

North Cave Millennium Walk Biodiversity Review for North Cave Parish Council

Meeting Date 5 Feb 2026, 10:30am

Location: Millennium Walk (MW), North Cave

Present:

North Cave Parish Councillors: Julie Steels, Steve Thackeray; apologies from Howard Strong

Tony Martin: Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
(YWT) Reserves Manager

Steve Whitbread: ERYC Biodiversity
Officer - Local Nature Recovery
Strategy (LNRS)

Michael Lee: Environment Agency (EA)
Fisheries Officer

Matt Arnold and Joanna Robinson:
East Yorkshire Rivers Trust (EYRT)

Steve Meays and Laura Howles: Mires
Beck Nursery

Bill and Elizabeth Blackledge:
West Wolds Slow the Flow (WWSTF)



1. Aim of Meeting

- 1.1. To review biodiversity opportunities in the context of North Cave PC's adopted Biodiversity Policy and current review of management of MW. This process can contribute to the creation of a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) with MW being the most significant land-holding by NCPC.
- 1.2. It was noted that the Hull and East Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been published this week, containing much useful guidance and strategies to align to. <https://heylnp.co.uk/lnrs/>
- 1.3. Towards the end of the meeting, Steve Whitbread said that the LNRS team would be pleased to work with NCPC to set an example for other PCs of what can be done, at Parish level, to contribute to the LNRS.

2. Review of Vegetation at Froscoles Bridge

- 2.1. It was noted that NC Beck is a valuable chalk stream. Froscoles Bridge, this is a low point in the village and prone to flooding. ERYC work to Littlemoor Drain and Finkle St should reduce water coming from that direction (down Blanshards Lane).
- 2.2. Bridge was replaced after 2007 flooding from 3-arch brick to single span steel. Deposition occurs on the inside of the bend resulting in vegetation growing.
- 2.3. It was explained that there was a recent meeting with EA River Maintenance team and they are looking into options and potential benefits of removing said vegetation.
- 2.4. Noted that drain headwalls have become lost in the vegetation and that trees have self-seeded.
- 2.5. This meeting was asked what is their view of the biodiversity in relation to this vegetation. Michael Lee (ML), Matt Arnold (MA) and Steve Meays (SM) all said that the vegetation is valuable due

to the fact that most of the beck edges are hard banks, upstream to the mill race (which marks the upstream extent of the main river, under EA jurisdiction). So the water-level vegetation is valuable for invertebrates, fish fry and water voles.

- 2.6. It was suggested that, rather than remove all the vegetation (which would be a short-term and destructive solution) a good compromise might be to 'fold back' about a third of the vegetation towards the bank, to provide some widening of the channel but maintain the habitat. This work would have to be done from the green. This discussion to be notified back to EA Maintenance Team.

3. Willow coppice and entering the Walk

- 3.1. First 6 willows due to be coppiced in February. Agreed that all arisings should be retained for use on MW, rather than chipped.
- 3.2. Ground level is raised/uneven as a result of the builders' spoil, and the area's level is raised. No longer functional floodplain.
- 3.3. Julie Steels explained that grass is cut either side of gravelled footpath and a separate cut grass path loops to the beck. This is to provide a managed appearance and also enable exploration off the main path.

4. Adjacent to the beck

- 4.1. Access to the beck was discussed, it was agreed that it is good allow limited access. Dogs can be a major issue, wearing down the bank. Also, spot-on flea treatment poisons the water and kills invertebrates. Sky-lighting (removing branches from over-hanging trees) would allow more light, encourage *Ranunculus aquatilis* (water crowfoot) which in turn is essential for fish spawning and shelter. The untidy gravel and leaf litter deposition at the edge of the stream is good habitat for brook lampreys and other fish.
- 4.2. Michael Lee noted that NC Beck is a 'jewel in the crown' in terms

of the range of classes of fish that it supports. Trout, eel and lamprey are notable. He noted that kick sampling needs to be done on a regular basis to get a true reflection of the state of the river invertebrates and health.

- 4.3. It was agreed that whilst access should not be removed, it should be restricted, for example by low 'dead hedges' or spillings along the edge of the path, which would protect the bank edge but still allow a view to the beck.
- 4.4. Water's edge planting (for example, *Lythrum salicaria*, Purple Loosestrife) can take place along the stream bank. Mires Beck to advise further on suitable species.
- 4.5. Interpretation would be helpful, including a notice to keep dogs out of the water if treated for fleas, using a spot-on chemical. MA would be able to provide text and/or signs. Article in Village Link to raise awareness of the issues.
- 4.6. It would be possible to create willow screen with viewing gaps at different heights for different ages, to allow quiet observation of kingfishers, egrets etc.
- 4.7. ML said that Himalayan Balsam has been noticed and removed on this section. It is more prevalent upstream, nearer to the Church. We can organise 'balsam bashing' and have been offered help by Anna Warrington, River Health Officer at Yorkshire Water.

5. Woodland area close to bench

- 5.1. Aconites and snowdrops were flowering (side-note, the position of these should be recorded whilst visible). It was suggested that whilst they are still 'in the green', clumps could be lifted, divided and spread (NCIB could be approached to see if they would be prepared to assist).
- 5.2. Nest boxes and squirrel issues were discussed. Noted that birds prefer natural materials, although they are not as durable. It would be possible to have a mix of wooden and (more expensive and robust) woodcrete boxes could be used to offer some variety.

Wooden boxes could be created by school children, 'Men in Sheds' or possibly prison woodworking (can ask).

- 5.3. Noted that recent tree work will allow more light to the ground and should help with grass establishment. Mires Beck can provide appropriate glade/shade species to help improve ground flora diversity and appearance of the area.
- 5.4. Hazel: it would be appropriate to establish new hazel plants set back from the path. As these mature, the existing established hazel can be coppiced (all stems cut to ground level). This would generate useful material for hurdles and other features. There could then be a longer-term coppice rotation established. Obviously, consideration needed as to 'by whom and how'.
- 5.5. Noted that cherry laurel (evergreen), at eastern end of MW near Mill, poisons the ground it grows in, so needs to be cut and removed as far as possible. No biodiversity value.
 - 5.5.1. WWSTF can fund work alongside the beck and also a 'scrape' in the lower wet area near the side stream and mill. These could all have marginal planting added.
 - 5.5.2. Breedon Aggregates is a possible source of funding.
 - 5.5.3. Noted that bamboo (to the north near the footpath between Mill Lane and Nordham) is spreading under a garden fence and will continue to spread into the area, if unchecked. Would take a lot of work to remove and would also need to be removed from the garden.
 - 5.5.4. General point that any tree work should not generate chippings - branches are more useful. If there are chippings, they are best piled up with branches to create hibernacula features, which are good for grass snakes and slow worms. These could be created near the proposed scrape, away from the more accessible grass areas.
 - 5.5.5. A dead hedge could be used to separate the accessible areas from the wetter more overgrown areas.
 - 5.5.6. Ideally would use hazel stakes and hazel, or other timber, at the base of the 'hedge' to keep willow off the ground and prevent it

rooting and causing issues as it outgrows the site.

- 5.5.7. The aim of these works should be to create a mosaic of habitats to maximise opportunities for biodiversity.

6. Recommendations to NCPC

- 6.1. Whilst recognising that the public consultation on MW is being reviewed, the following actions are recommended by the expert biodiversity group to NCPC. These should be reviewed alongside the creation of the NCPC Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

6.2. NCPC / MW Working Group

- Retain willow coppice arisings for use in MW, rather than chipping.
- Consider 'sky-lighting' - removing branches from trees overhanging the beck
- Consider restricting access to the beck, for example by low 'dead hedges' or spillings along the edge of the path, which would protect the bank edge but still allow a view to the beck.
- Review/allow sign ref dogs in water (with EYRT)
- Mires Beck to advise on suitable glade/shade species to help improve ground flora diversity and appearance of the area.

6.3. WWSTF

- WWSTF can fund some of above works (before end March 2026) where alongside the beck and also a 'scrape' in the lower wet area near the side stream and mill. These could all have marginal planting added.
- Dead hedge to separate the accessible areas from the wetter and more overgrown areas.

6.4. Short-term

- Aconites and snowdrops - record position of these whilst visible

- Whilst they are still 'in the green', clumps could be lifted, divided and spread (NCIB could be approached to see if they would be prepared to assist).

6.5. Village Link

- Article in Village Link to keep dogs out of the water if treated for fleas using a spot-on treatment. Also ref Balsam bashing (see below).

6.6. Longer-term

- For early summer along Beck - organise 'balsam bashing' with help by Anna Warrington, River Health Officer at Yorkshire Water.
- As part of BAP, work with LNRS team to set an example for other PCs of what contribution is possible at Parish level, to the LNRS.
- Consider nest boxes, approach others for possible supply/ sponsorship.
- Breedon Aggregates is a possible source of funding.
- Establish new hazel plants set back from the path and longer-term coppice rotation
- Cut and remove cherry laurel as far as possible
- Remove bamboo / notify neighbour
- Create hibernacula features

6.7. Notes to EA Maintenance ref Froscoles

- Drain headwalls have become lost in the vegetation and trees have self-seeded. to be cleared/removed
- Consider compromise to 'fold back' about a third of the vegetation onto the bank, to provide some widening but maintain the habitat. Notify to EA Maintenance.
- Separate to the meeting, arrange working party to remove sedges from wall.

Public Consultation Millennium Walk February 2026

What was your reason for your visit?

walking	83
walk the dog	51
watching wildlife	5
running	3
Go in to litter pick	1
other	1
Non-resident response	2

Would you like any improvements?

It is fine as it is	73
Improvements required	43

Total Responses Received **116**

It is noted that many of the suggestions for improvement are either nature-conservation related (highlighted in green) or would not conflict with nature conservation.

The few items that might have a slight conflict (highlighted in amber) would depend how they were done, and also depend on where they refer to.

On the whole, this list of improvements is compatible with appropriate amenity use of MW whilst enhancing its nature conservation.

Improvements suggested:

bird boxes	15
planting of wildflowers/ native bulbs	14
No picnic benches	11
less dog mess	8
reduce grass cutting	4
picnic/ further seating	4
more general maintenance	4
bat boxes	3
grass seed to path edges	3
beck clear of weeds/overgrowth	3
natural bug accommodation	2
bird feeding stations	2
trimming of hedges along the beck	1
replanting of dead trees	1
remove existing bench	1
enforce dogs on leads	1
path suitable for wheelchair users	1
waste bins emptied regularly (weekly)	1
no bins	1
better access to the beck	1
make it bigger	1
gravel up to Nordham on path	1
light trimming of trees	1
deal with pigeon problem	1