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## Report - Brookside

By Hannah Price

### Introduction:

The area known as Brookside lies in a field on the Southern edge of the village of Pill in North Somerset, grid reference ST 5235 7531. In past years it was used by the school for their sports day but this is no longer the case. Ten years ago a number of wooden bridges over the brook, a wooden play frame and zip wire were installed. The area is owned by North Somerset Council and leased to the Parish Council.

The area is roughly rectangular and runs north-east to south-west. The area consists of an open semi-improved grass field which is mown for amenity purposes. There is an area of semi-natural mixed woodland of mainly oak, field maple and hazel in the north east corner. The south eastern edge and south western edge are flanked by wide mature unmanaged hedgerows. There are a number of standard trees on the southern half of the north western edge, but many are elm and have died or are dying, or ash, that may succumb to ash dieback in the near future. The top half of the north western edge is fenced with areas of bramble and a mature (30-40 year old) oak. The northern edge is fenced with scattered clumps of bramble and several cherry and elm suckers.

### Aims:

- Increase value of Brookside for young people and encourage more use
- Increase value of Brookside for wildlife
- Plant trees and shrubs to capture carbon

### Summary of proposals:

- Create a 5-a-side football pitch with permanent goals (area D on map)
- Plant a wide hedgerow along the northern and north-west perimeter (Area A on map)
- Plant areas along the south-east and north-eastern edges (area B on map)
- Manage a central area of the site as a meadow, introducing a spring and late summer cut and removal of arisings (area C on map)
- Replace deteriorating bridge
- Form a community group, to include young people, whose duties include:
  - Litter
  - Publicity
  - Oversee ongoing management
  - Wardening of site

## Map of Brookside showing locations of proposed changes



Area A - Proposed planted hedgerow c. 74 m in total length

It is proposed that area A should be planted as a wide hedge at least two trees wide, widening to 10m in width on the sloped area by the main entrance. The Woodland Trust is offering free trees to Community Groups for such projects and an advisor may come to offer advice once an application has been submitted.

The young trees could be planted with help from small groups of school children but the school has not been approached on this as yet.

Smaller trees and shrubs may be more suitable for planting in this area in order to avoid blocking views of residents of Crockerne Drive. The Woodlands Trust's Wild Harvest mix consists of hazel, blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose, elder and rowan and may be suitable.

If the application is successful then the trees would be delivered in November 2020.

**Benefits:**

- Source of wild forage for wildlife and people.
- Aesthetically appealing
- Carbon capture
- Wildlife corridor
- Nest sites for small mammals and birds
- Cover, food and nest sites for invertebrates
- Education

**Associated costs:**

- Removal of bramble
- Ongoing hedgerow management

## **Area B - Proposed planted woodland area c. 1155 m<sup>2</sup> in total area**

It is proposed that area B be planted with trees be planted with young trees over a 5-10 year time period. Local provenance and low carbon footprint of seed stock can be accomplished by planting up the seed of trees grown locally. A number of sources of existing potted trees grown from local seeds have been sourced.

An event to promote Brookside, raise funds and to get children planting tree seeds could take place in October 2020. The trees could then either be taken home by the children and nurtured or raised centrally for planting out once they get to 40cm. There is lots of information on how to grow trees from seed on the Woodland Trust website.

**Benefits:**

- Carbon capture
- Wildlife habitat
- Education and ownership/connection with site for local people

**Associated costs:**

- Publicity and running of event to encourage seed planting

- Printing of instruction leaflet

### **Area C - Meadow area**

The area indicated is not to scale and may not be located correctly. There is an area of coarser grass somewhere in the region shown, where the species indicate that the ground is wetter. It is proposed that this area should be cut in spring and late summer with removal of arisings. Plug plants or appropriate local seed (such as green hay from the flower bank) could be used to speed up the process of meadow creation. A pathway mown through the centre of the area will add interest for children.

#### **Benefits:**

- Cover for small mammals
- Carbon capture
- Increasing local biodiversity
- Aesthetically appealing
- Providing a food source for pollinating insects

#### **Associated costs:**

- Costs associated with cutting and removal of arisings

### **Area D - 5-aside football pitch**

It is proposed that a permanent pitch area be marked out with goals and mown bi-weekly. The proposed area is already quite flat but the turf is tussocky and may require leveling with a roller. Estimates for the cost of this are being sought.

#### **Benefits:**

- Encourage greater use of Brookside
- Provision of resource to improve health and fitness of young people

#### **Associated costs:**

- Leveling of area with a roller
- Marking out of area plus repainting of lines
- Purchase and installation of two 5-aside goals
- Bi-weekly mowing of pitch area

### **Establishment of a community group that cares for Brookside**

The establishment of a diverse and committed group of local people will be key to the success of this project, including residents living in the vicinity of Brookside as well as the young people that use it as a meeting place. Problems of antisocial behaviour and litter could be addressed by encouraging young people to take ownership of the area.

## **Local consultation**

If the Parish Council gives this project the go ahead then the initial course of action must be to locally promote the plans and to encourage feedback and comment from residents. The opinions and concerns of local residents must be sought and listened to before proceeding.

## **Conclusion:**

Brookside is a fantastic resource and encouraging increased use by local residents will be of great benefit. It's close proximity to the school and the balance of value for both wildlife and recreational use makes it a great candidate for this type of project.