

The Stapenhill Gardens & The Washlands

Burton on Trent Management Plan 2019-2024

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Foreword

Stapenhill gardens and the neighbouring Washlands provide a unique and varied wildlife experience to visitors and locals. 2019 represents the first year that the Borough Council have entered the wider Washlands into the Green flag awards. This move comes on the back the Washlands project which is a multi-agency partnership programme designed to enhance the area, increase accessibility and provide a varied visitor experience which will boost the local economy.

Whereas this plan is for the next 5 years it is anticipated that the developments advocated in the document will safeguard the area and ensure that Stapenhill Gardens and the Washlands can be enjoyed by future generations. 2019 represents the beginning of this journey and it is with great anticipation that I recommend this management plan and the exciting developments that lie ahead.



Cllr Colin Whittaker
Deputy Leader

Contents

Introduction	4
Location Plan	5
History	6
Community Use:	
Something for Everyone	7
A Welcoming Place	8
Maintenance schedule	9
Conservation and Heritage	10
Community Involvement	12
Action Plan	14

Introduction

The Washlands is an extensive natural resource and floodplain situated alongside the banks of the River Trent. Predominantly flat, open grassland the area is utilised for recreation and cattle grazing.

Owned by Coors and leased out to East Staffordshire Borough Council on a 999 year lease, the Washlands provide a place for local people to relax and enjoy a variety of activities ranging from organised sport through to children's play and bird watching.

Historically, the Washlands and the River Trent have played a key role in the history and heritage of Burton on Trent with the local water quality fostering a vibrant brewing industry.

Nearby, Stapenhill Gardens is predominantly formal in style and retains much of its original layout, complemented by a small play area. The backdrop for this park is truly inspiring with extensive views of the river, enhanced by many floral beds which add a vibrancy of colour. Though split by St Peter's Bridge, the gardens continue around St Peter's churchyard where they link into Stapenhill Hollows and The Woodland Walk.

In 1933 Henry Goodger a successful solicitor, gave the land adjoining the former Stapenhill House and its garden to the public as a pleasure ground; in memory of his late mother. The Goodger family were significant local figures of the time. Miss Mary Goodger also of Stapenhill House, had been

elected as the first woman Councillor in 1923, and she went on to become the first woman mayor of Burton in 1931.

Stapenhill Gardens occupies a central location on the eastern side of Burton upon Trent. Its location is historically significant in that it sits adjacent to the eastern end of the Ferry Bridge; provided by Sir Michael Arthur Bass (later Lord Burton) in 1889 to replace a previous ferry service. The viaduct was provided the following year and this created a second safe cross point across the Trent Washlands, linking the settlement of Stapenhill with the commercial centre of the town. Prior to this as many as 17,000 people per month used the ferry to cross the river but the route across the Washlands was muddy and treacherous. A second road bridge known as St Peter's bridge was built in 1985 to ease congestion in the town, leading to the loss of a central portion of the park, but reinforcing the strategic location of Stapenhill Gardens.

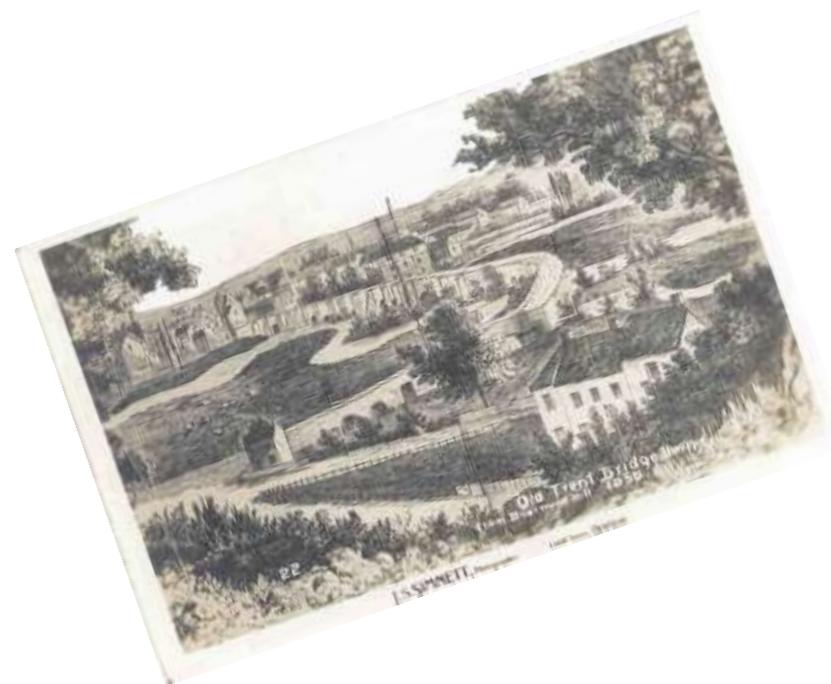
Stapenhill Gardens & The Washlands- Location



History

- 874-** Danish Viking raiders destroy a shrine, dedicated to St Modwen, in a church built on Andressey island
- 1002-** Burton Abbey is established by Wulfric Spot, a Saxon nobleman
- 1322-** 1st Battle of Burton bridge
- 1643-** 2nd Battle of Burton bridge
- 1857-** Stapenhill Woodland Walk (Burton's oldest public park) is laid out by Mr Edward Cliff.
- 1864-** Current Trent Bridge is built
- 1865-** Burton rowing regatta is held for the first time
- 1875-** Burton Swimming baths are opened having been funded by Richard and Robert Ratcliff, the sons of the brewer Samuel Ratcliff
- 1866-** Stapenhill Cemetery is opened
- 1899-** Ferry Bridge, provided by Michael Bass, is opened to replace the ferry service
- 1926-** Trent bridge is widened to accommodate increase in motor vehicle traffic
- 1933-** Henry Goodger "gifts" the land adjoining the former Stapenhill House and its garden to the public as a pleasure ground; in memory of his late mother.
- 1958-** Stapenhill Swan statute is constructed in Stapenhill Gardens and becomes an iconic Burton landmark.
- 1976-** Burton Library opens at the Riverside
- 1980-** Burton Swimming baths are demolished and the Meadowside Leisure Centre opens.
- 1985-** St Peters bridge, a second road bridge, is opened to ease congestion around Burton.

- 2016-** Stapenhill Ferry Bridge is closed for a period of restoration re-opening in September 2016. Diversitree sculpture designed by local school children, is installed at Stapenhill Gardens.
- 2018-** Stapenhill Swan rededication ceremony and installation of Coltman VC memorial.



Community Use: Something for everyone

- ✓ Rugby pitches home of Burton Rugby Club and available for informal play.
- ✓ Home of Leander and Phoenix Rowing Clubs.
- ✓ Fishing rights and the base for Coors Angling Club
- ✓ Picnic benches and tables
- ✓ Annual 10 mile run
- ✓ Annual Burton Regatta
- ✓ Cycle, running and walking routes
- ✓ Viking boat play area
- ✓ Fenced children's play at Stapenhill Gardens
- ✓ Historic Stapenhill Swan
- ✓ Diversitree sculpture
- ✓ Landmark Ferry bridge
- ✓ Birding feeding area
- ✓ Victorian style tiered planters
- ✓ Fitness boot camps
- ✓ Dog trainers
- ✓ Centenary woodland
- ✓ Washlands art trail
- ✓ Coltman VC stone
- ✓ 2014-2018 Peace Garden
- ✓ Memorials to various conflicts and lost servicemen and women.



A Welcoming Place

- ☼ Numerous entrants points either by foot, cycle or motor vehicle
- ☼ Maintenance takes place throughout the year and is undertaken by uniformed Council contractors from ID Verde.
- ☼ Noticeboards are present in key locations containing the latest information and important contact numbers/details
- ☼ Interpretation boards welcome and guide visitors around the park and also provide interesting information on the history of the area and Burton on Trent.
- ☼ Litter picked 5 days a week by the Council's Waste Management team.
- ☼ Toilet block at Stapenhill Gardens owned and managed by ESBC was extensively refurbished in 2015. Public toilets also available at Burton Library and the Meadowside Leisure Centre.
- ☼ Parking close by and at specific entry points
- ☼ Easily accessible from the Burton Town Centre.
- ☼ Nearby coffee shops at the Meadowside Leisure Centre, Burton Library, the Market place, Manor Croft and Costa@Tesco.



Maintenance schedule

Action	Frequency
Grass cutting	10 per year (March to November)
Shrub bed spot treatment	3 per year (April-July-September)
Shrub bed maintenance with long handled shears	5 per year (June, July, August, September, October)
Play inspection (visual)	2 per week
Play inspection (operational)	4 per year (1 each quarter)
Play inspection (annual)	1 per year
Play equipment painting	Every 5 years
Play area surface treatment	3 per year (April, July, September)
Safety Surface inspections	2 per week
ESBC Officer whole site inspections	12 per year
Bin emptying and litter picking	5 per week (Monday & Friday)
Picnic area chemical control	3 per year
Sweeping	Weekly following mowing

Important and useful information

Opening times. Stapenhill Garden gates are open 364 days a year. During the summer the park is open 8:00-21:00. Winter opening times are 8:00-16:30. Access to the Washlands is available 24 hours a day 365 days of the year.

The Council and ID Verde strive to ensure that the park is maintained to the highest standard. Unfortunately, sometimes things do go wrong or break. To report a fault contact the Open Spaces Team on 01283 508013 during office hours. Weekends and evenings contact the Council out of hours number on 01283 517111 for emergencies.

Stapenhill Gardens and The Washlands is enjoyed and respected by the majority of visitors. However, a small minority taint this experience for others. To report ASB contact the Police 101 number or report it via the Staffordshire Police or ESBC websites. Dog Fouling and Littering can be reported to the Council's Community & Civil Enforcement team on 01283 508856 or community.civil_enforcement@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk

Want to take part in one of the many sports playable on the Washlands? Then contact ESBC Sports Development Team on 01283 508192 for details of local clubs and teams

Conservation & Heritage

Stapenhill Gardens and the Washlands is home to a rich and diverse flora and fauna that can be enjoyed by visitors to the park. The Council makes every endeavour to encourage wildlife and examples of some of the species can be found below.

- ✓ Swans, Canada Geese, Heron, Robin, Wren, Chaffinch, Moorhen, Cormorants, Kestrels, Buzzards, Snipe, Kingfishers, Herons, Wrens, Reed Buntings, Reed Warblers, Little Grebe, Little Egrets, Chetti's Warbler, Gulls, Sparrow hawk, Ducks, Geese
- ✓ Carp, Grayling, Rudd, Dace, Roach, Chub, Bleak, Minnows, Perch, Gudgeon, Barbel, Ells, Trout, Pike, Bream, Bullhead, European Eel, Spined Loach.
- ✓ Daubenton & Common Pipistrelle bats
- ✓ Otter, Fox, Squirrel, Badger
- ✓ Rye grass, Timothy hair grass, tufted hair grass, creeping buttercup, ribwort plantain, silverweed, black medick, common bird's-foot-trefoil, great burnet, common knapweed, hard rush, hairy sedge, great willow herb, common marsh-bedstraw, gipsywort, marsh woundwort, cock's-foot, branched bur-reed, reed sweet-grass, Yorkshire-fog, creeping bent, bulrush, soft rush, purple-loosestrife, reed canary-grass, yellow iris, meadowsweet, common chickweed, cow parsley, hedge garlic, meadow buttercup, germander speedwell, yarrow, common cats ear and dovesfoot cranesbill, meadow vetchling, yarrow, salad burnet

Inspection and maintenance regimes for the park's trees follow the standard prescription for the Borough and is delivered through the Council's Tree Management Policy.

- ✓ Tree species include: Ash, Beech, Black Poplar, Common Alder, Common Elder, Common Lime, Common Walnut, Copper Beech, Corsican Pine, Crack Willow, English Elm, English Oak, Hawthorn, Holly, Horse Chestnut, Hybrid Poplar, Japanese Cherry, Lawson Cypress, Leyland Cypress, Lombardy Poplar, Norway Maple, Rowan, Scots Pine, Silver Birch, Swedish Whitebeam, Sycamore, Weeping Willow, Western Red Cedar, White Poplar, White Willow



Community Involvement

Both the Washlands and Stapenhill Gardens are free to access for community groups and attract a wide variety of activities ranging from organised sports through to mass celebration events. With the advent of the Washlands Programme it is anticipated that this community involvement will continue to flourish in future years. The following organised groups are already active within the park:

Run, Row, Ride

The river Trent and the surrounding Washlands and Stapenhill Gardens are home to various organised sporting events and teams. Leander (formed in 1847) and Phoenix Rowing Clubs make extensive use of the river. Since 1865 the river has hosted the annual Burton Regatta with teams coming from a far field to compete in this prestigious event.

Sport is not just restricted to the river. The Washlands also provide the start/finish point for the annual Burton 10 mile road race and host the Washlands Women runners and their annual relay. Recreational runners are also catered for with 3-way marked routes set out for runners of various abilities and experience.

Those that like to get around on two wheels can also enjoy the Washlands with cycling actively encouraged and a dedicated local cycling group meets at the Washlands each Sunday morning as part of an organised ride.

Fishing

The River Trent passing through Stapenhill Gardens is classed as free water, which entitles anyone who lives or works in Burton upon Trent to fish the stretch of water from the Leicester Line Bridge on Waterside Road through to the Newton Road recreation ground with just a rod license. Furthermore, the river is home to a fishing club, Coors Angling Club, who regularly host fishing matches and events along the river.

Having fun and doing their bit

Annually the Washlands plays host to the fun day of Kerry Foods a major employer in the town. This fun day gives staff a chance to relax and unwind and take part in a number of fun games and activities.

Local big businesses also help to keep the Washlands looking great by providing groups of volunteers to litter pick the area. Recently, McDonalds, Boots, Kerry Foods and Coors have all contributed and done their bit for the local community.

Away from the Washlands, volunteers have looked after and maintained a community garden at Stapenhill Hollows which has focused on introducing pollinating plants to encourage the growth of the local bee population.

Big top and big band

Given the versatility of the area the Washlands has also hosted a regular Circus. Only providers that don't use animals in their displays are permitted to use the ground. Over the years this circus has proved a popular attraction for residents of the town.

Away from the big top, Stapenhill Gardens has welcomed "Force 10" a swing band that have performed outdoor concerts for local music lovers.

Schools, charities and other celebrations

Both Stapenhill Gardens and the Washlands have proved popular venues for schools, scouts, guides, and charities who want to carry out litter picks, host outdoor classrooms, study wildlife or want space to simply enjoy the outdoors. In 2018 the Washlands also hosted a special "Women's Celebration" event which recognised 100 years of achievements for women since been granted the right to vote in 1918.



Action Plan

This table detailed below is derived from the Washlands Programme, a multi-agency project which aims to enhance the local area. Further details can be found at <http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/washlands-project>

Ref no.	Task	Cost	Objective
LW21	Improve the fish passage at Burton Bridge Weir based upon findings and suggestions of feasibility study carried out by partners	£71,040	Conservation & Heritage
PR05	Improve quality and legibility of connections to the Washlands from and under Burton Bridge as a key gateway	£200,000	A welcoming place
PR06	Create high quality public realm interface between Washlands and proposed housing development	£200,000	A welcoming place
PW04	The “demonstration zone” a microcosm of habitats to reflect those found throughout the Washlands	£100,000	Conservation & Heritage
PR11	Intermittent boardwalks to improve accessibility during flooding and access to and over designed wet areas	£100,000	Something for all
PR12	Replace existing play equipment with durable timber play equipment to provide a high quality, flagship play area.	£500,000	Something for all
PR17	Enhancements to access bridge	£100,000	A welcoming place
PR13	Update the frontage of Burton Library to improve an already popular gateway to the Washlands	£500,000	A welcoming place
PR14	Improve the public realm areas highlighted as “gold” within the Public Realm Implementation Plan (PRIP)	£250,000	A welcoming place
PH05	Celebrate the heritage assets including improved lighting, information and maintenance	£80,000	Conservation & Heritage
LW29	Import additional deadwood to woodland area for stag beetles and other saproxylic invertebrates	£5,000	Conservation & Heritage
LW30	Create two large otter holts	£1,000	Conservation & Heritage

PW05	Soften the edges of the woodland through additional woodland planting extending into the Oxhay Meadow	£15,000	Conservation & Heritage
LW28	Reduce maintenance of amenity grassland and manage as hay meadow with mown paths	n/a	Conservation & Heritage
PR16	Formalise and promote a new circular route which is accessible for all and connects to the Trent Valley Way, making use of existing footpaths.	£200,000	Something for all
PW07	Add scrapes and pools with buffer vegetation, to improve the wetland habitat for wildlife in an area which is accessible, as an educational resource, and to enhance the views from Stapenhill Viaduct	£15,000	Conservation & Heritage
PW08	Plant additional scattered native trees	£10,000	Conservation & Heritage
PW11	Add intermittent boardwalks to retain and improve access across the area and to the rest of the Washlands during flooding. Boardwalks in this area will allow people closer access to nature, and be an educational resource along with the proposed visitor shelter	£200,000	Something for all
LW22	Maintain the mosaic of semi-natural grassland, marshy grassland and swamp that is already forming	n/a	Conservation & Heritage
PH08	Increase riparian tree planting through addition of scattered trees/irregularly spaced copses along the edge of the river, using native species	£15,000	Conservation & Heritage
PR07a	Vegetation management to improve visual connections to the Washlands from Stapenhill Road	£20,000	Conservation & Heritage
PR07	Revive this space as a “visual gateway” to the Washlands	£200,000	A welcoming place
LW23	Improve grassland species diversity (of marshy and semi natural grassland) through a change in management practice and the addition of scrapes, providing a habitat link between Broadholme and the Hollows	n/a	Conservation & Heritage
LW26	Two stage channel and marginal planting (retain fishing pegs)	£25,000	Conservation & Heritage

LW24	Expand the existing woodland through additional planting of native species	£25,000	Conservation & Heritage
LW25	Create scrapes and expand the existing natural marshy grassland	£10,000	Conservation & Heritage
PR08	Maintain recreational space including formal riverside path and cricket strip to a high standard	n/a	Something for all
PR15	Enhance the main spine route through the Washlands so that it is suitable for cycling	£400,000	Something for all
PR09	Expand the available parking facilities to meet the demand for the area	£200,000	A welcoming place
PH09	Increase riparian tree planting through addition of scattered trees/irregularly spaced copses along the edge of the river, using native species	£12,000	Conservation & Heritage
PH10	Breach river banks in this historic channel location to improve the wet woodland habitat	n/a	Conservation & Heritage
LW27	Improve the ecological value of existing amenity grassland through the reduction in maintenance and manage the area as a hay meadow	n/a	Conservation & Heritage
PH04	Retain and enhance the formal and ornamental character of the gardens	n/a	A welcoming place
PR19	Improve the appearance of Stapenhill Viaduct through lighting improvements, high quality surface materials and inclusion of signage	£150,000	A welcoming place
PR10	Maintain as a possible space for hosting large events, but improve quality of grassland for biodiversity	n/a	Conservation & Heritage
PW09	New small scale visitor shelter/education space	£150,000	Something for all
PW10	Expand the existing parking facilities to meet the anticipated needs of the proposals for the area	£300,000	A welcoming place

