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The Chester and Deeside Greenway

Part of NCN5

**2019 Draft Habitat
Management Plan**



Background

Route Details

- From - to: Hawarden Bridge to Mickle Trafford
- Distance: 7.4 miles.
- Type: Disused railway path, no hills and largely traffic free.
- Surface: Tarmac
- National Cycle Network 5

Route Description

This route connects the historic city of Chester to the Wharf at Connah's Quay. The path takes you along an old railway line and is an attractive ride or walk from the north side of Chester out into The Wirral's rich arable farmlands.

Fairly flat and traffic-free, this route is the ideal undemanding ride. The route has railway stations at either end, which provide the option to cycle or walk one way and return by train.

Chester is an attractive city surrounded by medieval walls with fragments dating back to Saxon and even Roman times. Roman archaeological finds and displays on local history can be seen at the Grosvenor Museum, and the route travels right past the 13th century Chester Cathedral



What we plan to do and why we want to do it

On many parts of the path, we simply seek to maintain what is there. In other sections we have identified opportunities to enhance habitats. We always aim to keep a safe and open feel to the path which sometimes requires us to undertake tree and scrub management as well as cutting grass directly adjacent to the path to prevent it from causing an obstruction. We also thin trees where it would improve the woodland health and we clear around some of the older trees to release them from the competition of younger more vigorous trees allowing them to be fully appreciated by route users.

As you read on, you can see that seven sections of the path have been identified for specific projects beyond this general management. There is a brief description as to the nature and proposed management of each section.



Target species and Objectives

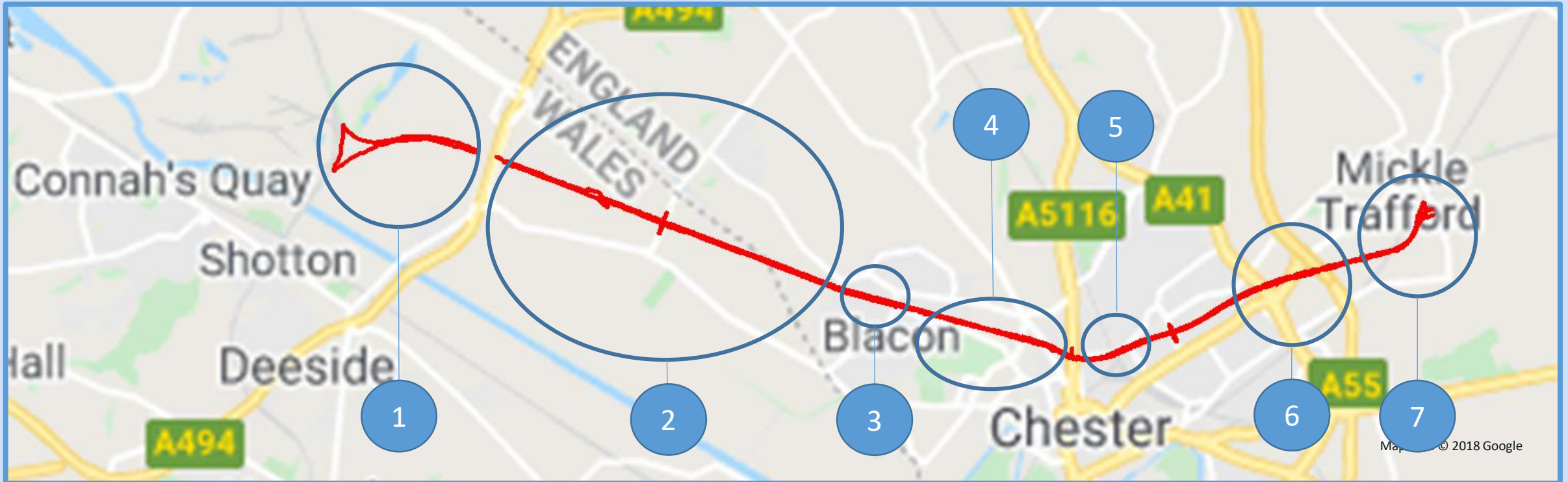
The trail sits in relatively close proximity to some of Chester's most important wildlife sites including estuarine habitats, maritime grasslands, and salt-water habitats towards the coast, as well as the River Dee SSSI, and Burton Mill Local Nature Reserve.

A recent ecological survey of the trail identified that its biodiversity value could be increased through additional management of grassland and woodland habitats, creating space for some of the important species that depend on these environments such as the club-tailed dragonfly and great crested newts

Ash dieback presents a risk to some of our woodlands and we will be carefully monitoring the site for its presence. Unfortunately some signs of dieback have already been noted and we are following the most up to date best practice guidance from the Forestry Commission in dealing with this issue. Our aim is to conserve ash in the landscape protecting the species that depend on it.



Plan Sections



Hawarden
Bridge



Mickle
Trafford



An area of open grassland bounded by pathside hazel, ash, birch and willow.

We would like to...

- 1/ Manage the wetland areas by managing new ponds and creating more wet scrapes.
- 2/ Improve the species diversity within the grassland by implementing a traditional cutting regime and introducing new species through green hay application if required.
- 3/ Thin the trees to prevent overcrowding and allow the establishment of native ground flora to benefit bees and other invertebrates.



Section 1



Deeside Triangle

An open section of the path with scattered broadleaved trees

We would like to...

Improve the species diversity within the grassland by implementing a traditional cutting regime and introducing new species through green hay application if required.



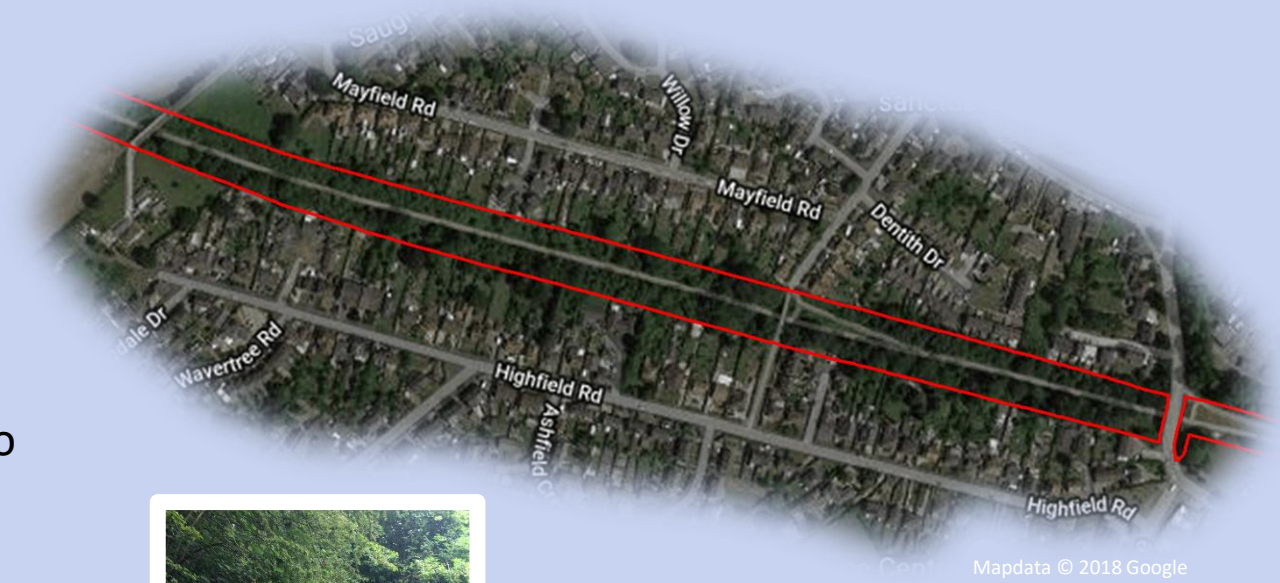
Mapdata © 2018 Google



A semi-mature woodland containing oaks, ash, horse chestnut and native shrubs.

We would like to...

Thin the understory and use the brush to create dead hedges to enhance the woodland for small mammals, birds, and invertebrates.



A scattered elm and oak woodland with areas of open grassland.

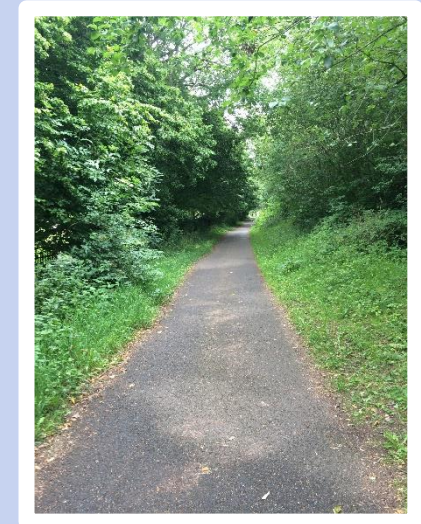
We would like to...

1/ Improve the species diversity within the grassland by implementing a traditional cutting regime and introducing new species through green hay application if required.

2/ Remove some non-native conifer trees to prevent them from obstructing the path and becoming invasive in the native woodland.



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Section 4



Saughall Rd to
Blacon Hall Rd

A young oak, sycamore and scrub willow woodland with small pocket of black poplar trees.

We would like to...

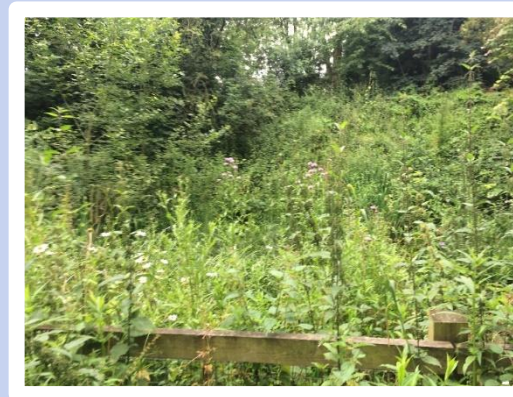
Pollard the black poplar to remove the risk of them obstructing the path and to create habitat diversity.



A semi-mature ash, oak, elm and sycamore woodland with high biodiversity value from a intricate network of ponds.

We would like to...

Develop the pond network to increase the surface area of open water adjacent to the trail.



A young field maple, hazel and cherry woodland bounded by a maturing native hedge.

We would like to...

- 1/ 'Lay' the hedge to improve its contribution to biodiversity and demonstrate a traditional rural craft.
- 2/ Thin the trees to prevent overcrowding and allow the establishment of native ground flora to benefit bees and other invertebrates.
- 3/ Install a bench to provide a rest stop as people join or leave the path.



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