Friends of Broomfield Park



stepping stones on Broomfield Park wetlands west bank

Broomfield Park Wetlands Management - Problems and Solutions

FoBP Habitats Group

Version	Date	Authors	Comments
1	06-Oct-2025	Matthew Pierce, Kim Lumley	Initial draft

Introduction / Purpose of this document

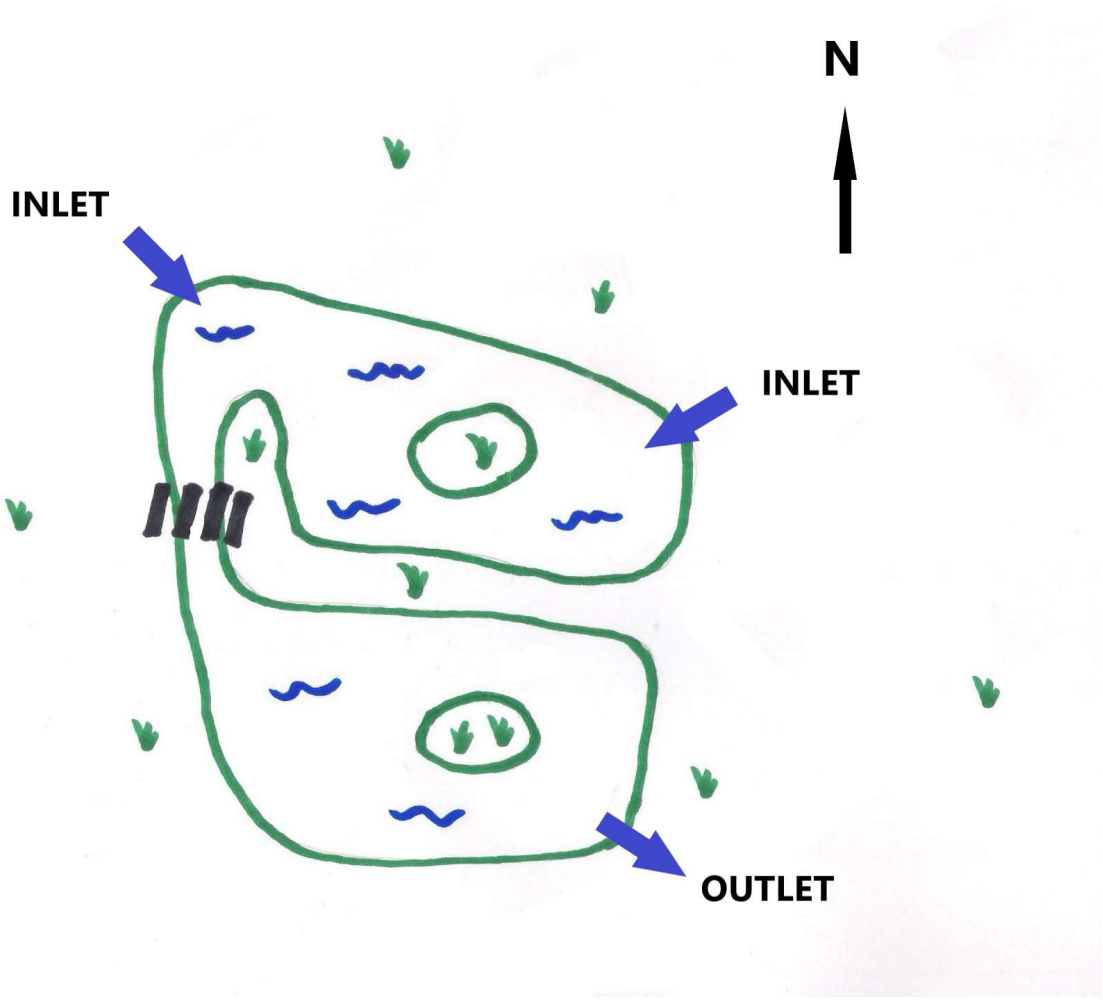
Broomfield Park wetlands was created in 2019. Surface water flows into it from the west of the park and it also receives an inflow of fresh water drainage (including road runoff) via one of the formal lakes in the park. Water flows out of the wetlands into the Pymmes Brook.

No management was done in the first two years. In 2021 FoBP cleared the inlets and outlet. Since 2022 we have mown the banks annually to maintain wildflower meadows and keep weeds at bay. Since 2023 we have removed 1/3 of the reeds each year to stop the wetlands from drying out, support the water cleaning function and keep access clear. We have also tried to keep trees under control.

In this document, FoBP outlines problems we have encountered to do with:

- The numerous large willow trees on the banks
- Islands
- How to dispose of cut reeds

We suggest potential solutions and also put forward some ideas about the need for wetlands management elsewhere in Enfield.



sketch map of Broomfield Park wetlands

Problem 1: Trees

Broomfield Park wetlands has willow trees spaced 40-60cm apart all around the banks and on the islands. They are up to 12m tall with trunks up to 25cm thick. They include the relatively short and bushy grey and goat willows alongside the much taller white willows.



closely-spaced trees on the wetlands west bank

These trees have the following undesirable effects:

- Shading out the reeds and hence inhibiting the water cleaning function of the wetlands.
- Shading out the marginal wildflowers, reducing the wetlands' public amenity and wildlife value.
- Drying out the wetlands, threatening its long term viability.

These problems will worsen as the trees increase in height and spread. Willows are very fast growing and could reach twice the height they are now. FoBP has concluded that at least 80% of them need to go , out of approximately 170 trees in total.

We have started removing trees by hand – cutting the roots and levering the stumps out – but this is laborious and it can take hours for a group of two or three people to remove just one tree.

FoBP might need two or three winters to complete the job, by which time some of the trees may grow too big for us to deal with. So while we will continue removing trees this winter 2025/26, we also propose some other potential solutions:

1) Enfield Council tree team removes the trees.
2) FoBP brings in a contractor to do it (funding potentially available from Thames21).
3) Thames21 set up their own project to do it (could perhaps be part of an overall management process for a number of other Enfield wetlands, perhaps all of them).

Problem 2: Islands

From FoBP's perspective, the two islands in the wetlands are problematic as they:

- Contribute to the tree problem mentioned above, and are difficult to keep free from trees due to the need to wade across to them.
- Take up space that would otherwise be occupied by reeds, diminishing the wetlands' water cleaning capacity.
- Present an obstacle to annual reed cutting.

We would be interested to find out if the islands are really necessary e.g. because they support the water cleaning function of the wetlands or increase their appeal to wildlife.

If not then it might be might be an idea to take out the islands altogether. Alternatively, removing the trees from them would still address some of the problems mentioned above.



island in the wetlands north pond

Problem 3: Reeds

One third of the reeds in the wetlands need to be cut and removed each year to support the water-cleaning function of the reedbed and prevent dead vegetation from accumulating.

FoBP, assisted by a large corporate volunteer team brought in for a day each year by Thames21, are able to cut the reeds and remove them from the water.



reed cutting

The problem is how to get rid of the 50m^3 of cut reeds produced each year. Last year Enfield Council trucked them to the Edmonton incinerator, but they have indicated that this is not feasible in future.



loading reeds onto trucks

Potential solutions:

1) Move the reeds into the stableyard and shred them for use in compost or as mulch (which could probably all be used up within the park over the course of a year). The shredding and composting could be probably be done cost-effectively by some combination of Enfield Council staff and FoBP volunteers.
2) Thames21 set up their own project to do it (perhaps as part of an overall management process for some or all of the other Enfield wetlands).

The Bigger Picture - Wetlands Management across Enfield

There are many other wetlands in Enfield including Pymmes Park, Oakwood Park and Bury Lodge. It is likely they have similar management challenges to the ones in Broomfield Park and that they might be falling short of their original objectives, for example:

- Without annual reed cutting wetlands don't clean water effectively (ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT NOT DELIVERED).
- Without management of bankside trees and other vegetation, paths become blocked, inaccessible or unsafe (PUBLIC AMENITY NOT DELIVERED).
- Without annual mowing, wildflower meadows get overrun by thistles and brambles (BOTH ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT AND PUBLIC AMENITY NOT DELIVERED).

FoBP has 3 years' experience managing Broomfield Park wetlands and will be more than happy to support Enfield Council and Thames21, and provide input to decision making, in planning future wetlands and wetlands management.

A wetlands management regime will require a considerable amount of admininstrative and manual effort, plus investment in tools and PPE, so the availability of volunteers and funding will be crucial. This is where Thames21 is well placed to help.