

10 Ellesmere Park



Introduction

Ellesmere Park contains an unusual variety of native and non native flora. Although primarily consisting of amenity grassland the site has great potential for wildlife with a range of berry bearing shrubs and trees that will provide food and shelter for nesting birds.

The northern section of the park contains a neglected bowling green and tennis courts with a community centre and basketball court that are well used. There is a children's play area that is bordered by a range of trees and shrubs. The park is in an area of dense housing and provides a valuable link between other open spaces such as Harleston /Petre Street urban wildlife zone and Earldom Street Open Space.

Site details

Site name

Ellesmere Park (sometimes split for convenience into Ellesmere Park North and Ellesmere Park South, either side of Earldom Street)

Location

The site is situated at Grid Reference SK 364 888. It is between Petre Street Urban Wildlife Zone, Earldom Street Green Space, Ellesmere Green and Sedan Street Open Space.

Land owner

The land is owned by Sheffield City Council.

Nearest road/street

Ellesmere Road to the west, Earldom Street cuts through the middle of the site east to west. Maxwell Way is to the south east and Petre Street to the north east.

Adjacent land use

To the west the site borders Ellesmere Road and houses and gardens, to the south is a nursery/ community centre with a small walled grassland area behind it. To the east is Harleston Street open space. To the north is a housing estate bordered with grassy banks to the north west.

Size

Ellesmere Park North covers 1.52803 hectares

Ellesmere Park South covers 1.75873 hectares

Present management

The grass is mown regularly and the trees and shrubs are cut back once a year.

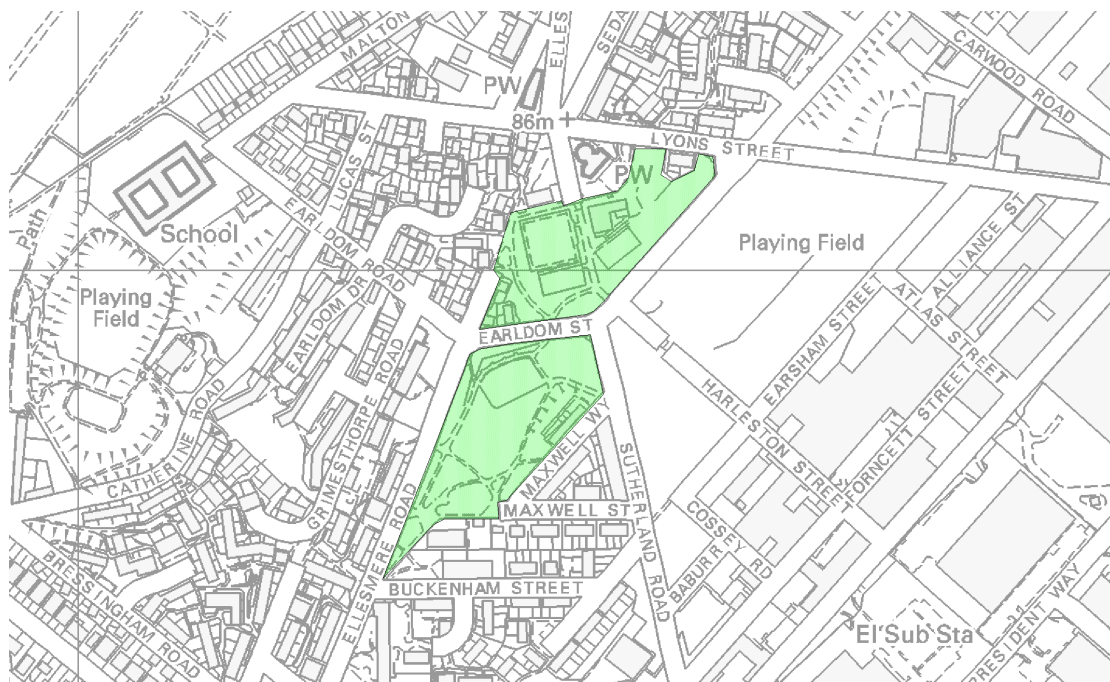
The Burngreave Rangers are planning to chainsaw the railway sleepers around the hard court to a low level to improve visibility, carry out essential maintenance of the court, clean, repair and re-mark to improve. They are also going to undertake essential maintenance of the playground, tidy paths, remove burnt out sleepers and tidy the shrubs.

Burngreave Community Forestry programme have recently cleared overhanging shrubs from the footpath and lifted the crowns of trees.

UDP designations

Open Space Area, (Leisure and Recreation).

Location map



Survey

Phase I ecological survey

Site description

a) Ellesmere Park North

From the road mown grassy banks and a line of *Leylandii* border a tennis court. This old tennis court and a bowling green have been neglected and are overgrown; the bowling green is bordered by a variety of trees and shrubs that will provide food and cover for birds, such as cotoneaster and Oregon grape. Flocks of starlings feed in and around the old bowling green. Some interesting non native shrubs and trees border the paths such as smoke bush and the New Zealand daisy and there is a basketball court that is well used. Behind this is a community centre that has a small playground area for children, a grassy bank that has a range of trees borders this and shrubs including some large birch trees. There is a very steep grassy bank that reaches to Petre Street.

b) Ellesmere Park South

This large site is mainly recreational but with a range of planted trees and shrubs. Mature trees and shrubs border the site including cherry, rowan, maple, ash and sycamore. Access is good with various broad paths and several benches. Apart from the borders, which have a range of flora, most of the site consists of amenity grassland. At the northern edge is a tarmac play area, this is neglected and covered in glass.

a) & b)

Birds: both parts of Ellesmere Park contain shrubs that contain berries for food and dense foliage for nesting bird cover.

Habitats of interest

a) & b)

The areas of densely planted trees and shrubs around the edges of the parks will provide food and cover for birds as well as shelter from noise and pollution for people.

b)

On the corner of the park next to Buckenham Street is a small walled grassland area, this did have steps and a desire line going through it but the steps have been walled off. It is directly behind the nursery and has an old school building at its top corner.

Species of interest

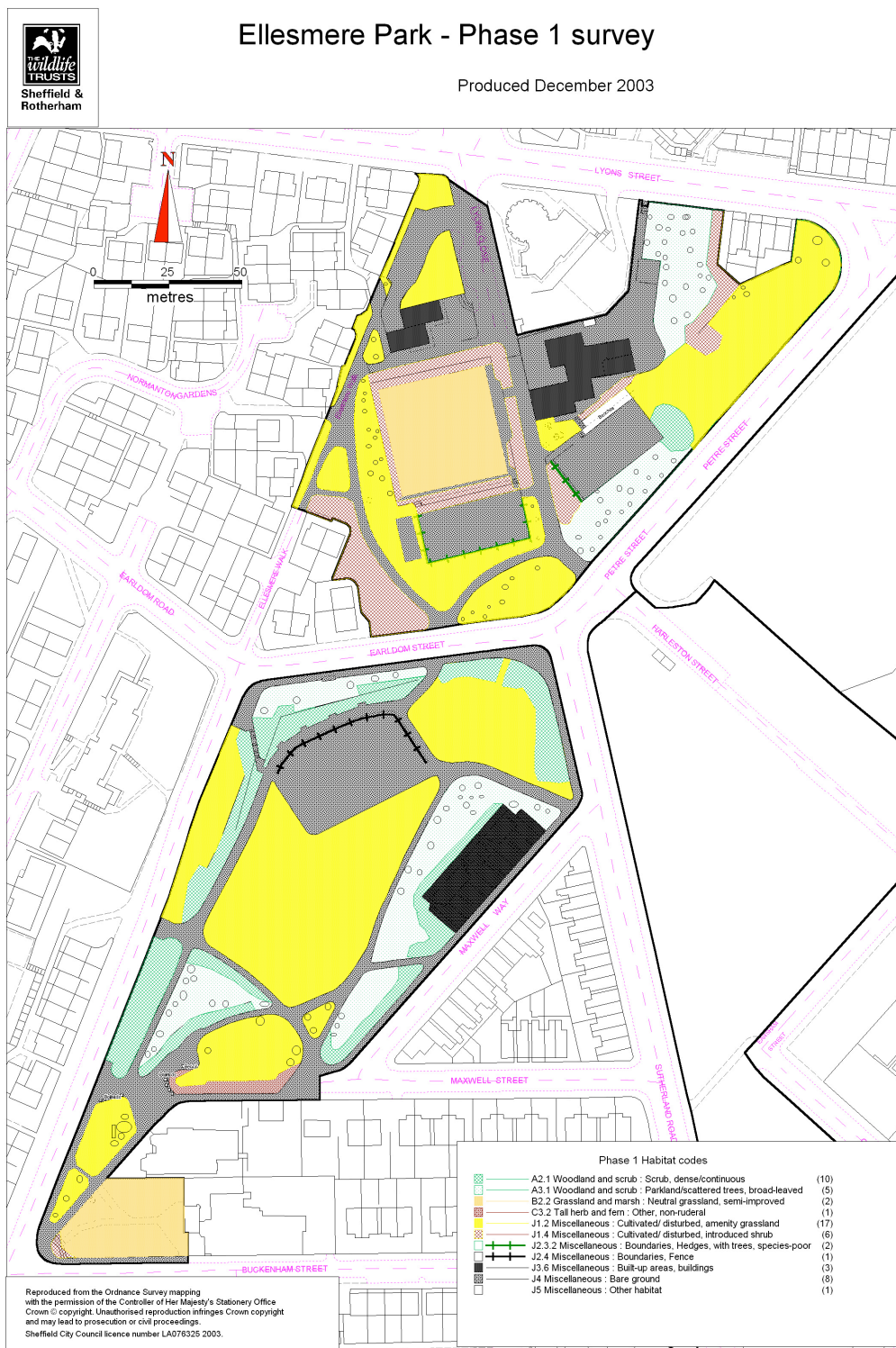
Local Red Data Book Species (Grade A): Speckled wood butterfly

UK Red List Bird Species: Starling

Ecologically the site does not contain a wealth of native species but there are some unusual herbs, shrubs and trees.

Ellesmere Park contains an unusual variety of flora including sea buckthorn, manna ash, dill and oregano. Also unusual shrubs such as the daisy bush-New Zealand Holly (*olearia macrodontia*) and the willow leaved pear.

Phase 1 Habitat map



Invertebrate survey

A full invertebrate survey was not carried out on this site as, due to limited funding; only a few sites could be chosen. The sites that were surveyed are believed to hold greater invertebrate interest.

A full invertebrate survey is recommended in the future.

Species found include:

Brown Hawker Dragonfly

The butterflies seen in the park include;

Meadow brown

Wall brown

Large white

Small white

Speckled Wood

Common blue

Small tortoiseshell

Painted lady

Comma



Common blue (Photo by Cheryl Gibson)

Vertebrate Survey

Foxes and mice have been seen around the site. A full mammal survey was not carried out.

Bird survey

Species recorded on at least one occasion between May and August 2003	Possible Breeding Species ¹	Probable Breeding Species ²	Confirmed Breeding Species ³	Number of territories held by selected species
Magpie Wood pigeon Blackbird Starling ⁵ Robin Dunnock ⁴			Magpie Blackbird	

¹ Evidence: present on more than one occasion in suitable breeding habitat

² Evidence: singing/displaying male in suitable breeding habitat on more than one occasion; pair in suitable habitat showing courtship or territorial behaviour; bird visiting probable nest site; nest building; anxiety calls; recently used nest.

³ Evidence: Adult carrying food or faecal sac; adult sitting on nest; nest with eggs/young; egg shells found away from nest; recently fledged young.

⁴ Priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

⁵ UK Red List Bird Species

A more detailed, comprehensive bird survey is recommended.

Evaluation

Ellesmere Park is a mosaic of habitats. The densely planted berry bearing trees and shrubs provide plenty of bird cover and food.

The short mown areas of amenity grassland are well used by people of all ages for play and recreation.

The neglected tennis court and bowling green offer potential for a range of possibilities. As they are flat they would make excellent facilities for disabled access so a sensory, wildlife or herb garden or a combination of these would be a straight forward option to increase its biodiversity and attractiveness

to a wider selection of the population. A combination of native and non-native planting would improve biodiversity whilst allowing species that could provide all year round colour, fragrance and food and cover.

The belts of trees and shrubs in the north and south sections of the park should be retained, as they are valuable for bird food and cover.

The broken benches in Ellesmere Park South need to be replaced or repaired to make the park more inviting for locals. The open grassy areas would be used more than they are if it was not for the dog faeces that regularly litter the site.

Dog-free areas and areas of longer grass clearly marked for dogs would improve the park making it more amenable to children playing and dog owners. Dog bins need to be put into the park to encourage care of the site. The site would be more amenable to play and community use if vehicular access was barred by increasing the frequency and strength of barriers.

Ecologically the amenity grassland that makes up most of the southern side of the park (b), does not contain a wealth of species. Leaving a few more small areas to grow wild and introducing a less frequent cutting regime would increase the biodiversity of the grassland.

An area of the park such as the small hill in front of the Children's Centre would be ideal for leaving to grow as a wild flower area.

The areas of densely planted trees and shrubs around the edges of the parks will provide food and cover for birds as well as shelter from noise and pollution for people. These should be left as they are.

A sensory, wildlife or herb garden or a combination of these would be an option that could increase biodiversity as well as being more attractive to the local, elderly population.

A sensory garden would be ideal as there is already seating covered in vegetation that just needs to be cleared. There are a lot of elderly people living locally who have no facilities around the park. There are gaps in the hedge that need to be patched up.

The short mown areas of amenity grassland are well used by people of all ages for play and recreation. Most of these need to be maintained.

Species found

A (tree or shrub)

<i>Acer campestre</i>	field maple
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	horse-chestnut
<i>Berberis</i> sp.	barberry
<i>Berberis x stenophylla</i>	barberry
<i>Betula pendula</i>	silver birch
<i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i>	Lawson's cypress
<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.	cotoneaster
<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>	wall-spray

	<i>Cottinus coggyria</i>	smoke bush
	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn
	<i>Forsythia x intermedia</i>	forsythia
	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	ash
	<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>	sea buckthorn
	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	holly
	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	oregon-grape
	<i>Malus domestica</i>	apple
	<i>Olearia macrodontia</i>	Daisy bush
	<i>Prunus avium</i>	wild cherry
	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	cherry laurel
	<i>Prunus sp.</i>	cherry
	<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i>	firethorn
	<i>Pyrus salicifolia</i>	willow leaved pear
	<i>Rosa canina agg.</i>	dog rose
	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	Japanese rose
	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	bramble
	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	elder
	<i>Sorbus aria agg.</i>	common whitebeam
	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	rowan
	<i>Tilia x vulgaris</i>	lime
B (herb)		
	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	garlic mustard
	<i>Arctium minus</i>	lesser burdock
	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	daisy
	<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	rosebay willowherb
	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	creeping thistle
	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	spear thistle
	<i>Galium aparine</i>	cleavers
	<i>Geranium pusillum</i>	small flowered cranesbill
	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	herb-robert
	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	wood avens
	<i>Hebe sp.</i>	hebe
	<i>Lamium album</i>	white dead-nettle
	<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	red dead-nettle
	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	ribwort plantain
	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup
	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	broad-leaved dock
	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	common ragwort
	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	groundsel
	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	smooth sow-thistle
	<i>Stellaria media</i>	common chickweed
	<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	feverfew
	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	tansy
	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	dandelion
	<i>Trifolium arvense</i>	hare's-foot clover
	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover
	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	common nettle
	<i>Veronica filiformis</i>	slender speedwell
	<i>Vicia hirsuta</i>	hairy tare
	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	common vetch
	<i>Vicia sepium</i>	bush vetch
C (grass)		
	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	meadow foxtail
	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	false oat-grass
	<i>Bromus sterilis</i>	barren brome
	<i>Festuca sp.</i>	fescue
	<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	wall barley

Lolium perenne
Poa annua
Poa pratensis
Poa trivialis

perennial rye-grass
annual meadow-grass
smooth meadow-grass
rough meadow-grass

Habitats/species of nature conservation importance

UK BAP Priority Habitats

None

Sheffield LBAP Priority Habitats

None

UK BAP Priority Species

None

Sheffield LBAP Priority Species

Starling

UK BAP Species of Conservation Concern

Duncock

UK Red List Birds

None

UK Amber List Birds

None

Local Red Data Book Species

Lepidoptera Grade A Species

Speckled wood

Previous Surveys

None were found.

History and Geology

Geological survey

The solid geology of the site lies within the Lower Coal Measures of the Upper Carboniferous period and is characterised by mudstone and flaggy sandstone.

Archaeological survey

No archaeological or historical features were identified in Ellesmere Park in the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service SMR or English Heritage NMR.

Historical survey

This area had houses covering the site built in 1914. On the 1905 map the site was still covered in housing. The southeastern edge of the site was an open area on the 1880 map next to a school. The rest of the site was built over.

Recommendations

Ellesmere Park is of limited archaeological or historical significance. It would appear to have been used for housing during the early to mid twentieth century. Following the demolition of the housing, the site remained undeveloped and has since become one of the many open or green spaces in the Burngreave NDfC area. Consultation of census records will help identify former residents of Earldom Street, Ellesmere Road, Petre Street, Sutherland Road and Writtle Street. This information may help improve understanding of local social history.

Community

Ellesmere Park is mainly a through fare for local residents and so the site received limited responses to the questionnaire. Very few visitors interviewed visited the park for recreation as it lacks any provision for play, feels unsafe and is unattractive. Although it has lots of established trees and open grassy spaces they are small and marred by an abandoned and vandalised five a side football court.

User Survey Results

The user survey showed that the most popular activity taking place on the site was taking a short-cut and dog walking. Other activities included walking, sitting, playing and cycling. With the exception of Wednesday the survey showed that the site was at its busiest during the AM and MD surveys with the majority of visitors being adults. Wednesdays was the most popular day during the PM survey with visitors being mostly children. This was due to a 'sports van' visit. There were some elderly, infant and teenage visitors counted in the survey.

Site Problems

Safety

Local people do not feel safe at times in the park, especially at night due to the lack of lighting and the intimidating groups of people that gather on the benches.

Drug and solvent abuse

There is evidence of drug use and dealing in the park and local residents are aware of it.

Most takes place by the seating along the footpath that runs alongside the football court. It is hidden behind the railway sleepers and is concealed from the road by trees

Litter

There is a lot of litter blown into the park from the road and surrounding streets.

There are a couple of small bins, which are always overflowing.

There is a lot of broken glass in and around the football court and along some footpaths.

Dogs

The park is frequently used by dog walkers who let their dogs roam freely. People find this inconsiderate as the site is too small.

Landscape and access

People are unhappy with the state of the overgrown footpaths and entrance ways; they find them both difficult and intimidating.

There is concern that the park entrances and exits are not protected for children and that small children can easily run out into a busy road.

There is a feeling of being enclosed when walking on the footpath alongside the football court as access is restricted on both sides.

Facilities

There are no provisions for play in Ellesmere Park.

The football court is the main feature of the park but remains unusable through constant vandalism and shards of broken glass.

There is a flat area below the court that can be used for playing but is next to a large opening on a slight hill that is considered unsafe for small children.

The seating at the entrance point next to the Ellesmere Children's Project is badly damaged

There is no other seating in the park other than those that are hidden behind the football court.

Site Solutions

- Cut back and maintain all overgrown areas.
- Open up the park by removing the old football court and replacing it with new sustainable surfacing.
- Create, install and maintain some form of play equipment in place of the old football court, ensuring it is fenced off with a gate.
- Repair existing seating and install sustainable seating around the park.
- Install sufficient lighting through the park
- Provide more litter From the options provided within the questionnaire the most popular suggestions to improve bins and clear litter regularly.
- Install gates at entrance points that lead straight out onto the road.

Community Suggestions

From the options provided within the questionnaire the most popular suggestions to improve Ellesmere Park were;

- Toddlers play equipment

- Litter control
- More places to sit down
- Entrance ways improved
- Stopping dog mess

Community suggestions for changes to improve the site focused on tidying up and creating a reason to visit the park. The most popular responses were to;

- Build a playground
- Create a single path in and out of the park with just two access points
- Install more litter bins
- Do something with the football court
- Stop motorbike access
- Tidy up the area
- Have a warden / ranger on site
- Install a zebra crossing outside the park entrance

Question 7 provided an insight as to what people would ideally like to be able to do at Ellesmere Park. The response was split between safety and provision for play. The following suggestions were made;

Feel safer

Regardless of time of day, visitors just want to be able to visit the park without feeling insecure or worried.

Play

Create safe, clean surfaces and spaces in the park, to play games and run around, was the requirement of the respondents who wanted to play.

Visit a playground

People that were interviewed strongly recommend creating a playground to replace the old football court with provision for both toddlers and older children.

Dog walk in the evenings

Provide lighting in the evenings along the footpaths of the park.

Play football

Install a new football court with goal posts in place of the old football court. It should have wire fences so you can see through it on all sides but not let the ball escape.

Have picnics

People responded by suggesting picnic tables to sit and eat at. They should be some shade with bins nearby to leave rubbish.

Relax

People stated that they just wanted to sit down and not feel insecure or intimidated by other users. Feel safe enough to allow children to play, read the paper or sunbathe.

Stay longer

People also wanted to feel secure enough to stay longer in the park and enjoy it.

Walk

Just walk around the site and enjoy the area.

Suggestions from the BGEP Roadshow

Comments/ Suggestions	Number
Children's play area	1
Football centre	1
Litter bins	1
Sensory garden	1
Swimming pool	1
Toilets with disabled facilities	1
Youth Club	1