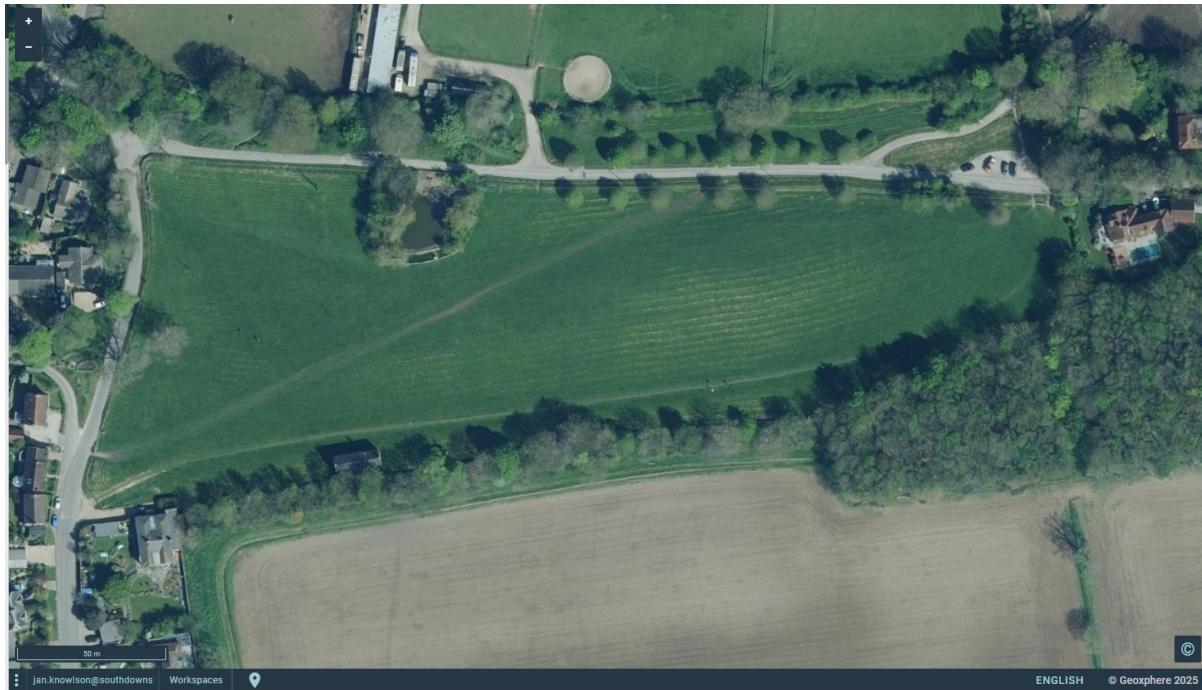


Findon Nature Recovery Meeting



Attendees: Fay Pattinson, Ranger (SDNPA) Jan Knowlson, Biodiversity Officer (SDNPA)
Fiona MacLeod, Findon Parish Council, Chris Gilbert, Findon Parish Council

Discussion: We walked around the pond and looked at the tree cover across the pond. There are some Elm Trees showing signs of Dutch Elm Disease beetle damage, these trees should be removed. We also recommended getting a contractor trimming the lowest branch of the Holm Oak below the telegraph lines that leans out across the pond. Fay will bring volunteers in January to cut some of the lower trees back around the pond. Do not cut back the nettles around the pond, not only do they stop people climbing over the fence there, but nettles are also a foodplant of butterflies such as Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock. If Chris would like to cut any of the vegetation around the pond, this is best done in March after everything has finished overwintering.

Wildflower areas: We also discussed potentially seeding around one side of the pond and also along some of the bunding, Fay will have a look and see if SDNP have any spare wildflower seed. This could be done with Findon Wildflower group and some

SDNP volunteers. Scarifying the ground prior to seeding to ensure any seeds have contact with the soil, these areas would be taken out of the regular mowing and only cut in spring. The area between the trees and the bund along the roadside could be left to grow, allowing some taller grasses and other plants to become tall and create cover for species moving through the landscape to the pond, it is great to connect areas of wildlife friendly habitat where possible. To maintain them and prevent scrub and bramble, cut them every 3-4 years in February, the arisings can be piled up in the vegetation next to the pond and create another layer of habitat.

Badgers and Rabbits: We had a look at the holes and burrows, and all appeared to be created by rabbits not badgers. There was evidence of recent rabbit activity, and the holes were generally too small to be Badgers.

Future Plans: Start off seeding small sections of the bunding and increase over time if the rabbits don't graze them all off. Over the coming years the wildflower areas could be increased and taller areas left around the edges to provide habitat and connectivity. The Lawton Principle is a widely used and respected way of managing areas for biodiversity – bigger, better and more joined up. A landscape that works for nature should have a core area of good habitat and then corridors linking to other good areas as shown below.

