

CLAUSENTUM FEN CONSERVATION GROUP

CHAIR'S REPORT

AGM 18 FEBRUARY 2018

Welcome and thank you for coming to our second AGM after a busy year with our Conservation Management Plan

Thank You for practical assistance:

- Mike Gibbons started the whole project off
- Hugh Corry surveys and initial advice
- CFCG website & Instagram – Sleath family
- Volunteers from bamboo to replanting trees
- Fellow officers of the CFCG in 2017
- SDNP - Ranger Rob Nicholls, Water vole team
- Andrew Scott – water engineering expertise
- Nick Radford – Natural England experience
- TCV Ranger - Rachel Bryan
- HCC Rangers - Pete Durnell, Steve Ord & Matthew Heaver
- PSFFA/Test & Itchen Association - Matt Owen-Farmer River Fly Monitoring, Angus Buchanan
- Matthew Greening – monthly Riverfly Monitoring
- WCC Trees & Landscapes - Stefan Kowalczyk & Sue Croker
- Environment Agency – Lawrence Talks & Judith Beard
- Hampshire Biodiversity Records – Nicky Court
- Wessex Chalk Streams – Vee Moore & Rupert Kelton
- Bishops Waltham North Pond - Barry Jerome
- Winchester College River Keeper - Mark Sankey
- Natural England – Dr Alex Poynter
- Prof Martin Burton – water engineering expertise
- Tim Walker – moth surveys
- Hampshire Bat recorder – Nik Knight
- TARCA bioblitz team – led by Graeme Davis
- Nick Horn energy and tree & channel expertise
- Metal detectors – Mark Spinney & Chris Moss
- Hampshire Watercourse Consent – Paul Prowting
- Approximately 30 experts have helped us in 2017

We owe a great deal to a large number of people who gave their time, passion, work and expertise

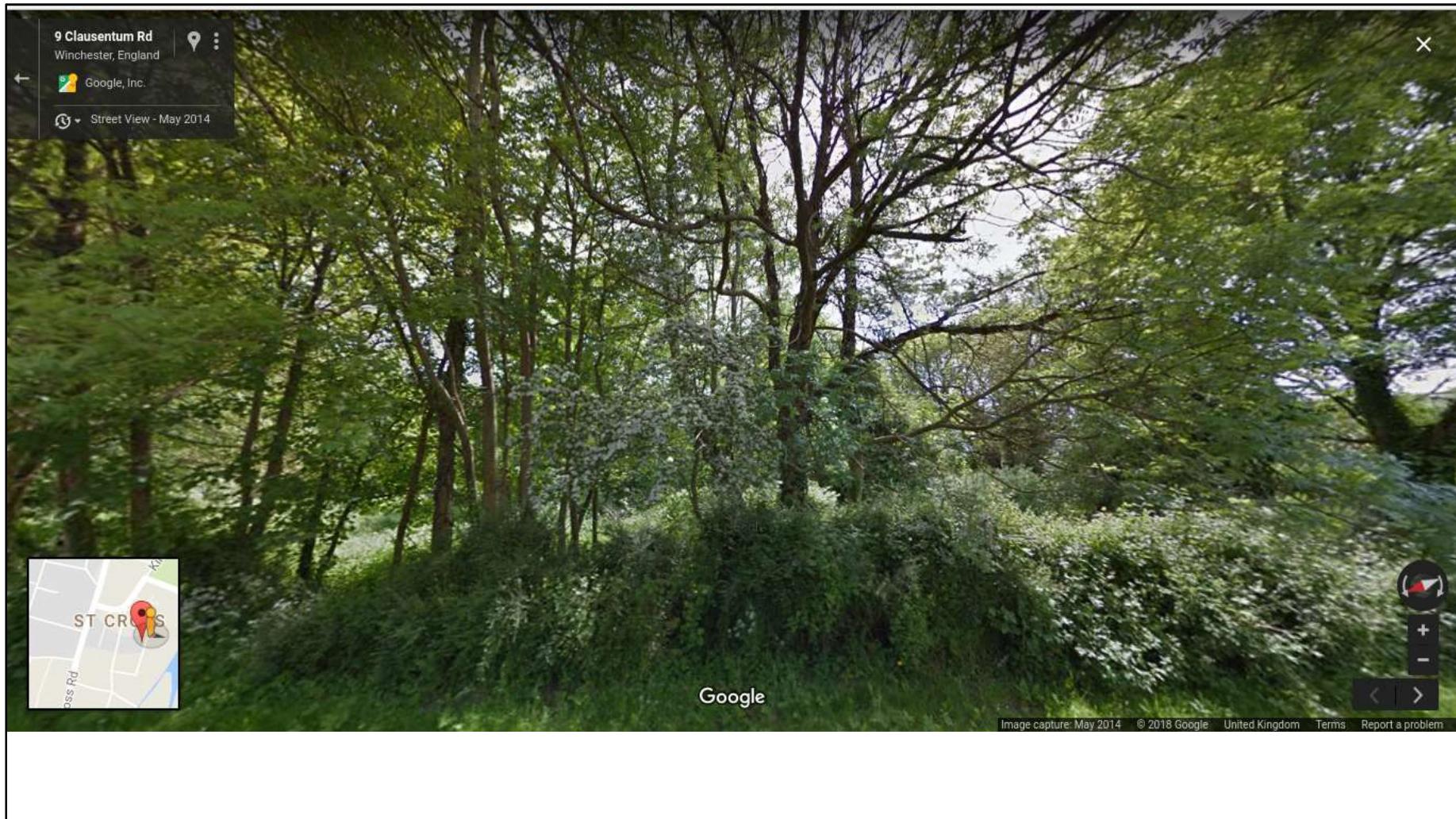
Thank You for financial support:

- £1,000 County Councillor Fiona Mather
- £1,000 County Councillor Dom Hiscock
- £ 500 TCV Chestnut Fund
- £ 500 WCC Town Forum
- £2,000 South Downs National Park Authority
- £1,500 WINnovations / Community First Dragon's Den
- £1,050 Personal donations from the community
- **£7,550 Sub Total**
- £ 430 Gifts in kind from the community
- e£ 400 Shrub whips from TCV Ovo energy
- £2,000 Winchester Round Table Bonfire Fund (mid March)

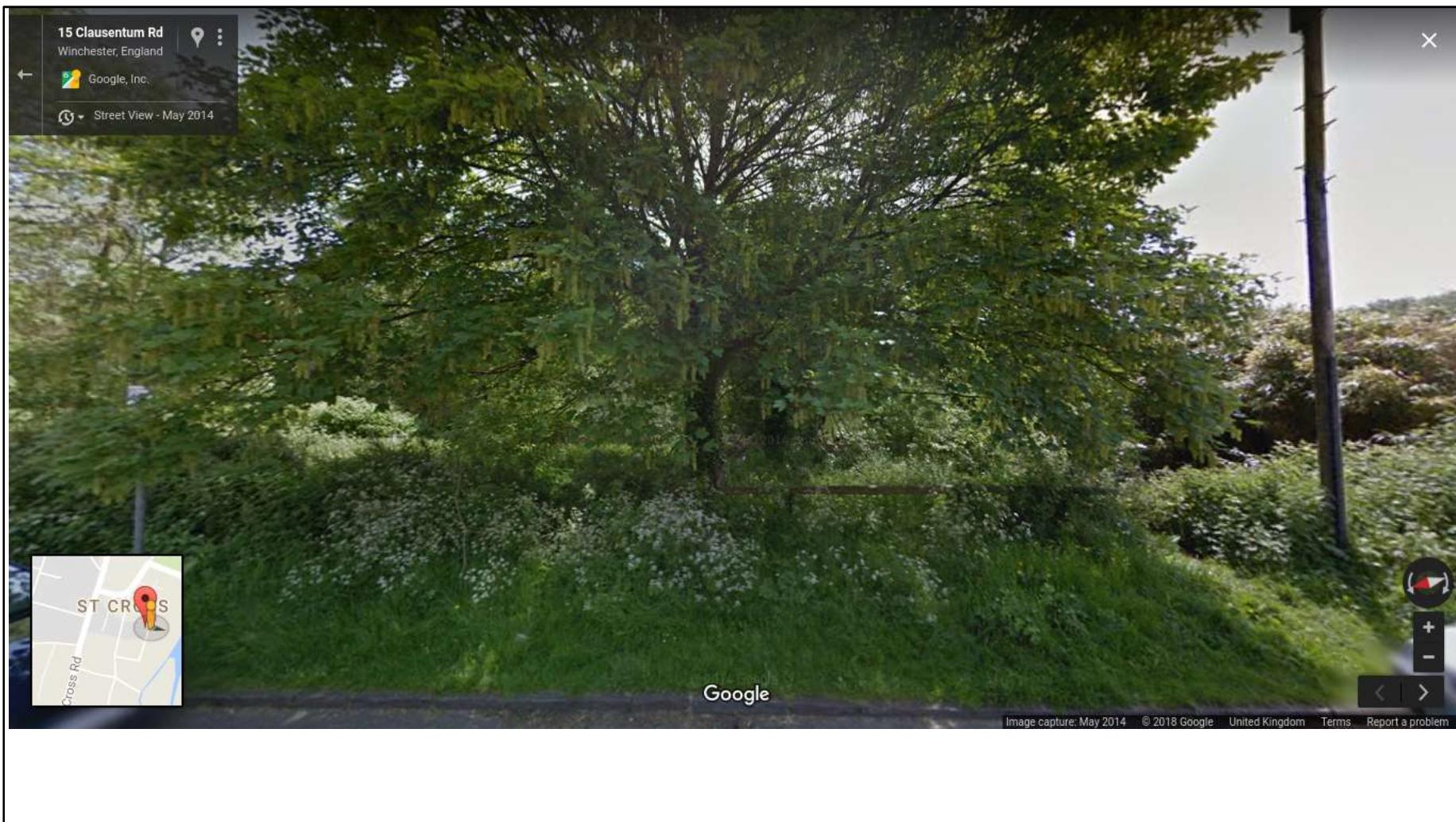
We owe a great deal to our financial supporters for their belief in our group and our plans

The story so far

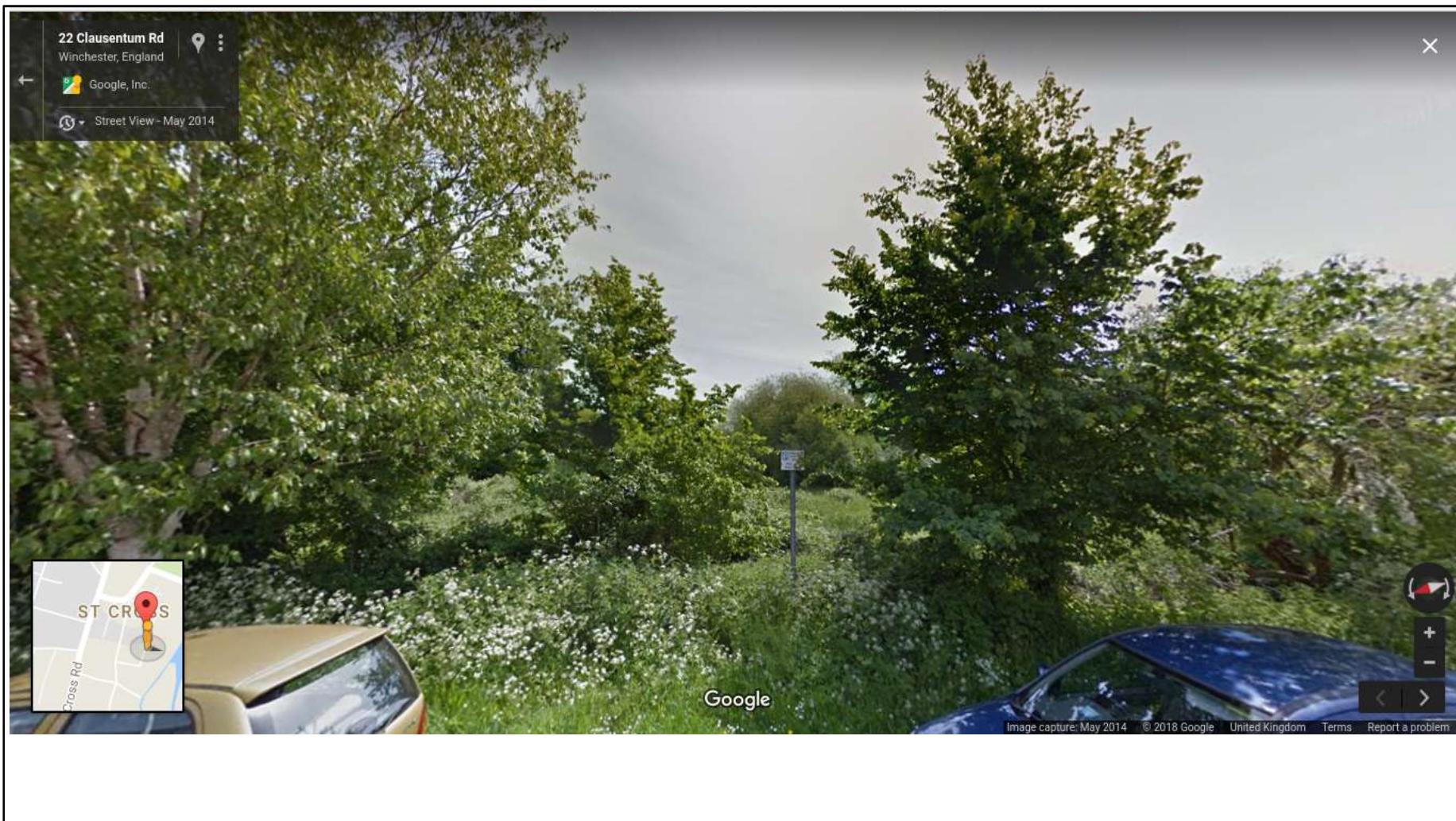
- Site uncared for, fen overgrown, derelict, dumped on, declining to scrub
- Dec 19 2016 - CFCG sparked at post carols party
- Jan 22 – consultation with interested residents / owners
- Feb 21 – launch AGM with strategic consultation
- Mar 18 – community cuts down main bamboo patch
- Apr 4 – first draft of Conservation Management plan
- May 14 – open day fen tour and strategy review meeting
- June 7 – publication of the 2017- 2022 Conservation Management plan
- Sept 18 – Nick Horn starts tree, channel & pond work
- Nov 6 – Nick reworks the channels and bund



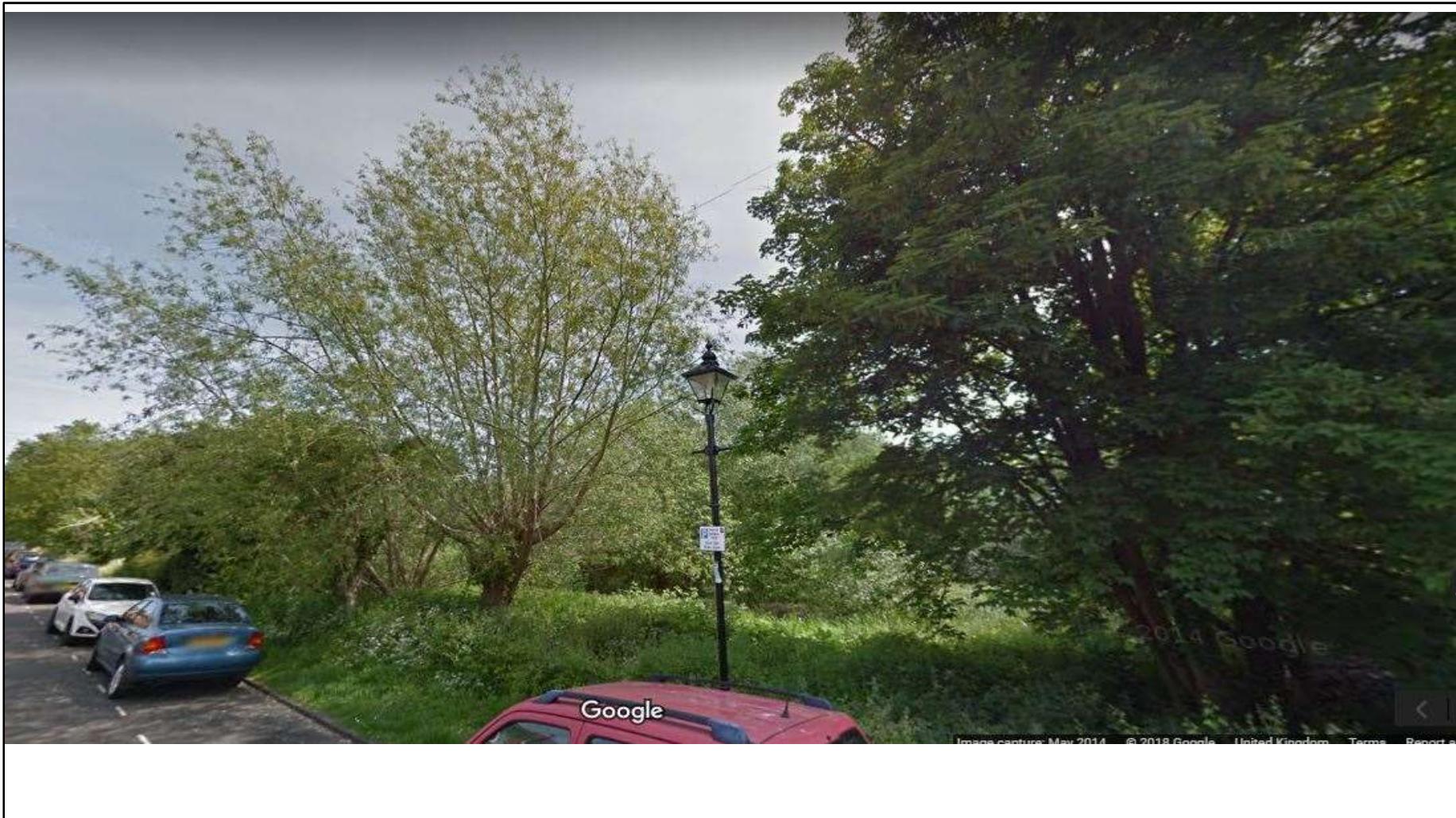
The following images are from Google Street view May 2014 – to remind us all what Clausentum Fen looked like from Clausentum Road













before

And this and the following slide shows the change across the centre of Clausentum Fen arising from our work to clear bamboo, scrub and light / moisture detracting sycamores



RE: Clausentum Fen

29 September 2017

Marcus

I understand that this is a brilliant initiative by local residents supported by ourselves and Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to undertake some of the habitat management on Clausentum Fen.

You have raised the funding to employ a contractor to undertake tree clearance and ground works which frankly we were unlikely to have the resources to do ourselves. However our Rangers are very supportive of the project.

Again this is a great example of local community involvement in managing a very important green space. I will try to visit you at some point.

Best wishes

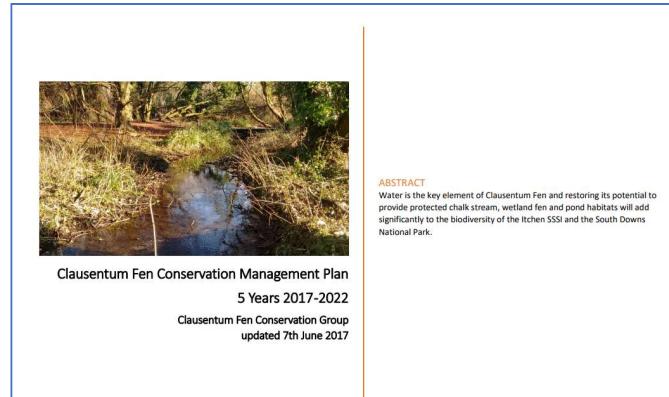
Andrew

Cllr Andrew Gibson

Executive Member - Culture, Recreation & Countryside
Hampshire County Council

Councillor Andrew Gibson, Head of Countryside for HCC quickly sent us his thanks for the extensive works in September

2017 Management Plan



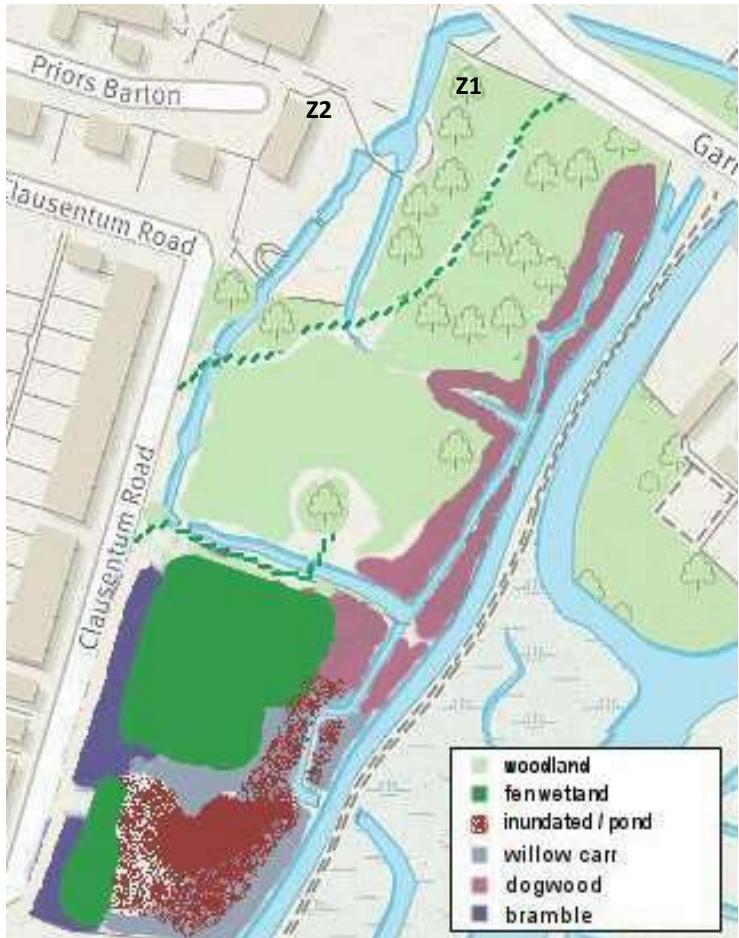
Water is the key element of Clausentum Fen and restoring its potential to provide protected chalk stream, wetland fen and pond habitats will add significantly to the biodiversity of the Itchen SSSI and the South Downs National Park.

- a) restore and conserve the different habitats to optimise biodiversity
- b) enlist, engage and inform the community with our biodiversity programme
- c) maintain community access via the recreation area and paths
- d) upgrade Clausentum Fen to a Local Nature Reserve to secure long-term support and protection to support desired species.

So, to address the issue of zone 3 rewetting – here are key elements of our 2017 Conservation Management Plan agreed and published in June 2017

b. Fen

Zones 3 and 4 are lower lying and wetter underfoot than the northern half of the site. Our plan to develop the fen wetland requires us to remove the sycamore at the corner of St Michael's Brook and cut a water channel through its roots into the fen area. In the fen, a rapidly growing sycamore has dehydrated the fen and overshadows where we intend to develop gentle fen vegetation, so we aim to remove it too. We will restore the fenland community of bird-attracting vegetation by suppressing the robust vascular species in the wetland. This will initially be by hay cutting and removing the dominant dry vegetation such as nettles. We dismissed the option to introduce cattle grazing to manage the vegetation and soil structure.



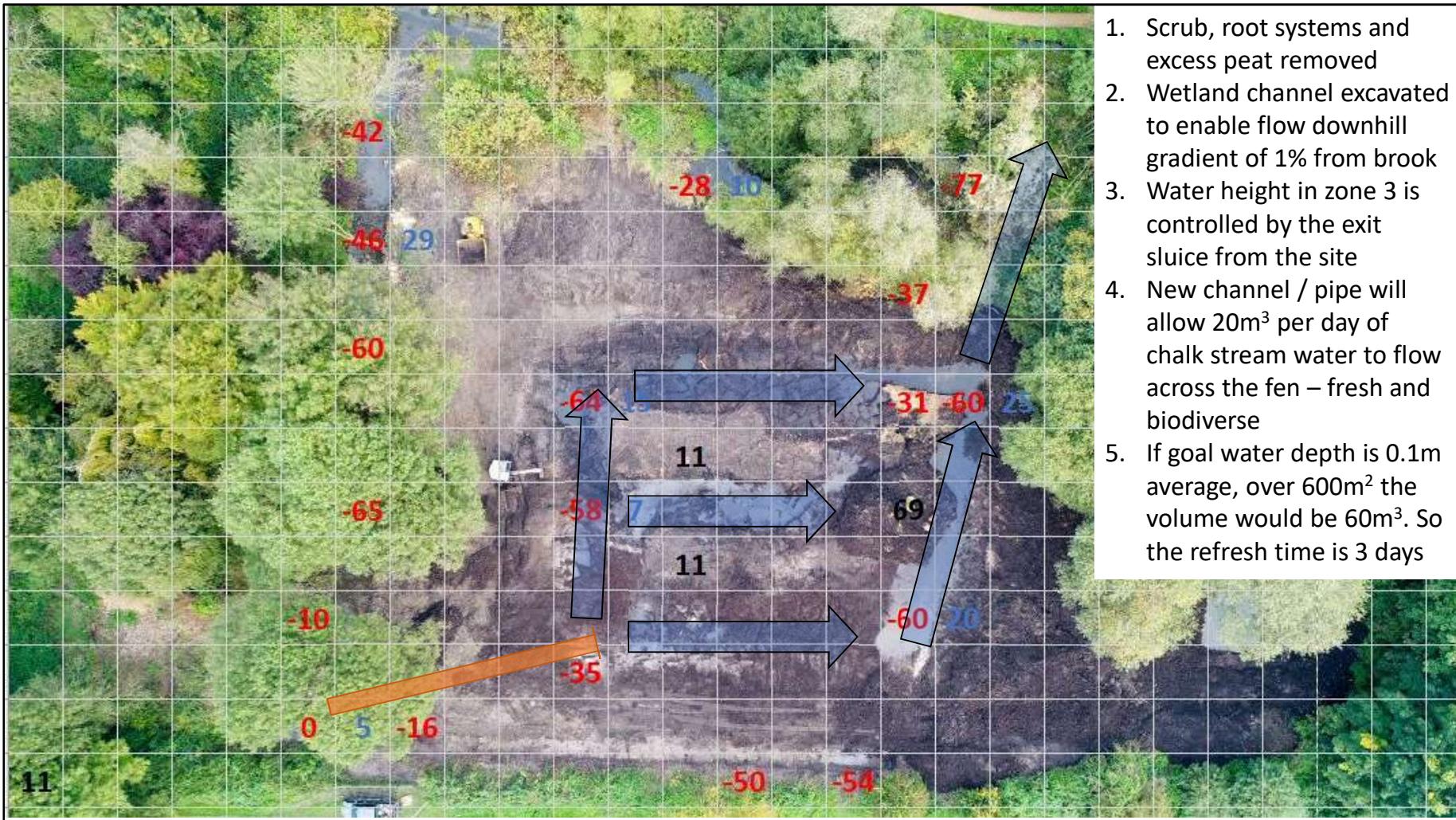
Map 2: Proposals for Management of Clausentum Fen

This chart shows our vision for 2022 biodiversity improvements:

- managed St Michael's brook (west) for consistent flow, depth and light
- managed woodland but more open in zones 1 & 2 (reduced cypresses)
- managed protective scrub along the Floodstoc (east) drain
- rewetted fen in zone 3 by connecting to St Michael's brook
- reduce dehydration of fen by removing sycamore and scrub
- retain highly biodiverse bramble patches in zones 3 & 4
- vegetated wet areas and still pond in zone 4

Remedial work will take some time, with priority given to stream and wetlands to enhance the value to wildlife.

The basis for SINC status should also be the basis for seeking LNR status. A mosaic of favoured biodiverse habitats alongside the River Itchen SSSI. Our plan also recognises access of the site by the community.



This chart shows the contours across zone 3, the fen wetland area

Red numbers show the channel depth in cm relative to our baseline (0) at the corner of St Michael's Brook

Black numbers show the land heights

Blue numbers show the water levels (end October)

30m x 110mm pipe with 16.4mm diameter aperture
gives 20,000 litres (20m³) water per day
if head is 100mm



We have spent much time this year developing the optimal solution for connecting the chalk stream water of St Michael's Brook into the channels prepared in zone 3.

Our discussions with Hampshire Watercourse Consent and Professor Martin Burton leave me to believe that this pipe with a scientifically calculated aperture will be permitted and can be easily installed and maintained. It also will bring the allowable 20,000 litres per day into the channels, enough to breathe fresh life into zone 3.



If you Google “fen wetlands” these are the images that you will see





Winnal Moor, Itchen valley north Winchester



Our “mock up” to show zone 3 revegetated

Our journey

- Something has to be done!
- Take on the responsibility to do it
- Explore ways to approach the challenge
- Communicate and network widely, taking in all ideas & opinions
- Create a plan and coordinate activities from it
- Resourceful – supply basic cash for resources, tools etc
- Work hard – personal efforts
- Motivate partners to help us and find funding
- Keep everyone informed
- Take the opportunities to maximise progress with minimal costs