

Stanwick Lakes

February 2004

Summary of Masterplan Proposals

Following on from an extensive consultation process, the Rockingham Forest Trust have now produced a Masterplan for the Stanwick Lakes site, which details our proposals for developing the site.



The Masterplan seeks to provide something of interest to everyone whilst maintaining and enhancing the important nature conservation interest of the site. The site will be zoned into areas for nature conservation, areas for quiet recreation, as well as a "hub" area for the more people focussed activities.

The Trust recognises that in developing the site, creativity, imagination and variety will be as important as the level of spend, and this will ultimately be what distinguishes Stanwick Lakes from similar sites.

The site, once developed, will appeal particularly to young families and to those with an interest in the countryside or in specific outdoor pursuits. It is also hoped that community groups, (including young people) will make regular use of the visitor centre.

A Green Design

Stanwick Lakes offers an excellent opportunity to showcase good environmental practice in both its construction and on-going management. For example, the visitor building will be designed using sustainable building principles, incorporating where possible reclaimed, recycled and locally sourced materials and providing a showcase for the latest water and energy efficient technologies.

As far as possible the emphasis within the site will be on the use of natural materials, which are in keeping with the site's natural beauty. Wood and stone will feature strongly throughout, from the visitor building to seats and sculptures.



Summary of the zoning, facilities and activities proposed for the **Stanwick Lakes** site

ZONE 1

Fishing Lakes

- ↪ 6-lake complex with day tickets and syndicate options.
- ↪ Tutorials and equipment loan for young people and beginners.
- ↪ Walking routes on marked paths only.

ZONE 2

Nature Conservation Area

- ↪ Quiet wetland grass and lake complex with opportunities for wildlife observation.
- ↪ The arterial cycle and pedestrian path runs along the former railway line on the eastern edge of the zone.

ZONE 3

Nature Conservation Area / Summer Youth Activities

- ↪ Former silt pond managed for minimal disturbance during the winter months to protect the wintering waterfowl.
- ↪ Grassland area to the north of the zone to be used for outdoor pursuits during the summer months, including adventure and survival activities and organised camping.

ZONE 4

Marina / Off-line Moorings or Non-motorised Watersports

- ↪ Subject to funding being secured – zone to be used for off-river moorings or a small marina.
- ↪ Alternative use for non-motorised watersports if moorings are not able to go ahead.

ZONE 5

Nature Conservation Area / Non-motorised Watersports

- ↪ Largest lake on site and surrounding grassland to have minimal disturbance during the winter months to protect wintering waterfowl.
- ↪ Summer use of lake for non-motorised watersports including sailing, windsurfing and canoeing.

ZONE 6

Recreational Hub Area

- ↪ Main visitor facilities including multi-use visitor centre incorporating reception, café, shop, exhibitions, interpretation and indoor activities.
- ↪ Outdoor areas incorporating car parking, picnic areas, bicycle hire, play area, mini-play-trail, outdoor theatre, and walking and cycling routes leading out from the hub.
- ↪ Heritage interest – Irthlingborough Bowl Barrow, a scheduled ancient monument.
- ↪ Rowing boats and canoes on the central lake.

ZONE 7

Quiet Recreation Area

- ↪ Main pedestrian and cycle paths.
- ↪ Adventure play trail.
- ↪ Picnic areas.
- ↪ Management and enhancement of existing reedbed.

ZONE 8

Nature Conservation Area

- ↪ Accessible wildlife and bird-watching area with main bird-hide and interpretation.

ZONE 9

Nature Conservation Area

- ↪ Some vegetation removal to improve the habitat for waterfowl.
- ↪ Opportunities for education and interpretation of Mallows Cotton, the adjacent medieval village.

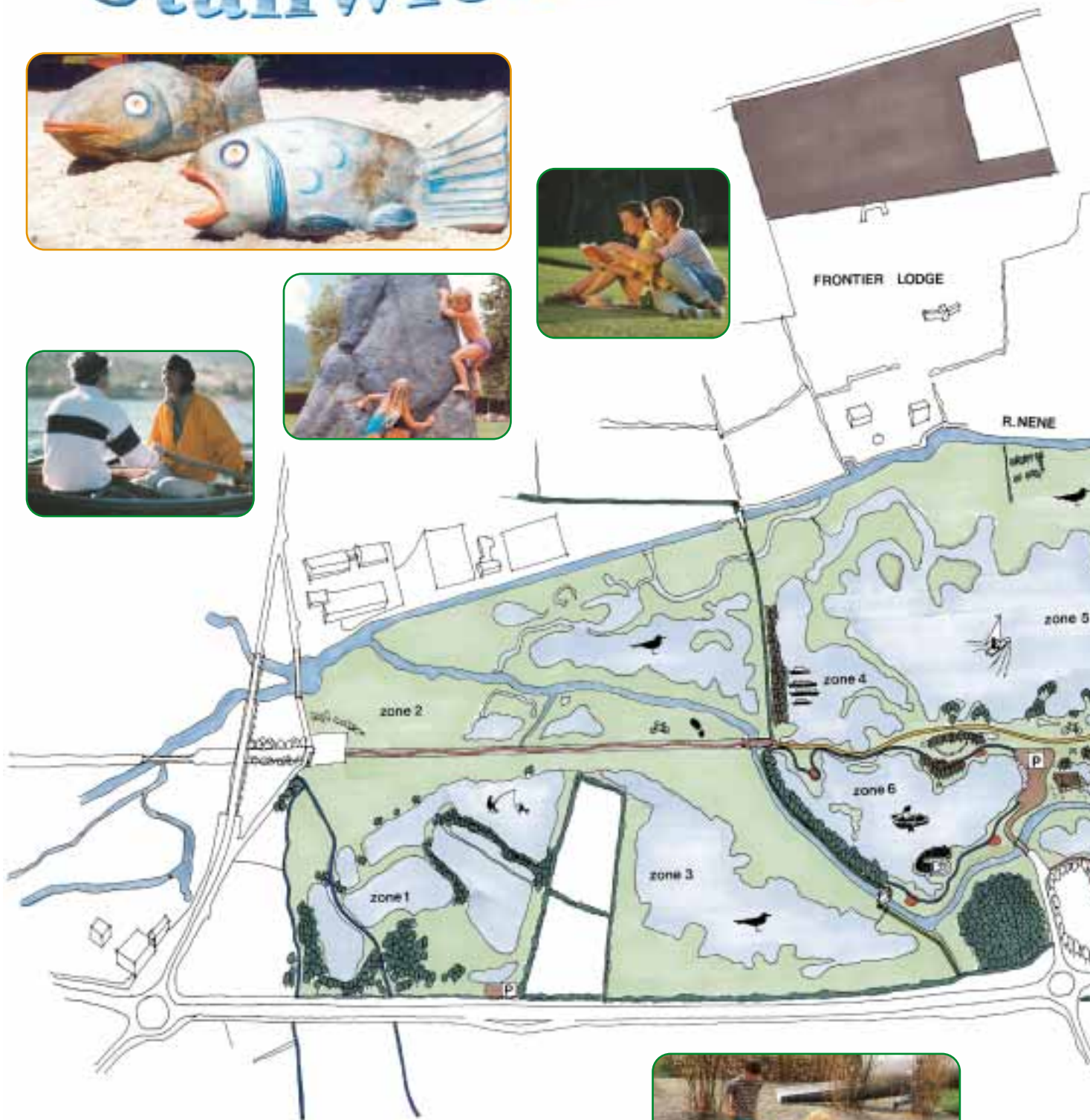
FORMER RAILWAY LINE

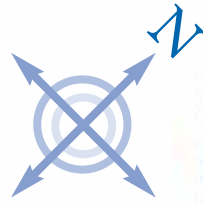
Green Route

- ↪ Route for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, linking Irthlingborough to Thrapston.
















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Masterplan

-  water
-  grassland
-  main vegetation areas
-  walking path + play trails
-  combined walking + cycling path
-  walking, cycling and horse riding route (some riding routes managed by permit)
-  bridle way
-  parking area
-  picnic areas
-  water sports
-  moorings
-  bird sanctuary areas
-  fishing areas

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Key aims and objectives for the site

In putting together the package of facilities and activities proposed for Stanwick Lakes, the Trust were mindful of achieving the key aim for the site:

“ to develop a site which will provide enhanced recreational and leisure opportunities, increasing the opportunities for access into the countryside and bringing people closer to the countryside, whilst also encouraging conservation by protecting and improving existing habitats and by the creation of new habitats.”

In addition to the overall aim, specific objectives for the site need to be achieved, which include:

- providing a broad mix of activities offering year-round appeal to a wide range of age-groups and interest groups.
- creating a facility with long-term sustainability, which will support itself through income generation.
- providing a facility which will utilise the rich history of the site, and use engaging and innovative techniques in order to interpret the heritage of the local area.
- creating a green corridor along the old railway line between Thrapston and Irthlingborough, which will link together the existing bridleways and footpaths and provide an alternative “green” method for local visitors to get to the site, rather than by car.



Project timescale



Stanwick Lakes will be developed progressively over the next 4-5 years. Visitors to the site will not have to wait this long to use the facilities though, as each facility will be made available as it is completed.

Phase 1 of the development, aiming for completion by the end of 2005 will include:

- ↳ the installation of the entrance road and car park,
- ↳ the construction of the path networks,
- ↳ additional landscape planting in the hub area
- ↳ the installation of a play area
- ↳ the installation of some initial site furniture, interpretation boards and signage
- ↳ repairs to the bridges on the railway line and opening up the green route



Phase 2 of the development, aiming for completion by the end of 2008 will include:

- ↳ the installation of a mini play trail and adventure play trail
- ↳ the provision of youth activities
- ↳ the construction of an outdoor theatre
- ↳ the installation of further site furniture including seats, bins and signage
- ↳ the installation of water-sports facilities
- ↳ the development of a sculpture trail

The two largest facilities proposed for the site – the visitor centre and the marina are both subject to being able to secure additional funding and will therefore be completed as and when funding becomes available.

What Now?

Work to install some of the infrastructure on site will begin later in 2004, with the construction of some of the key footpath and cycling routes, as well as the entrance roadway and car parking.

2004 will also see the first phase of bridge repairs on the former railway line – the first step towards opening up the railway line as a green route.

