



Panshanger ‘mini’ charrette workshops Mini-Charrette Report

“Developing a vision for Panshanger Park”
12th July at the David Lloyd Centre, Hatfield

“Panshanger Park, Delivering the Vision”
17th July at the Fielder Centre, Hatfield

August 2013

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Introduction

Background

This report documents the two workshops held on 12th and 17th July, which made up the Panshanger mini charrette process. The process was designed and facilitated by Dr Susan Parham from the Centre for Sustainable Communities (CSC) at the University of Hertfordshire at the invitation of Lafarge Tarmac, the owners of Panshanger Park. After the first workshop, a write-up was produced for information for the second workshop. Now that both workshops have been completed, this detailed write-up has been produced for circulation to participants and any other interested parties.

Purpose of the workshops

The purpose of the mini charrette was to explore the future of Panshanger Park involving stakeholders and listening to and documenting their views.

The mini charrette methods used

The mini charrette used techniques derived from ‘charrettes’ in a stakeholder workshop format. The CSC has previously used mini charrette techniques with the Sir John Laws Roundwood Trust, with UHArts, and with Samuel Ryder Academy. These techniques include:

- A collaborative process including brainstorming and potentially some design related activity
- Intensive, interactive discussion between representative interests in the future of the site/place in question
- Use of feedback loops to develop, present and refine ideas and proposals as these are explored in an intensive workshop context.

These techniques share principles with ‘full charrettes’ but their use in this kind of stakeholder workshop does not constitute a full charrette process (which would be undertaken over many months). However, shared principles include:

- Baseline information about key facts is shared by everyone taking part
- Issues from any sector are aired, explored and tested – “live”
- There is parallel, not serial, engagement – those contributing hear multiple perspectives
- All inputs are recorded, how they are processed is auditable – so everyone can understand why, and why not

For an example of a workshop in Hertfordshire employing some charrette derived techniques see <http://www.uh-sustainable.co.uk/docs/SJLRoundwoodTrust.pdf>

For those interested, more about ‘full’ charrettes processes can be found at

<http://www.uh-sustainable.co.uk/charrettes/choverview.php>

http://www.herts.ac.uk/fms/documents/events/herts-charrette-guide-to-growth_02-12-2008.pdf

<http://www.uh-sustainable.co.uk/planning/fagaras.php>

1. Workshop One – Developing a vision for Panshanger Park

This section of the report documents the presentations and discussions held in Workshop One, which was held at the David Lloyd Centre in Hatfield. The workshop focused on developing a vision for Panshanger Park.



Image 1: Informal discussion during workshop one

1.1. Plenary Session One – welcome, introduction and briefing

1.1.1. Welcome from Stuart Wykes, Lafarge Tarmac Director of Land and Mineral Resources

Welcome everyone. Thanks for coming. Time is precious so I'm grateful to you for giving it up. I'm looking forward to working on a rich experience of sharing ideas for the future of Panshanger Park – which moving forward are understandable, balanced and constructive.

Everyone here knows the park and has his or her own views and passions about it. Lafarge Tarmac has 80,000 acres of land in its portfolio, but this particular area of 900 acres is the most unique/special we have.

It is a fascinating park with a fascinating history – both natural and touched by man. Very recently it has been touched by Lafarge Tarmac for quarrying and we hope that the work we have done has changed the park in relation to its landscape and habitat back towards its earlier man-made history.

We want to build on that history. Everyone is proud of what the management committee has achieved since 1998. Over the years, various members of Herts County Council, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Lafarge Tarmac have represented these partners and a great many attendees have contributed to ideas. These are ideas that are not enshrined on a piece of paper, but as a true example of partnership/collaborative working have made the best of what we have, for example the creation of a chalk stream and others – which have all come out of the richness of people’s ideas.

Today and next week we want to build on everyone’s ideas/beliefs – looking forward to 10/20 years ahead.

This is a new process for us – a ‘mini’ charrette – and we’re not sure what it will actually mean for us. We’re used to doing public consultation exhibitions where we put forward some ideas and then consult on them. We’re looking forward to this stakeholder work and hope we come up with something diverse and rich for the future. This is a chance for everyone to express themselves about the future.

There are a lot of our key stakeholders here – and everyone should listen to everyone else’s beliefs. There are so many approaches/aspects to this park; we all need to appreciate/share each other’s points of view. It’s not often we get the opportunity to do this.

We are looking towards the maximum benefits for the future. We understand that some people are anxious/concerned about short-term issues and opening up rights of way. This process is not about delaying that – we are committed to sitting down and working to address them.

For today we want to focus our minds on the bigger picture and strategic vision for the next 10 - 20 years and what we want to get out of it.

I hope everyone has a fun and an enjoyable/rich day.

1.1.2. Introduction to workshop process from Susan Parham, University of Hertfordshire

Thank you Stuart. Today we are going to get in to some of the issues and ideas for the park – over the short, medium and long term. We’re going to try to shape the vision of what kind of place Panshanger Park will be, looking at meeting people’s aspirations. Over two ½ day sessions we will first be thinking strategically and next week we will look at the who/what/why/where/when etc to deliver these.

We will go into plenary sessions to start off with and then in to breakout groups for more views/discussion before getting feedback from all groups in the second plenary.

The existing management plan needs to be reviewed and updated and Lafarge Tarmac will put forward some proposals to the management committee about what to do.

I just wanted to clarify that this is not a full charrette – that is a process which is much more long term in nature and can take up a year to plan, undertake and report on. It is typically used for master planning. Instead, we will be using some charrette type techniques in a

different format – a shorter, more intensive format – bringing in some of the strengths of the charrette’s engagement techniques.

It’s worth noting that full and ‘mini’ charrettes have already been used elsewhere in Hertfordshire, for instance looking at growth options for the future of Hertfordshire as a county by way of scenarios for the future. This work led to a separate charrette focusing on Old Hatfield and was an important basis for recent proposals to redevelop Hatfield Station. I have also worked on a number of ‘mini’ charrettes using charrette derived methods in shorter half day and one day formats. The idea is that using these methods actually helps to get on with engaging faster while at the same time making sure views are properly heard and acknowledged and everyone is made aware of the different perspectives about the place in question, not only those in their own area of interest.

One of the key processes we plan to use in this ‘mini’ charrette workshop is the feedback loop where you move from concepts or scenarios to developing alternatives, and areas of agreement, exploring refinements to these, and if possible coming up with a plan. It doesn't imply everyone will necessarily agree about things but it does mean everyone will hear about all the issues and ideas and discuss them together.

During the course of mini charrette type engagement this means that:

- Issues are aired, explained and tested – live
- It is a parallel, not a serial, engagement process – so those contributing hear multiple perspectives
- All inputs are recorded and how they are processed is auditable, so everyone understands why/why not
- Perspectives are actively sought, not reactively received.

Usually in a workshop we mention some useful ground rules for the sessions, which are:

- Staying on topic
- Fair shares (giving everyone space/time to talk)
- Remembering to be nice to each other!
- And for us as facilitators, keeping to time.

Finally some housekeeping points – I just want to ask if possible to switch telephones to silent or vibrate, explain what to do if the fire alarm goes off, and tell you where the loos are in case you have found them yet. We would like to take some photos to document the process – if you aren’t happy with this, please let me know and we will make sure you don't appear in any.

1.1.3. Briefing about Panshanger from Mike Pendock, Lafarge Tarmac Regional Planning and Estates Manager

The aerial photograph shows the splitting off of Cole Green/Birch Green by A414, Area G, currently extracting in south-east corner. The site was only designated as Grade 2* listed in 1987 (postdating the 1980 permission) and English Heritage website includes a 4pp

summary as to why it was listed. (This document to be included in the information pack for Wednesday 17th July - Workshop Two).

The former SSSI designation was in relation to veteran trees. When the Tree Council published its 60 best tree list for the Queens Jubilee, the 600-year-old Panshanger Oak was included. The River Mimram is one of only 170 chalk streams worldwide and is very sensitive and very precious for its biological quality and habitats.

Humphry Repton outlined his vision for Panshanger Park in his Red Book of 1799. He put on the front cover his vision for the view across the Broadwater, which can now be seen again today. We take many group tours out on site – and they all want to see this view and the Panshanger Oak.

A short planning history of the site: there were a 1980 application and a 1982 approval – legal agreements to establish the country park, the woodland/wildlife areas to be incorporated in to the nature reserve and the setting up of the management committee. The Master Plan included defined routes, open space (access) through the valley and no public access in the south west corner. Economic circumstances meant that the start of mineral extraction (which was permitted for an 18 year period) was set back until 1998.

The 1999 application and 2003 approval – review of Minerals Planning Permissions (ROMP) – was seen as an opportunity to update the original 1982 permission to reflect modern day conditions. This permission was subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment and ecological surveys being carried out and the development of a management plan. This included changes to the extraction and restoration scheme. The main changes were that it included new routes and a new configuration of the lakes and extraction areas.

In 2013 Lafarge Tarmac agreed to do a phased implementation plan in the short term, without waiting for feedback from the charrette. Although there is an existing Liaison Group, Lafarge Tarmac wanted feedback from a wider range of stakeholders.

1.1.4. Initial discussion in plenary

Participants then asked a number of questions in plenary and in response Mike Pendock noted that:

The nature reserve area sits within the country park, which itself sits within Panshanger Park (new plan to be provided for Workshop Two). The English Heritage listing covers the entire area of Panshanger Park except the Chisel Shelf.

The country park is totally within the listed area. The white area in the top right corner of the plan (between the country park and Thieves Lane) is no longer in the company ownership.

The difference between the country park and the listed park is that the former was identified by the Planning Inspector at the appeal and the latter was subsequently listed by English Heritage.

The ‘starter for 10’ Lafarge Tarmac vision for the future of the park includes bringing together different strands of the site history and the different stages of the site’s development when differing issues were looked at. However, this is not a definitive document and we want your views on it.

The photographs of Blakemore Wood illustrate some of the adverse impacts/things that can happen when an area is opened up to public access (anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, trampling). Somehow we need to combine dealing with these issues with maintaining a living park incorporating public access, agriculture, woodland and biodiversity.

As we open up more areas of the site, we will produce more interpretation boards and update them as we go.

The pheasant shoot – which closes the site to public access during limited weekends from October – March – benefits the park because the on-site gamekeeper assists with the biodiversity management by controlling mink etc. He also controls unwanted access by motorbikes etc. so we don’t have a problem with them. The continuation of the shoot (or otherwise) is part of the menu to be talked about when discussing the delivery of the vision

The total acreage of the site is around 900 acres – the country park is about 520 acres.

An up to date species list is available in the 2003 Philip Parker report. Since then, more survey work has been carried out by volunteers co-ordinated by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. Lafarge Tarmac will investigate why some County Recorders have struggled to gain access to the land for survey purposes. There is much more information available today, since the Minerals Planning Permissions (ROMP) rather than what was available at the time of the 1980 legal agreement. This demonstrates there is biodiversity interest all over the park, not just in the nature reserve. The access to the nature reserve is restricted.

The layout of the land generally lends itself to limiting access by ditching, so there is no need for barbed wire fences.

At the next meeting we can talk about plans for the delivery of Orangery related issues, which have been drawn up by the Orangery Working Group. The general consensus of that group is that everyone is looking for some kind of sustainable use for the building. This would probably be a new use, compatible with the old one and the surrounding area, to generate income.

The ethos of the country park is not to maximise public access wherever possible, but to achieve a balance between the conflicting interests and uses of the park. The driver behind the Inspector’s report was “quiet enjoyment” – there is nothing in the legal agreement about maximising public access. There is however, a reference to “wandering over extensive areas”.

Lafarge Tarmac has no intention to sell/lease the site for wholesale development. There is a legal commitment relating to the uses of the park and Lafarge Tarmac doesn’t want to move away from that. Extraction on site has now nearly finished and there is a need for a generally agreed long-term management plan. Although people enjoy the quality of the park, inevitably there will be management problems and issues that need to be flagged up. These will be resolved by working with our stakeholders and liaising with people like the Friends of

Panshanger Park. Extraction is scheduled to end by 2030 but that's not going to happen. There is about 3 years reserve and then the plant site needs to be removed. Lafarge Tarmac will maintain a long-term interest in the site as an important/unique asset, which demonstrates the company's capability for land management. Lafarge Tarmac wants to maintain everything that is on the site, as part of its corporate image.

The agricultural land will remain in that land use and will stay in the ownership of Lafarge Tarmac, despite pressures on the site from both Hertford and Welwyn Garden City. Even if it could, Lafarge Tarmac would not want to sell off bits and pieces of the land, as this would inhibit the day-to-day agricultural land management. It could be possible to bring back (recreate) a working farm back in to the park (e.g. Winstock??), to replace the original Mill Farm in Hertingfordbury.

Local people are puzzled by the delay in "opening" the country park, but this delay is fundamentally because gravel extraction did not start until 1988 and will not be finished on time. The ROMP gave permission for the site to be worked until 2030. Large areas of the site have now been restored – so some routes can be opened up in the short term.

In the longer term, there is a need to look at the whole park – the agricultural and environmental schemes, income generation, ecology, and access. How will the country park contribute to income? Will it attract lots of people – and if it does, will there be charging for car parks, a visitor centre, a restaurant?

All of that is up for discussion – that's why ideas and contributions will be needed from everyone for the next session and what we need to hear.

For example, the quarry entrance is on the western side of the site, off Panshanger Lane. However, we've never looked at using that access, rather than the northern access off the top end of Welwyn Road by North Lodge. This is something that could be looked at.

1.2. Group Work Session – detailed discussion of the vision

After the initial plenary, the workshop participants broke into four smaller groups (using ‘colour coded’ dots – pink, yellow, purple and green - on name tags) to undertake detailed discussion about the vision for Panshanger Park. Each group comprised a cross section of different interests to ensure that discussion would take into account different perspectives. This section details the points made.



Image 2: Comments and ideas for the vision coming from small group work

1.2.1. Write-up from ‘Pink’ group

Heritage

- Important to maintain and enhance the heritage for whole of Panshanger Park
- Particular important given degradation from extraction works
- When thinking of heritage sites at what point in time do we decide what is important to conserve?
- Enhancement aspect is important but what does that mean?
- Retain landscape and built features - preserve but also put in features to make a living landscape
- Key thing is living

- Whole landscape has been changed several times
- Eaton landscape very exclusive market for that but latest "market" for this space is much more egalitarian
- Not pickling history
- Shouldn't go too far from historic landscape but allow wider use/enjoyment
- Role of the Orangery?
- For buildings, footprint and references in landscape are important
- Useful, living building (Orangery)
- We are pretty highbrow here but for park users needs to be accessible in terms of understanding the site...
- Landscape garden historic environment and habitat
- Panshanger Oak - Alfred Russell Wallace always came here.

Access

- As there isn't a central access path a vision would be to create this with a definitive right of way rather than just permissive use status
- The footpath next to the 414 is horrible
- There are also circular route footpaths which are important
- Need rights of way to be OS mapped and definitive
- Need a way north to south (and elsewhere) linking to existing definitive paths outside the park site
- Variety of opportunities to deliver access ie open access land well marked
- Opportunity for more local mapping is also available and can respond to changes over time in local conditions
- Basic structure of definitive pathways important
- Interpretation boards help locally
- Bridle ways/cycle ways in country park? Wonder about level of demand for this?
- Standards: would like to see/recognise 'edges' of the park...what it is, who owns it, what people can/can't do and where (reflect this in management plan)
- Access to the country park
- In the 1980s plan was for three car parks proposed but later road development to the south changed that
- Looking at provision/parks/entry points for a range of modes: foot, bike, horse...but will need provision by car...

- Access point near the ‘works’ seems the logical point to come in to the site and for additional car parking though not the main one
- The next car park could be at the north lodge
- These make three access points - north, east and west
- On footpaths – there are few interconnections between the main quarry area access and Panshanger Lane [implied comment: this is needed]
- Access for birdwatchers ie at the lakes – are there things that could make this more attractive? Currently the edges are rather steep – boardwalks? But these need to be maintained.

Land uses, management, biodiversity and ongoing visitor attractions

- Country park needs to be both attractive and incorporate income generation and landscape enhancing land uses
- Learn from other examples elsewhere?
- Cafe? Countryside walks, agriculture, SSSI
- Park is within walkable range of local communities - also for long distance walkers
- Farming - arable land (winter rye) of conservation grade - important that crops of ecological value not just "big standard" cropping
- Could have rare breed cattle grazing on pasturelands
- Spaces should be considered as a learning environment
- Original 1980 plan a disaster for ecology - now much better - wildlife trust involvement
- Tend to look at Mimram as 'the' fragile bit but other aspects also including woodland and areas of historic garden important
- Want to get different people into the site for different purposes
- Vision in red book not quite same as reality.

Management

- The next management plan should reflect all these insights
- The lakes environment has seasonal qualities that need to be reflected in the management plan and vision – could ‘phase’ access
- A ‘Springwatch’ type camera could be used here to show what’s happening by season.

Vision

- This should have three strands:
 - Human access
 - Wildlife
 - Farming

- ‘A Country Park Herts can be proud of’.

Woodland/habitat management

- Sensitive handling of veteran trees and fragile areas
- Dead wood is a resource and surprisingly bio-diverse
- Diversity of habitats in Panshanger are by far the most important aspect and farmland has as much contribution as other areas if farmed the right way.

1.2.2. Write-up from ‘Yellow’ group

What we would like to see (from post-its):

- Retain and increase the bio-diversity of all areas
- Public access versus bio-diversity
- Ecology and wildlife/public access
- Network of cycle/disabled ways, including one following the course of the Mimram where possible
- Maximum public access to river and lake areas
- Open the Country Park up very soon (ie this summer)
- Public access should be over open spaces in the valley
- Improved public access – linear and open areas
- Restore the Orangery and site of the Old House to a visitor centre for the public visiting the Country Park
- Conservation/restoration of Repton landscape
- Sustainability [in the sense of ongoing viability for the park]
- Funding?
- Issue – Panshanger unusual to be a country park in private ownership
- Some funding through Section 52 agreement.

Themes for discussion (from grouped post-its):

- Funding
- Access
- Biodiversity
- Historic landscape.

Theme 1 – Funding

- Planning permission provided for creation of Country Park
- Lafarge has responsibilities as per Section 52 legal agreement:
- To manage woodland and wildlife for not less than 50 years
- For nature reserve
- Development and management of Country Park
- NB 50 year limit does not apply to the Country Park per se but to woodland/wildlife. And the 50 years starts ticking when mineral extraction stops (?)
- What financial provision has Lafarge made in its accounts? (Mike confirmed that provision has been made but would not disclose amount)
- Need to distinguish between set-up cost (ie restoration budget) and management/running costs
- Mike – Lafarge expects the park to be self-supporting in terms of running costs.

Theme 2 – Access

- Fencing issues
- No barbed wire in park
- There might be an issues with cattle and horses (check with Tony Bradford – see below)
- Barbed wire is not part of the historic landscape, but cattle grazing is
- Solution might be electric wire? (no consensus on this)
- Must be possible to combine animals and public access – as in Epping Forest
- Zoning may be the answer (no consensus – some felt that freedom to roam was important)
- Discussion of pros/cons of electric fences and barbed wire. While electric fences may be less intrusive they can be painful!
- But fences are part of life in farming
- Keep historic vistas free of fences
- Example: Northall Great Wood is zoned
- Input from Tony Bradford, HCC:
- Country Parks have been around since 1970s so there are examples of cattle being introduced elsewhere. There are lots of options for managing landscape, livestock and public access.
- In one example, post and rail fencing has been chosen for cattle, because it can easily be repaired by volunteers in the event of damage from falling wood (e.g. easier than high-tension wire)

- At Burnham Beeches, neck collars for cattle are being trialled, in conjunction with buried electric line (collars buzz when cattle approach the line, and give a small shock if they get too close)
- At Therfield Heath, also in Herts, sheep grazing is being organised using temporary electric fencing (some fittings permanent; other parts temporary).
- Also, at Therfield Heath, which covers 900 ha so a similar size to Panshanger, metal boards with magnetic ‘sheep’ are used to indicate to dog walkers where sheep are grazing this month, so they can plan their routes to avoid them.
- Responses to Tony’s inputs:
- Post and rail is very high cost, particularly for a large area like Panshanger
- Sheep would get chased by dogs – and there is no market for wool at present
- The Country Park is meant to be for local people – not a farm.
- There was no consensus on whether public should have right to roam. Hugh (Lafarge Estate Management) felt strongly that the public can cause damage (e.g. look at the mess at sites such as Blackbridge). But others felt that a Country Park would be well positioned to manage this better than Blackbridge can.
- Which parts matter for access?
- Good to have cycle path along river
- Pathways in park should join up with Hertford/WGC pathways
- Need to allow people access to key features (e.g. water, woodland, historic features)
- Issue: roaming versus zoning (no consensus on this)
- If unlimited access, end up with less bio-diversity
- Safety issues
- Need to manage access to deep water.

Theme 3 – Biodiversity

- The best nature reserves have no people
- Where are the biodiversity hot spots?
- Along the river, particularly East Lake/Osprey Lake
- Other examples:
- Great Amwell (Epping)
- Blakemore Wood – heavy footfall.

Theme 4 – Repton landscape

- Herts Historic Garden Society - there is nothing incompatible between the historic landscape and access/bio-diversity issues.
- Important features are:
- The vista from the house to Broadwater
- Managing Broadwater Island
- Possibly public access to Broadwater Island
- Issue: what do you restore back to?
- Repton's Red Book vision was not fully carried through anyway
- There was much less woodland in Repton's time (cf 322 acres now)
- BUT Repton's vision was to create woodland (particularly on the valley side)
- Although Repton envisaged views from the house to Broadwater and probably to Hertford too
- The first OS map (1880?) gives a good idea
- What about the Orangery?
- This should be preserved
- Should be restored and used
- But much of the stone is now on rockeries around Hertford
- And the build quality was not great
- But it could be recreated
- A visitor centre would be good.

Other comments re historic aspects:

- Broadwater has partly silted up (relatively recent – records of it being dredged in 19th Century)
- Can still see footprint of old house (important to mark this – walls stand to about 3 feet?)
- Have information boards (e.g. about the old house)
- The site of the old Cole Green Park mansion would also be worth marking
- Recreate the garden, at least in part – which was mainly decorative rather than vegetables - (noted that walled garden was used for vegetables but is now under separate ownership).

Other themes – Theme 5: shooting

- Currently, some areas are permanently closed for breeding, while there are temporary closures during the shooting season

- Consensus – there should be no shooting once the area is a Country Park
- [Separate issue – current shooting should not be using lead shot.]

Vision statement for Panshanger Park

We would like Panshanger Park to have...

- As much public access as possible (encourage people to use particular areas; possibly allow roaming [no consensus on this]; possibly use buried electric fences for cattle; go for cattle not sheep, and choose breed carefully so that cattle do not threaten people/dogs)
- A network of paths (for people, cycles, horses....), including more cycle paths (both to avoid the A414 and at right angles to the A414?)
- Partial recreation of garden area (which was decorative, not a vegetable garden– should include access to Broadwater Island)
- Orangery as visitor centre
- Mark footprint of old house (and Cole Green Park mansion)
- No shooting when it's a country park
- Make Cole Green mansion safe and accessible.

1.2.3. Write-up from 'Purple' group

Introduction

The group was first asked to identify themselves to one another and to explain their interest(s) in the site. Following this exercise, group members were each individually invited to record what they considered to be the three most important characteristics and functions (actual and potential) of the park. Group members were also provided the opportunity to identify what they considered to be the key issues likely to influence/impact upon the future use of the site.

All responses were recorded on 'post it' notes. The facilitator then invited group members to talk to their points and supported discussion from other members on each point. As the discussion progressed key themes and elements of each theme were drawn out and recorded on flip charts. At the invitation of one group member participants were also invited to provide examples of other sites that could be used as inspiration or to illustrate ideas. Finally the group was invited to list the key elements they would want to see in a final vision for the park.

During the discussion a few overarching or strategic thoughts emerged through post it note contributions, including:

- Remove the distinction between the country park and the nature reserve and treat the park as a whole
- Maintain and enhance Panshanger's cultural and environmental heritage for the public benefit



Image 3: Group work underway, Workshop One

Theme 1: Access

The group unanimously felt that access was a key issue with the desire that access should be as easy as possible for as many people as possible. Access should include defined routes and free roaming access. However the group also recognised that the needs of particular areas and species should be protected so there may be places where access would not be allowed. In these cases the reason need to be made clear so as not to feel unduly restrictive.

As a core principle the group felt that access should be free, but might include some ‘paid for’ services.

The group explored the issue of whether there was a ‘real’ conflict between access and other interests, in particular biodiversity, or whether this was a ‘perceived’ conflict that could be worked through. Key comments from post it notes were:

- The park is for people, it is a major public facility for Welwyn Garden City and Hertford
- Responsibly managed – access to as much of the site as possible
- Access for all, horse riders, walkers, cyclists and carriage drivers
- Access – definitive but flexible ie farmland – not closed for six months, shooting etc
- To maximise the opportunities for quiet enjoyment by the public by good related (?) management

Points raised during the discussion and recorded on flip charts:

- New access points might be needed
- Access via a variety of modes of transport need to be supported – bike, bus, horse, walking
- Key issues - managing pressure from the growing nearby conurbations – this is the ‘public lung’
- By encouraging use a sense of ownership will be created and self policing will emerge
- Access plans will need to include managing disturbance and weighing sensitivities
- We should recognise, in access planning, that on the whole people are responsible
- If access has to be restricted we should explain why
- When restricting access we should also recognise that for some people, this is a challenge to fight
- Exploring the use of the access tunnel might be an option
- Access should not make people feel restricted
- Access should take account of the legal context

Theme 2: The Orangery/heritage

The group felt there were many opportunities presented for improving the visitor experience, income generation and interpretation / education by restoring some or all of the heritage buildings on the site. There was little conflict on this issue with an emerging consensus that on the whole most visitors do not tend to stray far from these sort of attractions, so the development would also be a way of managing some of the potentially disruptive access. Post it note comment:

- To create the Orangery and its curtilage as a visitor centre to enhance the ‘experience’ for the visitor to Panshanger.

Points raised during the discussion and recorded on flip charts:

- A centre will provide the opportunity to educate
- Development would provide an ‘attraction’, a ‘central hub’ and / or a ‘destination’
- The development would provide opportunities to secure and enhance barbastelle bats habitat – currently living in the undercroft
- Visitors now have high expectations of parks of this type – ‘they want a good afternoon’ – this would add to the visitor experience.

Options considered for the Orangery in particular were:

- Creating a safe ruin
- Restoring to a visitors centre
- Recreation of the Repton Vista
- Toilets

- Restoration of the formal gardens.

Theme 3: Natural habitats and wildlife

The site is a rich diversity of natural habitat and wildlife, many of special interest. Overall the group values these features highly, but agreed that there was more debate needed on how the various interests will need to be managed and the types of management that might be used.

Key considerations raised on post it notes were:

- Habitat enhancement
- Managed conservation
- Getting people excited about the biodiversity of the river without trashing it
- Biodiversity of the River Mimram and the area around it, including, birds, bats, dragonflies, fish, invertebrates, water voles and flora
- Support and develop traditional land management (when appropriate).

Thoughts recorded on the flip chart to support this work were:

- Using a combinations of types of access
- Creating views
- Managing the distance of cars from special sites
- Supporting agriculture.

Theme 4: The site's international and national importance

The group recognised that elements of the site have international and national importance and special efforts should be made in the management of these key areas, while providing interpretation for all interests. Particular elements of interest raised and recorded on the flip charts were:

- Bats
- Mimram
- Landscape, Repton and Capability Brown
- Listed status.

Vision statement

The group listed their top priorities for the start of a vision statement. These were:

- Public accessibility
- Planning obligations
- Preserving the chalk stream

- Heritage obligations
- Environment – biodiversity, ecology and wildlife
- Education
- Maximise the opportunity this historic site offer
- And finally ‘can we have it now please?’

Examples of other sites

- Stanborough Reedmarsh
- Heartwood Forest
- Ellenbrook Fields
- Tring Park.

1.2.4. Write-up from ‘Green’ group

Introduction

The group was first asked to identify themselves to one another and to explain their interest(s) in the site. Following this exercise, group members were invited to individually record what they considered to be the three most important characteristics and functions (actual and potential) of the park. Group members were also provided the opportunity to identify what they considered to be the key issues likely to influence/impact upon the future use of the site.

All responses were recorded on ‘post it’ notes. The facilitator then agreed with the group how best these might be organised under a set of thematic headings. Once the organisation of the responses was agreed, the group was asked to consider how their feedback could be used to inform a vision statement for the park and whether there were any other matters that should be considered.

Finally the group considered the draft vision, for Panshanger, provided by Lafarge Tarmac and how this compared with their own views on the park and its future development and use.

Theme 1: Preservation and restoration of the historic landscape

There was clear recognition of the value of the historic landscape and the preservation of this was viewed as one of the 3 main priorities of this group (the others being public access and nature conservation). There was also strong interest in the restoration of some of the historic features of the site, particularly some of the buildings, with the Orangery being singled out for specific attention. The following lists all of the individual responses received:

- Historic buildings and use
- Restore the context of the park, formal gardens and buildings
- Find a sustainable use for the garden buildings

- Restoration of the Orangery
- Restore as much of the formal gardens as practicable
- Showcase the historical significance of Panshanger

Theme 2: Public Access

The group was strongly in favour of enhanced access to the site, both via an improved network of formal, surfaced, routes and in the form of ‘open access’. Some members of the group felt that all areas should be open to unimpeded public access but there was collective recognition of the potential for conflict with nature conservation objectives.

The issues of what type of access, and to what purpose, were discussed. Walking, cycling (on designated paths) and horse riding were all seen as appropriate as was access for educational purposes. The view was expressed that additional access and recreational use would require the provision of toilets and other supporting infrastructure. It was suggested that this could be integrated with the restoration of some of the sites historic buildings, for example the Orangery, and that this might also involve the provision of a visitor centre and tearoom. The following lists all of the individual responses received:

- Access for all
- Open access
- Create north-south access route
- Bridleway access from Cole Green, from Panshanger Lane, from Sele Farm, from Hertingfordbury
- Maximise public access and enjoyment
- Open access for enjoyment and education
- Create access to Panshanger Oak
- Improve east-west public path
- Develop a visitor centre for education, interpretation, café and outreach activity
- Types of access, walking, family, recreational cycling, off track walking, fishing and wildlife enjoyment.

Theme 3: Wildlife Conservation

The preservation and enhancement of the sites existing wildlife and nature conservation value was identified as one of the three main priorities for stakeholders in the green group. It was recognised that there were likely to be tensions between this and the principle of open access, and there was some division on this matter within the group as to which objective should have primacy. The following lists all of the individual responses received:

- Historic landscape for ecology
- Protect and develop biodiversity in line with the principles of Lawton (the report)
- River ecosystem- very special, but fragile. Health and safety an issue

- Ecological value – what is currently there and how best can it be protected (there appears to be some uncertainty about the current ecological value of the site)
- Ecological Management- who and how (responsible body?)
- Safeguard wildlife (restrict access)

Theme 4: Working Landscape

The issue of the park being managed as a working landscape was not initially listed by stakeholders, but was acknowledged as being of some importance when the facilitator raised the subject. The group expressed the view that the park should continue to be a working landscape, but that agricultural and forestry enterprises should be subordinate to access and nature conservation objectives.

Theme 5: Funding

Whilst the need for the vision for the park to be founded on a sustainable funding model was recognised, this was a sensitive topic. Most group participants expressed the view that Lafarge Tarmac should fund the development and on-going maintenance of the park. The issue of how much development Lafarge Tarmac might be reasonably expected to fund was discussed, but no consensus was reached. There was, however, an acceptance of the fact that the site may need to contain elements that could potentially be self-funding.

Issues

The following is a list of the ‘issues’ identified by the group in relation to Panshanger. There is some overlap with some of the matters discussed under each thematic heading but they are recorded for completeness.

- Need to balance desire for open access with other objectives
- Cost
- Who pays for what?
- Be useful to be consider what has been done at other, exemplar, sites
- Shoot should be discontinued
- Nature reserve objectives versus public access
- Have a fully representative management committee
- Site safety
- Is restoration of the SSSI feasible
- Consultation needs to involve stakeholders outside of the management committee
- Need for linked access routes
- Need to ensure site safety and security
- Gaps exist in the existing wildlife records

1.3. Workshop One Plenary Session Two – Feedback and Next Steps

The session was primarily about brief feedback of points from each of the small groups but also included time for further questions and points raised in plenary as well as information on next steps.

1.3.1. Feedback from ‘Pink’ group

Key words:

- People)
- Education) all provide an opportunity for
- Biodiversity) Hertfordshire, to benefit the general
- Living landscape) public, both locally and further afield
- Production)
- Need to promote it and provide better facilities
- Key elements are:
- Promotion
- Management
- Delivery.

1.3.2. Feedback from ‘Yellow’ group

- Most time talking about public access and the problems related to it, with no real consensus
- Wanted “right to roam” as wide as possible – and for this to be managed in a subtle, guided way so visitors would be induced to go to less bio-sensitive areas – such as Orangery and old house
- These buildings could be restored and used as a visitor centre
- The landscape to the lake should be maintained
- The garden area around the old house site should be restored with some interpretation
- The walk to the main island in the Broadwater (as per Repton’s 19th century plan) should be restored
- The park should be grazed by different breeds of cattle, controlled by buried, electric fences and cattle with collars
- The site should be crossed by a network of all weather paths – designed to be used by horses, bicycles and people
- Footpaths should avoid the A414 and running parallel to it
- The footprint of the original house at Old Cole Green should be reinstated with footpaths/access and interpretation
- No shooting should be allowed/possible once the country park is open.

1.3.3. Feedback from ‘Purple’ group

- Need a global perspective for long term vision
- The global vision should be to “maintain and enhance the park’s cultural and environmental heritage, by looking at what we’ve got and improving it”. However, the devil is in the detail
- There is a challenge to capture all the elements.

Also need to consider:

Public accessibility

- Paid for, free, charging for car park
- Access points
- How to travel to the site
- Free ranging or restricted
- Real or perceived conflicts with biodiversity

Biodiversity

- Have to do elements inherent in planning/legal obligations
- Range of biodiversity issues – chalk stream, (aquatic environment), woodland, grasslands

Functional countryside

- Management of traditional cropping and grazing

Cultural heritage

- Sense of place
- National importance/historic landscape value
- Already impacted by Welwyn Garden City, Hertford and proposed new housing
- Planning context
- Education, interpretation and understanding of the issues
- Historic buildings, restoration/functionality.
- Still have to manage land to deliver country park or other land uses
- Need a holistic view of the way the park functions and lives
- Maximise opportunities offered by the site and not see them as constraints – more people, more money, more education and more management

Other similar examples include:

- Stanborough Reed Marsh
- Heartwood Forest
- Tring Park (historic parkland)
- Hatfield Park
- Hatfield Forest (NT managed with lots of resources).
- Need to manage public expectations
- Can they have some of it now please!

1.3.4. Feedback from ‘Green’ group

- 5 main themes
- Preservation and restoration of historic landscape. Restoration v enhancement. How to pay for it?
- Public access/access for all. Most of the site, most of the time – but tensions inevitable
- Nature conservation access. Walking and enjoying wildlife – but not just on tracks

- Education about wildlife and wildlife enjoyment. Visitor Centre (Orangery)
- Wildlife conservation. A given – but tensions with access
- Working landscape. Whatever vision is put in place it must persist over time – but needs to be balanced with costs
- Good to hear what’s been said – and in this environment.

1.3.5. Additional questions and suggestions for the park

- Toilets in Visitor Centre and/or car park
- How did SSSI lose its designation – and can it/should it be re-designated?

1.3.6. Next steps

Susan Parham noted that the key points raised in the plenary session – and those discussed in the break out groups – will be written up and circulated to the attendees of the workshops.

- All facilitators and other note takers will send their notes to Susan by Monday evening
- Susan will compile the material into a write-up of the workshop and will (as far as possible) distil these into key points – the whole document will be tabled at the beginning of Wednesday 17th's workshop session
- Focus on Wednesday 17th July is about how to make the vision a reality - how to deliver it.



Image 4: Discussion with Mike Pendock, Workshop One

2. Workshop Two – Panshanger Park, Delivering the Vision

The next section of this report documents the presentations and discussions held in mini charrette Workshop Two, which was held at The Fielder Centre in Hatfield. The focus of the workshop was on ways to make the vision for Panshanger Park into a reality.

2.1. Plenary One – Briefing on Workshop One and Initial Discussion

The second of the two linked workshops began with a welcome to participants and an explanation of the purpose of the events. It was noted that the focus for workshop two was to give practical shape to strategic ideas from workshop one so that these could, as far as possible, be put into an action plan format to help guide delivery and management of a country park.

The proposed structure and expected outcomes from the second workshop were explained and some time was given for people to read the detailed write up from workshop one, which was available on arrival.

The plenary also gave some space to discussion of points raised, any gaps noted or points not captured in workshop one. There was also time for any questions about process.

2.1.1. Workshop process introduction from Dr Susan Parham, University of Hertfordshire

Susan noted that participants had had a useful and productive session last week on producing a strategic vision for Panshanger Park. She felt that today would be harder as we will be working on the ‘who, what, why, where, when, how much and who funds’ elements necessary to deliver the actions to get there – and how it might work day to day. These are always tough aspects think about and be specific about.

Susan then said that before moving into small group discussion work, first of all Mike Pendock, from Lafarge Tarmac, will discuss what is in the delegate packs and why, then we’ll have some time to read last week’s workshop write-up. After that, we will then move into small group work and look at – for example – protecting, preserving, enhancing and maintaining aspects to do with heritage. We will need to discuss the ‘who, what, why, where’ aspects as well as how to generate income.

Because everything about the Park is interconnected, all groups will be looking at all subjects and the interaction between them – there is a need for a holistic approach (this is one of the charrette derived methods we are using).

The small group work will again, like the last workshop, by using coloured stickers to help divide people into groups. People are not in the same groups as last time – and we’ve ‘mixed and matched’ the facilitators as well. This is all to help get new discussions and fresh perspectives.

2.1.2. Information briefing and initial feedback from Mike Pendock, Estates Manager, Lafarge Tarmac

Mike welcomed participants and explained what was in the delegate pack, which included:

- The detailed write-up of the first workshop
- A new plan showing the main designated land uses and areas for Grade 2* Heritage designation, the country park and the nature reserve
- An English Heritage entry about why the park was designated Grade 2*
- Notes about grazing from East Herts District Council
- Attendance/organisations list for both events.

As it turned out, some items were missing from some packs but this was sorted out and new copies circulated.



Image 5: Reading time, at the beginning of Workshop Two

2.1.3. Plenary briefing discussion (after time for reading the write-up from the first workshop)

Susan briefly presented points she had ‘distilled’ from putting together then reading through the workshop one write-up. She noted this was just her first impression from reading the material and this summary had no more weight than any one else’s perspective and was offered simply as an introduction rather than any definitive set of key points:

- Discussion and briefings reinforced the (perhaps obvious) point that the site has an incredibly rich history and complex recent planning and legal background as the site moves on from its quarrying activities. It is a site of immense historic, biodiversity, economic, and social value, which its owners Lafarge Tarmac recognise.
- There are specific items, areas and land uses within the site that are particularly highly regarded (including the Mimram chalk stream habitat, the Repton landscape, and the footprint of the historic houses and the Orangery, present and future farming activities and access possibilities) among others.
- There is a high degree of interest in protecting valued aspects (and finding sustainable uses for specific items) while balancing up these needs with opening up access for the enjoyment of a local and wider community of walkers, cyclists, horse riders, bird watchers, fishermen and others.
- Both local communities and broader ‘communities of interest’ for specific aspects have a strong stake in the future of Panshanger. Aspects of the delivery of that future will have various timelines attached: from short, to medium and long term - and the existing management plan for the site needs updating to best reflect this.
- Given this complexity, finding an agreed vision that reflects high aspirations and also allows for practical delivery of a well-functioning park isn’t an easy thing to do and there remain differences of view about some aspects, which are referred to below.
- However, there are also areas where views seem to coalesce. There was a fair bit of agreement about the idea of Panshanger as a living landscape – ‘not pickling history’; a desire to find sustainable use for items such as the Orangery which might include an education/visitor centre, tearooms, loos etc, to ensure a good access network, the need for sensitive handling of woodlands and other fragile habitats, and a desire to see the conservation/restoration of the Repton landscape....among others.
- There were areas where participants didn't always agree – the future of any shoot, the balance between free access and protecting habitats, for example, but already groups came up with many very useful suggestions for specific actions that would help in balancing different needs – things like the arrangement/designation of paths; placement of car parks; support for farming possibilities for both arable and rare breed pasturing; fencing and habitat protection - and we will revisit these in workshop two.
- One thing we did agree on was the value of learning from the experience of other successful country parks and good examples were offered from which Panshanger might learn including Tring Park, Hatfield Park, Ellenbrooke Fields, Heartwood Forest and Stanborough Reedmarsh were mentioned amongst others.
- While no one definitive ‘vision’ statement emerged, the elements of the vision ‘to make a Country Park Herts can be proud of’ started to become clear from the discussions and it was agreed the next iteration of the management plan should reflect a number of broadly agreed

perspectives about, for example, habitats, heritage, access, farming and ongoing management and sustainability.

The next part of the Plenary took the form of a question and answer session and a chance to state views and perspectives.

Q1 - *What happens next?* Susan responded that as this will be dealt with in detail in the 'feedback and next steps' discussion in the second plenary, she wondered if the answer could wait until then.

Q2 - *To SP - are these your personal views?* Susan responded that yes, the write-up was put together based on the materials collected from the first workshop. Her summary was not definitive and was a personal view - an initial attempt to distil some aspects from that output just to start the discussion in the second workshop. Susan explained that her summary has absolutely no status above everyone else's. Everyone has their own take on the issues and will challenge some things.

Q2 - *Can I confirm that this is a group, not a committee? It will be left to the decision makers to make recommendations?* The landowner has the responsibility to carry out any work – or that's how I see it. Susan responded that individual responsibilities of owners and decisions makers for the park as a whole would be discussed during the second plenary, so asked if that question could be put on hold for a detailed response then.

Q3 - *This is my first attendance so can I still make comments/suggestions?* Susan responded that yes, this is an ongoing process and all comments are welcome.

A comment was made that there needs to be an education centre for pupils in Hertfordshire. Lafarge Tarmac should provide the building, Herts County Council should provide the work aspect staff/school students (expertise and training) and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust should provide a specialist team to develop it further and provide specialist help. It should encourage up and coming young people to learn how to respect historic/heritage sites. It needs a dedicated training team(s) to allow for training indoors and out.

Susan noted that one thing emerging from the workshop one write-up was that there could be an education centre/tea room, which could be used for the general public and school groups.

Q4 - Grimes Graves Visitor Centre, near Thetford in Norfolk is a good example – which is also a SSSI. Other examples include:

- Ashridge (Berkhamsted, Herts) National Trust
- College Lakes Buckinghamshire
- Other wildlife centres – including those run by Essex Wildlife Trust.

Q5 - Emphasis should be on outdoor education – not just a room inside a building.

Q6 - As a member of the Orangery Working Group, I have been checking out lots of National Trust places. These are generally marvellous, multipurpose places with catering and buildings with removable walls. There is much careful design with each place designed for its own use. I am going to take my report to the next Orangery Working Group and perhaps Lafarge

Tarmac should get some ideas from the National Trust, looking at the integration of heritage with other issues.

Q7 - There is a clear thread of wildlife versus public access running through the report (e.g. p21). The Government model for local nature reserves is very clear – they should be for wildlife and people. In terms of sustainability, there are models across the country of areas of land managed as country parks, which are also a financial success. If enough visitors are attracted then financially sustainable success will be delivered.

Q8 - In the Lawson Report, public access is considered to be very important for both wildlife and education. There should be interplay rather than antagonism between them – as a positive relationship.

Q9 - I have been out and about in the country park and the nature reserve and have recorded 400 different species of moths – none of them in the nature reserve. Nature doesn't recognise boundaries.

Q10 - I sit on the management committee. The nature reserve area was of its time. New work shows that there is rich biodiversity across the full 900 acres. The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust have 44 nature reserves, which have a dual role for people and wildlife.

Q11 - There is a real thread of people talking about the need for public access and the fear of public conflict. There are lots of reports about perceived conflict and safety issues – but they are perceived not actual. Where there are issues between users, these generally arise from a lack of understanding of each other's needs. There are even multiuse paths used by walkers, cyclists and horses where there are no reported incidents. There is a need to close the gap between reality and perception.

Q12 - People came last week and today with very balanced views. It is important to take that forward in terms of decision-making and governance (whatever that process is/is going to be). It is critical that the management committee respects that view and sign up to the vision – as well as the process, content, policy and management.

Q13 - We need to recognise that in some situations, there will be conflict – e.g. breeding ponds/disturbance/open access/dogs. It depends on the specifics of the biodiversity and the demands and expectations of the public on the particular site. The planning needs to be sophisticated to respond to the interplay between social and seasonal issues.

Q14 - There is a lack of emphasis on public health and safety. There is deep water in the lakes – even at the edges. The geographical layout of the site makes it open to much public access. We could use the layout of the site itself to separate out areas. For example, the northern plateau and the slopes leading out from it would work as free public access, with a more restricted area in the south. If the pathway was on the northern side, people would use it anyway, even if there were no notices.

The nature reserve is in the wrong place – it does not include the veteran trees, which are probably better than those at Hatfield House. There is no SSSI there now – it wasn't redesignated under the 1981 Act – but the boundaries were always wrong – in fact it had no boundaries.



Image 6: Presentation at Workshop Two

Q15 - It's really important to consider today and the position of Panshanger within the wider Mimram Valley. The site is within both the Mimram Catchment Plan and the wider Lea Valley Catchment Plan. It has to be considered how people, wildlife and biodiversity all fit in to the wider landscape.

Q16 - Access and accessibility are two different issues. We need to consider wider access + seasonal variations + protecting specific habitats/species. There is also a role to be played in the health and wellbeing of the community – as a green lung to the surrounding urban areas.

Q17 - There is a real push from the Health Authority (NHS) to consider the wellbeing of people as well as biodiversity. We need to get people outside and provide advice on walking, cycling to improve health etc.

Q18 - There is an overwhelming need for phased public access – and the need to know what will happen and when.

Susan responded to say we will focus on this in the break out groups and look at it in detail then.

Q19 - There are very few places where people can paddle in the Mimram and throw a ball in for the dog.

Q20 - There has been no mention of what presence LT will have on the site in the long term? The company is in the Stable Block at the moment. Is the company going to continue with a communal use on site?

Susan responded to say that Mike Pendock from Lafarge Tarmac will feed back on that during the final 'Next Steps' plenary.

Q21 - On the issue of health and wellbeing, it is important to be able to walk/cycle through the park. There are many public areas like this in France. It would be best for these active/keep fit areas to be in 'unsensitive' areas – and ideally near a car park.

Q22 - That could be something like the Green Gyms run by Groundwork, the conservation volunteers.

Q23 - There are a number of health and wellbeing programmes that something like this could link in to. It is important to recognise the strategic position of Panshanger in terms of both Welwyn & Hatfield BC and East Herts District Council and useful to think about how it fits in with other places in the county. Both authorities own and manage green spaces and there is a need to talk to them about any proposals.

Q24 - The Welwyn Hatfield plan talks about a walk (Green Route) through the park. However, the council is bankrupt. There are intentions to have lots of housing to the south east and east of the borough and East Herts has similar plans. These developments should include a Section 106 commitment as part of a Community Infrastructure Levy. The park is close to the housing but not in their area (East Herts build in planning obligations). Potentially, in the longer term, these could provide cash to support the park.

Q25 - Panshanger's future is significant. It has the potential for a local also regional destination. It has habitats and beauty. There is a need to consider how people get to the park – and links to the station, car parks and cycle routes.

Q26 – I am just back from cycling around the Netherlands, including two national parks with similar habitats to Panshanger. You can either leave your car in the car park at the entrance (and hire a bike) or just bike there. There are Highland cattle – but no conflict between horse riders, cyclists or walkers. There is also a high level of nature conservation. Subtle management techniques are used for control – there are no fences. The surfaces are managed and people yield to each other. There is a board going in to the park showing key points and you navigate around the park with those points. At various places there are solid mushroom shaped structures with numbers on them to show where you are. There is no signage – people navigate themselves around, so the environment remains completely rural with no negative impact on nature conservation.

Q27 – Lafarge Tarmac has worked very hard to restore the River Mimram, so any public access would have to work with the existing restoration. Dogs stir up the mud and paddling can create adverse flow impacts, which could be a danger to wildlife habitats. We shouldn't undo the good work Lafarge Tarmac has done.

2.2. Group Work Discussions

Participants broke into four groups for more in-depth discussions and the next section provides a write-up from each group. Each group was asked if possible to fill in a matrix sheet showing what needed to be done, by whom, when, how costed etc so some of the write up material here is in that format.



Image 7: Working on actions for developing the park, in Workshop Two

2.2.1. Write-up from ‘Yellow’ group

The time available for this exercise meant that we did not cover all of the issues that we are asked to consider, priority in the main was given to the question of what should be done. In some instances the group felt that it was premature to attempt to identify overly specific actions without some preliminary work; for example, site survey activity and the development of a strategic access plan.

Discussion focused on access and nature conservation. There was recognition of the potential for conflict between access and conservation and there is scope for this to become a source of tension if not carefully managed. There was interest in integrating agricultural and conservation with access objectives but there are again possible conflicts here; for example; between grazing animals and unleashed dogs. This could be managed through fencing but there was a strong desire to minimize the use of on-site fences.

There was significant debate about what a country park is, and the types of features and facilities one should contain. This was linked to discussions about Lafarge’s ‘liabilities’ (actual and perceived) in relation to site restoration and development of the site.

Priorities identified by the group included:

Access	Activity	Votes
	Develop a site Access Strategy to control/manage the use of the site especially	2

sensitive areas. This should be consistent with the county's Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Controlled access to the river 2
As few physical barriers to access as possible 2

Establish an educational facility and on-site interpretative materials. This could be integrated with the restoration of the Orangery/conservatory and provision of a café/tea room 2

Provision of open areas where dogs are allowed to run off the leash. 1

Installation of paths on the eastern part of the site 1

Access for horses 1

North-south route to link bridleway 13 and footpath 10 1

Conversion of permissive paths to legal rights of way 1

Café/teashop. 1

Biodiversity Activity Votes

Institute a site survey regime 2

Initiate appropriate woodland management regimes 1

Riverine habitat is a priority for biodiversity. Zoning and active management is required. 1

Grazing animals should be used in grassland management BUT people come first 1

Heritage Activity Votes

Preservation of the Orangery/Conservatory 1

1. Biodiversity

What	Why	Who	How	When	How funded
Institute a site survey regime	To ensure that all aspects of value have been identified with this information being used to inform access and site management planning	Biological Records Centre, Lafarge, Wildlife Trust, University	Lafarge to allow access to the site for biological recording	As soon as is feasible	Some activity at least is likely to be available at no cost
The whole site should be managed for nature	To maximise biodiversity.	Site managers			Lafarge, government farming and forestry

conservation					schemes
Install bird hides..	Reduce bird disturbance and enhance recreational experience.	Lafarge			
Initiate appropriate woodland management regimes	To improve biodiversity and generate some site income.	Lafarge			
Riverine habitat is a priority for biodiversity. Zoning and active management is required	To protect biodiversity				
Natural England's veteran tree guidance should be applied to the sites veteran trees	To preserve the wildlife and heritage value of the veteran trees	Lafarge			Lafarge
Any on-site agricultural activities should be wildlife friendly	To maximise biodiversity and recreational value	Lafarge. Those managing on-site farmland (assumed that land is leased to farmers)	Agricultural land entered into agri-environmental schemes		
Grazing animals should be used in grassland management BUT people come first	To provide a more naturalistic method for grassland management, generate on-site income and recreational/educational value				

2. Access and recreation

What	Why	Who	How	When	How funded
Develop a site Access Strategy to control/manage the use of the site especially sensitive areas. This should be consistent with the county's Rights of					

Way Improvement Plan					
Establish an educational facility and on-site interpretative materials. This could be integrated with the restoration of the Orangery/conservatory and provision of a café/tea room					
Provision of open areas where dogs are allowed to run off the leash	Recreation	Lafarge as part of site design	Through site design		
Controlled access to Panshanger Oak	Recreation	Lafarge as part of site design	Through design of access routes.		
Installation of paths on the eastern part of the site	To enable recreational access	Lafarge			
Controlled access to the river	Recreation	Lafarge	Through site design		
As few physical barriers to access as possible	To enhance the recreational experience and facilitate access	Lafarge			
Access for horses					
North-south route to link bridleway 13 and footpath 10.					
Conversion of permissive paths to legal rights of way					
Establish a local access forum		Lafarge, council rights of way and countryside management team. Cycling forum, BHS and ramblers.			

3. Heritage

What	Why	Who	How	When	How funded
Preservation of the Orangery/Conservatory					

2.2.2. Write-up from ‘Green’ Group

Contextual issues

The group flagged a number of contextual issues during the discussion. These were recorded on the flipchart as follows.

What is the Lawton Review?

A summary of key messages from the review would be that it shows how to enhance biodiversity, small pockets of protection are not enough and protection of biodiversity needs to be better, bigger and more joined-up. Panshanger provides an opportunity for this. This is also the philosophy behind the ‘Living Landscape’ initiative – managing land to enhance nature.

What does a nature reserve mean?

This is an area managed to enhance wildlife. Access is generally managed through defined routes through the area – leading people to ‘wildlife spectacles’ and educating/enticing them to experience nature, while guiding them away from sensitive areas.

Planning issues for Panshanger

Planning consent was varied in 2003 but this did not change the legal agreement. Lafarge Tarmac’s commitment is ‘more than just providing a car park’.

Participants are keen not to allow more slippage.

Outline management plans were submitted in 1982, but these were not detailed.

The 50-year timeframe relates to woodland and wildlife, but there is no time limit on Lafarge’s Country Park obligations so these are presumably in perpetuity.

Participants identified a key issue to be resolved in relation to Lafarge’s legal requirements and funding for creation of the Country Park:

How much ‘enhancement’ would Lafarge fund, or be obliged to fund?

Action planning

The group discussed potential actions under four themes:

- Access
- Biodiversity
- Heritage
- Park Management

As many actions as possible were discussed in detail, considering ‘what, where, who, why, how, when and how funded?’ Not all actions were analysed fully, owing to lack of time, but the group spent a significant proportion of the time discussing biodiversity issues because of the significant number of people in the group who had biodiversity expertise.

A large-scale table was created on the wall using large post-its, so that everyone could see and discuss the proposed actions and agree what should be written down. This is replicated in the attached appendix.

Prioritisation

Towards the end of the small group work session, participants were given three sticky dots each and were asked to ‘vote’ on the three actions which they regarded as highest priority. A summary of the actions and voting results is given below.

Theme	Action	Votes
Access	1 - Linear access and open up extensive areas	5
	2 - Use subtle methods to manage people’s access around sensitive areas	1
Biodiversity	3 - Appreciate conservation at the landscape scale	1
	4 – Manage the whole park for biodiversity	4
	5 – Find out what is there (in terms of biodiversity)	2
	6 – Use as demonstration site for conservation farming	2
Park Management	7 – Phase out the shoot (?)	2
	8 – Manage vermin (in ways other than shoot)	0
	9 – Define baseline re funding for initial works to create the Country Park	2
Heritage	10 – Open up some historic viewpoints	1
	11 – Restore the Orangery (with sustainable use connected to the Country Park)	2
	12 – Restore the gardens, with a heritage walk	2
	13 – Make the foundations of the house and other key buildings safe (e.g. mark with paving)	0

2.2.2. (Continued) Action planning tables – ‘Green’ group

The ‘Green’ group also spent some time working on aspects of action planning for Panshanger. The text in square brackets [] provides added explanation based on the facilitator’s recall of verbal discussions which were not recorded on the post-its or flipchart.

Theme	What/where	Votes	Why?	Who?	How?	When?	How funded?
Access	1 - Linear access and open up extensive areas	5	Need for access <u>through</u> park and <u>within</u> park	Lafarge – part of initial set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North-South access • East-West access • Connectivity to areas outside park • East-West would not necessarily be along the river (because of 	Phasing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open specific areas as soon as possible • Gradually join up 	

Theme	What/ where	Votes	Why?	Who?	How?	When?	How funded?
					<p>sensitivity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect existing bridleways across NE side of park [network has gap at present] • Potential to create bridleway from Cole Green (via underpass) • Tunnel also exists under South East but now has land in private ownership on the South side [so probably not useable] • <u>Through</u> routes, not just small circular route (e.g. put surface on top of sewer [N-S]?) • Review current surfacing and fencing of paths e.g. to south of Lady Hughes' Wood [where path runs between barbed wire on either side] • [HCC Rights of Way officer recommends that] the paths should be 'permanent permissive paths' maintained by Lafarge Tarmac [not Rights of Way per se] but with a guarantee that they won't be withdrawn 		
	2 - Use subtle methods to manage	1					

Theme	What/ where	Votes	Why?	Who?	How?	When?	How funded?
	people's access around sensitive areas						
Biodiversity	3 - Appreciate conservation at the landscape scale	1					
	4 – Manage the whole park for biodiversity	4					
	5 – Find out what is there (in terms of biodiversity)	2	Lack of recent records (some pre 1990; 30-40 years old)	Management group Could get a list of all local species groups in the County. The Wildlife Trust could play a coordinating role.	<p>It's not just about 'important' species and habitats, [but these are known to include]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chalk stream • Water voles • Trout • Osprey • Bats • Acid grassland • Invertebrates <p>There is an issue about how to deal with rarities [the more you look, the more you will find].</p> <p>Herts Biological Records Centre will take information provided/collected.</p> <p>[There is an issue re seasonality of biodiversity studies – some research can only be done at particular times of year.]</p>	<p><u>Before</u> development of the Management plan (and then update periodically).</p> <p>Some studies will be done as part of the planning process. But some of the planning process is already done, [so can't rely solely on this]. And the planning process will not necessarily use the right experts.</p>	Lafarge

Theme	What/ where	Votes	Why?	Who?	How?	When?	How funded?
						Lafarge will be updating the management plan (but planning permission will only be required for development of the Orangery).	
	6 – Use as demonstration site for conservation farming	2					
Park Management	7 – Phase out the shoot (?)	2	Because it restricts access (and ruins the character of the park)			When public access is opened up	
	8 – Manage vermin (in ways other than shoot)	0					
	9 – Define baseline re funding for initial works to create the Country Park	2	To meet the requirements of the legal agreement				Lafarge expect to cover initial set-up costs (e.g. car park) but expect ongoing management to be

Theme	What/ where	Votes	Why?	Who?	How?	When?	How funded?
							self- supportin g
Heritage	10 – Open up some historic viewpoint s	1					
	11 – Restore the Orangery (with sustainable use connected to the Country Park)	2					
	12 – Restore the gardens, with a heritage walk	2					
	13 – Make the foundations of the house and other key buildings safe (e.g. mark with paving)	0					

2.2.3. Write-up from ‘Orange’ Group

The time available for this exercise meant that we did not cover all of the issues that we were asked to consider, on the whole the group found that the detail expected from them in the task was too much for the timescale. A key second impact on the group discussion that

was both a driver for discussion, but at the same time affected the scope of the discussion, was the significant amount of planning and surveying completed that most group members had no knowledge of but was revealed during discussion. Key discussion areas explored in the group were:

Establishing the extent of the nature reserve – largely the group felt the entire site should be treated with care, recognizing that, across the site, there are key natural assets and habitats. In particular, members of the group stressed that ‘nature does not confine itself to the boundaries of a nature reserve’. The group felt that any plan to protect and enhance the natural environment should treat the whole site as one.

Knowing what evidence has already been established – as the group discussion progressed members become more and more aware of what significant biodiversity and wildlife recording had already taken place on the site. Collecting this data together and making it more widely accessible emerged as a desire.

The biodiversity plan – the group established that significant work had taken place on this and the work included:

1. Establishing what we have got
2. Where everything is
3. What alternative sites can be used for some species
4. Does protecting it impact positively or negatively on other areas
5. Taking into account conflicts of access/ landscape/ agriculture

The group also noted that this and other plans need to be constantly reviewed and updated and need to consider new habitats as the park develops.

2.2.3. (Continued) Action planning tables – ‘Orange’ group

Table 1. Biodiversity

What	Why	Who	How	When	How funded
Preserve and enhance the river Mimram					
Protect the ‘possible’ otter and the water voles on the Mimram					
Start comprehensive monitoring – park wide					
Protect wildlife and sensitive habitats					

across the whole site					
Acidic grasslands					
Protect and enhance habitats for specific species such as badgers, dragon flies, water birds and waders and bats.					
Establish the status of the vegetation and undertake grass classification					
Map and preserve veteran trees	They take a long time to grow They add to the visitor experience They provide unique habitats for insets and fungi They are irreplaceable Add to the heritage of the park		Leave them alone Enhance life – e.g. similar to the Kew experience or Windsor Great Park Active pollarding Creating veteran trees for the future Ensure that trees are part of the wider woodland management plan Manage public access around trees Manage chemical use around trees	The following have already happened. Trees have been identified Some clearance around veteran trees has taken place Dangerous branches have been removed	
Cater for the maximum range of wildlife indigenous to the park					
Ensuring the marginal vegetation of lakes is cared for					

2.2.3. (Continued) Action planning tables – ‘Orange’ group

Table 2. Access and recreation

What	Why	Who	How	When	How funded
Show off the River Mimram					Car park fees Horse licence scheme Through the
Manage public access around trees					

See the vista of the lakes					restoration programme
Walk along the river					
Establish a hierarchy of routes					
Provide easy access to the orangey as an 'attraction'					
Provide circular routes					
Provide cycling routes on hard surfaces for families					
Maintaining the sue of the footpaths					
Increasing and improving access to the site through existing and new entrances		L-T – as part of the restoration	<p>Create access from the old railway to connect the park to this popular and established footpath – use both the tunnel and the bridge</p> <p>Ensure that walks start and finish near entry points / car parks</p> <p>There is an important entrance from Birch Green via the Keepers Cottage and another from the SE conner (but here there are land ownership issues).</p> <p>New entrances can be created from Panshanger Lane and the B1000</p>		

2.2.3. 'Orange' group (Continued) Table 3. Heritage

What	Why	Who	How	When	How funded
Establish the					

orangery as an 'attraction'					
Ensure that the natural heritage is at the heart of the development of the park					

2.2.4. Write-up from 'Pink' group

Like the other groups, the 'Pink' group focused its discussion on practical actions to pursue the vision for the country park. The table below shows the comments made.

What	Why	Who	How	When	How funded
Deliverable plan for use of area that is not public land as a community park	To meet obligation to deliver a country park (Section 52 Agreement). To respond to aspirations for future use.	Lafarge with input from stakeholders and experts	Through expert input Through consultation (long term process)	Now – get on with it – short term	Using some income generating activities to fund other desired outcomes
Agri-environment scheme	To help guide appropriate management and provide funding that makes the park sustainable	Form a charitable trust or foundation Key stakeholders include Lafarge Conservation people Wildlife people Others (as per Therfield Heath)	Bring in right expertise and representative interests Seek legal advice Resolve planning implications Apply to Charity Commission	Start soon, but long term	Park charges users/rents External funding secured
Appropriate environmental management of the site acknowledging natural history and biodiversity, and protecting particular wildlife including bats, bees and wasps	Don't undo previous good work. Need clearer understanding of its environmental qualities and areas. Will help with making right decisions on access	HMWT HCC Local authorities Recorders of wildlife		Long term management to protect ecology	

Deciding on phasing of increased accessibility as a park	To be a functioning park as soon as practicable given there's been a considerable delay	Lafarge Tarmac			
Undertake security and vermin control once the shoot no longer operates Find alternative source of income to fund					
Reflect good practice elsewhere like Clumber Park – retain 'footprints' of former houses					
Dealing effectively with aspects of heritage (natural environment, built environment)					
Manage public access appropriately given biodiversity and other needs					
Decide on appropriate future for Orangery as a 'safe ruin' – walkable path and site	Relating to modern purpose built structure (ie for education/café etc)				
Develop a 'discreet' regime of protection of areas/sites of particular fragility ie river					
Continue to grow conservation grade crops on site and explore possibilities for grazing animals ie if financially feasible and to maintain landscape	Want this to continue to be a working landscape				
Rebuild the house as a hotel				Long term	Offering income for rest of site
Repton's garden has been studied and now					

would like to see it restored					
Make sure appropriate arrangements increase the possibilities for walking and cycling					

2.2.4 (Continued)

The 'Pink' group also undertook a prioritization and voting exercise as follows.

Theme	Action	Votes
Park Management	Undertake security and vermin control once the shoot no longer operates Find alternative source of income to fund	4
	Continue to grow conservation grade crops on site and explore possibilities for grazing animals ie if financially feasible and to maintain landscape	1
	Want this to continue to be a working landscape	2
Biodiversity	Manage public access appropriately given biodiversity and other needs	8
	Develop a 'discreet' regime of protection of areas/sites of particular fragility ie river	6
Heritage	Reflect good practice elsewhere like Clumber Park – retain 'footprints' of former houses	5
	Decide on appropriate future for Orangery as a 'safe ruin' – walkable path and site – relating to modern purpose built structure (ie for education/café etc)	1
	Rebuild the house as a hotel - offering income for rest of site over long term	1



Image 8: Prioritising actions to develop the park, Workshop Two

2.3. Workshop Two - Plenary Two – Feedback and Next Steps

Susan Parham provided an introduction to the plenary and asked the small groups to each briefly provide feedback from their discussions. Susan said that she got the feeling people are keen to get a sense of the next steps so after each group has given a brief flavour of what happened in their group, the session would move on to the next steps discussion. She noted that the detailed workshop report would include all the discussions and presentation material and this would be distributed to everyone attending.

2.3.1. Feedback from small groups

The ‘Orange’ group identified three priorities (with not spent as much time on heritage as would have liked to). They would like to institute a survey regime (biodiversity) to get a better understanding of value from the biodiversity perspective (but not to delay progress). They would like to develop an access strategy – and work out how that can be consistent with other objectives. Whoever is responsible will need to sit down and think/work around the biodiversity hotspots. They would like to restore the Orangery and the conservatory and develop an education facility on site.

The ‘Purple’ group developed a biodiversity plan (with the who/what/why/where/when etc) and made suggestions in relation to veteran trees.

The feedback from each of the other two groups was very brief given time constraints but by and large reflected what the Orange and Purple groups had already said.

2.3.2. Discussion of next steps

Susan explained that once she has compiled the report, with write-ups from both workshops, this will be sent out to everyone. Susan then handed over to Mike Pendock to sum up the next steps more broadly in relation to engagement on the future of the site and its actual realization as a country park.

Mike first thanked everyone for coming – and said he had found the workshops very helpful and valuable. He thanked Susan and the facilitators. Mike explained that when Lafarge Tarmac started this process, they were not quite sure what they would get out of it in terms of feedback and meeting expectations.

Mike said that what has happened is that Lafarge has received some really good information, which will help them a lot moving forward. Some people here have not seen the park – and as they will need to look at the site holistically (as he thought we’re all agreed that the boundaries on the plans are irrelevant), there will be a site visit next Thursday at 17:30.

This is not the end of the consultation process – Lafarge Tarmac now need to come up with an overall scheme. They have a number of plans they are hoping to implement to keep the consultation group going – including a simple and easy dedicated microsite on the web – which should be up and running by late July or early August.

A coherent, overarching management plan needs to be developed for the entire site – to address the four key issues – public access, biodiversity, heritage management and

commercial land use – and the plan has to be delivered to the county council by the end of September

They propose to hold a public event where they will present these plans by the end of October (the end of September quoted was an incorrect date). They will either present the Lafarge Tarmac views or a range of options depending on the circumstances.

They have been asked whether the entire mini-charrette process is just a delaying tactic? This is simply not the case, they are committed to a phased opening up of the site and some routes will be opened up over the next few weeks, following discussion with the management committee. Some permissive paths will be opened later this summer.

They will continue to hold further information events so they can talk direct to a wider audience rather than just the Liaison Group and the management committee. They need to carry through with the contact they have made here.

Mike then took questions and comments from the participants:

Q1 - I've come to this a bit late and am very confused about the timelines. Extraction can carry on until 2030 – but that won't happen – and then there's a 50-year limit – but there are only 3 years worth of mineral to extract. *What is the operational time?*

Mike explained that the initial planning allowed extraction until 2030, but there are only 3 years worth of mineral left to extract. Then they hope to be importing inert materials for restoration. There is no period specified for the country park, but the woodland, wetland and nature reserve need to be continued for not less than 50 years.

Q2 - *What are Lafarge Tarmac's plans for a long-term presence on the site?*

Mike said that the current offices in the stable block will be retained for offices in the foreseeable future. Post the joint venture this will no longer be a regional office – but that's just a change in function. It is well located to cover the whole area. There is also a small office/weighbridge at the quarry, which, together with the processing plant, will be removed post restoration.

Q3 - *Can you give us an indication of where the permissive paths will be and will they be accessible during the shooting season?*

Mike said that coming out of the current planning application will be a circular route from Lady Hughes' Wood to the northern car park area. However, this needs to be reviewed by the management committee, along with the future of the shoot.

Q4 - *Is it feasible to relocate/ban the shoot?*

Mike said that currently the shoot is in a transition process as there is concern about its future and the interface with other users of the park. The shoot may have to move to a different area of the park, but they will need to talk to the shoot about it. It will have to change in the future.

Q5 - *Will there be a resolution of this (the Shoot) by the time you have to do your plan?*

Mike said yes to this.

Finally, in summary Susan offered many thanks to everyone who came along and gave of their time. Everyone has been incredibly nice during the process, which was very much appreciated. From here, Susan and the team will put the workshop report together. There's a rich set of material here – including some things which haven't emerged before – or which haven't been thought about before so thanks again for all the hard work from everybody.

The workshop closed at 1pm.



Image 9: Studying maps of the site area, Workshop Two