Kew Pond Management Plan

2026 – 2030

RICHMOND BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

Contents

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1.0 Introduction

This management plan has been written by Richmond Councils' Ecology Officer as part of the Councils' commitment to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity. Each site is managed in accordance with the habitat and species action plans of the Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan, the London Local Nature Recovery Strategy, general good habitat management practice and current legislation.

1.1 Caveat

The implementation of prescriptions in this management plan will be subject to available budget.

2.0 Terms of Reference

This management plan is designed to inform the management of Kew Pond from nature conservation, landscape and visitor perspectives. It will be delivered by Richmond Council working in conjunction with contractors and community organisations.

Throughout this management plan our goals are to:

1. Restore and enhance Kew Pond to make it an attractive leisure and environmental asset for residents and visitors.
2. Protect and enhance the ecology of the mixed habitats with appropriate management and planting.
3. Support the Friends of Kew Pond.

To deliver these goals, this plan considers the sites' history, ecology and visitor use; drawing on existing data, it sets out refined objectives and the prescriptions to deliver and maintain the site over the next five years.

The management plan should not be regarded as fixed; the prescriptions provide a framework and guidance that enable reaction to changing conditions. Reviewing progress and monitoring key features on a regular basis is important in ensuring the site is managed appropriately and in a sustainable way, as such as a management review will be carried out by the Council annually.

3.0 Site Description

3.1 Site details

Location	Kew Green, TW9 3BH
Grid Reference	TQ 191775
Ownership	Crown Estate leased to London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Designation	Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation (#RiB23)
Area	0.17 Ha
Key habitats	Freshwater, reedbed
Key species	Common reed, flag iris, reed warbler, mute swan, grey heron, mallard, coot, moorhen, pochard and other visiting species

3.2 Pond description

Kew Pond is a rectangular, concrete-lined pond opposite the north-eastern corner of Kew Green, which is filled from the River Thames via a sluice at periods of high-tide.

The topography of the pond includes a slight slope from west to east but the change in level is minimal (<10cm) and when full the pond has a depth of just under 0.5m throughout. A thick layer of silt covers the base of the pond.

There are vertical concrete edges on three sides of Kew Pond and a high brick wall along the eastern side separating the pond from the gardens of adjacent residences. Painted metal railings border the pond on the high northern and southern peripheries. There is a sloped concrete ramp leading into the pond and

colourful information board in the northwestern corner. The sluice gate used to fill or empty the pond is sited within the northern boundary wall towards the eastern end.

An oval, artificial concrete sided island (~3m x 3.5m) is centrally placed within the pond. This contains a variety of marginal vegetation including yellow flag iris *(Iris pseudoacorus)*, which provides nesting habitat for wildfowl. A number of different trees have been planted on the island in the past, including willow and alder species, however, these have all failed, likely due to an insufficient volume of substrate to support root systems of trees of that size. In addition to the large central island, one smaller, circular (~1.5-2.0m diameter) island provides additional nesting capacity.

The northern and southern boundaries of the pond are bordered by dense stands of common reed *(Phragmites australis)*, and during early 2024, two retaining walls constructed from sandbags and a root barrier membrane were installed to contain the reeds to the margins and prevent uncontrolled colonisation of the shallow open water areas of the pond by the plant. The western side of the pond landscaped with a mix of native marginal plants, including lesser pond sedge *(Carex acutiformis)* and purple loosestrife *(Lythrum salicaria)* in 2022. The pond sedge has become dominant and has superseded many of the smaller aquatic herbs that were originally planted into this bed. In addition, bullrushes which had been planted earlier have re-emerged and common reed is encroaching into this area.

3.3 History

Kew Pond has a considerable historical background. It is thought originally to have been a natural pond fed from a creek of the Tidal Thames. Historical accounts and charters from the 11th and 12th centuries make first mention of the pond as a fishery, but with the development of Kew Green, the pond changed to being a village pond used for watering livestock and cleaning carriages and cartwheels.

Following gradual urbanization of the surrounding area the creek feeding the pond, was built over and filled in. This resulted in low-lying water levels within the

pond, especially following evaporation in summer, and frequent insanitary conditions from the exposure of a muddy, smelly pond base. In an attempt to tackle this problem Kew Pond was concreted in the early thirties. By the 1950s the concreted pond was being used as a car park and playground and many complaints were received due to noise disturbance at night.

Flood protection works in the sixties included the construction of a conduit to allow street drainage from the surrounding area to flow out to the river. With no natural inflow this pond can now only be filled when sluice gates are opened to allow river water from high (spring) tides, that occur approximately once a month, into the pond. In the early eighties an agreement was reached between the Council and local residents for local volunteers to take on the responsibility for filling Kew Pond. Despite the onerous nature of the task a group of dedicated volunteers has continued to fill the pond and ensure a more or less constant water level since this time.

In the early 1990's the *Kew Pond Project* was instigated in an attempt to improve the pond's wildlife value. Local volunteers helped to extend the central island and added a variety of aquatic plants including bulrush *(Typha latifolia)*, common reed *(Phragmites australis),* flowering rush *(Butomus umbellatus* and oxygenating species.

The vigorous nature of the common reed has led to its now being the dominant species in the pond. The pond borders now comprise mature reedbed, which is a priority habitat within UK national, regional and local Borough Biodiversity Action Plans.

3.4 Designation

Kew Pond is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, full details can be found in Appendix 3.

3.5 Ecological interest and features

A variety of birds (including resident and seasonal migrants) use the pond and reedbed habitat. Mute swan *(Cygnus olor)*, mallard *(Anas platyrhynchos)*, moorhens *(Gallinula chloropus)* and coot *(Fulica atra)* can be found here all year round and may breed. Tufted duck can also be found here in winter. Dragonflies and damselflies are seen around the pond during the summer months.

3.6 Community involvement

The Friends of Kew Pond represent local interests in the site and have a Service Level Agreement with the Council to assume certain responsibilities for the pond, primarily the organisation of pond-filling.

3.7 Constraints

The pond is very old and has a concrete liner which is vulnerable to cracks and leaks. Additionally, due to continuous filling from the River Thames, large amounts of silt build up rapidly on the pond base, reducing the capacity for open water, facilitating the unwanted spread of vegetation and providing a rich nutrient supply to blooms of duckweed and algae.

4.0 Policies

4.1 Strategic Principles for Parks and Open Spaces

The borough has the largest area of public open space per head of population of any London borough. We have a local and national reputation for quality and leadership in the delivery of excellent parks. To ensure the quality of our Parks and Open Spaces remains at a high level, following public consultation, we have developed a series of strategic principles by which parks will be managed.

1. Our parks and open space management will have biodiversity, climate change and sustainability at the forefront.
2. Community participation with our Friends and Community Groups will continue to be encouraged and supported.
3. Our parks will promote active, healthy living and social inclusion for people of all ages and abilities.
4. The management of Parks and Open Spaces will create a sustainable legacy for future generations.
5. The quality of our Parks and open spaces will continue to define LBRuT.
6. Richmond will lead in the delivery of excellent parks and open spaces services.
7. Through innovation, the future development of the parks will be ensured.
8. Richmond's Parks will offer positive experiences to all visitors.

All Council owned and managed parks and open spaces are controlled by Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). These orders impose various restrictions to dog control and other activities in our parks and open spaces, these can be found online here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/parks_enforcement_and_legislation#pspo.

4.2 Nature Conservation Policy

During 2019, Richmond Council adopted a Nature Conservation Policy in which the Council recognises the special and diverse wildlife found within its Borough and its' duty to protect and preserve biodiversity. The Policy outlines the ways the Council will achieve this through management of its land, planning obligations and monitoring. The policy can be found in *Appendix 2*.

5.0 Site Vision and Objectives

5.1 Site vision

To maintain and enhance the pond's wildlife importance in balance with its historic, landscape and amenity value to Kew.

5.2 Objectives

From the site goals (*Section 2.0*) and informed by the site description and research into key areas, the following objectives have been developed to cover every aspect of the work to be done:

5.2.1 Objective 1: Nature conservation

Maintain and improve the habitat and water quality on site to ensure optimum conditions for key species.

5.2.2 Objective 1: Amenity value

Protect and enhance the historic, landscape and amenity value of Kew Pond to the local community.

5.2.3 Objective 3: Monitoring and Management planning

Monitor management results is achieving the site vision.

Review the management regularly and amend work plan as appropriate to ensure site vision is achieved.

6.0 Maintenance Prescriptions

The following detailed prescriptions are designed to manage the site features to deliver the site vision and objectives. The management is not set in stone and must be reviewed and updated based on evidence observed on site, so that management is in response to the observed condition or any environmental change.

Key to terms used within the prescriptions and work programme

GMC	Greenspace Management Contractor
FoKP	Friends of Kew Pond
LBRuT	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
NCC	Nature Conservation Contractor

6.1 Objective 1: Nature conservation

Prescription details	Description
1. Shrub and tree maintenance ***Responsibility:*** *NCC*	Tasks - Regularly coppice trees and shrubs growing from the banks and walls of Kew Pond. - Remove any exotic species present and use stump treatment to prevent regrowth. - Plant 1x alder buckthorn *(Frangula alnus)* shrub in the central island. Considerations - Works should be carried out outside of bird nesting season unless a pre-works bird nesting survey has been conducted by an Ecologist. - All stems must be cut to ground level to avoid creating any trip hazards.
2. Marginal vegetation management ***Responsibility:*** *NCC*	Tasks - Remove emergent marginal vegetation (in particular common reed and flag iris) growing out into the open water beyond the boundary of retaining structures (including the banks of the central island).

	- Remove self-sown common reed seedlings from western boundary vegetation bed. - Thin-out the dominant lesser pond sedge from western boundary vegetation bed. Considerations - Works during summer months should only be carried out once a pre-works bird nesting survey has been conducted by an Ecologist. - Care must be taken not to damage retaining structures. - All arisings should be taken off site.
3. Silt management ***Responsibility:*** *LBRuT/FoKP*	Tasks - Identify a cost-effective solution for ongoing management of silt levels in Kew Pond, seeking external funding to facilitate works where necessary. Considerations - Recent prices obtained for silt removal at Kew Pond have been beyond the currently available financial resources of the Council. - It is not currently known when the pond was last completely desilted.

	- Extreme care must be taken not to damage the concrete lining of the pond during silt removal. - Silt removal must take place during the winter months, outside of the bird nesting and amphibian breeding seasons. - It is considered that the build-up of silt is likely a key cause of duckweed and algae growth in Kew Pond. However, intermediary treatments for these problems such as the addition of lime or barley straw should be considered as necessary on a yearly basis by the Friends of Kew Pond.

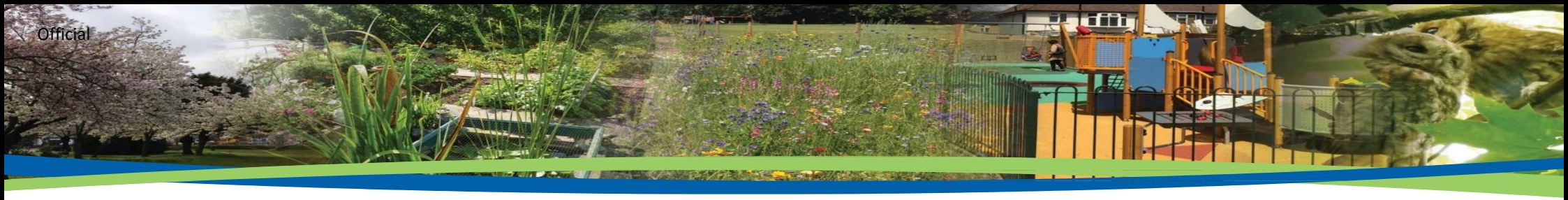
6.2 Objective 2: Amenity value

Prescription details	Description
4. Pond filling ***Responsibility:*** *FoKP*	Tasks - Fill pond at monthly intervals from the River Thames. A description of the procedure can be found in Appendix 4. Considerations - Additional filling may be required during summer months.

5. Leaf clearance ***Responsibility:*** *GMC*	Tasks - Remove leaf-litter from western pond margin and access ramp during autumn and early winter, carrying out two visits prior to the new year.
6. Maintain boundaries, check site and structures ***Responsibility:*** *NCC*	Tasks - Carry out weeding along pond edges, around access ramp and along western boundary, where plants and shrubs grow through gaps in the concrete. Considerations - Infrastructure and signage should be checked regularly, and any defects reported to the Appropriate Council Officer within 7 days unless urgent.
7. Litter collection ***Responsibility:*** *GMC, NCC*	Tasks - Litter picks to be carried out on a regular basis, any large / hazardous items or fly tip to be reported to Appropriate Council Officer within 24 hours.

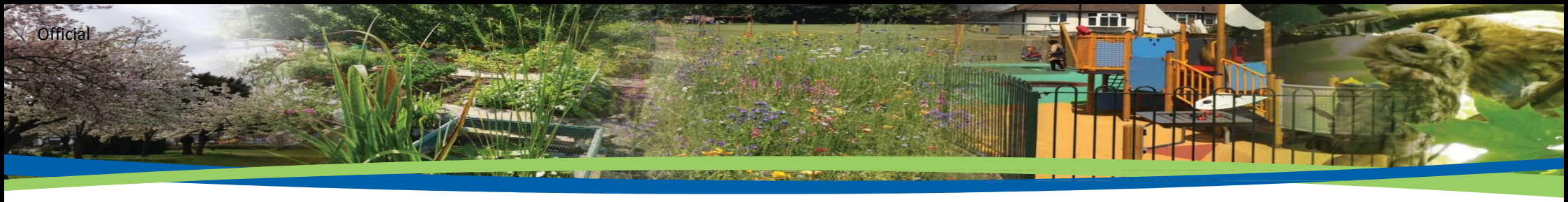
6.3 Objective 3: Monitoring and Management Planning

Prescription details	Description
8. Review management and work plans ***Responsibility:*** *LBRuT/NCC/FoKP*	Tasks - Twice yearly site visits will be undertaken with the Appropriate Council Officer and NCC to assess work progress and any issues encountered. - At the end of each calendar year, the Management Plan and Work Programme will be reviewed and updated as necessary.



6.4 Table 1 – Kew Pond Work programme 2026 – 2030

Prescription	Priority	Year					Usual Timing	Lead resource	Prescription details	Comments
		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030				
P1: Shrub and tree maintenance	**2**	✓		✓		✓	Oct – Feb	**NCC**	Coppice young trees sprouting from banks and walls of Kew Pond. Plant alder buckthorn shrub in central island.	Consider impacts to nesting birds
P2: Marginal vegetation management	**1**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Sep – Feb	**NCC**	Remove marginal vegetation growing out into the open water. Thin-out lesser pond sedge and remove self-sown reed seedlings from western boundary vegetation.	Consider impacts to nesting birds
P3: Silt management	**1**	✓					Oct – Feb	**LBRuT FoKP**	Identify a cost-effective solution for ongoing management of silt levels in Kew Pond.	



P4: Pond filling	**1**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly	**FoKP**	Fill pond at monthly intervals from the River Thames.	Additional fill when necessary
P5: Leaf clearance	**1**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Nov – Dec	**GMC**	Remove leaf-litter from western pond margin and access ramp.	Minimum 2 visits per year.
P6: Maintain boundaries, check site and structures	**1**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All year	**NCC**	Carry out weeding along pond edges, around access ramp and along western boundary.	
P7: Litter collection	**1**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All year	**NCC GMC**	Litter pick when on site, any sharps/inappropriate/ large/bulky litter and fly tipping to be reported to Appropriate Council Officer.	
P8: Review management plan and work programme	**1**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Nov	**LBRuT NCC FoKP**	Biannual site meeting to discuss progress. Annual review of management plan prescriptions.	

6.5 Priority levels

1 – Very important for the maintenance of the key habitats, species or visitor amenity

(i.e. annual meadow cut) and should reflect the bare minimum of what should be achieved each year.

2 – Of secondary importance to the key tasks, to be done if more time / resources are available (i.e. coppicing / thinning a secondary woodland boundary to a meadow, or additional survey work); priority 2 tasks could become 1s if not completed for a number of years.

3 – Luxury, wish list tasks: nice to do but not important if resources are not available; these items might become priority 2s over time if not completed but are unlikely ever to reach priority 1 unless significant change in other factors.

7.0 Management Map

8.0 References

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9.0 Appendices

Appendix 1
Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan, habitats and species relevant to Kew Pond, [online] available at - FINAL-RBAP-2025-2_compressed-2.pdf

Appendix 2
Richmond Council Nature Conservation Policy [online] available at https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/16895/lbrut_nature_conservation_policy.pdf

Appendix 3
Kew Pond and Kew Green SINC designation

Site Reference:	RiB23
Site Name:	Kew Pond and Kew Green
Summary:	Kew Green has some rare plants in its short turf, and the pond and churchyard add to the wildlife habitats.
Grid ref:	TQ 189 775
Area (ha):	5.4
Borough(s):	Richmond upon Thames
Habitat(s):	Acid grassland, Flower beds, Pond/lake, Ruderal, Vegetated wall/tombstones
Access:	Free public access (all/most of site)
Ownership:	Diocese of Southwark and London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Site Description:

Kew Green is a picturesque village green, with the old church of St Anne in its centre and an attractive pond across the road. Although the green is very short-

mown, its acid grassland supports several plants which are rare in London, including knotted, rough, clustered and subterranean clovers (Trifolium striatum, T. scabrum, T. glomeratum and T. subterraneum), lesser chickweed (Stellaria neglecta), fiddle dock (Rumex pulcher) and blinks (Montia fontana). It has been suggested that at least some of these have been accidentally introduced by staff from the nearby Royal Botanic Gardens, but it seems much more likely that they occur here naturally, though the large number of botanists regularly ctrossing the green has certainly ensured that these, mostly rather small, plants have been discovered.

St Anne's churchyard also attracts botanists, to see the large number of unusual non-native flowers which are naturalised here. These include perennial rocket (Sisymbrium strictissimum), pokeweed (Phytolacca sp.) and annual valerian (Centranthus calcitrape).

Kew Pond is rectangular in shape with brick sides. A good variety of emergent vegetation has become established in the margins, assisted by the creation of soil-filled berms behind sand bags at the water's edge. These include galingale (Cyperus longus), soft rush (Juncus effusus0, greater spearwort (Ranunculus lingua), purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) and yellow iris (Iris pseudacorus). Three small islands have been created in the pond and willows have been planted on the largest one. Common waterfowl, including mallards, moorhens and tufted ducks, nest on the islands.

Site first notified: 01/01/1993

Boundary last changed: 01/01/1993

Citation last edited: 15/01/2007 **Mayor Agreed:**

Defunct: N **Last Updated:** 11/08/2021

Appendix 4
Kew Pond filling regime

Kew Pond has no natural inflow. To compensate for evaporation and leakage it is necessary to top up from the Thames at approximately monthly intervals. This is achieved by opening a series of valves that connect to the Thames through an underground pipe. For the past thirty years this has been done by volunteers, while the Council has kept oversight and maintained the valves.

The procedures for pond filling were agreed with the Council in 1982. These procedures have been upgraded in line with current health and safety practice and are set out below together with a risk analysis.

The basic procedure requires opening a flap valve on the river foreshore at low tide on the selected day, opening two valves adjacent to the pond on the immediately following high tide and filling the pond. The two pond valves are closed immediately, and at the next convenient low tide the foreshore flap valve is closed.

1. Select a day when high tide is estimated to be between 6.7 and 7 metres and when the subsequent high tide is not more than 7.2 metres. Both high tides and the immediately preceding low tide must occur in daylight for safety reasons. Do not fill at a higher tide as this may cause local flooding.

2. Tide levels can be determined from the Handbook of Tide Tables and Port Information which is updated yearly and available from the Port of London Authority.

3. The tide level and time should be estimated from the figures given in advance from London Bridge. Add one hour to the high tide time and three hours to the low tide time for levels at Kew Bridge. On the day of the filling, it is useful to double-check the figures with those given by the PLA for Brentford Lock.

4. Monthly filling dates are determined quarterly by the Friends of Kew Pond and summarized in a form distributed to all members and the council.

5. If exceptionally high tides, floods or storm warnings are in place, the filling should be postponed.

6. At the low tide immediately preceding the selected high tide, a team opens the river valve on the river foreshore. This requires descending concrete steps 50 metres downstream of the valve, crossing the foreshore and manually lifting and securing the valve with the chain provided.

7. For security, a team of three is always needed: two people to cross the foreshore and secure the valve, and one person to remain at the bottom of the steps, equipped with a mobile phone, to ring the emergency services and provide the area postcode if a member of the team falls or otherwise requires assistance. A rope is provided to assist the descent of the often-slippery steps. The team should also wear suitable footwear (gumboots), use walking poles and carry a buoyancy aid.

8. At high tide, the pond valve adjacent to 50B Kew Green is opened, followed by the sluice valve at the pond's edge. Valve Keys have been provided for the purpose by the council, and are stored at 40 Kew Green. These handles are heavy and take some strength to operate. At least one member of the team must be physically capable of doing this task.

9. As it fills, the pond should be monitored by the team. Normally the sluice valve, followed by the second pond valve is closed when visual inflow ceases. This normally takes about 20 minutes. The pond level should not be allowed to exceed a freeboard of 20 cm or the road risks localised flooding.

10. If any problem is encountered with fully closing the two pond valves the emergency services should immediately be contacted. In this case it is the fire brigade.

11. The river valve is closed at the next convenient low tide, taking the same precautions as for the opening. This operation should take place in daylight so one more high tide will usually have passed before closing, however the two pond valves ensure there is no breach of the flood defenses.