

Chesham Bois, Bricky Pond

Management Advice update, September 2025



Bricky Pond in
September 2025

Client: Chesham Bois Parish Council

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1 Introduction

This management advice should be read in conjunction with the Management Advice report produced in September 2022 (BBOWT, 2022). Sections taken from that report are highlighted in blue.

The pond was revisited by the same author in September 2025, after an exceptionally dry period and the hottest summer on record (Met Office, 2025). September's weather has been much wetter, with above average rainfall for the first part of the month.

Concerns have been raised to the Parish Council about summer water levels and the amount of vegetation and silt in the pond.

2 Management recommendations

2.1 General description

Bricky Pond is in remarkably good condition despite the hot and dry summer of 2025. The Parish Council has been working hard to deliver the management plan by removing non-native invasives like the Cherry Laurel and undertake occasional vegetation removal.

The water level is as high as would be expected at this time of year – many similar ponds are still very dry.

The amount of vegetation in the pond has certainly increased since a previous visit in March 2022 (see figure 1) but this is to be expected and is good for wildlife. The area of open water is still significant. There is a good mix of aquatic and marginal plant species.

Ad hoc analysis by the Parish Council has indicated that the pond's nutrient status is low, which is a good thing.



Figure 1: Bricky Pond in March 2022 (top) and Sept 2025. Note the increase in emergent vegetation like Yellow Iris and Plicate Sweet-grass

2.2 Drying out

2025 was the hottest summer on record, and exceptionally dry. This is likely to be a continuing trend, with hot summers becoming the norm.

Like every other natural pond, Bricky Pond became very dry this summer. This is not necessarily a negative outcome for a wildlife pond.

The following advice stands from the 2022 report:

Fluctuating water levels in a pond are not necessarily a problem. All ponds will dry to some extent, creating wildlife-rich drawdown zones (see feature four). Wildlife is able to cope with an almost completely dry pond, and drying can ensure that fish are unable to colonise (a good thing for a wildlife pond). If the pond dries completely, there is a chance that the clay bottom will dry and crack, causing it to be ineffective in holding water in the future. It is likely, however, that this pond sits on a thick layer of natural clay, rather than just a thin liner.

The pond should not be topped up with mains water. Mains water contains nutrients (like phosphates and nitrates) and disinfectants (like chlorine and chloramines), all of which are damaging to the sensitive plant communities. Mains water is also a valuable resource which should be used sparingly. The pond is likely to be sited on a patch of relatively deep clay, so cracking should not be an issue. The pond will recover naturally once it starts to rain again.

Ponds with good quality water are essential for aquatic wildlife, but they are also important for terrestrial mammals and birds as a source of drinking water during hot spells.

Ponds are also an important amenity for people to enjoy, especially during the hot summer.

Recommendation 1: Continue to allow the pond to dry out naturally in dry weather.

Recommendation 2: Create an alternative water source for terrestrial mammals and birds which can be topped up with mains water. This could be a shallow trough or similar buried into the ground. Care should be taken to ensure that it is safe for visitors to the common and for small mammals like Hedgehogs.

2.3 Vegetation management

The vegetation in the pond has increased significantly since 2022 (see figure 1) but is well within acceptable limits for a wildlife pond. Importantly, terrestrial plants like willow have not started to encroach.

The variegated Reed is of concern as this can be very invasive if not kept in check. As much of this should be removed as possible.

It would be worthwhile keeping on top of the vegetation pulling (ideally), or cutting and disposing of it as per the 2022 report:

The vegetation is currently at about the right amount but, in the future, the pond may benefit from regular maintenance to keep the more aggressive plants from becoming too dominant. The Yellow Iris can be cut before it sets seed, but the bulk of the work should take place in autumn or winter. This can be undertaken annually by cutting or pulling vegetation from the pond. The vegetation can be removed on a rotation, by clearing one eighth of the vegetation from the middle to the edge, like slices of pie. An adjacent 'slice of pie' can be cleared the following year. Cut the vegetation with a sickle or slasher, or pull the vegetation using a 'crome' (aka a drag fork) to pull the vegetation to the side of the pond and pile it close to the edge of the pond to allow pond wildlife to return to the pond. The pile of vegetation will, ideally, be removed from site for composting after a few weeks.

Recommendation 3: Every year, **cut** the Yellow Iris in August, or after it has flowered and before it is able to set seed, and remove all cut vegetation.

Recommendation 4: Every year, **pull** one third of the tall emergent vegetation, including the Yellow Iris, from the pond, especially at the western end. Pulling it will remove a lot of the root matter.

Recommendation 5: Every year, pull as much of the variegated Reed from the pond and dispose of it well away from the pond. This may require an excavator.

Recommendation 6: Every year, pull one eighth of the other aquatic vegetation from the rest of the pond.

Cut and pulled vegetation can be disposed of at a composting facility or anaerobic digester plant.

2.4 Surrounding trees

Neighbouring trees shade the pond and inhibit the growth of certain plants and cool the water, reducing its value for certain wildlife. As summers become increasingly hot, however, some shade can be beneficial to maintain a cooler water temperature and higher oxygen levels.

As the Ash trees around the pond succumb to Ash Dieback, they should be removed for public safety and not replaced. A similar level of tree cover to present levels should be maintained by cutting back any encroaching trees and scrub.

2.5 Desilting and relining

Most of the water lost from Brick Pond during hot summers is through evaporation. Making the base of the pond more waterproof will therefore make no difference to the fluctuating water level. The speed at which the pond has refilled since the start of September demonstrates that the base is waterproof.

Removing silt is an expensive undertaking and should only be carried out if absolutely necessary. The depth of the pond is currently favourable, so there is no urgency to undertake dramatic and expensive work.

Desilting the pond should be undertaken when amphibians are not using the pond and when water levels are lowest, ie late summer or early autumn.

Ideally, wait for another dry year and undertake the work then.

Only remove silt from up to one third of the pond each year, leaving the remainder to ensure that the vegetation can recover.

When desilting the pond, the original profile of the clay should not be altered – only silt should be removed. If in doubt, remove less material.

A long-armed excavator or a smaller excavator with low-pressure tracks should be used to avoid damage to the pond base.

The silt should be removed and disposed of appropriately. A [waste exemption](#) is likely to be required.

Recommendation 7: Wait for another dry year before removing silt, and follow the guidance above.

2.6 Monitoring

Simple monitoring of environmental factors will help determine whether the condition of the pond is improving or declining.

Two survey techniques can be used to identify problems:

Freshwater Watch **water quality surveying** will identify problems with nutrient enrichment. You can [sign up as an individual](#) to get access to the recording app and supplies for quarterly monitoring.

Fixed point photography is a great way to monitor the amount of vegetation in the pond. Three photos can be taken at a similar time of year (late September). See figure 2 for the location of vantage points. Photos from 2025 are in appendix 1.

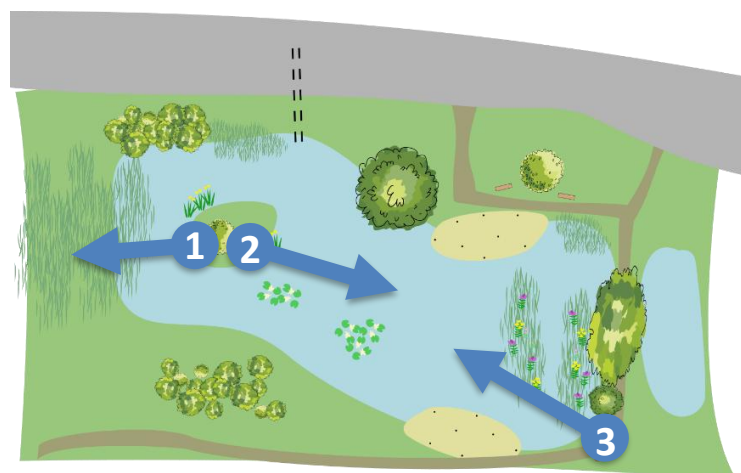


Figure 2: Location and direction of fixed point photographs to be taken annually in late September.

3 Appendix 1: 2025 Fixed Point Photographs

Taken 24th of September 2025

Bricky Pond FPP. Location 1. 24/9/25



Bricky Pond FPP. Location 2. 24/9/25



Bricky Pond FPP. Location 3. 24/9/25



4 References

BBOWT, 2022: BRICKY POND, CHESHAM BOIS. MANAGEMENT ADVICE. A report prepared by the BBOWT Land Advice Service, September 2022

Met Office, 2025: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/blog/2025/how-does-summer-2025-compare-to-summer-1976>