

MADELEY PITMOUNDS LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Formal Consultation with Natural England under
Section 21(6) of the National Parks & Access to the
Countryside Act 1949

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1. INTRODUCTION

Telford and Wrekin Council proposes to declare a declare a statutory Local Nature Reserve in Telford under the provisions of Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to be known as 'Madeley Pitmounds Local Nature Reserve'. The principle of this proposal was agreed by the Cabinet of Telford and Wrekin Council at their meeting on XXXX. A formal consultation with Natural England is required by Section 21(6) of this Act. This document contains the information for this consultation as identified by Natural England (Appendix 3, *Local Nature Reserves in England: a guide to their selection and declaration*, Natural England 2010).

2. INFORMATION TO SUPPORT FORMAL CONSULTATION

a. Site name

Madeley Pitmounds Local Nature Reserve

b. District and County

Borough of Telford and Wrekin
Shropshire

c. Proposed declaring authority

Telford and Wrekin Council

d. Area in hectares

Approximately 44ha

e. Map showing site location

Madeley Pitmounds LNR comprises naturally recolonised and revegetated pitmounds in the Civic Parish of Madeley: Blists Hill Pitmound, Hills Lane Pitmound, Madeley Court Pitmounds, Meadow Pit Mound and Tweedale Pitmounds.
General location ([Appendix 1](#))

f. Maps showing site boundaries

The specific location and boundary maps of each of the constituent parts of the LNR are shown in Appendices 2 – 6

Blists Hill Pitmound	(6.8ha)	-	Appendix 2
Hills Lane Pitmound	(2ha)	-	Appendix 3
Madeley Court Pitmounds	(17.6ha)	-	Appendix 4
Meadow Pitmound	(6.7ha)	-	Appendix 5
Tweedale Pitmounds	(10.5ha)	-	Appendix 6

g. Site ownership

Telford and Wrekin Council own the freehold of all the constituent parts of the proposed LNR and this is vested in **the Neighbourhood & Leisure Services and the Regeneration & Investment Portfolios.**

[\(Appendix 7\)](#)

h. Description of the habitats and species of interest based on a full survey of habitat types

The characteristic woodland developed through natural succession is of Oak and Birch with wavy-hair grass a dominant feature of the ground flora. Birch is a pioneer species of bare ground but there is a tendency for it to disappear from the canopy with age due to its inability to germinate in layers of leaf litter. Oak can germinate in deep leaf litter and becomes more dominant in time. Much of the birch on pitmounds is currently in mature stages of growth and other species are beginning to colonise the wooded pitmounds.

Blists Hill Pitmound

A pitmound of thin acidic shales lying adjacent to Legges Way with characteristic flattish top – with a varied microtopography of hollow and hummock - and steep sides. A section of the Shropshire Union canal runs along the eastern side. To the east of the canal, there is an extensive spoilheap bounded to the east by Sutton Way.

A habitat survey and desk study was undertaken in 1994 by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust for Telford & Wrekin Council ([Appendix 8](#)). The report describes much of the site as oak/birch woodland that has naturally regenerated. The pitmound is understood to have been associated with the Shawfield Colliery which closed in 1916. The 1902 edition of the 6” Ordnance Survey map shows the colliery already disused at this date. The 1928 Ordnance Survey map shows both coniferous and deciduous trees as being present which supports the anecdotal reports of tree planting in the 1920s.

The report describes the dominant tree as being Scots pine with birch and oak (many of which are multi-stemmed suggested previous coppicing) with a ground flora as containing wavy hair-grass with some heather and bilberry – the woodland community is assigned to the oak/birch/wavy hair-grass W16 woodland community of the National Vegetation Classification.

By 2008, it is evident that the vegetation is undergoing a natural succession to a more mixed oak woodland (pedunculate oak/bracken/bramble W10 woodland in the NVC) (*John Box, April 2008*). There is still much evidence of birch dominated oak/birch woodland with holly and Scots pine and with wavy hair-grass and patches of heather in the ground flora. The Scots pine is more on the slopes than the top of the pitmound. There is an excellent woodland structure with much regeneration of oak, beech, yew, holly, wild cherry, hawthorn, rowan and ash. The soils are clearly derived from coal spoil.

There are few areas left in Madeley Parish which support the oak/birch W16 woodland so characteristic of pitmounds with acid coal spoils as there is a natural progression on the Telford pitmounds to the more mixed species, oak dominated W10 woodland characteristic of richer, less acidic soils.

A short section of the disused Shropshire Union canal along the eastern side is a mixture of open water, fen, marsh and wet woodland as a result of natural succession.

The spoilheap lying between the canal and Sutton Way has clay soils and supports mixed woodland with much hawthorn and very little birch. Oak, hawthorn, goat willow, ash and occasional dogwood together with extensive areas of bramble are typical of the natural regeneration on clay spoilheaps in Telford.

Hills Lane Pitmound

A thin layer of loam covers clay spoil materials to create a pitmound with a flat top and steep sides. The geology is middle productive coal measures - the pitmound is associated with the Hills Lane Mine.

A habitat survey and desk study was undertaken in 1994 by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust for Telford & Wrekin Council ([Appendix 9](#)). Much of the site is oak/birch woodland that has naturally regenerated since the colliery closed at the end of the 19th century. The colliery is shown as being disused on the 1902 edition of the OS and pitmound is shown as being open spoil material on the 1928 edition of the OS. This suggests that natural succession was slow which may be due to acidic colliery spoil. The woodland is described in the report as being dominated by oak and birch with a ground flora that contains wavy hair-grass with some heather – a classic acid oak/birch woodland typical of acidic soils (W16 woodland).

By 2008, it is evident that the vegetation is undergoing a natural succession to a more mixed oak woodland (W10 woodland) with hawthorn starting to spread as well as occasional yew, ash, an area with raspberry, patches of ivy, bramble and coarse grasses (cock's-foot, Yorkshire fog) – particularly on the top of the mound where the accumulation of a litter layer would be greatest (*John Box, April 2008*).

There are few areas left in Madeley Parish which support the oak/birch W16 woodland so characteristic of pitmounds with acid coal spoils as there is a natural progression on the Telford pitmounds to the more mixed species, oak dominated W10 woodland characteristic of richer, less acidic soils.

The southern half of the eastern slope must have been structure planted with shrubs, roses etc. some 20 years ago.

Madeley Court Pitmounds

There are several spoil heaps visible in land around Madeley Court – all associated with the Court Collieries (17 pits sunk) thought to have been abandoned in 1910.

The pitmound to the southwest is a classic steep-sided pitmound with a flat top, although the topography is much more varied at the NE end. The pitmounds to the northeast is separated into two parts by the Silkin Way with the mound generally having steep sides and a flattish top. The two pitmounds are joined by a narrow woodland corridor with a central track that falls steeply on the NW side to a small watercourse.

A habitat survey and desk study of the Madeley Court Pitmounds was undertaken in 1994 by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust for Telford & Wrekin Council ([Appendix 10](#)). Subsequently, the Shropshire Wildlife Trust undertook a further survey in 1997 to prepare a management brief for the Madeley Court Wildlife Site ([Appendix 11](#)). Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership record of UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species identifies the presence of Grass Snakes and Snipe.

The woodland of the southwest pitmound is described in the 1994 report as being relatively diverse, whereas the woodland on the northeast pitmound is described as containing fewer shrub species. Both pitmounds are described as containing elements of both W10 and W16 woodland communities.

The 1882 OS shows the southern part of the southwest pitmound already covered in a mixture of conifers and deciduous trees with working shafts shown as present on the rest of the mound. It is understood that some of the trees were planted as a deliberate programme of regeneration. The 1902 OS shows the whole of the southwest pitmound as being planted. The 1928 OS shows the northeast pitmound under woodland cover.

In 2008, the southwest pitmound western end is a mixed woodland dominated by oak but with birch, sweet chestnut (a surprising amount), hawthorn, rowan and sycamore (W10 woodland) (*John Box, June 2008*). There is a good woodland structure and good regeneration especially by sweet chestnut and sycamore. There is a remnant of a bank & ditch along the foot of the slope for a hundred metres or so at the northwestern part – perhaps marking an old boundary which could not be tipped over. The woodland appears to have developed on colliery spoil.

The northeastern part contains two different woodlands. West of the Silkin way there is oak dominated woodland with birch, sweet chestnut and elder. East of the Silkin Way the woodland has ash, sycamore, oak, birch, Scots pine with bramble and ferns – this may well be on a clay spoil as indicated by the greater abundance of ash and the decreased abundance of oak and birch.

Meadow Pit Mound

A pitmound with distinctive flat top and steep sides formed from pit waste materials – clay, coal shale, and ironstone. There are many internal mounds and gullies and much variation in levels.

A habitat survey and desk study was undertaken in 1994 by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust for Telford & Wrekin Council ([Appendix 12](#)). The woodland at the western end is described as being oak/birch woodland with wavy hair-grass, some mature heather and bilberry similar in character to the W16 oak/birch/wavy hair-grass woodland. The report suggests that the rest of the woodland would be similar had it not been modified by coniferous planting.

The report states that the pitmound belonged to the Meadow Pit which closed in 1921. A large part was planted with conifers, believed to be during the time of the Depression, in the 1930s. The western part was not planted with conifers and has developed into oak/birch woodland.

In 2008, the western end is a very open oak/birch woodland (W16 woodland in the NVC) with holly, rowan, wild cherry, whilst the middle is a more complex mixed woodland with brambles (W10 woodland) and the eastern end is a mixture of both woodland types (*John Box, April 2008*). Patches of ramsons with ash and sycamore suggest the more base-rich W8 woodland in places. Mixtures of W10 and W16 woodland communities are typical of the pitmounds and spoilheaps in Telford which are derived from the Carboniferous coalfields with their coals, clays and limestones. The western end appears to be colliery spoils whilst the middle and eastern sections are more of a mixture of coal and clay materials (and even areas of burnt ash).

There are areas with wavy hair-grass on the steep sides. Patches of bilberry (around six) are present in the NW corner on the top plateau but near to the slope. Both species are indicative of W16 woodland.

Scots pine is mainly at the eastern end and on the slopes in the NW bordering Park Street and the west end. This is presumed to have been planted in the 1920s/30s.

The central and eastern areas on the top have a lot of bramble, nettle and ground elder indicative of nutrient-enrichment and more base-rich soils.

Tweedale Pitmounds

These two pitmounds are dominated by oak/birch woodland that has naturally regenerated on the two main spoil heaps now separated by the access road to the caravan site. Both pitmounds have a flat plateau with steep sides which is very evident on the north and east slopes; on the western side the slopes are much more complex with varying topography of slopes, large gullies and flat areas.

A habitat survey and desk study of the Tweedale Pitmounds was undertaken in 1994 by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust for Telford & Wrekin Council ([Appendix 13](#)). Subsequently, the Shropshire Wildlife Trust undertook a further survey in 1997 to prepare a management brief for the Tweedale Woods Wildlife Site ([Appendix 14](#)).

The woodland is described in both reports as being dominated by oak and birch with a ground flora that contains wavy hair-grass – a classic acid oak/birch woodland typical of acidic soils. The woodland of the northern pitmound was supplemented by plantings of sweet chestnut, Scots pine and larch in the 1920/1930s. The woodlands are described as being similar to the oak/birch/wavy hair-grass W16 woodland with some areas more typical of the oak/bracken/bramble W10 woodland. There is an area of semi-improved grassland in the northwest of the site that is reverting to scrub due to natural succession. There are occasional species records going back to 1983 including Dingy Skipper, Grass Snake, and Adder (UK BAP Species).

By 2008, it is evident that the vegetation is undergoing a natural succession to a more mixed oak woodland (W10 woodland) although it is still dominated by oak and birch (*John Box, July 2008*). There is sweet chestnut on the northern mound (which is regenerating in the shrub layer) and a small area of Scots pine in the southwest part of the pitmound. The southern pitmound has occasional Scots pine, but does have a small area of rhododendron and has areas with remnants of wavy hair-grass in the ground flora. The ground flora of both pitmounds is mainly dominated by bramble with bracken and honeysuckle.

The 1994 report suggests that the two pitmounds belonged to the Halesfield Colliery which produced mainly ironstone until 1912 when the Blists Hill furnaces closed down. However, the Halesfield Colliery was linked underground to the Kemberton Colliery and coal continued to be produced until 1920/25.

The 1928 OS shows the southern pitmound connected by a tramway to the Kemberton Colliery and it appears to be in use as it is shown as bare spoil. The northern pitmound is shown on this OS as being covered with both conifers and deciduous trees.

Note: UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) lists Priority Species for conservation action. The Shropshire BAP contains species action plans for the species in the Birds and Lepidoptera taxonomic group identified above, but there are no action plans for the Reptiles and Amphibians species locally recorded. The botanical, bird and mammal data recorded for these sites is limited and needs to be updated.

i. Description of geological features

The wooded pitmounds of Madeley are a characteristic feature and major landscape structural element within which significant ecological diversity and habitats can be conserved and enhanced.

The pitmounds are associated with coal and clay workings that are now recolonised by nature.

Madeley lies on the Coalbrookdale Field – a carboniferous coalfield with its associated layers of clay and ironstone all extensively mined.

During the medieval period local limestone was being quarried and outcrop coal was being extracted. By the late 16th Century iron was being produced at a number of bloomery furnaces in the area and local clays were being used for tile and pottery manufacture.

The spoil deposited is mainly acidic in character and comprises clays and shales, although the presence of some dogwood, yew, and common spotted orchids on some pitmounds indicates that some of the spoil is base-rich. However, more generally, the acidic nature of the spoil materials leads to the development of ‘Mor’ soils or podzols which characteristically have a thin litter layer with little incorporation of organic material and is base-poor.

The woodlands are the result of the process of natural recolonisation of the mining spoil by vegetation over a period of time creating deciduous woodland – although some sites have been artificially planted with coniferous (Blists Hill and Meadow Pit) and broadleaved trees (Madeley Court and Tweedale).

Its present character is a patchwork of small relic landscapes, pitmounds, railways and canals contrasted against modern housing and industry of the New Town. The wooded pitmounds are almost all that remains as evidence of past industrial activity and are, therefore, locally important features in their own right.

j. Description of the value of the site for its natural features

The Madeley Pitmounds LNR contains two County Wildlife Sites:

- a) the greater part of the Madeley Court County Wildlife Site ([Appendix 15](#)), with the exception of the waterbodies which are owned by Severn Trent Water.
- b) the Tweedale Woods County Wildlife Site ([Appendix 16](#)).

Most of the component parts of the Madeley Pitmounds LNR were formally recognised for their local nature conservation value by designation as a Site of Ecological Value (SOEV) in 1984 (*Sites of Ecological Value in Telford*, May 1984, Telford Nature Conservation Project, Stirchley Grange, Telford). This is a non-statutory designation for locally important sites, equivalent to a third tier in relation to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and County Wildlife Sites. The pitmounds designated as SOEV in 1984 included:

- a) Blists Hill Pitmound as part of the Blists Hill SOEV
- b) Meadow Pit Mound as part of the Meadow Pit Colliery SOEV
- c) Madeley Court Pitmound as part of the Madeley Court SOEV
- d) Tweedale Pitmounds as the Tweedale Woods SOEV

The whole of the Madeley Pitmounds LNR is part of the “Green Network”, a land-use designation in the current Wrekin Local Plan 1995 – 2006 (adopted 2000) which includes open spaces and land that has a collective value for ecology and nature conservation, recreation, access, and visual quality.

Madeley Pitmounds LNR is an excellent example of the nationally important series of pitmounds and spoilheaps throughout Telford that have been reclaimed by nature. The most striking impression is the similarity of species composition of each pitmound. The similarity of the vegetation is a reflection of the same spoil materials being brought to the surface as the collieries worked the same coal, clay and ironstone seams albeit in different locations. The pit mounds and spoil heaps which have revegetated with heathland, scrub and woodland are well-loved and characteristic landscape features. They support a complex series of wildlife habitats which are the result of interactions between the chemistry of the various spoil materials and the age of the pit-mounds. Ground flora have localised differences due to slope, aspect, substrate materials and drainage patterns. The Madeley Pitmounds generally support oak/birch woodland indicative of more acid soils typical of colliery spoils.

k. Description of the value of the site to schools (and community)

As well as a high level of free ongoing recreational use of sites by individuals and groups there are programmes of local community involvement co-ordinated by the South Telford Rights of Way Partnership . Their 'Young Explorers' project links with local primary schools to provide a varied programme of active "out of classroom education" linked to the National Curriculum. Pupils engaged on a nature walk across Blists Hill Pitmound sighted both **grass snake** and **slow worm**.

The links between Madeley Pitmounds LNR sites and local schools are recognised in the commitment to Forest School practice (learning in a woodland environment) by both Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School and Woodlands Primary School which use Blists Hill Pitmound and Meadow Pitmound respectively as 'outdoor classroom' facilities.

In recognition of the environmental work achieved, Sir Alexander Fleming Primary school has been awarded permanent Eco Green Flag status. Woodlands School currently has Silver Eco Status and is aiming to achieve 'Green Flag' status rewarding a high standard in environmental activities and recognising a key role in the development of biodiversity in the local area.

Themed and special interest walks are also provided for a variety and range of community groups – eg: Families in Telford, Primetime, Carers, Active Retirement.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust 'Telford and Wrekin Green Gym' offers people an alternative way to improve their health and wellbeing by getting involved in practical environmental activities and are active on sites (Blists Hill Pitmound and Madeley Court Pitmounds) improving accessibility through a programme of infrastructure works commissioned by South Telford Rights of Way Partnership and sponsored by Madeley Town Council. This work has been supplemented by Landau - a supported employment and work-related training organisation (Hills Lane Pitmound).

Madeley Town Council, Living History Project, organises themed educational and cultural walks (Madeley Court) based on the historic natural environment – its landscape, industrial past, listed buildings, ancient monuments – befitting the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site status accorded the civic Parish (in part, including Blists Hill Pitmound). Such a walk at Madeley Court Pitmounds recorded the presence of **Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-Eared, Noctule, and Daubenton bats**

Madeley Court Pitmounds has an environmental sculpture trail that was designed by pupils at the former Madeley Court School (now Madeley Academy) and created in c. 2005 using two local artists who worked with the pupils.

I. Description of the value of the sites as places in which local people can enjoy contact with nature

Walkers take advantage of local routes that are in close proximity to significant residential areas (the population of Madeley civic parish is 17,631 – 2011 census) and with links to strategic and promoted recreational routes.

Madeley Pitmounds LNR sites are used as a basis for walking programmes (*see previous paragraph*) and events. Madeley Town Council organizes an annual Madeley Ramble based on the extensive public Rights of Way network within the civic parish. South Telford Rights of Way Partnership has published “Nature Walks” booklets – a discovery guide through some of the special wildlife sites and naturally wooded pitmounds in Madeley.

Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust, Walking for Health, informed participants that walks were “within easy reach of Madeley, Sutton Hill and Woodside. All these routes are close to home yet give you the opportunity to experience some great views, some peace and quiet, and maybe even see some of our local wildlife. All this plus you get to enjoy a healthy walk!”

The component parts of Madeley Pitmounds LNR are used by the public for informal access to differing degrees with Blists Hill Pitmound, Meadow Pit Mound and the western part of Tweedale Pitmounds being used to a greater extent than Hills Lane Pitmound and the eastern part of Tweedale Pitmounds. There are many well-marked paths that clearly demonstrate informal access for a range of activities.

Blists Hill Pitmound contains remnants of the former Shropshire Canal – its towpath now used as a main walk route connecting Madeley Park with Blists Hill Victorian Town (Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust). Blists Hill Pitmound lies to the east of Legges Way and directly west of the pitmound are Bartlett Gardens which is the site of the new Madeley Community Orchard that contains a wealth of new fruit trees. Access to the Community Orchard is from Legges Way and locals and tourists can easily visit both sites in an afternoon.

Madeley Court Pitmounds are one of the most visited sites by local people from Woodside according to the NeighbourWoods Study undertaken in 2002 by Leeds Metropolitan University. As a result, a partnership of organisations including Telford & Wrekin Council, South Telford Rights of Way Partnership, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, Green Wood Centre and Madeley Town Council has undertaken a variety of environmental improvements. Access to the Madeley Court Pitmounds has been improved and a woodland walk has been created using a ‘Woodlands for Health’ grant from the Forestry Commission. All these works are described by Nicola Randall in an excellent brochure that argues strongly for Local Nature Reserve status for Madeley Court Pitmounds (*Telford Woods & People, Case Study #2, 2006*) ([Appendix 17](#)).

Blists Hill Pitmound and **Madeley Court Pitmounds** both feature in woodland walks described on the Woodlands for Health website (www.woodlandshealth.org.uk) which is a joint initiative involving Telford & Wrekin Council, South Telford Rights of Way Partnership, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, the Green Wood Centre and Madeley Town Council with funding from Heritage Lottery Fund, the Forestry Commission and the Onyx Environmental Trust.

The Silkin Way that passes through the northeast pitmound of Madeley Court Pitmounds and along the western boundary of Blists Hill Pitmound follows the route of a railway line that once linked the industrial workings in south Telford and access to the River Severn at Coalport with the industrial complex that is now the Town Centre and the main railway line to Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. The Silkin Way connects north Telford and the Severn Gorge and is much used by walkers, cyclists and people out running.

m. Features and values described in h – I placed in context of local authority area

Madeley Pitmounds contains open spaces with significant nature conservation, historical and social value that provide an outstanding natural asset of great importance in the parish of Madeley. It can be compared with other LNRs in Telford such as Granville Park LNR and Lodge Field LNR.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010) records that Madeley civic parish has 9 Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the top 20% most deprived in England. Significantly, there are 7 SOAs within the Health Deprivation domain; 8 SOAs within the Education domain; 9 within the Income domain.

Madeley Pitmounds Local Nature Reserve will provide opportunities for connection with the natural environment through active engagement and participation in volunteering activities, practical conservation, and training. Themes of accessibility and involvement can be addressed through existing initiatives organised by Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, the Small Woods Association, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, and South Telford Rights of Way Partnership, and proposals to Big Lottery 'Awards for All' and 'Reaching Communities' funds, and Heritage Lottery 'Our Heritage' and 'Young Roots' funds.

Free and open access to a high quality, local, natural environment will provide inspiration and encourage the expansion of boundaries for those affected by social deprivation. Social exclusion can be confronted and tackled through participation in community, cultural and leisure activities; physical and mental health can be improved through an increase in activity associated with the enhancement and management of Local Nature Reserve sites for the benefit of local communities as well as the natural environment.

n. Outline of past uses of the site in so far as these are known

Eight mines operated in the present-day Madeley civic parish:

Blists Hill
Brickkiln Leasow
(Madeley) Court
Halesfield
Hills Lane
Kemberton
Meadow
Shawfield

(Principle Mines – Reynolds/Anstice Developments *Dr I J Brown*)
[\(Appendix 18\)](#)

The spoil deposited from these mines is widely referred to as ‘pit mounds’ and locally as ‘pit mounts’.

The ***Blists Hill Pitmound*** is understood to have belonged to the Shawfield Colliery which is thought to have closed in 1916. The 1902 edition of the 6” OS map shows the colliery as being disused. The 1928 OS map shows both coniferous and deciduous trees which supports the anecdotal evidence of planting to provide work in the 1920s/1930s.

The ***Hills Lane Pitmound*** is understood to have belonged to the Hills Lane Colliery which is shown on the 1882 edition of the 6” OS as being operational but disused on the 1902 edition of the OS. The site of the colliery and other pitmounds which lay to the east have now been reclaimed and redeveloped as part of Sutton Hill.

The ***Madeley Court Pitmounds*** belonged to the Madeley Court Collieries which are thought to have been abandoned in 1910. The 1882 OS shows the southern part of the southwest pitmound already covered in a mixture of conifers and deciduous trees with working shafts shown as present on the rest of the mound. The 1902 OS shows the whole of the southwest pitmound as being planted. The 1928 OS shows the northeast pitmound under woodland cover.

The ***Meadow Pit Mound*** belonged to the Meadow Pit which closed in 1921. A large part was planted with conifers in the 1930s. The western part was not planted with conifers and has developed into oak/birch woodland.

The ***Tweedale Pitmounds*** belonged to the Halesfield Colliery which produced mainly ironstone until 1912 when the Blists Hill furnaces closed down. However, the Halesfield Colliery was linked underground to the Kemberton Colliery and coal continued to be produced until 1920/25. The 1928 OS shows the southern pitmound connected by a tramway to the Kemberton Colliery and it appears to be in use as it is shown as bare spoil. The northern pitmound is shown on this OS as being covered with both conifers and deciduous trees.

o. Any known constraints on management e.g. soil toxicity, wayleaves, tenancies, rights of common, mineral rights separately owned

Madeley Pitmounds LNR is well served by the public path network ([Appendix 19](#)). All footpaths are recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement for Telford & Wrekin - the responsibility of the public Rights of Way team of the Highway Authority. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that these definitive paths are kept open, available and reasonably maintained for their expected use. The public Rights of Way network in the locality has been strengthened and improved as a result of the South Telford Rights of Way Partnership – formed to define, improve and promote local Rights of Way – that has increased the number of paths that can be used and allowed circular paths to be followed (including creation of new public footpaths in Meadow Pitmound and Tweedale Pitmounds by Definitive Map Modification Order).

Telford & Wrekin Council has responsibility, conferred under the Mines & Quarries (Tips) Act 1969 (part 2), to ensure that disused tips do not, by reason of instability, constitute a danger to members of the public. Safety inspections are carried out on a regular basis

Current Colliery Spoil Mound reports (February/March 2013):

Blists Hill Pitmound/Hills Lane Pitmound (described as Madeley Market and Shawfield)	-	Appendix 20
Madeley Court Pitmound	-	Appendix 21
Meadow Pitmound	-	Appendix 22
Tweedale Pitmounds	-	Appendix 23

state that there is no record of dangerous occurrences with regard to stability of the sites since 2005 when Telford & Wrekin Council commenced inspections

Plans showing mineshaft positions have not been issued due to the considerable inaccuracy of the data and the likelihood of misinterpretation by third parties. The Coal Authority hold the definitive records.

p. Purpose of formal declaration

The purpose of the declaration of Madeley Pitmounds LNR is to ensure the preservation of the natural features for their special interest for quiet enjoyment and the appreciation of nature by the public. (See guidance by Natural England in *Local Nature Reserves in England* (1991) on the definition of a Nature Reserve in Section 15, National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949).

Declaration of the Madeley Pitmounds LNR will provide an environment that allows people to interact with biodiversity in a way that leads to increased understanding and engender a greater sense of responsibility.

q. Outline Management policies/objectives/prescriptions

On pitmounds of naturally regenerated oak and birch woodland the natural ecosystems are in balance in a fragile environment.

Telford & Wrekin Council and Madeley Town Council have commissioned AMEC Environment and Infrastructure UK Ltd to produce an outline Ecological Management Plan with an implementation period of 5 years effective 2015. (Appendix 24) The document is not intended to be a complete management plan (which would be drawn up following designation).

The outline Ecological Management Plan will supplement current Telford & Wrekin Council produced Woodland Management Plans (January 2005 to December 2015) Appendices 21 – 25

Blists Hill Pitmound	-	Appendix 25
Hills Lane Pitmound	-	Appendix 26
Madeley Court Pitmounds	-	Appendix 27
Meadow Pitmound	-	Appendix 28
Tweedale Pitmounds	-	Appendix 29

Current site management is predominantly thinning to diversify the structure of the even aged woodlands and move towards a mix of native species, creating more light to encourage development of ground flora and natural regeneration. Some mature trees to be left until senility as habitat and important woodland features. Tree safety work is carried out as appropriate

A complete management plan would be based on a thorough suite of ecological surveys (protected species and detailed survey of key habitats).

Madeley Pitmounds LNR Steering Group has resolved its key objectives:

1. To achieve the declaration of linked sites as Madeley Pitmounds Local Nature Reserve.
2. To manage (subject to Agreement) the Local Nature Reserve as a multiple-value resource for the benefit of the community.
3. To encourage local residents/volunteers in active management, use, and appreciation of the local natural environment.
4. To enhance the site's ecological importance and historical association and to preserve its natural and historic features for their special interest.

5. To improve the quality of the predominantly urban landscape of South Telford, raising the profile of Madeley as an attractive place to live and visit and unlocking the potential of open spaces to contribute to increased economic benefit.
6. To improve all aspects of accessibility – routes, information, publicity.

Future management will aim to create a balance of:

Wildlife Conservation

- Manage habitats to protect, maintain and enhance wildlife
(increase biodiversity value through conservation and management of habitats and species)

Accessibility

- Maintain and, where appropriate, improve public access.
(improve and upgrade access provision to and within the sites)
- Maintain and improve the site for education and interpretation and encourage visitors.
(maximise learning opportunities and communicate the importance of biodiversity to the local community and visitors)
- Provide a safe environment.
(establish governance to sustain management)

Education and Community Involvement

- Encourage local people to become involved in and learn more about the urban countryside.
(increase benefit to individuals and communities through active involvement)
- Produce education pack for schools
(extend opportunities for curriculum based learning)

The main management objectives are:

- a) Manage the woodlands and scrub for their ecological value and regeneration – increase biodiversity and reduce encroachment. Early intervention for the removal of alien species to retain character.
- b) Manage grasslands and open water by intervention to retain the early stages of the natural succession. Eradicate non-native invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, snowberry).
- c) Maintenance of paths and steps and signage of Public Footpaths to encourage access with the support of South Telford Rights of Way Partnership.
- d) Encourage local residents and local wildlife groups to undertake surveys for flora and fauna with records being held by Madeley Town Council and provided to the Shropshire Ecological Data Network (SEDN) via Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Telford & Wrekin Council.
- e) Develop knowledge and expertise within the local community so that they have sufficient skills to assist in management of the site.
- f) Implement a programme of monitoring and implementation of the actions set out in the outline Ecological Management Plan and a full review in 2015.

The wooded pitmounds are of value for their ecological importance and vital for their cultural and historical associations. Madeley Pitmounds LNR Steering Group considers that this landscape is a multiple value resource and wishes to develop its environmental, cultural, educational, social and economic values for the benefit of the local community.

r. Outline of capital and revenue costs

Blists Hill Pitmound, Hills Lane Pitmound, Meadow Pitmound and Tweedale Pitmounds are all in the Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme.

[\(Appendix 30\)](#)

Capital costs are not part of the declaration proposal but will be considered as part of the management plan. Madeley Town Council and Madeley Pitmounds LNR Steering Group have resolved to enter an Agreement with Telford & Wrekin Council to establish a partnership for delivery of management of the sites – adopting the existing Telford & Wrekin Council, outline Ecological Management Plan and Woodland Management Plans and exploring the opportunities for external funding for enhancement and development through community involvement.

Over the term of the Management Plan it is envisaged that £10,000 - £50,000 will provide for future enhancement of conservation value (habitat improvements), accessibility (footpath infrastructure), and education (signage for information and interpretation)

Revenue costs for regular/routine maintenance work will remain the responsibility of Telford & Wrekin Council, Environmental Maintenance, and Telford & Wrekin Council, Public Rights of Way, services strongly supported by Madeley Pitmounds LNR Steering Group and the environmental resource of Madeley Town Council.

s. Staffing proposals for Madeley Pitmounds LNRs

The current management regime provided by Telford & Wrekin Council – Environmental Maintenance, Woodlands Officer, Rights of Way Officer – undertakes routine maintenance tasks. This is supplemented by Madeley Town Council's Parish Environmental Team to ensure sites are accessible and tidy. Sites are regularly checked by South Telford Rights of Way Partnership, Project Officer, as part of PRow work programme – and minor maintenance works commissioned via West Mercia Probation Service (Community Payback), Telford & Wrekin Green Gym, and Landau (an organisation that works with young people who are 'NEET' and who have learning disabilities).

Madeley Pitmounds LNR Steering Group of existing and potential stakeholders has been established to develop and agree priorities and action plans, and monitor performance.

Madeley Pitmounds LNR Steering Group will oversee the implementation of Management and Action Plans, co-ordinate additional monitoring and survey work, improve and extend natural habitats for the benefit of a diverse wildlife, undertake publicity and promotion, and engage further local community participation.

t. Proposed links/liaison with voluntary nature conservation bodies and site users

Existing links:

- Madeley Town Council
- Madeley Pitmounds LNR Steering Group
- Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
- Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School
- Small Woods Association
- South Telford Rights of Way Partnership
- Telford & Wrekin Green Gym
- Telford Green Spaces Partnership
- West Mercia Probation Service
- Woodlands Primary School

Proposed links:

- Madeley Academy
- Madeley County Infants School

Madeley Town Council is the proposer of the Declaration of Madeley Pitmounds as a Local Nature Reserve and has been responsible for a number of local and strategic environmental initiatives – founder member of South Telford Rights of Way Partnership; Partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust to employ Green Spaces Officer; declaration of first ‘Village Green’ within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin; sponsor of annual Green Day (schools workshops and environmental activities); staging of Telford Trail and Madeley Ramble walk events; creation of Madeley Community Orchard; establishment of a Parish Environmental Team in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council – and has funded improvement works to improve accessibility in the site areas.

Madeley Town Council sponsors and hosts Madeley Pitmounds LNR Steering Group and will co-ordinate future management and monitoring of sites, and realisation of external funding support.

Together, the people and the places can and will become better (healthier, restored, improved, worthier) as a result of the designation of Madeley Pitmounds Local Nature Reserve.