



STEERING GROUP MEETING 11 MARCH 2026

Head of Leisure & Natural Infrastructure
Natural Infrastructure Programme Manager
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RICKMANSWORTH AQUADROME PROJECT STEERING GROUP MEETING

1. Where we are now
2. Hydrological Study Outcomes
3. Accessibility Audit
4. Concept Masterplan
5. Engagement
6. Activity Plan – Target Audience
7. Project Next Steps



Where we are now...

- Successful outcome on National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Development Phase application - £736,515
 - Permission to start by the NLHF agreed 4 July 2025
- Flood modelling from the EA received 2 October 2025.

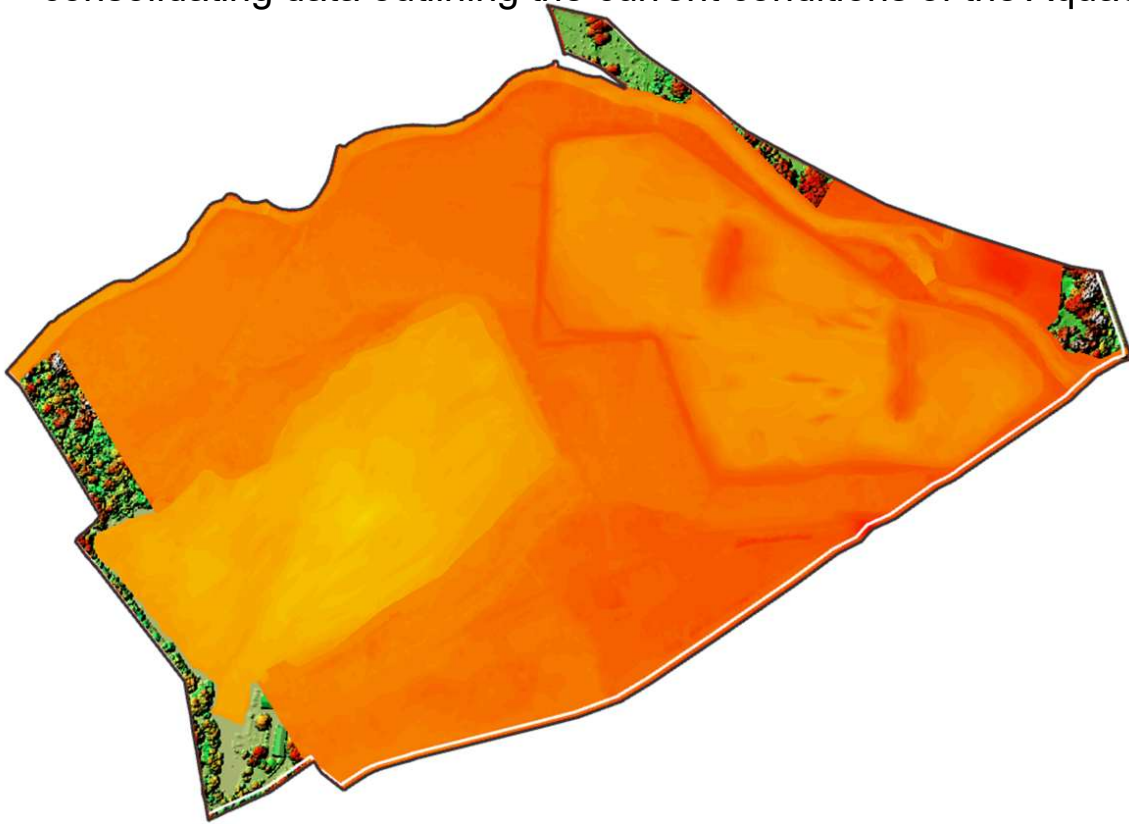
Funding for the following approved NLHF Development Phase purposes:

- High Visibility of the NLHF Logo and approved marketing
- Small scale activity programme – nature workshops and citizen science
- Detailed designs, tender packages and relevant consents: e.g. Planning
- Consultation and engagement with the community
- Next phase of the Hydrological Study
- Conduct an Access Audit – improving accessibility
- Asbestos assessment for delivery phase capital works
- Creation of site wide Masterplan
- Tree & Vegetation Strategy and Action Plan for Delivery Phase
- Develop an Activity Plan in preparation for Delivery Phase
- Appoint project staff for Development Phase

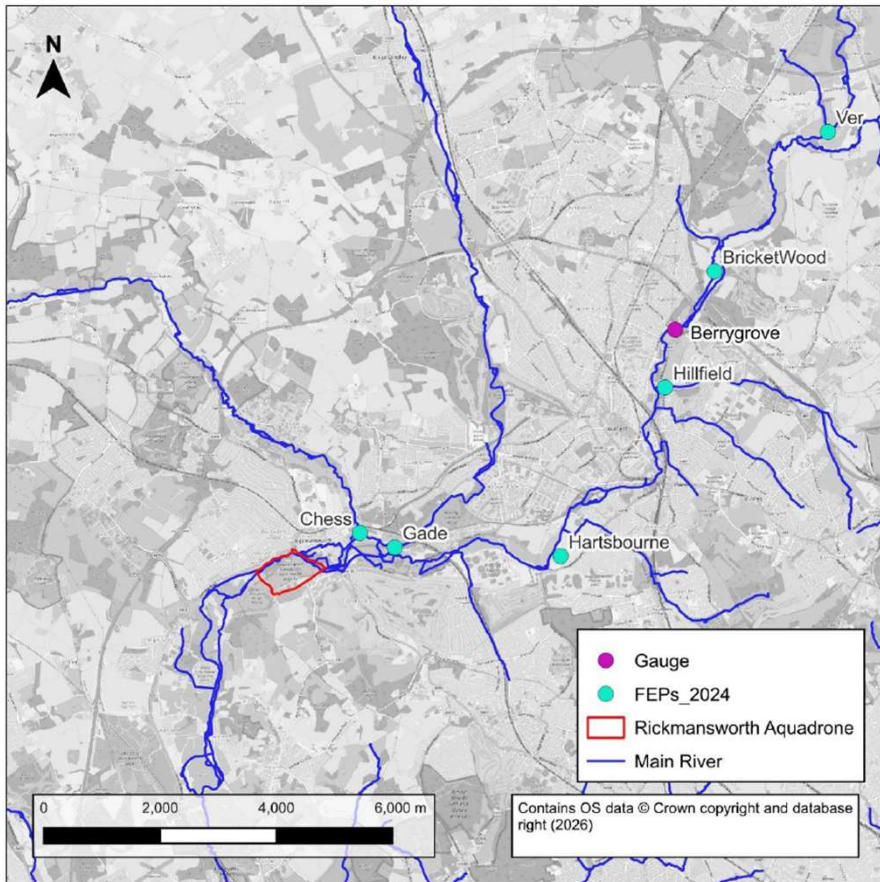


What has happened to inform the Masterplan?

In recent months, the Aquadrome Project team along with RSK, the council's consultant; have been consolidating data outlining the current conditions of the Aquadrome.



Hydrology & Hydrological Processes



People & Place– Accessibility Audit Outcomes

The Aquadrome is an inviting space for people with a variety of disabilities and needs. Its offer includes good accessible car parking, a relatively flat terrain with good quality pathways around the site's two large lakes offering access to nature.

The audit, conducted by Inclusion and Accessibility UK, outlined a number of areas for improvement:

- Information at the visitor hub to be provided in many formats (written, audio and tactile)
- Improved signage, wayfinding & interpretation
- All boardwalks to include handrails and a tapping rail for mobility canes
- Consider introducing a Changing Places facility
- Improved seating to allow easy transfer and use
- Promoting the accessibility of the site within the website & across social media
- Promote the Aquadrome as an accessible site across national networks
- Increase locations for opportunities to shelter in inclement weather
- Parking – increase in the number of disabled parking



RICKMANSWORTH AQUADROME

Landscape and Environmental Design Project

MASTERPLAN, VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The site-wide Masterplan shown on this board creates a resilient, regenerative and stewardship-based design framework for the detailed design interventions that will be delivered in the Lottery funded project. These will enhance the resilience of the Aquadrome, and so it can be enjoyed for the long term by current and future generations. The Masterplan is guided by the Vision below.

VISION

For the Aquadrome to be enhanced, nurtured and protected. To achieve a careful balance so nature can flourish and visitors can connect with and discover beautiful and unique habitats, whilst understanding the importance of the environmental heritage of the Site.

Nature

Creating Biodiverse and Sustainable Environments - The Aquadrome will conserve and enhance visitors, landscape and heritage features and all aspects of management will be underpinned with sustainability as a guiding principle.

- Restore blue-green systems and improve resilience.
- Protect and enhance priority habitats.
- Educate and inform visitors about vital wildlife and their habitats.
- To conserve and share the landscape and heritage of the Site.

People

To Be Welcoming for All - The Aquadrome will be an inviting, clean and well-maintained green space for all to enjoy.

- Inclusive, legible and intuitive arrival.
- Enable access for everyone.
- Provide balanced and diversified activity offer.
- Clean and well-kept by design.

Place

A High Quality Green Space - The Aquadrome will be a flagship destination, providing high quality facilities and diverse recreational opportunities alongside its rich wildlife habitats.

- Create memorable gateways.
- Celebrate and strengthen Site informed character areas.
- Enable year-round access.



MASTERPLAN

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Site gateways 2 Important nodes 3 Picnic platforms 4 Localised views 5 Bank repayment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Vantage point 7 Bird viewing 8 Panoramic views 9 Long views 10 Potential arts trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 Woodland Walk 12 Woodland Walk Node & Boardwalk Start 13 River Restoration 14 Viewpoints & River Edge Improvements 15 Pinetum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 Pinetum Threshold & Lake Connection 17 Floodplain Lowering 18 Formalising Desire Lines 19 Prominent Bury Lake Viewpoint 20 The Hollow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21 Underage Road Gateway (Orientation Point) 22 The Causeway & Western Lake Edge 23 Visitor Hub - Lakeside Picnic Area & Bird Viewing 24 Visitor Hub - Vegetation Management Behind the Cafe 25 Visitor Hub - Cafe Fourcourt & Lawn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 Navigation Node 27 Bury Point 28 Bridge & Boardwalk Link 29 Natural Play & Discovery Zone 30 Gate Line De-cluttering | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31 Dog Enrichment Area 32 Car Park Reconfiguration 33 Vehicle Entrance 34 The Meadow 35 Sightline Management 36 South-western Gateway (Orientation Point) |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|



RSK will go through this in more detail later



Scan to learn more & have your say



Haley Sharpe



Online Engagement – headlines to date

- Engagement closes on 16 March, with a full report to follow
- To date:
 - 133 responses to the survey
- Initial comments/observations:
 - Most people would like to find out information via onsite notice boards, followed by online information
 - Currently majority of respondents either supportive or very supportive of
 - Visitor Hub (67%), Bury Point (70%), Natural Play & Discovery Zone (69%), Meadow (74%) and car park one way system (63%)
 - Dog enrichment not as supported (47% in favour)
 - Overall positive views about the Woodland Walk proposal – ensuring wildlife remain protected, mixed views on Pinetum – some say leave as it is, others see it as a great addition, most supportive of anything that protects and enhances the wildlife.
 - On the whole, respondents are not supportive of an arts trail – they want to keep the site natural.
 - Many support information boards talking about the importance of the habitats and wildlife, but not to clutter the site.



Public drop in event – Saturday 7 March

- Engagement event focused on the concept masterplan and giving visitors a say on the proposals.
 - Upwards of 160 people attended the event
 - With approximately 30-40 people spending approx. 30mins discussing the plans
- Initial comments/observations:
 - Many people engaged in the exciting plans
 - 80 people participated in an interactive engagement piece, choosing interpretation themes, key wildlife and heritage features
 - A number of residents who back onto the River Colne attended to discuss river restoration proposals
 - A number of concerns were raised about dog behaviour at the site, whilst others wanted to ensure dogs could be kept off leads in relation to the dog enrichment zone
 - Concerns were raised around the play area and the Woodland Path, including a lack of communication for both
 - Overall people were very supportive around improving the car park, plans for the meadow, general plans to enhance the site and wished us good luck with the project.
 - It is worth noting that there were a number of rude and aggressive people who were extremely disrespectful towards staff at the event.



Activity Plan – target audiences

- Key deliverable of NLHF is the Activity Plan and how we will target and engage specific audiences during the 3-year delivery phase
- Plan requires us to be clear on the “why” we are targeting a specific group of people and how it aligns to the NLHF funding pillars.
- Project is not about increasing numbers, but offering opportunities to those who do not access the site currently and most significantly: *change behaviour*.
- It is also about celebrating the social and natural heritage of the Aquadrome.



Activity Plan – target audiences

- **Targeted children and young people:** young carers, pupil premium, children from lower economic families in deprivations wards in the district.
- **Families referred through the council’s Accessible Childcare for Everyone (ACE) scheme:** those referred through a professional and experiencing complex home lives.
- **People with a disability:** ASD/ADHD, Autism, Global Development Delay, visually impaired and longer term physical or mental health conditions.
- **Older Visitors:** local care homes and assisted living (offsite & onsite sessions), isolated older adults, oral history groups, U3A.
- **Special Interest:** TR Museum, Woodoaks Farm, CVRP, HMWT.
- **Adults demonstrating ASB:** change in behaviour & attitude around responsible dog control, attitude to litter, e-bikes and bike behaviour, care the environment.
- **Educational Research & Development (database hub):** Secondary Schools (GCSE & A-Level), University Students and National Geographic Society.
- **NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training):** Green Skills Training (possibly an apprenticeship grounds maintenance role) and working with “Change for Life” to offer young adults with a disability work experience through the delivery phase.

Have we missed any target groups?



Next Project Milestones – NLHF Dictated

- Flood Risk Activity Permit Submissions: **April 2026**
- RIBA Stage 3 Visitor and Welcome Hub detailed designs: **April 2026**
- RIBA Stage 3 Masterplan and Landscape Design Package – planning submission documentation: **May 2026**
- RIBA Stage 3 Hydrological Detailed Designs: **May 2026**
- Tree and Vegetation Strategy and Action Plan, including any capital works specifications: **June 2026**
- RIBA Stage 4 tender packages: **July 2026**
- Updated Rickmansworth Aquadrome Management and Conservation Plan, including future Maintenance of the site: **August 2026**
- Development Phase review with the National Lottery Heritage Fund: **July 2026**
- Development Phase Completion: **August 2026**
- Delivery Phase Funding Application Submission: **November 2026**
 - Approx. £5million
- Outcome of Delivery Phase Funding Application: **March 2027**
- Capital Works on site: from **April 2027**
- Delivery Phase completion: **March 2030**



Thank you for your continued
support and we welcome any
questions

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