



**Bedfordshire  
Cambridgeshire  
Northamptonshire**



## Why is the project needed?

An access survey carried out by Footprint Ecology in 2014 highlighted high levels of visitor pressure on Summer Leys. In response to this a Community Panel was set up and a vision for the reserve developed. The vision states that by 2024 Summer Leys will:

- Be managed primarily for its wildlife value
- Ensure good access for people with disabilities
- Provide public access along Rights of Way and permissive paths
- Provide information about the site and engage with its users

The Community Panel recommended:

- Improving the bird feeding station
- Installing a more effective barrier around the sand martin site at nesting times
- Keeping brambles under control
- Improving the path surface between Kim's Corner and the feeding station

We have already improved the path between Kim's Corner and the feeding station, and by the end of July 2018 the project aims to deliver the remaining recommendations put forward by the Community Panel, plus:

- ✓ Upgrading kissing gates, and cutting paths and hedgerows to maintain access
- ✓ Repairing bird hides
- ✓ Topping grassland areas, cutting islands and managing willow
- ✓ Installing eight new entrance signs, a welcome board and wildlife perches

## Project Benefits








As well as improving access for visitors, the project will help to increase biodiversity on the site. We will continue to graze the site with rare breed sheep which keep the majority of vegetation down, after which topping will be carried out to remove the tall, rough grass which sheep tend to leave. Grazing, topping and willow management will keep the core of the site open with a short grass sward ideal for ducks and waders in autumn and winter. Vegetation on islands is also cut to provide loafing areas in winter and breeding sites in summer. The project will make the site more aesthetically pleasing and provide a far better wildlife spectacle for visitors.

We have secured funding from a local community fund and charitable trusts towards certain elements of the project, but we need your help to raise the remaining funds to make sure the whole project can be delivered.

## Improvement work at Summer Leys Nature Reserve



### KEY

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Sand martin colony fencing   |  | Path repairs                                     |
|  | Entrance signs   |   | New bird feeders and repairs to photography hide |
|  | Welcome board  |  | Other hides                                      |
|  | New stone path<br>(This path has now been completed thanks to a donation from the Mick George Community Fund.) |  | Willow scrub                                     |