

Creating a new meadow



Levenhall Links

- 120 ha
- 10 million cubic metres of ash
- 2 active lagoons
- SPA

Aims of creating a new meadow

- ❖ To create a more valuable landscape for wildlife and the public. Increase plant diversity.
- ❖ To learn more about grassland development on this site
- ❖ To develop a more sustainable management regime
- ❖ To create a grassland of recognisable status (e.g. NVC)

It's not just about long grass

- ❖ Thin soil overlying PFA – **an unknown quantity**
- ❖ Existing grass sward – **a problem**
- ❖ Grassland management – **an issue**
- ❖ Local population – **possible conflict**
- ❖ Existing wildlife – **an issue**
- ❖ Conflicting advice – **a bore**



Seeding Trials

Different plots used to find the most effective means of enhancing plant diversity

+ Spray	+ Spray	+ Spray	- Spray	- Spray	- Spray
No seed	Slot- seed	Scarify Top- dress	Slot- seed	Scarify Top- dress	No seed

Cut the grass



Spray the spray



Slot seeder – action and problems



Scarify and top dress



The seed mix

- 6 grasses 13 wild flower
- 83% grass in the mix
- 6 kg seed per ha
- Wild, local origin
- Species of grassland or woodland edge
- Robust, colourful species
- Some annuals just in case



Grass grows and hay is harvested



- Improved landscape and habitat
- More sustainable management
- Know more about the site

The meadow (after 3 years)



Ragwort controlled by hand

NVC = MG 7 ?

Lolium perenne ley

21 plant species in total

6 annual species lost from
the grassland after year 1.

Seeded areas (after 3 years)

- **NVC** = MG 6
 - Lolium – Cynosurus* ley
- **31** species in the sward
- **9** new species, including:
 - Crested dog's tail
 - Sweet vernal grass
 - Ox-eye daisy
 - Lady's bedstraw
 - Bird's foot trefoil
 - Kidney vetch (year 1 only)



Observations on seeding trials

- ❖ Seed mix
 - Wildflowers up to 30%
 - Seeds per gram
- ❖ Sprayed Vs Un-sprayed
 - Try dilute weed killer
- ❖ Slot seed Vs Top dress
 - Large areas = slot seed
 - Small areas = top dress
- ❖ Be patient

