



EASTON PARK

A Vision for a New Country Park in Uttlesford

July 2020

This document has been designed and developed by the Stop Easton Park campaign group
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SEP would like to thank the Gardens of Easton Lodge Preservation Trust for allowing access to their archive materials. The Trust would like to make it clear that by allowing this it does not endorse the SEP proposal as it maintains a neutral stance on any proposed development concerning Easton Park.

The withdrawal by Uttlesford District Council (UDC) of its draft Local Plan on 30 April 2020 provides the opportunity to re-examine the requirements of the District to provide for current and future generations. This needs to be undertaken in the context of the climate emergency we face, the commitments made by central and local government, and the increasing awareness, compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, of the need to protect our natural surroundings for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all.

In 2019 the UK government committed to becoming carbon neutral “Net Zero” by 2050. Essex County Council has made similar commitments, notably the Essex Forest Initiative to plant £1m worth of trees over the next five years. Also, in 2019 UDC declared a Climate and Environmental Emergency with a net zero carbon goal of 2030. A common theme to all these initiatives is the critical importance of planting trees as evidenced by DEFA’s England Tree Strategy Consultation (June 2020) and the Committee on Climate Change Progress Report (June 2020).

In this context the district of Uttlesford is extremely fortunate to have in Easton Park an exceptional asset - an ancient park of 1,000 acres with extensive wildlife and a rich heritage evidenced by multiple listed buildings. Though damaged during World War II through the destruction of 10,000 trees to build an airfield, the Park remains whole and entire retaining the shape it has had for over 400 years. The Park is also remarkable for its biodiversity and is a haven for wildlife and a wide range of flora and fauna.

This document sets out a vision for the restoration of Easton Park in line with UDC’s environmental objectives. Although the ownership of the Park lies with a third party (Landsec), UDC retains control of development in the Park through an agreement signed in 1939. The intention of the agreement was to keep the Park as an open space and a nature sanctuary and limits any development to a maximum of ten dwellings. This agreement remains in force and so gives UDC both the authority to stop further development and the responsibility to do so.

The importance of open spaces to physical and mental health is increasingly recognised but a UDC review of February 2019 established that Uttlesford is surprisingly short of such space and that 75% of this limited provision is accounted for by Hatfield Forest, a key asset as a National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest. Regrettably and as evidenced by the National Trust, Hatfield Forest is suffering from excess use resulting from the high level of building in the locality in recent years. Both the issues of a shortage of open space and the plight of Hatfield Forest would be resolved by the restoration of Easton Park as one of the great parks of Essex, a park surrounded by woodlands and a flagship for environmental progress.

Stop Easton Park (SEP) is a residents’ action group set up in 2017 to support the Little Easton Parish Council in resisting plans to build a new town on Easton Park. SEP’s supporters are drawn from the residents of the towns and villages surrounding the Park and further afield. From the start, our focus has been on the preservation of Easton Park for the benefit of future generations.

Our mission to restore Easton Park was launched on 8 May 2020, the 75th anniversary of VE Day, a fitting date to embark on repairing the damage of WWII. In the coming months, we will be seeking support from relevant organisations and are delighted to have already secured the support of CPRE.

Our objective is to work with UDC, the owners of Easton Park and all relevant stakeholders to provide future generations with a worthy legacy. This document seeks to outline how this could be achieved. We hope you will find it interesting and inspiring.

Stop Easton Park Group

July 2020

WHAT IS EASTON PARK?

Easton Park is one of the great historic Parks of Essex. Historical references date back over 700 years to 1302. The land formed part of the estate of Easton Lodge which was retained by the Maynard family and their descendants from 1590 until 2004 when it was purchased by Land Securities. The Park was laid out in the late 17th Century and remained in substantially the same form until 1942 when, sadly, 10,000 trees were destroyed to build an airfield for the USAAF 386th Bomber Squadron known as The Crusaders.

"The destruction of most of Easton Park to make an airfield, while no doubt important for the war effort, must nevertheless be seen as the saddest loss to the historic environment of Essex during that conflict, indeed probably the worst loss since the grubbing of Hainault Forest in the mid 19th century."

Historian JM Hutton "The demesne lands and parks of Sir Henry Maynard" (2001).



The 1939 Agreement

The 1939 Agreement

In 1937, Frances Evelyn "Daisy" Maynard, The Countess of Warwick, sought to ensure that Easton Park would be protected from development by declaring Easton Park a Nature Reserve. She initiated an agreement with The Rural District Council of Dunmow to limit any development within the Park to ten dwellings. This agreement was signed by the council prior to her death in 1938 and by her executors in 1939 following her death.

The Agreement covering some 1,000 acres as shown in the plan, remains extant and its validity is evidenced by the Deed of Variation signed by the two successor parties (UDC and Landsec) in 2011 to allow the current gravel quarry activity. In addition to this protection, the 1939 Agreement also places an onus on UDC to honour its intent and ensure that the Agreement is respected.

Sadly, it has not been in the interests of the current or former owners to replace the trees. However the land has been carefully recovered and tended to create high grade arable land and the outline of the Park remains exactly as it has been for hundreds of years.

The Easton Park Estate is still very much in evidence today and can be easily visualised through the land and buildings that remain. From Brooke End Stables (named after Daisy's husband, Lord Brooke) in the west to the Little Easton Conservation Area (enclosing Little Easton Manor and the Grade 1 listed church) to the east, one can still see the layout of the estate.

At the centre of the Park are the historic Gardens of Easton Lodge, which have been restored over recent years and are now Grade II Registered Gardens.

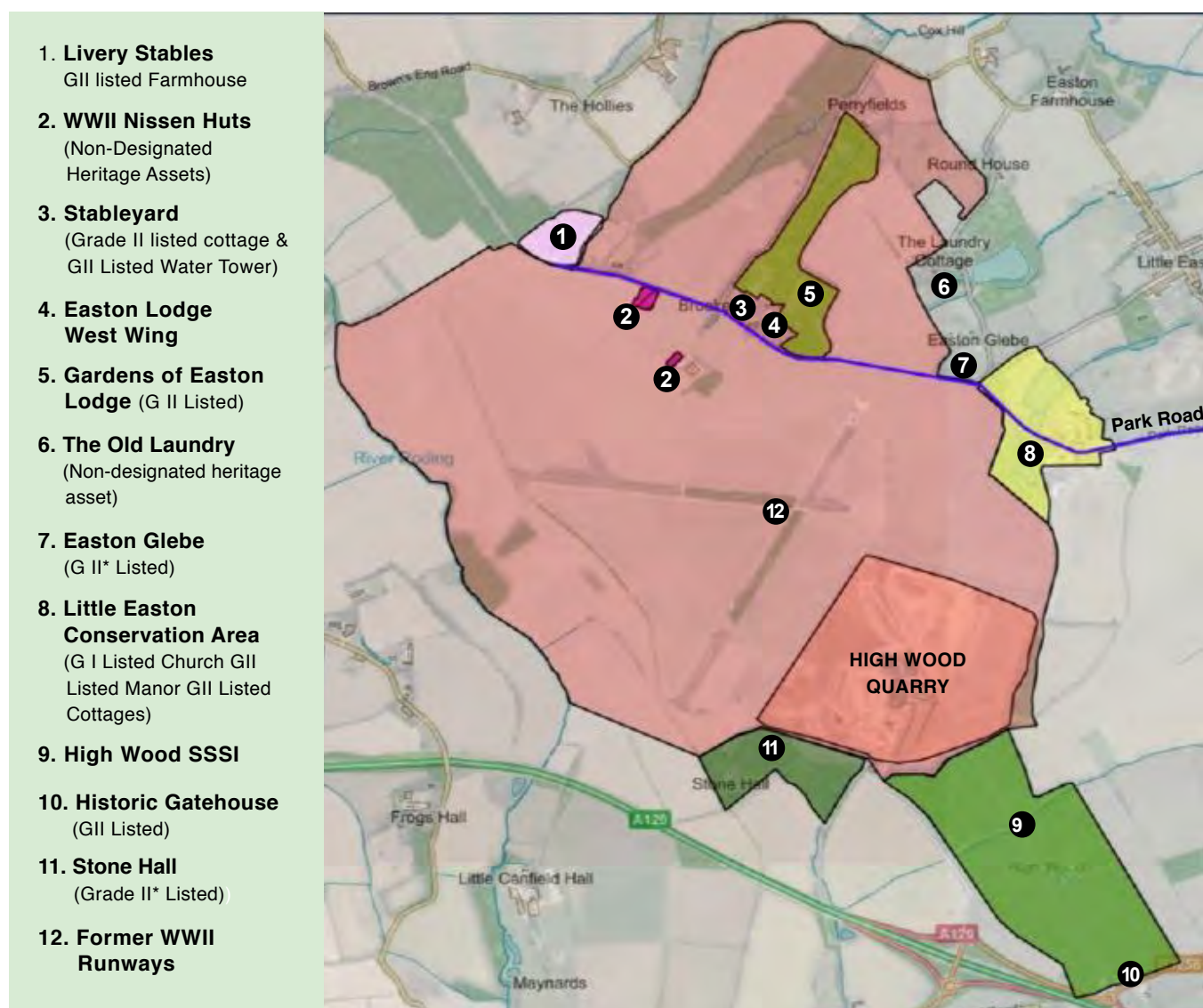
EASTON PARK TODAY

The outlines of the Park are clearly identifiable, bordered to the east by the conservation area of Little Easton; to the north by the Grade II listed Gardens of Easton Lodge; to the north west by Middlefield and Philipland ancient woodlands and to the south by High Wood SSSI woodland and Stone Hall.

A number of estate buildings are still present in and around the Park and at Easton Lodge. The west wing of the mansion, the Laundry, the Rectory (now Easton Glebe), the water tower and the former servant's quarters at Easton Lodge stable-yard are all now residential dwellings. The livery stables are still in use, as are the WWII Nissen huts.

Within the boundary of the Park lie the Grade II listed Gardens of Easton Lodge, 3 Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings, 3 non-designated heritage assets and 11 sites of special archaeological interest. On the boundary lie 11 Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings and a Grade I listed church within the Little Easton Conservation Area which borders the Park.

Easton Park Key:



OUR VISION FOR EASTON PARK

Our vision is to restore Easton Park to its former glory as one of the great country parks of Essex.

Our belief is that a new country park is crucial for the health and wellbeing of Uttlesford residents and can be a major contributor to Uttlesford's ambitious environmental targets.

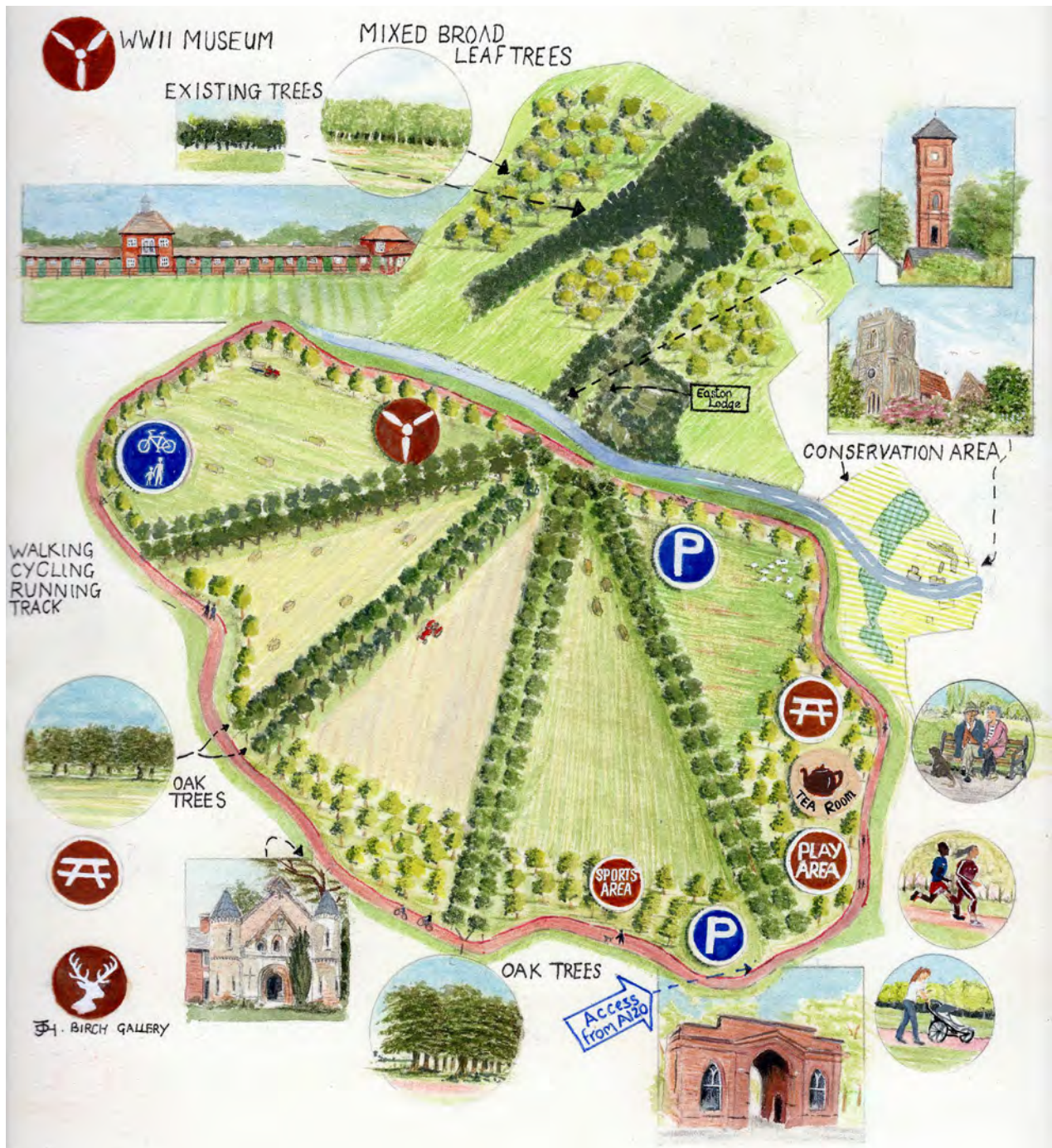
Our ambition is to work with UDC, the owners and other stakeholders to restore the Park and the 10,000 trees lost in WWII for the benefit of the local community and for the needs of future generations.



Our Strategy is driven by:

- ◆ Community Health and Wellbeing Benefits
- ◆ A Response to the Climate Change Emergency
- ◆ A Recognition of the History and Heritage of Easton Park

A NEW COUNTRY PARK FOR UTTLESFORD



The historic Easton Park extends to around 1000 acres. Our vision sees the former avenues of trees being restored in the “patte d’oie” style with access to the public for walking. Around the perimeter of the Park, we envisage tracks to cater for running, cycling and horse riding. New woodlands would be planted to the north of the Park alongside the existing Broxted Woods, retaining the setting of the historic Grade II listed Gardens of Easton Lodge, as well as to the south and around the perimeter. The stables to the north west of the Park would continue as a livery.

Access would be restricted to the south from the B1256, with car parking close to the vehicle access. Access for the Gardens of Easton Lodge would continue as now through Little Easton village. The WWII Nissen huts (non-designated heritage assets) would make an excellent location for a museum on the history of Great Dunmow Airfield.

HEALTH & WELLBEING CHALLENGES

The Importance of Parks for Physical and Mental Wellbeing

There is an ever-increasing body of academic research to support the importance of exercise and open spaces for our physical and mental wellbeing. This has also been stressed by Natural England, The Glover Report Landscapes Review of September 2019 and The National Trust in July 2020.

Housing numbers will continue to grow across the district with many people not having the benefit of gardens and places to exercise. There is and will be an ongoing requirement to provide sufficient open spaces to meet the needs of a growing community and it is therefore crucial to preserve suitable locations for the benefit of future generations.



Visitors flocked to the Little Easton Conservation Area and Easton Park during the Covid 19 lockdown to find open spaces to exercise.

The Shortage of Open Space in Uttlesford

UDC's 2019 Open Space Assessment Report revealed that the Uttlesford District is surprisingly short of 'natural and semi-natural green spaces' open to the general public and that 75% of this limited provision is accounted for by Hatfield Forest.

Housing numbers in the south of the district have grown rapidly in recent years. The continuing expansion of Great Dunmow in particular, which will more than double in size in the next plan period, will require significant provision of open space for the expanded community in and around the town.

The Plight of Hatfield Forest

One of the alarming aspects to surface at a late stage during the Local Plan process was the impact of recent housebuilding on the unique asset of Hatfield Forest.

A survey commissioned by the National Trust concluded that Hatfield Forest is showing severe signs of over-use in terms of visitor traffic, and is currently registered as 'Unfavourable, Recovering' by Natural England.

The National Trust has also indicated that if the Trust were in a position to acquire or help to acquire alternative space, there is a good prospect that such a facility could help to spread the visitor load away from the forest itself.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BENEFITS



Easton Park has a wealth of existing footpaths and bridleways that traverse the Park. These public rights of way would be preserved and enhanced to provide a network of routes for exercise and recreation to support a public health agenda. Being relatively flat, Easton Park would be ideal for recreational use by people of all physical abilities.

Consultation would take place with local residents, town and parish councils and other stakeholders (such as Essex Wildlife Trust and CPRE) as to what amenities they feel should be provided for the community. The Park has sufficient space for a wide range of features including:

- ◆ Footpaths
- ◆ Cycle Tracks
- ◆ BMX / Mountain Bike Trails
- ◆ Running / Jogging Tracks
- ◆ Bridleways / Horse Riding
- ◆ Café
- ◆ Visitors Centre
- ◆ Children's Play Areas
- ◆ Adventure Playgrounds
- ◆ Gym / Keep Fit Circuit
- ◆ Picnic Areas
- ◆ Ponds and Lakes
- ◆ Animal Petting Areas
- ◆ Hedgehog Wilding Sanctuary
- ◆ Wildlife Habitats
- ◆ Sports Fields (i.e. Cricket / Football)
- ◆ A Heritage trail
- ◆ Education



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

We are in a climate emergency that is threatening our planet. Global warming is happening at a faster rate than ever and without immediate action we are at risk of facing devastating consequences. We are also facing a biodiversity crisis. The UK has lost 13% of our native species since 1970 and this situation will further deteriorate if changes are not made quickly.

In 2019, the UK passed laws to end its contribution to global warming and set a target to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. The net zero target means any emissions would be balanced by schemes to offset an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as planting trees or using technology like carbon capture and storage.

The independent Committee on Climate Change, which advises the UK Government on emissions targets, recommends increasing woodland cover in the UK from 13% to a minimum of 17% by 2050 to ensure the country achieves net zero carbon emissions. To achieve the target, more than 74,000 acres of new woodland will need to be planted every year until 2050 —nearly 50 million trees per year!

Uttlesford District Council Commitment:

Acknowledging the gravity of the situation, Uttlesford District Council declared a Climate and Environmental Emergency in 2019, pledging to step up action on green issues and the environment. Through its Residents Charter, UDC have promised to act as “a strong protector of our environment.... acting quickly and responsibly to reduce the chances of a climate catastrophe”.

Essex County Council Commitment:

Essex County Council is equally committed to environmental protection, notably through the Essex Forest Initiative launched in 2019 whereby it has committed to plant £1million of trees over the next five years including 375,000 trees over 150 hectares.

UDC have committed to:

- ◆ Increase the number of trees in the district.
- ◆ Tackle the 3 biggest environmental issues—Air Quality, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction.
- ◆ Achieve a Net Zero Carbon Goal for the Council by 2030 and implement supporting policies.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS - BIODIVERSITY

The 1939 agreement enshrined in law the wishes of the late Countess of Warwick that Easton Park was to be preserved as a nature reserve and that “nothing shall be done to spoil or waste these lands”. The remote location of the Park with limited public access has largely safeguarded the habitat features of the Park in the intervening eighty years.

Easton Park is home to a diverse range of woodland, grassland and wildlife corridors of flora and fauna. Deer still regularly traverse the Park and Broxted Common Wood to the north of the Park is home to many badgers and their setts, both of which are protected by law. Within the woods, Perryfield Ponds contain a variety of amphibians and fish.



Easton Park is also home to many other species, including some that appear on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan lists of the most threatened species and habitats. These include:

- ◆ Mammals (including field mice, hares, polecats, weasels and stoats)
- ◆ Reptiles (including adders, grass snakes and lizards)
- ◆ Birds (including cuckoo, dunnoek, house sparrow, kestrel, yellowhammer, skylark, starling, lesser spotted woodpecker, tawny owl, buzzard, red kite and sparrowhawk).

The centre of the Park, the area around the former WWII runways, is a designated Local Wildlife Site included on the Uttlesford Local Wildlife Site register (Ref: UFD 194-Little Easton Airfield). The 19-acre Site designation includes:

- ◆ Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), a rare Essex plant.
- ◆ Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) & Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*)
- ◆ Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*) & Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*)
- ◆ Common Centaury (*Centaurea erythraea*) & Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*)
- ◆ Cowslip (*Primula veris*) & Bush-grass (*Calamagrostis epigejos*) - another scarce plant in the county.
- ◆ Tufted Hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) - a scarce Essex habitat type.

The restoration of Easton Park to a country park will protect both the Local Wildlife Site and the other resident species and their habitats. It will prevent loss and damage to breeding sites and resting places as well as foraging habitat, and will preserve the vital trees, shrubs, hedgerows and rare flora. Any action plan to address the biodiversity crisis declared by UDC should include the protection of this important site within its scope.

CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS - CARBON REDUCTION

The Easton Park Opportunity

To have any chance of meeting the net zero 2050 target, afforestation rates need to increase quickly. The UK has just three decades to reach net-zero emissions and tree planting has emerged as a prominent part of the Government's plan to achieve the target. Trees are (for now) the only scalable negative emissions strategy and afforestation is a proven, cost effective solution which is available immediately. The strategy has very strong public and political support and has many additional benefits for both wildlife and public health.

The Committee on Climate Change has advised that around one fifth of farmland will need to be used to tackle climate change. The historic Easton Park site is around 1000 acres in area and whilst much of the land will remain as farmland to continue a viable income stream, there is plenty of space within the Park boundary to plant extensive new woodland areas.

A new woodland can capture more than 100 tons of Co2 per acre after 50 years. The amount of acreage available within Easton Park provides the opportunity to replace the 10,000 trees destroyed in WWII. It can also deliver a range of benefits such as carbon sequestration, carbon offsetting and the protection of wildlife habitats as well as providing access to the public for their physical and mental health and well-being.

The restoration of Easton Park to a country park would give Essex and Uttlesford a supply of land available for tree planting for decades to come.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS - CARBON REDUCTION

Support Available for Carbon Offset Tree Planting

Afforestation is quickly moving up the policy agenda and there are now a wide range of initiatives in place to support the planting of trees to offset carbon emissions.



Set Up Support

In the public arena, Essex County Council have launched “The Essex Forest Initiative” whereby they have committed to plant £1million worth of trees over the next 5 years. This will involve the planting of at least 375,000 trees. The aim is to continue the initiative beyond the five year period with the target of planting at least one million trees by 2030. The intention is for half of the trees to be paid for by ECC and the other half paid for by the Forestry Commission and other partners.

In the charity sector, the Woodland Trust is committed to playing a central role in the expansion, restoration and protection of native trees and woodland in the UK. The trust gives away hundreds of thousands of trees to communities and also offers grants and funding schemes to help communities plant new woodland.

Woodland Planning Grants are available through the Forestry Commission to support large scale productive woodland creation. Public bodies and landowners can receive £150 per hectare up to a maximum of £30,000 per project.

Income Streams

There is significant commercial support available through the Woodland Carbon Guarantee Scheme - a £50 million government scheme designed to stimulate woodland creation in England which was launched at the start of 2020. Under the scheme, contracts are awarded through sealed bid reverse auctions every six months.

Winning a contract under the Woodland Carbon Guarantee will give the option to sell carbon credits to the government at a guaranteed price every 5 or 10 years until 2055/56. The first auction was held in February 2020 and the average price paid was £24.11 per Woodland Carbon Unit / tCO₂. Carbon credits can also be sold on the open market at any time.

UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY & HERITAGE OF EASTON PARK

The documented history of Easton Park, one of the great parks of Essex, dates back over 700 years to 1302 when Matthew de Loveyn acquired a license for two deer parks at Little Easton.



In 1590, Elizabeth I granted the Manor of Estaines and surrounding lands to Sir Henry Maynard in recognition of his services. Henry had acquired the Tilty Abbey lands in 1588 to which was added the Manor of Great Easton in 1597 and Little Canfield Hall before his death in 1610.

In 1597, Sir Henry built an Elizabethan mansion at Easton Lodge but retained the name to reflect its origin as a hunting lodge.



Sir Henry's son William was made a Baron in 1620 and acquired Great Canfield Lodge. His Grandson, also William, who succeeded in 1640 expanded the Park to its current shape and restored it as a functioning deer park.

Little Easton from J Chapman and Peter André's Map of Essex 1777



In line with the fashion of the times, the parkland in front of the lodge was laid out as four formal avenues of trees radiating out from a central point, in the manner of a 'patte d'oie' or 'goose-foot'.

Skyenner engraving of 1756.



The expansion of the estate continued until the death of the last Viscount Maynard in 1865 by when it comprised some 14,000 acres mostly between Great Dunmow and Thaxted.

The Elizabethan mansion survived until a disastrous fire in 1847 following which Easton Lodge was rebuilt in the Victorian Gothic style to the designs of Thomas Hopper.

The house was largely demolished in 1950. Only the west wing now remains which is in private ownership.

THE COUNTESS OF WARWICK



Frances Evelyn 'Daisy' Maynard

Easton Lodge Estate reached its zenith under the ownership of Frances Evelyn 'Daisy' Maynard who later became the Countess of Warwick. Born in 1861, Daisy inherited the estate in 1865 at the age of three, becoming reputedly the richest heiress in the country and in 1881 married Francis Greville, who in 1893 became the 5th Earl of Warwick on the death of his father.

The Countess was a colorful individual with many gifts including intelligence, beauty, social skills and considerable abilities as a writer, gardener and farmer. She entertained extensively, notably the Marlborough Set, resulting in a close relationship for nine years from 1886 with the Prince of Wales who became Edward VII in 1901.

In 1902 the Countess commissioned Harold Peto to improve her gardens including building an Italian sunken garden to the north of Easton Lodge.

The Countess also renovated Stone Hall, a property to the south of the Park, where she created a themed garden in the Arts and Crafts style which was the subject of considerable acclaim.

In 1895, the Countess became a socialist and thereafter played an active role supporting progressive causes, notably the welfare of the local community with particular emphasis on educational reform and employment skills, especially for women.



In 1940, the War Office requisitioned both Easton Lodge and the estate.

The Park was cleared to build the airfield with the destruction of 10,000 trees across the estate including the Park including over 200 mature oak trees.

Initially, the airfield was taken by the USAAF 386th Bomber Group which was heavily involved in the bombing of Utah Beach prior to the D Day landings in June 1944. The 386th then moved to France and were replaced by RAF 190 and 620 Squadrons flying converted Short Stirling bombers. After VE Day, the Park became an army storage depot for more than 34,000 vehicles.

In 1948, the Anglo-American Goodwill Association erected a memorial on the southern edge of the site to the crews that once flew from the airfield, many of whom died during the conflict. The north chapel of the Little Easton Church of St Mary the Virgin (in the Little Easton Conservation Area adjoining Easton Park) is also dedicated to the Group.

EASTON PARK FEATURES



Running & Cycling

A track will be installed around the perimeter of the Park for running and cycling and bike trails created for recreational use.



Footpaths & Bridleways

Existing footpaths and bridleways will remain and be enhanced. New paths will be developed across and around the park.



Patte D'Oie

Trees would be planted along newly created avenues forming a Patte D'Oie or Goose-Foot for walking across the Park.



Afforestation

200 acres of new woodland will be created to contribute towards the Net Zero 2050 emissions target and provide benefits to wildlife & public health and well-being.



Wildlife Habitats

Designated Local Wildlife Site and habitats will be maintained and expanded to protect the wide range of species present throughout the park.



WWII Museum

Interest has been shown by the USAAF Aviation Armorers and Mechanics Display Team in turning the WWII Nissen huts within Easton Park into a memorial museum.



Agriculture

A significant percentage of the agricultural land would remain. This will provide a continued income stream for the site and maintain important crop production.



Further Opportunities

Creation of a solar panel farm in a more remote location in the park surrounded by trees. Creation of a car park for the Gardens of Easton Lodge.



Other Facilities

There is ample space for other features such as children's playgrounds, picnic areas, sports areas, café and a museum.

EASTON PARK FEATURES

The Gardens of Easton Lodge

Easton Lodge lies at the heart of the Park. The Elizabethan mansion built in 1597 was destroyed by fire in 1847. It was rebuilt but suffered further damage from another fire in 1918. The requisitioning of the estate by the War Office in 1940 to build an airfield led to further damage during WWII and in 1950, the house was largely pulled down. Only the west wing remains which is known as Warwick House and remains in private ownership.

A number of important heritage assets remain around the lodge, including the former servants quarters and water tower in the adjacent Easton Lodge stable-yard and the laundry just down the road in Laundry Lane.

In 1971, the previous owners of Warwick House began a project to restore the remaining wing of the house and the gardens under their ownership. In 1995, they expanded the project to restore the larger Forgotten Gardens of Easton Lodge, including the Peto designed gardens commissioned by the Countess of Warwick, through an agreement with the latest descendent of the Maynard family. This work has been continued since 2008 by the Trustees of the Gardens.

Easton Lodge is renowned for its displays of snowdrops in February when it attracts many visitors. The Gardens are open to visitors one Sunday a month from April to October.

The Attractions of the Gardens Include:

- ◆ Harold Peto's Gardens, including the sunken Italian Garden
- ◆ The Peto Treehouse - Recreated around the original oak tree
- ◆ The Walled Garden
- ◆ The Glade and Stirling Walk
- ◆ Daisy's Café
- ◆ Guided Tours
- ◆ Children's Activities
- ◆ The Archive - including the Trust's extensive collection of photos and documents relating to the Gardens, the Countess of Warwick, Great Dunmow airfield and the wartime use of the Gardens.
- ◆ Seasonal garden produce for sale



Visitors to Easton Park would also be able to visit the Gardens of Easton Lodge to explore the beautiful restored Harold Peto gardens as well as learn the fascinating history of the Maynard family and the Easton Lodge estate.

CONCLUSIONS

- ◆ The withdrawal of UDC's draft Local Plan provides the opportunity for a fundamental reassessment of the District's needs. Housing is a key necessity but must be seen in the context of other key requirements for Uttlesford.
- ◆ Little attention has been paid to date to the need for more open space to be made available to the public to provide for both physical and mental wellbeing. The District is underprovided in this regard as evidenced by Uttlesford's Open Space Assessment Report of February 2019.
- ◆ It is critical to protect Hatfield Forest which currently is threatened by excess use resulting from extensive housebuilding in the south of the district over recent years.
- ◆ Easton Park is a unique Uttlesford asset in terms of both environment and heritage. Its preservation and restoration would provide the open space required in the south of the District and be the most effective way to protect Hatfield Forest.
- ◆ Restoration would provide the opportunity to replace the 10,000 trees destroyed in WWII and create new woodlands that would make a significant contribution to Uttlesford's ambitious climate targets and the UK Net Zero 2050 emissions target.
- ◆ SEP believes that a restoration of Easton Park could be achieved at modest cost; that much of this cost could be recouped through grants; and that the restoration would not impact significantly on the financial viability of the restored Park. The core proposals are relatively modest and facilities could be built over time, each being separately funded and making use of funding grants for each phase of development.

By virtue of the 1939 Agreement, Uttlesford District Council has both the power and the responsibility to make this happen.



Now is the time to act to rectify the damage inflicted on Easton Park in World War II and create a lasting legacy for both current residents and for the generations to come.



NEXT STEPS

500 years ago, the great parks of London were reserved for use by the general public as was Epping Forest in 1878 and Hatfield Forest in 1924. In 1964, Chelmsford City Council did the same for Hylands Park. All these parks now provide an essential release for local populations. The Countess of Warwick did the same for Easton Park in 1937 but her legacy has been frustrated by WW II and subsequent attempts to profit from house building. It is time for UDC to acknowledge its responsibilities and work towards the restoration of Easton Park.



Uttlesford District Council have committed to meaningful consultation with local communities as part of the new local plan process. SEP will be engaging with UDC in this consultation to advocate the inclusion of Easton Park as a new country park for Uttlesford. Additionally, SEP will consult with all Easton Park stakeholders to articulate our vision for the future and agree how to take this forward. The countryside charity— CPRE Essex—have already expressed interest in the campaign and we look forward to discussions with them and other supporting parties.



Original Gates to Easton Park
Picture courtesy of Summers Place Auctions.

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