



## SERVICES TO PLACE

### ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS SURVEY:

To: Emma Hughes  
From: John Rowland  
Ref: Beech Avenue  
Ext. No.: 2226  
Date: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018

### **Re: Albany Road/Meadway in Bramhall.**

Having visited the site and considered the available information, I have the following comments to make:

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Arboriculture, Habitat and Countryside Section was to undertake an assessment on the need for an open drain/ditch that installed as part of the A6MARR work and was intended to be a temporary addition. The drainage ditch has since been left in situ and there have been to catch surface water runoff from draining into the neighbouring gardens.

#### ***Field Survey***

Concerns have been raised regarding the ditch and the close proximity to the footpath which runs adjacent to the drain. The survey was to assess the wildlife value of the ditch against the hazard that may be presented by leaving the ditch in an open state. A statement from Jimmy Simpson from Morgan Sindall who installed the ditches as part of the earth works for the new road, says that the ditch is also helping to feed one of the newly constructed ponds which were created as mitigation for the scheme.

However the at the time of the visit the water was actually flowing out of the pond into the ditch, with the water extending around a third of the length of the ditch, the middle section was actually dry with the water building up again towards the opposite end of the ditch.

The eastern end of the ditch runs parallel to the footpath behind the houses on Albany Road had around a foot (300mm) of standing water in it which terminated into a small ponded area with muddy surrounds. This 'lower' section of the ditch is of a low wild life value and I can see no ecological reasons for not infilling with 'Gabion' stone should safety concerns be an issue as this large stone would still allow the ditch to work. In time the ditch will become silted up and the stone would make any kind of maintenance extremely difficult and more costly to maintain.

Our greenspace sites across Stockport have miles of water course running next to footpaths and there a large number of ponds that have open unrestricted access situated in popular visitor attractions such as Bramhall Park, Abney Hall and Etherow to name a few, so by comparison this ditch would represent a low potential health risk to pedestrians.

The two wildlife ponds, one of which is at the start of the ditch to the west of the site has been left 'open' having no perimeter fencing to prevent access by children. The second pond situated above the first bend in the path and above the ditch has extremely steep sides and would appear to be very deep perhaps representing more of a hazard than the ditch?! This pond does have some chestnut paling fencing around it but this has been knocked down in places and access has been acquired.

Records of protected species in the immediate area include Great Crested Newt and Badger. It is hoped that GCN will colonise the new ponds. Should badger accidentally fall into the ditch the sides are dug in such a way as to allow animals to climb out and the eastern end runs out to nothing also allowing species to escape should they end up in the ditch.

A new ditch looks to have been excavated quite recently behind the houses to the north east of the new footpath. This ditch is of concern from a wildlife viewpoint as the sides are steep and the ends are squared off which could potentially result in fatalities for any trapped wildlife which could struggle to climb out.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- If deemed necessary the ditch could be infilled with large stone to allow catchment of excess water but restrict the open area.
- Check out the reasons why the new ditch has been dug and make arrangements for the ends and at least one side to be re-profiled to allow any animal that may inadvertently become trapped the chance to escape.

Should you have any queries regarding these comments please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely,



John Rowland  
Countryside Officer







