**KIDWELLY QUAY February 2022**

**Method Statement- Protected Species**

Purpose

To restore grassland habitat and improve access along the footpath for both walkers and machinery- significant pond maintenance work is planned for late summer 2022. This is the only useful access through the site. Patches of bramble scrub along the path are beginning to encroach on the path and grassland. These will be removed, scrub patches on the opposite side of the path and within the field will be retained instead and plans for scrub management across the site will be discussed at a later date. Connectivity of vegetation will be considered in all management- retaining continuous runs of dense vegetation alongside the path with aerial connections within woodland. The grassland area will be cut and the arisings collected and piled along sunny edges of the site, to be used by egg laying reptiles. Nutrient stripping by removing the arisings will encourage species diversity in the grassland. By cutting scalloped edges around scrub patches in the field, new ecotones will be created which are beneficial to a wide range of species, notably dormice, who’s nest are often found in these edge habitats where scrub meets grassland. Occasional scrub trees and overhanging branches along the path will be removed and the wood piled to create habitat piles for dormice and other small mammals, and dead wood for invertebrates. An area of scrub willows with no understorey vegetation will be removed to clear an area for the arisings from the pond clearance work to be piled in to rot down. This will also create easier access to the pond for the clearance work, avoiding any disturbance to nesting birds.

Dormouse records

There are no dormouse records on site, but there are records in the vicinity. A full dormouse nest tube survey of the site and connected habitat is planned for 2022.

Method

Scrub removal will be carried out by a 2 stage approach, firstly with an excavator mounted flail mower, so there will be no impact on the surface of the ground, where dormouse hibernation nests might be. Vegetation will be cut no lower than 30cm. Removal of the remaining vegetation will then be done when it is safe to assume that dormice have come out of hibernation, either with a strimmer, mower or robocut.

Work will be completed during the winter, to avoid disturbing active dormice and nesting birds. During this time, night-time temperatures are low enough that it is deemed that dormice will be hibernating close to/ just below the surface of the ground.

Before any work commences a search for dormice and their nests will be completed and contractors will be given an induction talk on dormice before work commences (SCCF contractors are aware of protected species and are used to working on sites where dormice are present).

Should any evidence of dormice be found, work will cease and Amanda Evans (named on the toolbox talk which the contractors will have a copy of) will be called to check. If a dormouse is found, a 5m cordon will be erected around it and NRW informed.

Dormouse Licence holder Amanda Evans (licence number S088698) will carry out checks and be on call during the work.