

Pond Conservation
For Life in Fresh Waters

REGISTERED CHARITY 1107708

COLESHILL VILLAGE POND

**Options for the management of Coleshill Village Pond
and its local environs for the benefit of people and
wildlife**



Coleshill Village Pond, October 2006

Contents

Executive Summary	Page 1
Suggested Way Forward	Page 2
Coleshill Village Pond – Site Background	Page 3
General Pond Ecology	Page 4
Issues Affecting Coleshill Village Pond	Page 5
Issues and Opportunities, Coleshill Common and Other Areas	Page 7
General Issues and Opportunities	Page 8
Possible Pond Management Options – Village Pond and Common	Page 9
Provisional Project Timetable	Page 12

Executive Summary

This document sets out a series of options for the management of Coleshill Village Pond and its local environs, with the intention of looking after its plant and animal life as well as maintaining the pond, as a feature the local people can be proud of, i.e. a good pond for both people and wildlife.

Coleshill Village Pond is in many ways typical of ponds found on the clay cap of the Chilterns and village ponds in general. However, in at least one way it is very unusual, being one of only a handful of recorded locations in the UK for the very rare plant Starfruit, *Damasonia alisma*. This plant has only been recorded from a few ponds in the Buckinghamshire Chilterns.

Managing ponds until recently was uncomplicated, following traditional beliefs and methods of what a good pond should be. However, recent research carried out by Pond Conservation has shown how ponds really work in an ecological sense – and many of these findings run contrary to the “traditional” approach to pond management. Ponds are in fact much more complicated, with types of pond considered to be traditionally “poor” shown to be good for wildlife. Coleshill Village Pond is a very typical traditionally managed pond. In recent years, for example, it has been artificially topped up to maintain it as a permanent pond and ducks are a popular and sometimes numerous feature of the site. The aquatic environment produced by such traditional management and use, is often not wildlife friendly - including Starfruit the special plant of the site. In contrast to the recent management of Coleshill Pond, the life cycle of this plant requires all or part of a pond to dry up, at least in some years.

The reasons for the management of local landscape features such as Coleshill Pond can be numerous, including for example traditional aesthetic / landscape considerations, public access and recreation and nature conservation. As a local site managed by the Parish Council on behalf of the local community it is important that all people who want to be able to be involved in the future decisions and management of their site.

To help enable people make better informed decisions this document identifies basic background information about Coleshill Village Pond and the main issues when deciding the appropriate management of the site - including potential or actual conflicts and problems. This information is provided on the basis that understanding problems and issues will improve the local and wider debate about what should be done. The document does not favour or promote one particular solution but sets out some options for how to proceed. Other ideas or options may appear during the consultation process.

Suggested Way Forward

The current period of discussion and planning for Coleshill Village Pond and its local environs began in autumn 2006, when the Parish Council with the support of the Chilterns AONB and in conjunction with Buckinghamshire County Council and Pond Conservation began the process of developing a formal plan for the Village Pond and potentially other areas within the village. To ensure the planning is robust enough to ensure the final proposed solution(s) works at all levels, both the decision making process and actual work phases will be phased. This phasing of the process will allow time for local and other consultation, and for the effects of management to be monitored to assess its success (and modifications to plans to be made if required):

Phase One, Autumn 2006 to Spring 2007

Draw up summary scoping document for Coleshill Village Pond and the potential options for its management i.e. this document. These options are to be discussed at local level by the Parish Council and local community, and more widely by other external interested individuals or organisations. The aim of this period of debate and consultation is to develop an agreed plan of action. (If universal agreement is not possible at least plans are acceptable to the majority of people.)

Phase Two, Spring 2007 to Winter 2007/08

Following agreement, or at least general consensus, on the preferred option(s) for work, draw up a five year, or ten year (whatever is sensible) management plan – the content and scope of work being dependent on the findings of this Phase. This plan is likely to include a mix of capital (one off) tasks and ongoing work.

There are two parts to Phase Two work – firstly the information gathering and survey work – and secondly the actual plan writing. To develop a detailed work programme will require detailed survey work, both for the Village Pond itself and other areas that may be included in the plan. This survey work is projected to take place in 2007. Aspects that will need investigation include critical environmental issues such as local hydrology (understanding the local water regime is essential in managing or creating ponds) and wildlife surveys (aquatic and terrestrial). Once completed the plan will need to be agreed and signed off prior to its implementation.

Phase 3, Winter 2007/08 and Beyond

It is not possible to predict the resources required to implement the planned work in advance. One benefit of having a detailed plan is that it will make the costing of work much easier and thus help the process of finding resources to carry out the work. Grant giving bodies need to know what is required and when it needs to be done and often insist on a detailed working plan. A well thought out plan is thus very important.

Coleshill Village Pond - Site Background

Coleshill Village Pond is situated in the centre of the village in a prominent location adjacent to the main road. The Parish Council have been managing the pond and its immediate surrounds without any objections, but if major plans are to be developed which could result in significant changes then the ownership issue needs to be sorted out. (The Parish Council applied for common land registration in 1968, which was accepted, but there is no owner listed in the register.) The pond is more or less permanent, for example it reportedly “dried out” in the extreme drought of 1976, but not in 2006. In 2006 although many ponds did dry up, Coleshill pond may not have dried because in recent years it had been topped up with tap water by means of an automatic valve operated mains water supply. Topping up ceased in the summer of 2006 (for financial reasons). The water level subsequently dropped to reveal an approximately two metres wide band of exposed mud. The water level has now risen such that it is more or less full with no exposed pond margins.

Aquatic plants are restricted to a relatively narrow and discontinuous strip around the pond margins, with none elsewhere in the pond. Fish were present in the past, but are currently believed to be absent. There are, as with many village ponds, plenty of domesticated ducks with numbers varying but reported as high as sixty being present at times. There are also wild water birds e.g. Moorhens. This number of ducks will make a significant negative impact on the ecological value of the pond. A brief aquatic survey for invertebrates found little variety, but given the time of year of the survey (October) many species would not be recorded and any statements about the ecological health based on its invertebrate fauna can only be provisional. However, the results are consistent with other known information about the pond, and other similar types of pond. Significantly all of the animals were netted from the strip of fringing aquatic marginal plants.

The adjacent road verge consists of short regularly mown grass. The road verge appears, in part, to be made up ground - suggesting that in the past the pond may have been bigger, extending over what is now the main road through the village. However, the pond has escaped some of the more dramatic infilling that can be seen in some village ponds and it retains a wide shallow margin. To either side of the pond are houses with gardens - and to the rear a managed short grassland paddock. The pond has open sunny banks on the roadside, and is shaded by a row of trees along its back edge. The side banks are part shaded by trees and adjacent boundary hedges.

In the past the pond has been managed in an attempt to improve the site for Starfruit. (*pers. comm.* Andy McVeigh, Buckinghamshire County Council). Specifically, the pond was part dredged in 1990/91 for Starfruit, *Damasonia alisma* as part of the rare plant “Back From The Brink” project led by the plant conservation charity Plantlife. There was further smaller scale clearing of silt in 1996/97 for the same reason. There is no known current management of the pond itself, though its immediate surrounds are regularly cut.

General Pond Ecology

Despite a commonly held traditional vision of what is a good pond, research by Pond Conservation has shown that all ponds can be ecologically valuable for wildlife. The four most important controlling factors for ponds are clean water (the amount is less important), the variety of habitats or physical structure within the pond, how wildlife friendly the surrounding area is and fourth (to a lesser extent) being close to other freshwater habitats including other ponds. Other factors e.g. the actual type(s) of habitat in which the pond is located, the amount of shade, depth and permanence of water etc, are only variables that control the type of life that can live in a pond. Pond Conservation uses a broad definition of what a pond is i.e. a more or less still water body up to two hectares (five acres) in area, which normally holds water for four months of the year or more. This definition thus includes many small and temporary water bodies most people would not even think of as ponds.

The classic “good” pond is often seen as one with a some aquatic and marginal vegetation, but also lots of open water, perhaps light shade from scattered trees around the margin and sometimes a greater or lesser numbers of water birds and/or fish. This vision of a standard or good pond has probably been derived from, and maintained by, the type of pond found in the traditionally managed (agricultural) landscape – a pond type whose form has been created and controlled by its social and economic function(s) more than its ecology. In a technical sense this type of pond would be described as a mid-succession pond - that is neither a brand new (early succession) pond, nor a very old (late succession) pond – which if full of plants or other debris – these often being described as “overgrown”, “choked” or “drying out”. Good mid-succession ponds can indeed support a large number of species. They would often have been maintained in this state by regular use and/or specific management.

However, each phase of the life of a pond will be suitable for and used by a suite of different organisms, some being specialists of one particular phase. A brand new pond with no plants and little or no below or above water structure will be suitable for open water specialists – some of which are only or usually found in the first few months of its existence. Similarly an old pond, for example a woodland pond entirely surrounded by and filled with living and dead trees, will have lost most of the species from its early and middle incarnations. But under the right conditions a suite of specialist species only capable of living in shady ponds full of natural woodland debris will have colonised. None of these ponds are ecologically better or worse, they are just different! Even ponds that dry out every year, or every few years are good – with most aquatic organisms having mechanisms to cope with regular (e.g. seasonal) or occasional drying. Some specialist species actually need regular dry conditions as part of their life cycle. There is no part of a pond that is not used by plants or animals. Having said this open water is generally a poor habitat for most species – as it is often barren and dangerous – it is the plants and other accumulated debris (silt, large and small) which provides the structure for organisms to shelter, lay in ambush, hide, lay eggs, sources of food, sources of material to build larval cases (Caddis Flies), etc.

Thus a whole range of ponds can be good for wildlife, including:

- Large / small
- Deep / shallow

- Sunny / shady
- Permanent / semi-permanent / temporary water
- Long lived / short lived
- Calcareous / acid

Where one or more of the four controlling factors are not as good as they could be a pond may still be ecologically useful, but it will not fulfil its maximum potential. When managing ponds it is important to understand their whole ecology, including its biological and hydrological conditions. Where problems exist these either need to be solved or work plans devised such that the problems are negated as far as possible if it can't be fixed. Poor water quality is one of the most common and difficult overriding issues, which often cannot be solved. Common factors, which cause poor water quality include contaminated run off from agricultural land or roads and overstocking with fish and/or ducks. Water may appear clean but in reality be enriched – for example mains (tap) water has relatively high levels of nitrates and phosphates and can contribute to algal blooms and other water quality related problems. Particular management actions may improve water quality - but often it is a fact of life, which has to be accepted and worked with.

Issues Affecting Coleshill Village Pond

There are a variety of issues and/or problems that impact on Coleshill Village Pond and probably other ponds in the village. Some of these issues are real and some perhaps only perceived. The list below may not be exhaustive but is indicative of the type of issues to resolve as part of the planning process.

Environmental / Ecological Issues

Water Quality is the single most important factor controlling the ecological quality of a pond. Coleshill Village Pond is unlikely to have the best water quality for the probable following reasons. Ducks are numerous, and the pond is a popular place to feed them. Water is enriched by both duck faeces and also (though it may not be a major problem in Coleshill) any food brought for the ducks that remains uneaten. Ducks (and fish) can also maintain higher nutrient levels by continually disturbing the silts, which also has the effect of increasing water cloudiness. Two other problems have also added to water quality problems – keeping the pond topped up (until 2006) with mains water would have added nutrients some of which may no longer be present as they do not persist (e.g. nitrates), but others persist (e.g. phosphates tend to remain in the system once introduced). The pond also receives road run off, a potential source of numerous contaminants such as metals and salt.

It is very normal for pond water levels to fluctuate on an annual or seasonal basis and over a period of years. Species that live in ponds have adaptations to cope with this and some actually require drying out as part of their lifecycles. There are several plants, which need bare non-flooded ground to germinate, Starfruit being one of them. Thus during the period of topping up with mains water there was no or very little chance of this species re-appearing. If this and other similar species is to have a future

in this pond (and as far as is known it has never been seen in any other pond in Coleshill) then at least part of the pond needs to dry out at some time.

Even from two brief conversations with local people passing the pond it appears there is anecdotal evidence of declines in some of the wildlife using the pond - for example, one person said that the number of spawning Frogs has declined in recent years. Anecdotal information is not always reliable by its nature and can be very difficult to quantify – but often it is indicative of real trends. If wildlife is an important part of the ponds local function, then the precise cause(s) of any declines (if these declines are real) in the wildlife using the pond needs to be established and if possible addressed as part of the planning process.

There are old records for Signal Crayfish in the pond, the most common of the foreign invasive species, which has been a major factor in the decline of our native Crayfish across large parts of the country. A site policy will be required if they still present (which is very unlikely under present conditions) or they re-colonise.

Practical Issues

Silt Removal - If silt removal is required on a large scale it could be very expensive. Pond silts will need to be tested as part of any planned removal and if heavily contaminated or enriched cannot be dumped just anywhere. If badly contaminated they could be classed as hazardous or toxic waste which is potentially even more expensive to remove as it has to be taken away to a secure landfill site. If possible larger scale silt removal is to be avoided for other reasons as well. For example, larger scale physical disturbance can lead to even worse temporary water quality problems than existed prior to its removal. Many animals live in or use the silt and thus species could be lost.

Hydrology – Ponds are wetland habitats and water is the key component of the system - thus a complete understanding of where it is from, what it is like and when it gets to the pond is essential. Coleshill Village Pond is apparently simple being fed by direct precipitation, local surface run off from its immediate surrounds and run off from the adjacent road. However, even high up plateau ponds like this can have elements of ground water or springs. Hydrological studies would also include an investigation of the water quality. Water quality is a key issue, which needs to be addressed as part of planning for the pond. The fluctuations in pond level are also critical in devising plans, whether the emphasis is on creating the “perfect” village pond with more or less fixed water levels - or maximising its value for wildlife (with fluctuations being desirable and/or encouraged).

Perceived Issues

Silt and ducks - Ducks and duck feeding are a popular village activity - with some people at least. Concern was expressed that the deep silt layers are, or may be, detrimental to the health of the ducks. There is no obvious connection between the two, though it is possible that poor water quality (which may not be helped by rich or contaminated silts) could affect the health of ducks as well as other animals and plants. However, in this case it is also possible that the concern about the ducks health may be acting as a cipher for peoples general and usually unnecessary concerns about

silt in ponds. Silt in ponds is natural and a valuable habitat and resource for animals and plants. In duck ponds or other polluted ponds silts can become very rich and along with closely related issues of poor water quality cause major problems for life in ponds. Perversely however, ducks seem to live very happily in large numbers on the most polluted urban park ponds - which are otherwise almost lifeless.

Pond Ecology or “How Ponds Work” – Generally there is little widespread understanding of how ponds actually work as natural environments and from the few conversations with local people this appears to be the case in Coleshill. This is not unusual as many people have yet to catch up with recent findings about ponds. Thus the relationship between factors such as ducks, duck feeding, fluctuating water levels, water quality and the best way to improve its nature conservation value and/or aesthetic appeal (e.g. nobody likes green smelly ponds) is poorly understood. To get the best decisions about the future management of the pond and other related works or areas, people need to be better informed.

Issues and Opportunities, Coleshill Common and Other Areas

Generally, whatever final plans are agreed for the Village Pond, Coleshill Common offers a great opportunity for people and wildlife. It is already a valuable local resource for both - and a review of its current value for both people and wildlife could create more opportunities still. Given its more natural surrounds it arguably offers better opportunities for nature conservation than the Village pond itself. For example, the ponds on Coleshill Common will generally be much less impacted by pollutants and other problems - and therefore be better ecological habitats. However, for Starfruit in particular, which has only as far as is known been recorded from the Village Pond this may not be the case. If there is no seed bank on the Common then it is not going to benefit from any plans to improve the common, without very specific and potentially complicated (physical and administrative) plans to “seed” one or more ponds.

Including the Village Pond and other areas of public owned or other land into a single plan will rationalise and enable better use of finite management resources (money and volunteers) and other potential opportunities for external grants. An holistic approach will avoid any potential conflicts between the variety of local land uses and management. It could benefit the whole community by bringing them together to develop a vision for Coleshill, benefiting people and the wider environment.

Coleshill Common

Ownership - One overriding issue for Coleshill Common that needs to be highlighted is its ownership. It is understood that Coleshill Common is an “exempt common”. Under the Common Registration Act 1965 (dated August 1966) Amersham District Council applied for an Exemption Order. This Order was made in December 1966 which registered the fact that there were no commoners rights and no known owners. On its application the Order listed the Shardloes Estate as the owner. The Common is now under the auspices of the Chiltern District Council (Amersham District Council now defunct) which has delegated the management to Coleshill Parish Council. Thus, the Parish Council have been managing it without any objections, but if major plans

are to be developed which could include more significant changes than the issue of ownership needs to be clarified. It is not uncommon for ownership of Commons to be complicated and often not clear!

Coleshill Common has a mix of open grassland, woodland and trees, in part an historically traditionally grazed landscape - but also in part abandoned clay and/or sand diggings. The upper central part of the common is dominated by grassland, which appears (from a brief autumnal walk over survey only) to be reasonably species rich. It is managed in part by cutting, and is also heavily grazed by rabbits. Much of the woodland is relatively recent secondary in origin and dominated by typical scrub species such as hawthorn - and thus probably too young to be very rich at least in terms of species typical of older woodland. However there are areas of apparently more mature wood pasture (traditionally grazed common land), at least adjacent to the open grassland. The former industrial nature of part of the common has created an undulating landscape of variable soil types and wetness with good ecological and visual variation. Overall, this variety of physical structure and habitats offers great potential for ecological enhancement – in the process adding extra, or refining existing, features of interest for local people.

As regards ponds on Coleshill Common, there is very good potential for both common and rare species for the existing ponds and also plenty of scope for creating new ponds as well. There are currently at least three ponds on site and potentially other temporary ponds not visible at the time of the initial (brief) site survey. One pond is remarkable, possibly even unique, as it apparently has live cables running through the bottom of the pond!

The Chilterns Conservation Board with other organisations are piloting a project to assess the value of Chilterns Commons - with the future aim of improving their management. The opportunity to improve the Village Pond and expand work to include work on Coleshill Common as well would be an opportunity to be involved in this project at an early stage.

There is at least one potentially problematic (potentially invasive) species of plant on the common i.e. Himalayan Balsam, which may need to be monitored and controlled if this is deemed necessary. However, among ecologists there is not universal agreement that this species is a problem, and this is one of the many issues that would need to be explored as part of any plans if they were to include the Common as well as the Village Pond.

General Issues and Opportunities

- By ensuring all relevant information is gathered any proposed work is more likely to be successful. Thus although it may seem to some that a lot of time and resources are being put into planning it is best it is not rushed – if only to avoid wasting money and/or making major practical, ecological or other mistakes. For example the aim will presumably to improve the Village Pond, not accidentally drain it because either its physical structure and/or water supply was not understood and damaged by accident during work.
- Another advantage of good planning is that any proposals are more likely to be successful at attracting grants. A good management plan with clear objectives and

annual targets will allow a bid to be put together more easily and make reporting back to the same funding bodies and others much easier.

- Working in partnership with local people, and other organisations with a known track record (e.g. Bucks County Council, Pond Conservation) will also help in any grant applications.
- Some of the possible options for the management of the Village Pond could involve significant costs. By contrast management of the ponds on the common would probably be relatively cheap and new pond creation potentially even cheaper – by comparison with the Village Pond.

Possible Pond Management Options – Village Pond and Common

The options listed below for the Village Pond are **outline suggestions only** and details of work tasks and methods e.g. amount and methods of silt removal (if required), disposal of silts (if required), temporary or permanent storage of materials, etc. - will all need to be developed as part of the detailed planning process.

Possible work tasks are identified for each option, but note these are indicative only and only after the selection of the preferred option(s) and detailed planning will it be possible to define the actual tasks.

Options Involving Only Coleshill Village Pond

Option 1 - “Natural Pond”

Aim: To manage the pond in a “natural” way for the maximum benefit of wildlife, e.g. allowing water levels to fluctuate over the whole of the pond. This will impact on some of its current uses, for example its role as a duck pond and potentially its aesthetic appeal. In this option the pond would not always be full of water and the at least some of the surrounds would be managed less frequently and in a less regimented way.

Work tasks could include the following:

- If required, partially or completely drain the pond and/or allow its level to drop naturally over the course of one or two years. Dig out more recent (top) layer of heavily enriched silt and dispose of as required in legal manner.
- Remove all fish (if any still alive) from the pond, and do not return when work is finished. Fish removal would be easier when the water level is lower.
- Adopt a policy of not artificially topping up the pond during low periods. Fluctuating water levels are an important component of the ponds ecology. Remove the feed pipe from the pond and/or the adjacent land.
- Stop or ameliorate the effects of road run off. Methods to do this could include one or more of the following: routing run off away from pond altogether, allowing it to enter only part of the pond (i.e. sealed off from the main bulk of the pond) which soaks away to ground and not the main pond, install an external silt trap, install internal “reedbed” to filter and clean water either as part of main pond or a stand alone small internal pond.

- Limit, and control, if required the number of resident domestic water birds. The best option would be to have no resident domestic birds at all. Ban additional feeding of any sort to discourage birds to move onto and/or stay on the pond. Truly wild birds that come and go are an accepted and welcome part of the ponds wildlife. Ducks can have major negative effects on water quality, which is the most important factor for a good wildlife pond.
- Allow pond level to fluctuate naturally to encourage Starfruit and other typical species associated with seasonally dry areas and shallow waters.
- Record / monitor pond water levels (probably monthly) and other ecological features as required (e.g. extent and type of plant cover etc.) These features could include water depths, silt depths, width of draw down zone, aquatic plants, amphibians, dragonflies, etc.
- If target species do not appear develop additional plans (if sensible or possible) to encourage them either in the Village Pond or as a fall back option elsewhere e.g. ponds on Coleshill Common. The obvious target species is Starfruit, but there may be others identified as part of the survey work carried out to devise the detailed plan.
- Within existing limits (e.g. highways requirements) manage the surrounds (limited though they are) on a less regular and less intensive manner such that the adjacent terrestrial habitat is also better for wildlife.

Option 2 - "Classic" Village Pond with Ducks and/or Fish

Aim: To maintain the pond as a traditional village pond with regularly managed surrounds, a resident population of ducks and possibly fish. Nature conservation, by default, to be of secondary importance, as many species will not tolerate the ecological conditions associated with such a management policy. (This Option is more or less the current management policy.)

- This option will almost inevitably mean that the pond will be relatively poor ecologically, especially if the numbers of ducks / fish is not controlled and supplementary duck feeding is not controlled.
- The immediate consequence of this is that nature conservation, if it is deemed to be an important component of the ponds and other areas in the village, will need to be accommodated elsewhere. The obvious site for this would be Coleshill Common (ownership issue permitting) with its existing ponds and potential for pond creation. Other local ponds, as yet unknown, which owners are keen to manage with nature conservation as a very important or main aim could also form part of a wider village wildlife pond network.

Option 3 – Village Pond and Wildlife

Aim: To maintain the pond as mix of both traditional village pond but with wildlife also very high priority (assumed equal for the scenario outlined here). This option will involve compromises for both perspectives and could be a difficult thing to do in one pond. Two possible approaches are outlined below.

- Option 3A - Retain pond as one continuous water body, but within it define zones or areas with differing management priorities, access arrangements etc. For example some areas to be deliberately maintained as expanses of open water (if an

important part of its visual aesthetic appeal) with the water levels managed that could be topped up if required (mechanism to be decided) - but some drying out encouraged in other parts.

- Option 3B - Adapt the pond such that it is in two distinct and separate parts, one part being mostly permanent deeper water (e.g. this could be topped up by using all the road run off) and the other generally shallower which dries out to a greater or lesser extent on a regular basis (its entire water supply being clean sources i.e. rain water and immediate but not road run off).
- Both these options could be very difficult or even impossible to achieve in practise, but are concepts that could be explored. The permanent “deep” water would hopefully be preferred by the ducks and the very shallow semi-permanent in part temporary pond by other species e.g. Starfruit.
- For either of these options (3A and 3B) to work it will be necessary to define and work to limits (upper and / or lower) for features such as numbers of ducks and/or fish, amount of plants, type of plants etc. If these limits were not devised then one or other of the target reasons i.e. traditional village pond or wildlife will decline / dominate. Specified features would need agreed control method(s), instigated when limits were reached (or about to be reached).
- Both Option 3 plans would probably need to include a designated feeding area for ducks, preferably away from the water and any wildlife friendly areas, to minimise the effects of the feeding on the water quality but also generally to improve visual aspects such as green water.
- It is probable that active intervention to maintain the pond will be required on a regular basis – which is likely to be more costly in terms of resources than either of the two preceding Options (One and Two).

Village Pond and Other Areas

Option 4 – Also Manage Ponds Other than the Village Pond and/or Create New Pond(s)

Aim: Enhance and improve opportunities for both people and wildlife by making use of other existing ponds and/or creating new ponds (on Coleshill Common or elsewhere). These ponds to complement and increase the variety of opportunities offered by the Village Pond for both people and wildlife – whichever management option is chosen.

Note: This option is not dependent on what happens to the Village Pond and can be taken up in combination with any of the Village Pond Options (1, 2, 3A and 3B).

- The possibilities for work under this option have yet to be fully explored. However, Coleshill Common appears to have great potential for ponds generally – through its existing ponds but also through further pond creation. Pond creation could benefit nature conservation as well as produce attractive and accessible ponds for people to enjoy as well. The ecological value of its existing ponds needs to be carefully assessed before any major changes are made to them for any reason, ecological or other.
- The incorporation of other village ponds (with the agreement of local landowner(s)) as part of a formal, or informal pond network, could also provide

similar benefits. New pond creation does not have to be limited to Coleshill Common, but could be undertaken on other land as well.

- One of the benefits of widening the scope of work to other sites, i.e. Coleshill Common or elsewhere, is that it could include much larger areas of surrounding terrestrial habitats. One of the most important controlling factors for good wildlife ponds is the ecological quality of their (terrestrial) surrounds.

[Note: Work on private land with no public access is less likely to attract grant aid unless some element of public engagement, for example permitted access to visit ponds included in the local pond network scheme. Most grant schemes require a strong people element to any projects they support.]

Provisonal Project Timetable

Listed below is provisional timetable outlining the possible date and type of work required in compiling a thorough and sound practical plan for Coleshill Village Pond and (potentially) other ponds or areas (e.g. Coleshill Common). It is included as a guide only and may change, depending on circumstances e.g. funding.

Task 1 - Prepare Scoping Document – To be used to inform and be part of local consultation in spring 2007 – For March 2007

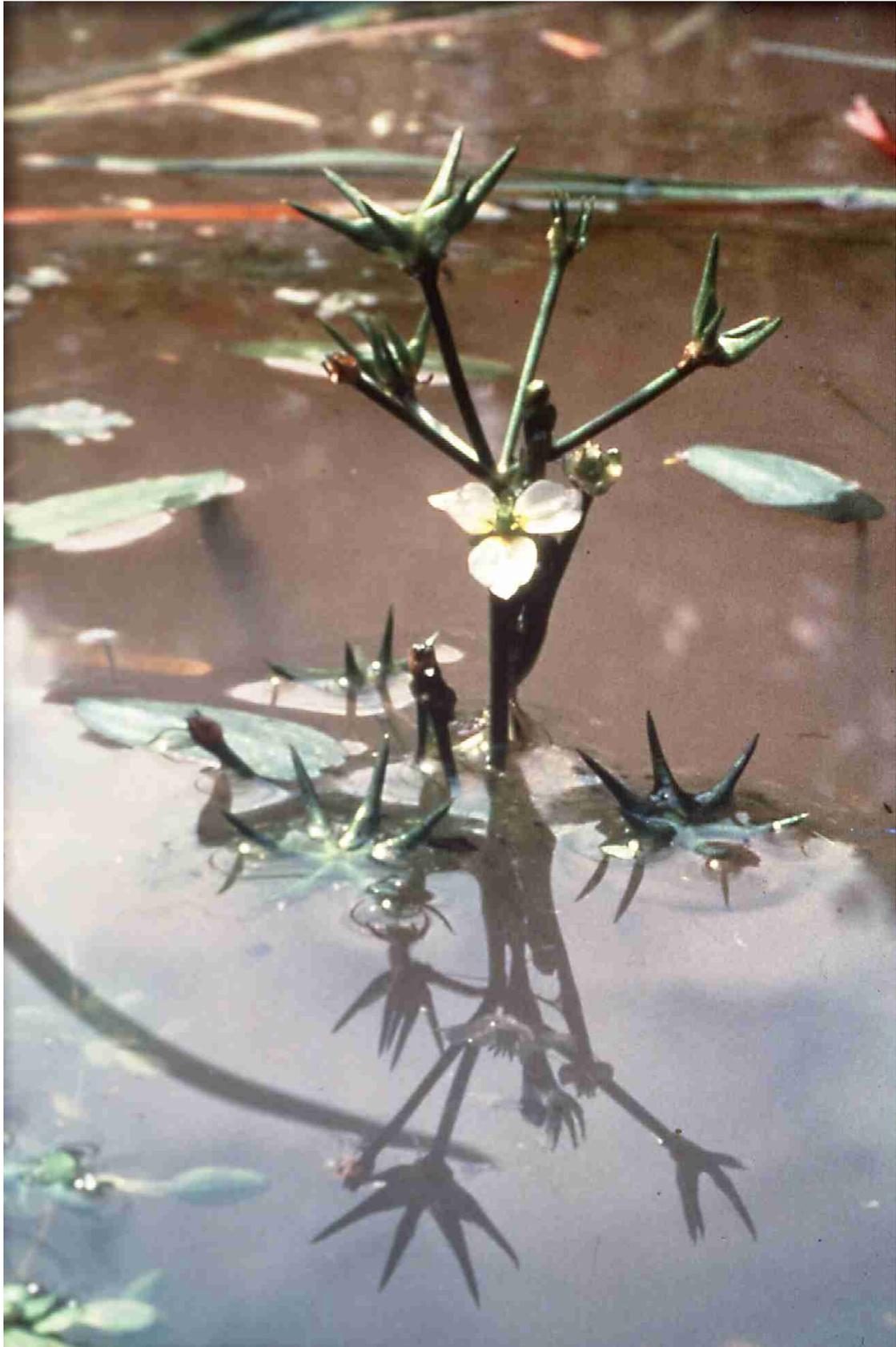
Task 2 - Detailed Surveys – Ecological, environmental of Coleshill Village Pond, Coleshill Common etc. (as required) – Spring and Summer 2007

Task 3 - Survey of Local Views and Opinions – The views of local important people are important, as these are their spaces. The process should be two way, gaining the opinions of people but also providing the local people with information so that they are best informed to contribute more fully to the debate - Spring and Summer 2007
[Note – Part of the above could be promoting Pond Conservations “Parish Pond Survey” which could be used a mechanism to both educate people about how ponds really work ecologically and also identify potentially suitable ponds for some of the more interesting local species (perhaps even Starfruit!) and candidates for a local pond network.]

Task 4 - Collate information, draw up plans. Agree the way forward, seek funding / resources. - Autumn / Winter 2007/08 etc.

[Note - These plans will need to be approved, this approval should include an appropriate consultation process. The plan will be a key document in getting resources to carry out the work.]

Task 5 - Practical Work – To begin as appropriate as soon as resources available – Spring 2008 and Beyond



Starfruit *Damasonia alisma*