

# **Water Safety Inspection and Risk Assessment Report of Boughton Village Green and Pond**



**By Kevin Fisher (NEBOSH)  
For Boughton Parish Council**

## WATER SAFETY SITE ASSESSMENT

**Site Location: Boughton Village Green and Pond**

**Assessing Officer: Kevin Fisher**  
**Date of Inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

<p><b>Environmental Factors</b>  Proximity to populated areas:  schools; inns; retail/tourism;  picnic area; play area; car  park; roads; especially  attractive features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre of village location close to sparsely located residential properties</li> <li>• Picnic area and various seating located on green surrounding the pond</li> <li>• Traffic highway encircles village green and pond with low density vehicular traffic</li> <li>• Children's play area and equipment in self contained space located adjacent to the green with highway separation</li> <li>• No pedestrian footway</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioural Factors</b>  Category and volume of  expected users:  swimmers; anglers; walkers;  drivers; specialist water users;  general public;  unaccompanied children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recreation area is generally used by local children to play (some unsupervised)</li> <li>• The area is used by occasional visitors (generally parents using their cars to bring children to the location) for the vista, play area and to feed the water fowl</li> <li>• In recent times there has been occasional angling but no swimming</li> <li>• Local people regularly enjoy the amenity of the village green and pond</li> <li>• Village events are often held in the vicinity. These events have their own Risk Assessments undertaken by the event holders</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ease of Access to Water Edge</b>  Open unrestricted access;  type and nature of paths;  natural obstacles; vegetation;  existing barriers/fencing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is open unrestricted access to the pond edge</li> <li>• There is much ornamental chain link fencing around the perimeter of the Village Green but this not continuous</li> <li>• Flag irises and reed provide edge to water delineation in various places</li> </ul>
<p><b>Type of Edge</b>  Condition of edge:  stable; unstable; nature of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pond edges are generally well defined</li> <li>• The Village Green and approach to the waters</li> </ul>

<p>ground at edge; height above water; gradient of bank; features allowing or encouraging access to water</p>	<p>edge is flat and well tended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ground is stable and can be softer underfoot closer to water depending on the season</li> <li>• The pond edge is generally 6 to 12 inches above the water level</li> <li>• No discouraging features to restrict access to water</li> </ul>
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<p><b>The Water</b>  Temperature; underwater gradient up to about 3.75 m from edge; max depth of water; currents; clarity; underwater obstacles or traps; tide; features, e.g. weir, lock; blue green algae</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water temperature is typical of a medium sized pond area.</li> <li>• Edges are generally shallow with a medium gradient. It is reputed by village elders that the maximum depth of water is 3m (10’).</li> <li>• Underwater traps or obstacles are unknown but thought not to be overly present</li> <li>• There are no currents and the clarity of water is generally very good</li> <li>• There is some evidence of algae and duckweed that is more prolific in the summer months. Expert advice has been sought by Boughton Parish Council on the optimum method of controlling this</li> <li>• A natural clay soil base retains the water</li> </ul>
<p><b>Existing Rescue Equipment, Signs etc.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no rescue equipment</li> <li>• No warning signs are displayed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Known Accident History</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two brothers aged 13 and 8 tragically drowned in 1929 when walking on the ice covered pond</li> <li>• No other known or corroborated incidents</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk Level (see matrix)</b></p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Probability of accident – Unlikely but foreseeable</p> <p>Severity of outcome – Moderate risk</p>



West side of pond showing gently sloping access/egress



North side of pond showing the area of non-continuous chain link fencing. Pond edges predominantly delineated with flag irises and reeds



East side of pond showing 'picnic'/seating area



East side of pond showing adjacent self-contained recreation area



South side of pond where deepest water is advised to be. Side is adjacent to main thoroughfare of village

## Risk Assessment Matrix

Probability of Accidents	Severity of Outcome		
	Slightly harmful (Low)	Harmful (Medium)	Extremely harmful (High)
Highly unlikely (Low)	Trivial Risk	Tolerable Risk	Moderate Risk
Unlikely but foreseeable (Medium)	Tolerable Risk	Moderate Risk	Substantial Risk
Likely (High)	Moderate Risk	Substantial Risk	Intolerable Risk

## Risks and Actions

RISK LEVEL	ACTION AND TIMESCALE
Trivial	No action required.
Tolerable	No additional controls are required. Consideration may be given to a more effective solution or improvement.
Moderate	Efforts should be made to reduce the risk. Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period. Where the moderate risk is associated with harmful/serious consequences further assessment may be necessary to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the need for improved control measures.
Substantial	The activity should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. Where the risk involves activity already in progress, urgent action should be taken.
Intolerable	Activity should not be started or continued until the risk has been reduced. If it is not possible to reduce risk even with unlimited resources, activity has to remain prohibited.

## **Recommendations/Actions**

To ensure a sensible and realistic approach is taken to risk for those using the Village Green and pond area I would recommend the following actions should be taken.

**R1** - To discourage/prevent persons approaching and accidentally entering or falling into the pond it is recommended that the existing natural barrier of wetland flora and fauna should be maintained and not removed. Additional planting of similar wetland shrubs should be made to where the known deep areas of the pond are located. This planting whilst being fitting to the area will also act as a natural obstacle and discourage persons getting too close to the waters edge. Some areas should be left clear to allow egress from the pond should someone accidentally fall in.

It is anticipated that it is unlikely, due to the location of the adjacent recreation area, that young children (toddlers) will enter the area unsupervised. Older children (5 - 12) will use the recreation area to play and therefore a clear natural boundary as detailed above would further discourage them getting too close to the water. Younger children feeding the water fowl are likely to be supervised.

**R2** - The use of a continuous fence around this pond area is an option, but would not stop children gaining access to the pond should they want to. However, it is still recommended that efforts should be made to continue the existing chain link fencing to provide a first line obstacle.

**R3** - Should a person fall into the pond, after negotiating the perimeter wetland shrubs, the depth of the water could prove difficult for a child or non-swimming adult to extricate themselves from. Consideration should be made for the provision of emergency rescue equipment this may include 'reach-pole', 'throw-line' or 'life-buoy'

**R4** - A precautionary notice, or notices, should be erected to warn of deep water danger and the need for adult supervision of children, also consider winter signage such as 'Danger – Thin Ice'

Kevin Fisher NEBOSH  
19<sup>th</sup> May 2009