

# Kingsmeadows House, Peebles

## Tweed Meadows Management Statement

December 2023



# Kingsmeadows House

Main contact: Catriona.McKay@btinternet.com	Total area: Approximately 0.2 ha
Land manager: n/a	Designations: Next to River Tweed SSSI boundary
Vehicle access points: NT259398	Location: NT259399

## Boundary map

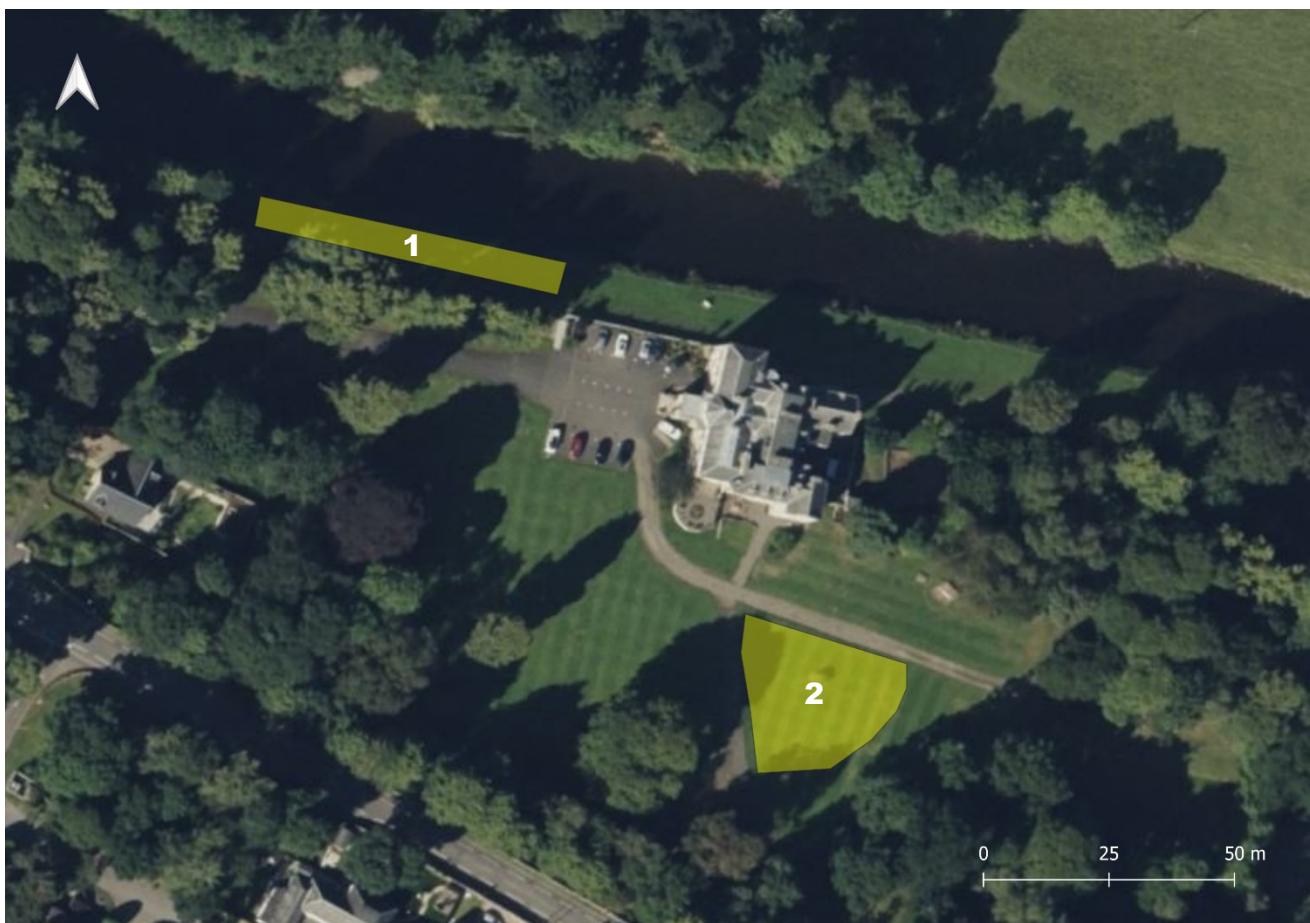


Figure 1. Satellite imagery showing boundary of the two areas at Kingsmeadows House.

## Summary

There are two areas proposed for meadow creation within the private grounds of Kingsmeadows House (Fig 1). Area 1 is an uncut embankment shaded by mature trees and already contains several wild flower species, including ancient woodland indicators like Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*). Whilst a hay meadow mix can be seeded in sunnier patches, area 1 will predominantly be managed for woodland species through a cut and lift regime. The second area is currently maintained as closely mown lawn and will require seeding with a hay meadow mix in addition to appropriate management. Tweed Meadows will prepare and seed the site and existing grounds maintenance contractors may be involved with management going forward. An informative letter and leaflet will be shared with the residents of Kingsmeadows, to inspire positive engagement with the project aims. Whilst this is a private garden, it would make an excellent case study (in the form of a blog post or newsletter article).

## Species of conservation value

The embankment located at area 1 has been well surveyed and contains several positive indicator species including Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and Pignut (*Conopodium majus*). Many of the species recorded indicate ancient woodland and absence of chemical input.

## Current management

The site is managed by a grounds maintenance company and this will continue. Area 1 has been left uncut and area 2 is mown regularly as a formal lawn. Good communication with the operators will be essential to ensure they are aware of any new cutting regimes.

## Management objectives

1. To enhance and restore upland hay meadow habitat along the River Tweed, through introduction of an appropriate grazing regime.
2. To increase the biodiversity of wild plants, insects and other wildlife on-site and monitor this through regular botanical surveying.
3. To engage the public with the project aims and progress, inspiring them to learn more about wild flowers and value local meadows.

## Management prescriptions

Seeding with a hay meadow mix containing hemi-parasitic species such as Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) and Eyebright (*Euphrasia nemorosa*) will be essential within the formal lawn (area 2) at Kingsmeadows. This will help to weaken dominant grasses and alongside a cutting and lifting regime, should improve the diversity of wildflowers over time. The following guidelines are suggested:

1. Prepare the ground for seeding by scarifying mown sward with a rake or by using the two-wheel tractor. Care should be taken in area 1 to avoid disturbing areas already rich in woodland wildflowers (scarify only in sunny, less diverse spots). If area 1 requires cutting first, this can be attempted with a scythe attachment.
2. Wildflower seed will be scattered by hand onto scarified ground (at approximately 5g/m<sup>2</sup>) by late February. This will improve the germination success of species that require a harsh frost.
3. Avoid cutting from around late April to Late August to allow wild flowers to flourish and set seed.
4. Cutting the meadow ideally takes place between late August and September but may need to happen earlier depending on weather. If practical, leave the cuttings for a few days to allow seed to drop – however, ensure cuttings are eventually removed to prevent excess nutrients returning to the soil.
5. The two-wheel tractor (using a scythe bar attachment) is available for use from Tweed Meadows, should existing grounds operators be unequipped to handle long vegetation.
6. The changing wildflower and pollinator diversity will be monitored through annual surveys.

## Constraints and potential for engagement

The transition from a manicured, formal lawn to a biodiverse meadow may take several years and will be a visible change for Kingsmeadows House. Good communication between Tweed Meadows and residents will therefore be essential to maintain positive momentum. Although the project cannot fund interpretation signage for private properties, designs can be shared for personal use. A booklet about the project will also be available in early 2024.

This project has kindly received grant funding from the following organisations: