

Puttenham Common Ecological Restoration Project

Hampton Estate

2023



Project partners

Plus many more





Puttenham Common

Puttenham Common is 180 hectares of priority habitats (a mosaic of lowland heathland, dry acid grassland, rush pasture, purple moor grass, fen, boggy mires, mixed deciduous woodland and wood pasture) which include parts of Puttenham and Crooksbury Commons SSSI (conditions are currently a mixture of unfavourable and favourable) and the Lower Puttenham Common and Halesmoor Wood Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). The area is within a B-Line and we are a key delivery partner in the Heathlands Connections Nature Recovery Project (facilitated by Natural England). Heathland Connections is one of the national Nature Recovery Network Projects, connecting heathlands across the Surrey Hills.

The area is owned by the Hampton Estate, with an Access Agreement signed in 1968 between Hampton Estate and Surrey County Council, to facilitate public access across the Common. Surrey Wildlife Trust have also historically been involved in land management across the Common. The land is registered as Common Land. There are five car parks that are free of charge to the public, enabling access to the common. The North Downs Way long distance trail passes in a west – east direction along the northern edge of Puttenham Common. This trail runs 256km from Farnham to Dover. Puttenham Common provides access to nature for a large population. The site includes multiple walking and cycling trails and is a very popular location for dog walking. The site is also home to the remains of Hillbury Hillfort and Ancient Farm, a Scheduled Monument which we manage in partnership with Historic England.



MAP 1 Site Location & Designated Sites

KEY

- Site boundary
- 2km linear distance from site boundary
- Hillbury Hillfort Scheduled Monument

Natural England's Provisional Ancient Woodland Inventory

- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland

Statutory Sites

- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

SCALE 1:25,000 A3

0 200 400 600 800 1,000 Metres

EPR

CLIENT: Harpton Estate

PROJECT: Pulham Common Management Plan

DATE: 21 October 2022

Critical green space in one of the most populated areas in the country.

Ecological restoration at Puttenham Common

- Hampton Estate, with the support of ecological consultants EPR, has developed a 100 year vision for Puttenham Common - to create a restored, biologically diverse heathland landscape with low-level rotational extensive grazing of a herd of traditional beef cattle, biologically-rich restored wetlands (with the aim of reducing wildfires across the Common), thriving heathland species, sustainably managed public access, an active volunteer group and nature-based community.
- *‘There is a very limited area of land in Great Britain that is suitable for the restoration of such habitats, as each requires certain geology, soil and hydrological conditions that are spatially very limited. In short, the area covered by this Management Plan represents a very uncommon opportunity to deliver substantial biodiversity enhancement.’* – Puttenham Common Management Plan 2022, EPR.
- There is now a 10-year management plan in place to kick start the heathland restoration across Puttenham Common, supported in part by the recent Countryside Stewardship Offer (of January 2023).
- There is a significant funding gap in the project and additional funding would enable the delivery of more nature restoration, improved climate resilience, better ecological monitoring, an improved visitor experience, increased access to nature and public engagement with the nature recovery project. Hampton Estate will be exploring options for novel financing of the project.



100 Year Vision :

‘The long-term vision for Lascombe/Little Common and Puttenham Common Main and Lower, is a restored, biologically diverse heathland landscape with low-level rotational extensive grazing of a herd of traditional beef cattle.’



Extract from the Ordnance Survey Drawing (OSD) Sheet 87. Original drawing dated 1809 and at a scale of 2 inches (5.1cm) to the mile.


British Library Website

Aim of the 10 year management plan

Restore, enhance and maintain lowland heathland (wet and dry), lowland dry acid grassland, wetland habitats, bogs and mires.

‘There is a very limited area of land in Great Britain that is suitable for the restoration of such habitats, as each requires certain geology, soil and hydrological conditions that are spatially very limited. In short, the area covered by this Management Plan represents a very uncommon opportunity to deliver substantial biodiversity enhancement.’





What are we actually going to do?

- Tree and scrub cover removal
- Reintroduce grazing (No Fence collars)
- Bracken control
- Create new wood pasture
- Restore the boggy mires
- Improve water quality
- Preserve archaeological heritage of Hillbury Hillfort
- Public engagement
- Monitor ecological changes
- Maximise the value of access for public health, wellbeing and enjoyment

What we are doing to restore habitats
on Puttenham Common:



1 Reintroducing
grazing



2 Targeted tree &
scrub removal



3 Bracken
control

Project outcomes



Restoration of key
priority habitats



Recovery of rare
animal and plant
species



Enhanced
condition of the
SSSI



Engaged and caring
public



Better access to
green space



Health benefits for
an urban
population



Bringing people with us

- positive engagement
- education and intrigue
- a sense of stewardship

Potential conflicts : dog behaviour, neospora, tree felling.

Public Engagement Plan

Dog behaviour
policy

Website and
social media
campaign

Press releases

Community drop-ins:

Monday 5th June 1000 – 1600

Friday 9th June 0700 – 1300

Weds 21st June 0700 – 1300

Saturday 8th July 0900 - 1300

Community
drop-ins

Open Farm
Sunday

Volunteer
Group

Signage

Meet the
cows drop-ins

BioBlitz



We want to move Puttenham Common from being a collection of dog-walkers to an engaged nature-loving community who enjoy and care for this special landscape


Data monitoring and citizen science

Plants, fungi, butterflies, birds,
reptiles, invertebrates, bats,
pollinators, lichen and more!

Bioblitz planned for 2024

Visitor data, carbon
sequestration, hydrological
monitoring...





Contact for questions :
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