



Epping Forest & Commons Committee

INFORMATION PACK

NB: Certain matters for information have been marked * and will be taken without discussion, unless the Committee Clerk has been informed that a Member has questions or comments prior to the start of the meeting. These information items have been collated in a supplementary agenda pack and circulated separately.

Date: THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2024
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 2 - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

4. MATTERS ARISING

- a) *Action Log (Pages 3 - 8)
Report of the Town Clerk.

For Information

6. *UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE HERITAGE TRUST

The Committee to receive a report of the Epping Forest Heritage Trust.

For Information
(Pages 9 - 14)

7. *EPPING FOREST - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 15 - 30)

8. *THE COMMONS - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 31 - 116)

11. ***REVENUE OUTTURN - 2023/24**

Joint Report of the Chamberlain and the Natural Environment Director.

For Information
(Pages 117 - 130)



Number	Recommendation	Progress Update	Owner	Creation date	Target date
2022-1	<p>Lodges: Income Generation: Members discussed vacant lodges that required investment. The Executive Director, Environment noted that a structure and aspiration were required for a long-term approach. It was requested that a business case on potential funding be brought back to the Committee regarding the costs of refurbishing lodges.</p>	<p>18 May 2023 – Verbal Update to be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>13 July 2023 - Verbal Update to be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>14 September 2023 – Update provided by the Director of Natural Environment at the meeting</p> <p>23 November 2023 – Information shared by Jo Hurst about ongoing work to audit income generation across different portfolios, including lodges.</p>	Bob Roberts/ Jo Hurst	21 Nov 2022	Report due in May



		<p>Emphasis on both long-term goals and short-term opportunities for additional income.</p> <p>May 2024</p> <p>Epping Forest Lodge Residency Strategy is in place and recruitment processes still underway to potential residential roles.</p> <p>Approval of legacy maintenance funding to CSD is in initial planning stages and NE continue to work closely with CSD about destination of funds and prioritisation. Committee to be updated after majority of recruitment complete.</p>			
2023-2	Target Operating Model Review: The Director to perform a formal review of the Target Operating Model changes in Epping Forest and the Commons	25 January 2024 – A review will be led by the Director in summer 2024 and Members will	Emily Brennan	14 Sept 2023	28 November 2024



	in May 2024, which will include engagement with staff, Members and Verderers.	have an opportunity to feed back into this.			
2023-3	The Warren Battery Storage Facility Introduction: the Superintendent of Epping Forest, in conjunction with City Surveyor, to determine how to celebrate the good news story of the installation of a solar electricity battery storage facility at The Warren	The battery system is installed and awaiting connection to the EF electrical supply system managed by the City Surveyor. The City Surveyor has received quotations for the connection work. 25 January 2024 – Recommendations Approved at the last committee. May 24 The battery storage has now been connected. (1 may) This will be promoted through various channels	Jacqueline Eggleston	14 Sept 2023	TBC



Epping Forest & Commons Committee
Action Log

2023-4	Digital Enablement: the Superintendent of the Commons to identify a solution to the lack of Wi-Fi at Coulsdon Common, which is also impacting the educational offering on site.	Update: (13/11/2023) no progress 19 January 2024: Contractors have been engaged to assess and price the works required. Outcome pending	Geoff Sinclair	14 Sept 2023	21 March 2024
2023-5	Corporate Plan and Strategies: Brief discussion on the corporate plan update and strategies for Epping Forest and other areas to be brought to the next committee.	25 January 2024 – Update provided, look to review delivery mechanisms, including site management plans and policies, to ensure alignment with the newly developed strategies for the natural environment.	Bob Roberts	23 November 2023	Autumn 2024
2024-7	Funding: Environment team would be looking at further opportunities, such as biodiversity credits, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and more general funding applications to trusts and foundations, and the resulting action plan would be presented to the Committee.		Emily Brennan	22 May 2024	



2024-8	<p>Risk Management:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on forthcoming meeting with utility company in respect of the M25 Closure to be brought to the next committee 2. Declining Condition of Assets Risk - Chairman asked about the impact of new funding from the cyclical works programme on reducing the declining condition of assets risk and the Executive Director agreed to review this 3. Concerns on suitable staff and workforce planning to be considered by Executive Director 4. Director to look at Superintendent's additional workload 5. Consideration on where governance could be placed in risk register 	<p>May 2024</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An update will be provided at the 22 May Committee. 	<p>Joanne Hill</p> <p>Bob Roberts</p> <p>Bob Roberts</p> <p>Emily Brennan</p> <p>Bob Roberts/Emily Brennan</p>		
2024-9	<p>Phone-In Reporting Service: Officers to inform the committee when contact was due for renewal.</p>		Bob Roberts	22 May 2024	
2024-11	<p>The Commons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director agreed to investigate why numbers on trees do not correspond with the ancient tree form 2. Committee to receive a presentation on apprenticeships 		<p>Geoff Sinclair</p> <p>Simon Glynn</p>	<p>22 May 2024</p> <p>18 July 2024</p>	

This page is intentionally left blank

Epping Forest Heritage Trust's community engagement and conservation activities - July 18th, 2024

Peter Lewis. Chief Executive, Epping Forest Heritage Trust (EFHT)

1. Executive summary

The City of London Corporation has 4 new environmental strategies which include objectives to increase outreach and engagement to more diverse audiences, and to engage local communities more in conservation activities.

This paper updates the Committee on EFHT's work in these policy areas, reaching out to more diverse communities around the Forest, engaging them in the heritage, culture and ecology of the Forest, and involving them in hands-on conservation activities to increase biodiversity in the Forest.

2. Background

The City of London's Access & Recreation strategy Theme 3. Equal Access, objective 2 states it will "Work with partners to develop outreach to ensure wider audiences are aware of and able to access sites". The *City's Community Engagement Strategy* Theme 2 on removing barriers states "ensure diverse and representative participation in our work and spaces".

EFHT's strategy has a core value of being inclusive, and is underpinned by a Theory of Change that says that unless people come to know the Forest, they will not come to love or care for it, or want to protect it for generations to come. Polling undertaken in partnership with Waltham Forest Council in 2023 showed that 30% of Black & 48% Asian residents had never visited the Forest compared to 17% of white residents, reflecting the visible reality that people from more diverse communities visit the Forest less than white people.

This has led to EFHT investing its own reserves, and securing support from the City Bridge Foundation, City Central Grants Team, Awards for All, Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund, and the general public through crowdfunding appeals, to increase its community engagement activities and grow its efforts to diversify its conservation volunteers.

3. Community engagement: approach, data, feedback, learnings

a. Approach

EFHT first researched and contacted 100 local community organisations, and made contact with the voluntary sector lead bodies in each of the 4 adjacent local authorities. From those initial contacts we

have engagement with 36 organisations and have an ongoing relationship with 16 of them.

With each organisation we have co-created an activity to meet the needs of their community, whether in relation to location, walk length, additional activities, access to toilets, the need for prayer breaks or being led by people from their community. This provides better experiences for communities and people who have previously been nervous of coming to the Forest, and in these small ways the Forest becomes more accessible, and in turn many of the attendees feel more confident to come again.

b. Data

Working on this basis over the last year EFHT has led 2 large walks with Muslim Hikers (each of 200 people, and with the support of the City of London Keepers for road crossings and with welcomes from Ben and Caroline), 4 family walks with Black Girls Hike and 12 other walks and activities with a range of different community organisations. These walks have so far involved over 700 local people from diverse communities, most of whom had never visited the Forest before.

The organisations we have worked with are: Muslim Hikers, Black Girls Hike, Sustainably Muslim, Wanderlust Women, Muslim Women Connect, Wanderers of Colour, Epping Forest Pride, VaChina, the Moja Collective, Redbridge Rainbow Group, Home Girls Unite, Fences & Frontiers and Behnu-Ki-Millan from the Trinity Project.



Walk in the Forest with intergenerational group, Muslim Women Connect.

c. Feedback

We have been really delighted with the feedback from the events which tends to focus on people feeling safe, not worrying about getting lost, and learning about the heritage and ecology of the Forest.

Nawaal: "The walk was amazing as I got to meet other likeminded people and gain more insight into nature. I would recommend anyone to come even if you're nervous as everyone is so kind and welcoming."

Nazia, Sustainably Muslim: "Immersed in the beauty of Epping Forest, it was great to learn about its trees and wildlife while connected with likeminded souls! Thank you so much to the team at Epping Forest Heritage Trust for the guided walk!"

"I had the most incredible, wholesome time. I met inspiring women and really enjoyed the guided meditation and learning about the forest. It's the first time I've been to Epping and I'm excited to come back again." Anon, walk participant

*"I enjoyed the opportunity to hear about the history and current efforts to manage the Forest"
Participant in our walk with Muslim Hikers.*

"There is a need to remove barriers to access for many diverse communities to Epping Forest; to share stories and build community knowledge and leadership about its heritage." Haroon Mota, Founder and Director, Muslim Hikers.



The Muslim Hikers group in front of the Hunting Lodge.

d) Learnings

- Each community of people is different, and it is really important to listen to each community organisation, and co-create an event that meets their needs. This can be time-consuming, but it pays dividends in the end.

For example, Muslim Hikers wanted a long walk, but not a linear one, so we designed a 14 mile hike in the north of the Forest; Black Girls Hike wanted to pilot family walks, so we partnered with the Hive to

ensure the children and women had a great experience, Behnu-Ki-Millan, an older Asian women group from the Trinity project in Newham wanted do a short walk and an activity, so we enabled them to do traditional block printing in the Visitor Centre at High Beach.

- The majority of people on these bespoke community walks, although very local to the Forest, have never visited the Forest. A pretty typical testimonial is:
"Loved the hike, I live 10 minutes from Epping Forest & haven't ventured out on any of their trails so it was lovely to do it with Muslim Hikers & my friends :) I have now joined the Epping Forest mailing list so look forward to joining them on their monthly walks & also venturing out alone :)"
- Barriers for individuals visiting the Forest include fears around safety and getting lost, having the right type of gear (footwear or waterproofs) , as well as a feeling that "the space is not for them".
- We are gaining credibility with local community organisations. Since the walks with Muslim Hikers and Black Girls Hike local community organisations are now approaching us to work with them, which is a lovely virtuous circle. We are also getting a lot more approaches from local schools and youth groups.
- Some smaller community organisations would like to work with us but do not have the capacity to do so - whether to engage their community in a potential event, or have support workers, for example, to come on an event.
- Our main free monthly walk programme, and the annual Big Walk, is attracting a more diverse set of participants.

4. Conservation. Approach, data, feedback, learnings.

a) Approach

All of EFHT's volunteer conservation sessions are as directed by the City's Epping Forest Conservation team, and deliver outputs/outcomes against the City's Countryside Stewardship Funding.

EFHT has been running its regular Thursday Green Team and its Friday Happy Lopper team of people with learning difficulties for many years. The Green team is a group of regular volunteers, who participate each week and who are mostly, but not exclusively, white men, many of whom are retired. The Happy Loppers are also mostly men. Together last year they contributed over 2,600 hours of volunteer conservation activity to the Forest.

Nick, the Conservation Officer who runs the Green Team and Happy Loppers also manages our corporate conservation sessions, including ones recently for Alpha Financial Software and Apple.

As part of our work to be more inclusive, and to engage a wider diversity of people in the Forest, we secured funding from City Bridge Foundation for an initial 2-year project to engage a broader diversity of

people in our conservation work. The funding pays for a Community Engagement Officer, Robyn, 2 days per week. Since September she has managed a combination of public sessions booked through Eventbrite, some for women* only (for women, non-binary and trans people), and bespoke sessions for community organisations.

For the public sessions we have varied timetabling, with some sessions at the weekend and some during the week.

b) Data

Since September last year this project has engaged 122 new people in new conservation activities through publicly advertised sessions: 60% under 45; 75% women*; 36% Asian. These new volunteers contributed 437 hours of activity over 23 sessions improving Forest biodiversity, removing invasive holly, birch, sycamore and hawthorn from sensitive wood pasture.

It also engaged 5 community groups involving over 100 people in bespoke walk/conservation sessions. The groups we have worked with are Trans Femme Social, Hiking in Skirts, Redbridge Rainbows, the Tower Project and Muslim Women Connect. Bespoke sessions are also planned for Muslim Hikers, Black Girls Hike and Wanderlust Women.



Become a Conservation Volunteer in Epping Forest

Join our Conservation Officer for a day carrying out hands-on work to improve biodiversity of the Forest

- No previous experience required
- Tools and trainings will be provided
- Available on weekdays and weekends
- Women* sessions available
- Bespoke** sessions available
- Over 18 only

Tasks may involve:

- Clearing bracken and other invasive shrubs on Forest heathland
- Clearing dense ivy growth to allow light to reach the Forest floor, helping to re-establish plant and animal life
- Removing small hawthorns, Silver birch and other young trees to open up the grassland more

*For women, non-binary and trans people
** Please enquire: admin@efht.org.uk

For details and booking info, visit: tinyurl.com/EPHTConservation

Epping Forest Heritage Trust
@EppingForestHT
www.efht.org.uk

c) Feedback

The feedback from these sessions has also been phenomenally positive, with a Net Promoter Score of plus 90. For example:

“This was the most fulfilling day I have had for a very long time. Helping with conservation at Epping Forest, nothing better!”

“It was so rewarding spending a day helping to maintain a small area of Epping Forest. I met some lovely people, enjoyed a good physical workout and learned loads about how the local biodiversity is managed and nurtured.”

“It was fantastic to learn more about why conservation is important and gain new skills working with the hand saw to coppice silver birch”
“It was great to do some hands-on conservation work with other like-minded women”.



Trans Femme/Hiking in Skirts Bespoke Conservation Day

d) Learnings

We have learnt that:

- there is demand for more ad hoc, easy-to-book, conservation sessions, where people come just as a one off, or more irregularly
- some people prefer the ability to volunteer at the weekend
- many local community organisations say that capacity is a real barrier for them partnering with us
- it is a big step for people to go from no involvement in Epping Forest to doing hands-on conservation sessions. Some people/organisations need a more gradual introduction such as a guided walk to get comfortable in the space before doing a conservation session
- a significant number of one-off participants use the allowed “volunteering day” from their employer to come and do a conservation session.

5. Next steps

We are seeking funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a 3-year programme, “Epping Forest Heritage for All”, to build on our community engagement work so far. We are grateful to the City for their formal written support for this application, and the offer of in-kind support for its delivery.

This autumn, in partnership with the Essex Cultural Diversity Fund and the City, we will be launching a new podcast series by artist Talia Randall about different communities, and their relationship with the Forest.

We are hoping to extend our City Bridge Foundation funded conservation programme for a further 3 years, based on our learnings so far.

Agenda Item 7

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons Epping Forest Consultative Group	18/07/2024 16/10/2024
Subject: Epping Forest – Assistant Director’s Update (SEF 13/24)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	All 6 outcomes
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Emily Brennan, Director Natural Environment Department	For Information
Report author: Jacqueline Eggleston – Superintendent/ Assistant Director of Epping Forest	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to summarise Epping Forest’s progress against business plan objectives since your last committee along with end of year performance indicator summaries for 2023/ 24 financial year.

Of particular note, a long-standing problem with a drug taking encampment at Wanstead Flats has been addressed through joint action. An annual summary of the work of partner organisation Field Studies Council is presented.

Recommendation(s)

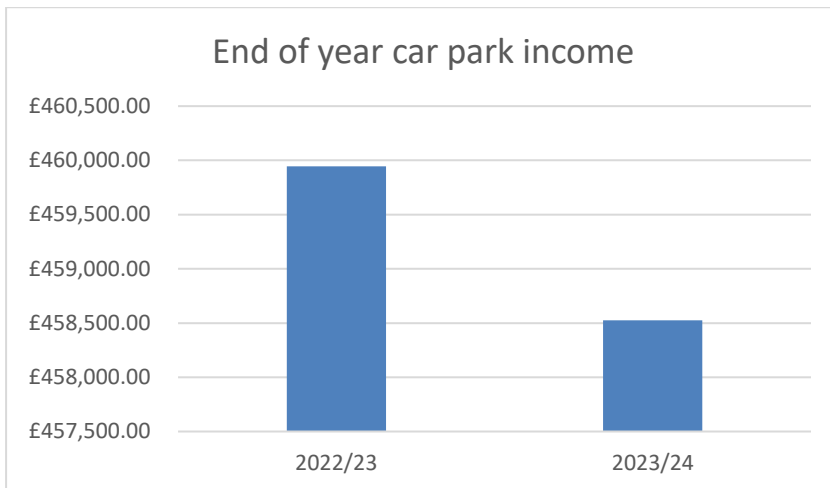
Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Key performance measures

1. This report reports on end of year performance figures in line with the financial reporting quarters.
2. Monthly income for car parking in Financial Year 2023/24 is approximately the same as that received in the previous financial year totalling £458,850 net surplus.



Licencing



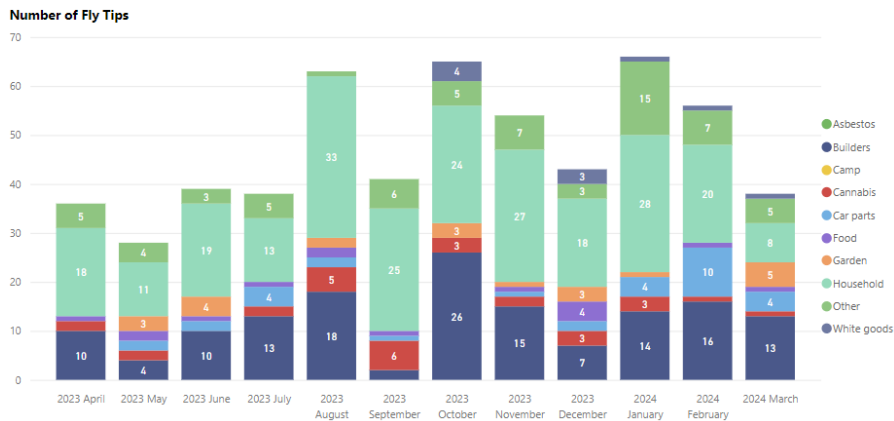
3. The largest proportion of income from licences continues to be from sport and wellbeing – this includes sponsored runs, major charity walks and the like. Filming continues to provide a healthy income, totalling £81,804 in the last financial year.

Golf



#

Fly tipping
 4. General household waste continues to dominate the fly tips experienced across Epping Forest followed by builder's waste.

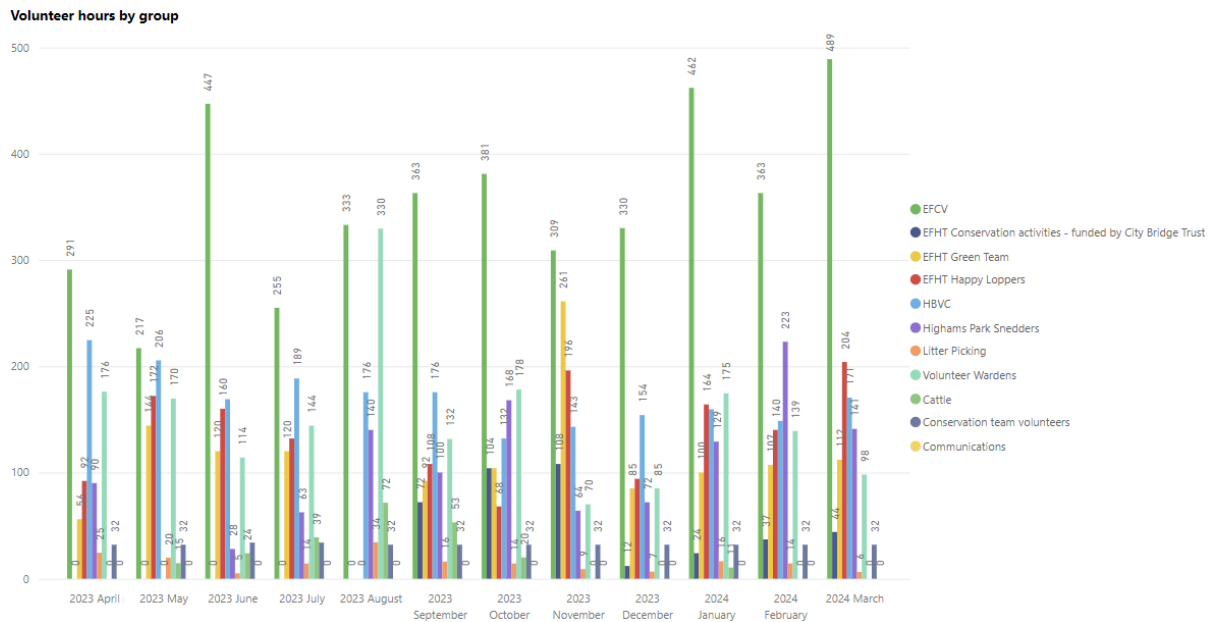


Waste Disposal costs

5. Costs of disposal of litter and fly tips. All waste is recycled.



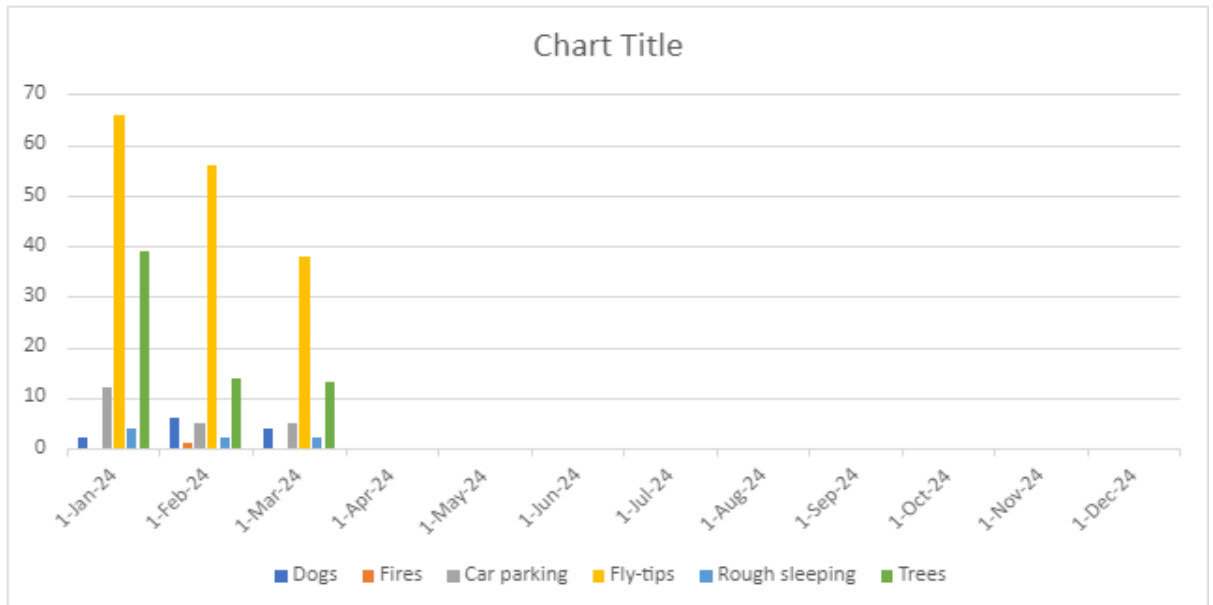
Volunteering



- Our new Engagement and Volunteering Officer, Joanna Stokes, joined the team on 1 May and has made excellent progress already reviewing volunteering and establishing great links with our volunteering partners.

Complaint and enquiries trends

- A new performance measure has started to be collected with the results below so far:



Annual Summary from the Field Studies Council based at High Beach.

FSC Education – annual summary

8. The City of London Corporation supported Field Studies Council (FSC) service, engaged with over 200 different schools and 16,700 students at the Epping Forest Field Centre, consisting of primary, secondary, and A-Level students studying curriculum science and geography in outdoor classrooms and learning locations throughout Epping Forest. Learner numbers are back in-line with pre pandemic levels; however, cost of living is impacting on customers.
9. They welcomed over 150 attendees to their Family Eco Adventures during the school holidays, where children could take part in nature-based games and activities and over 50 adults attended the Field Studies Council Biodiversity courses at Epping Forest.
10. Through the City of London Educational Trust grant funding, the FSC delivered Young-Naturalist courses to young people aged 11-16 in Wanstead Park, bringing those with an interest in ecology together. This grant also included Teacher Training delivered by an expert tutor, designed to introduce non-specialists to the ecology of Wanstead Park to increase teacher confidence in delivering curriculum ecology.
11. Through the Adventures Away from Home Fund, the FSC reached out to those who are under-represented in the outdoor sector and welcomed 30 SEND young people at Epping Forest where they took part in outdoor nature-based games and activities to promote good mental health and local community.

12. The FSC continue to promote and participate in the Signs of Spring campaign in partnership with The Royal Society of Biology (as featured on The One Show in January 2024).
13. Summary statistics for FSC EF delivery:
- Over 2180 primary school students in curriculum Science and Geography in our outdoor classrooms and learning locations throughout Epping Forest.
 - Over 12,700 secondary school students predominantly carrying out Geography GSCE Rivers fieldwork at Loughton and Debden Brook.
 - Over 1,700 A-level students studying Biology (Ecology and Ecosystems) at Rushey Plain and Paul's Nursery.

Updates and progress against business plan objectives (April, May, June)

Unauthorised Occupations

14. There was 1 traveller incursion on Monday 13 May when 12 vehicles and 12 caravans entered Forest Land at George Green. They were quickly moved on without Police assistance.

Enforcement

15. Epping Forest Enforcement Officers have investigated a total of 22 matters between 1 April and 31 May 2024, comprising the following types -
- Fly tips – 19
 - Byelaw breaches – 1
 - Anti-social behaviour (all matters relate to the use of Quad / motorcycle) – 1
 - Dog related incidents – 1
 - Poaching – 0
16. The team currently manage 24 on-going investigations. 3 matters resulted in an FPN for parking byelaw breaches. 1 Fly tip matter has been referred for prosecution / summons.
17. Quad / Motorcycle ASB in the Forest – Joint working with Essex police / EFDC continues under the operation title 'Spring action'. The one current EF investigation arises from a total of 23 separate reported incidents notified to Epping Forest between the relevant dates. This matter has been referred to CoL lawyers for advice on civil prosecution options after the police declined to take any further action. Police have increased patrols in the hotspot areas and the number of reports has seen a decrease during May compared to the previous month of April which in turn is lower than the high point in March (28 reports). Consideration to restrict access (to pedestrians) next to an identified gate within Copped Hall, being used by electric powered motorcycles to enter and return from the wider forest has been referred to Tris and then John Phillips.

18. Rough sleeper / drug use encampment at Wanstead Flats - On Wednesday 5 June 2024, a joint working initiative was undertaken with neighbourhood officers from the Met police. An area opposite the CoL cemetery beside Aldersbrook Road, was cleared of waste, with a longer-term aim of discouraging drinking and drug taking. Numerous complaints from Forest users and residents have been received due to the large amounts of rubbish, alcohol containers and drug paraphernalia littering as well as several makeshift shelters. Epping Forest officers along with the police and external waste clearance contractors undertook this hazardous task to clear the area. Daily keeper and police patrols are actively preventing a return to the previous poor condition.

Before and after



Skylark Fencing Wanstead Flats

19. The frequency and extent of vandalism to the skylark fencing at Wanstead Flats has continued to fall. No incidents reported since 8 May. Monitoring continues. Wren Group members observed seven adult skylarks including two breeding pairs and nesting activity."

Golf

20. Golf Course income rose for April & May 2024/25 compared to the previous year by £1,873.14 (1.15%) which considering the intermittent weather conditions is promising for the remainder of the season. Staff completed chainsaw & woodchipper training allowing more versatility across the grounds team when carrying out tree clearance work for better playability on the golf course. Outdoor machinery is better secured and protected under the newly constructed lean-too on the building which was ready for use at start of April.

Volunteer's Week



21. Every opportunity was taken to celebrate the outstanding contribution volunteers make towards taking care of the protected ancient woodland during national Volunteer's Week. The Epping Forest Guide to volunteering <https://bit.ly/EFvolunteers> was revised and promoted and all the various volunteers, from City of London official volunteers, volunteer partner organisations and volunteering individuals received thanks and promotion on Epping Forest's social media throughout the week. A new monthly 'Volunteering Information Session' was launched at the Epping Forest Visitor Centre, to recruit new volunteers for specific City of London volunteering roles. In addition a series of volunteer activities targeting youth volunteering was developed and will be promoted to take place throughout the summer holidays.

Grazing & Grasslands

22. The Grazing and Landscape Manager hosted a visit with The Essex Wildlife Trust and Bird Life Cyprus to look at the use of NoFence Technology for managing cattle and general conservation management.
23. The Grazing and Landscape Manager also hosted a visit with the RSPCA and Nofence to look at the history of collar-based animal containment in the UK and how we manage the technology to ensure high animal welfare and considerations for its use case on other sites.
24. Due to the wet spring and cold temperatures the cattle were delayed going out to pasture. This was to protect the soil and prevent vegetation getting grazed to low to quickly which would impact on the plant's growth for the rest of the year.
25. Lousewort has been discovered on Ludgate Plain by the Biodiversity officer. This is the first time it has been recorded there and shows how the transposition of plants can occur through cattle grazing.

26. A Longhorn herd TB test was completed, this 3rd clear test in 18 months takes us out of TB radial restrictions which had been imposed due to a TB breakdown in a local Goat herd.
27. Grassland cutting was delayed due to ground conditions remaining very wet. The grassland team is a 3-person team with 2 new members, this year they will be reviewing sites as they work and incorporating reactive works into longer term work programmes.
28. Earlier overseeding at Chingford has produced successful results in early summer including :_Red Clover, yellow rattle, buttercup, bird foot trefoil and knapweed



Conservation and Arboricultural

29. A new air pollution monitoring network has been installed across Epping Forest spanning sites from the Lower Forest to Leyton Flats. This is being funded through Natural England's Shared Nitrogen Action Plan programme which is targeted at issues of nitrogen pollution on Special Area of Conservation. Each site measures concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and ammonia in the air. This will continue until April 2025.
30. The Conservation and Arboricultural Team hosted 17 Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) members on the afternoon of 5 June 2024. They were given a tour to Bury Wood to see the re-pollarding work, use of NoFence and conservation cattle grazing, and Barn Hoppit to view ancient oak trees and their management. Followed by a tour of QEHL.
31. A re-prioritisation exercise of tree work identified through existing and most recent surveys is taking place to help to streamline and consolidate the 'jobs'. Three new arborists will be starting in July 2024 and a new team and task

structure is being implemented to tackle the backlog of works as rapidly and efficiently as possible.

32. Oak processionary moth (OPM) numbers are significantly down compared to 2023 (as of 10 June 2024, only one nest was recorded adjacent to Butlers Retreat), this is likely down to weather conditions. Epping Forest Arborist team supported the Forestry Commission with a OPM Awareness Day on 10 June 2024. This year the team will be undertaking the annual OPM survey and bringing this inhouse rather than contracting out as an internal member of staff will be available temporarily to perform light duties at work.

Recruitment

33. Since your last committee, the following appointments have been made with start dates due in the next couple of months:

Arborist – three appointments
Estate Manager
Countryside Manager (Forest Keeper Team Leader) – two appointments
Waste and Recycling Manager

34. The Conservation Manager post will be readvertised as interviews in May 2024 unfortunately resulted in no appointment.
35. Forest Keeper posts are currently advertised (4.5FTE). Posts shortly to be advertised include Estate Supervisor, Conservation Assistant and Assistant Forest Keepers.
36. Further recruitment is taking place once line managers have completed induction or when project timetables require. At the time of writing this report vacancies stand at 30%. Recruitment of the keepers will reduce this to 15%.

Education

NE Learning Team

37. The Natural Environment Learning Team has worked with 770 school students during April and May 2024. School students have enjoyed exploring the forest and taking part in activities including tree studies, eco art, orienteering and pond dipping.
38. The team also facilitated a session for unaccompanied asylum seekers, working in partnership with the City of London Virtual School.

Field Studies Centre High Beach

39. In partnership with The City of London, Field Studies Council engaged with 50 different schools and approximately 2750 students at the Epping Forest Field Centre in April and May 2024.
40. School Programme summary statistics for curriculum geography and science:
- Over 280 primary school and early years students
 - Over 2180 secondary school students
 - Over 285 A-level students
41. Many families attended the Eco Adventures during school holidays to enjoy nature-based activities and a group of adults attended a Biodiversity workshop on Wildflowers using Epping Forest as their outdoor classroom.
42. The Field Centre also welcomed approximately 200 participants of the Muslim Hikers event, organised by the Epping Forest Heritage Trust. Walkers were able to use the facilities and learn about the Field Studies Council's environmental education programmes and its partnership with The City of London as part of their hike.
43. In April and May 2024, the Field Centre welcomed over 3,300 visitors equating to over 18,100 learner hours in total across all programmes.

Estates

Car Park Improvements

44. The Estates Team have made considerable progress with improvements to car parks including at Snaresbrook, Hill Wood and the Boating Lake



45. The Estates Team constructed new planters for the Visitor Centre in Chingford, these are now being planted up.

46. The popular deer sculptures at the Visitor Centre have been restored, giving them a new lease of life.



Projects

River Roding Pump house

47. City Surveyors have appointed a consultant Spaflo who are designing and specifying the new pumphouse and filtration system that will be required to reinstate the up-cascade pumping system from the River Roding whilst it is in spate in winter months. The aim of this project is to help to reduce or eliminate the need for abstraction that currently takes place from the aquifer to the Heronry Pond.

Countryside Stewardship Grant Scheme

48. A grant of £2.37m has been offered by DEFRA for the second Countryside Stewardship grant, the Environmental Stewardship Officer is working with the RPA to receive their final corrected versions and SSSI consent for these works will be submitted in early June 2024. Tender submissions for the first of the contracted works have been reviewed and a contractor will be selected wc 17th June 2024. Work to deliver the first Countryside Stewardship agreement will continue this year through a combination of in-house and contractor delivery. This will include large scale habitat restoration at the north of Leyton Flats, as well as notable works at Highams Park, Woodbury Hollow, the Lops next to Woodford Golf Course, and around the glades next to Oak Hill in Woodford Green.

Great Gregories Yard – Roofing improvement and Barn Project

49. The new attenuation pond, slurry store tank and new pad prep works are complete.

Climate Action Strategy – Carbon Removals Project

50. Interviews were held in May 2024 for a dedicated project manager and a project officer in June 2024. The new project manager has been selected and will start in July 2024 and an offer to a project officer will be made wc 17 June 2024.

Deer Sanctuary Fencing Repairs

51. Repairs will start to a section of deer fencing in the deer sanctuary this summer following appointment of a contractor in June 2024. This is being

coordinated by the Wildlife Management Officer and City Surveyors under City Bow-wave funding for Forest infrastructure.

Deer Enclosure Plots (SEF 18/23)

52. Thirty deer enclosure plots will be installed in Epping Forest and Buffer Lands this summer 2024. Monitored over a period of a few years, in combination with deer counts and regular vegetation damage assessments, the plots will provide an indication of the impact of deer grazing on the Forest understorey and tree regeneration. The Conservation team are undertaking a site visit in June 2024 to select the locations and signage to inform the public on the purpose of these plots has been prepared.

Highams Park Lake Bank Restoration Works

53. City Surveyors are planning restoration works to embankments of Highams Park Lake. Sections of the embankment have improvements and wharfing of timber, however, in places these have deteriorated, and restoration works are proposed. Proposals cover eight locations and include new post and planks with coir rolls (that will be planted) which will be reviewed by Epping Forest Officers. City Surveyors plan to have this work carried out in Autumn 2024.

Events

Worshipful Company of Information Technologists

54. On 11 May we welcomed the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists to the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at Chingford. The group enjoyed a tour of the Visitor Centre and Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge as well as a talk on the grazing programme, focussing particularly on the pioneering use of the 'No Fence' technology. The visit was a great success and we hope it will lead to future collaboration.

Epping Forest Visitor Centre Exhibitions

55. Interpreting Epping Forest an exhibition by Judith Whitehouse, Jenny Blanchard and Linda Simmonds is at the Epping Forest Gallery from 14 May to 7 July.

56. Nick Bowman's exhibition The Longhorn Cattle of Epping Forest, which opened on 19 March, continues to run in the Lower Gallery at the Visitor Centre until 15 September and is receiving great feedback from visitors. Nick Bowman will be launching his book to accompany the exhibition at an event on Sunday 30 June, 1 – 5pm.

Staff Conference

57. The first of a new style staff conference took place in June as the first in a series of presentations and activities for the induction of new team members as well as a refresher for existing staff or those that have joined in the last few

years and not received the full induction.



58. The History of Epping Forest was presented as a quiz and there were three educational walks explaining the work of the arborists and tree protection; conservation, grazing and wood pasture management; and managing visitors



59. in the Forest. The day concluded with 8 teams challenged to complete their section of a jigsaw of Epping Forest. We then collated all the completed jigsaws together to create the entire map of Epping Forest, demonstrating how we are all individually pieces in the jigsaw taking care of Epping Forest and how much we can achieve when we work together collaboratively as one team, Team Epping Forest!



60. Further sessions like this are planned for new staff in the Autumn and video presentations for other areas of work have also been created and will be made more widely available.

Jacqueline Eggleston
T: 0208 532 1010
E: jacqueline.eggleston@cityoflondon.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Committee(s): Epping Forest and Commons Committee – For Information	Dated: 18/07/2024
Subject: The Commons – Assistant Directors Quarterly Update July 2024	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flourishing public spaces • Leading sustainable development
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts, Interim Executive Director Environment Department	For Information
Report author: Geoff Sinclair, Assistant Director The Commons	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present key data for Burnham Beeches and the Commons for the period January 2024 -March 2024. Updates on wider activity cover a longer period to ensure it is as current as possible.

Of note, volunteers contributed 4655 hours of work over the reporting period while over the year 16,770 hours of support has been given by volunteers across the Commons. The Commons local risk budget was £3,066.94 overspent at the end of the financial year against a total budget of £1,635,000. We are currently 2 staff down at West Wickham and Coulsdon Common with a fifth recruitment underway to fill the Conservation Officer role where the post holder is planning to retire. A development funding application to prepare plans and proposals for a wetland project at Ashted Common using funding from the Water Restoration Fund has been submitted. The 2023-24 annual reports for the Strategic Access Management & Monitoring Strategy (SAMMs) and section 106 are presented in the appendices.

Recommendation(s)

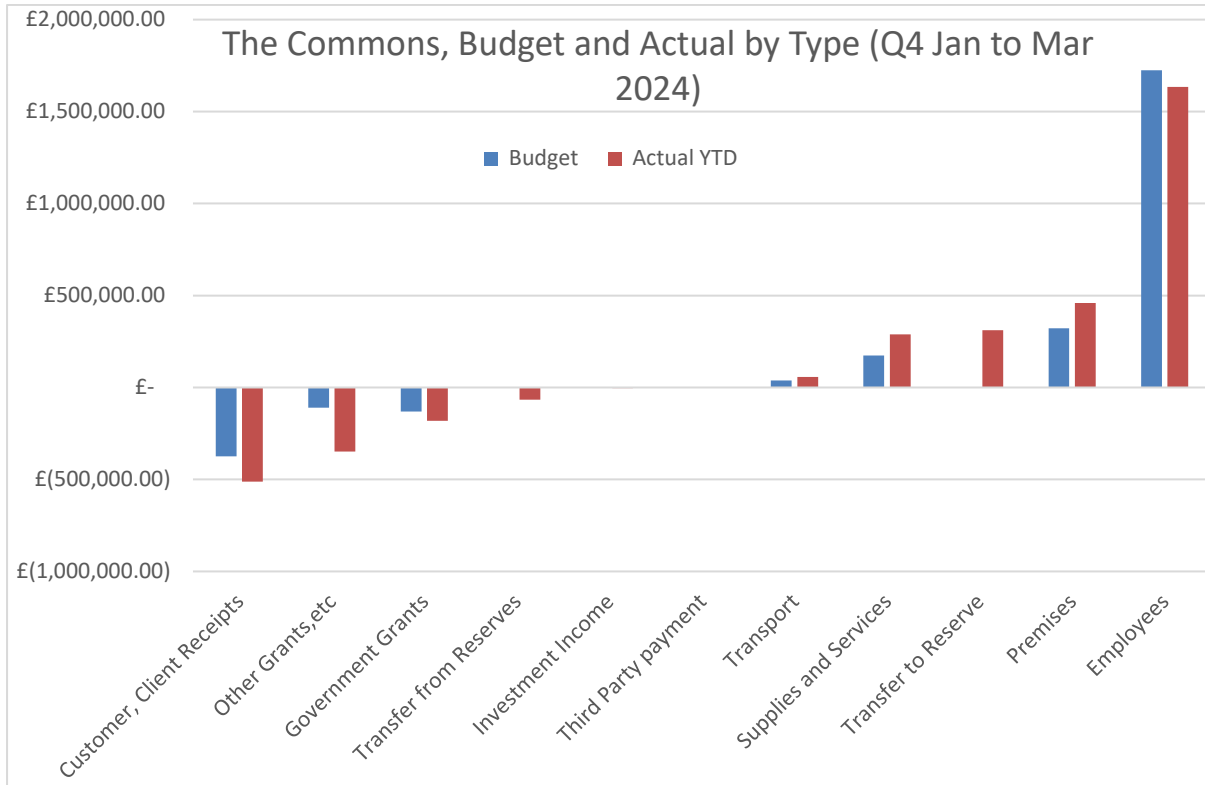
Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

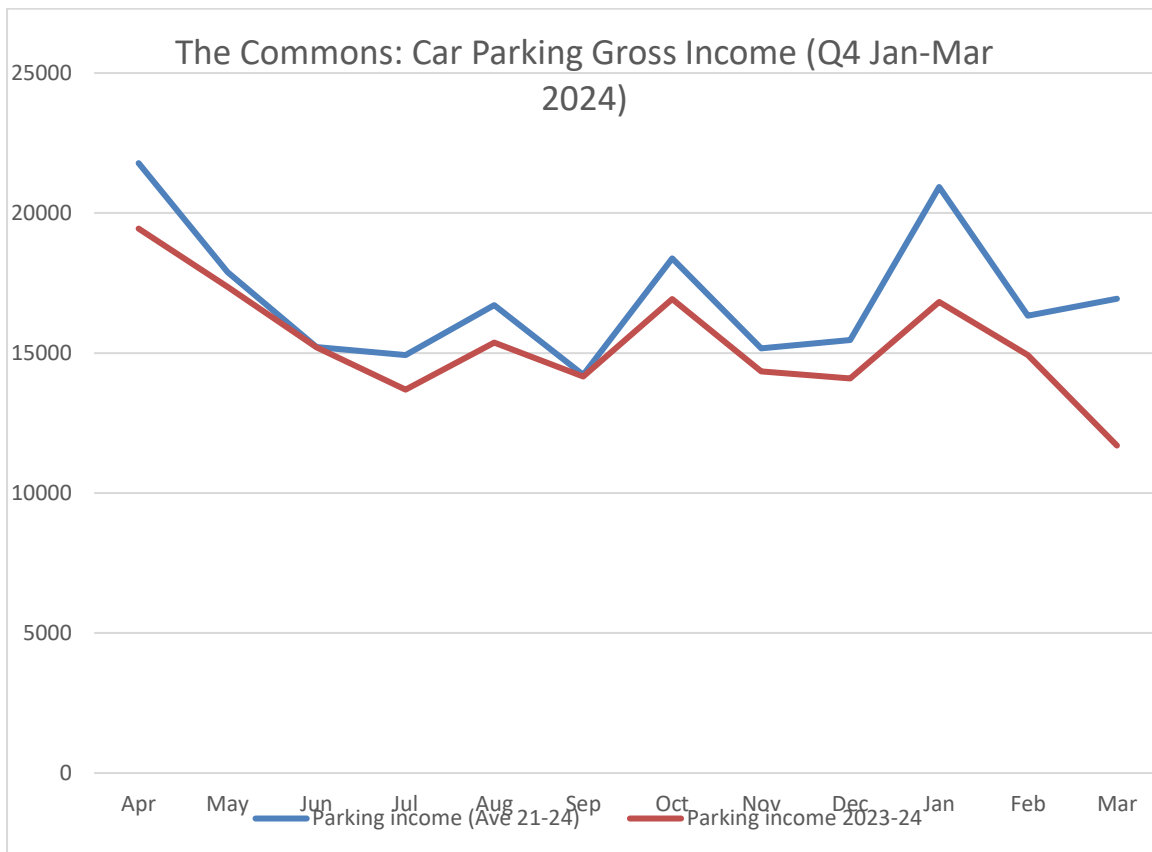
The Commons Key Data

Budget



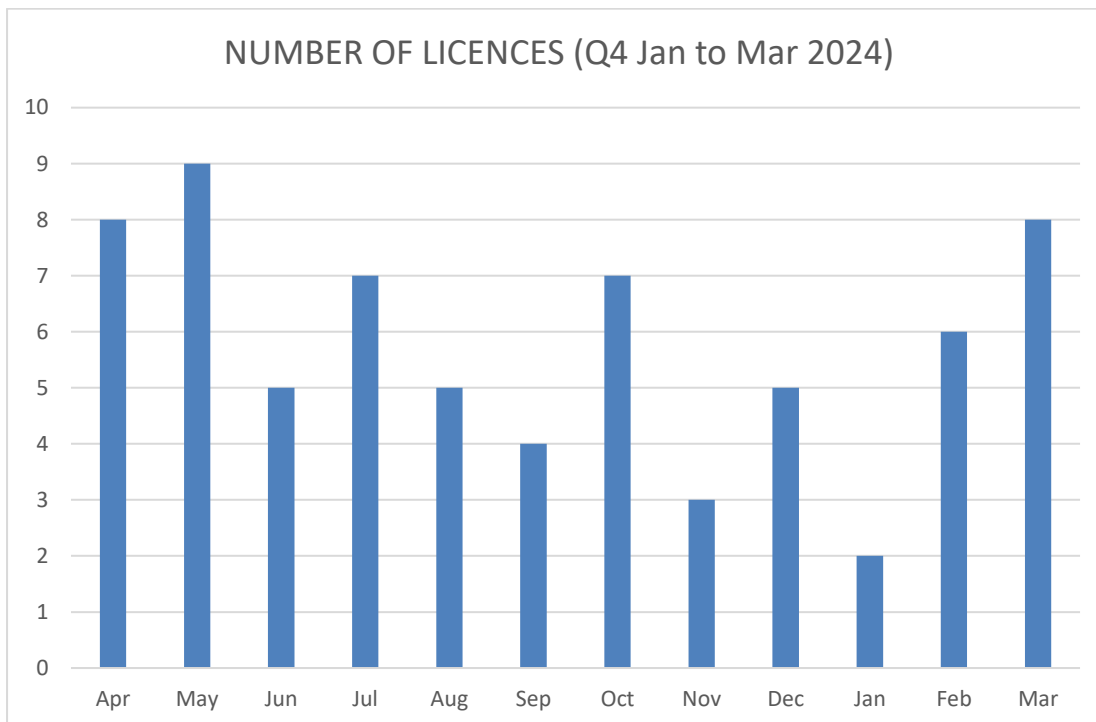
1. Burnham Beeches and the City Commons were £3,066.94 overspent on its local risk budget at the end of the 2023/24 financial year against a total budget of £1,635,000 net expenditure. Across the year income from government grants (eg Countryside Stewardship Scheme) and customer client receipts (eg Filming and café income) were nearly 40% higher than budgeted. We have been fortunate to have at least one major film a year in recent times. The over 300% increase in other grants reflects the income from the Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Scheme (SAMMS) much of which is held in a restricted reserve of the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common charity for use in future years.

Car Parking



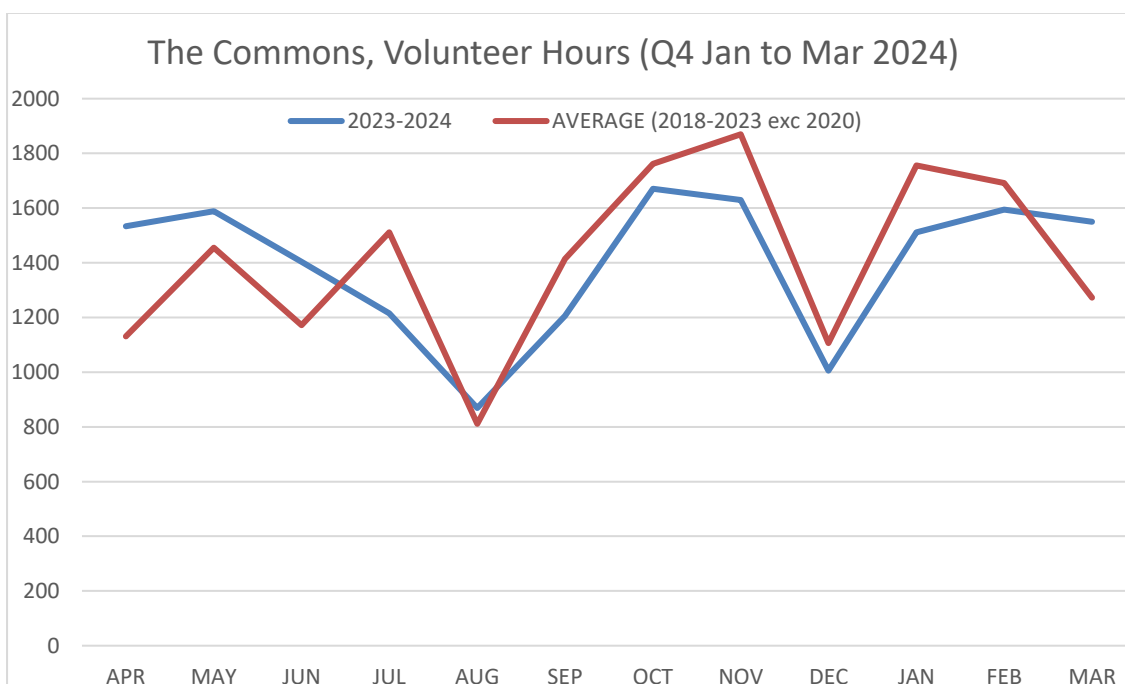
- Overall for the year (Apr-Mar) car parking income is about 94% of the annual average. The drop is largely attributable to the weather with periods of wet and inclement weather reducing visits. The wet weather seems to have had an impact on the first three months of 2024 with parking income around 80% of the average for the same period.

Licences



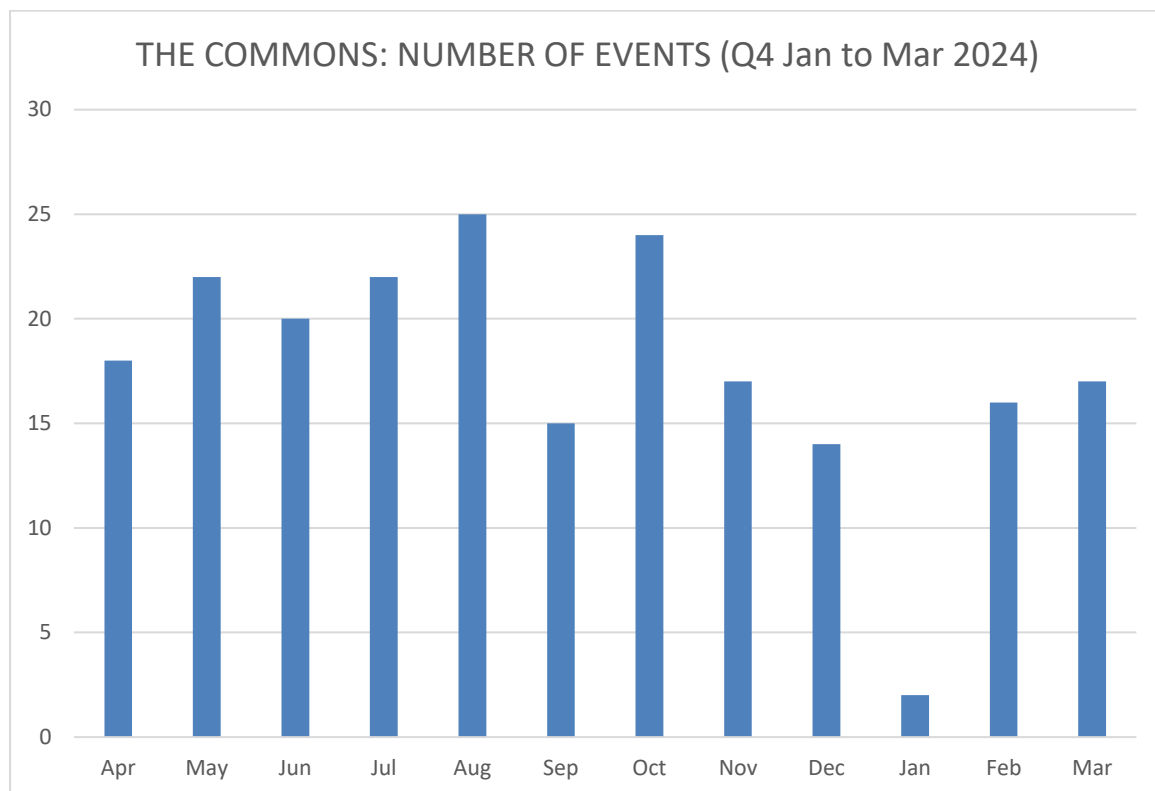
3. 15 licences were issued by local staff during quarter 4 (Jan-Mar 2024) against a total of 68 for the year. Typically, these are for events held by third parties such as schools and event providers.
4. A large film unit has been working at Burnham Beeches during May and June with 4 days of film shoot in total – the shoot’s ‘strike’ is still in progress.

Volunteering



5. Volunteers undertook 4655 hours (665 seven-hour days) of work during the period, the equivalent of £46,550 using the National Lottery Heritage Fund's match funding calculator. Overall, in the twelve months since April, 16,777 volunteer hours have been given to the Commons, the equivalent of £167,770 of much appreciated 'matched funding' from local people.
6. Volunteers at Ashted Common have been preparing for the arrival of 10 Belted Galloway cows by establishing a temporary enclosure. Work to maintain dead hedges has continued, along with the renovation of sign boards and finger posts. In addition to practical tasks, volunteers have been surveying butterflies and river flies. The latter involves kick sampling to test water quality in the Rye Brook.
7. At the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons all of the winter work has now been completed with a significant contribution from volunteers to reduce scrub across key habitats such as chalk grassland, woodland and heathland. Volunteers and Rangers have finished laying hedges at Farthing Downs, Coulsdon Common and Spring Park as part of a rotational programme of cutting and laying. Hazel coppicing has also continued with areas cleared on Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common and Spring Park. Additional tasks undertaken by volunteers across WWCC have included: litter picking to stock checking and maintaining heritage features.
8. The Riddlesdown Ranger has been continuing with hosting monthly volunteer tasks on the Common in partnership with the Riddlesdown Collegiate for students with special educational needs and disabilities. Tasks have included scrub clearance, coppicing and helping to maintain footpaths and rights of way.
9. At Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Volunteers completed habitat works by the end of March And have since turned their attentions to site maintenance, including path repairs and car park works, helping set up for grazing schemes and supporting a wide range of survey work in support of the conservation officer.
10. 17 volunteers from the friends of Stoke common have participated in a whole site reptile survey at the common undertaking 103 survey visits, and contributing 157 hours of survey effort and 1386 species records.

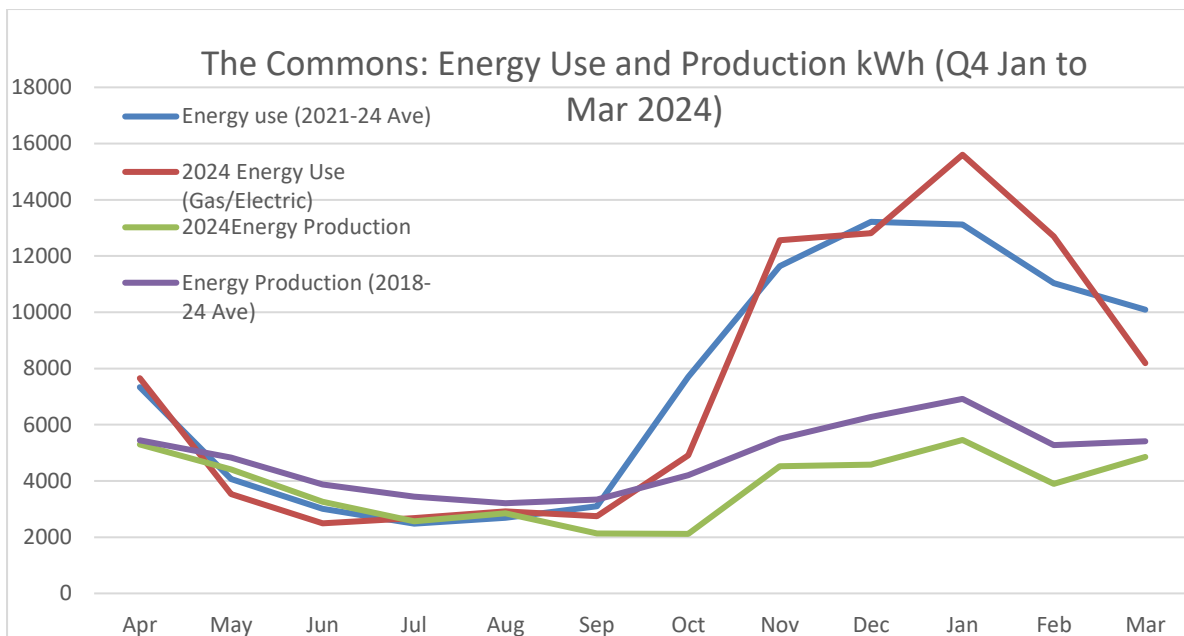
Events and Educational Activities



11. 35 events were held across Burnham Beeches and the City Commons with 933 people attending these events during quarter 4 (Jan-March 2024). The total number of events for the year was 212 with an estimated attendance of 6916.
12. To celebrate National Nature Reserve Week (20 to 31 May) we ran three guided walks between sites in the South London Downs NNR to celebrate its unique landscape, flora and fauna. Highlights included a visit to the Riddlesdown Quarry to see orchids, wild juniper and the goats that graze the chalk cliffs. Several spring wildlife events were held in April and May including wildflower walks at Farthing Downs, Kenley Common and Spring Park as well as a dawn chorus walk on Coulsdon Common.
13. The Big Wild Walk took place on Kenley Common for a second year running. This large event organised by the Rangers is a self-guided trail for families around the Common and airfield with multiple stops where people can learn a bit about the work of the Rangers and volunteers and take part in nature-based activities. Over 110 people attended; mainly young families who we have not previously engaged with.
14. At Ashted educational visits were delivered for students from Sparsholt College and Barnett Wood Infants School. A scout group spent a day with the rangers to gain the Forest Badge. A guided walk introduced people to the benefits of No Fence grazing.

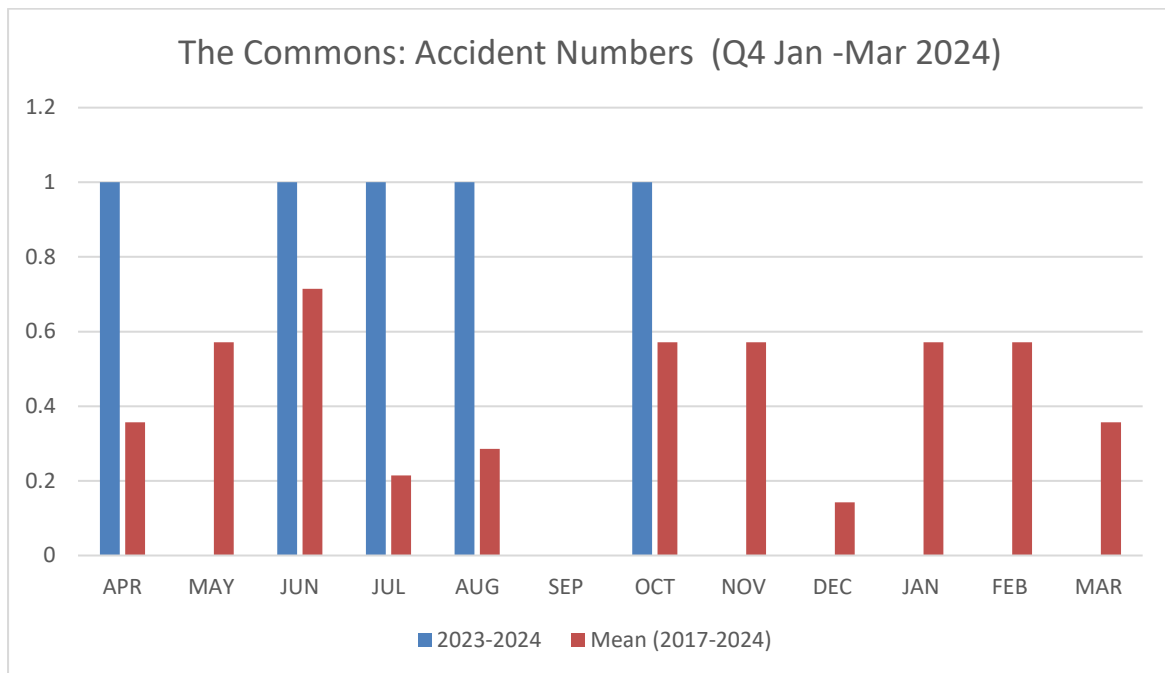
- 15. At Burnham Beeches events have included Easter & ½ term trails, guided walks and meet the Rangers sessions, just 2 of these attracting and engaging with over 280 people.
- 16. The Community Engagement rangers have run a series of walks for residents of the Horlicks Quarter, encouraging the residents to explore green spaces close to home as part of mitigation activity.
- 17. The Beeches team hosted a visit by colleagues from the Environment Departments Business Support team – providing a tour of the open space and an opportunity for colleagues to get to know one another and understand what we all do and how we can support each other.

Energy Use and Production



18. PV energy production was down by 4% in the period January -March on the six-year average. January was a particular good month with 45% more PV energy produced than the average for the month however February and March were especially poor production months. 6.5% more energy was used during the period (Jan to Mar) than on average. Overall, for the year Apr-Mar PV energy production was 80% and energy use 99.2% of the six-year average,

Accidents



19. During the quarter period (Jan to March 2024) we had no reported accidents. Overall, for the year we had 5 reported accidents against a 7-year average of 3.4. 61% of the accidents are linked to either task related incidents (38%) or vehicle related (23%).

Additional Important Updates

Recruitment and Apprentices

20. Across the Commons we have 2 roles currently vacant, representing 6% of the staff resource. Support Services Officer West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons and Conservation Ranger (Ecology) at West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons. In addition, we are looking at recruiting an apprentice for Ashtead Common.
21. The fifth round of recruitment for the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Conservation Officer was in progress at the time of writing and a verbal update will be given.
22. A Support Services Officer has been recruited at Ashtead and is likely to start in September.

Training and Development

23. All team members for the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons attended a refresher course in conflict management and personal safety. Two Rangers attended a 3-day refresher course for chainsaw operation, cross cutting and small felling with rangers from Ashtead Common. Another two Rangers

completed training in the use of wood fed chippers and another in the use of ride-on mowers

24. The Ashtead team all successfully completed their First Aid at Work with Forestry add-on training.
25. At Burnham Beeches 2 staff members have completed the IOSSH managing safely course and the team has attended a refresher course in conflict management and personal safety.

Livestock

26. The main herd of Sussex cattle at WWCC have finished calving in March with 17 new calves. Since mid-April, the herd were moved from the barn to graze Woodplace Farm Field and Tollers on Farthing Downs and New Hill. Two smaller herds of Sussex cattle have been grazing areas of species-rich grassland since January utilising the NoFence satellite fencing on Kenley Common and Farthing Downs. The goats have been removed from the main section of the Riddlesdown Quarry ahead of the first chalk grassland wildflowers emerging and will be temporarily staying in a smaller grazing area on the top of the Quarry until they come back to the Merlewood Estate yard for spring/summer.
27. The cattle at Burnham Beeches have returned to the nature reserve and are grazing the Beeches both in invisible (NoFence) and traditional fenced areas. This is the 13th season that invisible fences have been used at Burnham Beeches. Ponies have also returned from their winter quarter to the Beeches and Cattle are also back at Stoke Common on both the main and west commons.
28. At Ashtead Common the cattle contracted in from and managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust are successfully grazing using NoFence. As this is the first time NoFence has been used at Ashtead Common back-up electric fencing is in place as a precaution.

Project work

29. At Ashtead Common a remote water quality sensing device has been installed at the surface water outlet into the Rye Brook to monitor pollution. This information will supply baseline data for a reedbed project to tackle pollution from a surface water drainage network that discharges into the Rye Brook.
30. The Ashtead team has worked with the South East Rivers Trust to develop a wetland project using funding from the Water Restoration Fund. If successful the design will be developed to a level sufficient to submit a grant application to implement the project if this, or any other, funding stream becomes available again.
31. The Burnham Beeches Strategic Access Management & Monitoring Strategy (SAMMs) and section 106 funded Community Engagement Rangers (CERs)

completed their first full year in post during the period. The SAMMs provides funding for a CER and projects for 80 years via developer contribution relating to developments within 5.6 Km of the Beeches within Buckinghamshire. The 106 CER is funded by payments from 1 development in Slough – the Horlicks quarter - for 5 years. Annual reports of activity by the CERs are attached as appendices 2 and 3

32. The Beeches team have been Supporting Buckinghamshire and Slough councils with running Local Nature Recovery Strategy meetings whilst highlighting the importance of the Beeches and Stoke Common
33. Buckinghamshire highways have implemented the first part of long-awaited parking restrictions around Burnham Beeches with adjacent roads in Farnham Common having parking restrictions introduced.

Survey and monitoring.

34. As part of the SAMMs project a new monitoring strategy to guide the CERs and Beeches staff on what monitoring to undertake to monitor the impact of recreation on the SAC was completed. The CERs have started implementing actions to establish recommended monitoring systems to measure future changes. Their focus currently and for the next year includes areas like path widths and wear/ particular species monitoring and habitat fragmentation.

Consultative Committees

35. Nothing to report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Commons Local Risk Financial Summary
Appendix 2 – Buckinghamshire 2023-24 SAMMS report
Appendix 3 – Slough 2023-24 SAMMS report

Geoff Sinclair
Assistant Director, The Commons

T: 01753 647358

E: geoff.sinclair@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1: The Commons performance against budget to end March 2024 (Period 12-24, 100% of FY)

Summary of The Common's Expenditure and Income for the year to date (12 months)

Exp/Inc	P&L Header	DOS	Budget	Actual YTD
Income	Customer, Client Receipts	AC	-3,000	-28,347.97
Income	Customer, Client Receipts	BB	-258,000	-333,329.65
Income	Customer, Client Receipts	WW	-113,000	-150,536.77
Expenditure	Employees	AC	325,000	342,719.43
Expenditure	Employees	BB	735,000	696,698.18
Expenditure	Employees	SC	23,000	19,470.78
Expenditure	Employees	WW	618,000	574,731.88
Income	Government Grants	AC	-20,000	-52,696.53
Income	Government Grants	BB	-35,000	-46,650.00
Income	Government Grants	SC	-25,000	-27,946.05
Income	Government Grants	WW	-50,000	-54,596.40
Income	Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	AC	0	-2,929.03
Income	Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	BB	-110,000	-342,573.97
Income	Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	WW	0	-3,212.84
Expenditure	Premises	AC	81,000	113,231.31
Expenditure	Premises	BB	89,000	137,195.17
Expenditure	Premises	SC	23,000	33,907.95
Expenditure	Premises	WW	141,000	174,395.01
Expenditure	Supplies and Services	AC	31,000	58,209.45
Expenditure	Supplies and Services	BB	103,000	155,952.11
Expenditure	Supplies and Services	SC	5,000	654.77
Expenditure	Supplies and Services	WW	35,000	74,227.59
Expenditure	Third Party payment	SC	1,000	157.00
Expenditure	Third Party payment	BB	0	28.6
Income	Transfer from Reserves	WW	0	-8,426.97
Income	Transfer from Reserves	BB	0	-57,070.62
Expenditure	Transport	AC	11,000	10,920.86
Expenditure	Transport	BB	14,000	16,491.70
Expenditure	Transport	WW	14,000	30,697.25
Income	Investment Income	SC	0	-4014.13
Expenditure	Transfer to Reserve	BB	0	293,052.49
Expenditure	Transfer to Reserve	SC	0	4,014.13
Expenditure	Transfer to Reserve	WW	0	12,916.21
Expenditure	Transfer to Reserve	AC	0	726
Total			1,635,000	1,638,067

Appendix 1: The Commons performance against budget to end March 2024 (Period 12-24, 100% of FY)

Progress Against Budget for the year to date (Twelve months)

EXPENDITURE	
£2,249,000	122%
Sum of Budget	Actual by Budget
£2,750,397.87	
Sum of Actual YTD	
INCOME	
-£614,000	181%
Sum of Budget	Actual by Budget
£1,112,330.93	
Sum of Actual YTD	



BURNHAM BEECHES PROGRESS UPDATE REPORT

STRATEGIC ACCES MANAGEMENT AND
MONITORING STRATEGY

APRIL 2023 - APRIL 2024

Page 43





BURNHAM BEECHES SAMMS: progress report to Buckinghamshire Council

April 2023- March 2024

CONTEXT

Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

In 2005, Burnham Beeches, a primarily wooded area in southern Buckinghamshire, was designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This was to protect the 'beech forest on acid soil' habitat, and acknowledges the mosses, lichens, insects and other invertebrates that depend on the ancient trees. All SACs are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), giving these areas the highest degree of protection available in law.



Image 1. Burnham Beeches, Special Area of Conservation, National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The northern part of the SAC is private woodland, only accessible by public footpaths and a small number of permissive paths. The southern part, Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve, is a Public Open Space owned and managed by the City of London Corporation as a charity. Other habitats on the reserve include wood pasture, heathland, grassland, mire and valley mire, grassland, ponds and streams.

To protect the reserve, Burnham Beeches NNR is managed through a series of 10-year management plans, drawn up with and given consent by Natural England. The current [Burnham Beeches management plan](#) runs from 2020 to 2030.

Although only 220 ha (approximately one square mile), the reserve receives approximately 600,000 visits each year, with an estimated 35-40% of those visits bringing at least one dog. It is extremely vulnerable to damage from overuse as well as from external stresses such as drought, fire or pollution.

Evidence has suggested that additional visitors to Burnham Beeches NNR, generated through additional local housing development, will harm the integrity of the SAC ([Footprint Ecology Report: Urban Development and Burnham Beeches SAC](#)). To alleviate the projected impact, no new dwellings are permitted within 500 m of the boundary of the SAC and all new developments within a 5.6km 'zone of influence' (see Appendix A for map) are required to make a financial contribution to Buckinghamshire Council.



Image 2. Ancient beech pollards at Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve.

The [Burnham Beeches Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy \(SAMMS\)](#) was adopted by Buckinghamshire Council in November 2020. It runs for 80 years and is currently being delivered through six core projects that specify how funds received by Buckinghamshire Council will be used to directly manage and avoid the negative impacts of an increase in recreation at Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve.

Full details of each project may be found in Appendix B.

BUDGET

The SAMMs contributions collected must cover expected expenditure for the first 10 years of project delivery and ultimately for the 80 years of the SAMMs agreement.

Project summary and expenditure 2023/24

Project scope	Current agreed 10 yr expenditure 2020/21-2029/30	Exp 23/24
Project 1: provision of bespoke electronic information, to help visitors to the SAC understand the impact of their visit and/or actions.	£17,000 for bespoke interpretation 1x in 10 years, likely to be 2025/26 onwards	£0
Project 2: events and promotion of activities to raise awareness of recreation pressure and of alternative places to visit.	Project 2 - annual spend of £2,800 for CER to use for event/activities	£353.34
Project 3: appointment of a Community Engagement Ranger.	Project 3 - <£52,118 annually to employ a Community Engagement Ranger (CER) to undertake range of engagement activity *10 months' salary due to CER resigning on 31/01/23 and replacement not in post until 01/04/2024.	£39,792.63 (10 months' salary*)
Project 4: visitor surveys.	Project 4 - £10,000 – visitor survey /count 1 x every 10 years. Project not due before 25/26.	£0
Project 5: monitoring visitor impacts on soils and the ecology of the SAC.	Project 5 – £20,000 every 10 years, to be spent at an average of £2000 /year on monitoring visitor impacts on features at Burnham Beeches SAC (ecology/lichens /soils etc)	£7925.76
Project 6: production of access plan/carrying capacity study.	Project 6 - £15,000 for the one-off production of action plan /carrying capacity study	£0
	Total	£48,071.73

Budget summary to date 2020/21 - 2023/24

Income received from SAMMS contributions to date

Year	Contributions collected	Number of developments	Number of properties
2020/21	£26,310.31	8	12
2021/22	£452,986.74	25	224
2022/23	£177,537.22	33	85
2023/24	£162,583	24	78
Total	£819,417.27	90	399

Ten-year expenditure summary to date – no expenditure prior to 2022/23 (year 3)

Project	10 year value	Amount spent to date	Amount left to spend
Project 1 – Electronic Interpretation	£17,000	0	£17,000
Project 2 – Events/promotion	£28,000	£353.34	£27,646.66
Project 3 – CER employment	£521,180*	£51,349.94	£469,830.06
Project 4 – Visitor survey	£10,000	0	£10,000
Project 5 - Monitoring visitor impacts	£20,000	£7925.76	£12,074.24
Project 6 - Access Strategy	£15,000	£9,875	£5,125
Totals	£611,180	£69,504.04	£541,675.96

*CER not employed until Jan 2023

PROJECT OUTLINE AND PROGRESS

A: Project 1: provision of electronic information, to help visitors to the SAC understand the impact of their visit and/or actions.

- No action 2023/24.

B: Project 2: events and promotion of activities to raise awareness of recreation pressure and of alternative places to visit and Project 3: appointment of a Community Engagement Ranger

The objectives of the CER post are to:

- Mitigate the potential for harm to the protected habitats within Burnham Beeches and its SAC by being a public face and catalyst to effect behaviour change by visitors to the nature reserve;
- Work with the wider Ranger team to deliver a visible, approachable and proactive Ranger service to achieve sustainable outcomes for the reserve alongside a positive visitor experience;
- Undertake outreach, engaging with potential visitors off-site and promoting the use of other local natural greenspaces as alternative visitor destinations.

It is worth noting that there are two CERs at Burnham Beeches, with one post being funded by Buckinghamshire Council and the other by mitigation payments to Slough Borough Council from the Berkeley Group for the residential development at the Horlicks Quarter. The two Rangers are employed by the City of London Corporation and are based at the Burnham Beeches office. They work closely together, with the relevant officer taking responsibility for outreach work in their respective local authority areas. They support each other delivering their respective work programmes – each has different skills which bring more benefits to the delivery of both schemes/agreements than possible working as individuals.

The Buckinghamshire CER left the post at the end of January 24 due to personal reasons. As of April 1 2024, the position was filled by the Slough CER and as of April 15 2024, the Slough CER position was filled.

B.1 ACTION ON THE NNR

B.1.1 Patrols

Four regular patrol routes have been established, which are patrolled on different days and times each week. The schedule ensures equal coverage of the on-lead and off-lead areas.

Patrols are either undertaken with the Slough CER or alone; these have been on foot or by e-bike. When on foot, the CER also deals with any litter; this not only has a positive practical impact (studies have shown that 2+ pieces of litter tends to attract additional litter) but also offers a talking point that leads into conversations about other issues affecting the reserve.

The most common reasons to intervene with negative behaviour on the reserve relate to breaches in the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs). Appendix C shows the PSPO areas. In these instances, visitors have been given verbal advice about the on and off lead areas and the fragility of the reserve, and maps/ supporting literature where needed. Where necessary, the CER has ensured dogs have been put on lead. All incidents are recorded immediately after the PSPO breach and later recorded on a central log with further action (formal letter or enforcement action) being authorised by the Head Ranger/Assistant Director, as required by the Burnham Beeches PSPO enforcement protocol.

Other interventions have related to:

- fires
- visitors approaching or feeding grazing livestock
- fungi picking
- off-road cycling
- quad bike incursion
- moving deadwood and den-building

Engagement has also included chatting or answering questions about wildlife, reasons for visiting or responding to particular needs such as giving directions. Where possible, core messages have been integrated into these conversations. As the CER's knowledge of the wider area has grown, it has also been possible to suggest other places visitors might enjoy visiting.

Over 99% of engagement has been positive, even when enforcing PSPOs.

There has also been multiple 'engagement weeks', where other members of staff patrolled with a CER, aiming to share their proactive approach to engagement.

Patrol engagement April 2023 to April 2024

- 296 hours and 25 minutes of patrol from 01/04/2023 to 09/01/2024 (manual/handwritten surveys).
- 66 hours and 27 minutes of patrol from 10/01/2024 to 31/03/2024 (surveying using Survey123).
- Total of 362 hours and 52 minutes of patrol from 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024.
- An average of 30 hours of patrol per month.

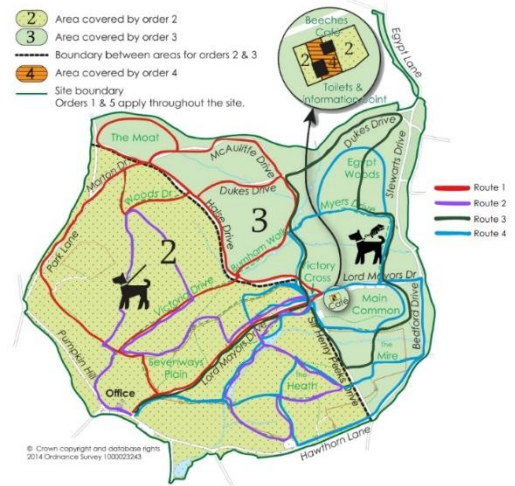


Image 3. Map of four patrol routes across Burnham Beeches.

Image 4. Visitor engagement about tree safety work.



PSPO enforcement April 2023 to April 2024	
No. interventions by CERs	236
No. interventions by all team members	552

CERs have enforced 42.75% of the total number of PSPOs enforced by the whole Ranger team in 2023/24.

B.1.2 Monitoring

Patrol engagement

Version 3 of patrol monitoring includes the following:	Observations for 01/04/23 – 09/01/24
Number of visitors (the number of people seen at Burnham Beeches, including from a distance where there is no opportunity for engagement).	8288
Number of dogs (the number of dogs seen at Burnham Beeches).	2173
Visitors exhibiting positive behaviour (for example, a dog is on-lead in the on-lead area).	8041
Visitors exhibiting negative behaviour (for example, a visitor walking off the path).	281
Positive engagement with visitors.	2704
Negative engagement with visitors (for example, a conversation where the visitor disagrees with the Public Spaces Protection Orders).	6

The routes, frequency and monitoring of patrols has been evolving over the first year. Information from meetings with other SAMMS in 23/24 and data from existing transects has helped to inform the final procedures. Data in the key areas (as above) has been gathered on an ongoing basis, however from the 10th of January 2024, a new patrol monitoring system has been used (Appendix D). This new way of monitoring using Survey123 (an ArcGIS application) does not include the number of visitors or dogs seen, but records more information about the types of engagement, problems observed and mitigation (see also Project 4). This method of monitoring also enables the CERs to monitor patrols in wet weather conditions and no extra time is needed to upload the data to a spreadsheet after the patrol. The CERs now use two surveys whilst on patrol:

- One that is monitoring the whole patrol which includes information such as date, time, weather conditions, location, number of visitors greeted, number of dens dismantled, and the number of negative behaviours witnessed (such as dog fouls not picked up).
- The second survey is more focussed on engagement when on patrol and records information about conversations with visitors (Appendix E). This survey records information such as the number of visitors interacted with, location, the main topic of conversation, whether the visitor was aware of a particular issue such as soil erosion, whether the visitor was aware of rules in place, and if the visitor was aware of the wildlife value of Burnham Beeches.

Patrol monitoring using Survey123:	Observations for 10/01/24 – 31/03/24
Number of visitors greeted (hello, good morning)	630
Number of visitors engaged with (full conversations had with visitors)	287
Number of negative behaviours witnessed (dog fouling not picked up, foraging)	81

It is clear from this first year of monitoring that the issues affecting the National Nature Reserve are only occasionally those of overtly negative behaviour such as graffiti, littering or aggressive dogs. Although there is an on-going issue with dogs being off-lead in the on-lead area, or being far from the paths, or not under effective control in the off-lead area, these represent a relatively small proportion of the dogs walked on the reserve. Damage seems to result largely from the volume of footfall in relation to the fragility of the Beeches and conversations indicate lack of visitor awareness and/or interest about the value of the reserve or consequences of overuse (47% of visitors spoken to since 10/01/24 were aware of the wildlife value of Burnham Beeches). Fewer than 1% of the visitors seen were walking through undisturbed vegetation with the majority being on some kind of existing trail. The main topic of conversation had with visitors was a general chat (33% of engagements since 10/01/24) which could be about the walker's dog, the weather or a catch up. The next most common topic of conversation was regarding PSPOs, whether that was discussing the rules or enforcing the rules (16% of engagements since 10/01/24).

The new monitoring technique will enable the CERs to adapt messaging and create materials specific to topics that visitors are unsure about, providing a more targeted approach to mitigation.

Other monitoring

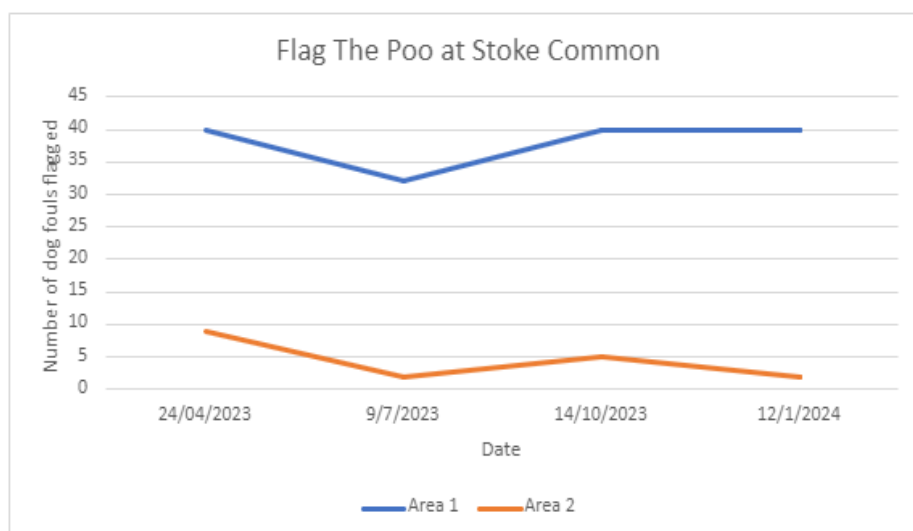


Two 'dog transects' are carried out each month. These follow two set routes around the reserve (Appendix F), and count the number, gender mix and approximate age of visitors in each section of the route, the number of dogs and whether these dogs are on or off-lead. Data from 24 transects conducted by the CERs in 2023/24 adds to records dating back to 2015 and is used to inform the three-yearly review of Public Space Protection Orders. It will now also be used to also help assess the impact of the CER presence.

Three new 'flag the poo' transects (counting the number of dog faeces left and placing flags next to them to raise awareness) have been established at Burnham Beeches: the first and second are along the two footpaths at the main entrance; the third is a stretch of path leading into Egypt Wood (Appendix G). The data from these transects, conducted quarterly, will add to the data collected from the two transects at Stoke Common and the two existing long-term dog poo transects which have shown a significant reduction in fouling in both the on-lead and off-lead areas.

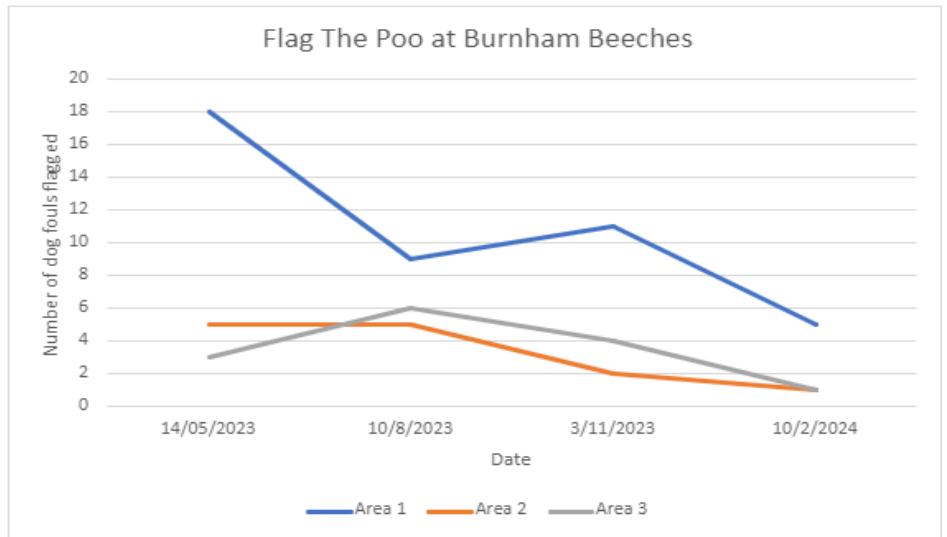
Image 5: 'Flag the Poo' sign board at the main entrance to Burnham Beeches. The board includes information about dogs and their fouls.

In area 2 at Stoke Common, the number of fouls being flagged has decreased, however the number of fouls being flagged in area 1 has remained high since July 2023. This could be due to area 1 being the most common entrance used by visitors at Stoke Common. Further messaging needs to be created to help stop dog fouls being left.



The number of dog fouls flagged at Burnham Beeches has decreased since the start of Flag The Poo in May 2023.

Whilst conducting Flag The Poo at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, many visitors approach the CERs to ask questions about the flags and primarily comment on how awful it is to see so many flags.



B.1.3 Practical mitigation

B.1.3.i Trampling and erosion

One of the main issues affecting the reserve is the number of *desire lines* (tracks created by visitors walking the line that seems natural to them) that were created or widened over Covid lockdowns, when an estimated additional 250,000 visits were made to the Beeches. Many are continuing to widen as paths become muddy. As a result, vegetation and soil damage is occurring across the majority of the reserve.

Action included:

- Creating 5 dead hedges across the entry points to block desire lines off surfaced paths and protect vulnerable areas.
- Identifying further areas for the Burnham Beeches volunteers to dead-hedge to reduce path edge erosion.
- Creating informal path blocks using fallen or cut material
- Roping off particularly vulnerable areas for the winter months.
- Supporting practical action with signage and social media to explain why action is needed.
- Improvement of path sections so all main paths are clearly marked and accessible.



Image 6: This stretch of dead hedge protects an area of woodland damaged by visitors cutting through from one surfaced track to another.



Image 7: Winter ground conditions exacerbate the impact of footfall, hence some areas are closed.

Recommendations

- Continue to carry out practical work as in 23/24 as opportunities arise, working alone and with volunteers;
- Work with the other staff and visitor data to draw up a map of which paths should be retained and prioritise closures and measures to encourage visitors to use particular paths, and use this to plan future practical work;
- Investigate ways to waymark desired routes;
- Integrate actions with the monitoring proposals under Project 4.
- Liaison with information team regarding routes of any trails produced.



Image 8: Blocking a desire line, helped by staff and students from Berkshire College of Agriculture.

B.1.3.ii Damage to decaying wood

Much of the ecological value of Burnham Beeches relates to the animals, plants, fungi and lichens that depend on decaying wood for part or all of their life cycles. The scarcity, diversity and number of these species was a factor in the designation of Burnham Beeches as a Special Area of Conservation, and the subsequent need for the SAMMS. It is therefore critical that there is mitigation action to protect the volume and quality of this habitat.

Dead and decaying wood is found in the ancient trees, in standing and fallen or felled dead trees, in habitat piles built of cut wood and in the fallen branches that have been left where they fell.

Damage to this habitat and the associated wildlife is caused mainly by visitors climbing on or in the ancient trees or by visitors moving sticks and logs, primarily to build dens.



Image 9. Decaying wood provides shelter and food for rare and endangered species.

Protecting ancient trees

The Beeches tree management programme already includes measures to deter visitors from getting too close to the ancient trees. These include creating barriers around vulnerable trees from cut material, or re-routing paths. The CER input has been primarily information-based (section B.1.4)

In January 2024, however, the CERs created a solution to a particularly vulnerable tree; this was adjacent to a busy path and showing accelerated disintegration from the number of people standing in or on it for a 'selfie'. This temporary barrier will be replaced by a palisade fence, and may be used for other trees at high-risk.



Image 10. Protecting the 'Fairy Tree'.

Dens

Den building is seen as a fun, harmless activity, and is indeed promoted elsewhere as a way to encourage families to enjoy being outdoors. It is, however, not appropriate at Burnham Beeches. Although the wood may appear to be undamaged, movement changes light and moisture conditions needed by the animals, plants, fungi and lichens that had colonised the wood in its original location.

It is therefore vital that action is taken to protect particularly vulnerable trees and that dens are spotted and dealt with promptly to raise awareness that this activity is not permitted.



Image 11. A dismantled den. Each den uses a large number of logs and sticks and causes severe localised habitat disruption.

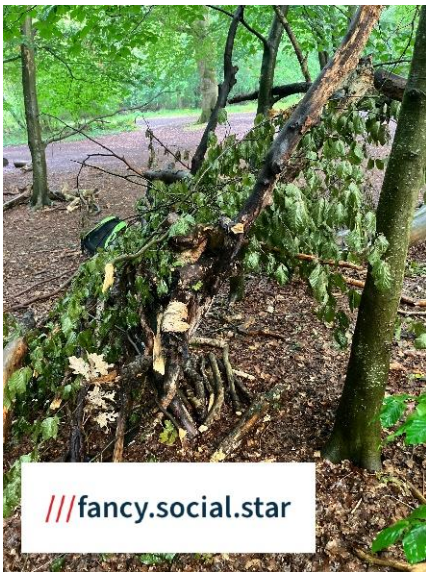


Image 12. Some dens use fresh materials too. Many attract litter.



Image 13 and 14. The sticks used in this den were used to block a desire line. Friendly signage explains the importance of this habitat and asks visitors to leave it



All the dens found have been dismantled and the wood either scattered around the surrounding habitat or built into a habitat pile. Where visitors have been seen building a den, the CER Ranger has explained the value of the wood and nature reserve to both the adults and the children, and encouraged them to help dismantle the den carefully and to try to replace the wood where they found it.

Prior to the creation and use of Survey123, the number of dens dismantled this year was not recorded formally, although it is estimated to be in the region of 25+, with 5 direct interventions with families. Since January with the use of Survey123, 13 dens have been dismantled and recorded, along with images and the locations of each den.

Recommendations

- To continue to dismantle dens and engage with public, as required.
- To work with the Ranger team to ensure a consistent approach.
- To log locations and take pictures of dens, and a) target information and b) work with the Conservation Officer to agree removal of decaying materials to less accessible areas of the reserve.

B.1.4 Message and resource development

In 22/23 the following key points were identified for on-site information/interpretation and integration into one-one conversations with visitors.

Core message	Simple supplementary information to increase understanding that Burnham Beeches is a National Nature Reserve
The number of visitors here is damaging the nature reserve	Burnham Beeches is one of the most important places for wildlife in Europe.
Stay on the main paths	The number of visitors is causing damage to soil structure: erosion and compaction is affecting the nature reserve.
Pick up after your dog	Nutrients impact on the nature reserve.
This is part of the nature reserve where dogs need to be on a lead at all times	The nature reserve is heavily used; the on-lead area is a 'safe space' not just for wildlife but for our many visitors who may not like dogs.
Always keep your dog in sight	Information about the variety of wildlife on the nature reserve that may be disturbed; impacts of fouling out sight.

In 23/24, the additional key points were added.

Core message	Simple supplementary information to increase understanding that Burnham Beeches is a National Nature Reserve
We understand you love being here and don't mean any harm.	This is one of the most important places in Europe for certain species and habitat. It is only one square mile, very popular, and the number of visitors puts it in danger of being loved to death.
Keep your dog alongside.	A dog doesn't have to chase wildlife to disturb it. Every time an animal is disturbed, it stops it from resting, feeding or breeding. This includes small birds, mammals and invertebrates you don't see.
Do not climb in or on the ancient trees.	There are things living in and around decaying wood that depend on it for all or part of their life cycle. Many are rare or endangered. The mix of species suggest these woods have been here since the Ice Age. The species are only here because the habitat is so old. This is the 3 rd most important place in the UK for saproxylic species.
Leave logs and sticks on the ground. No den-building.	As above. Plus, once wood has been moved, the light and moisture conditions are not those needed by the things living there. It can never be put back in exactly the right place. Moving dead wood also directly disturbs and may damage the wildlife in/under it.
Do not approach or feed the cows or ponies.	These are working animals, not pets. They are helping the reserve become better for wildlife using a traditional method. They create a better mix of plants for wildlife than mowing or cutting. Plus safety and nutrition information.
No fires or BBQs; no litter.	The value of NNR, as above.

Over the course of the year, the CER has researched the facts and figures underpinning these statements to be able to construct meaningful ‘arguments’ to underpin information delivery. Information aims to be as specific as possible so that visitors understand not just what is required but also why restrictions or changes in behaviour are required and how these will benefit the nature reserve.



Image 15: Display ending with the core behaviours.

The majority of information materials produced this year have included the five core behaviours (see Image 15) we want to encourage, aiming to establish a baseline awareness of appropriate behaviour.

The focus now is to:

a) make it easy for visitors to be aware of what is needed and how to comply. *Note: this work needs to be linked with practical measures; at present, for example, it is not always easy to tell which unsurfaced paths are the main paths.*

b) recognise the mismatch between visitor expectations (a park for recreation) and reality (a highly fragile and important area of conservation);

c) raise awareness and love of the things that make Burnham Beeches unique.

Note: this work supplements and overlaps with that of the existing information team.

The following approach is used for all resource development, from flyers to guided walks, to ensure that all action is meaningful.

Whilst some materials are purely informational, others are interpretative, aiming to link the visitor’s experience with the needs of the reserve. All aim to incorporate:

(a) **What** feature/species/ habitat is being impacted by a particular behaviour;

(b) **Why** action is needed (usually why a particular feature/species/habitat is important;

(c) **What** the threat is, e.g. trampling, disturbance, fire;

(d) **How** visitors can help.



Image 16. The picture on the outside of the cubicle of something the visitor is likely to see on the reserve.

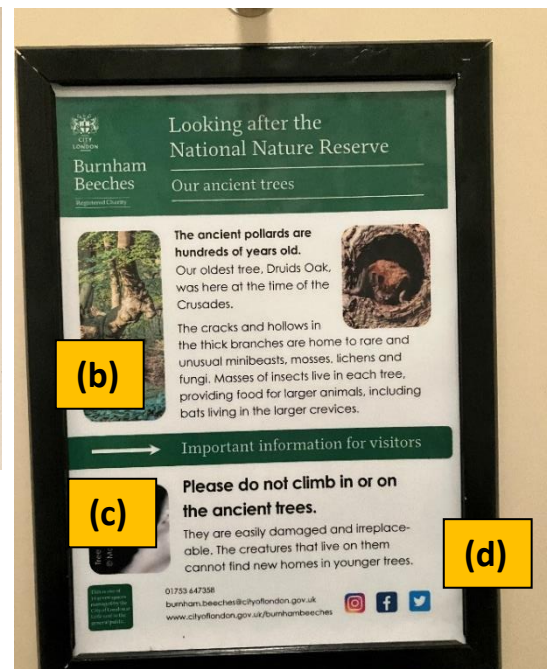


Image 17. Information on the inside of the cubicle relates to that image.

A suite of information was developed for the toilet block. The poster on the outside of the door highlights (a). The inside panel explains (b), (c), and (d).

The six cubicles cover grazing (separate panels for cows and ponies), ancient trees, decaying wood, wildlife disturbance and picking flowers.

B.1.4.i Displays at the information point

The information point is in the busy café area on the Main Common, and next to the toilet block. Although small, it has a display case, three notice boards and a leaflet rack. The display case and largest notice are available to the CERs for seasonal displays.



In spring, the display highlighted core behaviours that would help reptiles and amphibians coming out of hibernation.

Image 18 and 19. Spring display

The summer display targeted families with children, aiming to raise awareness of the five core behaviours. It was styled to complement a summer 'bucket list' of low impact activities organised by the information team and the CER summer engagement week activities.

Image 20 and 21. Summer flyer promoting other places to visit, and summer display.



The autumn display addressed the seasonal problem of fungi picking and aimed to educate visitors about the importance of fungi in the food chain. The core messages of keeping to the path and keeping dogs alongside were set in the context of the variety of life in leaf litter.

Image 22 and 23. Autumn display.



The winter display covered all five core messages again, with an additional safety message about ice. It also reinforced the autumn 'no foraging' messaging by highlighting the scarcity of food for wildlife at this time of year.

Image 24 and 25. Winter display



B.1.4.ii Portable materials

In order to display information across the nature reserve in different areas and target a wider audience, a portable table was purchased. However, the table was difficult to carry on foot or by bike across the reserve. Therefore, a cargo bike was designed and purchased to solve this problem and help transport materials and displays to different parts of Burnham Beeches. The CERs aim to use the cargo bike regularly, especially during seasonal engagement weeks. The bike also enables the CERs to target specific problem areas and places where there is higher visitor pressure. The design shows visitors the various habitats within Burnham Beeches and highlights key aspects of the reserve such as the ancient pollards, decaying wood and fungi.



Image 26. Cargo bike.

It was agreed that the most important areas to target through interpretative and information materials were the ancient trees and decaying wood. Although they are a highly visible part of the reserve, conversations with visitors suggest that understanding of their importance is minimal.



Image 27. Ancient tree display.

A tabletop display was created to explore how the previous community use of Burnham Beeches created the ancient pollards.

Organised by past, present and future, it details the value and variety of wildlife that depends on the old trees and the associated decaying wood.

It is accompanied by a 'treasure box' that provides talking points for the CER to explain in more detail about some of the species that need the trees and threats facing them.



Image 28. A fungi display created by the Slough CER, also used for autumn/winter engagement to expand wildlife messaging.

It has been used at the village Orchard Day and in autumn engagement week, and will be used to support future pop-up events on the Reserve.

Recommendations

- Further development of ancient tree and deadwood resources with:
- Taxidermy specimens, such as an owl or woodpecker, to raise interest.
- Bowls made from different woods, containing the relevant nuts or berries that help support wildlife on the Reserve.
- Duplicate treasure boxes, for use with school groups.
- Note cards for the treasure box, to enable other staff or volunteers to use the display.
- Development of displays and materials highlighting seasonal issues for use on pop up patrols, such as information on responsible dog walking, disturbance of ground nesting birds and reptiles.



Image 29. The treasure box.

B.1.4.iii Other materials

Temporary signs were created to target issues on the ground. Seasonal signs included grazing, fire and bird feeding while others supported practical mitigation work.

Image 30. This sign at a dead hedge explains the benefit of staying on the main path in this part of the reserve.

Image 31. An A5 child-friendly laminated sign has been left where dens have been frequently built. All but one of these has remained in place without dens being rebuilt.



B.1.5 Activities and events

All events, walks and engagement weeks have a common aim of raising visitors' awareness on the importance of Burnham Beeches, educating visitors on how to visit Burnham Beeches respectfully to reduce disturbance (for example, sticking to the main paths or not building dens), and promoting other locations for visitors to explore. It is worth noting that the aim of these walks, events and engagement weeks is not to speak to as many people as possible or bring in more people to the reserve, but to instead talk to those who are already visiting and use Burnham Beeches on a regular basis.

- Summer engagement week 2023 was the first engagement week conducted by the CERs. The aim of this week was to trial a range of low preparation activities and to assess the effectiveness of various pop-up locations. Activities during the week included a bug hunt, nature art using homemade clay and a space to take time in noticing nature which involved inviting visitors into a quiet area to sit down and listen to the natural sounds around them. Over the week, 216 engagements were made.
- Autumn engagement week 2023 focussed on highlighting the importance of ancient trees, decaying wood and fungi. This week tied in with National Tree Week and included multiple pop-ups with displays and a walk at Burnham Park to show their tree trail.
- Spring engagement week 2024 had a theme of disturbance to make visitors aware of the species (reptiles, ground nesting birds) coming out of hibernation or breeding, and the importance of keeping to the paths, especially at this time. The week brought together the whole Ranger team for various pop-ups with a display and for patrols. 88 people were engaged with over the week.
- Farnham Common Infant school, which is a local school, came to visit to conduct a bug hunt. The CER ensured that the 59 children understood the importance of Burnham Beeches for invertebrates and explained why activities such a den building are not allowed at the reserve.



Image 32. Educating Farnham Common Junior School about Burnham Beeches during WWII.



Image 33. Crafting Creatures event during the summer engagement week 2023.



Image 34. Game created for school/youth groups to stop them from running, shouting or stepping off path.

- The CER has been supporting the Slough CER with walks on the reserve such as ‘Waggy Walks’ which aims to educate dog walkers on the PSPOs and help them better understand the on and off lead areas.
- A guided walk for 10 of the Land Management team from Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) provided contact with professionals experiencing similar impacts.
- The CER supported a visit from Farnham Common Junior School (60 children) to explore the value of Seven Ways Plain and its history and the children were encouraged to explore the area respectfully.
- Guided walk with 36 Beavers. The CER rewarded them for following the undamaging the nature reserve rules through a simple game that made them think about how species such as mice need to be quiet to survive (see image 34).

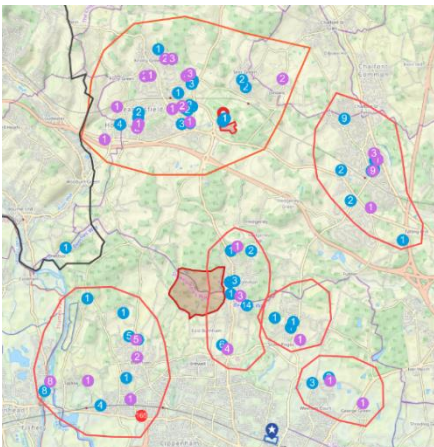
Recommendations

- Continue and consolidate activities and events that continue to educate visitors to the nature reserve.
- Move more walk and talks onto surrounding areas.
- Use weekends for pop up patrolling at various locations at Burnham Beeches using the cargo bike.
- Offer frequent or repeat youth and school group visits and offer support at a green space closer to them.

B.2 WORK OUTSIDE THE RESERVE

The aim of CER work in the wider community is to reduce pressure on the National Nature Reserve by encouraging residents within the 5.6k zone of influence to make greater use of their local green spaces and rights of way.

It should be noted that CER focus on outreach differs between Buckinghamshire and Slough. Although each Ranger takes responsibility for initiatives within their respective local authority, they support each other on the presumption that residents of each development will benefit from green space use in both Buckinghamshire and Slough.



With the exception of Wilton Park and Huntercombe Walk, the residential developments comprise a large number of small developments spread across the 5.6km zone of influence surrounding Burnham Beeches. Outreach events/activities and promotion of alternative green spaces/routes targeting residents of the small or individual developments is likely to be through community meeting points and local schools.

Within Slough, the 106 payment is exclusively from the development of the Horlicks Quarter; the Borough Council is investing in its existing green spaces to meet the needs of new residents. The Slough CER is targeting residents through work with the Quarter’s concierge service, which provides a range of activities for residents.

Image 35. Map of developments. Purple icons indicate S106 payments have been made. Blue icons indicate the planning application has been made.

B.2.1 Fieldwork and liaison around Burnham

The first tranche of work linked to Burnham, aiming to identify spaces that might appeal to the residents of Huntercombe Walk (165 properties, 45 occupied as of Dec. 2023) and/or Berkeley Place (28 flats, 13 occupied as of December 23). It was anticipated some of these spaces might have potential for promotion to residents of the Britwell Estate and surrounding area.

A set of linked green spaces was identified fairly early on, comprising Cocksherd Wood, Lynch Hill Park/Lammas Meadow and Haymill Nature Reserve.

Cocksherd Wood is a remnant of ancient woodland managed by The Evergreen Trust. It is possible to walk a short circuit here.

Lynch Hill Park/Lammas Meadow is an attractive open space with some scrub that is a potential place to redirect dog walkers to.

Haymill Nature Reserve is wet woodland surrounding ponds and reedbeds.

All three sites are owned by Slough Council but managed with the help of external organisations. Links have been made with the Evergreen Green Trust (Cocksherd Wood), and BBOWT (Haymill Nature Reserve). Slough Council is supportive of any measures to increase local use of these spaces.

- Visits were also made to Burnham Park, Cherry Orchard, and several paths walked.
- As the map shows, it is possible to reach all these spaces (and also Burnham Station) on foot, although some sections use pavements beside fairly busy roads. Furthermore the route from Huntercombe Walk has a small uphill gradient which many might find off-putting. Nevertheless, there is potential to promote use of these spaces not just to residents of new developments but also of the area of Slough immediately to the south of the Beeches.
- Informal advice was given to Burnham Parish Council regarding the management of the Cherry Orchard reserve, which is currently mainly used by people walking their dogs.
- The Council is revising a booklet of circular walks within the Parish (several of which include the Beeches); this is an opportunity to ensure the walks through the Beeches follow surfaced paths and the Ranger has offered to walk and check these sections and some of these routes in the wider countryside, feeding back any revisions or clarifications to the Council.
- Advice was given to the Evergreen Trust regarding funding opportunities for conservation work in Cocksherd Wood.

Recommendations

- Promoting the Cocksherd Wood to Burnham route to the residents of Berkeley Place.
- Follow up on Burnham Parish Council walks.
- Further exploration of the area to the south of Huntercombe Walk, looking at areas of accessible green space identified on Natural England's green infrastructure map and looking for routes down to the Thames Path.

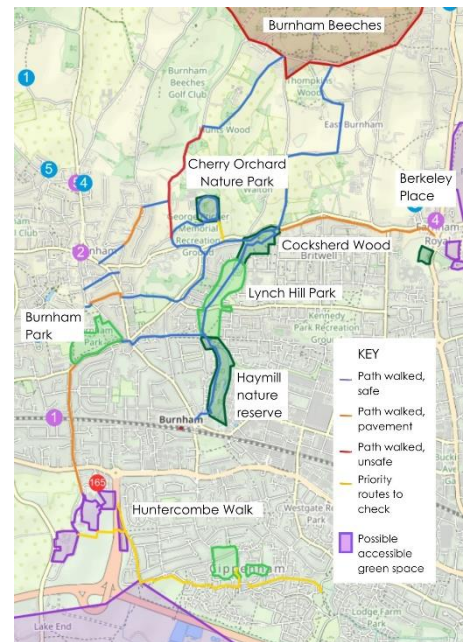


Image 36. Green areas and routes identified in and around Burnham. The area to the south of Huntercombe Place contains footpaths linking to the Thames Path and Jubilee River

- If these exist, production of a leaflet or other resource promoted via the Parish Council, local library, community centre/hub/Facebook group and directly to Huntercombe Walk and other developments in the Burnham sector.
- Linking Huntercombe Walk initiatives with any work by the Slough CER.

B.2.2 Fieldwork and liaison around Burnham Beeches

Fieldwork around the Beeches began in autumn 2023. Here the priority was to identify walks and additional green spaces not just for residents of new developments but also for existing residents, who make up the bulk of regular visitors to the NNR. Research on surrounding green spaces has been conducted using OS maps, existing staff knowledge and Natural England's green infrastructure map.

- Meeting with Farnham Royal Parish Council regarding routes from Hedgerley to link down to Burnham, and link to planned improvements to the Shakespeare Way. The Parish Council is considering whether it will be possible for the patches of woodland under their care to be 'offered' as an alternative place for families found building dens at the Beeches. It was agreed that Temple Dell, a parish-managed space located close to Farnham Common Infant and Junior Schools, would be a suitable location for schools-based activities (see B.2.4).
- A visit to Littleworth Common (a Site of Special Scientific Interest) showed it provides a similar landscape to the Beeches, suggesting it might prove an occasional alternative for local visitors; car parking is, however, limited. Furthermore, the condition of the footpath linking the two sites suggested the path between Littleworth Common and Burnham Beeches is already heavily and regularly used; some sections were extremely slippery and muddy. Due to the status of this site, it is not desirable to push large numbers of visitors here.
- Improved waymarking of both the permissive and statutory paths in the Portman-Burtley estate is needed. The Portman-Burtley estate is part of the SAC due to its wildlife value and therefore it is not desirable to push huge numbers of visitors here.
- Footpath reconnaissance found problems relating to path condition on all routes, with some sections flooded. This may well have been due to the persistent bouts of torrential rain, but this seems likely to be a continuing problem. The existing level of use is making many of the paths uninviting and needing wellingtons or sturdy footwear, therefore unsuitable for the casual recreational use that the majority of visitors to the Beeches are seeking.
- In addition to the properties that have made S106 payments, there are many re-developments around the Beeches where much larger houses have replaced relatively small dwellings. It seems likely that some of these account for the many new visitors to the Beeches.
- There is no off-road walking route close to the Parsonage Lane development, shown on the south of Image 37.

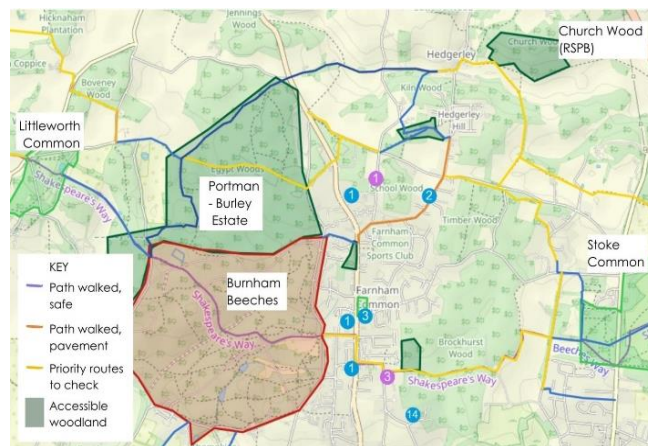


Image 37. Green areas and routes identified in Farnham Royal Parish around Burnham Beeches.

Recommendations

- Further fieldwork to identify the best circular routes from Farnham Common, Farnham Royal, Hedgerley and Stoke Poges.
- Liaison with Buckinghamshire Council to resolve any access or waymarking issues along these routes.
- Liaison with Portman-Burtley to improve waymarking of any permissive sections of these routes.
- Promotion of the circular walking routes and local green spaces via parish websites, local community centre/hub/Facebook group and walks in the Beeches' events programme.
- Promotion of the above directly to new developments in this sector, e.g. by flyer.
- Working with the information team to resolve difficulties in making resources available through the City of London website.

B.2.3 Events and activities

It is worth noting that when attending events away from Burnham Beeches, the CERs now have separate uniform that does not state 'Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common' on them so that members of the public aren't made aware of the nature reserves when it is not necessary.



Image 38. Stoke Poges Fete.

Both CERs attended the Stoke Poges fete, seeing this as an opportunity to work with the Friends of Stoke Common to direct local residents to the nearby heathland (also owned and managed by the City of London) within easy walking distance of the village. Care was taken to emphasise the nature value of this reserve and need to protect ground-nesting birds when visiting. 76 people were spoken with at the stall, including the local MP.



Image 39. Farnham Common Orchard Day.

Farnham Common Orchard Day was a chance to influence those living closest to Burnham Beeches, with the display emphasising both the positive and negative impacts of community use of the Reserve. The CERs spoke to 108 people, most of whom were overwhelmingly positive about the Beeches and mitigation efforts. The CER also spent time talking about community issues with other stall holders, including representatives of Farnham Royal Parish Council, Farnham Common School, the local Guides and Farnham Common Library.

As part of the autumn/winter engagement week, the CER led a guided walk around Burnham Park's tree trail. This was a trial first walk on an external site; it aimed to build the relationship with Burnham Parish Council and trial targeting an extremely local audience. The walk was publicised by flyers at Huntercombe Walk, posters in Burnham Library, Tesco and community hall, on Eventbrite, and on Burnham and the Beeches Facebook pages. Of the 8 participants, 4 found it through searching for nature walks on Eventbrite, 1 from a poster, and 2 from following the Beeches. Although numbers were small, links were made with a volunteer with BBOWT and the organiser of the Wycombe District Ramblers.



Image 40. Guided walk at Burnham Park about the tree trail.

The CER also supported the Slough CER with walks and event at the Horlicks Quarter, aiming to promote use of Slough parks and reaching 32 residents.

Other community events attended included a health initiative by the local GP surgery, a library coffee morning, and joining a 'Tilly's Trotters' walk (a new Simply Walk group coming to the Beeches each week).

Recommendations

- Attendance in 24/25 at Farnham Common Orchard Day, Stoke Poges Horticultural Show (with FOSC), Burnham Donkey Derby, Burnham Park Wellbeing event and similar community events as they arise.
- Further walks away from Burnham Beeches (already planned through the Beeches event programme).
- Using a variety of publicity for walks and events, and monitoring in order to target walks/events at local residents.
- Liaising with Tilly's Trotters to ensure routes stay on surfaced paths.
- Visiting Farnham Common Community hub, a Friday morning drop in, on a more regular basis.

B.2.4 Schools and youth groups

The CER has been interested in working with schools and youth groups that are very local to Burnham Beeches or those that frequently visit. When working with these groups on the nature reserve the aim is to educate them and to push mitigation messages through a fun and engaging way. However, there is scope to work with these groups at other green spaces that may be closer to them. The CER has explored these spaces to see whether they are suitable for schools or youth groups.

Recommendations

- Hold a session at a nature reserve local to 1st Holtspur Scouts/Beavers/Cubs.
- Support sessions for the Hedgerley Scouts/Cubs in woods at the back of the Scout hut (which they already use).
- Run a series of sessions at Farnham Common Junior School with each year group and help the children use their school outside space to create better wildlife habitats in the grounds.
- Work with Farnham Common Infant School at their local greenspaces where activities such as den building and bug hunts can be conducted whilst being taught about the importance of being respectful.

OTHER

a) Links with other groups and organisations

Burnham Beeches is just one of many areas affected by visitor pressures. Efforts have been made over the year to learn from the experiences of others, and to begin to share our own.

Visits were made to three of the areas contacted in 2023: Thames Basin Heaths, the South Downs National Park and the Solent Special Protection Area (Bird Aware Solent). A return visit by members of the Thames Basin Heath team provided an opportunity to share our own experience. Although sharing experiences with other SAMMs projects has been extremely useful, the project at Burnham Beeches is very different to others. Burnham Beeches is a small nature reserve with a high density of visitors, whereas other SAMMs projects are working across multiple large areas so visitor numbers are more spread out. It also became apparent that the presence of a SANG has helped other projects immensely and reduced pressures to the highly valued nature sites.

The CERs have joined SCCAMP (the Southern Counties Canine Access Management Partnership). As a result, the CERs are learning from and sharing experiences of dog control and ways to educate dog walkers about being responsible and respecting nature.

A walk for the Land Management team from Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) provided contact with professionals experiencing similar impacts on nature reserves often more akin to Burnham Beeches

Other walks or presentations were given to officers from Natural England, Buckinghamshire Council and the Burnham Beeches Consultation Group.

Recommendations

- Visit to BBOWT sites.
- Liaise with those in charge of the SAMMs project at Ashridge Estate (National Trust) and organise visits there and at Burnham Beeches.
- Liaise with those in charge of the SAMMs project at Epping Forest and organise visits there and at Burnham Beeches.
- Maintain links with SCCAMP and other SAMMs projects.
- Attend annual mitigation conferences.
- Maintain and grow links with Buckinghamshire Council Country Parks' Team, with particular reference to opportunities to link with development of the new South Bucks Little Country Park and the possible redevelopment of Little Marlow Lakes Country Park as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.



Image 41. Visit to Thames Basin Heaths Partnership.



Image 42. Leading a walk for the Land Management Team from BBOWT.

b) Social media and press work

The Slough CER has taken the lead for social media but the Bucks CER has also created regular social media to promote positive recreational behaviour, highlight issues at Burnham Beeches and promote alternative destinations. This messaging aims to target those already visiting Burnham Beeches rather than attracting new visitors.

Over the past year Burnham Beeches' social media has transformed from only information about the reserve to posts that are specific to mitigation aims (see image 50). The main aim of social media is to educate followers on how important Burnham Beeches is and how they can help protect the reserve. All social media platforms are monitored and information such as engagements, reach and impressions are recorded on a weekly basis. This enables the CERs to understand which types of post are performing particularly well in comparison to others. Facebook is used more frequently and all information is posted on Facebook (e.g., events as well as mitigation messages) in order to reach a more local audience and to prevent attracting visitors from further afield.

01/04/23 - 31/03/24	New Followers	Total Impressions	Total Engagements
X (Twitter)	37	53,363	1,388
Facebook	124	141,620	10,489
Instagram (Starting 06/23)	44	8,594	1,185

c) Training and development

Training was targeted at opportunities to inform or deliver engagement work. The importance and diversity of saproxylic species is one of the reasons why Burnham Beeches is such an important site.

- One day course on the importance of dead and decaying wood.
- Causes of tree failure.
- Creativity conference (online attendance at a number of seminars of interest for activity development).



Image 43. Post-Christmas message, anticipating the seasonal rise in occasional visitors who may not be familiar with restrictions on the reserve.

Project 4: Visitor Surveys

Project 4 is specified in the SAMMS as a major survey every ten years, to determine the total number of visitors and visitor use. The last detailed count of visitors to Burnham Beeches was carried out in 2015/16; it is planned to repeat this every 10 years to calibrate the automatic car counters. The next survey will be carried out in 2025. The external consultants will guide the work but the practical work will be carried out by staff, volunteers and/or contractors. One option under consideration is to use a contractor to analyse data collected by mobile phones carried by visitors to replace some aspects of previously used methods.

Project 5: Monitoring visitor impacts on soils and the ecology of the SAC

A monitoring strategy has been drawn up by Footprint Ecology, working with the Conservation Officer, Head Ranger and Community Engagement Rangers. It recommends a number of improvements to some of the existing monitoring and five new monitoring actions. [The report produced is a monitoring strategy for Burnham Beeches](#) and specifically relates to recreation mitigation work. The report aims to establish a prioritised list of measures and set out further detail as to how they would work and fit into a long-term monitoring 'package'.

Existing monitoring

- *Incident log*
- *Transects counting dog faeces*
- *Visitor interviews*
- *Visitor distribution*
- *Tree health and condition*
- *CER Ranger patrol time and engagement*

Proposals for new monitoring

The new monitoring actions (see table below) will be undertaken alongside the existing monitoring listed above. The new monitoring actions will commence in May 2024, starting with path condition surveys to provide a baseline to work from in following years. Most other actions, except for the soil sampling, will be started in 2024 and some will be undertaken with help from volunteers. The CER will put together a plan to outline when each action will be completed, who they will be done by and the deadlines for reporting.

New monitoring actions:

Monitoring action	Done-by	1 st year to be undertaken	Frequency
a. Report and spreadsheet structure	Staff	2024	Annual
b. Path condition survey	Staff	2024	Repeated every other year
c. Follow-up monitoring path management/interventions	Staff	2024	Annual
d. Additional fixed-point photography of paths outside of RAG areas	Staff	2024	Repeated every other year
e. Soil sampling	Staff or volunteers and laboratory	2025	Repeated every 5 years
f. Vegetation wear on common	Staff or volunteers	2024	Annual
g. Species monitoring	Staff or volunteers	2024	Annual

Project 6: Production of access plan/carrying capacity study

- A [review of sustainable visitor numbers at Burnham Beeches \(Liley et al. 2022\)](#) was commissioned from Footprint Ecology to identify what level of recreation use at Burnham Beeches might be sustainable in the long term and what steps might be necessary to achieve this level of recreation: this is being used to inform the new visitor access strategy.
- A draft of a new Sustainable Visitor Access and Mitigation Strategy is in progress, with completion expected 24/25 with the final document produced by Footprint Ecology.

PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25

Project 1 priorities

No action planned for 2024/25.

Project 2 and 3 priorities

- To continue regular patrols, aiming to encourage positive outcomes on the reserve through regular one-to-one engagement and delivery of core messages. This will include weekend and out-of-hours patrols.
- To carry out regular visitor monitoring, including car park counts, visitor behaviour transects, dog transects and 'flag the poo' transects. This will be used to inform work programming and help assess the impact of CER action.
- To keep accurate records of patrol engagement and outreach using Survey123, including a qualitative assessment of their impact, amending work programming as required.
- To continue developing and trialling core messages and materials tackling the main issues caused by visitor activities.
- To visit more SAMMS projects to learn from their experience of developing and delivering similar campaigns. These visits will include various Wildlife Trust sites, Ashridge estate and Epping Forest. This will enable us learn from and provide information to others managing discreet sites/nature reserves who will have a similar aim to our project.
- To develop and undertake more regular on- and off-reserve activities that deliver campaign messaging.
- To support the above with regular social media posts reflecting the spectrum of visitor/recreation related pressures affecting Burnham Beeches and creating context for mitigation measures.
- To build on existing partnerships and create new partnerships with site owners/managers of alternative green spaces to find ways to promote their sites to new residents that complement each site's objectives, prioritising those sites closest to the two major developments, Huntercombe Walk and Wilton Park.
- To work with schools and community points close to Burnham Beeches and/or developments suitable for outreach activities.
- To keep records of and monitor all engagement activities, adjusting work priorities accordingly.
- Continue to carry out practical work as in 23/24 as opportunities arise, working alone and with volunteers.
- Work with the other staff and visitor data to draw up a map of which paths should be retained and prioritise closures and measures to encourage visitors to use particular paths, and use this to plan future practical work.
- Investigate ways to waymark desired routes.
- Liaison with information team regarding routes of any trails produced.
- To continue to dismantle dens and engage with public, as required.
- To log locations and take pictures of dens, and a) target information and b) work with the Conservation Officer to agree removal of decaying materials to less accessible areas of the reserve.

- To work with the Ranger team to ensure a consistent approach.
- Further development of ancient tree and deadwood resources with:
 - Taxidermy specimens, such as an owl or woodpecker, to raise interest.
 - Bowls made from different woods, containing the relevant nuts or berries that help support wildlife on the Reserve.
 - Duplicate treasure boxes, for use with school groups.
 - Note cards for the treasure box, to enable other staff or volunteers to use the display.
- Development of displays and materials highlighting seasonal issues for use on pop up patrols, such as information on responsible dog walking, disturbance of ground nesting birds and reptiles.
- Continue and consolidate activities and events that continue to educate visitors to the nature reserve.
- Move more walk and talks onto surrounding areas.
- Use weekends for pop up patrolling at various locations at Burnham Beeches using the cargo bike.
- Offer frequent or repeat youth and school group visits and offer support at a green space closer to them.
- Promoting the Cocksherd Wood to Burnham route to the residents of Berkeley Place.
- Follow up on Burnham Parish Council walks.
- Further exploration of the area to the south of Huntercombe Walk, looking at areas of accessible green space identified on Natural England's green infrastructure map and looking for routes down to the Thames Path.
 - If these exist, production of a leaflet or other resource promoted via the Parish Council, local library, community centre/hub/Facebook group and directly to Huntercombe Walk and other developments in the Burnham sector.
- Linking Huntercombe Walk initiatives with any work by the Slough CER.
- Further fieldwork to identify the best circular routes from Farnham Common, Farnham Royal, Hedgerley and Stoke Poges.
- Liaison with Buckinghamshire Council to resolve any access or waymarking issues along these routes.
- Liaison with Portman-Burtley to improve waymarking of any permissive sections of these routes.
- Promotion of the circular walking routes and local green spaces via parish websites, local community centre/hub/Facebook group and walks in the Beeches' events programme.
- Promotion of the above directly to new developments in this sector, e.g. by flyer.
- Working with the information team to resolve difficulties in making resources available through the City of London website.
- Hold a session at a nature reserve local to 1st Holtspur Scouts/Beavers/Cubs.
- Support sessions for the Hedgerley Scouts/Cubs in woods at the back of the Scout hut (which they already use).
- Run a series of sessions at Farnham Common Junior School with each year group and help the children use their school outside space to create better wildlife habitats in the grounds.
- Work with Farnham Common Infant School at their local greenspaces where activities such as den building and bug hunts can be conducted whilst being taught about the importance of being respectful.
- Maintain links with SCCAMP and other SAMMs projects.
- Attend annual mitigation conferences.
- Maintain and grow links with Buckinghamshire Council Country Parks' Team, with particular reference to opportunities to link with development of the new South Bucks Little Country Park and the possible redevelopment of Little Marlow Lakes Country Park as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.
- To carry out outreach work to reach new residents, building a relationship with the Huntercombe Walk and Wilton Park developments.
- To develop a flexible welcome pack that can be modified and targeted to both the large and the individual developments across the zone of influence.
- To trial ways to reach the developments of one or two individual properties.

Project 4 priorities

No action planned for 2024/25.

Project 5 priorities

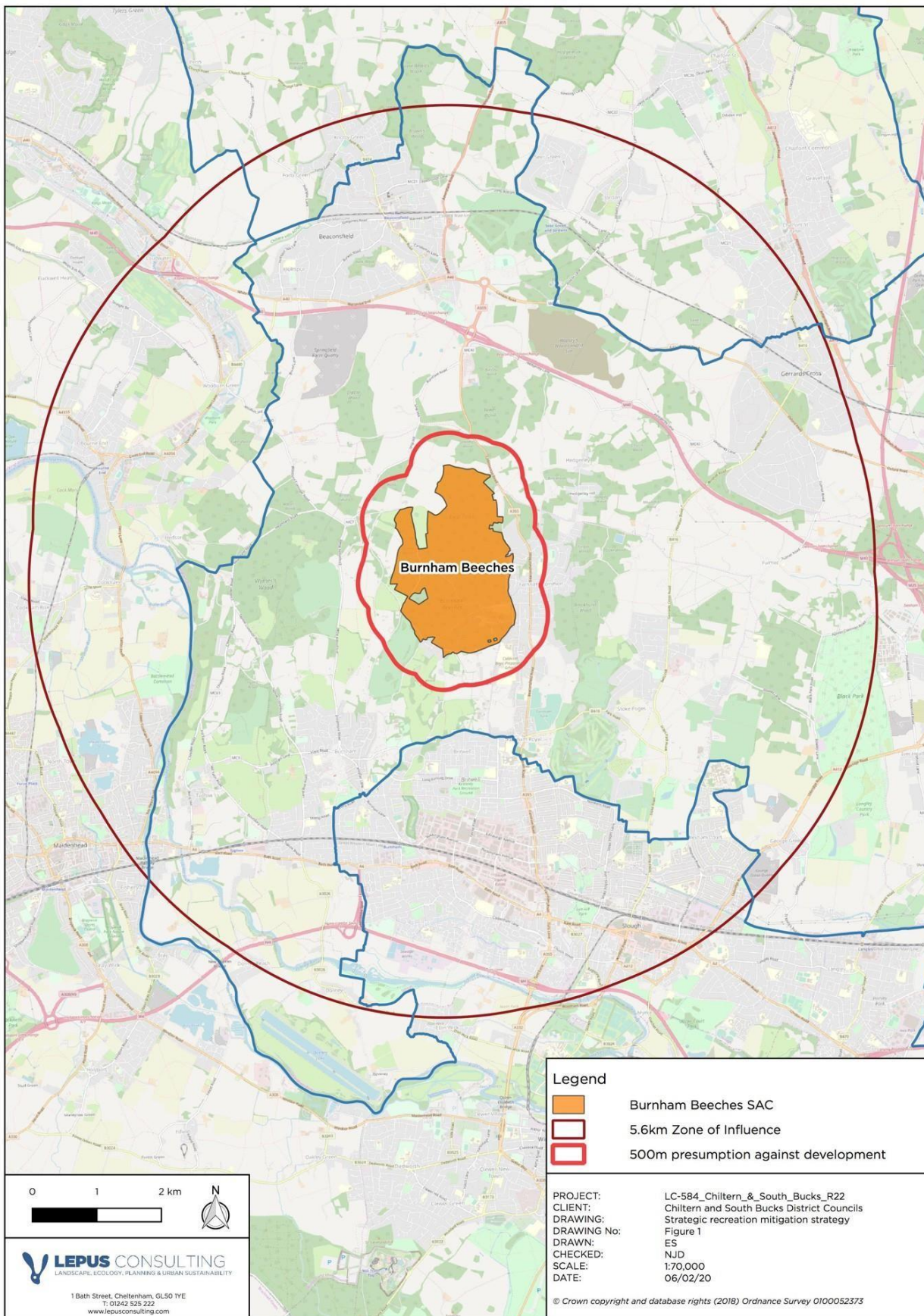
- Produce a plan and timeline that blends exiting monitoring with the proposal identified in 23/24
- Identify what can be carried out by the CERs, what can be carried out by other staff or volunteers and what might require expertise from contractors.
- Start/carry out most new monitoring actions in 2024, except for the soil sampling which will commence in 2025.

Project 6 priorities

Further work on the Sustainable Visitor Access and Mitigation Strategy will be undertaken, bringing together and summarising the effort and actions to date that aim to manage and/or reduce visitor impacts. It will refer to the SAMMS and the CERs and mitigation activities. The strategy will also aim to identify further options should visitor impacts be shown, despite the mitigation measures of Projects 1-3, to be negatively impacting the SAC.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Zones of influence around Burnham Beeches



Appendix B – Strategy Projects and Costs, from Burnham Beeches SAMMS supplementary planning document.

Project Description	Unit Cost	Frequency	Funding Duration (prices provided in perpetuity based on 80 years)	Occurrence over 80 years	Total Cost	Rationale and justification
Project 1: Provision of electronic interpretation	£17,000.00	Once every 10 years	2020/21 - 2100/01	8	£136,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bespoke interpretation to help visitors during their visit to better understand the consequences of their actions. Information will be linked electronically to visitor location. This will allow visitors to understand the areas within which they are walking. For instance, information will be provided to indicate 'dog on lead' areas or sensitive trees etc. ➤ This is an area where there is currently no provision but where future provision is required to mitigate additional impacts from Local Plan development.
Project 2: Events and promotion of activities aimed specifically at raising public awareness of recreation pressure and alternative places to visit. This project will be implemented by additional Ranger resource (see project 3).	£2,800.00	Annually	2020/21 - 2100/01	80	£224,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Targeted Visitor events to improve visitor understanding of the pressures at Burnham Beeches and how these can be mitigated. ➤ Suitable events might include those aimed at dog owners or more general open days to explain the importance of the nature reserve and the work carried out to manage it. ➤ Prices assume one large or two smaller events per year. ➤ Costs are based on similar events hosted at Burnham Beeches and other local sites managed by the City of London Corporation.

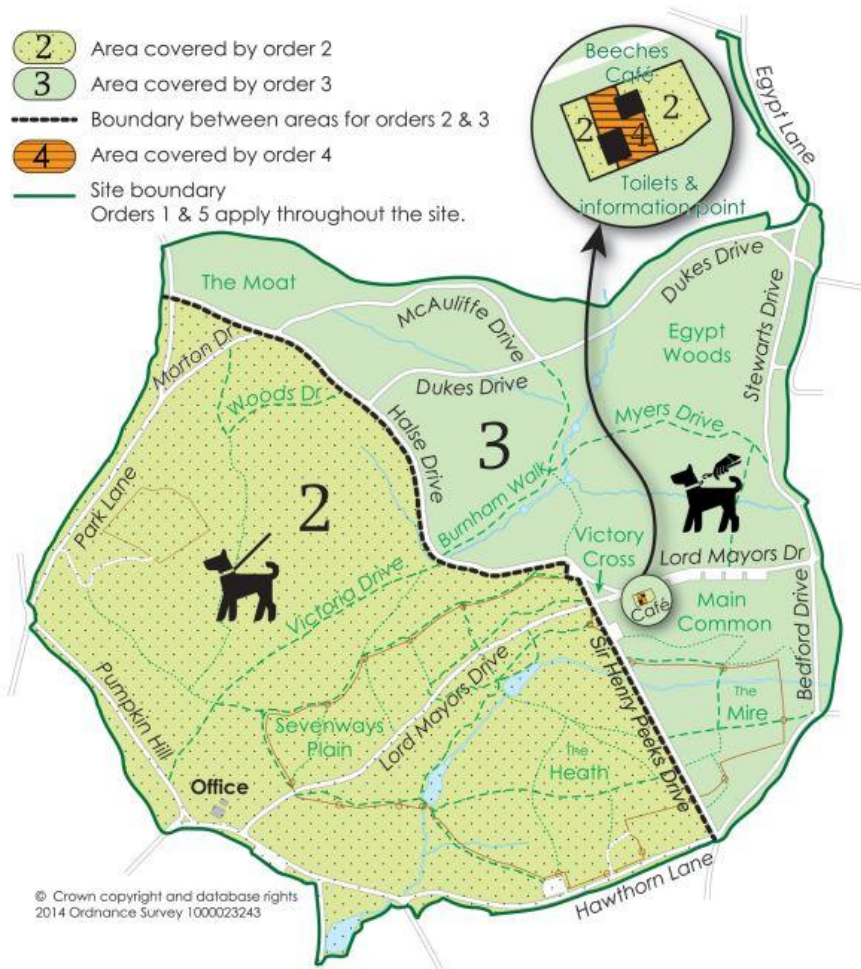
Project Description	Unit Cost	Frequency	Funding Duration (prices provided in perpetuity based on 80 years)	Occurrence over 80 years	Total Cost	Rationale and justification
Project 3: SAC Engagement Ranger/SAC Ambassador (new member of staff).	£52,118.00	Annually	2020/21 - 2100/01	80	£4,169,440.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ranger post to raise awareness of visitor impacts, including help with enforcement of Public Space Protection Orders, promotion of sustainable transport, responsible dog ownership, impact of recreation activities on wildlife to manage additional impacts from Local Plan development. ➤ This role may include community outreach, to schools and local events. ➤ This role will also ensure engagement with volunteers to help raise awareness of visitor impacts with additional visitor numbers from Local Plan. ➤ Costs are based on a full- time Ranger. Note: full time Ranger costs are based on Grade C post within City of London Corporation including all employee related costs e.g. uniform, training etc.

Project Description	Unit Cost	Frequency	Funding Duration (prices provided in perpetuity based on 80 years)	Occurrence over 80 years	Total Cost	Rationale and justification
Project 4: Visitor surveys (numbers & visitor activities).	£10,000.00	Every 10 years	2020/21 - 2100/01	8	£80,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visitor surveys will be undertaken to determine the total number of visitors and visitor use. This will target the additional visitors expected to be generated by development set out within the Local Plan. ➤ Surveys will help to inform future revisions of the mitigation strategy. ➤ Surveys will be delivered by external consultants. ➤ Practical work may be by staff, volunteers, or contractors.

Project Description	Unit Cost	Frequency	Funding Duration (prices provided in perpetuity based on 80 years)	Occurrence over 80 years	Total Cost	Rationale and justification
Project 5: Monitoring visitor impacts on soils and the ecology of the SAC.	£20,000.00	Every 10 years	2020/21 - 2100/01	8	£160,000.00	A provisional list of surveys is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Path condition survey. ➤ Follow-up monitoring of path management/interventions. ➤ Additional fixed-point photography outside of RAG areas. ➤ Soil sampling. ➤ Vegetation wear on common (annual) ➤ Species monitoring. ➤ Surveys will be conducted by staff, volunteers or contractors. ➤ Surveys will be reported on in a 10 yearly monitoring report.
Project 6: Production of access plan / carrying capacity study.	£15,000	1	2020/21 – 2021/22	1	£15,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Produce visitor access strategy for Burnham Beeches including an assessment of visitor carrying capacity.
Total for 80 years					£4,784,440.00	

Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy		Mitigation Total		Projected number of new homes	Cost to each Home
		Total	£4,784,440.00	2,364	£2,023.87
P1	£136,000.00				
P2	£224,000.00				
P3	£4,169,440.00				
P4	£80,000.00				
P5	£160,000.00				
P6	£15,000.00				

Appendix C – Map of Burnham Beeches showing areas covered by either order 2 (dogs on leads), order 3 (dogs on lead by direction), or order 4 (dogs exclusion area) of the Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to dog walking.



Order 1: Foulings by dogs

Please make sure you pick up all poo that your dog drops, wherever you are in Burnham Beeches. Please also ensure that you dispose of it properly by using one of the bins provided or taking it home.



Order 2: Dogs on leads

If you are in the areas marked 2 on the map you must keep your dog on a lead no longer than 5m in length.



Order 3: Dogs on leads by direction

Dogs must be under effective control at all times in Burnham Beeches. If your dog is off a lead in the area marked 3 on the map and an authorised officer judges that it is not under effective control, they will ask you to put it on a lead. Please make sure you always carry a lead (not more than 5m in length) when you walk your dog at Burnham Beeches.



Order 4: Dogs exclusion area

Please do not allow your dog to enter the no dogs area at the café (marked 4 on the map). If you have a recognised assistance dog because of a disability, you are exempt.



MAX 4

Order 5: Maximum number of dogs

Each dog walker can bring a maximum of four dogs onto Burnham Beeches at one time.

Appendix D – Burnham Beeches patrol monitoring using Survey123.

10:27 Thu 11 Apr

Patrol Monitoring Data

Name of individual filling in this form *

Location of patrol *

Date of patrol *

Start time of patrol *

End time of patrol *

Pick the options that best describe the weather conditions during the patrol:

- Raining
- Cloudy
- Sunny
- Very sunny
- Hot
- Cool
- Windy
- Hailing
- Snowing

Did you dismantle any dens? *

Yes

No

How many visitors did you engage with? *

How many people were spoken to (full conversation).

Did you dismantle any dens? *

Yes

No

How many dens did you dismantle? *

1 10

How many visitors did you engage with? *

How many people were spoken to (full conversation).

How many visitors did you greet? *

E.g., Hello/good morning/good afternoon etc.

0 50

How many negative behaviours did you witness that weren't addressed? *

This could be due to the visitor being too far away etc. This should be 1 per negative behaviour.

0 1 20

What and how many negative behaviours were witnessed?

Please pick which negative behaviours were witnessed during the patrol and how many of each.

	1	2	3+
Dog off lead in area 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What and how many negative behaviours were witnessed?

Please pick which negative behaviours were witnessed during the patrol and how many of each.

	1	2	3+
Dog off lead in area 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog not under effective control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cyclist off tarmac roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horse rider off tarmac roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Littering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog in cafe exclusion area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Owner not picking up after dog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More than four dogs brought onto the reserve with one person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foraging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Den building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fouling left (bagged or not)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BBQ debris	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire debris	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quad bikes/other vehicles on site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-authorized filming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climbing ancient trees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional comments about the patrol

Appendix E – Burnham Beeches patrol engagement using Survey123.

Note: when some topics of conversation are chosen, e.g., PSPOs, another question will appear asking whether the visitor was aware of the rules before the conversation.

10:27 Thu 11 Apr

Burnham Beeches Patrol Engagement

Name of individual filling in this form *

Jordan.Payne_CoL

Location of interaction

Date and time of interaction *

How many people did you interact with? *

Eg., Was there one person in the group or five?

1 10

What was the main topic of conversation? *

Select one.

General information about BB/SC e.g., history of site, management etc.

Wildlife

PSPO issued

Information about the dogs on lead areas

Information about the dogs off lead areas

Dog fouling

Information about dogs under effective control

Information about maximum number of dogs per person

Specific directions around BB/SC

Soil erosion & trampling

Information about other green spaces in the surrounding areas

Information about CERs e.g., what is being surveyed.

Litter

Livestock

Information Point

Cycling

✓

10:27 Thu 11 Apr

Burnham Beeches Patrol Engagement

Cycling

Events

Horse riding

Cafe

General chat - about weather, walkers' dog, etc.

Other

Please tick if there was any other topic(s) of conversation had during the interaction.
Select multiple if necessary.

General information about BB/SC e.g., history of site, management etc.

Wildlife

PSPO issued

Information about the dogs on lead areas

Information about the dogs off lead areas

Dog fouling

Information about dogs under effective control

Information about maximum number of dogs per person

Specific directions around BB/SC

Soil erosion & trampling

Information about other green spaces in the surrounding areas

Information about CERs e.g., what is being surveyed.

Litter

Livestock

Information Point

Cycling

Events

Horse riding

Cafe

General chat - about weather, walkers' dog, etc.

Other

✓

10:28 Thu 11 Apr

Burnham Beeches Patrol Engagement

Did you give any leaflets to the visitor(s)? *

Yes

No

How many leaflets did you give the visitor(s)? *

Which leaflets did you give to the visitor(s)? *

BB Map

Walking your dog at BB

Events Guide

Historical Trail

Geological Trail

Cycling / Horse riding

Wood Pasture

Pollards

Heathland

Fungi

Dead / Decaying wood

Vision

Grazing

Dog fact sheet

Other

Has the visitor(s) been spoken to by a ranger before? *

Yes - already once today

Yes - on another day

No

Don't know

Was the visitor aware of the wildlife value of BB/SC? *

Yes

✓

- Dog fact sheet
- Other

Has the visitor(s) been spoken to by a ranger before? *

- Yes - already once today
- Yes - on another day
- No
- Don't know

Was the visitor aware of the wildlife value of BB/SC? *

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Was the visitor(s) receptive to the key message? *

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- No key message mentioned

How was the interaction with the visitor(s)? *

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

Did the visitor state any positive remarks?

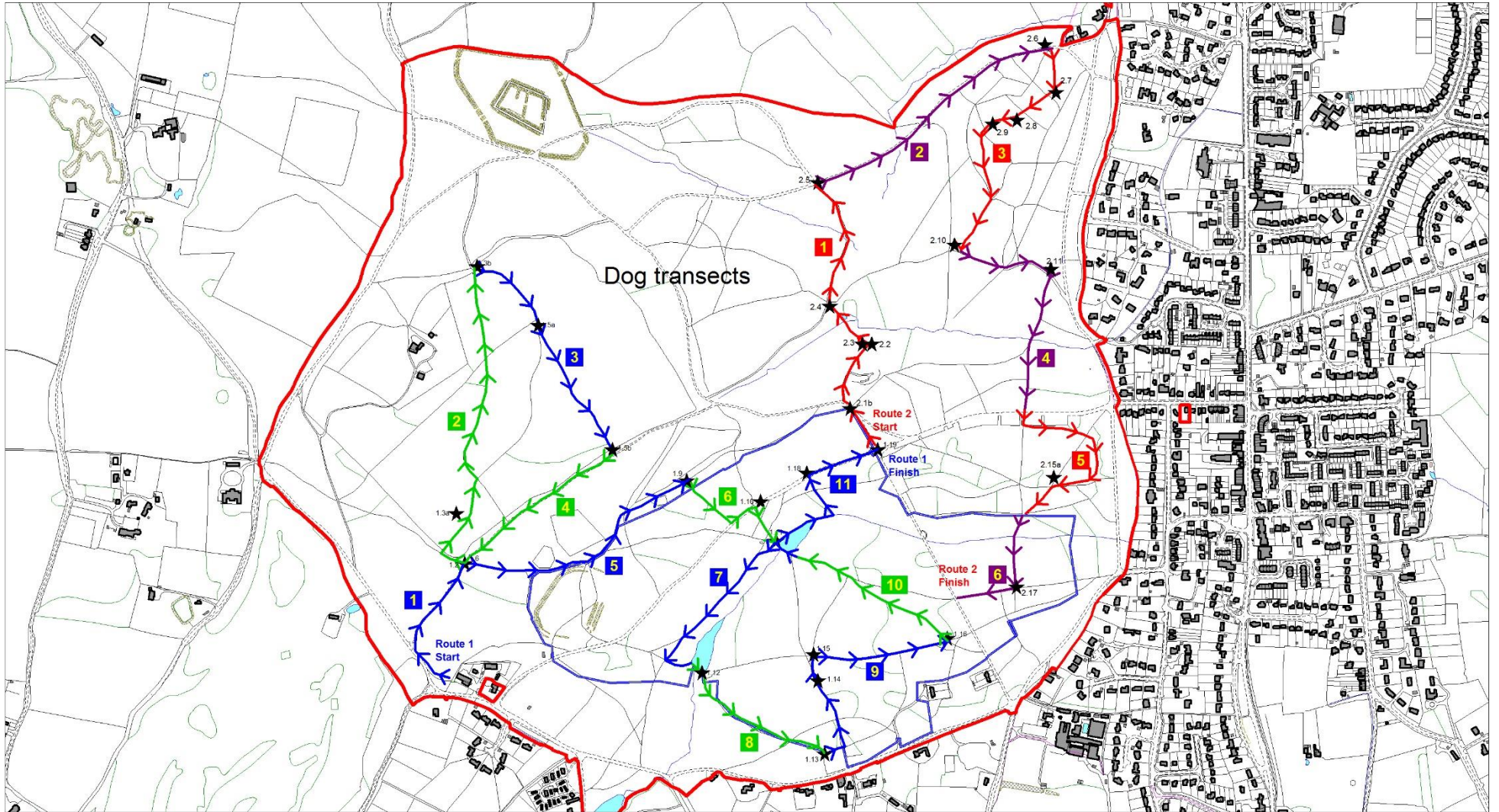
I.e. about the management of the reserve, if we have been nice etc.

Is there anything else important about the interaction not captured in other questions?



page 79

Appendix F - Map of Burnham Beeches showing both dog transect areas. Route 1 covers those areas where dogs are required to be on lead. Route 2 covers those areas where dogs are required to be on lead if requested but must always be under effective control.



Appendix G – Map of ‘Flag The Poo’ areas at Burnham Beeches highlighted in yellow.



This page is intentionally left blank



BURNHAM BEECHES PROGRESS UPDATE REPORT

SECTION 106 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

YEAR 2 (APRIL 2023 - APRIL 2024)



Contents

1 Introduction to Burnham Beeches	3
2 Slough Heat and Power Development 106	4
2.1 Project overview	4
2.2 Budget	4
2.3 Project outline and progress	5
3 Horlicks Quarter Mitigation Strategy	6
3.1 Project overview	6
3.2 Budget	6
3.3 Project outline and progress	7
3.3.1 Patrols	7
3.3.2 Monitoring	9
3.3.3 Practical mitigation	12
3.3.4 Message and resource development	15
3.3.5 Events and activities	20
3.4 Work outside the reserve	21
3.4.1 Fieldwork and liaison around Slough	21
3.4.2 Events and activities	22
3.4.3 Schools and youth groups	23
3.5 Links with other similar projects	24
3.6 Training and development	24
3.7 Visitor surveys	24
3.8 Monitoring visitor impacts on soils and the ecology of the SAC	25
4 Priorities for 2024/25	26
4.1 Work in and for Burnham Beeches	26
4.1.1 Monitoring	26
4.2 Work in and for Slough	27
5 Appendices	28

1 Introduction to Burnham Beeches

In 2005, Burnham Beeches, a primarily wooded area in southern Buckinghamshire, was designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Burnham Beeches was designated as a SAC to protect the 'beech forest on acid soil' habitat, and the mosses, lichens, insects and other invertebrates found on and within its ancient trees which are of European importance. All SACs are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations (2017), providing these areas the highest degree of protection available in law.



Image 1. Burnham Beeches, Special Area of Conservation, National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The northern part of the SAC is private woodland, only accessible by public footpaths and a small number of permissive paths. The southern part, Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve (NNR), is a Public Open Space owned and managed by the City of London Corporation as a charity. There are multiple habitats within the nature reserve, including wood pasture, heathland, grassland, mire and valley mire, ponds and streams.

To protect the nature reserve, Burnham Beeches NNR is managed through a series of 10-year management plans, drawn up with and consented by Natural England. The current [Burnham Beeches management plan](#) runs from 2020 to 2030.

Although only 220 ha (approximately one square mile), the nature reserve receives approximately 600,000 visits each year, with an estimated 35-40% of those visits bringing at least one dog. The nature reserve is extremely vulnerable to damage from overuse as well as from external stresses such as drought, fire or pollution.

Evidence from Footprint Ecology ([Report: Urban Development and Burnham Beeches SAC](#)) acknowledged that additional visitors to Burnham Beeches NNR, generated through additional local housing development, will harm the integrity of the SAC. To alleviate the projected impact, no new dwellings are permitted within 500 m of the boundary of the SAC. All new developments in the former South Bucks District Council area within a 5.6 km 'zone of influence' (see Appendix A for map) of the SAC are required to make a financial contribution to Buckinghamshire Council which is transferred to the City of London Corporation to be spent on mitigation to protect the nature reserve from additional damage by visitors.

Slough Borough Council does not have a local plan nor a separate mitigation strategy and therefore mitigation for the impact of additional visitors to Burnham Beeches as a result of housing development within the borough has been on a case by case basis and tied to individual developments.

A Section 106 (s106) agreement, also known as Planning Obligations, is a legal agreement that ensures a local community (in this instance Burnham Beeches SAC) is unaffected by any developmental prospects. To date there are two s106 agreements linked to particular developments at Slough Power Station and the Horlicks Quarter. Both have provided funding for two separate projects (detailed below) seeking to limit possible negative impacts of those developments on Burnham Beeches SAC.

2 Slough Heat and Power Development 106

2.1 Air quality monitoring project overview

Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve received £10,791.31 from Scottish and Southern Electricity through a section 106 agreement with Slough Borough Council. This was as a result of extensive upgrading and modernisation work occurring at the Power Station on Slough Trading Estate. The sum of money received was to be spent on air quality in relation to Burnham Beeches. Discussions were had with Natural England and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), as well as Slough Borough Council in order to decide how to spend this funding to the best effect.

Each SAC has a site improvement plan listing features that might threaten the integrity of the nature reserve. Where there are some concerns over nitrogen deposition (as with Burnham Beeches), Natural England recommend that a Shared Nitrogen Action Plan (SNAP) is produced. Currently plans for SNAPS at several SACs are in progress but none have been completed. Following guidance from Natural England it was decided to use the s106 funding to start the first steps towards producing a SNAP. Previous measurements of nitrogen levels are rather out of date so in order to start this process, more measurements were desirable. Therefore, it was agreed that the best use of the funding would be to monitor ammonia and nitrogen dioxide at as many sites as possible within the budget for a year, and then collate the available information and to produce an up to date report regarding levels of nitrogen in and around the SAC. Opportunity was taken to add some Burnham Beeches local risk funding to slightly expand the project (see below).

2.2 Budget – 2022/24

Description	Cost
1 year of ammonia monitoring on four sites	£7470
1 year of nitrogen dioxide monitoring for four sites	£2419.59
Administration and production of final report by CEH	£6,077.71
Total	£15,973.30

Breakdown of funding	Total
Funding from Slough S106 (including inflation)	£10,791.31
Contribution from Burnham Beeches local risk budget	£5181.99

2.3 Project outline and progress

Monitoring started in June 2022 and continued until the end of May 2023 when CEH analysed the data and produced a report. This also incorporated other available information.

Four monitoring points for ammonia were set up and four monitoring points for nitrogen dioxide (as shown in image 2). In addition, Burnham Beeches has one location in the National Ammonia Monitoring Network, so this provided additional information. Some of the ammonia and nitrogen dioxide samplers are co-located, and others are separated out. Locations included areas where previous information indicates that there may be concern over nitrogen levels; others were placed in areas where levels might be expected to be lower. As the SNAP will cover the whole SAC, some of the monitoring sites are located on land owned by the Portman Estate, with their permission.



Image 2. Map showing the locations of the monitoring points across the SAC.

As an additional part of the project, Burnham Beeches has taken the opportunity to place monitoring points in the area where there are the best populations of rare lichens (lichens are known to be very sensitive to air quality). There was an ammonia and nitrogen dioxide monitoring point at about head height, which is the level at which most of the rare lichens have been found, and another situated high up in the canopy of trees to see how the nitrogen levels differ, and if the trees are filtering out some of the pollutants.

In order to maximise the amount of data available, and to include the monitoring points in relation to lichens, we were able to add some local risk funding to the budget in 2022/23. Because the costs of each air quality sampler decrease with the number of samples taken, it was considered worthwhile to add some extra monitoring points if possible.

Lichens can also be used to evaluate levels of nitrogen at a much coarser level, using an observational method looking at species found on the trunks of trees and their twigs. The Burnham Beeches Ecovolunteer group and some staff have received training from Plantlife and it is this method is being used to look at the lichens across Burnham Beeches, focusing especially on areas where the air quality samplers are located. This is something that could be repeated in future years.



Image 3. Ammonia and nitrogen dioxide being monitored at a single point.

The final report found that the levels of nitrogen dioxide and ammonia are generally lower than anticipated. When evaluating the levels of nitrogen by looking at species of lichen, this indicated that the air quality is more heavily polluted. The difference in these results could be due to a legacy effect. A webinar was held to discuss the results of the air quality levels and lichens, and now there are discussions ongoing with Natural England on what the next steps are as it is likely a SNAP is not as high of a priority as previously thought.

3 Horlicks Quarter Mitigation Strategy

3.1 Project overview

With no local plan, nor formally agreed mitigation strategy for Burnham Beeches regarding development within the Slough Borough Council area, the potential impact of each planning application is considered separately. In 2020 a large development on the former Horlicks factory by Berkeley Homes was approved following agreement to fund a community engagement Ranger to mitigate the impact from residents visiting Burnham Beeches. The aim of this post is to help residents engage with their local public open spaces and educate visitors to Burnham Beeches about negative impacts of recreation. An additional obligation was for the developer to provide an information pack for residents giving information about public open space in the Slough area.

Payment was not required from the developer until the initial residents began to occupy the new dwellings and City of London Corporation received this from Slough Borough Council in July 2022.

The SAMMs Community Engagement Ranger (CER) was appointed in January 2023. The Community Engagement Ranger will be responsible for delivering multiple projects. The objectives of this post are:

1. To raise awareness of visitor impacts/impacts of recreation activities on wildlife.
2. To help enforce Public Spaces Protection Orders and promote responsible dog ownership.
3. To manage additional impacts from local development (Horlicks Quarter) by providing information to residents on other green spaces in Slough to visit.
4. To engage with volunteers to help raise awareness of visitor impacts and promote volunteering opportunities at Burnham Beeches.

It is worth noting that there are two CERs at Burnham Beeches. The additional CER is funded by Buckinghamshire Council from payments made by various developments across the former South Buckinghamshire district. Both Rangers are employed by the City of London Corporation and are based at the Burnham Beeches office. They work closely together, with the relevant officer taking responsibility for outreach work in their respective local authority areas. They will support each other delivering their respective work programmes – each has different skills and will, as a result, bring more benefits to the delivery of both schemes/agreements than possible working as a lone CER.

The Buckinghamshire CER left the post at the end of January 24 due to personal reasons. As of April 1 2024, the vacant Buckinghamshire position was filled by the Slough CER. The vacant Slough CER position has subsequently been filled and the new CER started in their new position on April 15 2024. This means that the slough CER post was vacant for just 14 days.

3.2 Budget

The s106 contribution collected must cover expected expenditure for five years of hiring a full-time ranger and project delivery. The five year agreement, ending in 2028, totals £264,696.91. This figure is an indexed starting figure from SBC dated April 2022 i.e. original figure of £242,111+

6.5% to reflect any passage of time since the agreement was made prior to the appointment of the post. The 2.5% indexing is included in the figures below from Year 2 onwards.

Recruitment of the full-time ranger post began 09/2022 with employment beginning 16/01/23.

NB: Actual total spend in 12 months of 2023/24 = £47,380.67

Year	Spend	Year 1* Breakdown (23/24 + 2.5 months of 22/23)	Spend
1*	£50,188	CER Salary - 2.5 months 2022/23	£8654.55
2	£51,443	CER Salary - 12 months 2023/24	£46,661.84
3	£52,729	Total salary cost - 14.5 months	£55,316.39
4	£54,047	CER recruitment 2022/23	£437.05
5	£55,399	Other staff costs - (equipment/phones/training/uniform) 22/23	£2160.49
Total	£264,696.91	Other staff costs - (equipment/phone/iPad/training/uniform) 23/24	£408.78
		Total CER Year 1* spend - (14.5* months)	£58,322.71
		Total project money still available for the remaining 4 years	£206,374.20

3.3 Project outline and progress

3.3.1 Patrols

Four regular patrol routes have been established, which are patrolled on different days and times each week. The schedule ensures equal coverage of the on-lead and off-lead areas.

Patrols are either undertaken with the Buckinghamshire CER or alone; these have been on foot or by e-bike. When on foot, the CER also deals with any litter; this not only has a positive practical impact (studies have shown that 2+ pieces of litter tends to attract additional litter) but also offers a talking point that leads into conversations about other issues affecting the reserve.

The most common reasons to intervene with negative behaviour on the reserve relate to breaches in the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs). Appendix B shows the PSPO

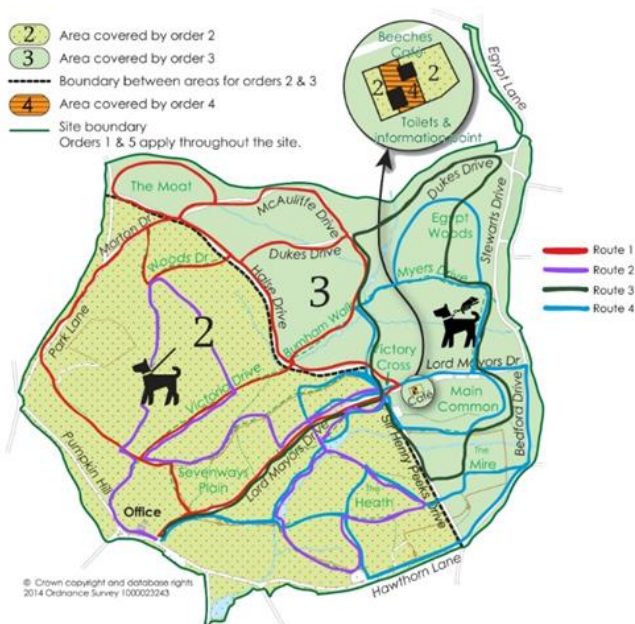


Image 4. Map of four patrol routes across Burnham Beeches.

areas. In these instances, visitors have been given verbal advice about the on and off lead areas and the fragility of the reserve, and maps/ supporting literature where needed. Where necessary, the CER has ensured dogs have been put on lead. All incidents are recorded immediately after the PSPO breach and later recorded on a central log with further action (formal letter or enforcement action) being authorised by the Head Ranger/Assistant Director, as required by the Burnham Beeches PSPO enforcement protocol.

Other interventions have related to:

- fires
- visitors approaching or feeding grazing livestock
- fungi picking
- off-road cycling
- quad bike incursion
- moving deadwood and den-building

Engagement has also included chatting or answering questions about wildlife, reasons for visiting or responding to particular needs such as giving directions. Where possible, core messages have been integrated into these conversations. As the CER's knowledge of the wider area has grown, it has also been possible to suggest other places visitors might enjoy visiting.

Over 99% of engagement has been positive, even when enforcing PSPOs.

Patrol engagement April 2023 to April 2024

- 296 hours and 25 minutes of patrol from 01/04/2023 to 09/01/2024 (manual/handwritten surveys).
- 66 hours and 27 minutes of patrol from 10/01/2024 to 31/03/2024 (surveying using Survey123).
- Total of 362 hours and 52 minutes of patrol from 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024.
- An average of 30 hours of patrol per month.

PSPO enforcement April 2023 to April 2024	
No. interventions by CERs	236
No. interventions by all team members	552

CERs have enforced 42.75% of the total number of PSPOs enforced by the whole Ranger team in 2023/24.

3.3.2 Monitoring

Patrol engagement

Version 3 of patrol monitoring includes the following:	Observations for 01/04/23 – 09/01/24
Number of visitors (the number of people seen at Burnham Beeches, including from a distance where there is no opportunity for engagement).	8288
Number of dogs (the number of dogs seen at Burnham Beeches).	2173
Visitors exhibiting positive behaviour (for example, a dog is on-lead in the on-lead area).	8041
Visitors exhibiting negative behaviour (for example, a visitor walking off the path).	281
Positive engagement with visitors.	2704
Negative engagement with visitors (for example, a conversation where the visitor disagrees with the Public Spaces Protection Orders).	6

The routes, frequency and monitoring of patrols has been evolving over the first year. Information from meetings with other SAMMS in 23/24 and data from existing transects has helped to inform the final procedures. Data in the key areas (as above) has been gathered on an ongoing basis, however from the 10th of January 2024, a new patrol monitoring system has been used (Appendix C). This new way of monitoring using Survey123 (an ArcGIS application) does not include the number of visitors or dogs seen, but records more information about the types of engagement, problems observed and mitigation. This method of monitoring also enables the CERs to monitor patrols in wet weather conditions and no extra time is needed to upload the data to a spreadsheet after the patrol. The CERs now use two surveys whilst on patrol:

- One that is monitoring the whole patrol which includes information such as date, time, weather conditions, location, number of visitors greeted, number of dens dismantled, and the number of negative behaviours witnessed (such as dog fouls not picked up).
- The second survey is more focussed on engagement when on patrol and records information about conversations with visitors (Appendix D). This survey records information such as the number of visitors interacted with, location, the main topic of conversation, whether the visitor was aware of a particular issue such as soil erosion, whether the visitor was aware of rules in place, and if the visitor was aware of the wildlife value of Burnham Beeches.

Patrol monitoring using Survey123:	Observations for 10/01/24 – 31/03/24
Number of visitors greeted (hello, good morning)	630
Number of visitors engaged with (full conversations had with visitors)	287
Number of negative behaviours witnessed (dog fouling not picked up, foraging)	81

It is clear from this first year of monitoring that the issues affecting the National Nature Reserve are only occasionally those of overtly negative behaviour such as graffiti, littering or aggressive dogs. Although there is an on-going issue with dogs being off-lead in the on-lead area, or being far from the paths, or not under effective control in the off-lead area, these represent a relatively small proportion of the dogs walked on the reserve. Damage seems to result largely from the volume of footfall in relation to the fragility of the Beeches and conversations indicate lack of visitor awareness and/or interest about the value of the reserve or consequences of overuse (47% of visitors spoken to since 10/01/24 were aware of the wildlife value of Burnham Beeches). Fewer than 1% of the visitors seen were walking through undisturbed vegetation with the majority being on some kind of existing trail. The main topic of conversation had with visitors was a general chat (33% of engagements since 10/01/24) which could be about the walker's dog, the weather or a catch up. The next most common topic of conversation was regarding PSPOs, whether that was discussing the rules or enforcing the rules (16% of engagements since 10/01/24).

The new monitoring technique will enable the CERs to adapt messaging and create materials specific to topics that visitors are unsure about, providing a more targeted approach to mitigation.

Other monitoring



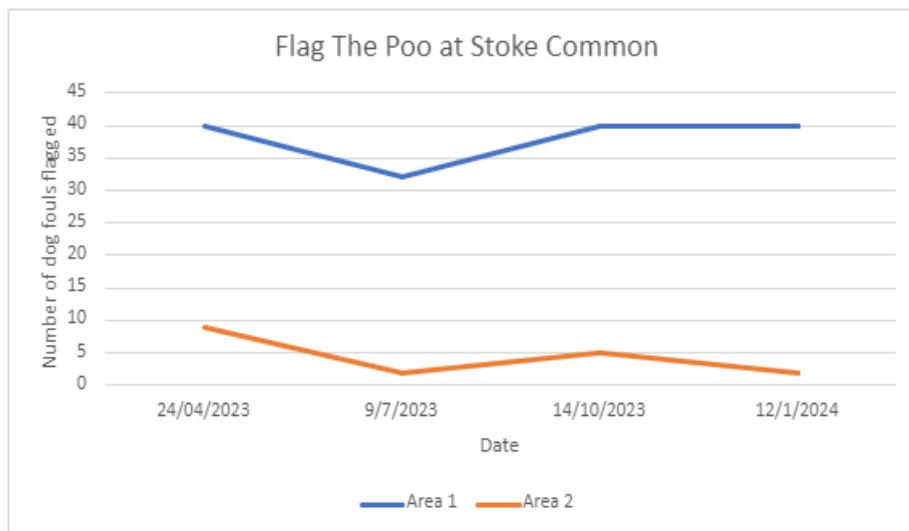
Image 5: 'Flag the Poo' sign board at the main entrance to Burnham Beeches. The board includes information about dogs and their fouls.

Two '**dog transects**' are carried out each month. These follow two set routes around the reserve (Appendix E), and count the number, gender mix and approximate age of visitors in each section of the route, the number of dogs and whether these dogs are on or off-lead. Data from 24 transects conducted by the CERs in 2023/24 adds to records dating back to 2015 and is used to inform the three-yearly review of Public Space Protection Orders. It will now also be used to also help assess the impact of the CER presence.

Three new '**flag the poo**' transects (counting the number of dog faeces left and placing flags next to them to raise awareness) have been established at Burnham Beeches: the first and second are along the two footpaths at the main entrance; the third is a stretch of path leading into Egypt Wood (Appendix F). The data from these transects, conducted quarterly, will add to the data collected from the two transects at Stoke Common and the two existing

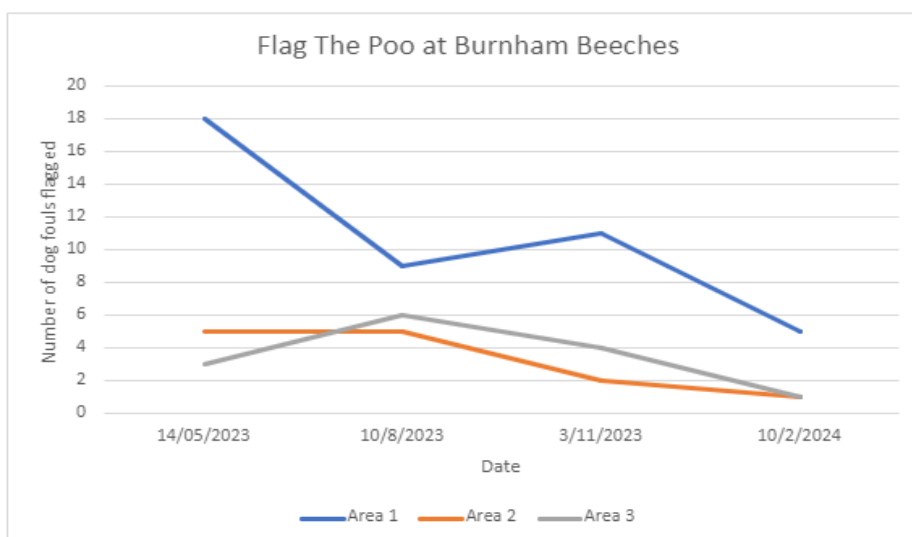
long-term dog poo transects which have shown a significant reduction in fouling in both the on-lead and off-lead areas.

In area 2 at Stoke Common, the number of fouls being flagged has decreased, however the number of fouls being flagged in area 1 has remained high since July 2023. This could be due to area 1 being the most common entrance used by visitors at Stoke Common. Further messaging needs to be created to help stop dog fouls being left.



The number of dog fouls flagged at Burnham Beeches has decreased since the start of Flag The Poo in May 2023.

Whilst conducting Flag The Poo at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, many visitors approach the CERs to ask questions about the flags and primarily how awful it is to see so many flags.



3.3.3 Practical mitigation

Trampling and erosion

One of the main issues affecting the reserve is the number of *desire lines* (tracks created by visitors walking the line that seems natural to them) that were created or widened over Covid lockdowns, when an estimated additional 250,000 visits were made to the Beeches. Many are continuing to widen as paths become muddy. As a result, vegetation and soil damage is occurring across the majority of the reserve.

Action included:

- Creating 5 dead hedges across the entry points to block desire lines off surfaced paths and protect vulnerable areas.
- Identifying further areas for the Burnham Beeches volunteers to dead-hedge to reduce path edge erosion.
- Creating informal path blocks using fallen or cut material
- Roping off particularly vulnerable areas for the winter months.
- Supporting practical action with signage and social media to explain why action is needed.
- Improvement of path sections so all main paths are clearly marked and accessible.

Recommendations

- Continue to carry out practical work as in 23/24 as opportunities arise, working alone and with volunteers;
- Work with the other staff and visitor data to draw up a map of which paths should be retained and prioritise closures and measures to encourage visitors to use particular paths, and use this to plan future practical work;
- Investigate ways to waymark desired routes;
- Integrate actions with the new monitoring proposals;
- Link with any trail information produced by the information team.



Image 6: This stretch of dead hedge protects an area of woodland damaged by visitors cutting through from one surfaced track to



Image 7: Winter ground conditions exacerbate the impact of footfall, hence some areas are closed.



Image 8: Blocking a desire line, helped by staff and students from Berkshire College of Agriculture.

Damage to decaying wood

Much of the ecological value of Burnham Beeches relates to the animals, plants, fungi and lichens that depend on decaying wood for part or all of their life cycles. The scarcity, diversity and number of these species was a factor in the designation of Burnham Beeches as a Special Area of Conservation, and the subsequent need for the SAMMS. It is therefore critical that there is mitigation action to protect the volume and quality of this habitat.

Dead and decaying wood is found in the ancient trees, in standing and fallen or felled dead trees, in habitat piles built of cut wood and in the fallen branches that have been left where they fell.

Damage to this habitat and the associated wildlife is caused mainly by visitors climbing on or in the ancient trees or by visitors moving sticks and logs, primarily to build dens.

Protecting ancient trees

The Beeches tree management programme already includes measures to deter visitors from getting too close to the ancient trees. These include creating barriers around vulnerable trees from cut material, or re-routing paths. The CER input has been primarily information-based.

In January 2024, however, the CERs created a solution to a particularly vulnerable tree; this was adjacent to a busy path and showing accelerated disintegration from the number of people standing in or on it for a 'selfie'. This temporary barrier will be replaced by a palisade fence, and may be used for other trees at high-risk.

Dens

Den building is seen as a fun, harmless activity, and is indeed promoted as a way to encourage families to enjoy being outdoors. It is, however, not appropriate at Burnham Beeches. Although the wood may appear to be undamaged, movement changes light and moisture conditions needed by the animals, plants, fungi and lichens that had colonised the wood in its original location.

Image 11. A dismantled den. Each den uses a large number of logs and sticks and causes severe localised habitat disruption.



Image 9. Decaying wood provides shelter and food for rare and endangered species.



Image 10. Protecting the 'Fairy Tree'.



It is therefore vital that action is taken to protect particularly vulnerable trees and that dens are spotted and dealt with promptly to raise awareness that this activity is not permitted.



Image 12. Some dens use fresh materials too. Many attract litter.



Image 13 and 14. The sticks used in this den were used to block a desire line. Friendly signage explains the importance of this habitat and asks visitors to leave it in place.



All the dens found have been dismantled and the wood either scattered around the surrounding habitat or built into a habitat pile. Where visitors have been seen building a den, the CER Ranger has explained the value of the wood and nature reserve to both the adults and the children, and encouraged them to help dismantle the den carefully and to try to replace the wood where they found it.

Prior to the creation and use of Survey123, the number of dens dismantled this year was not recorded formally, although it is estimated to be in the region of 25+, with 5 direct interventions with families. Since January with the use of Survey123, 13 dens have been dismantled and recorded, along with images and the locations of each den.

Recommendations

- To continue to dismantle dens and engage with public, as required.
- To work with the Ranger team to ensure a consistent approach.
- To log locations and take pictures of dens, and a) target information and b) work with the Conservation Officer to agree removal of decaying materials to less accessible areas of the reserve.

3.3.4 Message and resource development

In 22/23 the following key points were identified for on-site information/interpretation and integration into one-one conversations with visitors.

Core message	Simple supplementary information to increase understanding that Burnham Beeches is a National Nature Reserve
The number of visitors here is damaging the nature reserve	Burnham Beeches is one of the most important places for wildlife in Europe.
Stay on the main paths	The number of visitors is causing damage to soil structure: erosion and compaction is affecting the nature reserve.
Pick up after your dog	Nutrients impact on the nature reserve.
This is part of the nature reserve where dogs need to be on a lead at all times	The nature reserve is heavily used; the on-lead area is a 'safe space' not just for wildlife but for our many visitors who may not like dogs.
Always keep your dog in sight	Information about the variety of wildlife on the nature reserve that may be disturbed; impacts of fouling out sight.

In 23/24, the additional key points were added.

Core message	Simple supplementary information to increase understanding that Burnham Beeches is a National Nature Reserve
We understand you love being here and don't mean any harm.	This is one of the most important places in Europe for certain species and habitat. It is only one square mile, very popular, and the number of visitors puts it in danger of being loved to death.
Keep your dog alongside.	A dog doesn't have to chase wildlife to disturb it. Every time an animal is disturbed, it stops it from resting, feeding or breeding. This includes small birds, mammals and invertebrates you don't see.
Do not climb in or on the ancient trees.	There are things living in and around decaying wood that depend on it for all or part of their life cycle. Many are rare or endangered. The mix of species suggest these woods have been here since the Ice Age. They are only here because the habitat is so old. This is the 3 rd most important place in the UK for saproxylic species.
Leave logs and sticks on the ground. No den-building.	As above. Plus, once wood has been moved, the light and moisture conditions are not those needed by the things living there. It can never be put back in exactly the right place.

Do not approach or feed the cows or ponies.	These are working animals, not pets. They are helping the reserve become better for wildlife using a traditional method. They create a better mix of plants for wildlife than mowing or cutting. Plus safety and nutrition information.
No fires or BBQs; no litter.	The value of NNR, as above.

Over the course of the year, the CER has researched the facts and figures underpinning these statements to be able to construct meaningful 'arguments' to underpin information delivery. Information aims to be as specific as possible so that visitors understand not just what is required but also why restrictions or changes in behaviour are required and how these will benefit the nature reserve.



Image 15: Display ending with the core behaviours.

The majority of information materials produced this year have included the five core behaviours we want to encourage, aiming to establish a baseline awareness of appropriate behaviour.

The focus now is to:

a) make it easy for visitors to be aware of what is needed and how to comply. *Note: this work needs to be linked with practical measures; at present, for example, it is not always easy to tell which unsurfaced paths are the main paths.*

b) recognise the mismatch between visitor expectations (a park for recreation) and reality (a highly fragile and important area of conservation);

c) raise awareness and love of the things that make Burnham Beeches unique.

Note: this work supplements and overlaps with that of the existing information team.

The following approach is used for all resource development, from flyers to guided walks, to ensure that all action is meaningful.

Whilst some materials are purely informational, others are interpretative, aiming to link the visitor's experience with the needs of the reserve. All aim to incorporate:

- What** feature/species/ habitat is being impacted by a particular behaviour;
- Why** action is needed (usually why a particular feature/species/habitat is important);
- What** the threat is, e.g. trampling, disturbance, fire;
- How** visitors can help.

Displays at the information point

The information point is in the busy café area on the Main Common, and next to the toilet block. Although small, it has a display case, three notice boards and a leaflet rack. The display case and largest notice are available to the CERs for seasonal displays. Since the departure of the Buckinghamshire CER (who was responsible for the displays), the Slough CER has created a display to raise awareness on the issues of walking off path, cycling and horse riding off the tarmac roads and entering areas that are blue roped.

Image 16. Information point case display about the impacts of walking off path and why we blue rope areas.



Image 17. Information point display about the soil erosion and trampling.



Portable materials

In order to display information across the nature reserve in different areas and target a wider audience, a portable table was purchased. However, the table was difficult to carry on foot or by bike across the reserve. Therefore, a cargo bike was designed and purchased to solve this problem and help transport materials and displays to different parts of Burnham Beeches. The CERs aim to use the cargo bike regularly, especially during seasonal engagement weeks. The bike also enables the CERs to target specific problem areas and places where there is higher visitor pressure. The design shows visitors the various habitats within Burnham Beeches and highlights key aspects of the reserve such as the ancient pollards, decaying wood and fungi.

It was agreed that the most important areas to target through interpretative and information materials were the ancient trees and decaying wood. Although they are a highly visible part of the reserve, conversations with visitors suggest that understanding of their importance is minimal. The Buckinghamshire CER created a display to explore how the previous community use of Burnham Beeches created the



Image 18. Cargo bike.



Image 19. Ancient tree display.

ancient pollards. It details the value and variety of wildlife that depends on the old trees and the associated decaying wood.

Throughout the year, the CER has created multiple displays to highlight the wildlife at Burnham Beeches and the ways in which visitors can help us to protect the reserve. For autumn and winter engagement activities, a fungi display was created to explain what fungi is, the features of fungi, and the types of fungi that can be found at Burnham Beeches. The display also stated that fungi is not allowed to be picked at Burnham Beeches or Stoke Common.

The CER created a display about birds that can be found at Burnham Beeches and things visitors can do at home to help birds. This came about due to bird houses and bird food being left in Burnham Beeches and messages on the display

Image 21. A 'Building for birds' display at a Meet the Ranger event at Burnham Beeches.

A display on disturbance was created in time for spring engagement week 2024. The display included information about what can be disturbed at Burnham Beeches, why we have rules such as 'no drones' at Burnham Beeches and how visitors can help reduce disturbance at the reserve.

Image 22. A disturbance display created for spring engagement week 2024.

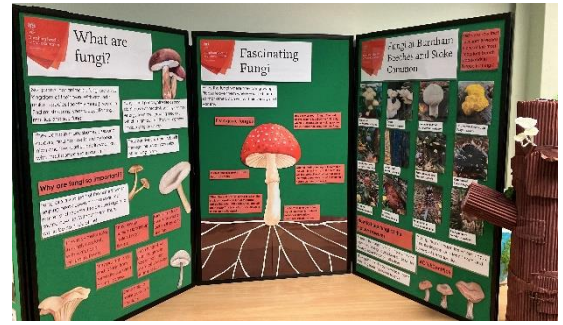


Image 20. A fungi display created by the Slough CER, also used for autumn/winter engagement to expand wildlife messaging.



Recommendations

- Development of displays and materials highlighting seasonal issues for use on pop up patrols, such as information on responsible dog walking, disturbance of ground nesting birds and reptiles.

Other materials

Temporary signs were created to target issues on the ground. Seasonal signs included grazing, fire and bird feeding while others supported practical mitigation work.

Image 23. This sign at a dead hedge explains the benefit of staying on the main path in this part of the reserve.

Image 24. An A5 child-friendly laminated sign has been left where dens have been frequently built. All bar one of these has remained in place without dens being rebuilt.



Social media and press work

The Slough CER has taken the lead for social media to promote positive recreational behaviour, highlight issues at Burnham Beeches and promote alternative destinations. This messaging aims to target those already visiting Burnham Beeches rather than attracting new visitors.

Image 25. Post-Christmas message, anticipating the seasonal rise in occasional visitors who may not be familiar with restrictions on the reserve.



Over the past year Burnham Beeches' social media has transformed from only information about the reserve to posts that are specific to mitigation aims (see image 25). The main aim of social media is to educate followers on how important Burnham Beeches is and how they can help protect the reserve. All social media platforms are monitored and information such as engagements, reach and impressions are recorded on a weekly basis. This enables the CERs to understand which types of post are performing particularly well in comparison to others. Facebook is used more frequently and all information is posted on Facebook (e.g., events as well as mitigation messages) in order to reach a more local audience and to prevent attracting visitors from further afield.

01/04/23 - 31/03/24	New Followers	Total Impressions	Total Engagements
X (Twitter)	37	53,363	1,388
Facebook	124	141,620	10,489
Instagram (Starting 06/23)	44	8,594	1,185

3.3.5 Events and activities

All events, walks and engagement weeks have a common aim of raising visitors' awareness on the importance of Burnham Beeches, educating visitors on how to visit Burnham Beeches respectfully to reduce disturbance (for example, sticking to the main paths or not building dens), and promoting other locations for visitors to explore. It is worth noting that the aim of these walks, events and engagement weeks is not to speak to as many people as possible or bring in more people to the reserve, but to instead talk to those who are already visiting and use Burnham Beeches on a regular basis.



Image 26. Crafting Creatures event during the summer engagement week 2023.

- Summer engagement week 2023 was the first engagement week conducted by the CERs. The aim of this week was to trial a range of low preparation activities and to assess the effectiveness of various pop-up locations. Activities during the week included a bug hunt, nature art using homemade clay and a space to take time in noticing nature which involved inviting visitors into a quiet area to sit down and listen to the natural sounds around them. Over the week, 216 engagements were made.
- Autumn engagement week 2023 focussed on highlighting the importance of ancient trees, decaying wood and fungi. This week tied in with National Tree Week and included multiple pop-ups with displays.
- Spring engagement week 2024 had a theme of disturbance to make visitors aware of the species (reptiles, ground nesting birds) coming out of hibernation or breeding, and the importance of keeping to the paths, especially at this time. The week brought together the whole Ranger team for various pop-ups with a display and for patrols. 88 people were engaged with over the week.
- The CER has recently started monthly dog walks for local visitors at the nature reserve. These 'Waggy Walks' started in January and aim to help dog walkers know which areas are on- or off-lead and understand why we have PSPOs relating to dog walking in place. The first walk was a great success with
- The CER has also been supporting the Buckinghamshire CER with activities and walks on the reserve such as for a bug hunt with a local infant school, a visit from a local junior school who explored the history of Burnham Beeches during World War II, and multiple visits from Beaver and Scout groups.

Recommendations

- Continue and consolidate activities and events that continue to educate visitors to the nature reserve.
- Move more walk and talks onto surrounding areas.
- Use weekends for pop up patrolling at various locations at Burnham Beeches using the cargo bike.
- Offer frequent or repeat youth and school group visits and offer support at a green space closer to them.

3.4 Work outside the reserve

The aim of CER work in the wider community is to reduce pressure on the National Nature Reserve by encouraging residents within the 5.6k zone of influence to make greater use of their local green spaces and rights of way.

It should be noted that CER focus on outreach differs between Buckinghamshire and Slough. Although each Ranger takes responsibility for initiatives within their respective local authority, they support each other on the presumption that residents of each development will benefit from green space use in both Buckinghamshire and Slough.

Within Slough, the 106 payment is exclusively from the development of the Horlicks Quarter; the Borough Council is investing in its existing green spaces to meet the needs of new residents. The Slough CER is targeting residents through work with the Quarter's concierge service, which provides a range of activities for residents, and through work with The Slough Hub.

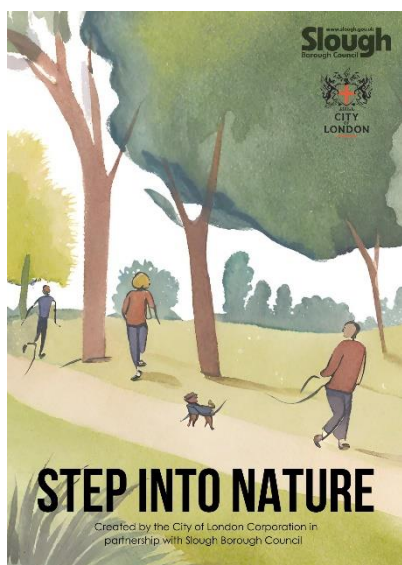
3.4.1 Fieldwork and liaison around Slough

The CER has remained in contact with the Slough Parks team to discuss volunteering opportunities in Slough, ways in which the CER can help them and also the progress of Upton Court Park as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). The CER also reached out to all three Slough Parish Councils (Britwell Parish Council, Wexham Parish Council and Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council). Further contact which involved an in-person meeting occurred only with Wexham Parish Council. The CER met with the Clerk to discuss opportunities for residents of Slough to join various walks and activities in and around their local greenspaces. The Clerk agreed to help promote any such activities on the 'Slough Borough Council' social media platforms. Much of the CERs work in Slough has been coordinated alongside The Slough Hub who are a not for profit social enterprise that aims to enhance the mental, physical and economic well-being of Slough residents. The Slough Hub work closely with part of the Horlicks Quarter due to being funded by Sovereign Housing Association who offer shared ownership in some of the properties at the Horlicks Quarter.

After extensive research in the first year of the project, the CER has familiarised themselves with the majority of the greenspaces in Slough. The CER has planned three walking routes through various greenspaces in Slough and has produced leaflets to showcase these walks. The CER visited 27 greenspaces in Slough and took photographs of each to be included in the [digital welcome pack](#) that has been produced for Horlicks residents. The digital welcome pack is a guide on the abundance of greenspaces on the doorsteps of the residents and provides a brief description of each greenspace including whether there is parking or toilets and it also states how long it would take the residents to get to each greenspace, whether that's by cycling, walking or using public transport such as the bus or train.



Image 27. A leaflet created by the CER to promote volunteering at Slough's greenspaces.



Step into nature with plenty of greenspaces on your doorstep!

Welcome to this exciting new guide on the abundance of greenspaces right on your doorstep at the Horlicks Quarter, Slough. Situated in the heart of Slough, this vibrant new development is surrounded by a plethora of green areas that are perfect for relaxation, recreation, and connecting with nature.

Using this guide, discover a variety of parks, nature reserves, and open spaces that are ideal for picnics, outdoor workouts, or simply unwinding after a long day.

A few things to bear in mind:

- Some of these greenspaces are a walkable distance away from the Horlicks Quarter. Other greenspaces might be better to travel to by bike or public transport. All transport options from the Horlicks Quarter to each greenspace will be highlighted in this guide using the icons below with timings specified.
- Distances of specific walks are typical walk lengths, not necessarily the longest walk possible.

Key to this guide:



STEP INTO NATURE

4.36 Kilometre Walking Route



Developed by the City of London Corporation in partnership with Slough Borough Council

55:52

Duration

4.36

Distance (km)

Image 28 and 29. 'Step into Nature' digital welcome pack on greenspaces in Slough for Horlicks residents.

Image 30. One of the leaflets promote a walking route through parks in Slough.

Recommendations

- Continue working with community groups in Slough to organise various walks, events and activities. Research other groups in Slough that may conduct similar activities to the CER.
- Keep in contact with Slough Parks to give and receive updates.
- Research and promote other walks around Slough, for example, routes around the Jubilee River.

3.4.2 Events and activities

It is worth noting that when attending events away from Burnham Beeches, the CERs have separate uniform that does not state 'Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common' on them so that members of the public aren't made aware of the nature reserves when it is not necessary.



Image 31. Stoke Poges Fete.

Both CERs attended the Stoke Poges fete, seeing this as an opportunity to work with the Friends of Stoke Common to direct local residents to the nearby heathland (also owned and managed by the City of London) within easy walking distance of the village. Care was taken to emphasise the nature value of this reserve and need to protect ground-nesting birds when visiting. 76 people were spoken with at the stall, including the local MP.



Image 32. Farnham Common Orchard Day.

Farnham Common Orchard Day was a chance to influence those living closest to Burnham Beeches, with the display emphasising both the positive and negative impacts of community use of the Reserve. The CERs spoke to 108 people, most of whom were overwhelmingly positive about the Beeches and mitigation efforts. The CER also spent time talking about community issues with other stall holders, including representatives of Farnham Royal Parish Council, Farnham Common School, the local Guides and Farnham Common Library.

The CER has planned and guided multiple walks for residents at the Horlicks Quarter alongside The Slough Hub, aiming to promote the use of Slough parks. From the end of September to the beginning of November 2023, four walks were planned around Slough's green spaces from the Horlicks Quarter. Due to bad weather conditions, only two walks went ahead and only 4 people in total attended. The CER has planned six more walks in spring 2024 where the weather should be better for more people to attend.

The CER attended the Horlicks Summer Party and had a stall/display which promoted various Slough parks, activities to do in the parks and volunteering opportunities. The CER spoke to 32 residents.

Other community events attended included a health initiative by the local GP surgery, a library coffee morning, and joining a 'Tilly's Trotters' walk (a new Simply Walk group coming to the Beeches each week).



Image 33. Advertisement for guided walks in spring 2024.

3.4.3 Schools and youth groups

The CER research all primary and secondary schools in Slough and sent an email to all of the primary schools to offer nature-based sessions at their school or in a nearby green space. The first school that responded to the offer was Cippenham School. The CER arranged to attend the school quarterly and teach the children about seasonal topics. The most recent session held in March was based around 'International Day of Forests' and the children were taught about what forests are, where they are in the UK and what can be found in UK forests. The CER then took the children outside in their school grounds to have a go at some bark and leaf rubbing. The 30 children thoroughly enjoyed their first session and the CER will be going back to the school during insect week at the end of June to continue these education sessions.

3.5 Links with other similar projects

Burnham Beeches are just one of many areas affected by visitor pressures. Efforts have been made over the year to learn from the experiences of others, and to begin to share our own.

Visits were made to three of the areas contacted in 2023: Thames Basin Heaths, the South Downs National Park and the Solent Special Protection Area (Bird Aware Solent). A return visit by members of the Thames Basin Heath team provided an opportunity to share our own experience. Although sharing experiences with other SAMMs projects has been extremely useful, the project at Burnham Beeches is very different to others. Burnham Beeches is a small nature reserve with a high density of visitors, whereas other SAMMs projects are working across multiple large areas so visitor numbers are more spread out. It also became apparent that the presence of a SANG has helped other projects immensely and reduced pressures to the highly valued nature sites.



Image 34. Visit to Thames Basin Heaths Partnership.

The CERs have joined SCCAMP (the Southern Counties Canine Access Management Partnership). As a result, the CERs are learning from and sharing experiences of dog control and ways to educate dog walkers about being responsible and respecting nature.

Recommendations

- Maintain links with SCCAMP and other SAMMs projects.
- Attend annual mitigation conferences.
- Liaise with those in charge of the SAMMs project at Ashridge Estate (National Trust) and organise visits there and at Burnham Beeches.
- Liaise with those in charge of the SAMMs project at Epping Forest and organise visits there and at Burnham Beeches.

3.6 Training and development

Training was targeted at opportunities to inform or deliver engagement work. The importance and diversity of saproxylic species is one of the reasons why Burnham Beeches is such an important site.

- One day course on the importance of dead and decaying wood.
- Causes of tree failure.

3.7 Visitor surveys

A major survey will be conducted every ten years to determine the total number of visitors and visitor use. The last detailed count of visitors to Burnham Beeches was carried out in 2015/16; it is planned to repeat this every 10 years to calibrate the automatic car counters. The next survey will be carried out in 2025 and will be led by the Buckinghamshire CER and the Slough CER will support. The external consultants will guide the work but the practical work will be carried out by staff, volunteers and/or contractors. One option under consideration is to use a

contractor to analyse data collected by mobile phones carried by visitors to replace some aspects of previously used methods. The Slough CER will also be involved in helping with a detailed visitor count for Upton Court Park, Slough in 2024.

3.8 Monitoring visitor impacts on soils and the ecology of the SAC

A monitoring strategy has been drawn up by Footprint Ecology, working with the Conservation Officer, Head Ranger and Community Engagement Rangers. It recommends a number of improvements to some of the existing monitoring and five new monitoring actions. [The report produced is a monitoring strategy for Burnham Beeches](#) and specifically relates to recreation mitigation work. The report aims to establish a prioritised list of measures and set out further detail as to how they would work and fit into a long-term monitoring 'package'.

Existing monitoring

- *Incident log*
- *Transects counting dog faeces*
- *Visitor interviews*
- *Visitor distribution*
- *Tree health and condition*
- *CER Ranger patrol time and engagement*

Proposals for new monitoring

The new monitoring actions (see table below) will be undertaken alongside the existing monitoring listed above. The new monitoring actions will commence in May 2024, starting with path condition surveys to provide a baseline to work from in following years. Most other actions, except for the soil sampling, will also be conducted in 2024 and some will be undertaken with help from volunteers. As this is a Buckinghamshire-funded project, the Buckinghamshire CER will lead and put together a plan to outline when each action will be completed, who they will be done by and the deadlines for reporting, and the Slough CER will be helping to deliver the monitoring.

New monitoring actions:

Monitoring action	Done-by	1 st year to be undertaken	Frequency
a. Report and spreadsheet structure	Staff	2024	Annual
b. Path condition survey	Staff	2024	Repeated every other year
c. Follow-up monitoring path management/interventions	Staff	2024	Annual
d. Additional fixed-point photography of paths outside of RAG areas	Staff	2024	Repeated every other year
e. Soil sampling	Staff or volunteers and laboratory	2025	Repeated every 5 years
f. Vegetation wear on common	Staff or volunteers	2024	Annual
g. Species monitoring	Staff or volunteers	2024	Annual

4 Priorities for 2024/25

4.1 Work in and for Burnham Beeches

- To continue developing and trialling core messages and materials tackling the main issues caused by visitor activities.
- To develop and undertake more regular on- and off-reserve activities that deliver campaign messaging.
- To support the above with regular social media posts reflecting the spectrum of visitor/recreation related pressures affecting Burnham Beeches and creating context for mitigation measures.
- To continue regular patrols, aiming to encourage positive outcomes on the reserve through regular one-to-one engagement and delivery of core messages. This will include weekend and out-of-hours patrols.
- Continue to carry out practical work as in 23/24 as opportunities arise, working alone and with volunteers.
- Work with the other staff and visitor data to draw up a map of which paths should be retained and prioritise closures and measures to encourage visitors to use particular paths, and use this to plan future practical work.
- Investigate ways to waymark desired routes.
- Integrate practical mitigation actions with the new monitoring proposals.
- Link with any trail information produced by the information team.
- To continue to dismantle dens and engage with public, as required.
- To work with the Ranger team to ensure a consistent approach.
- To log locations and take pictures of dens, and a) target information and b) work with the Conservation Officer to agree removal of decaying materials to less accessible areas of the reserve.
- Development of displays and materials highlighting seasonal issues for use on pop up patrols, such as information on responsible dog walking, disturbance of ground nesting birds and reptiles.
- Continue and consolidate activities and events that continue to educate visitors to the nature reserve.
- Use weekends for pop up patrolling at various locations at Burnham Beeches using the cargo bike.
- Maintain links with SCCAMP and other SAMMs projects.
- Attend annual mitigation conferences.
- Liaise with those in charge of the SAMMs project at Ashridge Estate (National Trust) and organise visits there and at Burnham Beeches.
- Liaise with those in charge of the SAMMs project at Epping Forest and organise visits there and at Burnham Beeches.

4.1.1 Monitoring

- To keep records of and monitor all engagement activities, adjusting work priorities accordingly.

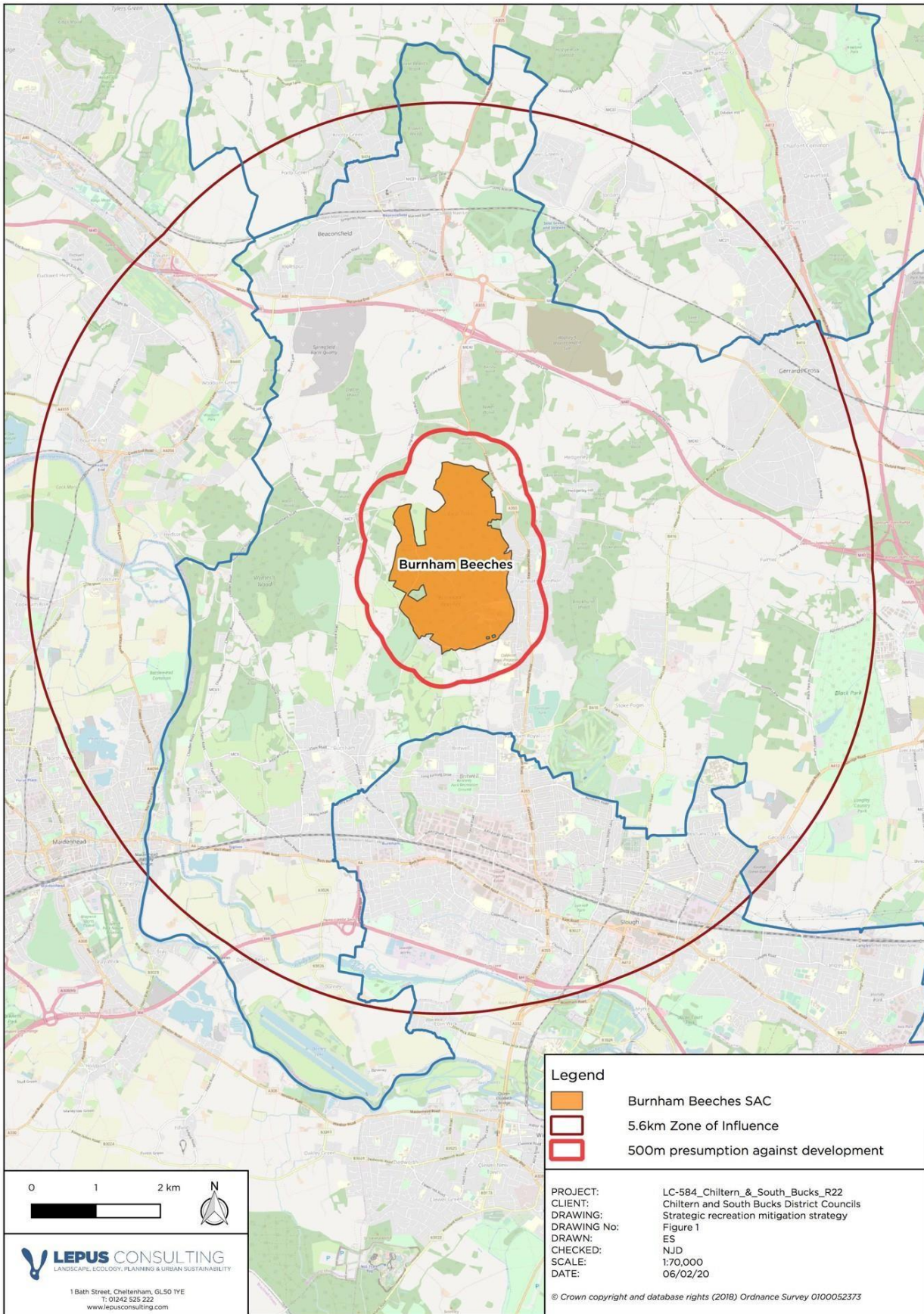
- To carry out regular visitor monitoring, including car park counts, visitor behaviour transects, dog transects and 'flag the poo' transects. This will be used to inform work programming and help assess the impact of CER action.
- To keep accurate records of patrol engagement and outreach using Survey123, including a qualitative assessment of their impact, amending work programming as required.
- Support the production a plan and timeline for necessary monitoring – both existing and new.
- Start all new monitoring actions in 2024, except for the soil sampling which will commence in 2025.

4.2 Work in and with Slough

- To promote Slough Parks and volunteering opportunities in Slough on social media.
- To build on existing with partnerships with Slough Parks, Slough Hub and other organisations to find ways to promote green spaces in Slough to new residents at the Horlicks Quarter.
- To further build a partnership with Berkeley Homes and the Horlicks Quarter through outreach activities and events.
- Research and promote other walks around Slough, for example, routes around the Jubilee River.
- To continue work with Cippenham school and identify other schools and community groups in Slough that are suitable for activities.
- To help Slough Borough Council conduct visitor counts at Upton Court Park.

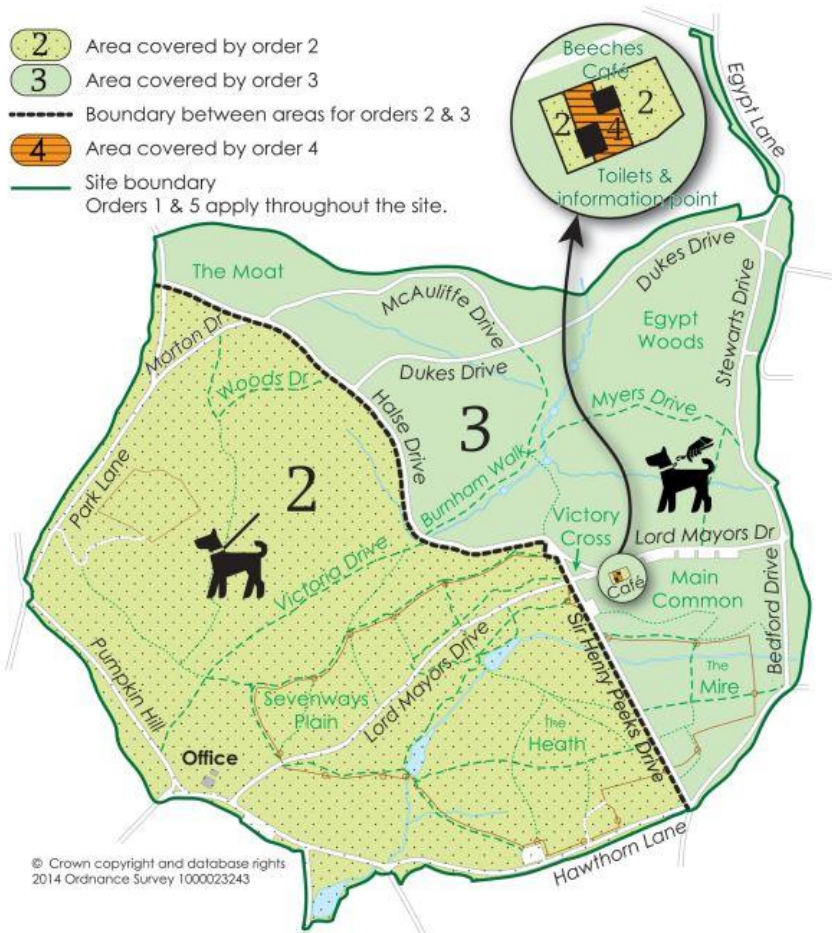
5 Appendices

Appendix A – Zones of influence around Burnham Beeches



Appendix B – Map of Burnham Beeches showing areas covered by either order 2 (dogs on leads), order 3 (dogs on lead by direction), or order 4 (dogs exclusion area) of the Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to dog walking.

Page 111



Order 1: Fouling by dogs

Please make sure you pick up all poo that your dog drops, wherever you are in Burnham Beeches. Please also ensure that you dispose of it properly by using one of the bins provided or taking it home.



Order 2: Dogs on leads

If you are in the areas marked 2 on the map you must keep your dog on a lead no longer than 5m in length.



Order 3: Dogs on leads by direction

Dogs must be under effective control at all times in Burnham Beeches. If your dog is off a lead in the area marked 3 on the map and an authorised officer judges that it is not under effective control, they will ask you to put it on a lead. Please make sure you always carry a lead (not more than 5m in length) when you walk your dog at Burnham Beeches.



Order 4: Dogs exclusion area

Please do not allow your dog to enter the no dogs area at the café (marked 4 on the map). If you have a recognised assistance dog because of a disability, you are exempt.



MAX 4

Order 5: Maximum number of dogs

Each dog walker can bring a maximum of four dogs onto Burnham Beeches at one time.

Appendix C – Burnham Beeches patrol monitoring using Survey123.

10:27 Thu 11 Apr

Patrol Monitoring Data

Name of individual filling in this form *

Location of patrol *

Date of patrol *

Start time of patrol *

End time of patrol *

Pick the options that best describe the weather conditions during the patrol:

- Raining
- Cloudy
- Sunny
- Windy
- Hot
- Cold
- Windy
- Hailing
- Snowing

Did you dismantle any dens? *

Yes

No

How many visitors did you engage with? *

How many people were spoken to (full conversation).

✓

Did you dismantle any dens? *

Yes

No

How many dens did you dismantle? *

1 10

How many visitors did you engage with? *

How many people were spoken to (full conversation).

How many visitors did you greet? *

E.g., Hello/good morning/good afternoon etc.

0 50

How many negative behaviours did you witness that weren't addressed? *

This could be due to the visitor being too far away etc. This should be 1 per negative behaviour.

0 1 20

What and how many negative behaviours were witnessed?

Please pick which negative behaviours were witnessed during the patrol and how many of each.

	1	2	3+
Dog off lead in area 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

✓

What and how many negative behaviours were witnessed?

Please pick which negative behaviours were witnessed during the patrol and how many of each.

	1	2	3+
Dog off lead in area 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog not under effective control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cyclist off tarmac roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horse rider off tarmac roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Littering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog in cafe exclusion area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Owner not picking up after dog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More than four dogs brought onto the reserve with one person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foraging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Den building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fouling left (bagged or not)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BBQ debris	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fire debris	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quad bikes/other vehicles on site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-authorized filming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climbing ancient trees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional comments about the patrol

✓

Appendix D – Burnham Beeches patrol engagement using Survey123.

Note: when some topics of conversation are chosen, e.g., PSPOs, another question will appear asking whether the visitor was aware of the rules before the conversation.

10:27 Thu 11 Apr

Burnham Beeches Patrol Engagement

Name of individual filling in this form *

Jordan.Payne_CoL

Location of interaction

Date and time of interaction *

Date Time

How many people did you interact with? *

Eg., Was there one person in the group or five?

1 10

What was the main topic of conversation? *

Select one.

- General information about BB/SC e.g., history of site, management etc.
- Wildlife
- PSPO issued
- Information about the dogs on lead areas
- Information about the dogs off lead areas
- Dog fouling
- Information about dogs under effective control
- Information about maximum number of dogs per person
- Specific directions around BB/SC
- Soil erosion & trampling
- Information about other green spaces in the surrounding areas
- Information about CERs e.g., what is being surveyed.
- Litter
- Livestock
- Information Point
- Cycling

✓

10:27 Thu 11 Apr

Burnham Beeches Patrol Engagement

- Cycling
- Events
- Horse riding
- Cafe
- General chat - about weather, walkers' dog, etc.
- Other

Please tick if there was any other topic(s) of conversation had during the interaction.
Select multiple if necessary.

- General information about BB/SC e.g., history of site, management etc.
- Wildlife
- PSPO issued
- Information about the dogs on lead areas
- Information about the dogs off lead areas
- Dog fouling
- Information about dogs under effective control
- Information about maximum number of dogs per person
- Specific directions around BB/SC
- Soil erosion & trampling
- Information about other green spaces in the surrounding areas
- Information about CERs e.g., what is being surveyed.
- Litter
- Livestock
- Information Point
- Cycling
- Events
- Horse riding
- Cafe
- General chat - about weather, walkers' dog, etc.
- Other

✓

10:28 Thu 11 Apr

Burnham Beeches Patrol Engagement

Did you give any leaflets to the visitor(s)? *

Yes

No

How many leaflets did you give the visitor(s)? *

Which leaflets did you give to the visitor(s)? *

- BB Map
- Walking your dog at BB
- Events Guide
- Historical Trail
- Geological Trail
- Cycling / Horse riding
- Wood Pasture
- Pollards
- Heathland
- Fungi
- Dead / Decaying wood
- Vision
- Grazing
- Dog fact sheet
- Other

Has the visitor(s) been spoken to by a ranger before? *

Yes - already once today

Yes - on another day

No

Don't know

Was the visitor aware of the wildlife value of BB/SC? *

Yes

✓

10:28 Thu 11 Apr

Burnham Beeches Patrol Engagement

Dog fact sheet

Other

Has the visitor(s) been spoken to by a ranger before? *

Yes - already once today

Yes - on another day

No

Don't know

Was the visitor aware of the wildlife value of BB/SC? *

Yes

No

Don't know

Was the visitor(s) receptive to the key message? *

Yes

No

Don't know

No key message mentioned

How was the interaction with the visitor(s)? *

Positive

Neutral

Negative

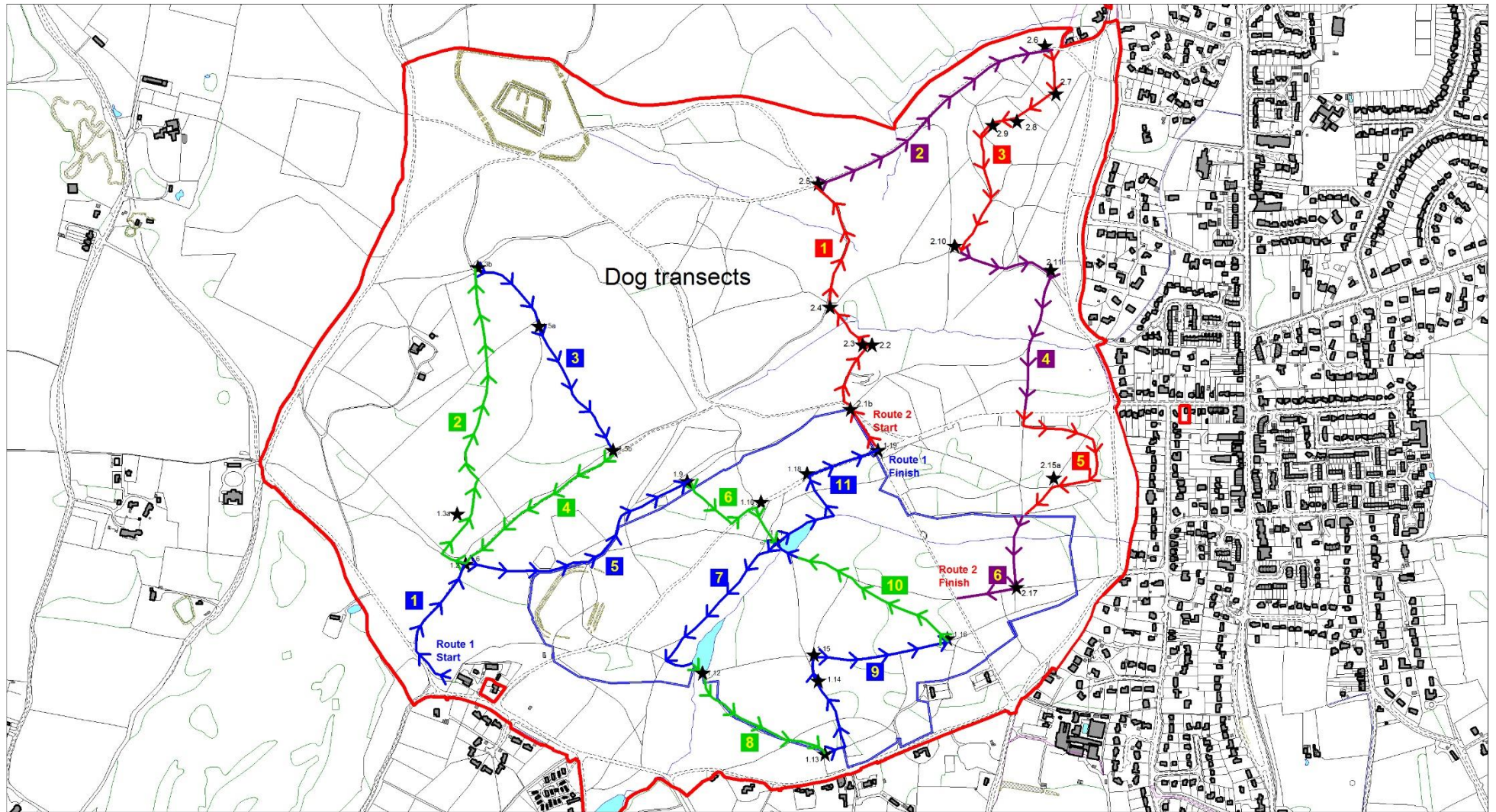
Did the visitor state any positive remarks?
I.e. about the management of the reserve, if we have been nice etc.

Is there anything else important about the interaction not captured in other questions?

✓

page 114

Appendix E - Map of Burnham Beeches showing both dog transect areas. Route 1 covers those areas where dogs are required to be on lead. Route 2 covers those areas where dogs are required to be on lead if requested but must always be under effective control.



Appendix F – Map of 'Flag The Poo' areas at Burnham Beeches highlighted in yellow.

Page 116



Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest & Commons	18 July 2024
Subject: Revenue Outturn 2023/24 – Epping Forest and Commons	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	n/a
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	n/a
Report of: Chamberlain Natural Environment Director	For Information
Report author: Clem Harcourt – Chamberlain’s Department	

Summary

This report compares the revenue outturn for the services overseen by your Committee in 2023/24 with the final budget for the year. Overall, there was an underspend of £50k for the services overseen by your committee compared with the final budget for the year as set out below.

	Final Budget	Outturn	Variation Better/ (Worse)
	£000	£000	£000
Local Risk			
Interim Executive Director Environment	(4,883)	(4,886)	(3)
City Surveyor	(1,127)	(773)	354
Total Local Risk	(6,010)	(5,659)	351
Central Risk	(577)	(585)	(8)
Recharges	(2,083)	(2,376)	(293)
Total Net Expenditure	(8,670)	(8,620)	50

Explanations for significant budget variances with the final budget are detailed in the report in paragraphs 5 to 9.

The Interim Executive Director Environment had an overall local risk overspend (excluding City Surveyor) of (£3k) for activities overseen by your Committee. The Interim Executive Director also had a net local risk underspend totalling £40k on activities overseen by other Committees within his remit, after adjusting for unspent carry forwards from 2022/23. The Interim Executive Director Environment is proposing that his maximum eligible local risk underspend of

£37k be carried forward into 2024/25, none of which relates to your Committee. The Interim Executive Director is also proposing that £36k is carried forward in unspent Priorities Investment Pot (PIP) monies related to your Committee.

Recommendation(s)

Note the report and the proposed carry forward of £36k PIP underspending into 2024/25.

Main Report

Budget Position for 2023/24

1. The 2023/24 original budget for Epping Forest & Commons services overseen by your Committee (received in November 2022) was (£7.482m) net expenditure. This budget was endorsed by the Court of Common Council in March 2023 and was subsequently updated for approved net increases of (£1.188m), resulting in a final net expenditure budget of (£8.67m). This is primarily explained by the following:
 - (£793k) uplift to your Committee's local risk resource base following implementation of the new staffing structure across the Natural Environment Division;
 - (£368k) central contingency funding to meet cost of living pay rises to staff effective from July 2023 and centrally funded apprentices;
 - (£210k) funding from Finance Committee contingencies to support work on known dangerous trees at Epping Forest;
 - (£164k) additional recharges from the Natural Environment Directorate and Learning Team following implementation of the new staffing structure across the division;
 - (£136k) funding from central contingencies to cover the cost of energy price rises;
 - (£72k) increased costs relating to the corporate contract for Integrated Facilities Management overseen by the City Surveyor following implementation of the new contract;
 - (£67k) central risk carry forward funding from 2022/23 relating to unspent Priorities Investment Pot (PIP) monies for projects at Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches;
 - £459k local risk transfer to capital budgets relating to the purchase of a range of vehicles at Epping Forest; and

- £209k contribution from Epping Forest's local risk budget to part fund the Great Gregories Yard Future Proofing Buildings capital project.
2. A reconciliation between the original budget and the final budget is shown in Appendices 1 and 2.

Revenue Outturn 2023/24

3. Actual net expenditure for your Committee's services during 2023/24 totalled (£8.62m), an underspend of £50k compared with the final net expenditure budget of (£8.67m).
4. A summary comparison with the final agreed budget for the year is tabulated below, split between Epping Forest (table 1) and The Commons (table 2). In the tables, income, increases in income, and reductions in expenditure are shown as positive balances, whereas brackets are used to denote expenditure, increases in expenditure, or shortfalls in income. Only significant variances (generally those greater than £50k) are commented on. A more detailed comparison with the final budget can be found in appendices 3 and 4.

Table 1: Comparison between 2023/24 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – Epping Forest (see Appendix 3)

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Outturn	Variation Better/ (Worse)	Para Ref
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Local Risk					
Interim Executive Director					
Environment	(2,534)	(3,248)	(3,248)	0	
City Surveyor	(896)	(971)	(524)	447	5
Total Local Risk	(3,430)	(4,219)	(3,772)	447	
Central Risk	(444)	(521)	(511)	10	
Recharges	(1,448)	(1,598)	(1,841)	(243)	6, 7
Total	(5,322)	(6,338)	(6,124)	214	

Reasons for Significant Variations

5. The £447k underspend on budgets managed by City Surveyors is largely attributable to a £411k underspend on Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) expenditure due to the rephasing of projects falling under the CWP. This included projects such as works at the Copped Hall Estate. The CWP is a three-year rolling programme reported to the Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee quarterly, where the City Surveyor will report on financial performance and phasing of the projects. Under the governance of the programme, variances on budgets are adjusted for the life of the programme to allow for the completion of works which span multiple financial years. This

was in addition to an underspend of £36k relating to reduced building repairs and maintenance and cleaning costs managed by the City Surveyor compared to budget.

6. The (£243k) net overspend in recharges was largely attributable to increased recharges from the IT Division of (£261k) as well as additional net recharges from other corporate departments (£98k). This overspend was partly offset by increased income for recharges to City Fund for Woodredon and Warlies £91k due to a higher than anticipated net cost for this division of service largely as a result of reduced rental income.
7. During 2023/24, a review of central support services recharges was carried out. This involved updating the basis of apportionment for all recharges following the Target Operating Model (TOM) and Governance Review along with trying to make them more transparent and fairer across all services. The updated basis has led to several variations to the original budget across committees, but overall total recharges have remained within the total original envelope: City Fund Original Budget (£29.9m) vs Outturn (£27.9m), and City's Estate Original Budget (£24.2m) vs Outturn (£22.9m). Any variation/increase in costs are met from the deficit funding and have no effect on front-line services. The full review has not yet been formally approved by Members as work is ongoing as how to the new basis will affect 2024/25 budgets. Once the review is fully adopted, the 2024/25 budget will be reviewed and updated where necessary and the paper on the review made available.

Table 2: Comparison between 2023/24 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – The Commons (see Appendix 4)

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Outturn	Variation Better/ (Worse)	Para Ref
		£000	£000	£000	
Local Risk					
Interim Executive Director					
Environment	(1,471)	(1,635)	(1,638)	(3)	
City Surveyor	(159)	(156)	(249)	(93)	8
Total Local Risk	(1,630)	(1,791)	(1,887)	(96)	
Central Risk	(50)	(56)	(74)	(18)	
Recharges	(480)	(485)	(535)	(50)	9
Total	(2,160)	(2,332)	(2,496)	(164)	

Reasons for Significant Variations

8. There was a total overspend of (£93k) on budgets managed by the City Surveyor at The Commons. This was primarily attributable to an additional (£57k) incurred in extra CWP expenditure, predominantly at Burnham Beeches, due to a rephasing of projects falling under the three-year rolling programme. This was in addition to a (£36k) overspend on budgets

managed by the City Surveyor for repairs and maintenance and cleaning primarily relating to the City Commons.

9. Total net recharges were (£50k) overspent compared with the final budget at The Commons. This was largely due to additional recharges from the IT Division of (£67k) compared with budget, which was partly offset by lower than anticipated recharges from other corporate departments £27k. As stated in paragraph 7, a review of recharges from support services departments was carried out during 2023/24 resulting in variations compared with budget for a number of service areas.

Local Risk and Central Risk Carry Forward to 2024/25

10. Chief Officers can generally request underspends of up to 10% or £500,000 (whichever is the lesser) of the final local risk budget to be carried forward, so long as the underspending is not fortuitous and the resources were for a planned purpose that was prevented from happening during the year. Such requests are subject to the approval of the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Resources Allocation Sub Committee. In accordance with Financial Regulations, any overspends are carried forward in full and are met from the agreed 2024/25 budgets.
11. The Interim Executive Director Environment had a net local risk overspend of (£3k) on the activities overseen by your Committee. The Interim Executive Director Environment also had a net local risk underspend totalling £40k on activities overseen by other Committees within his remit, after adjusting for unspent carry forwards from 2022/23. The Interim Executive Director Environment is proposing that his maximum eligible local risk underspend of £37k be carried forward, none of which relates to activities overseen by your Committee.
12. The Interim Executive Director Environment has also submitted the following Priorities Investment Pot (PIP) central risk carry forward requests amounting to £36k which relate to your Committee:
 - £34k unspent expenditure associated with the Epping Forest Licences, Leases and Wayleaves project; and
 - £2k unspent expenditure associated with facilitating the 'Biodiversity net gain' project at Burnham Beeches.

Conclusion

13. This report presents the revenue outturn position for 2023/24 and the carry forward bids relating to unspent PIP budgets into 2024/25 for Members to note.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Movement between Original 2023/24 Budget and 2023/24 Final Budget (Epping Forest)
- Appendix 2 - Movement between Original 2023/24 Budget and 2023/24 Final Budget (The Commons)
- Appendix 3 - Comparison between 2023/24 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – Epping Forest
- Appendix 4 - Comparison between 2023/24 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – The Commons

Clem Harcourt

Finance Business Partner (Natural Environment)
Chamberlain's Department – Financial Services

E: Clem.Harcourt@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - Movement between 2023/24 Original Budget and 2023/24 Final Budget – Epping Forest

	£000
Original Budget (All Risks)	(5,322)
Original Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor)	(3,430)
Interim Executive Director Environment	
Adjustments to local risk resource base following implementation of staffing restructure within Natural Environment Division	(760)
Central contingency funding to cover the cost of the pay award effective from July 2023	(286)
Funding from Finance Committee contingencies to support works on known dangerous trees	(210)
Central contingency funding to cover increased energy costs	(123)
Funding from Natural Environment Directorate to meet costs of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) scoping report	(3)
Transfer to capital budgets for purchase of vehicles incurred during 2023/24	459
Local risk contribution to part fund Great Gregories Yard Future Proofing Building Project	209
City Surveyor	
Adjustments to budgets for building repairs and maintenance and cleaning following introduction of new corporate contract for Integrated Facilities Management	(75)
Final Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor)	(4,219)
Central Risk	
Original Central Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment)	(444)
Agreed carry forward funding from Priorities Investment Pot for Licenses, Leases and Wayleaves project	(61)
Central risk funding for Supplementary Revenue Project expenditure incurred during 2023/24	(16)
Final Central Risk Budget	(521)
Recharges	
Original Recharges Budget	(1,448)

Additional recharges from Natural Environment Directorate and Learning Team following staffing restructure within Natural Environment Division	(159)
Adjustments to Woodredon and Warlies recharges to City Fund	9
Final Recharges Budget	(1,598)
Final Budget (All Risks)	(6,338)

Appendix 2 - Movement between 2023/24 Original Budget and 2023/24 Final Budget – The Commons

	£000
Original Budget (All Risks)	(2,160)
Original Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor)	(1,630)
Interim Executive Director Environment	
Central contingency funding to cover cost of pay award effective from July 2023	(82)
Unidentified savings at West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons met through savings achieved from staffing restructure across Natural Environment Division	(33)
Funding from Natural Environment Directorate to cover costs related to Ash Dieback and Oak Processionary Moth	(22)
Funding from Natural Environment Directorate to meet costs of Commons HUQ Survey	(14)
Central contingency funding to cover cost of energy price rises	(13)
City Surveyor	
Adjustments to budgets for building repairs and maintenance and cleaning following implementation of new corporate contract for Integrated Facilities Management	3
Final Net Local Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment & City Surveyor)	(1,791)
Central Risk	
Original Central Risk Budget (Interim Executive Director Environment)	(50)
Carry forward funding from Priorities Investment Pot in relation to Facilitating 'Biodiversity net gain' project at Burnham Beeches	(6)
Final Central Risk Budget	(56)
Recharges	
Original Recharges Budget	(480)
Additional recharges from Natural Environment Directorate	(5)
Final Recharges Budget	(485)
Final Budget (All Risks)	(2,332)

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 3 - Comparison between 2023/24 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – Epping Forest

	Original Budget £000	Final Budget £000	Revenue Outturn £000	Better/ (Worse) £000	Note
LOCAL RISK					
Interim Executive Director Environment Epping Forest	(2,506)	(3,100)	(3,117)	(17)	
Epping Forest – Countryside Stewardship Scheme	0	0	0	0	
Chingford Golf Course	72	128	121	(7)	
Wanstead Flats	(124)	(291)	(180)	111	1
Woodredon & Warlies	24	15	(72)	(87)	2
Total Net Expenditure	(2,534)	(3,248)	(3,248)	0	
City Surveyor					
City Surveyors Repairs and Maintenance	(286)	(361)	(325)	36	
Cyclical Works Programme	(610)	(610)	(199)	411	3
Total City Surveyor Local Risk	(896)	(971)	(524)	447	
TOTAL LOCAL RISK	(3,430)	(4,219)	(3,772)	447	
CENTRAL RISK					
Epping Forest	(416)	(477)	(467)	10	
Wanstead Flats	(28)	(44)	(44)	0	
TOTAL CENTRAL RISK	(444)	(521)	(511)	10	
RECHARGES					
Insurance	(76)	(77)	(77)	0	4
Support Services	(379)	(383)	(508)	(125)	4
Surveyor's Employee Recharges	(300)	(300)	(273)	27	4
IT Recharges	(118)	(113)	(374)	(261)	4
Recharges Within Fund (Directorate, Democratic Core, and Learning)	(515)	(674)	(684)	(10)	
Recharges Across Fund					
Woodredon & Warlies	(10)	(1)	90	91	5
Structural Maintenance	(50)	(50)	(15)	35	
TOTAL RECHARGES	(1,448)	(1,598)	(1,841)	(243)	
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	(5,322)	(6,338)	(6,124)	214	

Reasons for Significant Variations

1. The Wanstead Flats division of service was £111k underspent compared with the final budget for 2023/24. This was largely attributable to savings in employment costs of £127k as a result of staffing vacancies whilst posts in the new staffing structure have been recruited. The underspend was partly offset by (£16k) additional equipment, furniture and materials costs due to extra purchases being required during 2023/24.

2. There was a total overspend on the Woodredon and Warlies local risk budget of (£87k) due to reduced income of (£56k) largely explained by lower than expected income generated from rents compared with the final budget. This was in addition to an extra (£21k) being required in grounds maintenance costs.
3. Expenditure relating to projects falling under the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) at Epping Forest was £411k underspent compared to budget. This can be explained by the re-phasing of works for a range of various projects including works at the Copped Hall Estate.
4. Central recharges for 2023/24 were overspent by a total of (£359k) at Epping Forest compared with the final budget. This is largely explained by additional IT recharges of (£261k) as well as higher central support costs for other corporate departments of (£98k). This followed a review of central recharges during 2023/24 which led to the updating of the apportionment bases used to calculate the recharges which resulted in variances across a number of service areas.
5. There was a £91k variance in relation to the recharge for the net cost of Woodredon and Warlies to City Fund. This can be explained by an overspend in this division of service, resulting in increased recharges being incurred by City Fund.

Appendix 4 - Comparison between 2023/24 Revenue Outturn and Final Budget – The Commons

	Original Budget £000	Final Budget £000	Revenue Outturn £000	Better/ (Worse) £000	Note
LOCAL RISK					
Interim Executive Director Environment					
Burnham Beeches	(485)	(538)	(520)	18	
Stoke Common	(24)	(27)	(26)	1	
City Commons	(962)	(1,070)	(1,092)	(22)	
Total Net Expenditure	(1,471)	(1,635)	(1,638)	(3)	
City Surveyor					
City Surveyors Repairs and Maintenance	(159)	(156)	(192)	(36)	
Cyclical Works Programme	0	0	(57)	(57)	1
Total City Surveyor Local Risk	(159)	(156)	(249)	(93)	
TOTAL LOCAL RISK	(1,630)	(1,791)	(1,887)	(96)	
CENTRAL RISK					
Burnham Beeches	(49)	(55)	(63)	(8)	
City Commons	(1)	(1)	(11)	(10)	
TOTAL CENTRAL RISK	(50)	(56)	(74)	(18)	
RECHARGES					
Insurance	(19)	(19)	(22)	(3)	2
Support Services	(182)	(182)	(158)	24	2
Surveyor's Employee Recharges	(39)	(39)	(36)	3	2
IT Recharges	(58)	(58)	(125)	(67)	2
Recharges Within Fund (Directorate & Democratic Core)	(182)	(187)	(194)	(7)	
TOTAL RECHARGES	(480)	(485)	(535)	(50)	
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	(2,160)	(2,332)	(2,496)	(164)	

Reasons for Significant Variations

1. The additional expenditure for budgets managed by the City Surveyor is largely attributable to an overspend of (£57k) on the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP). This primarily relates to a re-phasing of projects falling under the CWP at Burnham Beeches.
2. Total central recharges for The Commons were (£43k) overspent compared with the final budget for 2023/24. This is predominantly explained by additional IT recharges of (£67k) being incurred partly offset by reduced recharges of £27k for other corporate departments. Please note that a review of central recharges took place during 2023/24 which led to the updating of the apportionment bases used to calculate the recharges which resulted in variances across a number of service areas.

This page is intentionally left blank