

**Progress against the Natural Environment Strategy Action Plans and Business Plan objectives  
Quarter Three (October – December) 2024-25**

Epping Forest

1. Nature Conservation and Resilience
2. Community Engagement
3. Access and recreation
4. Culture heritage and learning
5. Sustainable Business Model

<b>1</b>		<b>Nature Conservation and Resilience</b>
	<b>Action/Objective</b>	<b>Progress update (Quarter Three 2024-25)</b>
	<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our open spaces</b>
1.2	SSSI condition improvement and Species Recovery plans are in place for all our sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest 2 CSS – major wood pasture restoration works completed at Oak Hill (Woodford) and Phase 1 works Leyton Flats - extensive tree and scrub clearance work. Metal trackways were used to protect the ground during works. Leyton Flats work will resume in August 2025.</li> <li>• Veteran tree management for Forest 1 &amp; 2 CSS at Bury Wood, St Thomas’ Quarters, Great Monk Wood, Honey Lane Quarters – 231 trees worked including 18 host trees of the rare Zygodon forsteri moss</li> <li>• Bell Heather planted on Warren Hill heathland – reintroduction of this species to the Forest since the 1970s. plants were cultivated from cuttings taken from Tiptree Heath (Essex Wildlife Trust site).</li> </ul>
1.4	Community support and engagement in the conservation of our open spaces is increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Grazing and Landscape Manager gave a talk on the history of Grazing in the Forest and the benefits of Conservation Grazing to the Aldersbrook Horticultural Society.</li> <li>• The Grazing and Landscape Manager hosted Lecturers and 30, 2nd &amp; 3rd year student from Writtle college. The visit is conducted annually.</li> <li>• The Grazing and Landscape Manager gave a talk to “Herefordshire Meadows” at their AGM on grazing management with the use of collar-based technology and GPS technology.</li> <li>• We have had 34 calves born to date</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Grazing and Landscape Manager and Biodiversity Officer met with representees of Listt.io, a small startup building technology to improve conservation and agriculture practices, the visit was to explore whether their portable sheep pen could be adapted to in order to bring pig grazing back to Forest.</li> <li>• The Project “Great Gregories – Future proof farm” has been completed, a large construction project part funded by Countryside Stewardship. The aims of the project were to cover up areas of the farm to reduce rainwater mixing with animal bedding which causes ammonia air pollution, this included covering up feeding areas, providing covered storage for farmyard manure, building cover for un-wrapped hay and straw and rainwater harvesting which is then supplied to cattle as drinking water.</li> <li>• EF Head of Conservation presented at the EFHT AGM.</li> <li>• EF Superintendent, Head of Conservation and Chairman met representatives from The Big Green Internet and Eaton Park Country Park restoration to discuss their ambition for reconnecting fragments of woodland across Essex and Epping Forest's part in this.</li> <li>• EF Head of Conservation took part in the River Ching Action Plan filming day with the EA, Cllr from Waltham Forest, and volunteers from The Ching Action Group. This supports the formal publication of The Ching Action Plan on the GOV.UK website and Thames21 website which the EF Conservation Team have inputted into and the Groups campaign to encourage volunteers to sign up. In December there has been social media campaigns to cover the River including short videos from the filming day.</li> <li>• EF Head of Conservation attended Thames21's stakeholder meetings for The Roding Rises project. Thames1 has secured development funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and the meetings are to discuss the framework for Capital Projects.</li> <li>• EF Conservation team met with RSPB to review Turtle Dove habitat restoration opportunities at Copped Hall.</li> <li>• EF Head of Conservation presented at the launch of the Deer Strategy for London hosted by London Wildlife Trust in partnership with the GLA at Camley Street Natural Park.</li> <li>• EF Conservation team met Professor of Physical Geography and Deputy Head of School Alex Henshaw of Queen Mary University of London to discuss collaborative opportunities to support students and research at Epping Forest and Buffer Lands.</li> </ul>
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	<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>To increase the resilience of our open spaces within a wider, interconnected natural landscape.</b>
2.2	Landscape connectivity around our open spaces is enhanced through collaboration with other organisations and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses made to consultation on Local Nature Recovery Strategies for London and for Essex.</li> <li>• EF Conservation Team met the EA and Thames21 to discuss potential watercourse enhancements at Cobbins Brook at Copped Hall Buffer Lands and Brookhouse Brook at Great Gregories.</li> <li>• EF Head of Conservation attended London White Stork Working Group, alongside environmental NGOs, LPA, and landowners.</li> <li>• EF Conservation and Arb Team hosted a site visit for the Property Operations Manager for National Trust Hatfield Forest.</li> <li>• Officers attended the London Lea Catchment Partnership Meeting to discuss project work and the Partnerships future vision.</li> <li>• EF Head of Conservation with CoL Natural Environment Director attended a site visit to Enfield Chase as part of the London Rewilding Action Group. A visit also included a site visit to Forty Hall beaver site.</li> </ul>
2.3	Reduced visitor impact on priority habitats and other important sites through sustainable visitor and mitigation strategies being in place and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor Survey completed by Footprint Ecology for 2024 (repeat of 2019 survey)</li> </ul>
2.4	Damaging introduced species monitored and kept under control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APHA Notice issued on Warren Plantation for outbreak of pathogen <i>Phytophthora Ramorum</i>. Control measures put in place with biosecurity procedures for staff and contractors.</li> </ul>
	<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Establish a natural capital based management process across our open spaces</b>
3.3	The City of London Corporation's Climate Action Strategy goals are met for the open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deer Management commenced with oversight from DMOG</li> <li>• Baseline soil carbon sampling bird surveys, fixed point photography, earth worms</li> <li>• Hydrology assessment tenders out</li> <li>• EOI made to EA for £200k fund for leaky dams and flood prevention.</li> <li>• Deer enclosure plot location proposal site visits undertaken</li> <li>• Deer drone census survey completed</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CoL Environmental Resilience Officers installed leaky dams for natural flood management at Yardley Hill.</li> </ul>
	EF Management Strategy Conservation objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floating reedbed installed on Heronry Pond, Wanstead Park, funded and project managed by Thames 21. This will improve water quality around road run off</li> <li>• New fencing installed at Deer Sanctuary</li> <li>• Tree Management targets not met in December due to staff injury and storms. Surveying taking place</li> <li>• Queens Oak at High Beach suffered in storm – gradual decline to be managed</li> <li>• Officers met Forestry Commission to discuss potential for development of a woodland management plan.</li> </ul>

<b>2</b>		<b>Community Engagement</b>
	<b>Action/Objective</b>	<b>Progress update (Quarter Three 2024-25)</b>
	<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Partnership</b>
1.1	Build and sustain meaningful and lasting partnerships with the communities we serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Volunteer Day social media posts celebrating the individual volunteers and volunteer groups who work in partnership with Epping Forest.</li> <li>• Officers consulted with the WREN Group on future habitat work at the skylark areas</li> <li>• Officers attended the Visit Essex Conference.</li> </ul>
1.2	Implement a holistic approach to community engagement that encourages active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Epping Forest Consultative Group were consulted on Fingerpost signage installation.</li> </ul>
1.3	Cultivate and support successful partner organisations that support us in mission delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful partnership working with Local Authority outreach teams (via 'Streetlink' referrals) and Met Police, with support from Enforcement, Keeper and Litter teams to clear and deter drug encampments around Manor Flats in Newham &amp; Redbridge. Shrub clearance undertaken.</li> <li>• Successful partnership with Essex Police and EFDC for Police and Crime Commission Essex Safer Streets Funding for CCTV/ANPR cameras in fly tipping hotspot, High Beach.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visits held with contractors and Essex Highways and Natural England to finalise A104 schematic plans</li> <li>• Joint training day with EFDC and Essex Police on flytipping – good practice and evidence based tactics</li> </ul>
	<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Removing Barriers</b>
2.1	Ensure diverse and representative participation in our work and spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded youth volunteering opportunities including pre-school litter picks and youth conservation sessions.</li> <li>• Officers lead volunteers in doing work around the Zygodon host trees; clearing encroaching bramble, holly and tree saplings from the small area immediately around each host tree and detailed work clearing competing common mosses from the beech root knotholes, which is the habitat that Zygodon forsteri favours, to allow it to expand. An estimated 120 bags of litter have been removed, along with around 4 tents.</li> </ul>
2.2	Create physical spaces that are as accessible as possible to as many people as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storms Bert and Darragh responses promptly cleared paths</li> <li>• Extensive ditch clearance along Bury Lane to prevent flooding</li> <li>• Grass cutting completed for the season</li> </ul>
	<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Ownership</b>
3.1	Facilitate a deep sense of pride in and attachment to our open spaces among user groups and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with Ching Action Plan – 35 volunteers signed up to participate</li> <li>• A litter picking event was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> November at Leyton Flats with 13 attendees, following the CSS habitat works which had revealed large volumes of litter which volunteers helped to clear away. There was liaison with the already established OWL Group who litter pick at Leyton Flats to update them on the habitat work, and who also litter picked throughout the opened up area.</li> </ul>
3.2	Create opportunities for user groups and communities to provide additional resource to the Corporation to support mission delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 39 new volunteer litter pickers recruited.</li> <li>• 1 new learning assistant volunteer recruited. 3 new visitors centre volunteers recruited.</li> <li>• Bi-monthly volunteer information sessions took place at the Epping Forest Visitors Centre at Chingford.</li> <li>• Event support volunteering opportunities at the Epping Forest Visitors Centre.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaky Dam installations were supported by volunteer groups Epping Forest Heritage Trust and Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers.</li> </ul>
	<b>Theme 4</b>	<b>Thriving Spaces</b>
4.3	Provide a diverse mix of opportunities for enrichment at our open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Licences for activities cancelled due to storms</li> </ul>
	<b>Theme 5</b>	<b>Knowledge Transfer</b>
5.1	Ensure easy access to information about the Corporation, its open spaces, and our management practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coverage on social media for National Tree Week included tree management video and time lapse video clearing trees after Storms with explanation why car parks close during storms</li> </ul>
5.3	Ensure greater understanding among members of the public of the Corporation's efforts to preserve and care for our spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Review published</li> <li>National Tree Week coverage</li> <li>A Storymaps page was published for the Leyton Flats CSS habitat works to convey the explanation for the works, this was a valuable resource used in responding to complaints about the works</li> </ul>
5.4	Improve service delivery by the Corporation at its open spaces through information exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation Officers from Burnham Beeches and EF met to discuss good practice</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>		<b>Access and Recreation</b>
	<b>Action/Objective</b>	<b>Progress update (Quarter Three 2024-25)</b>
	<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Balance</b>
1.3	Reduced visitor impact on priority habitats and other important sites through sustainable visitor and mitigation strategies being in place and implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell Common link road permanent stop up from 9 Dec</li> <li>• Open Riding closed for the season</li> </ul>
	<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Excellence</b>
2.3	Provide on-site infrastructure and welcome facilities to create exemplary world class sites that are renowned for the highest quality visitor experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thames Water and their contractors Morrisons finished removing inappropriate material (containing re-cycled glass) from a surfaced ride (Woodman's ride Chingford) and re-laid with coxwell gravel over the affected area. This was from damage caused to the ride by Thames with vehicles traffic using the ride earlier in the year.</li> </ul>
2.4	Make improvements to both informal and formal recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement Officer and Estate Manager met with Friends of Wanstead Parklands regarding playground developments at Wanstead Park,</li> </ul>

4		<b>Learning and Heritage</b>
	<b>Action/Objective</b>	<b>Progress update (Quarter Three 2024-25)</b>
	<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Opportunities in education and employment</b>
3.4	Provide opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships leading to skills and career development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two apprentice arborists recruited</li> <li>• Estate Worker apprentice recruited</li> </ul>
	<b>Theme 4</b>	<b>Engagement, Confidence and enjoyment</b>
4.1	Engage participants in our learning, heritage and cultural activities which provide opportunities to explore, enjoy and feel safe in our spaces.	<p>'Batty about Epping Forest' seasonal events included two Bat Walk and Talk events in partnership with the Fields Study Centre, a youth conservation session with Highams Park Snedders, a youth litter pick and a bat craft workshop.</p> <p>Festive Forest events and activities including youth litter pick, Tudor storytime, Little Saplings storytime and carols, and wreath making workshops.</p>
	<b>Theme 5</b>	<b>Care, management and promotion</b>
5.1	Conserve and enhance our heritage assets in accordance with statutory requirements, sector guidance and best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grotto CMP approved and funding allocated for scheme of work with eventual aim to remove from HARR</li> </ul>



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		<b>Income Generation</b>
	<b>Action/Objective</b>	<b>Progress update (Quarter Three 2024-25)</b>
1.1	Filming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major filming for Apple TV in Loughton and Chingford from 28 Oct to 13 November – The Completely made-up adventures of Dick Turpin starring Noel Fielding Operationally this was a great success and was monitored throughout by staff. Income was £65,000 +vat.</li> <li>• Filming requests reduced during the winter months.</li> <li>• Paddington in Peru was released in cinemas and featured a scene shot on Hollow Pond in September 2023.</li> </ul>
1.2	Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jubilee Flats handed to agent for marketing for AST with both flats estimated rental income £1800 each pcm.</li> <li>• New Project Manager for CWP works appointed and setting up process for prioritisation from next financial year</li> <li>• Valuations conducted for empty properties for rental income</li> <li>• Capel Road lease signed for community facility and nursery</li> <li>• 5 encroachments currently being challenged</li> <li>• Major yard and buildings clearance across Warren complex</li> <li>• New lockers for body worn armour installed</li> <li>• Five year spending ( machinery and equipment) planning</li> </ul>

		<b>People Management</b>
	<b>Action/Objective</b>	<b>Progress update (Quarter Three 2024-25)</b>
1.1	Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Manager started in November</li> <li>• Arborist role interviews completed, appointment offered.</li> <li>• Forest Keeper posts interviewed with 4.5FTE appointments offered.</li> <li>• The Head Herdsperson left, a replacement will be sought and advertised in January 2025.</li> </ul>