

Woodland Park, Bursledon

The Woodland Park Community Group has held workdays throughout the year to manage their 4 hectare site within Pilands Wood. The woodland, which has a stream running through it, is designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) for its ancient and alder woodland.

Activities have included reducing areas of invasive laurel and rhododendron in the north east section of the wood, collecting rubbish and removing larger items including a picnic bench and several car tyres from the stream.

Management of the central woodland glade has also been a top priority. Following advice from a Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust advisor, suitable native flowers including red campion have been planted to increase plant diversity.



A volunteer work party cutting back brambles and nettles encroaching into the glade

Staff Change

In April 2008, we said goodbye to Phil Lomax, Head of Countryside and Recreation for Eastleigh Borough Council. Phil joined Eastleigh Borough Council from Leicester City Council in 1991. In his time with the Council he helped to firmly integrate nature conservation into the Council's core functions.

Importantly, Phil introduced and managed the Biodiversity Officer post and has overseen the production of the borough's 10 year Biodiversity Action Plan published in 2002. The Council's Countryside Section has grown considerably and is now responsible for the management of 400ha of land around the borough, including two Country Parks at Itchen Valley and Lakeside. Phil will be working nearby as a freelance environmental consultant and we wish him very well for the future.



Phil Lomax formerly Head of Countryside and Recreation at Eastleigh Borough Council

Wild about Eastleigh

April 2007
to
March 2008

6th
Annual
Report

Celebrating the work of the Eastleigh Biodiversity Action Plan partnership

Local Nature Reserve Declared!

In February, Eastleigh Borough Council with support from Natural England declared Hocombe Mead in Chandler's Ford as a statutory Local Nature Reserve (LNR). This is a first for the Council and a good reward for the Council's Countryside Service, which has been managing the 8 hectare site for over 15 years.

The ancient woodland and meadows at Hocombe Mead LNR support many special plants and animals, including spectacular displays of purple loosestrife flowers in the summer. 29 species of butterfly have also been recorded on the reserve.

Wildlife friendly cattle grazing and a woodland coppice regime have been introduced in recent years, and new interpretation panels will be installed at pedestrian entrances shortly.



The ancient meadow at Hocombe Mead LNR has a spectacular display of flowers in summer

The Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has been awarded a grant of £1.6million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to preserve the Itchen Navigation. The five year project will help to stabilise and restore the Navigation's riverbanks. It will create a heritage trail celebrating the outstanding wildlife and history of the internationally renowned chalk river system.

Water voles, otters, and a variety of fish including brown trout and southern damselfly, are expected to flourish and The Trust is looking to train volunteers to undertake a series of wildlife surveys.

The exciting project is being managed by the Trust on behalf of a wider partnership of the Environment Agency, Winchester City Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Southampton City Council, Hampshire County Council, Natural England and the Inland Waterways Association.



The old canal which runs through Itchen Valley Country Park will be improved

Eastleigh Borough's Biodiversity Action Plan

The full BAP document and previous annual reports are available to download at www.eastleigh.gov.uk/ebc-1338

For more information please contact

Rachel Urwin, Biodiversity Officer
Eastleigh Borough Council
023 8068 8352
rachel.urwin@eastleigh.gov.uk

Volunteering Opportunities

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)

Katy Dudman, BTCV Community Projects Officer
023 8076 9719
K.Dudman@btcv.org.uk
http://www2.btcv.org.uk/display/btcv_southerncentral



Eastleigh Borough Council's Countryside Service

Dave Payne, Countryside Officer
Eastleigh Borough Council
023 8046 6091

Implementation of the Eastleigh BAP is overseen by the following organisations:



www.eastleigh.gov.uk www.environment-agency.gov.uk www.naturalengland.org.uk www.hampshirebiodiversity.org.uk www.hwt.org.uk

Eastleigh River Revealed

A 250 metre stretch of river, which flows into the Monks Brook at Fleming Park in Eastleigh, has been brought to the surface thanks to Eastleigh Borough Council and advice from the Environment Agency.

The river was culverted underground in the early 1970's when the original golf course, club house and car park were constructed.

The £2.5 million community project has redeveloped the old golf club house into a new community facility and incorporated the stream so that the river now flows in front of the new building.

The new section of river has classic features such as meanders, two stage channels and fish refuge areas. Along with helping to enhance local wildlife, the development will also reduce flood risk in the area.



Inspecting the new channel. Plants should readily colonise the artificial matting used to shape the banks

Priors Hill Copse, Butlocks Heath

Throughout the winter Hound Parish Council Rangers have been working hard to coppice and thin out dense thickets of seedling and mature holly trees which have been dominating the ancient woodland in recent years.

Assisted by volunteers from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), the hard work has paid off and the increased light conditions have allowed spring loving flowers such as bluebell to put on a spectacular display for local residents to enjoy.

Spurred on by this success, a revised work plan for the next 10 years has been drafted under advice from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The Parish Council hopes to introduce a long term rotational coppicing cycle with help from volunteers.



Phil Croxton

Bluebells are thriving in the increased light conditions within woodland glades

Wyvern priority area, Fair Oak

The Wyvern area with its mosaic of wet woodland, flower rich grasslands and pond system is a priority for conservation action in the borough's biodiversity action plan.

In December the Herpetological Conservation Trust (HCT) field team visited Wyvern Technology College, Fair Oak to help with biodiversity management of the College's grounds.

The ancient meadow is full of wet loving flowers and its diversity of insect life provides an excellent terrestrial food source for the rare great crested newt.

In the meadow, selected willow trees were coppiced back and encroaching seedling trees removed. A special type of long handled fork with bent prongs was used to drag vegetation out of the pond to restore an area of open water and allow newts to breed.



EBC

Large willow trees were selectively cut back to stop encroachment into the wildflower meadow

Surveys Highlight Hidden Wildlife

Over the past year the borough's residents have been keen to record the wildlife on their doorsteps.

The Hampshire Mammal Group received records for over 150 hedgehog sightings after it was revealed that the species was undergoing a national decline.

Over 100 Eastleigh Borough Council allotment holders also filled out compost surveys to help a national survey investigate which type of compost is good for reptiles.

Taking part in wildlife surveys helps to build up valuable local datasets which help conservation organisations to monitor populations and take action. You can visit The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's website (www.hwt.org.uk) for information on how to record the wildlife in your area.



Paul Sterry

Is the hedgehog declining in your area? Report your species sightings to the Wildlife Trust

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)

The BTCV has been working in partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council to enhance the involvement of local people in environmental projects throughout the borough. Here are some of the highlights:

Green Prints Flagship – BTCV was awarded nearly **£10,000** to undertake a hedge laying project with young people aged 16-25 at Lakeside Country Park in the autumn. 32 volunteers took part in this project.

Green Prints Event at Moorgreen Copse, West End – BTCV was awarded **£950** and ran a two day event at Moorgreen Copse clearing litter, barbed wire fences and gates and stiles in March.



EBC

The **BTCV NVQ field team** built a new bridge over the stream at West End Copse. The project used timber grown at Itchen Valley Country Park felled as part of a woodland improvement scheme and converted into planks

Youth Conservation Taster Sessions – BTCV secured grants from V and Connexions (**£1000**) to carry out 3 half day youth Conservation taster sessions for 13-25 year olds at Lakeside Country Park. 10 volunteers attended these taster sessions and two attended all three!

BTCV Green Gym Short Programme – Eastleigh Borough Council awarded BTCV **£1700** to run a 10 week Green Gym Short Programme at Lakeside Country Park. This project worked in partnership with Healthworks (the Exercise Referral Scheme) and 30 volunteers took part.

Greenprints Event at The Box Youth Centre - BTCV submitted a successful funding application with help from young people. This raised **£1000** and two events are to take place in April 2008 to undertake garden improvement works.



BTCV

My Space? Your Space! – BTCV was awarded **£30,000** from V and Veolia to undertake a youth (16-25) Volunteer Project at North End Nature Reserve, Eastleigh in the autumn. 6 tasks have been undertaken so far including the boardwalk improvements pictured.

If you have a project which the BTCV could get involved in, or for more information on volunteering including Green Gym, training, local conservation groups, youth taster sessions and volunteer officer positions please contact the BTCV using the details on page 4.