

## Countryside in the Borough

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council presides over an extensive expanse of natural landscapes, encompassing diverse ecological areas such as Chalk Downland, Lowland Heath, open meadows, and ancient woodlands. The council manages four of these countryside sites in accordance with Natural England under their High-level Stewardship Schemes, ensuring the conservation of priority habitats, namely Chalk Downland, Acid Grassland, Lowland Heath, and Broadleaf Woodland.

Many of our sites are also protected under a range of statutory and non-statutory designations which imposes strict regulations on what activities and operations can and cannot be undertaken as prescribed by Natural England the Government's regulation body for Land Management. Management of RBBC's countryside is delivered using a combination of Greenspace labour, contracted services, and local community groups. We also make annual financial contributions to two non-government organisations who carry out nature conservation works on our behalf; these are the Downland Project and Gatwick Greenspaces.

### Definition of Designations:

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Any site that has a species or group of flora or fauna or habitat that is of national importance. The condition of SSSI's is strictly regulated by Natural England. Statutory designation.

The Metropolitan Green Belt (MET GB) is a statutory green belt around London, England. It comprises parts of Greater London, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent and Surrey, parts of two of the three districts of Bedfordshire and a small area in Copthorne, Sussex.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR): An area that is protected for nature and for the community to enjoy and engage with. Local Authorities can make applications to DEFRA for this designation. Statutory designation.

Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI): An area of open space that contains a species or group of flora, fauna or habitat that is of local importance. Sites are selected for this designation and monitored by the Surrey Nature Partnership which is made up of representatives from County Council, Local Authorities and Non-Government Organisations. Non-Statutory designation.

Common Land (CL): Common Land is historically land that was set aside by landowners for 'commoners'. Commoners were given grazing and foraging rights on this land which still applies today in some cases. In modern times the Countryside Right of Way Act 2000 applies to Common Land which allows unrestricted access for walkers and in some cases horse riders. There are many restrictions on what can and cannot be done on Common Land, for example preventing access cannot be carried out without applying for permission from the Secretary of State either before or after. Statutory designation.

Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV): an area designated by the County Council as being of high visual quality worthy of conservation.

High-Level Stewardship (HLS): is designed to offer more support to more active and environmentally beneficial management practices.

## Aims and Objectives

Manage HLS sites according to HLS prescriptions to ensure the sustainability, both environmentally and economically, of the sites.

Manage countryside sites to preserve and enhance their value for wildlife where appropriate to do so.

Look for opportunities to improve the visitor's experience.

Identify and manage pressures on the countryside sites.

Engage the visitors through interpretation to provide educational resources.

## Operational Targets

Utilise resources effectively.

Write seasonal work programmes.

Keep steering groups engaged.

Keep management plans adhered to and updated.

Undertake annual reviews of sites and ensure statutory obligations are met.

## Key targets for HLS

Heathland: 1-5% bare ground by turf stripping, provide mix aged Gorse, control bracken,

Chalk Grassland: 1-2% Bare ground, 5% scrub, graze or mow to avoid getting thatch

Acid Grassland: Cut and collect annually, maintain pH of 5.5-7, only top during August and September, top no more than half.

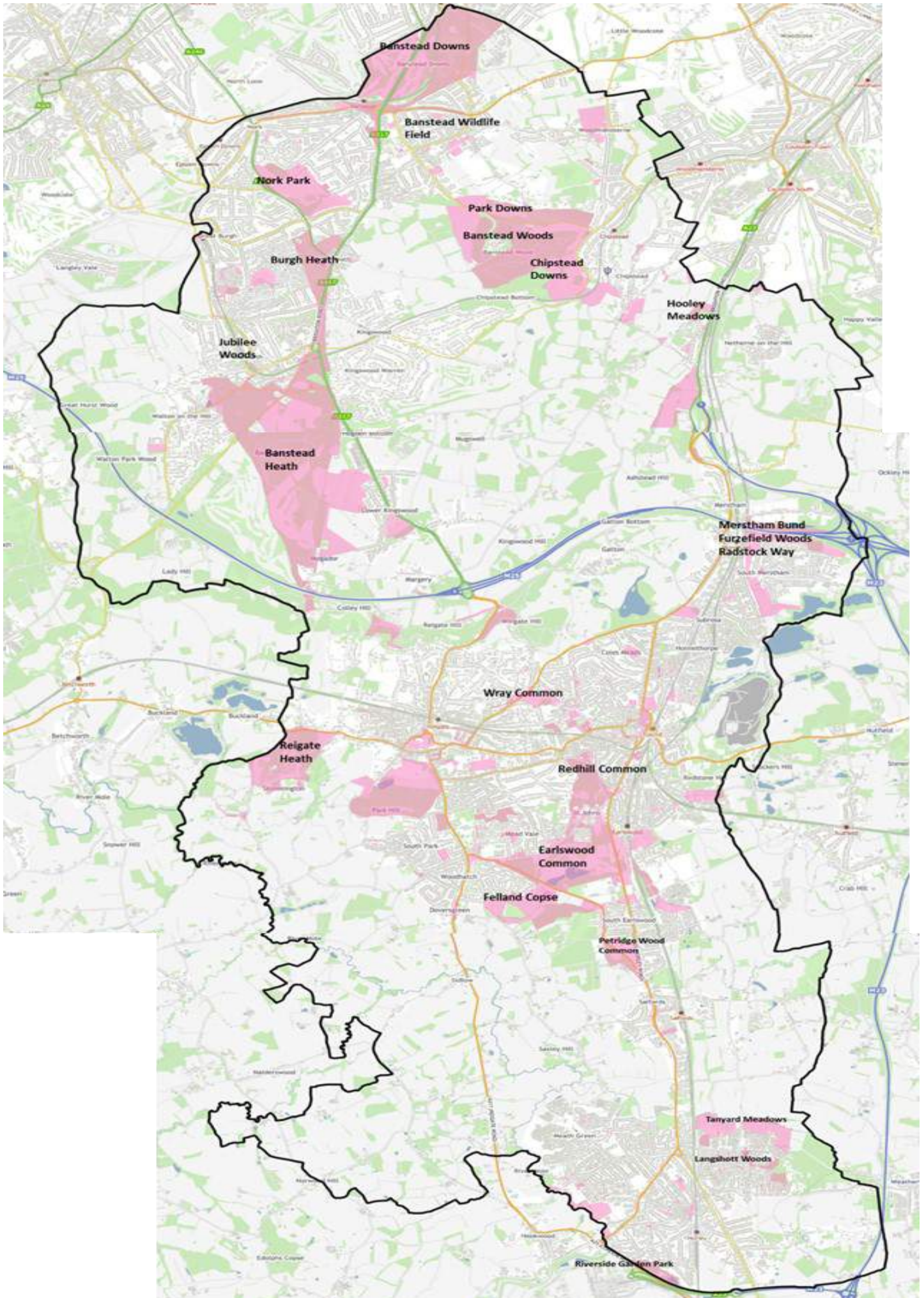
Resources refers to the time and energy of council staff and volunteers. Volunteer groups should be kept well informed and engaged, motivating them, and showing the councils appreciation. Council operatives should work to targets and timeframes to ensure the work for that season is completed to a satisfactory standard. Countryside contractors should remain competitive both in terms of price, quality, and value.

Seasonal work programmes are the backbone of the council's countryside provision. They provide a keen oversight and ensures actions are documented. These programmes should be written in a timely manner. At the end of the season, actions should be signed off or carried over to the next season's if appropriate to the time of year.

Earlswood Common/ Redhill Common and Reigate Heath are sites that have a steering group attached. These groups are consulted before any major works are carried out. These groups need to be engaged by arranging sufficient meetings throughout the year.

Many of the countryside sites have a management or maintenance plan, each one should have an expiry date. They should be reviewed when they expire. The recommendations and action points from the management plans should be translated into the work programmes.

It is important to keep updated with what's occurring in each site, ensuring legal obligations such as keeping rights of way clear are met.



## Table of Sites, size, and designations

Name	Location	Size (h)	(acres)	Designations
Reigate Heath	Reigate	51	126	SSSI, LNR, AGLV, common land, MET GB
Earlswood Common	Earlswood	100	247	LNR, SNCI, common land
Banstead Woods	Banstead	83	205	Ancient Woodland, SSSI, SNCI, MET GB
Chipstead Downs	Chipstead	157.8	390	AGLV, SSSI, SNCI, MET GB,
Redhill Common	Redhill	28.53	70.5	LNR, SNCI
Nork Park	Nork	47	116	-
Tanyard Meadows	The Acres	24.3	60	
Wray Common	Reigate/ Redhill	111	274.3	
Riverside Garden Park	South Horley	111	274.3	-
Petridge Wood Common	S Earlswood	180	445	SNCI, common land
Langshott Woods	Langshott	4.81	12	
Hooley Meadows	Hooley	4.54	11	
Furzefield Wood	Merstham	22	54	Ancient woodland
Radstock Way	Merstham	3	7.3	
Jubilee Woods	Tadworth	0.4	1	
Fieldings orchard	Horley	0.13	0.32	
Alderstead Heath?	Merstham	21	52	Ancient woodland, common land
Felland Copse	Redhill	13	32	
Banstead Wildlife Field	Banstead	0.7	1.74	
Merstam Bund	Merstham	7.37	18.22	
Banstead Downs	Banstead	174	430	Managed by BCC
Banstead Heath	Banstead	307.56	760	Managed by BCC
Burgh Heath	Banstead	31	78	Managed by BCC
Park Downs	Banstead	30	74	Managed by BCC

## Countryside Management Approach

### Access

Paths are cut back regularly to ensure paths are kept clear for the ease of public access. Paths are cut back a couple of metres high on bridleways to ensure Horse riders and cyclists have a safe ride.

### Grass mowing

All grass mowing plans are recorded in management plans and work programmes. They vary around the borough and each plan has had careful consideration. The mowing regime has been relaxed in many countryside sites with some areas only receiving an annual cut whilst other areas need to be kept short for either safety or for recreation purposes.

The grass mowing regime is based on the use and objectives for that area of grass, for example, amenity grass will be mown more regularly. Many areas of the countryside sites are on annual cut, this is to let the grass grow longer, providing food and shelter to invertebrates. An annual September cut allows the seeds to set over the Summer, which promotes a diverse sward during the next Summer. The most relaxed mowing regime is annual or very occasionally once every other year to prevent grass dying, falling over and then creating a thatch layer which prevents seeds to entering the ground and adding unwanted nutrients. It

also stops dominant weeds and thistles from taking over and in the long-term, controls succession. Recreational pressures are also considered such as the risk of ticks.

### Countryside Mowing regimes.

Site	Frequency of cutting	Type of cutting	Time of cutting
Petridgewood Common SNCI	Once a year	Cut & collect	July
Tanyard Meadows - Countryside areas*	Once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
Chipstead Downs part (SSSI) (LNR) –	Once a year	Cut & collect	Late August
New Pond Farm SNCI	Once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
White Bushes Common SNCI	Three cuts a year	On-site grass recycling	Apr, Jul, Sep
Merstham Bund	once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
Nork Park (Part SNCI)	once a year	Cut & collect	July
Holly Lane	once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
Banstead Wildlife area	Every two years		September
Reigate Heath*	Once a year	Cut & collect	Late August
Earlswood Common LNR, SNCI	Mosaic of cutting	Mixture of cut & collect & on-site grass recycling	Mixture
Earlswood Lakes (behind Café)	Six cuts a year	On-site grass recycling	Ongoing
Redhill Common	Three cuts per year	On-site grass recycling	Apr, Jul, Sep
Wray Common (windmill side) Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)	Once a year	Cut & collect	September
Lonesome Lane fields	Once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
Pendleton Road*	Once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
The Ring-Plough pub*	once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
Whitepost Hill-Elm Road*	Once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
Pebble Hill-Dorking Road + pub	Three cuts a year	On-site grass recycling	Apr, Jul, Sep
Sandpit Lawns	Once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
Dovers Green-Castle Drive*	Once a year	On-site grass recycling	September
Maple Way	Three cuts a year	On-site grass recycling	Apr, Jul, Sep
Skimmington Castle	Three cuts a year	On-site grass recycling	Apr, Jul, Sep
Riverside Garden Park	Three cuts a year	On-site grass recycling	Apr, Jul, Sep
Brambletye field	Once a year	On-site grass recycling	September

\* Sightlines and firebreaks are maintained on a more regular basis for highway and public safety

### Trees

The main objective with tree management is assessing the risk and hazard of potentially dangerous trees. Tree inspections are undertaken to determine the risk to the public. A significant issue currently is Ash Die Back which has been spreading rapidly throughout the UK; it causes the Ash trees to die and increases the chance of dropping limbs. When the Ash trees get into the final stages of the disease, they will either be felled or if possible, retained as standing deadwood for habitat. Natural regeneration will be used to restock

the area or if suitable replanted with native species. Tree inspections are conducted on an annual or triennial basis. The frequency of these inspections is determined by the tree's location and the proximity of potential targets within its fall radius. Any recommendations resulting from inspections are passed over to our in-house tree team or external contractors.

## Conservation Designations

If a site has a specific countryside designation, its management practices will be appropriately tailored to reflect this distinction. Often this means more sensitive management and works to preserve and enhance the biodiversity will be planned in and carried out. Surveys will be carried out to inform future management decisions. For instance, should a rare species be identified, management techniques to conserve this species would be implemented. Likewise, if a species of significant importance was in decline, steps would be taken to reverse this decline.

## Mixed Sites

Many of the countryside sites have a mix of habitats, terrain and uses. Land management is about having the right objectives and plan for different areas of the same site. The council wants to encourage sites that both people and nature can thrive. Often volunteers enjoy working on mixed use sites as they can improve habitats for wildlife and see the difference, they are making to improve wildlife in the local area. The volunteers can then show the work they have completed to friends and family. During the bird nesting season (March-August), undertaking habitat improvement works become risky to potential ground nesting wildlife therefore the focus turns to improving access and visitor facing activities/ events. Opportunities to engage local stakeholders and communities are sought.

Tanyard Meadows is a good example of a mixed-use site as it was identified as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) but also receives public pressures. The Gatwick Greenspaces volunteers operate on this site, improving the habitats to attract a range of butterflies, birds, small mammals, and invertebrates. It acts as a flood relief area with ditches and seasonal ponds. There are high recreational pressures from residents wanting space to walk and cycle.

## Focus sites

### North

#### Hooley Meadows

Open chalk meadows managed by the Downlands Project under a Stewardship grant scheme with Natural England.

The site has many shrubs and currently is very scrubby, this is being tackled by a more targeted grazing plan using cattle. A new QR code project is being considered by the Downlands for this site to allow users to track cattle across the site.

Designations: Site of Nature Conservation Interest



#### Alderstead Heath

Located near Nethene on the Hill this is a quiet little used woodland and is managed with little intervention, but has fantastic bluebell displays.



## Banstead Woods

A popular woodland heavily used by the public. Management is largely provided by the Woodchip Conservation Volunteers.

Designations: Local Nature Reserve, Area of Great Landscape Value, part of the MET green belt and Site of Special Scientific Interest for its ancient trees and plant life.

This site is an ancient woodland, important for its ancient oak specimens. Other frequent species include Beech, Sweet Chestnut, and pine. Sessile Oak is the most abundant species. There are a couple of orchards onsite which the plan is to restore them. There is an ancient pond in the centre which has been restored historically but needs further attention.

There are historic coppice stands which have been restored recently by a local group of volunteers. There is a Narnia trail around the site featuring carvings of characters from the books/ films. There are interpretation panels by the large carpark aimed at informing children and families about the local environment and the history of the site.

It is owned and managed by the council with the local volunteer group undertaking much of the practical work. The current management plan is 2016- 2026.



## Chipstead Downs

Designations: Local Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest for its Chalk Downland habitat and species rich meadows.

A well-used area of Chalk Downland. It is managed under a Countryside Stewardship agreement with Natural England and works are carried out in partnership with the Downlands Project and the Woodchips Conservation Volunteers. This site has detailed grazing plans which are supported by years of vegetation data. Currently, scrub removal is taking place to control succession. There is a rabbit population onsite which helps with the grazing efforts. Mowing is also used in certain areas





## Nork Park

Area of Chalk meadows and woodland. Managed by Downland Projects under a Stewardship grant scheme with Natural England. Nork Park Conservation Volunteers support site maintenance here.

Nork Park provides recreation opportunities, wildlife refuge and historical interest. There is a fitness trim trail around the site to peak visitor's interest and to encourage visitors to use the paths. Future focus of the site could be to restore the historic arboretum and produce a historical trail for the ruins of the old manor house.

There is an HLS agreement assigned to the site which requires the neutral grassland to be grazed, this is agreed between the council and the Downlands project. There is a local volunteer group who undertake practical work on the site from glade creation to Rhododendron clearance.

The council manages this site and formulate work programmes with the volunteer group's input.



## Banstead Wildlife Field

Small pocket chalk meadow near Banstead town centre, it has the potential for an educational facility but not well known to the public. Holds a good population of wildflowers. This site is cut and collected every other year and is used by the local community for educational/ forest school purposes by schools and youth groups. There is a platform which is ideal for pond dipping. Historically, the site has been used for research purposes/ higher education. There is a biodiverse sward. There is Silver Birch natural regeneration and a young Aspen area.



## Banstead Commons

Large area of Heath and Downland managed by Banstead Common Conservators under a Service Level Agreement with RBBC. Areas include Banstead Downs, Banstead Heath and Burgh Heath. A number of sites are managed under Countryside Stewardship grant scheme agreements with Natural England.

RBBC have agreed to support the BCC with the costs of Chalara disease affected trees.

## Jubilee Wood

A small pocket woodland managed by the Jubilee Woodland Management Committee made up of Tadworth residents and a local Councillor. It is an educational and local community facility with a natural playground funded by Pocket Parks Grant. This is currently being monitored for safety. There is a book swap box. The group lead volunteer conservation days and organise public events such as Christmas Carols.



## South

### Merstham Bund and Furzeffeld Woods

A large area of open meadow and woodland. An important community asset and managed in partnership with Friends of Merstham. This forms a valuable screen from the M25 that runs along the back of Merstham.

The woodland is used by local schools for nature activities and there are many old Oaks trees which makes this woodland important. The open glades give good Bluebell displays and the trees provide roosts for bats. There is the potential to designate this as a Local Nature Reserve.



### Brook Road Open Space

An amenity area in Merstham with pocket woodland and wildflower areas, managed in partnership with Friends of Merstham.

Further areas of grass cutting has recently been relaxed to form natural meadows throughout the growing season and cut in the late summer. Parts of the open space are maintained as amenity areas providing a balance between public use and the enhancement of biodiversity.



## Wray Common

A varied site featuring wildflower meadows, seasonal ponds, woodland, and amenity grassland.

The site, which lies on Gault, provides a balance of amenity grass and natural meadows, the bunds installed to protect the common, provide a buffer zone for habitats. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland and an area of species rich longer grass. The area by the windmill is on annual cut and bailed

Designations: Common Land and Site of Nature Conservation Interest



## Reigate Heath

Designations: Common Land, Local Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest for its Lowland heath, Acid grassland and wet Alder woodland.

A site comprising of heathland, acid grassland, woodland, and wet woodland. The site has eight Bronze age barrows. The site is managed under a Higher-Level Stewardship agreement with Natural England,

There is a steering group that meet to discuss the management of the site. There is a representative from each interest group, such as dog walkers, horse riders and resident association, local councillors, and council officers.

With it being a SSSI, work on the heathland must be sensitive to the site and either follow the work programme in the management or have consent from Natural England.

Work this Winter is planned and involves bracken control and path widening for the permissive horse rides. Practical work is done by the council and local volunteers.



## Earlswood Common

The site features two lakes, ancient barrows, meadows and woodland. Plants of interest here are the Wild Chamomile and Dwarf Gorse.

Designations: Common Land, Local Nature Reserve and Site of Nature Conservation Interest

This site is used for nature conservation and recreation opportunities. It has a lot of neutral semi-improved grassland and broadleaf woodland. Since the closure of the golf course the council prioritise are to return the common back to grassland.

The site contains Chamomile which is nationally rare and therefore the grassland management is tailored towards this.

There is a steering group for this site, with relevant stakeholders, including local councillors, interested groups members, volunteer group organisers and greenspaces officers.



## **New Pond Farm**

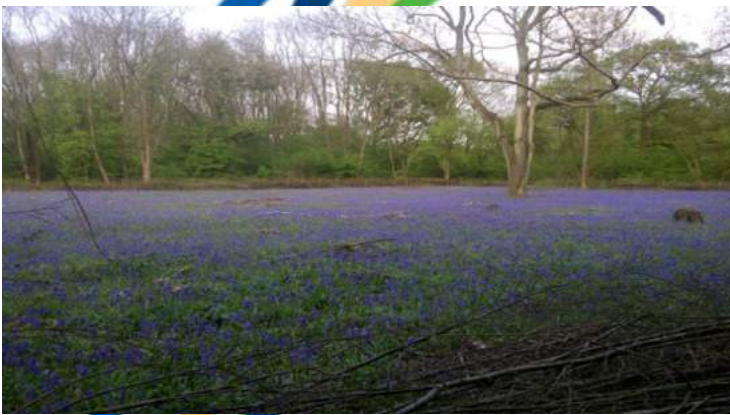
An area comprising of open meadow and amenity grass. Heavily used by dog walkers.

Designations: Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

New Pond Farm is a network of wet grassland fields that were farmed until the middle of the 20th century. Since then, the site has been used for public recreation and nature conservation and the result is the peaceful place that we have today.

## **Felland Copse**

An Ancient Woodland located at the back of New Pond Farm. Popular with dog walkers. There is a glade supporting population of bluebells. The copse is an excellent example of ancient semi-natural woodland coppice where woodlands were managed in rotation to ensure an ongoing supply of wood for fuel.



## **Redhill Common**

Site adjacent to Earlswood Common. Notable viewpoint overlooking Gatwick airport.

Designations: Common land (registered under Earlswood Common).

Redhill Common forms part of a large (though now fragmented) area of common land known as the Redhill and Earlswood Commons. There is ancient, semi-natural woodland, grassland, lowland heath and a pond to be enjoyed. Traditionally sheep and cattle would have grazed on the land. Since grazing stopped woodland has taken over and some of the habitats that were lost have become very rare. In the last few years RBBC and volunteers have restored the Top Common so that on a clear day amazing views across the Weald to the South Downs can be enjoyed.



### **Whitebushes Common**

Open meadow, scrub land, seasonal pond and amenity grass.

Designations: Common Land, Site of Nature Conservation Interest.



### **Petridgewood Common**

Comprises of open meadow, scrub and amenity grass.

Designation: Common Land and Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

Petridgewood Common is a large area of common land, home to an array of plants and flowers. The richness of wildflower species on this site is a direct result of its management and periodical cutting, which also provides suitable conditions for a myriad of insects and other wildlife.



### Riverside Park Garden

A linear stretch of woodland and amenity grass that runs alongside the River Mole near Gatwick Airport. Also features a fishing lake managed by the Horley Piscatorial Society under licence with RBBC. Gatwick Greenspace provide nature conservation task here, such as the control of Himalayan Balsam population, coppice the Alder, Hazel Cherry and Willow as well as carrying out hedge laying in partnership with RBBC.





## Community Orchard Horley

A small area of unused greenspace that has been converted into an Orchard and is managed by the Horley Conservation Group.

The aim is to manage this area for people and wildlife, and to be cut and collected twice a year (in Spring and late Summer) to encourage native plants to grow between the trees. Recently RBBC supplied saplings for the volunteers to plant to protect the site further and to encourage residents to use the footpath.



## Tanyard Meadows

RBBC's newest open space comprises of open meadow, woodland, wetland and ponds. It features an ancient Tanning Pond which is a listed scheduled monument.

The maintenance of Tanyard meadows is split into two areas, defined by the spinal path through the middle of the meadows, the larger fields are maintained as countryside areas of which are cut once per annum. The areas of open spaces are maintained as amenity grass land, these are cut on a more regular basis and located close to the properties. The ditches are cut every other year, providing essential flood relief as well as flowers and other notable species. There are many secluded parts of the site which are managed for wildlife by providing mixed ages of bramble, long grass and coppiced woods. New scallops have been included by volunteer groups (primarily for Butterflies) in the Blackthorn that is extending out from the hedgerows. Future management of the site will be determined through a review of the current management plan in 2024

Designation: Proposed Local Nature Reserve, has been put forward to be nominated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest



### **Key Achievements**

South East in Bloom awards for Reigate Heath, Earlswood Common and Tanyard Meadows. Work programmes for all sites. All sites overseen by Natural England are in favourable condition. Good working relation with key partners like SNP, Downlands, BCC, Gatwick Greenspaces, steering groups and community groups, volunteers specific to countryside (RACV and Woodchips). Fantastic feedback from resident survey for providing clean green countryside areas, such as Earlswood & Redhill Common; this was highlighted through the covid period where the public were using our sites more than ever.

<b>Site</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Lady Neville Park	Silver	Silver	Silver-Gilt
Redhill Memorial Park	Gold	Gold	Gold
Redstone Cemetery	Gold	Gold	Gold
Reigate Castle Grounds	Silver-Gilt	Silver-Gilt	Silver-Gilt
Earlswood Common	Gold	Gold	Silver-Gilt
Reigate Garden of Remembrance	Silver-Gilt	Silver-Gilt	Silver-Gilt
Reigate Heath	Silver-Gilt	Silver-Gilt	Silver-Gilt
Reigate Priory Park	Gold	Gold	Silver-Gilt
Tanyard Meadow	Silver-Gilt	Silver-Gilt	Gold

### **Status of Sites of Nature Conservation (SNCI's) managed by Greenspaces.**

53 SNCI Sites in the borough, (only 11 of these are in RBBC Greenspaces Management) The rest are managed by other site managers such as Surrey Wildlife Trust/Woodland Trust etc.

In 2017 64% were in positive management (Joint second highest out of the 11 Boroughs and Districts in Surrey) 5 out of the 11 SNCI 's managed by Greenspaces were in positive management. In 2018, 7 out of the 11 SNCI's managed by Greenspaces were in positive management. Currently, 10 out of the 11 SNCI's

managed by Greenspaces are now in positive management. The outstanding site is Pit Wood as there is no SNCI Report available to view target notes.

## Countryside Stewardships and protected sites

Chipstead Downs, Banstead Woods & Reigate Heath – The SSSI are all in favourable condition as per last assessment by Natural England

## Management plans

Management Plan	Dates	Renewal
Reigate Heath	2019	2029
Earlswood Common	2022	2027
Redhill Common	2022	2027
Banstead Woods	2016	2026

HLS Agreement	Dates	Renewal
Nork Park/ Hooley Meadows	2011	2021
Chipstead Downs	2023	2027

Maintenance Plans	Dates	Renewal
Tanyard Meadows	2019	2023
Riverside Garden Park	2019	2024
Nork Park	2020	Under review
Langshott Estate	2010	2030
Furzeffeld Woods	2018	Under review
Merstham Bund	2009	Under review
Banstead Sites (BCC)	2024	2034

## Challenges and Constraints

Many of our sites experience anti-social behaviour including litter, vandalism, unauthorised use of motorbikes and dog fouling. Tackling these challenges isn't simple, installing bins are costly and clutter the countryside and must be considered by the street cleansing team. Working with the Joint Enforcement Team is crucial to dealing with anti-social behaviour. Undertaking work on Common land provides its challenges as there are limitations to what can be done, for example erecting fences and buildings, creating ditches and banks, resurfacing, or laying new hard standing roads/ paths/ carparks. If the council wishes to undertake such works, then an application to the Secretary of State (DEFRA) must be submitted.

Greenspaces officers are in the process of precuring a consultancy services for the development of a Greenspaces Strategy, the likely timeframe for this to be completed is by the end of 2024.

## Wildlife

Recently carried out wildlife surveys are:

Site	Date	Details
Earlswood Common	March- October 2019	Butterfly transects
Earlswood Common	Dates up to 2020	Amphibian and reptile
Earlswood Common	June 2020	Phase 1 survey
Earlswood Common	May 2020	Himalayan Balsam
Reigate Heath	November 2018	Bat survey
Reigate Heath	November 2018	Bird survey
Reigate Heath	January 2018	Butterfly survey
Reigate Heath	June 2017	Reptile survey
Reigate Heath	June 2017	Veteran trees
Reigate Heath	November 2018	Invertebrate survey
Reigate Heath	September 2023	Acid grassland survey
Reigate Heath	September 2016	Fungi survey
Banstead Woods	January 2020	Invertebrate survey
Banstead Woods	November 2019	Fungi
Chipstead Downs	Year of 2016	Butterfly transcut
Chipstead Downs	2010- 2017	Comprehensive fauna survey
Chipstead Downs	Annually as part of HLS	Sward surveys
Nork Park	2008	Hedgerow survey
Nork Park	2015, Baseline for HLS	Sward survey
Wray Common	2019	Vegetation survey
Whitebushes	July 2019	Vegetation survey
Priory Park, Park Hill	July 2019	Vegetation survey
Petridge Common	July 2019	Vegetation survey
Dovers Green Road	2021	Sward survey
Tanyard Meadows	April 2020	Great crested newt DNA
Tanyard Meadows	April, May 2018	Phase 1 habitat survey
Tanyard Meadows	April- July 2018	Bird survey
Tanyard Meadows	Summer 2018	Invertebrates
Tanyard Meadows	April 2018	GCN suitable habitat
Tanyard Meadows	April- September 2018	Reptile survey

## Operations

Countryside Officer, supervisor, full time ranger, dedicated operative assisting when required, grounds maintenance team to support on larger tasks. Reliable contractors who are local and flexible to our needs. We have access to all grounds maintenance tools and machinery including tractors, cut and collect machines, trailers, chainsaws, bowsaws, strimmers, brushcutters, hedgecutters, loppers, silky saws.

## Designated Countryside Ranger's task 2023/24

Tasks	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tree works												
Crown lift to reduce shade on Chamomile area												
Clean interpretation boards all sites												
Thinning of invasive sycamore and holly												
Furniture repairs												
Access and furniture strimming												
Control scrub regrowth (bramble, woody growth) with herbicide												
Mow and clear Chamomile areas												
Footpath mowing all sites												
Priory Park Hill, Earlswood Common selected roughs, Petridgewood Common selected grass areas												
Site inspections all sites												
Strim selected golf course roughs that were treated in May, clear cuttings/ occasional habitat piles on edges. No vehicles on roughs because of ant hills												
Mow Zone 2 on ridge. Habitat pile cuttings												
Glade maintenance (two new glades to establish)												
Woodland thinning of invasive sycamore												
Scrub control on lowland heath areas												
Scrub clearance on scheduled monuments												
Scrub control												
Crown lift												

## Volunteers

Volunteer groups operate throughout the borough on the countryside sites.

List of volunteer groups:

- Reigate Area Volunteers: Redhill Common and Reigate Heath
- Woodchips: Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs
- Gatwick Greenspaces: Riverside Garden Park
- Horley Conservation Group: Tanyard Meadows
- Nork Park Volunteers: Nork Park
- Friends of Merstham Parks & Greens: Furzefield Woods
- Woodhatch greenspaces preservation volunteers

The council work with them by agreeing their work programmes throughout the year. The groups let the council staff know of any challenges and any feedback from the public.

## Communications

We have regular internal communication meetings to discuss issues and current projects. One future focus is to communicate our social media messages with local ward councillors on planned operations that may be of interest of residents & user groups on countryside areas.

## Wider Picture

The Countryside Officer is involved in the Surrey Countryside Partnership and attends the Countryside and Parks Forum, which is a group of landowners/ managers from around Surrey to discuss how to tackle issues and share expertise.

## Level of resource within the Greenspaces team

Team	Level of resources	Main duties*
Parks	3	Grass/ Hedge cutting borough parks
Allotments & council owned grass areas	2	Maintaining allotments and council owned land
Mechanic	1	Maintaining and repairing of machinery
Cemeteries	4	Maintaining Redstone & closed Cemetery with hedge cutting, grass cutting, clearing paths of moss and leaves, preparing plots and graves,
Trees	3 + Apprentice	Maintaining trees in our cemeteries, allotments, parks, playgrounds, and countryside sites
Playground equipment	1	Repairing and inspecting playground equipment
Playground maintenance	2	Maintaining and cleaning all the boroughs playgrounds for grass and hedge cutting
Sports	1	Maintaining the boroughs cricket and football pitches
Priory Park, Garden of Remembrance, Shaws corner, Various sites	5	Maintaining the priory park, Garden of Remembrance Shaws corner and various sites, with grass cutting hedge cutting pruning shrubs, planting, and weeding.
Redhill memorial park, Lady Neville, various sites	2	Maintaining Redhill memorial park, Lady Neville and various sites with grass cutting hedge cutting pruning shrubs and weeding
Castle Grounds / Town Hall	2	Maintaining Castle grounds and the town hall with grass cutting hedge cutting pruning shrubs, planting, and weeding

\*Main duties are planned works only, often the team undertakes additional task on request and resident reporting