
Maintaining the Biodiversity of Wandsworth Council's Park & Open Spaces

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Maintaining the Biodiversity

- Working in partnership with Wandsworth Council on legislation
- Biodiversity in Wandsworth – an action plan to address climate change
- Protecting Wandsworth's parks and open spaces; planning and action at a local authority level

What we do..

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

Enable deliver this duty on behalf of Wandsworth through:

- Evidence
- Land management
- Biodiversity strategy
- Planning advice

Evidence

Our work is informed by up-to-date evidence:

- a) Best practice document - Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), in accordance with the “Guidance for Local Authorities on accessing biodiversity information”
- b) GiGL regularly provides accurate and current data, including maps, detailing the distribution of priority places, habitat types and species within the borough
- c) This information is used to:
 - Analyse changes in the area, condition of habitats and by extension inform any changes to Local Wildlife Sites and changes of Deficiency in access to nature (AoD)
 - Analyse the spatial distribution of priority species to inform works to improve supporting habitats and features
- d) Modelling the data informs us about the best locations to seek enhanced links and connectivity within and across the borough

Guidance for Local Authorities on accessing biodiversity information published jointly by Association of Local Environmental Record Centres, National Biodiversity Network and Association of Local Government Ecologists



Wandsworth Factsheet



www.gigl.org.uk

@iGiGL

Top 5 Contributors of Wildlife Records:



Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

- Number of SINCs: 36
- SINC area: 822ha
- Percentage SINC: 23.3% of borough

Open Space

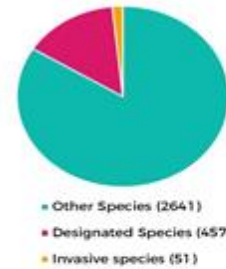
- Number of open spaces: 250
- Open space area: 1,115ha
- Percentage open space: 31.7% of borough
- Priority habitats: 7/9

Wildlife Records

- Number of records: 85,669
- Designated or notable records: 22.8%
- Invasive non-native species records: 2.7%

Number of Species

- Total Species: 3,149



GiGL Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC
the capital's environmental records centre

January 2020

CC-BY



enable.



Enable staff completing surveys on River Wandle



Enable staff completing surveys on River Wandle



Fox captured on wildlife camera at Putney Lower Common Cemetery



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Land Management

- Work is programmed by Enable's Biodiversity Team
- Enable has full access to the GiGL data on a GIS system
- Works are focused for delivery according to habitat (woodland, grasslands, waterbodies) with sites being assessed continually throughout the year and work delivered at the correct time/season
- For species populations to be successful and sustainable they rely on good quality habitats. Management and maintenance work of habitats is informed by a knowledge of the species that exist along with an understanding of future species
- Actions to improve habitats are implemented to support the population sustainability of these priority and protected species

Examples



- Our work to manage elm within our woodlands, scrub and hedgerows is done to support the **white-letter hairstreak butterfly** - a high priority species nationally
- We coppice the trees at around 10yrs of growth just before the heartwood is attractive to beetles, who spread the fungus that causes Dutch-elm disease. This means the trees do not succumb to the disease and we can provide a continuous cycle of fresh growth critical to support the caterpillars of this species
- Through this work, the species has now gone from one London colony in Battersea Park in 1986 to 10 thriving colonies across South-West London today; including at our Tooting Common site as well as Battersea Park and elsewhere in the borough in Putney



Community hedge planting at Wandsworth Common

Hedgehog 'highway' at
Putney Lower
Common Cemetery





Volunteer Dead Hedge woodland events

Biodiversity Strategy

Wandsworth Council's Biodiversity Strategy was published in 2021. The strategy is underpinned by 5 key principles which should be applied in priority order:

1. *Better*: improving the quality of existing priority habitats/landscapes
2. *Bigger*: expanding the areas of priority habitats/landscapes
3. *More*: creating new habitats/landscapes
4. *Joined up*: improving links and connections between habitats at the landscape scale
5. *Promote*: informing people about how they can enjoy access to priority landscapes and work with us to benefit biodiversity

Wandsworth Council's Biodiversity Strategy..

Allows us to:

- Focus our collective efforts on where they will best support the 24 different habitats and over 3,149 different species that share the borough with us
- Work will continue to be delivered in a variety of ways from how we direct our land management activities, to the ways we will be sharing information, ideas and inspiration with the community
- We want to ensure that healthy sustainable habitats and landscapes are in place in perpetuity for everyone to appreciate and enjoy!

Addressing Climate Change Through Greenspace Management

- By maintaining our greenspaces well and making sustainable choices we can benefit the space itself, the wider environment and local communities
- The Sustainable Planting Programme provides a management framework which guides decisions on plant selection, location and design to ensure not only suitable, but sustainable landscapes
- Incorporating sustainable urban drainage schemes into wider landscaping we can ameliorate impacts of increased rainfall and localised flooding and erosion
- By employing the principles of “Right Tree, Right Place” we can secure greater carbon absorption in streets and housing estates
- Green Flag and London in Bloom accreditation validates our approaches in addressing climate change sustainably in our greenspaces
- We are reducing our reliance on the use of fossil fuels during production and maintenance of plants as well as greenspace management
- Educating residents through Wandsworth Council’s Together on Climate Change annual festival



Planning and Actions at a Local Authority Level to protect Wandsworth's Green Spaces

Planning Advice

- Enable provide biodiversity assessment of planning applications submitted to Wandsworth planners to advise them of their impacts on priority or protected species, habitats and places in line with the Local Plan Planning Policy DMO4 Nature conservation
- Enable assess Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA), Ecological Impacts Assessments (EclA) and Design and Access documents (DAS) to determine if they meet professional standards
- We provide a summary of the submission and advise on any necessary wording for Conditions or Informatives

Examples of Enable project delivery in Wandsworth..



An example of “better” habitat management is our work at the pond on Wandsworth Common alongside Bolingbroke Grove (known as either the Stock Pond or Three Islands Pond) where we have begun to improve the emergent vegetation around the edges. We have implemented an annual programme to remove self-set woody species (such as sycamore) and planted additional stretches of vegetation to encircle the pond. This additional vegetation will both improve water quality and allows the pond to support species in greater numbers, making it more interesting and visually pleasing for the community too.

It is important that we focus on retaining and improving our existing habitats first – they already support a wide diversity of species in ecosystems that have developed over long periods of time. We are custodians of these landscapes, and we should do all we can to retain and enhance them for the future.



As you may have seen on Wandsworth Common, we have been working to understand where the geology and seedbank are suitable to allow us to make habitat mosaics “bigger”. We have done this by leaving some grass areas uncut adjacent to existing habitats (either grassland or woodland). We have temporarily fenced them to prevent trampling and we have been monitoring the plant growth that happens as a result. In the area north of the tennis courts this has resulted in a good diversity of species flourishing and is an area we can now look to retain as neutral/acid grassland in future years which makes the overall habitat mosaic in this area bigger.

There is a lot of potential to make areas of habitat bigger in this simple way – by adjusting our maintenance tasks and letting nature do the rest. In a time of climate emergency this is the most sustainable way to enlarge habitats and we should always assess what it is possible to do this way.



- In Wandsworth Park we are reducing the nutrients in a grassland area so it can better support wildflowers and different less dominant grass species
- We did this in a sensitive and sustainable way by using shire horses as our 'machines' to cut the grass
- Their large feet have the added benefit of helping to open the sward leaving scattered bare patches for seed sowing
- We created a showcase event to educate local school children



Shire horses at Wandsworth Park



Shire horses at Wandsworth Park



- “Joining up” and “promote” will often be going hand in hand. The best way to join up habitat parcels across the entire borough is by working with the local community to encourage change in private gardens
- We began our work this year by encouraging participation in “No Mow May”. This scheme encourages us all to see what grows in our gardens when we don’t mow. At the end of May people were encouraged to count the flowers that arose
- We will be running this campaign again next year and will be looking to develop on our links with Wandsworth Council’s Housing to encourage the scheme on more land under their care
- By encouraging residents to participate we can provide routes for pollinators to move to and between larger sites in the borough which may be better suited to support the wider life cycle of these species





Q&A
