

Site Manager's Report Keston Common, Ravensbourne Open Space & Padmall Wood

March 2015

Dear Friends,

Looking back over some of our headlines from the last year...

Pond 3 footpath re-opened.

We've finally had the beech tree removed from the closed footpath next to Pond 3 and the path reopened. There is still some follow-up work to do, such as repairing the post and rail fencing, but it is good to be able to use the path again.

Height barrier installed in Westereham Road car park.

The fixed height barriers were installed in Westerham Road car park this year. This is a positive as it prevents heavy goods vehicles from using the car park (as they were wont to do) which obviously put extra wear and tear on the surface.

Keston SAM off the At Risk register

The Schedule Ancient Monument (SAM) at Keston is now off English Heritage's At Risk register. One of the conditions for taking it off, was the installation of the height barrier in the car park, as it is hoped this will reduce the likelihood of encampments by groups such as the Rainbow Family.

English Heritage restructuring

English Heritage is changing. The organisation is being split into two separate entities from spring 2015:

Historic England: A government service championing England's heritage and giving advice.

English Heritage Trust: A charity caring for the National Heritage Collection of more than 400 properties & their collections.

I would presume for the purposes of the SAM, we will be dealing with Historic England.

HLF Project Completed

Just a big well done to those involved with the completion of your HLF Project (especially Tudor). All the boards are in place, as well as the Victorian gate and memorial tree.

SSSI Condition Assessment

As I wrote in more detail in my July site report, the Hayes and Keston SSSI was assessed by Natural England in 2014. SSSI are periodically assessed by ecologists from NE to determine whether they are being managed appropriately and whether the features for which the site was notified are still present. The report in general was very positive, I was particularly pleased that the Keston Bog unit is now in 'favourable' condition, which is the best one! A testament to all the many hours of toil there, I think!

You can find the full report under the SSSI details on this website (site name is Keston and Hayes Commons):

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>

London's bogs booklet

Keston bog will also feature in an upcoming publication from the London Wildlife Trust on the bogs and mires of Greater London. There are only six!

And some upcoming work...

Laurel/Rhododendron removal in Padmall Wood

Contractors will be removing some of the Laurel & Rhododendron from Padmall Wood near the river (this work is funded by LBB's Woodland Improvement Grant).

Volunteer Leaders Course – Mon 30th March

This is designed for Friends groups who lead their own tasks. I would strongly recommend those of you who might take responsibility for a task day through the year attend this or a future course.

Some notes from Richard Foster on Keston ponds:

Removal of diseased fish from Pond 3

The Environment Agency has been contacted by some of the fisherman as there have been 8 diseased ornamental fish in the ponds recently. These fish have been brought in from elsewhere. Our fisheries officer from the EA would like to remove the remaining ornamental fish, and he will do this by electro-shocking them. This is a small electric pulse to the water that stuns the fish and allows them to be collected. We have spoken with Natural England also, and they are happy for us to go ahead. This is likely to be happening quite soon.

Thames21 3 Rivers Clean Up

We are attempting to arrange a clean-up day with river charity Thames 21 as part of their annual 3 Rivers Clean Up event (usually in June). We'll let you all know if we are able to arrange something. If the day goes ahead it will focus on removing invasive species and debris from the ponds.

If you have any questions or queries for me when I'm not on site, contact me at the High Elms Office, tel 01689 862815 or email jenny.price@bromley.gov.uk.

Jenny Price
Countryside Development Officer