

Keston Common, Ravensbourne Open Space and Padmall Wood Site Report

Friends of Keston Common Open Meeting October 2022

Firstly, as always, please could I express my gratitude and whole-hearted thanks for all the hard work that you as Friends put into Keston Common. The site would not be in such a good state it is without all of your efforts, hard work and support.

Special thanks to Bob Harrop and Diane Muir for undertaking the recording of the reptiles and butterflies respectively. The other species highlight this year has been the orchids with both Southern Marsh and Common Spotted recorded onsite along with their respective hybrids.

The coming winter is due to be a busy hive of activity. Pond 3 has the go ahead and work is due to commence week of the 10th October. This will see an appointed contractor remove the degraded revetments and the edge re-profiled into a natural sloping shape. The footpath will be diverted upward so that people can still enjoy the vista of the pond. Fencing will be looked at in due course.

A further contractor is in the process of being appointed to carry out a scrape on a section of the main bog. This will remove a section of rush and allow re-colonisation of sphagnum mosses, restoring the overall structure of the bog. It is hoped this will keep the rush at bay but time will tell. Further works to continue the slowing down of water in the bog is currently being scoped to enhance the hydrology.

Contractual work is also due to be undertaken to thin out the dense holly and free up the canopy of the woodland between the mire and the main heath. This will complement work that the Friends have done over the summer taking out holly regrowth to maintain the open woodland structure below the SAM.

Looking beyond the winter to spring and summer 2023 there is a range of infrastructure tasks to be undertaken including replacement of gates, repairs to the Westerham Road car-park island and notice board. Additionally, there will be all the usual tasks such as post and rail renewal.

Anti-social behaviour and access management is still a problem, as a result dead hedging and fencing is being used more to steer the public out of areas of sensitivity and allow the natural restorative process to take place. Please do politely remind people to stick to the paths but only if safe to do so, do not put yourself in an uncomfortable or threatening situation. If you see any enforcement matters such as horse riders and cyclists in the wrong places, please continue to report this via the usual channels.

I am looking forward to the challenging winter ahead.

Steven Lofting
Senior Conservation Ranger (Biodiversity), Site Manager.