

Open Space & Wildlife sub-group

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Scope of sub-group:

- At our 1st sub-group meeting we noted that protecting our open spaces, waterscapes and wildlife had been identified as the overarching objective. Consequently, the scope of this sub-group was agreed as follows:

This group should propose policies that support this objective, taking into account the local sites of special scientific interest and protection areas. Where appropriate, this group should also develop policy ideas that encourage biodiversity when new developments are proposed, that protect and enhance highly valued views and wildlife corridors by the continuous informed and sympathetic management of the natural environment.

First steps:

- Initially we have been working on identifying protected and non-protected areas of Green Infrastructure (GI) in Yateley, Darby Green and Frogmore.
- The National Planning Practice Guidance defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as: “A network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure is not simply an alternative description for conventional open space. As a network it includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, but also street trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls.”
- GI can be in public or private ownership and be various sizes and be in any condition.

First steps:

- Identifying the areas of GI that are publicly and privately owned has proved to be time-consuming and is on-going.
- To do this we are using the Defra Magic maps <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> , local knowledge and the Land Registry with support from the Hart Countryside team who have provided large scale maps for us.
- We are aware that there is considerable overlap between this sub group and the Getting Around sub group and we plan to collaborate further down the line.

First steps:

- We are categorising our GI into the following categories, identifying their owners where known:
 - Green Infrastructure with designation
 - Green Infrastructure without designation
 - Green Infrastructure in private ownership
 - Areas of water with designation
 - Areas of water without designation
 - Areas of water in private ownership
 - Important views around the parish
- We felt that breaking down the ownership and designation would provide a clearer picture of what we have, and what is protected and what is vulnerable, identifying areas that could be enhanced in terms of biodiversity.

Draft objectives

1. *If new development takes place, measures should be taken that ensure the existing ecology and biodiversity of the area is conserved and enhanced.*
2. *Where Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) are proposed/required as part of a new development, they will need to meet locally agreed criteria and reflect current best practice.*
3. *Water courses shall be conserved and enhanced as they are integral to the biodiversity of the area.*
4. *All green spaces shall be managed with a view to protecting, conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Steps should be taken to link up and enhance existing ecosystems and provide new wildlife corridors.*
 - *Consider developing a 'Duty of Care for Wildlife' policy with YTC that is shared with all contractors undertaking any form of landscaping work. Also detailing the measures householders could take to enhance biodiversity in private gardens.*

Draft objectives

5. *Any new housing in the area would be expected to be resilient to climate change and take account of all of these objectives. Hedgerow and woodland planting should be undertaken to create, or enhance existing wildlife connections between new developments, designated sites and valued green spaces and incorporate green corridors along any linear access features*
6. *Environmental education for young people and the community is to be encouraged so that there is better understanding of the importance of nature to our way of life. This should lead to more interest in conserving and enhancing biodiversity across the area.*
7. *By identifying green infrastructure (including important views as detailed in the Yateley Village Framework Document) across the area that are not part of the SPA or SSSI, the NHP aims to conserve, join up and enhance as many of these sites as practicable with the support of the Nature Recovery Network and Plans for a Wilder Hampshire (HIWWT) and Hart GI Strategy*

Stakeholders contacted:

- HIWWT – Nature Recovery Network that we would hope to be part of.
- Thames Valley Basin Heaths Partnership – SANG best practice expertise and environment education skills.
- BVCT – knowledge and experience of measures to enhance the biodiversity of new developments (bird/bat/swift boxes etc) and citizen science. Also developed Natural Surrey Heath to bring excellent environment education into schools.
- Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) – have provided information on species reported in the area.
- Hart Biodiversity Officer – key stakeholder locally.
- Limited community engagement so far; local primary schools have been contacted.

Stakeholders still to be contacted:

- Hampshire Countryside Rangers who manage Yateley Common – proving difficult to find a time that suits all.
- Local land owners – to gauge interest in participation in local projects that can help to improve the overall biodiversity of the area.
- Local community – need to communicate with to begin to gauge interest in developing local knowledge and skills for preserving and enhancing what we have e.g. survey skills, id skills, and general interest.
- Hart Flood Risk Infrastructure engineer/Environment Agency