

**GREEN FLAG MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-25**

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# Bedfont Lakes

Country Park

2020-25



**London Borough  
of Hounslow**

**Lampton**  
Services  
Greenspace

*Updated 2025*



# Foreword

The London Borough of Hounslow has some superb greenspaces that everyone can be proud of. They are places where people can relax, enjoy nature, play, or take part in cultural and historic activities and recreation. They are essential for the health and well-being of our residents, and they are vibrant spaces that provide a borough-wide green infrastructure for our communities.

In Hounslow, we are committed to stimulating a strong and robust green recovery related to our Greener Borough Framework and Climate Emergency. The Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy plays a key role in delivering the Greener Borough Framework and sets out key priorities for our greenspaces in areas such as health and wellbeing, regeneration, climate change and nature recovery.

The London Borough of Hounslow considers the Green Flag Award process as a tool towards positively developing our greenspaces within this strategic framework and in partnership with our communities. It contributes to providing a vision, with clear objectives and priorities for how the Council and its partners would like to see greenspaces managed in future years.

This plan is not only the commitment from the Council to improve our greenspaces but is an important recognition of the support and commitment of the friends of parks, community groups, local clubs, third sector and partners who share our visions and work with us to respond to our green agenda.

# Acknowledgements

This plan has been produced by Lampton Services Greenspace\* (GS) and the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) Parks Team. In addition, it is important to acknowledge the great contribution from all interested groups for their commitment and dedication in supporting the development, promotion, and management of Bedfont Lakes Country Park.

\*Lampton Services GreenSpace is part of the Lampton Limited Group and is a company wholly owned by London Borough of Hounslow with an aim of returning value to the Council representing a bold new ambitious approach.





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# Purpose of the Plan

The Management Plan for Bedfont Lakes Country Park has been prepared by LBH and Lampton Services Greenspace with input from the Friends of Bedfont Lakes and the Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteer group (BLCV). The plan is specifically developed for the individual site with a dedicated Green Flag Action Plan.

This plan has been developed following detailed assessment of the Green Flag Award criteria and a comprehensive collaborative review of the existing uses, management, and maintenance of Bedfont Lakes Country Park.

As part of the development of the plan, detailed consultation has taken place with the Lampton Services Greenspace parks maintenance and management team, LBH officers and Friends groups.

The Management plan is a 'working document' that brings together all the information relating to Bedfont Lakes Country Park and will be updated, revised, and annually reviewed. This plan has been developed based on the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Space document "*A Guide to Producing Park and Greenspace Management Plans*" and the "*Green Flag Award Guidance Manual*" guidelines.

## Policy & Strategic Context

Actions and aims within this management plan are both guided by, and relate back, to wider Council strategies. The development of parks and open spaces are a vital component of the Council's Corporate Plan 2022 – 2026. Our work during this period is focused on six priority ambitions for a borough that is greener, healthier, cleaner, thriving, safer, and livable. Green infrastructure contributes in many ways to helping us achieve these priorities.

A key approach of Hounslow Council is working under the concept of "One Hounslow" where services are delivered without silos, working for specific outcomes with several internal council departments, community groups, NGOs, and government bodies.

Parks and open spaces play a significant role in the approach highlighted in the Council's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy with start, live and age well, preventing ill-health, which in turn has an impact on reducing costs within the wider economy, the Council, and the NHS.

The Council's Equalities and Diversity Strategy 2023, created to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion - sets out an ambitious approach to target policies and funding to the areas which need them most to thrive. The strategy is based on three pillars - Equality by Place, Equality by Group, and Equality as Employer. Hounslow Council has committed to transform the opportunities and life-chances of communities in the borough's thirty most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The Council approved the Greener Borough Framework 2020-30 which seeks to provide a high-level framework to deliver on the Council's ambition and aspirations for the borough through enhancing our environment and reducing our use of resources. The framework is part of a wider ambitious green agenda bringing different people and organisations together to discover, engage, innovate, and deliver.





The adoption of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Nature Recovery Plan are the pillar of the strategic framework for the development of our parks and open spaces and their management plans through the Green Flag Award process.

**Useful Links:**

- [Corporate Plan 2022-26](#)
- [Climate Emergency](#)
- [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)
- [Greener Borough Framework](#)
- [Nature Recovery Action Plan](#)
- [Equalities and Diversity Strategy](#)

## **Parks Funding**

The Councils Parks team are funding by an annual salary and contract revenue budget for base line ground maintenance activities that include allotments, cemeteries, trees, countryside and other workstreams.

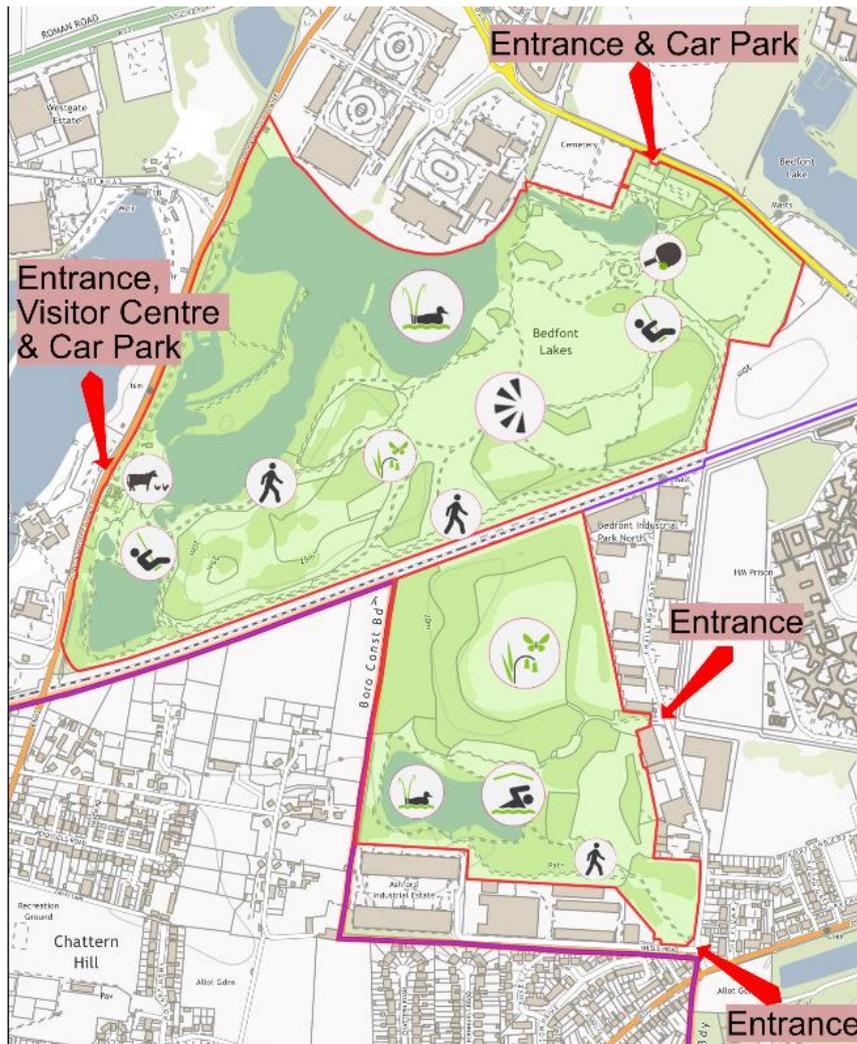
Current parks capital funding has been allocated through a Parks Improvement Project for sites in need of improvements. This fund will cover 2 years of project delivery and staff resourcing 2023 – 2025. Other capital funding is obtained via Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); S106, the Councils Thriving Communities fund (local CIL) and other grants and initiatives. These are applied for annually or as necessary and are based on need and strategic investment required by both the Council and local communities.



# Where are we now?

## Site Description & Facilities

The park opened to the public in July 1995 and is the second largest open space to be created in London in the 20th century. The local community can enjoy the park facilities and take the opportunity to visit the Rangers in the Information Centre, to discuss several aspects of the countryside education or conservation works. The Education Team organise seasonal events throughout the year, promoting the park, its wildlife and conservation values, healthy living, and environmental education to local families. Two improved playgrounds, tailored to cater for toddlers to teenagers have proved a huge attraction in keeping children active in the park.



### Site Information

**Name:** Bedfont Lakes Country Park

**Address:** Clockhouse Lane, Bedfont, TW14 8QA

**Contacts:** Rangers 07887410808

**Email:** Countryside@hounslow.gov.uk

**Web:** [www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk), Facebook: Bedfont Lakes Country Park

**Designation:** Nature Reserve, Site of Metropolitan importance

**Ownership:** London Borough of Hounslow **Size:** 72ha

**Byelaws:** A copy can be downloaded at [www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk)

**Access:** 8am until dusk or 9.00pm (whichever is earlier)

**Transport:** **Train:** Feltham, Ashford Stations **Tube:** Hatton Cross

**Buses:** H26/116 **Parking:** Clockhouse Lane and Bedfont Rd Car Park (Free)

**Local Facilities:** Play areas, onsite animal rescue centre, car parks, toilets, millennium monolith, community orchard, dog agility area, trim trails.



## Detailed Facilities

An onsite animal rescue centre homes a variety of reptiles, mammals, birds, amphibians, and exotics which attracts visitors and has enhanced many trips to the country park. The centre, which takes in rescued or unwanted domesticated animals, is open to the public and offers an educational, hands-on experience. As well as pet responsibility talks, the Education Team discuss native/ non-native animals and promote a respectful attitude to both domesticated pets as well as wildlife found within the park. The Education Team runs a full programme for schools and other youth groups, including activities such as Shelter Building, Mini Beast Habitat Hunts, and Orienteering. The Team run community activity days as well as seasonal events- all activities are created to promote wildlife and nature, and healthy outdoor living.

## General Facilities

- Car parks with disabled spaces are located off Bedfont Road and Clockhouse Lane.
- Toilets including disabled toilet and baby changing facilities are in the Information Centre at the Clockhouse Road entrance.
- To cope with the additional visitors to the park, the Clockhouse Lane car park has been extended to allow an extra 25-30 cars at a time.
- Car park with coach parking
- Disabled access is particularly good in the park. Throughout the park the paths are compacted gravel with medium slope gradients. They are accessible to wheelchair users with assistance.
- A pier on South Lake allows wheelchair users and those with mobility difficulties to get closer to the lake and is an excellent vantage point for bird watching and feeding.
- There are two children's play areas. One for older children is located close to The Motte. The Bedfont Road car park is nearest to this play area.
- Another play facility for younger children is located near the Information Centre by the Clockhouse Lane car park.
- Picnic tables are located throughout the site.



*The children's play area at Bedfont Lakes*





### The Millennium Monolith

The Millennium Monolith is located on Monolith Hill, which, at 95ft above sea level, is the highest land point in the London Borough of Hounslow. The monolith is made of a 3-ton block of York Sandstone, atop which is a circular brass disc showing the direction and distances to many cities and landmarks of interest within the borough and beyond.



*View of the Millennium Monolith*

### Community Orchard

Chattern Hill Community Orchard on South Side is a replicated section of a much larger orchard dating from the late 19th Century, incorporating several remnant mature trees. It was replanted in 1998, and again in 2018 using apple varieties known to have been grown in the local area. Several replacement trees were purchased on the site's behalf by BLCV in conjunction with The Orchard Project. This represents an important local heritage and cultural remnant of what was once the main landscape feature and primary agricultural employer of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. This habitat is now part of the Hounslow BAP.



*Entrance to the Chattern Hill Community Orchard at Bedfont Lakes*





## Detailed History

Bedfont Lakes Country Park formed part of a large orchard that supplied Covent Garden market until the 1920s. The area was then worked for sand and gravel until the 1950s and used as a refuse site until 1973 leaving a mixture of polluted lakes, wasteland, and abandoned machinery.

The land where the orchards used to stand belonged to the Duke of St. Albans and was known as Fawn's Manor Farm. Around 1780 William Sherborn of Bedfont, who was one of a long line of lessees of the land, bought the land outright. At this time, like most of the surrounding area, the farm was arable land with few trees present. It was not until about 1897 that the land that now forms part of south side of the Country Park was planted up as an orchard. By this time, it was now owned by Mr. Sherborn's grandson, also a William. A few mature apple and pear trees still exist in the Country Park. These are offspring of remnants from the orchard days as they are mostly unidentifiable seedlings that are trying to revert to their original type.

In the late 19th and early 20th Centuries the west of London, and the county of Middlesex in particular, was famous for its association with orchards. Well-respected local farms, such as Whiteley's of Feltham, used to supply apples, pears, and other produce to London's Covent Garden Market. The orchards in Middlesex were also unusual in that, as well as the fruit trees in the orchards, it was commonplace to plant an under crop of soft fruits such as currants, raspberries, and gooseberries. With the expansion of London from the late 1700s orchards were re-sited further out from the city to make way for housing, which meant that the parishes of Bedfont, Feltham, and Ashford became more important for fruit production up to the Second World War. It was popular for people who lived in London to come to Hounslow on fruit picking holidays, as the borough was in the depths of the countryside away from the city.

The first gravel extractions on site were carried out in the mid-1860s and involved a small quarry at what is now the northern end of North Lake, adjacent to Clockhouse Lane. The only remaining feature of this extraction site is Finger Island next to Black Hide, which formed the southern boundary. It was later turned into a fishpond.

From the 1930s to the 1950s the site was worked for sand and gravel extraction to provide raw materials for the housing expansion of London and to increase the road network. For the next two decades the abandoned gravel workings were used as a landfill site for both domestic and industrial refuse. At this time there were not the regulations in place concerning the safe disposal of refuse in landfill sites that we have today, and subsequently this caused problems later in the site's history. It was reported that at the time it was the largest pile of rubbish in Europe. The landfill site activity ceased in 1973, leaving a legacy of polluted lakes, derelict buildings, and abandoned machinery.

In 1988 Hounslow Council granted permission to Rutland Hall for the development of offices, some housing, warehousing, and light industry, on 56 acres in the northern and southern parts of the site, which had good access to the main roads. In return, the developers created a 180-acre park on the remainder of the site, which the Borough of Hounslow leases and manages.

To make the former landfill areas safe, two million cubic metres of soil and refuse were relocated to enable a pipe-work system to be installed to drain off leachate and other contaminated groundwater.





Much of the soil and landfill was used to form the hills running through the middle of North Side, creating one of the highest points in the borough, at 95ft above sea level. The hills were seeded with three native wildflower mixes and areas of trees were planted. The existing lakes were extended, and footpaths were laid out around the 180-acre site.

Conservation Rangers work towards the protection and enhancement of the wildlife and biodiversity within the site and work closely with the Countryside Manager to conduct a volunteer program involving residents, nature enthusiasts or local companies. They support the creation and management of habitats such as the heather regeneration project, conduct tree planting works such as the orchard development project and host guided walks. The Rangers also carry out wildlife surveys to submit to relevant monitoring organisations and maintain a record of statistics for the local area.



*Figure 1 View of Bedfont Lakes*





## Nature Conservation

Bedfont Lakes Country Park is a site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation and a designated Local Nature Reserve which covers 88.85 hectares. Habitats at Bedfont Lakes Country Park include Marsh/swamp, Pond/ lake, Reed bed, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Wet woodland, and wildflower meadows. Access is free to most of the site.

A restored gravel extraction and land-fill site, now managed as a country park. The two former gravel pits, Bedfont Lake, are of considerable ornithological interest. Bedfont Lake supports large populations of breeding reed warblers in its extensive reed beds, common tern and pochard. Both lakes are important for wintering and passage wildfowl and waders, including regular nationally scarce species such as bittern and smew. The nationally rare nathusius pipistrelle bat has a major roosting site within the wet woodland.

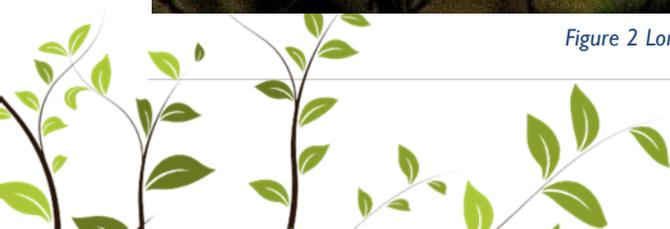
The site is also important for its invertebrates, the aquatic habitats support a good assemblage of dragon/damselflies, while created wild-flower meadows support diverse populations of butterflies, including common blue and, clouded yellow and small heath. Several nationally rare ground nesting bees and wasps occur, as well as several nationally scarce wetland moths, including the obscure wainscot and goat moth. Much of the site is a Local Nature Reserve.

Conservation of the natural environment has been particularly important through the development at Bedfont Lakes. A great deal of this is guided by the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Countryside Manager. Maintaining access to the natural environment is a key objective of this. Good relationships exist with the environmental organisations that operate across Hounslow and many of them are actively involved in park projects. Much of Hounslow's woodland is currently under protection. The countryside team lead on surveys for birds, mammals, hedgehogs, reptile, butterflies, and moths. The runny mead bird group attend regularly to ring birds and the Bat Trust carry out bat surveys from March to September.

Please see Appendix 4 for Flora and Fauna species list.



*Figure 2 Long Tailed Tit*





## Recent Developments

In 2024 across the site there has been 1983 hours volunteered by the Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteers and corporate volunteering groups. A wide array of tasks was completed by the volunteers including litter picking, meadow scything, coppicing, scrub reduction, hibernaculum creation and tree planting. The Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteers have also been awarded funding from the Crane Valley Partnership to undertake a scything project within several areas of the site. The funding has paid for a range of tools for the group to carry out this project and future projects.



In 2024 the rangers have managed the grazing regime of the site with a herd of two herds of livestock on site. A herd of 15 goats has been moved around the site grazing the large grazing field on the Southside section of the site and within the Private Nature Reserve. A second herd/flock consisting of 3 sheep and 1 goat are currently grazing the fenced grazing fields around the main portion of Bedfont Lakes. Additional work has been carried out this year within the Private Nature Reserve to monitor the on-site bat populations. This has been carried out by the Bedfont Nathusius Group who throughout the year regularly check the bat boxes, undertake bat trapping and MOTUS radio tagging of bats.

### Achievements 2024:

- Revitalized play areas
- 3 new gates for grazing fields
- Change of metal shutters on visitor centre
- A new bird hide in private nature reserve.
- New bird screens in public nature reserve
- Bank stabilisation of 15 linear metres of eroding bank
- Replacement of public bird feeding jetty
- 4 floating tern rafts
- New entrance signage





### **Achievements 2023:**

- repair of a pedestrian bridge near Bedfont Cemetery
- repair of footpath potholes using 40 tonnes of gravel
- A reprofiled section of path where water run-off had damaged the path, this also included new surface drainage channels to minimize continued path damage.
- Extensive electrical works to visitor centre and animal enclosure/petting zoo
- New fencing to create a safer boundary between early years education area and the car park.
- Renewed sheep holding pen that was end of life, to support conservation grazing.
- New fencing by boating lake to protect the public from the steep embankment.
- Replaced pedestrian and vehicle gates into public nature reserve area.

A key development for 2023 also included writing the business case for the long awaited Bedfont Lakes Masterplan. A meeting took place between LBH Parks and Greenspace in October 2022 which was aimed at looking at how the masterplan process would be delivered. In 2023 a wider project board will be established to support the delivery of the masterplan. The initial funding will support a stakeholder consultation and development of design to create a vision for Bedfont Lakes, along with adding capacity within the parks team to oversee the masterplan process.

The implementation of the masterplan will be subject to gaining the significant funds needed. We had initiated a landscape plan of the car park areas to rationalise the parking spaces and explore options for increasing parking provision on site ahead of the masterplan, but this will now likely be part of the wider masterplan delivery to ensure that there is a coherent approach. Re-profiling and resurfacing of main pathways, including the perimeter path used for park run will now also be part of the masterplan implementation as there is a need to replace this path requiring significant funds.

Ahead of the Masterplan, in 2023 we will look to commission works for the following:

- Improvements to the play area surfaces and equipment.
- Restoration and stabilisation of lake banks
- Improvements to security fencing around the children's outdoor education area
- Enhancements of habitats to support positive outcomes for biodiversity – to include floating tern habitats, aquatic planting, and tree planting.
- Refurbishment of existing bird hides and installation of new bird hide.
- Repair boardwalks, bridges, and re-establishing drainage channels.
- 10 new benches across the countryside site
- Add more trim trail equipment.
- Improvements to the children's outdoor play area – to include a nature trail and installation of bird and bat boxes.

### **Achievements 2022**

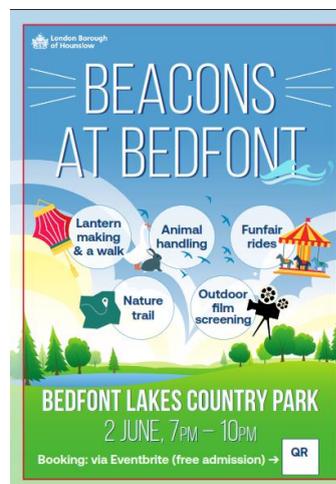
In 2022, minor potholes were repaired in the car park as were some lake bank sections, fencing for the car park and education area and some minor refurbishments for the visitor centre. Two hundred metres of bee bank were actively maintained to support healthy bee populations. Habitat works were also delivered on Tern Island, the Sand martin bank, the Kingfisher Channel. Four dead-hedge sections of bird hides were replaced, and twenty percent of the Reed beds were cut and cleared to prevent encroachment.

The Countryside ranger team delivered a range of events over 2022 including an Easter extravaganza, Santa's Grotto, and a Halloween themed event. A school holiday activity programme was also delivered.





**‘Beacons at Bedfont’**- To mark the Queens Jubilee in 2022, a 500-person event was held at Bedfont Lakes which was royal themed nature activities, there was animal handling, a small funfair and ended with an outdoor screening of the BFG, which was one of the films on the royal film list.



### **Achievements 2021**

Following a successful bid for strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funds and additional Section 106 funding in Spring 2021, a 2-year capital improvement programme will be delivered from 2022 to 2024.

### **Achievements 2020**

In 2020, over £100k was spent on a complete overhaul of the countryside staff and volunteer welfare/office areas, with improved security of depot. Two stacked refurbished cabins, with stairs and a new toilet block was installed. In addition, two new CCTV cameras were installed following a major upgrade of the power supply at Bedfont Lakes which will also support future developments, along with new security fencing around the depot.



### **Achievements 2019**

The Autumn 2019 improvements to the children’s education zone included refurbishing the outdoor classroom with a raised floor to ensure this could be used in all weather. This was supported by new children’s benches and a range of outdoor play equipment.

Within this area a new boardwalk around the pond was installed with pond dipping platforms. A new “Fitness Trail” installed which includes an 8-station fitness gym. Stations include sit up beams, parallel bars, and stride jumps. The trail is suitable for a range of strength and fitness activities. Users are encouraged to utilise the whole Park and a variety of circular routes are possible. Traffic calming measures installed between the visitor centre and outdoor learning space to include speed humps, a pedestrian crossing and 5mph signs. The main access road had surface repairs 3 new disabled parking bays were installed.





# Where do we want to go?

## Green Flag Analysis

The ambition for LBH in partnership with GS and community groups is to continue to work to improve standards and develop parks and opens spaces strategically according to corporate priorities and local needs.

A clear connection between the criteria identified by the Green Flag Award Scheme and the main points gained from the SWOT analysis and site review completed with the Stakeholders of Bedfont Lakes Country Park has helped to establish a comprehensive management plan for this site.

The management plan process is described below the section “How do we get there?”

## Consultation & Co-design

The Council has a strong partnership with the Stakeholders of Bedfont Lakes Country Park. Co-designing the future of the park together in most initiatives and opportunities.

Continuous dialogue is in place through regular communication and a quarterly forum where Friends discuss wider issues and learn from each other to improve overall management standards.

LBH works in close partnership with GS with monthly project and development team meetings where the monitoring and progress of these plans are discussed.

LBH engage annually with Friends groups and community groups in compiling these management plan and their progress.

Ward Councillors and the Lead Cabinet Member for Recreation, Public Spaces and Parking are regularly updated on parks development projects and strategies.

Liaison with the Hounslow Met Police and the Councils Enforcement Team on matters around ASB and public safety.





## SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a management critique to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to help shape future improvements.

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good disabled access</li><li>• Car park (inc. coach parking)</li><li>• Toilet facilities (inc. disabled)</li><li>• Well used play areas for all age groups</li><li>• Activity trim trail</li><li>• New orienteering course</li><li>• Information and animal centre</li><li>• Variety of habitats</li><li>• Education area</li><li>• Seasonal events and activities programme</li><li>• Active friends' group</li><li>• Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteers</li><li>• Active community use</li><li>• Park runs.</li><li>• Corporate Volunteering groups</li><li>• Bird watching areas with screens, hides and floating tern rafts</li></ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Condition of the Information and Animal centre</li><li>• Condition of public toilets</li><li>• Condition of bins, benches, and picnic areas</li><li>• Signage needs a refresh.</li><li>• Condition of lake banks</li><li>• Condition of paths</li><li>• Limited parking</li><li>• Poor pedestrian/cycle network connected to the site.</li><li>• Poor access for pedestrians and vehicles</li><li>• Poor public transport</li></ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Natural England Stewardship Conversation</li><li>• Conservation works – Tern Island, Bat areas, Kingfisher channel etc.</li><li>• Increase in volunteer groups and projects.</li><li>• Upgrade of site facilities</li><li>• Cafe</li><li>• Masterplan for Bedfont lakes</li><li>• Permanent building for staff and volunteers</li><li>• Improvements to the Children's outdoor learning space</li><li>• Updated Bedfont Lakes habitat management Plan</li><li>• Initiatives and improvements focused on increasing physical activity and recreation.</li><li>• Fishing</li><li>• Income generation</li></ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Antisocial behaviour</li><li>• Security (Council/Greenspace buildings)</li><li>• Illegal fishing/poaching</li><li>• Local private development</li></ul>



# How do we get there?



## Vision and Objectives

Vision for Bedfont Lakes Country Park:

“The Friends of Bedfont Lakes and the Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteer group (BLCV), the London Borough of Hounslow and Greenspace will work together to create and maintain an exemplary centre for community involvement and enjoyment which is beautiful, wildlife friendly, sustainable, resilient to climate change, safe and accessible to all.”

### Key objectives for Bedfont Lakes Country Park are:

- To continue to work closely with the Friends and Volunteer groups and other users of the facilities to adequately maintain and improve the facilities.
- To ensure that Bedfont Lakes is a place that is secure, safe to use and is clean and well maintained.
- To ensure that the management of the landscape maintains the heritage character of the park.
- To ensure that the park is promoted and managed to provide a high-quality service for the people using it.
- To continue to encourage and promote community involvement in the management of the park.
- To ensure that the management of the park protects and enhances the biodiversity of the site and borough.
- To promote health and well-being.
- Creating opportunities for connecting green spaces for wildlife and increasing the boroughs ecological resilience and connectivity





## Meeting the Green Flag Award Criteria



### Management of Bedfont Lakes

This sets out guidelines and general principles to be followed in delivering the vision and objectives outlined above.

We value diversity and are committed to delivering a service that puts equality of opportunity as a priority. Management of Bedfont Lakes needs to deliver high standards of maintenance of all aspects of the soft and hard landscaping of Bedfont Lakes, the management of habitats and the outdoor education programme, within existing revenue budgets and through capital infrastructure funding opportunities.

### Delivery Partners

The Council recognises the important status Bedfont Lakes holds, as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, and as space for local people to enjoy. We work pro-actively with the Friends of Bedfont Lakes and the Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteers, consulting with local people regarding their views of the facilities and any impact that is made on their lives. Continuing this relationship is a remarkably high priority for the management of Bedfont Lakes.

GS are responsible for maintaining all the parks and open spaces within the LBH Parks Service. Maintenance is carried out by the contractors' operatives who have the necessary skills to achieve high and consistent horticultural standards. We also work with environmental volunteering groups, such as the Environmental Champions and others, see the "Community Involvement" section below for more information.





## A Welcoming Place

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that Bedfont Lakes continues to be a welcoming area.

Bedfont Lakes Country Park is one of Hounslow's most popular visitor attractions, with over 800,000 visitors per year. The Rangers on site work tirelessly with the local community to ensure that the park continues to be a welcoming, safe, and enjoyable park to visit.

### Graffiti Removal

As part of our aim to make the borough safe, green, and clean we are committed to reducing and removing graffiti. The site will be regularly inspected for graffiti. All graffiti is removed will be removed within 7 days of notification, where the graffiti is racist or offensive it will be removed within 24 hours of notification.

### Signage

Park signage will be kept clean and is regularly inspected, any repairs will be carried out promptly. For more information, please refer to the "Marketing Section" below.

### Pathways

All paths and hard surfaces will be inspected annually. Any necessary repairs will be reviewed, and funding opportunities explored with the aim of rectification as soon as possible. Bedfont Lakes has several formal, accessible gravel pathways and other informal cut pathways across the site.

### Visibility

Vegetation will be reduced so that where possible site lines are achieved across the site.

## Healthy, Safe & Secure

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that Bedfont Lakes continues to be a healthy, safe, and secure place.

### Health & Wellbeing

We recognise the benefits that our green spaces can make to the health of our residents.

We are committed to developing active environments that enhance leisure, sport, physical activity and play opportunities in priority areas.

The Councils [Playing Pitch Strategy](#) in particular, identifies needs for sports facility improvements and sets out priority projects for delivery in partnership with key stakeholders. We collaborate with Council services to ensure that our approach supports the broader Council strategies around health and wellbeing and together with Active Travel team, Leisure Services, Transport, Public Health, Community Development team and the local community we aim to deliver these improvements.

### Useful Links:

- [Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-26](#)
- [Data Hub](#)





## Healthy Hounslow

Healthy Hounslow is a partnership between several organisations supporting people in leading healthier lifestyles; to become more active, eat well and stop smoking.

The partners that make up Healthy Hounslow are Hounslow Council, West London Trust, Feltham & Bedfont Primary Care Network, MoreLife, Maximus/BeeZee and Lampton Leisure. The services and support offered by Healthy Hounslow are: Smoking cessation, Health and wellbeing coaching, Healthy weight management, Exercise on referral, Cook and eat sessions, and Community NHS Health Checks.

You can find out all about Healthy Hounslow at our website [www.healthyhounslow.co.uk](http://www.healthyhounslow.co.uk)

## Move More Hounslow Activity Map

- Available online to be [here](#).
- Map shows most parks in the borough that have a multitude of free activities available.

**MOVE MORE HOUNSLOW**  
Getting outdoors can help boost your mood and reduce anxiety

**Activities**

- Group exercise
- Historic House
- Museum
- Outdoor gym
- Health walk
- Cricket wicket
- Play area
- Ball
- Table court
- Water ramp
- Parkrun
- Games area
- Hurling/throwing
- Cycling
- Screen Gym
- Orientation

**CHECK OUT OUR TOP TIPS!**

- Choose activities you enjoy
- Set simple goals and make a plan
- Start slowly and pace yourself
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Stay hydrated

**Set simple goals and make a plan**

**COUCH TO 5K**  
A weekly running programme designed by the NHS for complete beginners.

**ACTIVE 10**  
Track and gradually increase your levels of brisk walking every day.

**ACTIVITY PLANNER**

I will:	On:	Tuesday	At:	10am	For:	With:	Friends
I will:	On:		At:		For:		With:
I will:	On:		At:		For:		With:

Gradually build up to 150 minutes per week. You can count activity that lasts 10 minutes or more!

How many minutes have you been active this week:

London Borough of Hounslow | @HealthyHounslow | @oneyouhounslow | @hounslowcouncil | @hounslowcouncil | For more activity inspiration [oneyouhounslow.org/more-more](http://oneyouhounslow.org/more-more) **ONEYOU HOUNSLOW**

## Site Safety

All GS Staff and contractors working at Bedfont Lakes undertake an important role in terms of a visible staff presence. All are uniformed and where necessary will wear highly visible clothing. All works will have been risk assessed to ensure the highest level of public safety.

## Control of Dogs

Most dog owners act responsibly and keep their pets under control. However, the council continues to receive comments and complaints from residents about the behaviour of some dogs and irresponsible dog owners within parks and open spaces.

In response to this, the council is holding a public consultation process to gather residents' opinions about a variety of dog control related issues. The feedback will help us decide whether to introduce a dog control public space protection order (PSPO).





PSPOs are aimed at ensuring public spaces can be enjoyed free from anti-social behaviour. They are not about stopping the responsible use of public spaces - but they do provide councils with a tool to tackle persistent issues that are damaging their communities.

For more information on the status and findings from the dog PSPO consultation please see the webpage [here](#).

Bedfont Lakes welcomes responsible dog owners. Some areas are already dog exclusion zones, due to cattle grazing etc. and this has been reflected in the PSPO consultation. There is also a dedicated dog exercise area near to the Bedfont Road car park, where dogs can be safely exercised off lead in a fenced area.

### **Community Safety**

Hounslow Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) is responsible for reducing crime, disorder, and substance misuse in the London Borough of Hounslow.

Along with other supporting partners, HCSP brings together key local agencies including:

- London Borough of Hounslow – Safer Communities Team
- Metropolitan Police Service (Hounslow Division)
- Hounslow district of the National Probation Service
- Hounslow NHS Trust
- London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
- [www.hounslow.gov.uk/community-safety](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/community-safety)

The Council's Enforcement Team have responsibility for overseeing Community Safety in the boroughs Parks and Open Spaces. They walk through parks to show presence and work with the Parks Team and GS to target regular occurrences of ASB (anti-social behaviour). Occasionally a joint task force operation including those above is required i.e., rough sleeping, food dumping, drinking and drug misuse.

In 2024, Hounslow Council established a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group focused on addressing VAWG issues in parks and open spaces. This group identifies short term and long-term strategies and opportunities for partnership development. Key approaches include clearing sightlines, encouraging natural surveillance, and fostering a sense of ownership within these spaces through vegetation removal, raising tree canopies, encouraging volunteering in parks, and organising police walk and talks. The team have also been working closely with:

- London Borough of Hounslow – Domestic Violence Reduction Unit
- London Borough of Hounslow – Rough Sleepers Unit

Additionally, they contribute to the WA – BCU (West Area – Borough Command Unit) meetings, which include boroughs of Hounslow, Hillingdon, and Ealing.





## Well Maintained & Clean

The following regimes are designed to ensure that Bedfont Lakes is clean and well maintained.

### Grass Maintenance

GS employ several different management approaches to maintain grass areas within our parks and open spaces. Generally, grass areas are managed either as amenity grassland, rough grassland, or as wildflower meadow. Within many of our larger parks, the grass is left uncut as part of the annual No Mow May campaign which was also referred to as [Hounslow's Natural Summer](#) in 2024. For more information see the Council's webpage [here](#).

Bedfont Lakes consists of various grassland habitats, and this is reflected in the management approach for specific areas, some of which are managed as part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, with seasonal grazing playing an important role. There are also areas which are managed more formally as amenity grassland, for example within the central field which is used to host community events.

### Amenity Grassland

Amenity grassland consists of areas used for general recreation, and formal and informal sports, and can include wide-open spaces or those areas planted with trees and shrubs. These areas are regularly cut during the growing season, to ensure they can continue to be used for recreation throughout the year (see Annual Maintenance Work Schedule). Grass edges, whether they are against paths, fences or walls will be cut at the same time as the rest of the grass using strimmers in most areas.

### Rough Grassland

Rough grassland consists of areas which are cut less frequently generally 2-3 times a year. These are usually areas which are less accessible to the public and help support beneficial insects and small mammals, as well as protect features such as boundaries, hedges, and ponds.

### Trees

Trees are an incredibly significant feature in the borough's parks and open spaces. They provide a variety of benefits not only to visitors but to the overall environment of an area, creating habitats and providing natural shade. They form an important part of the borough's green infrastructure, and this is reflected within the council's [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#).

### Tree Maintenance

To ensure that trees continue to contribute to the landscape it is essential that we think about their health and safety. Trees within parks and open spaces are subject to inspection by suitably qualified and experienced GS Arboriculturists. This is to identify and remedy any unacceptable risks to people using the sites, or the removal of trees that are extensively decayed compromising their structural integrity. Tree pruning is only carried out where necessary for risk management purposes or where formative pruning is necessary; this approach allows Hounslow's parks to retain a natural landscape with well-formed specimens.

Hounslow Council works closely with Friends, Councillors and Lampton Services Greenspace tree team to consider the tree population within Bedfont Lakes to make improvements and ensure that there is continuity in the way that the trees are managed.





## Tree Planting

Between 2020 and 2024 the Council set ambitious tree planting targets, successfully planting over 25,000 new trees and whips in parks and open spaces. This formed one of the main ongoing targets set out in the [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#). Several of these were planted in Bedfont Lakes.

Since 2020, Bedfont Lakes has had approximately 400 trees and whips planted around the site. Some of which created orchard lining paths, some planting was done in collaboration with a local charity called Gurserva, who funded and helped plant 20 trees in December 2024.

For more information on tree planting locations and species, please see the Council webpages [here](#)



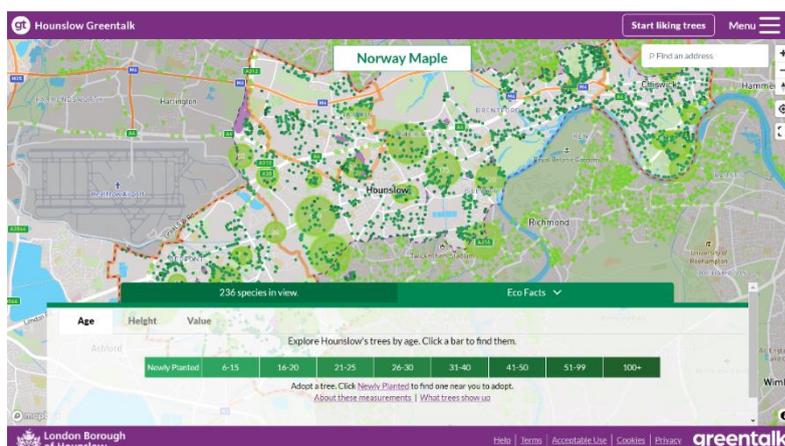
## Greentalk

Hounslow Greentalk is an innovative new platform developed as a bespoke resource for Hounslow residents. It has lots of clever features to help explore public trees and make a positive difference to the environment. The platform provides a unique opportunity for Hounslow residents to adopt newly planted trees and help their borough become greener.

Anyone who wants to find out about trees in the borough can use the Greentalk interactive map to explore their area through a tree focused perspective.

Other features include but not limited to:

- Adopting a tree
- Watering notifications
- Green walks
- Tree giveaways



Over 120,000 trees have been mapped, and around 33,000 can be liked by registered users. Liked trees are saved as favourites and can be accessed through the user profile.





The data used to display all the information on Hounslow Greentalk is derived from the council's tree partners who manage the trees in the borough and regularly provide up-to-date information to keep the system as relevant as possible. If a resident is aware of a problem with a tree, Hounslow Greentalk can help them report the exact tree with the right information to the relevant tree partner. For more information, please visit [Hounslow Greentalk](#)

## Wetland Management

### Sustainable Urban Drainage Design

The Parks team work closely with the Flood Risk team, to help inform on Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features and design during parks development projects. This approach helps provide ecological and sustainable solutions, to help alleviate flooding within urban areas.

### Ponds & Lake Maintenance

Bedfont Lakes consists of a series of lakes and is the largest area of open water managed by GS within the Hounslow's parks and open spaces. Its management and maintenance are therefore of vital importance, both from an environmental and ecological perspective, but also in terms of safety.

GS manage and maintain water areas within Hounslow's parks and open spaces. This includes but is not limited to; removal of litter, debris, fallen trees/branches, dead foliage, and aquatic plants from the water feature/pond. Invasive aquatic "weed" species i.e., Spirogyra sp. (Blanket Weed) or Wolffia sp. (Duck Weed) are controlled, by removal. Bedfont Lakes consists of several aquatic and semi aquatic habitat areas, which are managed by the Countryside Rangers. For more information, please see the "Nature Conservation" section.

### Water Safety

GS also ensure that water areas are safe, carrying out water safety audits, installing buoyancy aids and routine checks especially during extreme icy or hot weather conditions. These measures help ensure that all our water features and ponds remain healthy, encourage wildlife and are aesthetically pleasing and safe for all parks users. Standards are achieved by following guidance provided by BS7370-5: 1998 Recommendations for the Maintenance of Water Areas.

The Council hold fire and water safety groups which are managed and coordinated by the Emergency Planning Team, with various teams and organisations involved, including, the LBH Parks Team, GS Team, Lampton Group Health and Safety Manager, London Fire Brigade, and others. Bedfont Lakes is a priority site in these meetings, and its management is continuously monitored to ensure its safety throughout the year.

### Cleansing

The collection of litter is extremely important in maintaining the appearance of Hounslow's parks and open spaces and has a direct effect upon how people treat and respect the site. This is managed by ensuring twice daily litter picks, bin changes and regular patrols throughout the day, especially in peak times such as weekends and school holidays.

All pathways and entrances are well maintained, clear and regularly swept. Any occurrences of fly tipping are cleared by GS within 48 hours of notification, and we work closely with the Enforcement Team to investigate fly tipping issues where possible.





Community clear up days also take place regularly with the Friends of Bedfont Lakes and the Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteer group. The buildings and facilities onsite are well maintained by Parks staff.

### **Furniture & Fittings**

GS ensure that all furniture is clean and will check benches, notice boards and bins on a regular basis. Items will be cleaned when necessary. Any necessary repairs will be reviewed, and funding opportunities explored with the aim of rectification as soon possible.

### **Playgrounds**

All playgrounds are visually inspected a minimum of once per week (based upon site usage), a recorded quarterly operational inspection, and an annual inspection carried out by an independent inspector to ensure the playground meets ROSPA standards. Any hazards identified are dealt with accordingly and where necessary equipment will be cordoned off whilst repairs are scheduled.



### **Hard Surfaces**

Hard surfaces will be kept clean with litter and leaves removed. Hard surfaces will be maintained in a weed free state. Paths will be kept in a good state of repair and all paths being inspected annually. Any necessary repairs will be reviewed, and funding opportunities explored with the aim of rectification as soon possible. Drains and gully's are inspected regularly as part of the Annual Infrastructure Survey.

### **Buildings & Structures**

GS manage and maintain most buildings and structures within our parks and open spaces. These include both buildings that are open and in use by the public (such as visitor centres, chapels, toilet blocks etc.) as well as disused buildings which are closed to the public. All buildings are managed with health and safety concerns being paramount, with regular visual inspections conducted, and all necessary building regulations adhered to (e.g., fire risk assessments etc.).

Buildings at Bedfont Lakes condition include the Visitor Centre, Offices & Outbuildings and Store and Pump House. These are all managed and maintained by GS. The visitor centre is accessible to the public during opening hours and during specific events and education al activities.





## Environmental Sustainability

The following regimes are designed to ensure that Bedfont Lakes is managed in a sustainable way.

### Litter Recycling

All litter is taken to Transport Avenue, the West London Waste Authority site within Hounslow borough. It is then loaded onto trains and taken to an energy waste site in Avonmouth, where it is used as a renewable energy source.

### Green Waste Recycling

All green waste is either reused or recycled. Grass clippings are spread and left in situ in the park. Wood chippings are used on flowerbeds to provide a compost and a weed control. Other green waste (shrub pruning etc.) is taken to Transport Avenue Waste Disposal Site, where it is then transferred by road to a composting facility for processing.

### Pesticides

As a part of our commitment to ensuring a cleaner and greener Hounslow, the use of chemicals to treat weeds was stopped in 2020. This decision supports the Council's ambitions for a cleaner and greener borough and promotes biodiversity and encourages wildlife. This approach is now fully supported by GS in parks and open spaces, enabling the borough to become even more hospitable to plants and animals.

The use of specific herbicides will only be considered when it is not viable to use non-chemical alternatives, for example, controlling the spread of an invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, as they are especially damaging to the environment.

Removing the use of herbicides does present operational challenges, herbicides have always been considered a cost-effective solution due to their less labour-intensive results. As such GS continue to assess and review their operational schedules to ensure that an adequate resource and suitable approach is applied to control weed growth.

### Peat Use

GS do not use peat, or any peat-based products within Hounslow's parks and open spaces.

### Infrastructure

GS follow the Council's procurement guidelines when sourcing replacement or new infrastructure items. This includes prioritising products made from recycled and environmentally and sustainably sourced materials wherever possible and financially feasible.

For example, using trees felled onsite for seating and fence work, and sourcing fibreglass heritage litter bins to replace ironwork bins. Products made from tropical hardwoods and other unsustainable sources are not used.





## Fuel, Fleet & Power Tools

### Fleet

As part of an ongoing trial within the Lampton group, the GS fleet use an alternative diesel product, Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil Fuel (HVO). HVO meets OEM fuel specifications and is certified to be a 90% CO2 saving on normal diesel. This efficiency is better than current electric vehicles and is a great stop gap to future technologies given the age of the HGV fleet. It is hoped that a switch to HVO will help GS transition to low carbon technologies in a systematic way, giving time to manage various operational constraints limiting early adoption of electric vehicles.

### Power Tools

GS are continuously trialing the use of electric power tools as alternative to 2 stroke machinery. They currently utilise several battery powered trimmers and blowers and continue to evaluate the effectiveness and development of the technology, and replacing older traditional machinery as it reaches end of life.



Examples of the machinery used by Lampton Greenspace, left; a battery-operated leaf blower, right; a traditional ride-on lawnmower.





## Biodiversity & Heritage

We manage our parks and open spaces by ensuring that where possible we maintain a diverse range of age, species and structure in the canopy, understory and herb layers and aquatic spaces. This is achieved by:

- Managing site specific habitats such as acid grassland, mature veteran trees, rivers, ponds, and woodlands.
- Supporting the borough's wildlife through interventions such as birds and bat houses, stag beetle loggeries, aquatic ledges and educational signage.
- Enhancing existing aquatic and terrestrial habitats to support a diverse range of flora or fauna.
- Exploring opportunities to create new habitats such as wildflower meadows, native hedge planting, aquatic ledges, and copses.
- Consider introducing sympathetic mowing regimes where suitable, for example leaving areas of rough grassland around trees.
- Recognising the effects of climate change e.g., drought, wildfires, floods, disease, biosecurity.
- Prioritising sustainability through resilient planting e.g., drought tolerant trees and plants.
- Managing invasive non-native species (INNS) e.g., Japanese Knotweed, Pennywort, Himalayan Balsam. In 2021 LBH commissioned a baseline report of Invasive species Parks and open spaces portfolio, surveying 195 sites. This information was used to procure a specialist contractor to remove targeted species over a five-year period beginning in April 2025 and running for 5 years. This will seek to eradicate: Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, and floating Pennywort, and provide advice on how to deal with Himalayan balsam.
- Biosecurity – Anyone responsible for plant supplies must ensure that all plants and associated soil are supplied free of pest and disease at all points in the supply chain. To achieve this, GS consider the latency period and life cycles of all pests and diseases. Special attention to biosecurity is given to imported stock.
- GS procurement will always prioritise suppliers that are able to demonstrate a supply chain audit trail (for example, are part of a recognised Plant Health Assurance scheme) that ensures plant material sourced within the UK is under a regime of biosecurity-aware production and follow nationally agreed good practice guidelines.

The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) is a part of Hounslow's Greener Borough Framework and was adopted in 2023. A stakeholder board -Nature Recovery Stakeholder Board (NRSB) was launched in February 2024 and is led by the Nature Recovery Manager with quarterly meetings held in various locations across the borough. Currently planning the 4th meeting to be held in February 2025. More information can be found [here](#).





## Conservation

Bedfont Lakes Country Park has a long history of involving visitors in nature conservation. The site has a designated local nature reserve and several viewing hides. The Countryside Service works with Runnymede Ringing Group and Bat conservation experts to undertake long term survey programmes on the parks bats and birds throughout the year. The Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteers, corporate and other groups work with the Countryside officers in undertaking weekly conservation tasks on the Parks wetland, grassland, and woodland habitats. The Countryside Manager undertakes relevant species surveys including moth trapping, butterfly and bird transects with university students and individual work experience trainees.

Examples of ongoing nature conservation works and surveys include:

- Seasonal wildlife Information sheets that are displayed on the information boards and at the centre.
- Environmental Stewardship Grazing Scheme, delivering grassland habitat management.
- Regular species and habitat surveys conducted by volunteers, students, and work experience trainees.
- Weekly habitat conservation task programme

## Habitat Management

The landscape and habitats at Bedfont Lakes are actively managed to try to increase species diversity. This management regime is carried out throughout the year with surveying done in the summer months and initiative-taking habitat management completed outside breeding/growing seasons in the winter. The winter management is driven by the results of the various monitoring programmes. Starting in winter, sections of reed bed are cut once every 5 years to stop them succeeding into willow scrub and ultimately woodland. The leaf litter is also raked off from the base of the reeds to stop sediment building up, which would trap silt around the reed bed and lead to encroachment by willows. Some insect larvae, such as Wainscot moths, develop in the reed stems for several years; hence the reason for a 5-year cycle before we cut the same section again.

Where succession is advancing, willows have started to grow and mature in the reedbeds. The Countryside Rangers remove them as they dry out the beds and stop light getting to the reeds themselves, as well as adding a considerable amount of leaf litter, thus speeding up the process of succession. Reedbeds are one of the UKBAP priority habitats. The meadows and most other grassland areas in the Country Park are managed for wildlife too. They are grazed or cut at the end of summer and the risings removed to reduce the level of nutrients returning to the soil, thus ensuring they remain in an optimum condition for the more herbaceous species of plants.

In the main nature reserve woodland area, glades and rides are cleared in the ground vegetation to create subtly different habitats and microclimates allowing sunlight to reach the woodland floor. These slight differences allow a 20 wider range of species to inhabit this area than if the habitat were the same throughout. For the most part, much of the scrub is left as it provides good nesting habitat for birds and is also heavily populated with insects. Obvious man-made influences within the Country Park are the bat and bird boxes and the tern rafts. The bat boxes are crucial to help support populations of bats in the Country Park, particularly the rare Nathusius' and Soprano Pipistrelles.





The tern rafts provide a breeding habitat for Common Terns, which breed on North Lake between April and August. The chicks reared by the terns are ringed and recorded every year by Runnymede Ringing Group who also record, and ring birds caught in mist nets in the main nature reserve throughout the year. Moth trapping, butterfly surveys, and a variety of bird surveys are conducted in the summer months.

Throughout the year Wetland Bird Surveys counts are carried out. Other monitoring programmes include vegetation structure, water levels, plant communities, bat roost numbers and general observational recording.

- Long term monitoring by bird and bat groups, Runnymede Ringers, and Bat Conservation Trust
- Programme of student, apprentice and work experience working in conservation
- Wildlife Logbook for recording of wildlife by site visitors.
- Provision

Habitat work is also carried out in line with the 2020 Habitat management plan. See table below:

	HABITAT WORK	ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS	ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS
January	Reed bed maintenance	Bird (all year)	
February	Railway line heather scrape		
March	Bee banks Orchard Ephemeral Pond		Butterfly Moth Reptile Mammal
April	Goats rue in flower meadows		
May	Goats rue in flower meadows		
June	Invasive species- balsam and Cressula		
July	Neutral meadows		
August	Neutral meadows		
September	Bat glades		
October	Ditches and channels		
November	Sand martin bank		
December	Tree compounds Orchard		

### Bedfont Lakes Higher Level Stewardship Agreement

Bedfont Lakes entered into a Higher-Level Stewardship agreement with Natural England in 2018 and receives annual payments for maintenance and restoration of 4 parcels of land. The stewardship consists of:

- **Restoration of species rich semi neutral grassland and skylark breeding areas (11.57 Hectares):** There are four fenced areas within the park consisting of meadow grassland. These areas are grazed during the summer (after flowering- usually late July/ August) and then flailed (Cut and collect) during March. The grass is best suited to grazing using sheep, as cattle can be too hard on the clay like ground. There are a further four sections of meadow grass that are not subject to grazing. These areas are ‘hay cut’ (grass is cut and collected into bales of hay.) These areas are cut once per year, weather dependent, but typically in July.
- **Maintenance of reedbeds (1.1 Hectares):** Reedbed management is aimed at increasing structure and diversity and preventing the invasion of scrub and wet woodland. The reedbeds are cut on a 4 – 7-year rotation and the cuttings are removed to avoid a build-up of nutrients and dead plant material. Different sections are cut at various times to leave long reeds for roosting birds and insects.





## Community Involvement

This is crucial to the management of Bedfont Lakes and will continue to be of the utmost importance.

### Friends Groups

The Council works closely with Friends of Bedfont Lakes and encourages them in their efforts to apply for grants and to organise volunteer days and events. We also engage with other community groups and third parties to encourage and ensure opportunities for the needs and requirements of a diverse borough population.

The Parks Team provide support for applications to the Council's Thriving Communities Fund. More information about the scheme can be found on the Council webpages [here](#).

Hounslow Friends of Parks Forum holds quarterly meetings. The forums are facilitated by [Habitats & Heritage](#) who are a west London based organisation who help support new and established Friends Groups. The Friends Partnership provides a support network, and to provide opportunities to build relationships that are based on collaboration.

The Countryside Manager, Rangers and LBH Parks team work closely with the friends' groups, volunteers, community groups and third parties to explore funding opportunities and ensure opportunities for the needs and requirements of a diverse borough population are reflected in current and future improvement plans. We regularly attend meetings, site visits and planning committees. The countryside team ensure that noticeboards on site are accessible for the Friends Groups, so that they can publicise events, meetings, improvement works etc. Community Groups play a key role in engaging the wider community in the park and provide invaluable assistance to the Council and the Parks Team.

There are two strong and supportive groups on site at Bedfont Lakes, Friends of Bedfont Lakes and the Bedfont Lakes Conservation Volunteer group (BLCV). Other groups who regularly assist the park include Runnymede Bird Ringing Group, The Bat Trust and New Foundlands Search and Rescue.

All groups are extremely active in progressing improvements and diversification of the park's facilities. These groups are composed of residents, and represent the core users; dog-walkers, people taking independent exercise and families with children who use the play facilities. The groups work diligently, meeting regularly with Parks team, the police, and Community Support Officers to discuss the park and neighbourhood matters.

### Volunteering

The Council and GS work with the public to inform, educate, and volunteer in managing habitats through event opportunities and specific projects such as school planting in greenspaces, green gyms, tree planting and habitat surveying. Community involvement and engagement in nature conservation projects helps to increase the health and wellbeing of our residents.

The GS Countryside Team help manage and coordinate several volunteer groups across the borough, working in collaboration with various environmental charities.

The Council also have an Environmental Champions scheme, more information is available on the Council's website [here](#).





## Marketing

Promotion and marketing of Bedfont Lakes is carried out by means of a range of measures to ensure that local people and visitors to the borough are aware of the facility.

Weatherproof banners are used to display up and coming events and activities. The countryside team continue to support and encourage the local community to use the park as a venue for appropriate community events and encourage groups to promote the parks as part of their marketing plans as well.

## Entrance Signage

There are three noticeboards located at Bedfont Lakes which generally give people a positive sense of welcome. These signs are well-maintained and of uniform design. The two main signs display key details for visitors, including the park's opening hours and reporting/feedback contact details. Space is also available in the notice board section for advertising special events and activities by the local parks' groups.

## Signage Refresh

The Parks Team secured significant funding for a borough-wide refresh of all parks and open spaces signage. The signage was designed in partnership with Friends, local community groups and other stakeholders to ensure they are designed in consultation with our park's users. The design principles focus on inclusivity, using pictograms and maps to illustrate the facilities available in the park and the surrounding area.

Bedfont Lakes has had new welcome signage and community boards installed in spring 2024. A bespoke design that includes interpretation to provide visitors with more detailed information about the country park, its history and management. The signage designs have been well-received by the community, and includes new mapping, wayfinding information, and anti-littering information.



For more information and examples of the new signage please visit the Council webpages [here](#).

## Web & Press

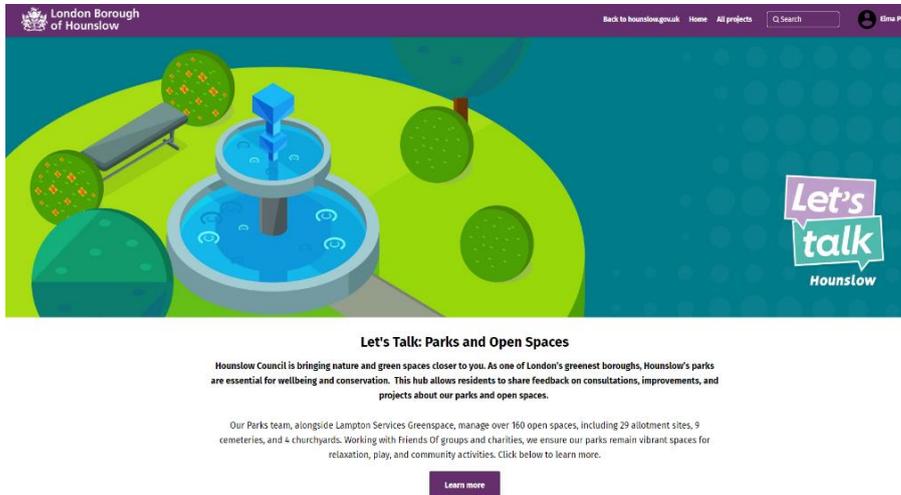
The Council's website has a dedicated Parks and Open Spaces section which can be found [here](#). You can find general information about the service, with useful links, advice, and reporting channels for customers to use.





## Parks Hub

The Consultation and Engagement platform Let's Talk Hounslow has a new dedicated Parks Hub which includes current consultations, surveys, and live projects, as well as a digital noticeboard. Since the launch in February 2024, the site has had over 10,000 visitors to the homepage. To view the hub, visit [here](#).

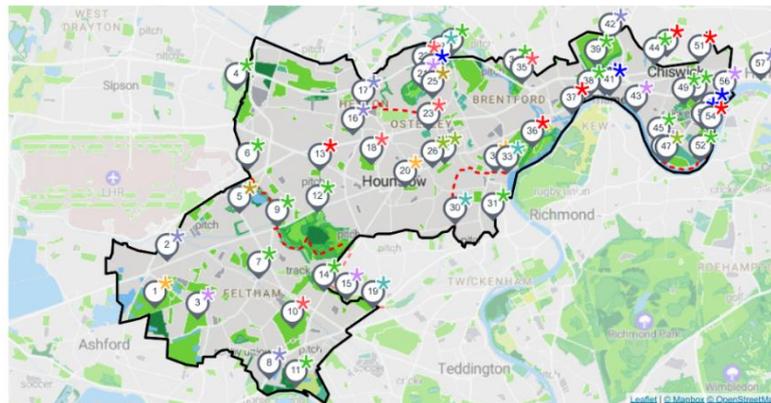


Hounslow also has several other websites which are designed to engage with the wider community about our services and the opportunities available in Hounslow. Please visit, [HounslowConnect](#) and [InHounslow](#) for more information.

- Promotion through the London National Park City [www.nationalparkcity.london](http://www.nationalparkcity.london)
- London National Park City Mini-Guide for Hounslow [Hounslow's Mini Guide](#)

## LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY Hounslow Mini-Guide\*

LONDON  
NATIONAL  
PARK CITY  
IS OPEN\*



Welcome to the first London National Park City Mini-Guide for Hounslow, celebrating Hounslow's great outdoors. Use it to find places to explore, play, or simply sit; groups to join and paths to walk; activities on land or water to try. Get there on foot, by bicycle or public transport.

The Council also has an active social media presence on [Facebook](#) and [X](#) with handle [@LBofHounslow](#).

- Bedford lakes web site: [Friends of Bedford Lakes Country Park – Home](#)
- Facebook: [Friends of Bedford Lakes Country Park - Home | Facebook](#)





To create community awareness for all its facilities the Council regularly produces articles and press releases about activities and facility development. The Council publishes a regular newsletter, Hounslow Matters, which is provided to all residents and includes news and information about our services, including parks and open spaces. To download the latest publication please follow the link [here](#).

### Events

The Council encourages the hire of parks to appropriate organisations for commercial and community events. Events are held in accordance with the Parks and Open Spaces Events Policy found on the council webpages [here](#).

The Countryside Education Team deliver a robust activities programme throughout the year and are responsible for an on-site animal sanctuary. Regular activities include outdoor sessions with school groups in line with the national curriculum, group bookings, work experience opportunities for students, mobile animal visits, animal handling sessions, birthday parties and junior ranger activities. In addition, the team also host seasonal programmes during half term and school holidays, as well small events for Easter, summer, Halloween, and Christmas.

### Upcoming in 2025:

Seasonal events are currently being planned for 2025, With the addition of a 30 years of Bedfont Lakes event celebrating the first ever opening of the site.

### 2024:

#### **Bunny Bonanza Easter Event – 29<sup>th</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> April**

An opportunity to meet the Easter Bunny and complete our Easter egg hunt and spring trail around the lake.





### **Circles in the Park – 6<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

Lampton services rangers were joined by a host of local businesses and charity groups for our Circles in the Park event. A range of services within the Lampton Group were present including the recycle team and leisure teams as well as being joined by the fire service, businesses from Bedfont Business Park and local craft makers. The event saw around 300 members of the public come down to take photos in our tractors and on our ride on mowers, meet the animals from the Animal Antic's Rescue Centre, make survival shelters with the rangers and play a range of games and complete challenges.



### **School Holiday Programme – spring, summer, autumn**

Our school holidays programme consisted of a whole host of different events including our popular junior rangers, survival skills, fairy tales in the forest, toddler town and wildlife explorers. This year also saw the new junior explorer's activity which involved children attending our activities for 4 days in a row to experience life as a ranger through helping look after our animals, undertake wildlife surveys and litter pick the park.

### **Bat Walks – summer and autumn**

This year 4 bat walks were run by rangers on site with over 120 people attending the walks. The event consisted of a short talk from rangers on ecology and management on site of bats before a short walk into the Private Nature Reserve. There members of the public got to see the bats in action flying over their heads as well as listening to their calls on handheld bat detectors.





### **‘Deadfont’ Apocalypse – 1<sup>st</sup> November**

Back by popular demand was our Halloween event ‘Deadfont Apocalypse.’ The event allowed members of the public to visit and enjoy an animal talk from our rangers before heading into the apocalyptic wasteland being led around the lake by a ranger and avoiding being chased by zombies before enjoying roasting marshmallows around a fire.



### **Bedfont Lakes Christmas Grotto – December 2024**

The event was attended by over 350 children and consisted of a winter trail, visiting the Animal Antics Centre, decorating biscuits and crafting baubles, wreaths, and letters to Santa in our elves workshop and of course a visit to Santa and his elves and receiving a present. We were also joined by a local business The Sweets & Treats who provided a range of hot and cold snacks and drinks for visitors to the event and park.



### **2023:**

**‘Films on the Green’**- - As part of the Summer of Culture programme of events we had through the Summer ’23, our parks were used as a free open cinema for the locals to enjoy. Tickets were free but had to be reserved through a booking system to ensure no overpopulation. Families and individuals were thrilled, some cosplayed as their favourite characters, some brought their own picnics... it was a fantastic experience, and we hope to continue this idea moving forward across more of our parks.

**‘Bedfont Lakes Park Run’** - A popular and fantastic addition to Bedfont Lakes. Starting in 2016 over the last 4 years it attracts an average of 135 runners every Saturday who run two perimeter laps of the country park. To support this event the paths have been improved with the addition of 100 tonnes of grit although a major reinvestment to fully reinstate the paths will be needed in the future. Various events of assorted sizes take place on site, varying from small community engagement days to larger borough events. In 2019 there were two large events that took place at Bedfont Lakes – Kingston wheelers Cyclo-Cross and the Joint Services Open Day.





**‘Kingston Wheelers Cyclo-Cross (third-party event)’**- This is an annual event where cyclists take part in various races throughout the day. As the location has uneven surfaces and hilly areas, the cyclists undertake an exciting course. The races are mapped out for cyclists of varying experience and skill levels, and the day is a hit for everyone. There are also opportunities for passers-by to either take part or for new cyclists to have lessons.





# How do we know we have arrived?

## Monitoring & Review

This management plan has been designed as a live document that will guide development in the park over the next five years. Progress will be subject to monitoring and review to measure success and delivery of aims.

Members of the GS Parks team regularly visit the site to monitor progress against the action plan; the results of these visits will be discussed at monthly management and meetings with Friends.

LBH Parks Officers work closely with GS and the Friends group to monitor progress and discuss future. This includes:

- Performance against the requirements of the Management Plan
- Provision and analysis of infrastructure surveys
- Provision and analysis of asset surveys
- KPI's and performance monitoring

An annual SWOT analysis will be carried out by all stakeholders and, together with the information gathered from all the monitoring methods will be recorded and fed into annually updated management plans.

GFA Judges feedback and award outcome will enable continuous learning, development and improvement by all partners involved in the award process. Discussed at monthly Parks and GS management meetings and meetings with Stakeholders.

## Action Planning

Our action plan for Bedfont Lakes Country Park provided in Appendix 1. This plan is based on an evaluation of the SWOT analysis together with other projects and plans raised by the Friends group. The action plan lists actions and categorises based on timescales and the Green Flag award criteria. The plan will also allocate ownership for each task to the key stakeholders.





# Appendix 1

## Bedfont Lakes Country Park | Green Flag Award | Action Plan Updated 2025

### Key to Action Plan

#### Green Flag Award Criteria

W	Welcoming Place
H	Healthy, Safe and Secure
VM	Well Maintained and Clean
S	Sustainability
BH	Biodiversity and Heritage
C	Community
Mkt	Marketing
Mgt	Management

#### Stakeholders

LBH	Parks Service Management Team
GS	Lampton Greenspace
BLCV	BL Conservation Volunteers
FoBL	Friends of Bedfont Lakes
GG	Green Gym

#### Delivery Timescales

S	Short term (less than 1 year)
M	Medium term (1 to 3 years)
L	Long term (3+ years)
O	Ongoing

MANAGEMENT ACTION	STAKEHOLDER	GREEN FLAG CRITERIA	TIME-SCALE	STATUS 2025
Develop a Bedfont Lakes Country Park masterplan through extensive engagement and consultation	LBH, GS BLCV, FoBL, GG	W, H, WM, S, BH, C, Mkt, Mgt	M/L	Business case to support funding of Masterplan design and vision works to be written in 2024.
Introduce improvement program for Lakes banks	GS	S	S	Started 2023 with more bank stabilization works will be carried out in 2024
Improvements to main entrance design	LBH, GS, BLCV, FoBL, GG	W, WM	M	Improvements to main entrance access design to include new gates, fencing, landscaping, speed reduction measures and safe pedestrian routes. This will form part of the wider masterplan delivery.
Review of Buildings	LBH, GS	W, H, WM	S	Building condition survey now completed.
Resurfacing of pathways	GS	W, H, WM	M	Perimeter path repaired in 2023 for worst of potholes but requires significant civil engineering works to address camber and foundation. Will form part of wider masterplan implementation
Improvements to staff and volunteer welfare facilities	LBH, GS	W, H, WM	M/L	New Welfare unit and refurbished non-public toilets, new GS yard perimeter fencing. Works now completed.
New electric supply to visitor centre and staff areas	LBH	W, H, WM	S	Electric supply and fittings now future proofed and would support a new visitor centre and building. Works now completed.



MANAGEMENT ACTION	STAKE-HOLDER	GREEN FLAG CRITERIA	TIME-SCALE	STATUS 2025
Installation of CCTV around the visitor centre	LBH, GS	W, H, WM	S	Initiated on the back of recent damage and theft of GS machinery from the yard. Works now completed but not proving effective. Additional security updates such as alarms to be installed.
New main entrance Countryside Park signage	LBH, GS, BLCV, FoBL, GG	W, S	S	This will likely form part of the wider masterplan but will look at opportunities to deliver sooner.
Anti-Social Behaviour – signage review, continue stakeholder engagement and targeted enforcement	LBH, GS, BLCV, FoBL, GG	W, H	O	
Review signage and wider communications to stop illegal fishing of the lakes	LBH	W, H, WM, C	O	Illegal fishing has been one of the bigger challenges for the GS countryside team.
Review Green Waste	GS	H, S	S	Any woodchip generated on site is used on site
Continue to maintain a healthy tree stock with a review of opportunities for new tree planting.	LBH GS	S, W, WM, BH	M	All tree works are carried out by GS in compliance with UK legislation. Discuss with the friends all tree planting opportunities in 2023.
Develop plans for increasing habitats and the biodiversity of the site.	LBH, GS, BLCV, FoBL, GG	BH	S	
Add bird boxes & bat boxes, Bat Surveying, and other site appropriate habitats/surveys	LBH, GS, BLCV, FoBL, GG	BH	O	Three bat and one bird boxes installed in 2020. We will continue to look for funding and opportunities to install more including bug hotels, snake hibernaculum's, including wildlife education workshops/events
Continue to explore funding opportunities to further improve the outdoor children's area	LBH, GS, BLCV, FoBL, GG	C	S	Go fund me set up in 2022 by Friends of for a new outdoor classroom
Explore catering options such as café or mobile ice-cream catering options	LBH GS	C, H	S/M	To be part of wider masterplan
Continue and expand the work with BLCV/FoBL/GG and the wider community to promote greening activities.	LBH	C	O	
LBH to facilitate events with Hounslow's parks and open spaces as part of an active community engagement agenda	LBH	C	O	
LBH to facilitate opportunities for Education, Heritage, and culture at the site. Include an education facility in any future plans for the Visitors centre.	LBH, GS, BLCV, FoBL, GG	C	S, M	Ongoing
Continue to publicise the Countryside Park through LBH website, social media platforms and notice board. Also, borough wide campaigns, including achievements, initiatives, and announcements.	LBH	Mkt	0	Ongoing
Support other positive promotion of the countryside park through various media platforms	LBH, GS, BLCV, FoBL, GG	Mkt	0	Ongoing
The Bedfont Lakes Management plan to be reviewed annually and the Action plan to be updated annually	LBH GS	Mgt	O	Ongoing

# Appendix 2

## Annual Maintenance Work Schedules

The following table provides an overview of the annual maintenance work schedules. All frequencies are subject to seasonal variations, resource, and specific horticultural requirements. They are reviewed annually by the Operations Manager at GS to ensure they remain suitable and reflect any significant site changes. See “*Meeting the Green Flag Criteria*” section for more detailed management information.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Frequency/Management information</b>
<b>GM Summer works (March - October)</b> <i>Amenity grassland cutting</i> <i>Rough grassland cutting</i> <i>Wildflower meadow cutting</i> <i>Hedge &amp; shrub cutting</i>	<b>Managed by the Grounds Maintenance Teams</b> Once every 3 weeks 1-2 cuts per summer season 1-2 cuts per summer season 1 “reduce cut” dependent on horticultural requirements
<b>GM Winter works (October – March)</b> <i>Hedge &amp; shrub cutting</i> <i>Pond clearance</i> <i>Leaf clearance</i>	<b>Managed by the Grounds Maintenance Teams</b> 1 “hard cut” dependent on horticultural requirements As required, dependent upon size and conditions As required, from hard surfaces and grass areas
<b>Cleansing</b> <i>Litter collection &amp; bin emptying</i> <i>Non-offensive graffiti removal</i> <i>Offensive graffiti removal</i> <i>Fly tip removal.</i>	<b>Managed by the Cleansing Teams</b> <b>[site specific]</b> Daily, including bank holidays. Within 7 days of notification Within 24 hours of notification Within 48 hours of notification
<b>Playgrounds</b> <i>Safety inspections</i>	<b>Managed by the Playground Inspectors</b> 1 visual inspection per week minimum (based upon site usage), quarterly “operational” inspections, recorded, annual independent inspections by the Royal Soc. for the Protection of Accidents (ROSPA), recorded.
<b>Infrastructure</b> <i>Cleansing (bins, benches, signs etc).</i> <i>Lighting</i> <i>Buildings</i>	<b>Various teams/management</b> As required, based on visual inspections and reports Inspections and repairs managed by Hounslow Highways All H&S checks conducted, electrical, fire, water, etc.
<b>Trees</b> <i>Tree inspections</i> <i>Tree maintenance</i> <i>Tree watering</i> <i>Tree planting</i>	<b>Managed by the Tree Team</b> Annually Based on previous inspections, prioritised by H&S Summer: May – September (for trees under 3 years) Winter: October – March
<b>Countryside Schedule</b> <i>Site safety checks</i> <i>Conservation management</i> <i>Volunteering sessions</i>	Daily water and fire checks: buoys/banks, BBQs/firebreaks Seasonal dependent on habitat types Frequency dependent on activity
<b>Site Specific Features &amp; Services</b> <i>Countryside Rangers</i>	Daily general cleansing and horticultural management tasks and to report issues when found.



## Monitoring the Annual Maintenance Work Schedules

Members of the Parks Team conduct site visits to ensure that the work schedules are being adhered to and report issues to GS to resolve where necessary. Customer enquiries relating to maintenance issues are also routinely assessed to ensure they are rectified in a suitable and timely manner.

The Parks Team are currently working with the Ward Improvement Team to develop a new monitoring program, which we expect to be deployed in spring 2025.

The program will rely upon the Land Audit Management System (LAMS), developed by the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE). This is an industry recognised approach, which many local authorities use to monitor the performance of their park services.

The program will also make use of and refer closely to the guidance provided by Parks for London in their recently updated Green Space Quality Manual. This provides valuable insight and understanding as to “what good looks like” and will help to ensure a consistent approach is taken during routine monitoring.

The new monitoring program will be periodically reviewed to help measure its success in improving the parks services. We expect it to help identify where there are issues and trends in performance to inform how best to deploy resource in the areas which require it the most.

For more information regarding the tools and approach that will be used for the monitoring program, please visit the [APSE LAMS](#) page and download the Parks for London [Green Space Quality Manual](#).



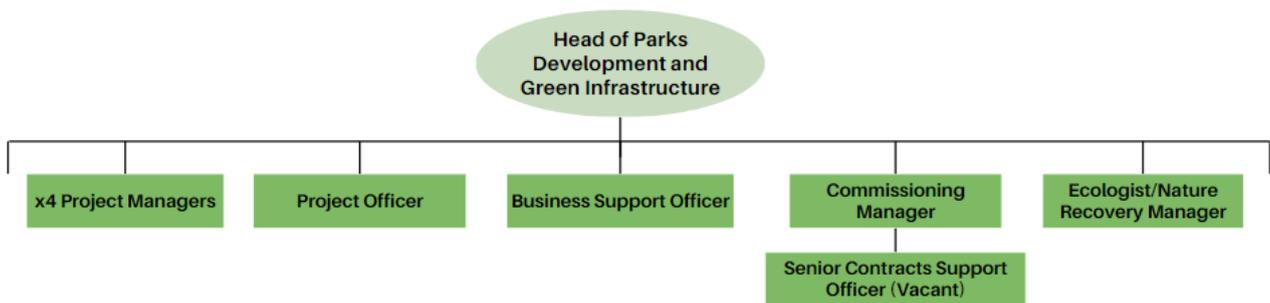
# Appendix 3

## Management Structure and Responsibilities

Bedfont Lakes is owned and managed by the LBH and maintained by GS. Information below sets out the management structure and describes the roles and responsibilities of the key personnel involved in managing and maintaining the site.

## LBH Parks Service Management Structure

The Environment and Culture Directorate provide the following roles who are responsible for the management, and associated roles, of Hounslow's parks and open spaces:



### LBH Head of Parks Development & Green Infrastructure

Senior commissioning role for the management and partnership with GS, senior advisor in relation to parks and open spaces, strategy and policy development, Member's liaison.

### LBH Parks Project Managers (x4)

Project development and management, fundraising, community engagement and consultation, implementation, strategy, and policy setting.

### Parks Project Officer

Development and delivery of projects, fundraising, community engagement and support Head of Parks.

### Commissioning Manager

Supplier performance governance and relationship management, Legal and contracts, Planning/Commissioning, Operational Service delivery and business processes/systems.

### Senior Contracts Support Officer

Supplier performance, customer service and casework, community engagement and consultation, project support.

### Parks Business Support Officer

Assistance with finance; administration, project support and communications.

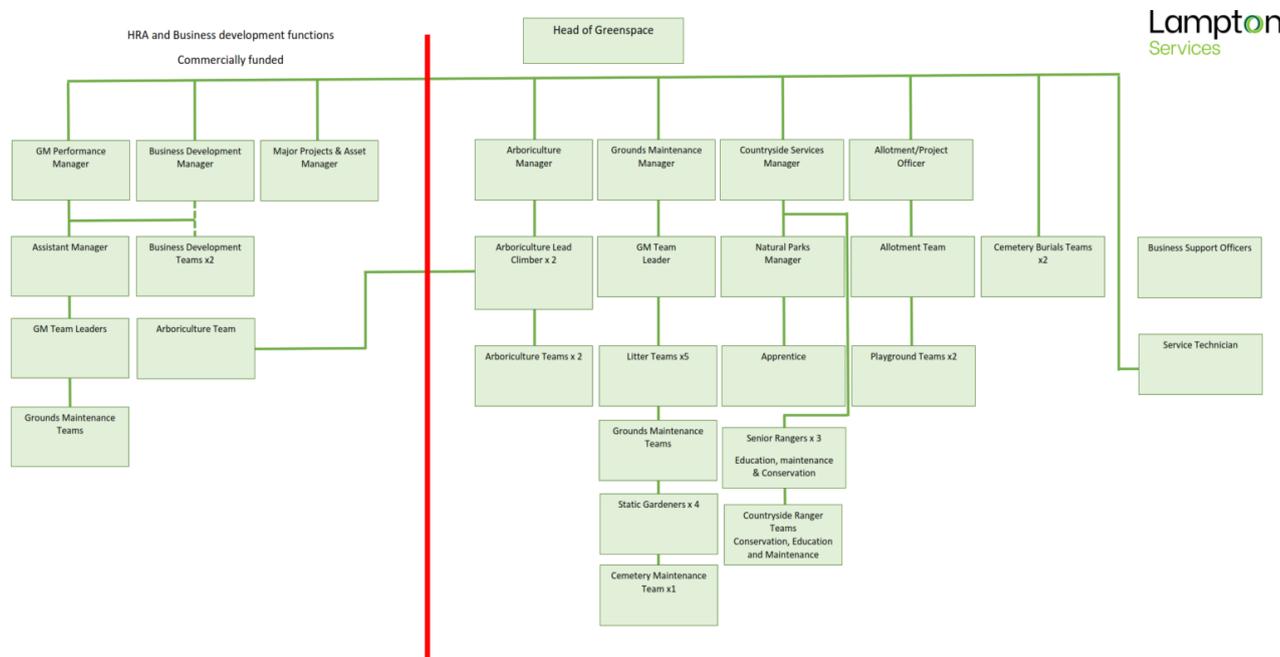
### Ecologist and Nature Recovery Manager

Responsible for providing expert ecological advice relating to the management, protection and enhancement of important habitats and species within the borough.



## Lampton Services Greenspace Management Structure

The following GS roles are responsible for the management of Hounslow's parks and open spaces:



### Head of Service

Responsible for the ground's maintenance service provision. Oversees the delivery of the specification which includes infrastructure.

### Projects Manager including the Allotment Service

Responsible for the development of park infrastructure, management of the allotment service, overseeing horticultural standards, schemes, and developments. Main contact for contractors (CDM). Friends and Member liaison.

### Countryside Manager

Responsible for the management of the borough's countryside service. This role includes the management of the Ranger team and educational, animal husbandry, environmental and wildlife operations/programs associated with these locations.

### Planned Maintenance Manager

Responsible for the management of the operational resources to deliver the ground maintenance services for the parks and open spaces sites.

### Performance & Support Officer

Customer Service functions- Freedom of Information (FOI), customer enquiries, councillors' enquiries, and monthly statistics; technical project support.

### Tree Team Manager

Responsible for the teams that carry out the inspections and maintenance of the boroughs 85,000 park trees. Oversees all tree planting schemes for the council and community groups in parks. Managing and mapping/recording of invasive species. Planning application guidance to LBH.





### Playground Inspectors x2

Visual, operational, and minor repairs of playgrounds. Inspected annually external contractor.

### Operational Teams

Grounds maintenance is delivered using mobile teams. These teams provide the Grass cutting, horticultural tasks, general maintenance, litter bin emptying and litter picking.

### Business Support Officer

Provides administration for fleet, handles finances and overtime schedules.





# Appendix 4

## Flora

There are over 390 + species of plants at Bedfont Lakes, some of the more common or important species to be found in each habitat include:

**Wet Willow Woodland:** Crack Willow, White Willow, Goat Willow, Alder

**Lowland Dry Neutral Grassland:** Bee Orchid, Black Knapweed, Ox-eye Daisy, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Yellow Rattle, White and Red Clovers, Marjoram, Wild Carrot

**Water Bodies:** Pond Water Crowfoot, Rigid Hornwort, Greater Spearwort, and various Pondweed species.

**Reed bed/fen:** Common Reed, Lesser and Greater Reed mace, Water Mint, Purple Loosestrife, Yellow Flag, Gypsywort, Pink Water Speedwell, Water Forget-me-not.

**Scrub:** Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Dog Rose, Bramble.

**Orchard:** Apple trees of traditionally grown local varieties; Mistletoe.

**Fungi and Lichen:** 144 species of fungi and lichens have been recorded so far at Bedfont Lakes. These include Brown Roll Rim, Oyster Fungus, Poison Pie, Velvet Shank, Yellow Brain Fungus, Blushing Bracket, and Warty Puffball.

## Fauna

### Birds

Over 156 species of birds have been recorded at Bedfont Lakes. The condition and diversity of the site and its habitats is a significant factor contributing to the number of species that choose to come here and makes it suitable for them to winter or breed on site.

**Resident species:** These include Skylark, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Crested Grebe, Kestrel, Ring-necked Parakeet, Grey Heron, Cormorant, Kingfisher, Reed Bunting, and overwintering Chiffchaff.

**Winter visitors:** These include Bittern, Smew, Fieldfare, Redwing, Water Rail and occasionally Firecrest and Cetti's Warbler.

**Summer visitors:** In summer, the woodland, reeds, and scrub attract nesting migrant warblers, including Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Garden Warbler, Common Whitethroat and Lesser Whitethroats. A growing population of Common Tern nest on the rafts. Swift and House Martin can be seen feeding over the lakes and are themselves hunted by Hobby.

Swallows breed in the adjacent smallholdings.

**Passage migrants:** Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, Spotted Flycatcher, Ring Ouzel, Common Sandpiper and Green Sandpiper. In recent years we have had Nightingale, Wryneck and Grasshopper Warbler too.





**Bittern** - The Bittern is a regular winter visitor to the park. Since at least 1995 there has been at least one Bittern using our reed beds as a wintering ground. The Bittern is a rare bird in the UK. It is estimated that there are only 50-150 birds over-wintering in the UK from mainland Europe and around 50-70 booming males in the summer months. The “boom” is the call males make to attract females whilst they remain deep in the reed bed, and it is this choice of habitat that makes the Bittern so rare in the UK. When startled, the Bittern puts its head straight up in the air and becomes excellently camouflaged amongst the reeds. The most recent sighting of bittern was January 2019.

**Smew** - These are small diving-ducks belonging to a group known as the Sawbills, which feed upon small fish and aquatic insects. The males are white and black, and the females white with red heads. They may be seen on the larger lakes here during the coldest winter spells. This area of southwest London is nationally important for Smew as most of their numbers, winter here.

**Common Tern** - A summer visitor to the UK, Common Terns migrate from their wintering grounds in Africa to spend the summer months here on their breeding grounds. They nest in scrapes on bare ground and shingle on beaches, and islands in large bodies of water. To encourage them to nest at Bedfont Lakes we have constructed floating rafts, which are anchored out on North Lake and are visible from the bird hides overlooking North Lake. We have also created a manmade Island, named Tern Island. The island is cleared of all scrub each winter and the Rangers visit the island during nesting time to ring and record the tern chicks.

**Kingfisher** - This small, bright blue and reddish-orange bird dives for small fish from a perch a metre or so above the water. One of the best places to try and view this behaviour is looking straight out across South Lake from the pier where they may be seen at all times of year.

**Skylark** – Present all year, but most visible during the summer, these birds sing by flying high into the sky and then ‘parachuting’ slowly back to the ground, singing their elaborate song all the way. In winter they are harder to see but can be found feeding on the arenas. The habitat for skylarks is maintained using conservation grazing animals. The sheep or cattle who graze leave different sward heights amongst the meadow grass allowing the skylarks to nest.

During the winter months Jackdaws and Carrion Crows put on an impressive display at dusk where a huge flock, usually between 3,000 and 4,000 birds, pile into their woodland roost at the end of the day.

Other birds that may be seen at Bedfont Lakes include: Great Crested Grebe (on our logo), Linnet, Reed Bunting, Song Thrush, Dunnock, Reed Warbler, Willow Warbler, Common and Lesser Whitethroats, Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Bullfinch, Goldfinch, Great Tit, , Chaffinch, Long-tailed Tit, Little Owl, Hobby, Kestrel, Sparrow hawk, Cormorant, Water Rail, Black-headed Gull, Blackcap, Mute Swan, Grey Heron, Teal, Gadwall, Pochard, Moorhen and Coot to name but a few.





## Mammals

Bedfont Lakes provides habitats for various mammal species listed below.

**Rodents** - It has large numbers of Britain's commonest rodent, the Wood Mouse. These can be confused with both Bank and Field voles. However, they have much larger and more prominent eyes and ears and are a rich chestnut brown colour. The site is also inhabited by Field and Bank Voles too and the Common Shrew. They are common mammals who like grasslands and hedgerows with dense ground cover, but the Bank Vole also likes woodland. They are of comparable size, both around 9-11cm in length, not including the tail.

**Red Fox** - the best times to look for a Red Fox is at dawn and dusk. The wildflower meadows and hills by the railway line are where they are most likely to be seen, as well as the woodland opposite the pier in South Lake. A true scavenger, the Red Fox eats anything from insects and birds to uneaten food left in the park and bins.

**Rabbit** - Easily spotted, there are many within the Country Park. Most of the rabbits are brown but there are one or two black rabbits on the site. It is likely that they are black because of an inherited genetic fault known as melanism. Every year there are 2 or 3 new black rabbit kittens around the South Lake warren area. Very few are seen to survive to adulthood. This may be because they are easier to spot by predators.

**Stoat** - A small, but voracious predator, a mature male can kill and carry an adult rabbit. They can live for up to 10 years and are able to travel up to 5miles/8km in one hunting session.

**Bats** - The Country Park also has regionally important bat populations present, of which the Nathusius' Pipistrelle is particularly rare. In 2008 ours was only the second communal roost site for this species site to be found in England, the first being in Lincolnshire. Others bats species recorded here are: Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, Daubenton's, and Noctule, Serotine, and Leisler's bats. Our guided bat walks on warm, still summer evenings are your best bet of hearing or seeing bats in the Country Park.

**Hedgehogs** - there have been numerous sightings of hedgehog on site and the Rangers have created a new survey to track and detail the hogs. This programme will be beginning in March 2019.

## Reptiles & Amphibians

**Reptiles-** Grass snake, Slow worm

**Amphibians-** Amphibians found in the country park are Common Toad, Common Frog, Marsh Frog (introduced into the UK in 1935 and now common around lakes in Southwest London) and Smooth Newt.



Figure 3 Smooth Newts at Bedfont Lakes





## Butterflies & Moths

Twenty-seven species of butterfly have been recorded at Bedfont Lakes. These include:

- Brimstone (ssp. rhamnii)
- Brown Argus
- Comma
- Common Blue (ssp. icarus)
- Essex Skipper
- Gatekeeper
- Green-veined White (ssp. sabellicae)
- Holly Blue
- Large Skipper
- Large White
- Clouded Yellow
- Grizzled and Essex Skipper
- Swallowtail
- Meadow Brown (ssp. insularis)
- Orange-tip (ssp. britannica)
- Painted Lady
- Peacock
- Red Admiral
- Small Copper (ssp. eleus)



*Common Blue (ssp. Icarus) – a common butterfly sighting at Bedfont Lakes.*

The lakes, reedbeds and wet woodland provide habitats for some localised moths, including a dozen species of Wainscot moths, whose larvae feed specifically on Common Reed. The site also has one of London's very few known colonies of Goat Moth, whose caterpillars feed on deciduous trees, particularly willow.

## Other Invertebrates

**Dragonflies:** In summer, the lakes host a range of dragonfly species, including Brown, Southern, Common and Migrant Hawker, Emperor, Broad-bodied Chaser, Black-tailed Skimmer, Ruddy and Common Darter, and damselflies, including Common Blue, Red-eyed, Blue-tailed and Azure. In 1997 Red-veined Darter bred here

**Beetles:** The most notable beetle in the park is the Stag Beetle, Britain's largest beetle, which in summer can be seen flying late in the afternoon and into the evening.

**Arachnids:** Another rare resident invertebrate is the Wasp Spider, which has spread northwards from its stronghold on the south coast.

**Thames Terrace Invertebrates:** Many species of mining bees and wasps associated with the Thames terrace gravels habitat have been recorded, including the RDB1 *Nomada xanthosticta*.

## Fish

Fish present in the lakes include Pike, Tench, Common Carp, Mirror Carp, Perch, Bream, Roach, Rudd, and Stickleback.



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Greenspace