



*Epping Forest*  
***Countrycare***

a service provided by Epping Forest District Council

# 32nd Annual Report

## 2017 – 2018



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## 1. Introduction

Epping Forest Countrycare is Epping Forest District Council's Countryside Management Service. Based within the Neighbourhoods Directorate it is fully funded by the District Council and is the key resource for advice, information and practical assistance on the countryside, nature conservation and wildlife legislation.

Operating across the entire Epping Forest District, Countrycare undertakes a wide variety of community-based activities and coordinates a regular programme of practical conservation work. Countrycare engages and involves the local community in "hands on" practical conservation work and, as one of the Council's primary "enablers", involves people of all ages and abilities in every aspect of its work.

Since its establishment in 1986, Countrycare has developed a credible and proven track record for delivering effective projects. This in turn has developed strong community support and trust, which staff have been able to harness to good effect. The obvious public enthusiasm and desire of people to make a difference is reflected in Countrycare's ability to recruit and keep a wide volunteer base.

Since 2009 Countrycare has also provided an internal service to the Governance Directorate as ecological consultants for planning application decision making, mitigation and compensation advice. Countrycare is also increasingly involved in Local Plan consultation and implementation.

## 2. Countrycare's Key Functions:

- i) To preserve the landscape, wildlife habitats and biodiversity value of the District
- ii) To promote and support the designation of Local Nature Reserves and the Local Wildlife Sites network across the District
- iii) To involve and educate local communities and schools in all aspects of the Service's work
- iv) To promote a greater understanding and respect for the countryside
- v) Provide ecological advice to the Governance Directorate

## 3. Countrycare Staff

At the start of 2017-18, Countrycare had four permanent staff. This has remained stable and presently the team consists:

Abigail Oldham	Countryside Manager
Nicola Ceconi	Assistant Countryside Manager
Kevin Mason	Countryside Assistant
Joanne Garrad	Countryside Assistant

## 4.0 Biodiversity Projects

### 4.1 Practical Conservation Work

Enhancement of biodiversity across the District continues to be one of the Service's key strengths. A great deal of staff and volunteer time and effort has been spent improving sites across the District. In 2017-18 work was undertaken on 24 sites. Nine of these are Local Nature Reserves and the others are Local Wildlife Sites or areas some Parish Councils wish to be managed for nature conservation. On 20 of these sites volunteers helped out. More time than usual was put into Nazeing Triangle LNR and Old Shire Lane both of which have seen considerable improvements that will benefit both wildlife and people.

## 4.2 Volunteer Thursdays



Thursday volunteer day tasks were complemented by some Tuesday project days as well as the Friday hedgelaying group (see below). 705 volunteer days were given on 57 practical tasks organised this year. This equates to £29,610 of volunteer time. See below for a breakdown of sites and volunteer value for each. Tasks included much raking, clearing, planting, habitat improvement, access and construction. Some project days were less well attended than usual mainly due to the weather and one Thursday task was cancelled due to heavy snow (in March!).

VOLUNTEER TASKS AND THEIR VALUE (excludes hedgelaying)							
Date	Site	Task	Staff	Vols	Vol hrs	@	Total
16/11/17	Abbots Wood	Grass raking and bramble clearance	2	16	96	£7	£672
11/05/17	Abbots Wood	Footpath raking, scrub clearance	2	10	60	£7	£420
01/02/18	Abbots Wood	Cleared blackthorn and bramble to new glade	2	10	60	£7	£420
06/04/17	Bobbingworth	Planted 250 trees	4	14	84	£7	£588
11/04/17	Bobbingworth	Planted 120 trees	3	3	18	£7	£126
22/06/17	Bobbingworth	Mulching trees cutting goats rue painting furnit	2	11	66	£7	£462
22/03/18	Bobbingworth	Bramble clearance around hedge mulching hed	2	12	72	£7	£504
26/04/18	Bobbingworth	Bee bank/snake, steps, goats rue	3	16	96	£7	£672
05/10/17	Chigwell Heath	Grass raking	2	15	90	£7	£630
30/11/17	Chigwell Row Wood	Bramble clearance and ride widening	2	16	96	£7	£672
08/02/18	Chigwell Row Wood	Cleared Aspen and holly near heath	2	11	66	£7	£462
08/03/18	Chigwell Row Wood	Cleared aspen and ride	2	12	72	£7	£504
11/01/18	Epping Green Millenium	Clearing around fruit trees.	2	16	96	£7	£672
07/09/17	Epping Green Millenium	Grass cutting and raking hedgerow trimming	2	15	90	£7	£630
31/08/17	Epping Upland Church	Grass cutting and raking	2	12	72	£7	£504
27/07/17	Foster Street	Raking painting gate and bench	2	15	90	£7	£630
20/04/17	Hawksmere Spring	Raking	2	10	60	£7	£420
27/04/17	Hawksmere Spring	Raking	2	7	42	£7	£294
07/12/17	Home Mead	Planting and raking	2	14	84	£7	£588
12/04/18	Home Mead	Plant plugs, pulled spanish bluebells	2	8	48	£7	£336
13/07/16	Linders Field	Raking and hedge clearance footpath widening	2	20	120	£7	£840
09/11/17	Linders field	Grass raking	2	17	102	£7	£714
25/01/18	Linders field	Brambles and access point clearance	2	14	84	£7	£588
15/03/18	Linders field	Bramble clearance and ride widening	2	14	84	£7	£588
24/08/17	Nazeing Church	Raking grass construction of a new compost bir	2	14	84	£7	£588
04/05/17	Nazeing Triangle	Footpath installation, hand rail on B/Walk	4	11	66	£7	£462
14/09/17	Nazeing Triangle	Grass raking path sign & hedge	2	12	72	£7	£504
14/12/17	Nazeing Triangle	Hedge clearance, footpath surfacing	4	16	96	£7	£672
15/06/17	Norton Heath	Pulling Bracken coppicing willow building a dea	2	15	90	£7	£630
06/07/17	Norton Heath	Nettle pulling Hazel coppicing mound clearanc	2	9	54	£7	£378
18/01/18	Norton Heath	Birch burning, hazel coppicing	2	16	96	£7	£672
05/04/18	Norton Heath	Plug plant planting hazel coppicing	2	17	102	£7	£714
01/06/17	Old Shire Lane	Raking nettle clearance	2	5	30	£7	£210
03/08/17	Old Shire Lane	Raking bollard installation	2	13	78	£7	£546
02/11/17	Old shire Lane	Grass raking thinning trees faggoting in the stre	2	14	84	£7	£588
21/12/17	Old Shire Lane	Hedge cutting pond clearance woodland thinni	3	9	54	£7	£378
22/02/18	Old shire Lane	Cleared out compost bin thinned out trees cut	2	9	54	£7	£378
19/04/18	Old Shire Lane	Hibernaculum, bee posts	2	11	66	£7	£462
12/09/17	Ongar Orchard	Grass Cutting	3	3	18	£7	£126
13/04/17	Roughtalleys Wood	Painted benches, removed invasive plants, cot	2	16	96	£7	£672
08/06/17	Roughtalleys Wood	Raking willowherb pulling orchid count	2	15	90	£7	£630
28/09/17	Roughtalleys Wood	Grass raking	2	15	90	£7	£630
23/11/17	Roughtalleys Wood	Tree work fence repair bonfire	2	16	96	£7	£672
29/03/18	Roughtalleys Wood	Cow parsley, clearing fallen branches primrose	2	16	96	£7	£672
04/01/18	Sheering Copse	Tree planting blackthorn cutting felled 5 Scots	3	13	78	£7	£546
12/10/17	Spring Pond Wood	Herbage raking	2	15	90	£7	£630
18/05/17	Springs Pond Wood	Footpath raking scrub clearance	2	13	78	£7	£546
19/10/17	Swaines Green	Grass Raking	2	13	78	£7	£546
26/10/17	Swaines Green	Grass Raking	2	14	84	£7	£588
20/07/17	Thornwood Nature Area	Raking coppicing and fence painting	2	11	66	£7	£462
17/08/17	Weald Common	Hedge cutting steps repair ragwort pulling	2	12	72	£7	£504
15/02/18	Weald Common	Installed new steps and trimmed hedge by hou	2	14	84	£7	£588
29/06/17	Weald Common TH1	Tree Guard Removal clearing bramble	2	15	90	£7	£630
25/05/17	Willingale Road Allotme	Raking and bramble bashing	2	11	66	£7	£462
21/09/17	Willingale Road Allotme	Grass raking, tree haloing	2.5	14	84	£7	£588
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>705</b>	<b>4230</b>		<b>£29,610</b>



## 4.4 Hedgelaying



Well-managed hedgerows are a vital wildlife corridor and a source of food and shelter for many small mammals, birds and invertebrates. Once a hedge has been laid a rotation of trimming will keep it in good condition for years. By using only a few hand tools and some basic knowledge it is a sustainable method of creating physical boundaries with both scenic and wildlife value. This season four days were spent coppicing stakes and binders at Belhus Woods (two for EFDC hedges and two

to sell on to the City of London). Two days were spent hedgelaying at Church Lane LNR (*pic*), one day at Home Mead LNR and two at Nazeing Triangle LNR. A total of 173 meters of hedge was laid over the winter and was aided by 50 volunteer days at a value of £2100.

## 4.5 Nazeing Triangle Project finished

Countrycare was awarded a £8000 grant from Tesco and Groundworks to use towards a community project to improve the habitat for wildlife and access for visitors at Nazeing Triangle Local Nature Reserve.

A new dipping platform was constructed and the edges of the pond were planted up. This will allow access to the waterside safely and provides edge habitat for amphibians and invertebrates by providing a refuge and food source. Reeds from Bobbingworth nature reserve were also transplanted to help aquatic habitat for invertebrates and newts. An interpretation panel displaying the various different species that can be found in the nature reserve was erected. To finish it off the entrance gate was widened and a hardened path was added from the gate to the dipping platform wide enough for wheelchair access.



**TESCO** Bags of Help

## 5.0 Tree Projects

### 5.1 Tree planting

Nine hundred and eleven trees were planted with our volunteers this year. Over 350 went in at Bobbingworth Nature Reserve with 125 at Linder's Field LNR and 75 at Home Mead LNR. Nine project days were given this year to tree planting.

### 5.2 Planting at Nazeing Church

In partnership with All Saints Church Nazeing Countrycare planted a hedge with the help of 23 pupils from Nazeing Primary School. The children planted 260 trees as a hedge and six further large ornamental trees around the churchyard. Even a Wellingtonia went in in the overflow carpark for which a very big hole was needed.

### 5.3 Oak Tree for the late Cllr Gary Waller



On the 4<sup>th</sup> January, during a woodland task, Countrycare planted a tree for the late Gary Waller. It is in Sheering Copse, a woodland that he was keen for us to manage and indeed helped us to do so on volunteer days in the past. Countrycare and the volunteers wanted to mark their appreciation of the support and enthusiasm Gary had had for the Service. Councillor Stalker and the clerk to the parish council came along to help dig.

## 5.4 Tree Wardens

Tree Wardens are in a position to report on many things locally that would otherwise go unnoticed by the authorities. This can be invaluable in protecting trees.

The Council has over 20 active volunteer Tree Wardens based in 12 of the District's Parishes. This year we welcomed three new Tree Wardens. The Tree Wardens receive a monthly newsletter from the Tree Council and quarterly newsletter from Forest Research Tree Health, Observatree and the Ancient Tree forum.



The events held for the tree wardens this year included the autumn meeting held at the Civic Offices attended by 13 Tree Wardens. Five tree wardens and two members of staff attended the East Anglian Tree Wardens Forum at Cockfield Village Hall Suffolk on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September.

Chris Neilan held a training morning introducing the Tree Wardens to Capital Asset Value of Amenity Trees held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018. This was attended by twelve tree wardens and five members of staff. Chris explained that CAVAT is one of the principal methods of valuing trees in the UK. The Tree Wardens

were able to put a monetary value on the trees in the immediate vicinity of the Civic Offices.

## 6.0 Public Engagement



Three events took place with scouts/guides which involved, collectively, 84 children pond dipping, bug-hunting and making butterfly feeders, bee homes and wildlife masks.

Chigwell School engaged Countrycare for a day to give 24 children conservation experience in Chigwell Row Wood. This involved raking of glades, surveying of veteran trees and building and erection of bird boxes. This is a new relationship and plans are underway for more joint working in 2018.

Six family events were held where a total of 118 children had fun on an Easter Scavenger Hunt, a Hedgehog Day, a Teddy Bear's Picnic, a river dip, a moth and bat night and small mammal identification. Unfortunately two events were cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.



Two presentations were given about nature conservation methods on the local nature reserves, one to Sheering Parish Council and one to the North Weald Bassett Rural and Preservation Society.

Countrycare attended the North Weald Airfield open day in July quizzing people on wildflowers and giving out native bee-friendly seeds as prizes. They also attended the Ancient Tree Forum Conference where they exhibited information about the Veteran Tree Survey of the District.

*A hedgehog advice poster made by Sunny Burton on Hedgehog Day.*

Walks, Talks, Environmental Education and Events 2017-18							
Date	Event	Location	Audience	Staff	Vols	Public	TOT
12/04/2017	Easter Scavenger Hunt	Roughalleys Wood	General Public	4	1	30	31
26/04/2017	Sheering Parish Council AGM	Sheering village Hall	Sheering residents	1	0	25	25
23/05/2017	Pond Dipping, bug hunting	Woodford church and pond	Woodford	2	0	24	24
31/05/2017	Hedgehog Day	Greenacres Burial Park	General Public	3	1	21	22
	Lambourne Walk	Cancelled	General Public				0
21/06/2017	Bug hunting	Bobbingworth	Shelley Rainbows	2		14	14
23/06/2017	Lifewalk Ongar	Ongar	Lifewalks Group	1	4	29	33
30/06/2017	Conservation task	Chigwell Row Wood	Chigwell School	4		24	24
03/07/2017	Bioblitz	Bobbingworth	Volunteers	4	2		2
13/07/2017	ATF	Gillwell	General Public	4		80	80
16/07/2017	Airfield Open day	North Weald Airfield	General Public	2		50	50
16/08/2017	River Dipping	Roding Valley Rec Ground	General Public	2	1	13	14
	Wildlife of Bobbingworth	Cancelled	General Public				0
10/08/2017	Copped Hall Tour	Copped Hall, Epping	Volunteers	4	18	0	18
23/08/2017	Teddy Bears	Linder's Field	General Public	4	1	15	16
01/09/2017	Moth Night and bats	Epping Green Millennium	General Public	3	2	31	33
12/09/2017	Scouts Ongar	Bobbingworth	Scouts	2	1	20	21
16/09/2017	Mammal Morning	Roding Valley Meadows	General Public	2		8	8
26/10/2017	Tool Sharpening Day	Town Mead Depot	Volunteers	2		4	4
11/10/2017	Tree Warden meeting	Civic Offices	Tree Wardens	2		13	13
27/09/2017	Bug Hunting	Thornwood Nature Area	Thornwood	2		23	23
20/10/2017	N Weald Rural Preservation	North Weald Methodist church	NWRPS	2		35	35
30/09/2017	Tree Warden Conference	Suffolk	Tree Wardens	2		4	4
11/10/2017	Tree Warden Meeting	Civic Offices	Tree Wardens	2		20	20
28/03/2018	CAVAT Training	Civic Office	Tree Wardens	2		25	25
	<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>30</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>538</b>

## 7. Planning Consultative Advice

Countrycare offers an in-house ecology consulting service with regard to planning applications to the Governance Directorate. This year the Service has commented on 211 planning applications, pre-planning applications or queries. Countrycare also offers advice on mitigation for protected species, enhancement of habitat and compensation in relation to planning applications, where appropriate.

EFDC is helping fund an Essex Wildlife Trust biological records office. The mapping layer that is supplied to EFDC annually helps Planning Officers identify which planning applications need ecological surveys.

Countrycare is involved in contributing to strategic documents for instance the Local Plan or the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

## 8. Further Information

Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS)

<http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/out-and-about/countrycare/local-wildlife-sites>

Epping Forest Veteran Tree Hunt

<http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/out-and-about/countrycare/key-information/special-projects>

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

<http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/out-and-about/countrycare/local-nature-reserves>

Favourite Trees Website

[www.favouritetrees.com](http://www.favouritetrees.com)

EFDC's Pre-Application validation checklist

<http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/residents/planning-and-building/planning-development-control/document-store>



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Biodiversity and Landscape Enhancement

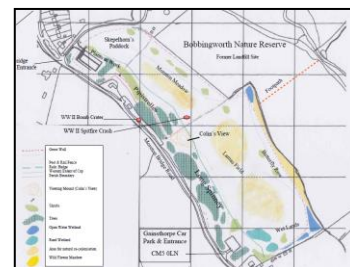
The following section describes the sites that Countrycare manages and what the regular work is undertaken on each. More information can be found at [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/countrycare](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/countrycare)

#### Aveley, Belhus Chase (55ha)

This is a 55 ha Woodland Trust owned and managed site in Aveley, Essex. The site consists mainly of Hazel coppice and forms part of the Thames Chase Community Forest. Countrycare has worked with the Woodland Trust now for two years.

#### Bobbingworth, Bobbingworth Nature Reserve (9ha)

This District Council owned site is located to the south of Moreton village. From 1961 to 1972 it was used as a rubbish tip. The site was restored in 2008 and the next few years saw Countrycare creating a nature reserve with wetlands, a wildflower meadow, copses and hedgerows. Six thousand trees have been planted and there are now 84 species of wildflower and grasses.



#### Buckhurst Hill, Linder's Field LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep38 (3.6ha)



Linder's Field is a mixture of habitats. Combined with the grassland is ancient woodland, scrub and two small ponds. Since 1990 Countrycare has worked on the field to make both habitat and access improvements. In May 1996 the site was declared a Local Wildlife Site and this was followed in August 2000 by its declaration as a statutory LNR. In 2012 it was awarded a Living Landscapes Award for Countrycare's green hay strewing efforts.

#### Chigwell, Chigwell Row Wood LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep85 and Ep86 (15ha)

Chigwell Row Wood provides a variety of habitats: ancient semi natural woodland, with some magnificent veteran Oak and Hornbeam pollards, through to secondary woodland, heathland and acid grassland.

The main objective is to continue to develop a varied age structure throughout the wood at the same time as increasing woodland edge habitat as this can potentially be the most diverse area of a woodland. Work has also begun on extending the heathland further south and west and improving the interaction between heathland and woodland edge.



#### Epping, Civic Offices Newt Pond (0.07ha)

The pond and its surrounding field (0.3 ha) was initially allocated for car parking in 1988 but the discovery of 400 great crested newts led to the plans being amended. Whilst the majority of the field was lost, the pond and a small area of grassland surrounding the pond were saved. This area was enclosed by a wall and planted with a variety of trees and shrubs. In addition, thought was given to creating safe access for the newts between the breeding pond and surrounding gardens which are now their main feeding area. This arrangement has been successful as the colony of great crested newts is still very much present. Countrycare has managed the pond and the newts since 1995.





### Epping, Swaines Green, Local Wildlife Site Ep82 (9.81ha)



Countrycare works in partnership with Epping Town Council and the Friends of Swaines Green to undertake management work on one of the meadows, Lovelocks. The site is a mosaic of grassland, scrub and developing woodland bordered by thick hedgerows. Lovelocks Meadow won an Essex Wildlife Trust Living Landscape Award in 2014 recognising its value as being good for local people, wildlife and the local economy.

### Epping, St Johns Open Space (0.75ha)

Countrycare will be working in partnership with Grounds Maintenance to manage a small patch of land behind St Johns School, Epping. Part of the land will be managed by Grounds as recreational grassland, part of it will be managed by Countrycare as a wildflower area. Bird boxes and bat boxes will be erected and possibly a wetland area to encourage wetland species.

### Epping Upland, All Saints Churchyard, Local Wildlife Site Ep71. (0.8ha)



All Saints Churchyard in Epping Upland is a designated Local Wildlife Site in recognition of its variety of wildflowers. Working in partnership with the church warden, management of the grassland is carried out by Countrycare staff and volunteers. Annually we mow and rake the conservation area.

### Epping Upland, Epping Green Millennium Wildlife Garden (0.5ha)

Epping Green Millennium Wildlife Garden was created with the help of grant funding from the Millennium Festival "Awards for All Scheme", obtained by the Parish Council in 1999. The funding provided trees and a wildflower seed mix to spread across part of the site.

Since 2006, a formal management agreement has been in place to continue working on the site in the long term. The effects of management can now be seen through the array of wildflowers on the site and the now completed hedgelaying project. Annually we mow and rake the meadow and also keep an eye on the hedgerows.



### High Ongar, Norton Heath Common, Local Wildlife Site Ep213 (4.3ha)



Norton Heath is a registered common. In 2008 this former heathland had largely reverted to secondary woodland. It has a mainly Oak canopy overlying very acid gravel soils. Since then a few glades have been created to improve the light penetration to ground level. This has encouraged the reestablishment of Gorse, Heath Bedstraw and Heath Wood-Rush. The more open conditions are favouring bumblebees (six species recorded) and butterflies (twenty species). Broad Buckler-fern and rushes indicate a wet, healthy understorey.

### Loughton, Home Mead LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep66 (1.82ha)



This District Council owned site is a mosaic of scrub, secondary woodland, acid grassland and a small pond. In 1999 Countrycare took over management of the site and began a habitat restoration programme. This has involved the creation of a new pond and grassland management combined with rotational scrub coppicing and tree removal. A circular hardened pathway was installed around the site in the summer of 2004. In December 2004 the site was declared a Local Nature

Reserve reflecting its biodiversity importance. In 2009 Home Mead was designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

### Loughton, Roding Valley Meadows LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep61, SSSI (56.5 ha)

The Reserve is a mosaic of old hedgerows and flower rich meadows that nestle beside the River Roding as it flows through Loughton and Chigwell. Today, the meadows represent the largest surviving area of traditionally managed flood-plain hay meadow and marsh in Essex and probably South East England. Four of the fields are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) reflecting their huge importance for biodiversity nationally. Managed under an agreement, the Essex Wildlife Trust maintains this site with the occasional help from Countrycare, its volunteers and its hedgelayers.



### Loughton, Willingale Road Community Orchard (2ha)



Willingale Road Community Orchard is a small but ecologically important two hectares of land surrounded mainly by the large population of Debden. The site is a haven for wildlife with excellent ecological corridors to the surrounding wider countryside. A disused allotment site with remnant fruit trees and two veteran Oaks, this site has a great deal of potential and a medium population of slow-worms. In 2015 a variety of fruit trees and bushes were planted to create a community Orchard.

### Nazeing, Nazeing Triangle LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep33 (0.6ha)

In June 2002 the site was declared a Local Nature Reserve, but for more than 20 years Countrycare and volunteers have worked here on behalf of the owners, Nazeing Parish Council. At the beginning of 2010 some major works were undertaken using contractors to dredge and enlarge the pond. The ground that was disturbed by machinery was later seeded with a mixture of wildflowers. By spring 2011 this area was in flower and buzzing with life. Annually the work consists of mowing and raking the wildflower area.



### Nazeing, Nazeing All Saint's Church



All Saints Churchyard, Nazeing was designated a Local Wildlife Site in 1992 for its species rich grassland. Species such as Burnett-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifrage*) and Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*) had been recorded there. In December 2014 Countrycare was approached by All Saints Church to help with the management of the site.

### North Weald Bassett, Thornwood Flood Meadow LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep92 (2.7ha)

This LNR is one of North Weald's three flood storage reservoirs created in 1998. The meadow has been designed and sympathetically managed for nature conservation. Specially designed wetland scrapes and a wetland meadow was sown. Wildflowers such as Ragged Robin, Oxeye Daisy and Knapweed can be found here. It was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in December 2004 after just six years.



The grassland area receives an annual cut by Grounds Maintenance in late July or early August. Countrycare also cuts part of the reserve in early April to help suppress the growth of invasive grass species, allowing better conditions for wildflowers.

### North Weald Bassett, Church Lane Flood Meadow LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep118 (3.25ha)



Consisting of three hectares of wet and dry meadow, the banks surrounding the large stream fed pond at the centre of the site can hold 35 million litres of water. These banks and marshy areas also provide habitat for wildlife such as amphibians, dragonflies, butterflies and birds as well as the 180 species of flowers, grasses and trees that have been recorded here so far.

### North Weald Bassett, Thornwood Common Nature Area (0.2ha)

In 1996, Countrycare and North Weald Parish Council created a nature area on a number of redundant allotments. Since then Countrycare has managed the grassland areas by cutting and scrub clearance. This has helped to enhance the wildflowers. Following flooding of the adjacent allotments during the winter of 2012-13 a new pond was dug to retain the water. There is an annual summer grass cut and some tree management.



### North Weald Bassett, Roughtalley's Wood LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep114 (3.4ha)



Roughtalley's Wood is a large ancient woodland covering 25 hectares. However, in the 1860s the wood was divided unequally by the creation of the Eastern Counties Railway. The largest section to the south of the railway is now a green burial site while the smaller section is EFDC's LNR declared in 2000.

The LNR can be divided into two areas. The first is semi-natural ancient woodland with large Hornbeam coppice stools and Oak standards and the second is an area of regenerating secondary woodland. There are three species of orchid and patches of Arum lilies, Snowdrops, Bluebells and Primroses in the spring.

### North Weald Bassett, Foster Street Burial Ground, Local Wildlife Site Ep115 (0.28ha)



The origins of the site can be traced back to 1677 and are linked to the Harlow Baptist Church. Countrycare became involved with the site in 2002. Many of the graves have been cleared of encroaching bramble and scrub and the more open grassland areas are cut each year with the cuttings removed. The work has created a more open aspect to the site with a good display of wildflowers.

### North Weald Bassett, Weald Common Flood Meadows LNR, Local Wildlife Site Ep124 (2.9ha)

The Weald Common Flood Meadows consist of two meadows created in 1996 as part of flood defence measures to protect the village of North Weald. It was possible from the outset to maximise the site for biodiversity gain. In spring Cowslips cover much of the meadow and in early summer Ragged Robin takes over. Grass snake and Common lizard have been noted here. The hedges on the lower meadow have all been laid.



### Ongar, Ongar Community Orchard (0.16ha)

Ongar Community Orchard is a small piece of land owned by Epping Forest District Council and managed by the Friends of Ongar Community Orchard with the help and support of Countrycare. A local Conservationist came up with the idea to plant an orchard on a piece of redundant EFDC land. Annually we help with an early and a late cut of the orchard.





### Ongar, Springs Pond Wood (1ha)



Springs Pond Wood is a privately owned woodland situated a short walk from Chipping Ongar High Street. An agreement is in place between Countrycare and the landowner to provide support for the management of this site, broadly consisting of keeping the paths open and the site safe and accessible. There is a large pond to the eastern end of the site and a number of springs and wet flushes throughout the wood. Cripsey Brook marks the site's southern boundary.

### Sheering, The Copse (0.4ha)

No management had taken place in the Copse for many years and the site, which has a network of narrow footpaths, was very overgrown with a number of fallen or dangerous trees. Since 2014 some Scots pine has been felled, the logs were used for marking out woodland paths, the right of way footpath on the western side has been repaired with edging boards and gravel, the open glade was dug over and wildflower seed sown to create a small woodland meadow. The overgrown Blackthorn in the hedgerow has been thinned out and new Buckthorn whips were planted.



### Waltham Abbey, Old Shire Lane (0.8ha)

EFDC has owned this site since 1991. Since 2000 Countrycare staff and volunteers have managed the site. This can now be seen in the increasing variety of wildflowers and invertebrates, with five species of dragonfly recorded. Further surveys could uncover a larger array of wildlife, as the site offers open glades and successional habitat ideal for moths, butterflies and other invertebrates.



### Waltham Abbey, Abbots Wood (1.25ha)

This small wood has been managed by Countrycare for a year. It is made up of Blackthorn scrub, Oak standards and rough grassland. The area is designated as broad-leaved deciduous woodland which is a Natural England Priority Habitat. Countrycare works with Ninefields Residents Association to clear up the rubbish and make the site more accessible to local walkers. Conservation work focuses on creating wildflower areas in glades, clearing scrub and haloing around the Oak trees to give them the best chance to thrive.

## Appendix 2 – Facts about EFDC’s Local Nature Reserves and other EFDC owned sites

Under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the District Council has the power to designate sites of nature conservation interest as statutory Local Nature Reserves. The Epping Forest District now has nine Local Nature Reserves.

<b>EFDC Local Nature Reserve Summary</b>			
<b>LNR</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Size (ha)</b>	<b>Declared</b>
Roding Valley Meadows*	Chigwell	63.00	13/04/1986
Roughtalley’s Wood	North Weald	3.40	17/08/2000
Linder’s Field**	Buckhurst Hill	3.50	17/08/2000
Chigwell Row Wood**	Chigwell	15.60	17/08/2000
Nazeing Triangle***	Nazeing	0.60	12/06/2001
Church Lane Flood Meadow	North Weald	3.40	13/05/2002
Weald Common Flood Meadow	North Weald	2.90	23/12/2004
Thornwood Common Flood Meadow	North Weald	2.70	23/12/2004
Home Mead	Loughton	1.80	23/12/2004
<b>Total</b>		<b>90.40</b>	

\* Managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust.

\*\* Managed by EFDC as trustees of a charitable trust.

\*\*\* Managed by Countrycare in partnership with the owners Nazeing Parish Council

<b>Seven EFDC owned sites</b>		
<b>Site</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>
Civic Offices Newt Pond	Epping	0.07
Old Shire Lane	Waltham Abbey	0.80
Norton Heath Common	High Ongar	4.30
Halsford Bridge	Ongar	3.00
Ongar Orchard	Ongar	0.16
St Johns Open Space	Epping	0.75
Abbotts Wood	Waltham Abbey	1.25
<b>Total</b>		<b>10.33</b>

<b>Six EFDC Special Roadside Verges</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Grid reference</b>	<b>Side</b>	<b>Locality</b>
EPF1	TL 51188 10878	N	New Way Lane, Matching
EPF1	TL 51189 10374	S	New Way Lane, Matching
EPF2	TL 51488 12783	E	Sheering Lodge
EPF2	TL 51483 12779	W	Sheering Lodge
EPF3	TL 57352 09808	W	Beauchamp Roding
EPF4	TL 57679 10197	E	Beauchamp Roding



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