

Epping Forest Countrycare

25th Annual Report

2010 – 2011



Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



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1. Introduction

Epping Forest Countrycare is Epping Forest District Council's Countryside Management Service. Based within the Planning Policy and Conservation Directorate of Planning and Economic Development, Countrycare 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 law.

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. The ability of Countrycare to engage and involve the local community in "hands on" practical conservation work remains its key strength. As one of the Council's primary "enablers" Countrycare 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 quality 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 Planning Directorate as ecological consultants for planning application decision making, mitigation and compensation advice.

2. Countrycare's Key Functions are:

- To conserve and promote the landscape and biodiversity value of the Epping Forest District
- To manage and guide the maintenance of the District's nine Local Nature Reserves
- To promote and support the designation of new Local Nature Reserves and the Local Wildlife Sites network across the district
- To improve public access to the countryside and provide for informal recreation
- To promote a greater understanding and respect for the countryside
- To involve and educate local communities and schools in all aspects of the Service's work through walks, talks and events
- To co-ordinate the Epping Forest volunteer group and Tree Wardens Scheme
- To implement the targets set out in the Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan
- To provide Development Control planning application advice on ecological issues and protected species

For information about all the Services work, details of all the EFDC LNRs, Countrycare work sites, news and information see www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/countrycare

3. Countrycare Staff

At the start of 2010-11, Countrycare had four permanent staff complemented by volunteers, student work placements and temporary staff.

During the course of the year many changes occurred with three long-serving staff members leaving. These were Paul Hewitt (former Countryside Manager), Andrew Vaughan and Jordan Thomas (former Assistant Countryside Managers).

Recruitment took place in February 2011 and presently the team consists:

Abigail Oldham	Countryside Manager	Promoted from Assistant Countryside Manager February 2011
Nicola Rogers	Assistant Countryside Manager	Promoted from Countryside Assistant March 2011
Kevin Mason	Countryside Assistant	Promoted from Trees and Woodlands Project Officer February 2011
Paul Ceconi	Countryside Assistant	Promoted from Trainee Countryside Assistant March 2011

This structure is slightly different from the former structure which had two Assistant Countryside Managers and one Countryside Assistant. This allows some savings to be made but also lent itself to a more workable structure.

For six months in 2010 Countrycare had help from two Future Jobs Fund staff. Their contracts were extended to the end of March 2011 when unfortunately there was only a permanent job available to one of them (Paul Ceconi).

Luke Roberts joined Countrycare as a work-placement student from Capel Manor College from 19th April to 28th May 2010.

4. Main Achievements for 2010-11

The Service's main achievements of 2010–11 can be summarised as follows:

- 704 volunteer days (4224 hours) given on 65 practical tasks organised this year. This equates to £26,400 @ £6.25 per hour
- Organising and attending 33 walks, talks and educational events
- 61 project days spent improving the District's nine Local Nature Reserves. Involving 1119 staff hours and 2028 volunteer hours.
- 27 project days dedicated to access improvement projects involving 543 staff hours and 1020 volunteer hours.
- 128 project days dedicated to improving biodiversity across 29 sites including nine Local Nature Reserves, 19 Local Wildlife Sites and 11 other Countrycare managed sites. Involved 2142 staff hours and 4224 volunteer days.
- Completing updated Site Management Plans for:
 - Home Mead LNR
 - Thornwood Common LNR
 - Weald Common LNR
 - Norton Heath Common LoWS
 - Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve
 - Willingale Road Allotments
 - Foster Street LoWS
- Completing the Roding Valley Management Agreement between EFDC, Essex Wildlife Trust and Grange Farm Centre Trust.
- Completing the restoration phase of biological enhancement of Bobbingworth former Landfill Site. Move into maintenance phase with plans to open to the public in summer 2011.
- Completing the DEFRA Hedgerow Survey of 99 hedgerows in the District.
- Exceeding the NI197 Local Wildlife Sites target to achieve more than 34% of LoWS into Positive Conservation Management by 31 March 2011.

- Continuation of the Epping Forest Veteran Tree Hunt. Total number of trees recorded by 31 March 2011: 2,739 veteran and 856 and notable trees. Completed surveys in four parishes.
- Receiving confirmation from Natural England of their approval to declare Norton Heath Common a Local Nature Reserve.

5. Working with Partners

In addition to the regular Thursday Volunteer Group which is coordinated by staff each week, staff also worked with a range of other community groups, charities and local town and parish councils.

During the course of the year Countrycare worked with:

Community Groups

Chigwell Girl Guides
 Epping 4th Brigade Beavers
 Epping 'Edgers
 Finchcourt Residential Home, Ongar
 Friends of Swaines Green
 Loughton Rainbows
 Nazeing Scouts, Rainbows and Brownies
 Roding Valley Conservation Volunteers
 Roydon Countrycare
 Waltham Abbey Scouts and Cubs
 West Essex Ramblers

Public Sector Organisations

Chingford Parish Council
 City of London Corporation
 EFDC Community Development
 EFDC Arts
 Epping Town Council
 Epping Upland Parish Council
 Essex County Council
 Harlow District Council
 Lea Valley Regional Park
 Loughton Town Council
 Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers
 Parish Council
 Natural England
 Nazeing Parish Council
 Ongar Town Council

Schools

Capel Manor College
 High Ongar Primary School
 Nazeing Primary School
 Passmore's School
 Theydon Bois Primary School
 Thomas Willingale School
 Royden Primary School

Charities

Copped Hall Trust
 Essex Field Club
 Essex Wildlife Trust
 Grange Farm Centre Trust
 Lambourne End Outdoor Centre
 The Woodland Trust

Private Sector

Epping Burial Park
 Local Landowners
 Local Farmers

6. Major Projects in 2010-11

i) Planning Consultative Advice

Countrycare offers a service to the Planning Directorate giving advice in ecological terms on planning applications. When a planning application is received with an ecological survey or a protected species survey, Countrycare will advise on whether the survey is robust and whether or not it feels that the planning application should be accepted or rejected.

Countrycare also offers advice on mitigation for protected species and enhancement of habitats as part of the development. This year 60 planning applications have been commented on in this way.

Countrycare is supporting the set up of a Biological Records in Essex (BRIE) which will greatly help the Planners to identify which planning applications need the ecological surveys.

Following on from the recent Government White Paper on the Natural Environment Countrycare will become even more involved with planning decisions, mitigation, compensation and biodiversity offsetting advice.

ii) Biodiversity Action Plan

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 came into force on 1 October 2006. Under Section 40 of the Act, all public bodies have a legal duty to consider biodiversity in their work. More than 900 public bodies are affected, including local authorities. EFDC produced a plan that gives a brief introduction to the biodiversity of the district and establishes a five year Action Plan containing a range of targets aimed at conserving and enhancing biodiversity across the District. The targets set out in the Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan reflect priorities and targets that have been developed in the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan and UK's National Biodiversity Action Plan. The EFDC BAP was updated in July 2010.

For more information please see:

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Biodiversity.asp

iii) Practical Conservation Work

Enhancement of biodiversity across the district continues to be one of the Service's key strengths. A great deal of staff time and effort has been spent improving sites and liaising with private landowners and other nature conservation bodies across the District.

In 2010-11 management work has been undertaken on 29 sites, the majority of which the District Council either owns or to which Countrycare has had a long-term commitment. In total 128 project days were organised to enhance biodiversity involving 6336 hours of staff and volunteer time. This included work on one Site of Special Scientific Interest, 19 Local Wildlife Sites and nine Local Nature Reserves.

Chigwell Row Wood LNR received approx 500 staff and volunteer hours of attention. Roding Valley Meadows and Bobbingworth Nature Reserve (former Landfill Site) received over 600 staff and volunteer hours each.

Five volunteer project days were spent in Chigwell Row Wood, six in Roding Valley Meadows and seven at Bobbingworth.

This reflects the commitment the Service has to creating Bobbingworth Nature Reserve with a view to opening it to the public during the course of 2011-12.

iv) Guided Walks, Talks and Events

This year staff organised a total of 33 walks, talks and environmental events aimed at increasing people's knowledge and understanding of the countryside. A total audience of approximately 900 people attended. This included "The Meeting Place" a large event to raise awareness of Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve, Ongar. Countrycare worked together with EFDC Arts to organise the event and also involved two local schools and Finchcourt Residential Care Home.

Details of the walks, talks and events are in Appendix 3, page 25.

v) Tree Wardens

Epping Forest District Council has coordinated a Tree Warden Scheme within the district since 1994.

Its goal is to work together with the wardens to:

- encourage more tree planting
- improve management of trees
- raise public awareness of the importance of, and celebrate, trees
- Record veteran and notable trees throughout the district

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

- alert us to possible unauthorised works to trees
- look out for pests or diseases and alert the authorities
- report on dangerous trees, or street trees needing pruning or replacement
- keep an eye on trees where there may be a threat and, if necessary, ask for a Tree Preservation Order or other measures; and
- keep an eye on tree planting and protection on development site

The council has 40 volunteer Tree Wardens based in 12 of the District's parishes.

Events held for the tree wardens during the year 2010-11 included:

Date	Event	Attendees
13 th June 2010	Hedgerow Survey training day	7
12 th July 2010	Open Meeting	16
29 th September 2010	Open Meeting	20
16 th November 2010	Annual General Meeting*	24
13 th Feb 2011	Veteran tree walk Chigwell	6
15 th March 2011	Open Meeting	12

* Presentations were given by Robin Hellier, EFDC Tree and Landscape Officer – "How does the High Hedges Legislation work?" and Judith Moore, Arboricultural Consultant – "The findings of the Epping Forest Hedgerow Survey"

vi) Veteran Tree Hunt

The recording of veteran tree on the Favourite Trees website has continued with four new parishes being completed: Fyfield, Moreton, Matching and Sheering. This makes a total of nine now finished. 272 new trees were added to the database during the year and the total now recorded for Epping Forest District stands at 2739 Veteran and 856 Notable trees.

For further information please see the Favourite Trees website: www.favouritetrees.org

vii) Local Wildlife Sites

A Local Wildlife Site is an area of land that has significant habitat or wildlife value and is selected against a National Selection Criteria. In national planning policy they are recognised as “material consideration against development”. Previously these sites were referred to as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or County Wildlife Sites (CWS).

The district contains 222 Local Wildlife Sites as reported in the Essex Ecology Services (EECOS) review in January 2010. Previously EFDC had 189 in its area.

DEFRA’s National Initiative (NI197) that began in 2008 made a target to have 34% (73 sites) in Positive Conservation Management (PCM) by the end of the reporting period, 31st March 2011. EFDC succeeded in achieving 37.4% (83 sites) in PCM in this period.

The Service has been particularly successful in contacting private landowners of Local Wildlife Sites and producing Management Guidance Statements for them with the aim of linking up neighbouring sites.

For more information see:

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Local_Wildlife_Sites.asp

viii) Tree Planting and Free Tree Scheme 2010-11

A total of 8730 trees were planted this winter season.

Countrycare put the Woodland Trust in touch with some local landowners and a total of approximately 5000 trees were planted via the Free Tree Scheme on six different sites. In addition Tree Wardens in Roydon and Nazeing Primary School applied to the scheme direct and Countrycare then helped children plant 1850 trees in these areas involving approximately 110 school children. This season trees were also planted in Bobbingworth Nature Reserve (800), Foster Street Burial Ground (30), Great Gregories (1200 trees supplied by City of London, 90 children involved), Weald Common LNR (400) and Lambourne End Outdoor Centre (600).

ix) Schools and Youth Groups

This year the Service worked with a range of youth groups and seven schools from across the District. Over 300 young people were involved in practical conservation work or a Countrycare event. A list of groups worked with and tasks undertaken can be found in Appendix 6, page 26.

x) Multifor

Countrycare has been working in partnership with Essex County Council on the Interreg funded Multifor project which is lead by the Pas De Calais Forestry Department. The aim of this project is to investigate the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows in the south of England and Northern France.

Countrycare’s main involvement with this project has been the management of Lambourne Woods in Lambourne End. This consists of six small woods: Ape’s Grove, Great Wood, Jubilee Plantation, Conduit Wood, Mutton Corner, and Half Moon Wood. Most of the Work carried out by Countrycare this year has been on Ape’s Grove and Great Wood and is detailed later in the report.

Countrycare has also assisted in the assemblage and positioning of vein traps, designed to survey for invertebrates in patches of ancient woodland. A total of 48 staff hours were put into the invertebrate survey. This equates to £1200 worth of staff time. This does not include the hours put into Lambourne Woods which is detailed later in the report.

xi) DEFRA Hedgerow Survey

In 2010 Countrycare received a £5000 grant from DEFRA to carry out a hedgerow survey in Moreton, Fyfield and the Lavers. The aim of the survey was to record the condition of hedgerows across the UK. 99 hedgerows were surveyed in total at 10 different farms. The results showed that 20% of the hedgerows surveyed were in favourable condition. The majority were found to be in unfavourable condition due to nutrient enrichment, most likely caused by fertilisers used on the farms. The survey was conducted by a contractor and members of staff, and height, width, length, species, past management, percentage of gaps and isolated trees were all recorded and placed in a DEFRA database for analysis. A total of 72 staff hours were dedicated to this project this equates to £1800 worth of staff time. £3300 of the DEFRA grant paid for a private contractor to survey the hedgerows and write up a report for DEFRA.

To see the report go to:

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Defra_hedgerow_survey.asp

xii) Hedgelaying

Well managed hedgerows have a variety of uses, not only are they a vital wildlife corridor they also provide a stock proof barrier and shelter for grazing animals which is much more effective than modern methods. Once a hedge has been laid a rotation of trimming will keep it in good condition for years until which point it may require relaying. Using only a few hand tools and some basic knowledge it's a sustainable method of creating physical boundaries with scenic and wildlife value.

This hedge laying season, 29 volunteers over 16 days laid 624 yards (570 metres) of hedge with the guidance of Peter Vaughan and Patricia MacFarlane and other members of the Epping 'Edgers group. You can see some of the hedges they've worked on at sites such as Weald Common LNR, Banson's Lane, High Ongar Church, Old Shire Lane and the Gunpowder Park.

7. Key Objectives for 2011–2012 include:

Projects	Comments/Objectives
Site Management Plans and Management Agreements	To complete reviews of the existing plans for Linder's Field LNR, Chigwell Row Wood LNR, Civic Offices Pond and World's End LoWS. Investigate management agreements for Foster Street Burial Ground LoWS, North Weald, Copy Wood Field, Nazeing and Thornwood Nature Area, North Weald.
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	Continue to work towards the designation of Norton Heath Common, High Ongar as a Local Nature Reserve. Continue to manage Bobbingworth Nature Reserve and work towards opening to the public in Summer 2011. Work with Essex County Council to investigate the promotion and management of Apes Grove Wood, Lambourne, as a LNR and to establish a Management Agreement.
NI 197 – Biodiversity and Local Wildlife Sites	Continue to manage the District's Local Wildlife Sites to keep them in Positive Conservation Management.

Raising Awareness through 25th Anniversary	Organising events to celebrate/publicise the Service eg. moth night, guided walks, fayres.
Epping Forest Veteran Tree Hunt of the District	In partnership with the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Hunt undertake a veteran tree survey of the District on a Parish basis. Complete surveys of three more parishes. Achieve the recording of 3,000 veteran trees on the favourite trees website by March 2012.
Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan	Continue to implement the District's Biodiversity Action Plan in partnership with the Epping Forest Biodiversity Partnership and EFDC's Environmental Coordinator.
Planning Consultative Advice	Continue to offer advice to Planning Directorate on ecological and protected species issues.
Traded service	With the assistance of the Assistant Director (Policy & Conservation), to look at the opportunities for running Countrycare as a traded service.

8. Further Information

Practical conservation project calendar

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Countrycare_Volunteers_and_project_updates.asp

NI 197 and Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS)

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Local_Wildlife_Sites.asp

Epping Forest Veteran Tree Hunt

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Epping_forest_veteran_tree_hunt.asp

Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Biodiversity.asp

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Countrycare_LNR.asp

Favourite Trees Website

www.favouritetrees.com

BRIE

<http://www.brienet.org.uk/>

EFDC's Biodiversity Guidance notes for developers

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/development_control/Biodiversity_Guidance_Notes.asp

Appendices

Within the following appendices are the major projects undertaken in the course of the year from 1st April 2010 to 31 March 2011, with full descriptions of each project. Throughout this report every attempt has been made to avoid jargon and specialist terms where possible, however the Glossary of Terms in Appendix 8 may help.

Appendix 1 - Access to the Countryside

Countrycare has worked in twelve parishes on 27 project days, improving 17 public rights of way.

714 staff hours and 1392 volunteer hours were dedicated to this. Activities included building new boardwalks and maintaining existing ones, new bridges and benches, installing steps, field gates, kissing gates, undertaking path drainage and general footpath maintenance. Many of the footpaths run through the Local Nature Reserves and some green lanes that are also Local Wildlife Sites. This contributed to Countrycare's work on Local Wildlife Sites and NI197 targets.

The following sites with public rights of way were worked on. Details are in Appendix 2.

Buckhurst Hill, Linder's Field LNR, LoWS
Chigwell, Chigwell Row Wood LNR, LoWS
Epping, Stewards Green Lane, LoWS
Epping Upland, Millennium Garden
Fyfield, Canon's Green Lane, LoWS
High Ongar, Norton Heath Common
Lambourne, Ape's Grove, LoWS
Lambourne, Great Wood LoWS
Loughton, Roding Valley Meadows, LNR, LoWs, SSSI
Loughton, Home Mead, LNR, LoWS
North Weald, Weald Common, LNR, LoWS
North Weald, Church Lane LNR
North Weald Thornwood Common, LNR, LoWS
Nazeing, Nazeing Church Fields, LoWS
Ongar, Cripsey Brook
Ongar, Hallsford Bridge Meadow, LoWS
Waltham Abbey, Old Shire Lane

Appendix 2 – Biodiversity and Landscape Enhancement

In total 128 project days were undertaken across 29 sites including 19 Local Wildlife Sites to increase their biodiversity value. A total of 2142 staff hours and 4224 volunteer hours were given equating to £26,400 @ £6.25/hr. The following lists conservation projects undertaken by the regular Countrycare Volunteer Group working alongside Countrycare staff. Other groups are mentioned by name.

Bobbingworth, Bobbingworth Nature Reserve (Former Landfill Site) (9 ha)

This District Council owned site is located to the south of Moreton village. During the 1950s, it was used for gravel extraction following which, from 1961 to 1972, it was used to take domestic rubbish.

By 1974, the site had been filled and "restored" to green open space. However, when the tip was filled in the 1960s, recycling was non-existent. Consequently, newspapers, bottles, plastics and cans all went into the tip. During trial works in 2007 much of this rubbish was revealed which despite being in the ground nearly 40 years looked like it had been put there yesterday. Unfortunately, restoration of the tip's surface cap on completion in the 1970s and

later in the 1980s had proved inadequate. Pollution had been found coming from the site, which has required a comprehensive project to stop the migration of any pollution and restore the former tip's surface to a usable state. This involved major soil importation and movement. This engineering phase of the project was completed in October 2008 and the next few years saw major landscaping.

This is where Countrycare have been, and will be, involved into the future. The Council's contractors Veolia will be managing and maintaining the site for the next seven years. However, during this time as well as ensuring the design is working they will be working closely with Countrycare in trying to create a biodiversity resource with wetlands, a wildflower meadow, copses and hedgerows.

During the course of 2010-11 a Local Liaison Group was formed to discuss issues relating to the site. The group consists local Councillors, the Portfolio Holder and representatives from Environmental Street Scene and Countrycare. It was this group that renamed the former landfill site as "Nature Reserve". The plan is to open the site to the public in the summer of 2011.

In 2010–11 seven volunteer tasks were held on the Nature Reserve. This amounts to £5983.00 volunteer time given to this site (based on Natural England's £6.25/hr). 650 trees were planted along the boundary on the northern edge and near the carpark. More trees were mulched and a Warrener was employed to help eradicate the rabbit problem. In June 2010 a group of school children from Passmore's in Harlow mulched trees, planted aquatic plants in the ponds and had a guided tour of Moreton. Countrycare staff visited regularly to trim the grass and mulch the trees.

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/bobbingworth_tip.asp

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

Linder's Field is far more than just a field: it is actually a mixture of habitats. Combined with the grassland is ancient woodland (50%) (Little Pluckett's Wood), scrub and two small ponds. Since 1963, the land has been managed as a charitable trust with first Chigwell Urban District Council and now Epping Forest District Council acting as managing trustees. Since 1990 Countrycare has worked on the field to make both habitat and access improvements. In May 1996 the importance of the site was recognised by its declaration as Local Wildlife Site and this was followed in August 2000 by its declaration as a statutory LNR. Each year staff and volunteers undertake a range of projects and this year the following works have been undertaken:

- **11 June 2010** – Pond Dipping and Bug Hunting with Loughton Rainbows.
- **16 June 2010** – Bug hunting and tree ID with Girl Guides.
- **28 July 2010** – Put in Linder's field sign by City of London land, cleared around gates and path into Linder's Field.
- **25 November 2010** – Felled 12 trees in area behind pond and cleared around newly planted hedge.
- **3 February 2011** – Reed mace from pond pulled up and hedge gapped up.

In total 72 staff hours and 228 volunteer hours were dedicated to the site over three project days and two environmental education days this year. This equates to £1425 worth of volunteer time and £1800 worth of staff time.

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/sites/Linders_Field.asp

Chigwell, Hainault Forest, Local Wildlife Site (5.0ha)

The Essex section of Hainault Forest is managed by the Woodland Trust (WT). Over the last five years Countrycare has worked in partnership with the Trust and coordinated occasional volunteer days within the Forest. The Trust has also purchased 53 hectares (131 acres) of adjoining land and is once more expanding Hainault Forest. This former agricultural land is being planted with trees which will in the future develop into woodland and expand this great forest. There are plans for Countrycare to continue working with the Woodland Trust in Hainault Forest in winter 2011-12.

Further details can be found at:

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/our-woods/Pages/wood-details.aspx?wood=5067>

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

Chigwell Row Wood is a remnant of Hainault Forest which survives to the west of the Romford Road. This hugely significant and valuable site is home to a variety of habitats, from Ancient Woodland with its magnificent veteran trees (50 veteran oaks and hundreds of hornbeam pollards) and dead wood insects, through to relic heathland and its rare plants such as Lousewort. Since 1950, the land has been managed as Charitable Trust first by Chigwell Urban District Council and since 1974 by Epping Forest District Council.

Since its declaration as a LNR in August 2000, the site has been a major focus for Countrycare staff and volunteers restoring many veteran pollards and a large area of heathland. In addition, the opening up of woodland rides and glades has been very successful.

In total this year 83 volunteers days amounting to 498 hours @ £6.25 equates to £3237 in labour. This does not include all the days worked by Countrycare staff patrolling the site and completing general maintenance tasks.

Some examples of the work that has been undertaken with volunteers are :

April – Installing drainage pipe to combat boggy footpaths in winter

May / August – Heathland management

September – Mowing glades

October / November – Controlling encroaching bramble by flailing and strimming

December - Coppicing hazel on western edge of wood

January – Removal of invasive sycamore from the north west of the wood

March – Heathland management

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/sites/chigwell_row_lnr.asp

Epping, Civic Offices Newt Pond

In 1900 ponds were a common feature in Epping with 20 ponds on the northern side of the High Street alone. The Civic Offices pond was one of these and is shown on the 1881 OS map. Unfortunately, a hundred years later the Civic Offices pond is the only survivor, as all the others had been lost as development extended north from the High Street.

Even this pond was initially threatened with extension proposals for the Civic offices in 1988. The pond and its surrounding field (0.3 ha) was initially allocated for car parking but the discovery of 400 great crested newts led to the plans being amended and the pond's future secured. 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. In 2008/09 a Great crested newt population survey was undertaken. Full details of the findings are on the Countrycare website.

The management work undertaken in 2010-11 was an early spring and summer cut of the grass around the pond and meadow area. Repairs were also made to the entrance gate. The plan for 2011-12 is to update the management plan with consideration given to it being open to EFDC staff as a recreational area in future.

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Civic_offices_pond.asp

Epping, Steward's Green Lane, Local Wildlife Site Ep91 (1.1ha)

This ancient green lane was selected as a Local Wildlife Site in 1996. It is bordered by species-rich hedgerows and a narrow strip of scrub. There are at least 13 woody species present including Spindle, Wild Service Tree, Wild Privet, Wild Plum, Elm, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Holly and Oak. Ground flora consists typical woodland species including Dog's Mercury. Included in the site is a thin triangular area of mature woodland adjacent to the southern end of the lane, representing additional semi-natural habitat.

In 2009–10 Countrycare started the Green Lane Project which included project days working on this lane. In 2010–11 this continued with two volunteer days coppicing and clearing overgrown blackthorn. This helps more light onto the ground and will encourage the spread of wildflowers.

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Epping_Forest_Green_Lanes_LoWS_Project.asp

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

Swaines Green lies to the north of Epping Town and from 1994 had been managed by Countrycare on behalf of Epping Town Council and local residents under a management and access agreement with the landowner. However, since 2005 the land has been jointly owned and managed by the City of London, (Forties field 4.98ha, Middle Lincoln field 1.31ha, and Lower Lincoln field 1.74ha) and Epping Town Council (Lovelocks Meadow 1.78ha). Countrycare now works in partnership with the two landowners and the Friends of Swaines Green undertaking management work. The site itself has developed from four former agricultural fields, which had been left unmanaged since the early 1980s. Nature quickly took hold and today the site is a mosaic of grassland, scrub and developing woodland bordered by thick hedgerows, the seed source for much of the woodland coming from the major hedge bordering Bolt Cellar Lane.

The Friends of Swaines Green were instrumental in securing the land into public ownership in 2005 and they continue to hold regular monthly volunteer days on the Green supported where possible by Countrycare.

A management plan is being written by the City of London for their part of the site and they have installed a large interpretation board at the entrance. Works are due to take place during 2011-12 to restore the pond.

This year the Service assisted on the following days undertaking the following works:

6th June 2010 - grass cutting on Lovelocks Meadow with Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers.

10th March 2011 - clearing blackthorn on Lovelocks Meadow to increase the grassland area a continuation of previous work on the meadow with Countrycare volunteers.

In total 18 staff hours and 174 volunteer hours were dedicated to the site over the two project days.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Swaines_Green.asp

Epping, Copped Hall

The Copped Hall Trust has charitable status and was established in 1993 to acquire the freehold of Copped Hall, its gardens and other related parts, in order to permanently protect them under benign ownership, to restore and conserve the mansion, ancillary buildings, gardens, walled garden and grounds. Countrycare has on occasions worked in partnership with the Copped Hall Trust to help improve the landscaping. This year as a joint favour EFDC Planning and Economic Development Team, for the Christmas team day, spent a day “scrub-bashing” in the grounds in return for a tour of the house. This involved 25 staff.

In January 2011 four Countrycare staff returned to plant up gaps in a hedgerow with 50 trees.

For further information see:

<http://www.coppedhalltrust.org.uk/>

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

Countrycare has managed the wildflower conservation area of this churchyard since 1993, working in partnership with the churchwardens. To date over 138 different flowering plants have been recorded within the churchyard’s conservation area. In recognition of the site’s wildlife value it has been designated a Local Wildlife Site. To help maintain the diversity of wildflowers, especially the highly impressive display of Cowslips in the spring, the grass is cut annually and all the cuttings removed. This year a single project day was organised on the 5th August 2010 involving 36 staff hours and 114 volunteer hours.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/All_Saints_Churchyard.asp

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

In 1999 Epping Upland Parish Council received a small grant from the Millennium Festival “Awards for All Scheme”. This went towards creating a Millennium Wildlife Area on redundant allotments within Epping Green village. Over the last eleven years, Countrycare has worked in partnership with the Parish Council to create an ever improving wildlife area.

A meadow area has been created, a pond dug and hedgerows planted all of which are now starting to mature. Wildflowers such as Cowslip and Common Spotted Orchid are now establishing. In 2006, a formal management agreement was signed between Countrycare and the Parish Council that will see this work continue in the long term. Two volunteer project days took place to mow and rake the meadow and strim bramble. Another five occasions Countrycare staff visited the site to strim bramble and hedges.

In total 72 staff hours and 96 volunteer hours were dedicated to the site over six project days this year.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/millennium_garden.asp

Fyfield, Cannon's Green Lane, Local Wildlife Site Ep200 (1.5ha)

Cannon's Green Lane was designated as a Local Wildlife Site in 1996. Many woody species occur in this complex of ancient lanes including Field Maple, Hazel, Hawthorn, Ash, Oak, Elder, Crab Apple, Spindle and in the ground flora Spurge Laurel. The linear feature has value for birds and insects. The northern section contains rich woodland flora including Moschatel, Primrose, Pendulous Sedge, Hairy St John's Wort and Wood Sedge. In 2009–10 Countrycare started a "Green Lane Project" which continued into 2010–11. In winter 2009 Countrycare did some clearance work and also gapped up some of the hedgerow with trees funded by the Tree Council. In winter 2010 two project days were held clearing blackthorn and scrub to encourage light onto the floor.

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Epping_Forest_Green_Lanes_LoWS_Project.asp

Fyfield, The Moors, Local Wildlife Site Ep194 (3.1ha)

This Local Wildlife Site was designated in 1992. The Moors consists grassland fields and marshy swamp divided by thick hedgerows with Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Spindle amongst the main woody species. The marshy areas include extensive stands of Lesser Pond-sedge, Greater Pond-sedge and Meadowsweet. A management plan was written in 2009-10 for this site which involved grazing to keep the site in Positive Conservation Management. In summer 2010, with the help of the Essex County Council Landscape and Countryside Grant scheme, fencing was erected in the fields to contain cattle. Three staff days amounting to 84 hours was spent on construction of 300m of fencing. The landowner has signed an agreement that if she should ever move the fencing material should be returned to EFDC.

High Ongar, Norton Heath Common, Local Wildlife Site Ep 213 (4.3ha)

Norton Heath is a registered common with EFDC acting as the managing trustees. Countrycare has been undertaking small-scale projects on the common since the late 1980s. Today, this former heathland has largely reverted to secondary woodland. It has a largely closed canopy of Oak and Birch, overlying very acid gravel soils. The only exception is a small glade, which was created in the centre of the site in 2009.

The improved light penetration to ground level since 2009 has encouraged the reestablishment of Gorse, Sheep's Sorrel, Heath Bedstraw, Trailing St John's Wort and Heath Wood-Rush. Ten species of dragonfly and damselfly have been recorded, nine Orthopterans and 19 species of butterfly. Many hollows are seasonally filled with water and in one Marsh Pennywort occurs, an Essex Red Data List species, now very rare in the County.

This year site maintenance has included strimming the paths and around the ponds, some pond clearance and mending of boardwalks. Winter 2011 will see Countrycare doing some more small-scale felling work to create larger glades in the southern area. The objective for the future of this site is to restore much of the heathland that used to occur here.

Natural England have recommended that Norton Heath may be declared a Local Nature Reserve but there are some legal issues which EFDC is addressing.

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/norton_heath.asp

Lambourne, Featherbed Lane, Local Wildlife Site Ep102 (3ha)

This ancient green lane runs for nearly two kilometres north from Hainault Forest to Lambourne Church. Its old hedgerows are full of magnificent veteran trees the lane is designated a Local Wildlife Site. Over many years Countrycare has worked on various parts of the lane improving drainage and managing the ponds and veteran pollards, removing scrub from the centre of the lane and the boundary hedgerows. More work is planned for winter 2011-12.

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Epping_Forest_Green_Lanes_LoWS_Project.asp

Lambourne, Lambourne End Centre for Outdoor Learning

The Lambourne End Outdoor Centre is a charity that is passionate about developing people. Using a blend of adventure, farm and environmental activities they aim to inspire people to make a positive contribution to their lives and their communities. In early 2010 Countrycare put the Centre in touch with the Woodland Trust's Free Tree Scheme and in December volunteers planted 400 metres of new hedgerow along a field edge.

Further details can be found at: <http://www.lambourne-end.org.uk/>

Lambourne Woods

Countrycare has been working with Essex County Council in Lambourne Woods for a couple of years as part of the Multifor project. These woods once made up part of the Lambourne Hall Estate and were regularly coppiced. The woods have been neglected for many years now leaving them full of ancient Hornbeam coppice stools. These stools are becoming brittle and prone to falling over in the wind. With the correct management it is possible the life of these trees could be extended for many more years.

Further details can be found at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Lambourne_Woods.asp

Ape's Grove Wood, Local Wildlife Site Ep96 (6ha)

Over the last year Countrycare has been working to improve access to Ape's Grove. It is prone to flooding in the winter and parts of it are impassable by local walkers. This year the following tasks were undertaken by staff and volunteers:

- **2nd July 2010** – Started boardwalk in the Northern corner.
- **8th July 2010** – Continued with boardwalk construction.
- **15th July 2010** – Continued with boardwalk construction.
- **13th September 2010** – Put in steps over ancient ditch boundary marker.
- **14th October 2010** – Cleared scrub from behind boardwalk.

In total 21 staff hours (not including time spent patrolling the site) and 264 volunteer hours were put into the site over five project days. This equates to £1650 worth of volunteer time and £525 worth of staff time.

Great Wood, Local Wildlife Site Ep106 (9ha)

Great Wood is known amongst the residents of Lambourne End and Abridge as Bluebell Wood. The management that has taken place here over the last year has therefore been geared towards improving the area for Bluebells. This year the following tasks were undertaken by staff and volunteers:

- **4th May 2010** – Flailed paths
- **19th August** – Installed two benches and a bridge
- **23rd September** – Cleared scallops into the wood and finished the bridge.

In total 10 staff hours (not including time spent patrolling the site) and 126 volunteer hours were dedicated to Great Wood over three volunteer tasks. This equates to £787 worth of volunteer time and £250 worth of staff time.

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

This District Council owned site is a wonderful mosaic of scrub, secondary woodland, acid grassland and a small pond. For many years the site was simply forgotten about, which allowed much of the scrub encroachment to occur. There is still an area of heather on the eastern side which suggests a once larger heathland community may have existed. In 1999, Countrycare took over management of the site and began a comprehensive habitat restoration programme that continues to the present day. 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 designate as a Local Wildlife Site. This year, three project days were held on the Nature Reserve involving volunteers from the regular Countrycare group, and two day's work was completed by staff in preparation for these project days. The following work was undertaken:

- **3 June 2010** – Dug scrapes near pond, cut compartments 2, 7, 8 and 9 and constructed new bench in compartment 7.
- **26 July 2010** – Cut compartment 7.
- **11 November 2010** – Cleared part of compartment 8.
- **6 January 2011** – Cleared section 5ii.
- **21 March 2011** – Cleared fence line in preparation for volunteer day.

In total 108 staff hours and 103 volunteer hours were dedicated to the nature reserve over 6 project days. This equates to £643 worth of volunteer time and £2700 worth of staff hours.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/sites/Home_Mead.asp

Loughton, Roding Valley Meadows LNR, Local Wildlife Site G10, SSSI (56.5 ha).

One of the main achievements of this year has been the signing of the Management Agreement between Epping Forest District Council, the Essex Wildlife Trust and the Grange Farm Centre Trust.

This now means there is a more focused aim for the management of the reserve and funding to provide the current warden Patrick Bailly with a part time assistant to help promote interest, understanding and enjoyment of the reserve and nature conservation and assist with its management.

Some major ground works have been undertaken in the last year. In conjunction with the Environment Agency a water level management plan was created. Water control features have been installed and ditches cleared in Further River Mead and Great Horseley Meadow. This was to increase the quantity of water on the fen and flood plains and to control its rate of flow.

Work has also been carried out in and around Andrew's Pond. The pond has been dredged and the inlet ditch widened and re-profiled, this is to allow for a reed bed to be planted to aid with water filtration. The dam at the outlet ditch has also been renovated and strengthened.

In total the Essex Wildlife Trust and Countrycare held 70 volunteer days over the last year which equates to 2342 adult volunteer hours which at a rate of £6.25 equates to £14,637 of voluntary labour.

Countrycare also contributed a further 51 staff days to help the Wildlife Trust warden with works around the reserve and provide further tools and equipment to help on his volunteer project days .

The five Countrycare volunteer days were

- Yearly cutting of the fen
- Installing new raised footpath to replace vandalised boardwalk
- Two days working in Lower Brick Clamp cutting back encroachment of blackthorn to widen paths and improve public safety
- Installing kissing gates and field gates

There were also two wildflower walks held in July and September led by Tricia Moxey and Patrick Bailly, both of which had a successful turn out.

For more information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council_services/planning/countrycare/sites/roding_valley_meadows.asp

Loughton, Thomas Willingale School

Staff from Countrycare have been working with the school over the last few years to create a wildlife garden in the school grounds. The hedgelaying group associated with Countrycare has also started laying the hedges planted around the school grounds and giving hedgelaying demonstrations to school children. This year the following tasks were undertaken:

- **12 June 2010** – Put down mulch path with children.
- **4 August 2010** – Bug hunting with Green Team.
- **20 November 2010** – Cut grass and finished mulch path.

In total 66 staff hours and 198 volunteer hours were put into working with Thomas Willingale School over four project days. This equates to £1237 worth of volunteer hours and £1650 worth of staff hours.

Matching, Matching Green, Local Wildlife Site Ep176 (4.9 ha)

Matching Green is one of the largest surviving village greens in Essex and is the 6th largest grassland Local Wildlife Site in the district. Since 1999, the green has been managed sympathetically for its wildflowers in a partnership between Countrycare and the owners Matching Parish Council. Surveys in 1998, 1999 and 2006 have recorded over 206 species of plant including Burnet Saxifrage, Lady's Smock, Common Restharrow, Quaking grass and Common Spotted Orchid all indicating the Green's huge biodiversity value. In June 2010, contractors undertook the annual hay cut of the green (3.5ha). This was funded by the Landscape and Countryside Grant Scheme from Essex County Council.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Matching_Green.asp

Nazeing, Nazeing County Primary School.

The school applied direct to the Woodland Trust to source trees for a hedgerow in their grounds. On 23rd March 2011 two staff spent a morning working with 30 children from the school to plant the 30 metre hedgerow. Afterwards a short talk and practical demonstration about the importance of trees was given followed by a tree identification exercise in the school grounds. Eight staff hours and 30 children were involved in the morning.

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. Due to the size of machinery access had to be gained by removing part of the hedge running along Back Lane. The hedge has been replanted but needs some attention and the ground that was disturbed was later seeded with a mixture of wildflowers. By spring 2011 this area was in flower and buzzing with life.

This year 12 volunteers have contributed 72 hours of their time to help us with pond work. With a further six staff days carrying out maintenance works (not including regular patrols of the site).

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/sites/Nazeing_Triangle.asp

Nazeing, Copy Wood Field, Local Wildlife Site Ep55 (0.7ha)

Countrycare has managed this unimproved meadow since 1986. Situated on the northern edge of Nazeing Common, this small field is in fact part of the Copped Hall Estate. It is especially notable for its spring flowers and butterflies and forms part of the Epping Long Green Local Wildlife Site Complex. Each year staff and volunteers undertake a hay cut that helps the wildflowers to thrive.

- **12 June 2010** - Staff and volunteers cut and raked 90% of the field

In total 24 staff hours and 90 volunteer hours were dedicated to managing this important wildlife site. This equates to £672 worth of staff time and £527 worth of volunteer time.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Copy_Wood_Field.asp

Nazeing, Nazeing Church Fields, Local Wildlife Site Ep34 (3.4ha)

Designated a Local Wildlife Site in 1998 these two fields comprise Neutral grassland with a small woodland area between them. The southern field is steeply sloping and becomes encroached by bramble if left unmanaged. The northern field is used for sheep grazing. Grassland species include Burnet-saxifrage, Cuckooflower, Ragged Robin and Creeping Jenny. Countrycare wrote a management plan for the site as part of the NI197 obligations in 2009-10. In October 2010 contractors mowed the southern field and Countrycare staff raked the bramble. This allowed the tenant farmers to graze sheep in both fields. A total of 36 staff hours were used for the practical work.

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 by the District Council and the then National Rivers Authority. From the outset, the meadow has been designed and sympathetically managed for nature conservation within the primary

parameters of flood defence. Specially designed wetland scrapes and a wetland meadow was sown to maximise biodiversity. Wildflowers such as Ragged Robin, Oxeye Daisy and Knapweed can be found here. Its development has been a massive success reflected in its designation as a Local Nature Reserve in December 2004 after just six years.

The grassland area receives an annual cut by outside contractors arranged by the Council's Environmental Street Scene in late July or early August. To improve the meadow for wildflowers and reduce the Creeping Thistle invading the site on the north side of the main ditch, this year an early cut of the grass was made by contractors in late March. The cut grass is taken off site to reduce nutrient levels. If resources allow an early cut will be made in future years.

Work carried out on the site by the service this year has been.

- **23 April 2010** – Cleared ditch.
- **1 July 2010** – Cut meadow and replaced faggots in ditch.
- **23 December** – Cleared trees overhanging ditch.

In all 17 staff hours and 126 volunteer hours were dedicated to the site over three project days. This equates to £787 worth of volunteer hours and £425 worth of staff hours.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/sites/Thornwood_Flood_Meadow.asp

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

Completed in 1989, this LNR has been the focus of a major engineering and habitat creation scheme. Designed primarily for flood protection, the site can hold 35 million litres of water in a flood event. A wet meadow and large stream fed pond lie within the flood bowl and 2,000 trees have been planted. In addition to the good populations of birds, dragonfly and butterfly, over 180 species of flowers, grasses and trees have been recorded.

The two volunteer days held this year were;

- **June** – Installed two runs of steps up bank
- **October/November** - Coppiced willow around the central pond to make binders for hedge laying projects around the district

In all 126 volunteer hours were dedicated to the LNR over two volunteer project days and 87 staff hours.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/sites/Church_Lane.asp

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 at Thornwood Common. Since then Countrycare has managed the grassland areas by cutting and scrub clearance. This has helped to enhance the colony of bee orchids and other wildflowers. This year the grassland was cut by staff in July 2010.

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

Roughtalley's Wood in its entirety is a large ancient woodland covering 25 hectares. However, in 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 neatly divided into two distinct areas. The first area is semi-natural ancient woodland with large Hornbeam coppice stools with Oak standards and the second is an area of regenerating secondary woodland with an abundance of Sycamore. The ground flora within the wood is generally poor due to lack of recent management and Bramble tends to dominate, however there are three types of orchid and the occasional patch of Bluebell and Primrose in the spring. This year the following work was undertaken on the LNR:

- **18th November 2010** cleared bramble and coppiced trees beside boardwalk.
- **15th February 2011** Strimmed brambled beside ditch close to railway line
- **3rd March 2011** cleared ditches from railway to the ponds and dug out the ponds, installed new chestnut paling fence by Cunningham House, cut Birch and removed leaning trees.
- **28th March 2011** Treated new fence with fence paint.

In total 60 staff hours and 162 volunteer hours were dedicated to the Reserve over three volunteer project days this year.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/sites/Roughtalleys_Wood.asp

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 following an approach from local volunteers and historians regarding the overgrown plight of the churchyard. Since that time the Service has undertaken a series of volunteer days with a minimum of one a year. 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 to the compost bin. The work has created a more open aspect to the site and a good display of wildflowers during the spring and summer. In 2010-11 a two-year management agreement between the church and the Service has been agreed and is awaiting sign off.

This year the following work was undertaken:

- **24th June 2010** - Annual meadow cut and rake off.
- **24th March 2011** - Extended and repaired the compost bin. Rejuvenated the roadside hedge by clearing dead trees and replanting with new trees. Cut the grass around the gravestones and cleared cut material left on field side hedge.

A total of 30 staff hours and 123 volunteer hours were dedicated to the site over two project days.

Further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Foster_Street_Burial_Ground.asp

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. While their primary role and reason for creation was flood alleviation 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. Over 3,000 trees have been planted creating over a kilometre of new hedgerow, which are starting to mature. These are now gradually being laid and the following project days were held on the LNR undertaking this and other tasks:

- **15th April 2010** - Installed boundary bollards around north meadow and cleared bramble
- **13th May 2010** - Installed 12 bollards around North Meadow. Cemented steps and removed tree guards on South Meadow.
- **27th July 2010** - Installed more bollards and strimmed bramble around North Meadow.
- **13th October 2010** – Strimmed along hedgeline on South Meadow.
- **29th October 2010** – Hedgelaying South Meadow, 45 metres.
- **12th November 2010** – Hedgelaying South Meadow, 35 metres.
- **26th November 2010** – Hedgelaying South Meadow, 35 metres with Field Studies Council.
- **17th February 2011** – North Meadow: planted boundary extension hedge, 50 trees, and filled in any gaps in the boundary hedge. Built a small post and rail fence in the gap by the field gate and cleared bramble along the boundary edge.
- **17th March 2011** - South Meadow: cleared Bramble and Blackthorn along eastern boundary and along ditchline.
- **21st March 2011** – South Meadow: repaired bridge, mended fence rail and removed graffiti.

In total 148 staff hours and 396 volunteer hours were dedicated to improving the nature reserve over nine project days.

For more information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Weald_Common_Flood_Meadows.asp

Ongar, Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve (1.12ha)

In October 2007 work finally began on Ongar's first Nature Reserve. The site itself is located to the south of the town on a thin strip of land running beside Cripsey Brook. Countrycare's partners are Ongar Town Council, who have secured a 25 year lease for the land from Essex County Council and have secured grant funding of over £17,000 to allow enhancement works to take place. Following major clearance of the site in 2007, and a range of projects to enhance access and continue to establish a wildflower meadow in 2008, the main focus of work now is to maintain the site.

This year also saw the opening of the site which was marked with an event organised by EFDC Arts, EFDC Countrycare and Ongar Town Council. The "Meeting Place" was a successful event working with High Ongar Primary School and Finch Court Retirement Home. Approximately 100 staff hours and 66 volunteer hours and 20 children were involved in management of the Reserve and organisation of the event over the year. This equates to £2800 worth of staff time and £413 worth of volunteer time.

For more information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Cripsey_Brook_Nature_Reserve.asp

Ongar, Halsford Bridge Meadow, Local Wildlife Site Ep190 (2.8ha)

Designated in 2009, despite having undergone previous disturbance from a former sewage works site, it is now a mosaic of habitat comprising species-rich grassland scrub and some tall herb ruderal vegetation. The hedgerow bounding the eastern side has a diverse species composition including Spindle, Crab Apple and Buckthorn. The River Roding bounds the western edge. The site was patrolled regularly throughout the year by Countrycare staff.

Roydon, World's End, Local Wildlife Site Ep35 (4.6ha)

Since 1995 Countrycare has worked in partnership with the landowner of World's End and Roydon Countrycare. World's End is a Hazel and Willow carr woodland and home to a number of native Black Poplars. One of which is listed in the 50 Great British Trees by the Tree Council. World's End was designated as a Local Wildlife Site by the Essex Wildlife Trust in May 1996.

Two project days were run over the last year with the help of volunteers from Epping Forest Countrycare and Roydon Countrycare in which a programme of coppice management creating stakes and binders for hedgelaying projects around the district was continued.

Stapleford Tawney, Hawksmere Spring, Local Wildlife Site Ep141 (1.8ha)

Hawksmere Springs covers an area of approximately 1.8ha consisting of mainly ancient unimproved pasture, with a tiny remnant of damp woodland bounded to the west by a stream. Although this site is owned and managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust, Countrycare have supplied staff and volunteer time, tools and extra equipment to help with the management of the meadows in return for EWT help on EFDC Reserves.

Hopefully at the end of September 2011 there will be sheep grazing the site again after a few years absence. Conservation grazing is the use of grazing animals to manage sites of conservation interest to encourage the wildlife that they support.

There were two volunteer days held to help cut the meadows with the use of power scythes as there is no longer tractor access to the site. With a small team of eight volunteers, four staff from Countrycare and the Essex Wildlife Trust, over two days arisings were cut and removed from both meadows. A further two days was needed to finish clearing the site by three staff.

Two more volunteer days were held to continue the programme of coppice management along the western boundary of the site for hedgelaying projects on the Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve.

Theydon Bois, Great Gregories Farm, Buffer Lands Epping Forest.

Staff from both the District Council and the City of London worked with school children from Theydon Bois Primary School. The result was the planting of 1200 trees as a new hedgerow on the Forest buffer lands at Great Gregories on 26 January 2011. In all 10 staff hours and 60 children were involved on the day. This equates to £250 worth of staff time.

Waltham Abbey, Old Shire Lane (0.8ha)

Countrycare has managed this District Council owned site since October 2000. Formally an old nursery, it was given to the Council as a ransom strip when the Swallow Hotel (now Marriott) was built. For Countrycare staff and volunteers the site became the focus of a major habitat creation project. In 2001 over 800 trees were planted creating a copse and boundary hedgerows. In addition a wildflower meadow was sown in Spring 2004. This year projects have continued to enhance the wildlife value of the site and carry on with the hedgelaying project.

The following was undertaken:

- **23rd August 2010** - cleared bramble around hedge
- **5th October 2010** - cleared steps and cut path through site.
- **2nd November 2010** - cut and raked footpath.
- **17th December 2010** - hedgelaying - 30 metres layed

In total 24 staff hours and 24 volunteer hours were dedicated to the site over 1 project day and 3 staff work days.

For further information see:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/countrycare/Oldshire_land_nature_reserve.asp

Appendix 3 - Guided Walks and Events Organised

Date	Location	Walk/Event	Audience	Attendance
11/04/2010	Lambourne Woods	Guided Walk	Life Walks	23
08/05/2010	Lambourne Woods	Bluebell Walk	General Public	25
08/05/2010	Lambourne Woods	Bat Walk	General Public	24
11/05/2010	Knighton Wood	Guided Walk	Jubilee Court	8
11/06/2010	Moreton	Guided Walk	Passmore's School	25
13/06/2010	Purleigh	Hedgerow survey training day	Tree Wardens	7
17/06/2010	EFDC Sites	Volunteer Tour	Volunteers	25
30/10/2010	Cripsey Brook	The Meeting Point	General Public	130
13/02/2011	Chingford	Veteran Tree Walk	Tree Wardens and General Public	4
	Total			267

Appendix 4 – Talks Given

Date	Location	Subject	Audience	Attendance
19/04/2010	Theydon Bois Village Hall	Countrycare's Year	Town and Parish Cllrs	20
15/06/2010	South Woodford	"Threats to the Countryside" Talk	South Woodford WI	33
01/11/2010	Civic Office	High Hedge Issues*	Tree Wardens	15
01/11/2010	Civic Office	DEFRA Hedgerow Survey*	Tree Wardens	15
	Total			83

* Special thanks to the following people who assisted Countrycare with this year's talks: Robin Hellier, Tree and Landscape Officer and Judith Moore, Consultant Arborist.

Appendix 5 – Meetings and Events attended/chaired

Date	Location	Subject	Audience	Attendance
12/04/2010	Civic Office	RVM Liaison Group Meeting	RVM Liaison Group	6
14/04/2010	Civic Office	RVM Management Meeting	RVM Management Committee	10
12/07/2010	Civic Office	Tree Warden Open Meeting	Tree Wardens	16
22/07/2010	Civic Office	RVM Management Meeting	RVM Management Committee	12
29/09/2010	Civic Office	Tree Warden Open Meeting	Tree Wardens	20
21/10/2010	Civic Office	RVM Management Meeting	RVM Management Committee	9
08/12/2010	Abridge Village Hall	Lambourne Woods Management	Parish Councillors and General Public	20
18/01/2011	Chigwell Pony Club	RVM Liaison Grp Meeting	RVM Liaison Group	4
06/02/2011	Loughton	Farmers Market	General Public	
10/03/2011	Civic Office	RMV Management Meeting	RVM Management Committee	9
15/03/2011	Civic Office	Tree Wardens Open Meeting	Tree Wardens	9
	Total			115

Appendix 6 – Schools and Youth Groups

Date	Group and Subject	Attendance
24/04/10	Epping 4 th Brigade Beavers. Pond Dipping and hibernaculum building.	11
17/05/10	Waltham Abbey Cubs. Pond Dipping and tree ID.	12
11/06/10	Passmore's School. Tree Mulching.	19
11/06/10	Loughton Rainbows. Pond Dipping.	25
12/06/10	Thomas Willingale School. Put down a woodchip path in their nature area.	15
16/06/10	Girl Guides. Bug hunting, pond dipping and tree ID.	12
22/06/10	Capel Manor College. Cut Old Shire Lane Meadow.	3
04/08/10	Thomas Willingale School. Bug hunting.	10
06/08/10	North Weald. General Public. Bug Hunting.	10
18/09/10	Chigwell Girl Guides headquarters. Bug Hunting.	30
20/11/10	Thomas Willingale. Cut and raked nature area and finished mulch path.	7
31/10/10	High Ongar Primary School. Cripsey Brook Opening Event.	60
26/01/11	Theydon Bois Primary School. Tree planting.	90
23/02/11	Nazeing Rainbows and Brownies. Hedge trimming.	5
11/03/11	Royden Primary School. Tree Planting.	22
23/03/11	Nazeing Primary School. Tree planting.	30
	Total	361

In total seven schools and six community groups have worked with Countrycare on environmental education projects.

Green Team Days in Partnership with EFDC's Community Development Section

Date	Group and Subject	Attendance
08/09/10	Green Team. Bug hunting and scavenger hunt.	13
13/08/10	Green Team. Bush craft and games.	15
20/08/10	Green Team. Bush craft and games.	15
26/08/10	Green Team. Pond dipping and games.	15
	Total	58

Appendix 7 – 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.

EFDC Local Nature Reserve Summary			
LNR	Parish	Size (ha)	Declared
Roding Valley Meadows*	Chigwell	56.5	13/04/1986
Roughtalley’s Wood	North Weald	3.40	17/08/2000
Linder’s Field**	Buckhurst Hill	3.60	17/08/2000
Chigwell Row Wood**	Chigwell	15.6	17/08/2000
Nazeing Triangle***	Nazeing	0.60	12/06/2001
Church Lane Flood Meadow	North Weald	3.25	13/05/2002
Weald Common Flood Meadow	North Weald	3.25	23/12/2004
Thornwood Common Flood Meadow	North Weald	2.70	23/12/2004
Home Mead	Loughton	1.82	23/12/2004
Total		90.99	

* 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

Roding Valley Meadows LNR, Chigwell

Size: 56.5 Hectares.

Access: The site has a network of hardened pathways totalling about 1km. There are also many other pathways across the site.

Parking: Car Park, Roding Lane, Chigwell.

Grid Reference: TQ 430 942

Getting There: Off Roding Lane (B170) between Loughton and Chigwell, next to David Lloyd Centre.

Special plants and animals: Numerous plants, Kingfisher Water vole and Otter.

Wildlife site: Ep61

LNR Declaration: 13 April 1986

Roughtalley’s Wood LNR, North Weald Bassett

Size: 3.4 hectares

Access: Entrance off Pike Way. A 600m circular hardened walkway allows easy access for everyone.

Parking: Street parking along Pike Way.

Grid Reference: TL 489 037

Getting There: Off Epping Road (B181) between Epping and North Weald Bassett.

Special plants and animals: Broad-leaved helleborine, bee orchid, common spotted orchid, veteran hornbeam coppice, slow worm and grass snake.

Wildlife Site: Ep114

LNR Declaration: 17 August 2000

Linder’s Field LNR, Buckhurst Hill

Size: 3.5 hectares

Access: By hardened footpath off Roebuck Lane

Parking: Street parking Roebuck Lane.

Grid Reference: TQ 415 945

Getting There: Roebuck Lane is off Loughton High Road (A121).

Special plants and animals: Wild service trees, wood anemone, bluebell, sneezewort, frogs and toads.

Wildlife Site: Ep38

LNR Declaration: 17 August 2000

Chigwell Row Wood LNR, Chigwell

Size: 15.6 hectares

Access: A 370 metre hardened walkway runs north-south through the wood linking up the nearby recreation ground promoting safe and easy access for everyone. There is also a whole network of woodland rides throughout the reserve.

Parking: Lodge Close car park.

Grid Reference: TQ 460 931

Getting There: Off Lambourne Road (B173) past junction with Romford Road (A112).

Special plants and animals: Veteran trees, dead wood insects and grass snake.

Wildlife Site: Ep85 and Ep86

LNR Declaration: 17 August 2000

Nazeing Triangle LNR, Nazeing

Size: 0.6 hectares

Access: A hardened granite footpath and boardwalk take you right to the centre of the site.

Parking: Street parking along Betts Lane.

Grid Reference: TL 414 065

Getting There: Off Nazeing Common Road.

Special plants and animals: Great crested newt, emperor dragonfly and grass snake.

Wildlife Site: Ep33

LNR Declaration: 12 June 2001

Church Lane Flood Meadow LNR, North Weald Bassett

Size: 3.4 Hectares.

Access: The site can only be accessed via public footpaths. The pathways are informal grass paths.

Parking: Street parking Vicarage Lane at St Andrews Church.

Grid Reference: TL 495 047

Getting There: Church Lane is off Epping Road (B181).

Special plants and animals: Devils-bit scabious, ragged robin, kingfisher, heron and water vole.

Wildlife site: Ep118

LNR Declaration: 13 May 2002

Weald Common Flood Meadows LNR

Size: 2.9 Hectares.

Access: The reserve is reached via Weald Common Open space.

Parking: By Village hall.

Grid References: TL 499 039 and TL 502 042

Getting There: Off (B181) High Road, North Weald.

Special plants and animals: Grass Snake, Common Lizard, Ragged Robin.

Wildlife site: Ep124

LNR Declaration: 23 December 2004

Thornwood Flood Meadow LNR, North Weald Bassett

Size: 2.7 Hectares.

Access: The reserve is reached via a public footpath from North Weald High Road, Thornwood.

Parking: Street parking

Grid Reference: TL 471 045

Getting There: Off (B1393) High Road, Thornwood Common.

Special plants and animals: Ragged Robin and Snipe

Wildlife site: Ep92

LNR Declaration: 23 December 2004

Home Mead LNR, Loughton

Size: 1.8 hectares.

Access: A circular hardened pathway takes you through the site. Entrance England's Lane, Loughton.

Parking: Street parking.

Grid Reference: TQ 439 978

Getting There: From A121 Goldings Hill via Clays Lane.

Special plants and animals: Heather and bird population.

Wildlife site: Ep66

LNR Declaration: 23 December 2004

Four EFDC owned sites		
Site	Parish	Area (ha)
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
Total		8.17

12 EFDC Special Roadside Verges			
No.	Grid reference	Side	Locality
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
EPF6	TQ 43470, 99537	N	Oak Hill, Epping Forest
EPF7	TQ 43509, 99354	S	Oak Hill, Epping Forest
EPF8	TQ 43315, 99432	S	Jack's Hill, Epping Forest
EPF10a	TQ 41231, 97138	E	Earl's Path, Epping Forest
EPF10b	TQ 41577 96741	E	Earl's Path, Epping Forest
EPF10	TQ 41222, 97137	W	Earl's Path, Epping Forest
EPF11	TL 43102, 00423	S	Upshire Road, Epping Forest
EPF12	TL 57433, 07662	N	Bird's Green, Fyfield

Appendix 8 - Glossary of Terms

Ancient semi-natural woodland is woodland that is known to have existed before 1600 and Secondary Woodland is woodland that has developed on land which at sometime has not been wooded.

Biodiversity is short for 'biological diversity'. It describes the whole variety of life on Earth and includes all the world's animals, plants and the natural systems in which they live.

Coppicing is the process of cutting a tree near ground level and allowing it to regenerate from the stool. Trees which are regularly coppiced also have a distinctive shape - a large stool close to ground level with a great many shoots.

Habitat is a place where a plant or animal lives.

Hectare: area 100m x 100m

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are intended to be places that can be enjoyed and where people can have contact with nature. They can also be places where people can study and learn about nature.

Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) are "a discrete area of land which is considered to be of significance for its wildlife features in at least a District/Borough/Unitary Authority context". LoWS were identified and declared by the Essex Wildlife Trust following a Phase One habitat survey of the District in 1991 (revised 1996 and 1998) and again in 2010. Formerly they were known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) or County Wildlife Sites (CWS). The Epping Forest District has 222 Local Wildlife Sites.

Nationally Notable is a species that occurs within the range of 16 to 100 modern 10km grid squares across the UK.

Pollard is a tree that has been cut once or has had regular cutting at a height above which grazing animals can reach normally between two and four metres. Pollards are characterised by their distinctive shape - a large trunk (or bole) from which commonly radiate numerous smaller branches.

Red data book (Rdb) lists species whose continued existence is threatened. Rdb species are classified into different categories of perceived risk. Each Rdb usually deals with a specific group of animals or plants (e. reptiles, insects, mosses). They are now being published in many different countries.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) represents the UK's best sites for wildlife and geology. Over half, by area, are internationally important and many play an important part in local culture and economies. Notification as a SSSI is primarily a legal mechanism to protect sites that are of particular conservation interest because of the wildlife they support, or because of the geological features that are found there.

Unimproved grassland is grassland that is species rich and has not had chemical fertilisers, herbicides or pesticides applied to it.

Veteran trees are of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of their age, size or condition. As a rule, a tree that is either over 250 years old or has a girth of over 3 metres at breast height can be described as a veteran. However, other factors must be considered such as the location and past management of the tree.



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