

Community Groups

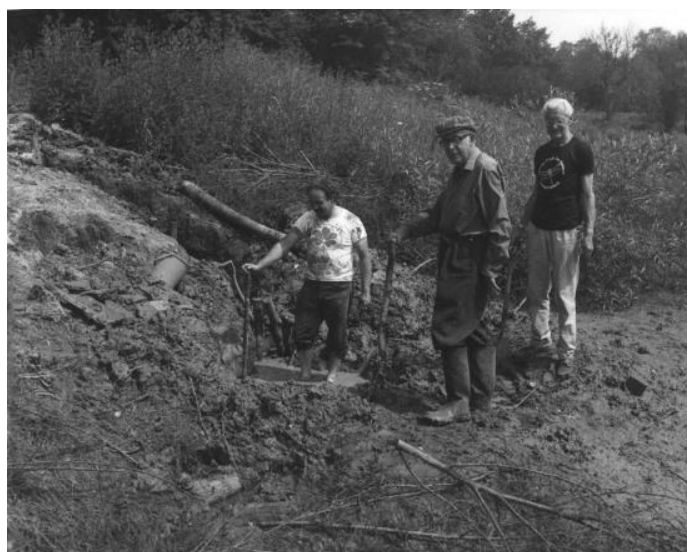
[Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve](#) and [Horton Country Park Local Nature Reserve](#) both have a community group associated with them. These groups comprise of individuals who value their countryside and are concerned with its protection and effective management. The Countryside Team work closely with these groups and consult with them on all aspects of site management.

The Friends groups detailed below all have regular committee meetings which are usually attended by a member of the Countryside Team, allowing for positive dialogue between the Council and local residents. The community groups produce their own websites and newsletters and, with guidance and supervision from the Countryside Team, take part in practical nature conservation tasks.

Please read on for more information about the community group associated with each countryside site. For general information about nature conservation volunteering in the Borough, please follow this [link](#) for more information.

Epsom Common Association

The [Epsom Common Association](#) (ECA) was formed in 1974 by Mr T Dowman and other residents living on the Wells Estate next to the Common. The Association formed because of a perception that the wild nature of the Common was threatened by a new road proposal. The road never happened but the Association continued and managed to persuade the Council to improve access by creating the all-weather circular track to improve the condition of the grass paths. The shining achievement of the Association was the restoration, by volunteers, in 1980 of the medieval 'Great Pond' which was drained over a century previously. The restoration of the 'Great Pond', shown below, is a great example of what local people can achieve.



Great Pond restoration 1980



Views of Great Pond today



Today the ECA is still thriving and continues to work closely with the Council. In 1998 a volunteer work party, the ECOVOLS, formed to carry out nature conservation tasks on the Common. They are shown above producing charcoal from trees on Epsom Common, felled as part of our woodland management activities.

The ECA are also key in coordinating the volunteer effort in checking the cattle we have [grazing](#) the site from May to September. Their help is key to ensuring one of the most important management techniques of the Common continues and the site remains in favourable condition.

The ECA also run a programme of guided walks and talks and play a large role in helping to survey and monitor the wildlife on Epsom Common.

If you would like to find out more about the Epsom Common Association, please visit their website www.epsomcommon.org.uk

The Friends of Horton Country Park

The Friends of Horton Country Park were formed in October 1999 to provide a line of communication between Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and members of the general public interested in improving Horton Country Park. Over the years the group has helped the Countryside Team carry out a variety of practical conservation tasks including; managing the hedgerows, improving the stream habitat for plant and animal life and most recently to help manage the trees and surrounding habitat within the three orchards (see photos below).



The Friends have also contributed funds towards helping to restore Field Pond and Lambert's Pond. The group has bi-monthly meetings held in the Farmhouse in Horton Country Park and is looking for new members.

To find out more about the Friends please visit their web site at www.friendsofhorton.co.uk

Community Involvement along the Hogsmill LNR

Over the years there has been a great deal of community involvement along the Hogsmill Local Nature Reserve. The Friends of the Hogsmill was set up in early 2004 on the back of the creation of the Doorstep Green along the section between Ruxley Lane and the Ewell By-Pass. The Friends were involved in organising volunteer litter picks and are shown below clearing litter from the river and cutting back vegetation to improve the view of and access to the Clinker Bridge.



The Friends of the Hogsmill became more of a virtual group and now an email list of people interested in the management and wildlife of the reserve is kept by the Countryside Team and if you would like to be added to this please [email](#) us.



Currently the community is more actively involved via the Hogsmill Catchment Partnership. Practical nature conservation tasks are coordinated and led by the Countryside Team, [South East Rivers Trust](#) (SERT), and [Lower Mole Partnership](#). The photo above left is of the Countryside Team Volunteers planting plug plants to encourage regeneration of plant life after the removal of the concrete weir by SERT.

There are also opportunities to get involved in surveying the wildlife e.g butterflies via the Countryside Team and also surveying the freshwater invertebrates for water quality, which is coordinated by [Zoological Society London](#). The photo on above right is of volunteers surveying freshwater invertebrates for ZSL. If you would like to get involved please [email](#) us or call 01372 732000 and ask to speak to a member of the Countryside Team.