

## Volunteering in your Local Nature Reserves



The Hogsmill, Horton County Park and Epsom Common Local Nature Reserves comprise approximately 1000 acres/400 hectares of countryside in Epsom & Ewell. The Council owns and manage these sites for the benefit of nature and the people who visit them. This is a huge responsibility and volunteers play an important role in helping us fulfil it!

### Why Volunteer?

By volunteering, you can help learn about and improve your local environment, get some regular fresh air and exercise and make new friends. Why not give it a try? [Link to current task programme](#)

### How can you help?

Volunteers help us look after the countryside sites in a number of ways, not all of which involve getting your hands dirty! As a volunteer you can:

- undertake practical nature conservation tasks
- contribute to wildlife surveys
- sit on the committee of one of our local community groups
- maintain a watching brief on the sites and report any concerns to us
- Undertake livestock checks.

### Practical Conservation Tasks

We work with volunteers to help manage and enhance habitats on our nature reserves and help ensure access to nature for the general public. If habitats are neglected their value to wildlife decreases and by managing habitats with our volunteers we can maintain and enhance biodiversity in our local countryside.

As a volunteer you can expect to take part in a variety of practical activities which include woodland coppicing, tree planting, fencing, scrub management, hedgerow laying and planting and the control of invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Bracken.

You need to be physically able as the work is practical and often involves the use of hand tools. All training and equipment is provided by us but volunteers are required to bring sturdy footwear and wear old clothes. Anyone of any age can come along and help, we only request that under 16s are accompanied by a responsible adult.

### Where do our volunteers work?

We regularly carry out volunteer tasks on the Borough's nature reserves, the [Hogsmill Local Nature Reserve](#), [Horton County Park Local Nature Reserve](#) and [Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve](#).

In addition, we have close links with the Lower Mole Partnership who, with our prior approval, often lead tasks on our sites. The partnerships volunteers also work throughout the boroughs of Mole Valley, Elmbridge, The Royal Borough of Kingston and land owned by the City of London. You can find out more by contacting them

on 01372 743783 or visiting their [website](#).

There are also opportunities for volunteering in Epsom & Ewell's urban parks and recreation grounds. For more information please contact the Ranger Service on 01372 732000.

### When do tasks take place?

We hold tasks every Thursday throughout the year. In addition we hold occasional Sunday tasks in conjunction with the Friends of Horton Country Park.

Tasks commence at 10am and finish around 4pm but, of course, volunteers may leave before then. For details on meeting points, please see the [current task programme](#).

Please note that the programme may be subject to alteration. Changes to the programme are recorded on our voice mail message on 01372 745224 in the week prior to the task. Alternatively, if you would like to be informed directly of any changes, please drop us an [email](#) and request to join our volunteer email distribution list.

For further information on volunteering, or to obtain directions to the meeting places for tasks, please telephone 01372 732000 and ask to speak to a member of the Countryside Team.

### Biological Monitoring

In order to manage the countryside effectively, it is important to monitor the wildlife that lives in it. Accordingly, we welcome any information about wildlife sightings on our sites from local wildlife enthusiasts. There are also opportunities for volunteers to take part in more formal wildlife surveys and contribute to our biological records. Please contact the Countryside Team on 01372 732000 or email [contactus@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@epsom-ewell.gov.uk) for more information.

### Community Groups

There are community groups for Horton Country Park, [The Friends of Horton Country Park](#) and Epsom Common, [The Epsom Common Association](#). We work closely with each group and communicate with them on a variety of issues. Please click on the links above for more information.

### Maintaining a Watching Brief

With such a large area of land to manage, it is difficult for us to maintain a constant patrol on each of our sites. We therefore encourage all members of the public to be our extra "eyes and ears" on the ground and keep us informed of any problems. If you have concerns about any park or open space in the Borough, please inform Customer Services on 01372 732000. Please note, if you are witnessing a crime taking place then please call the police on 999, then when possible, inform Customer Services afterwards.

