

The Countryside Team

The Countryside Team is responsible for managing biodiversity, improving public access and interpretation on [Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve](#), [Horton Country Park Local Nature Reserve](#) and the [Hogsmill Local Nature Reserve](#) in accordance with the site management plans. In addition, the Team coordinate the delivery of the [Epsom & Ewell Local Biodiversity Action Plan](#) and comment on planning applications in reference to their impact on the Borough's biodiversity.

Guided Walks and Illustrated Talks

As part of their role in raising awareness and appreciation for the local countryside, the Countryside Team can provide talks to a variety of local youth groups and schools as well as to adult clubs and associations. The talks normally take the form of PowerPoint presentations on the work of the Team or on the management, history and/or wildlife of the Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve, Horton Country Park Local Nature Reserve and Hogsmill Local Nature Reserve. The Team can also offer bespoke guided walks for a minimum of 10 people.

If you would like a member of the team to give a talk or walk, please contact them on 01372 732000 or [email](#) us. There is no charge but a suggested donation of £50 could be made to one of the local voluntary community groups supporting our work.

Environmental Education and Schools

The Countryside Team encourages children to learn about their local nature reserves through maintaining links with local youth groups and schools. On Epsom Common, Horton Country Park and the Hogsmill Local Nature Reserves a range of activities, from guided walks to habitat studies and environmental games can be enjoyed.

If you are thinking of arranging a visit you can phone us on 01372 732000 to discuss your requirements or send us an [email](#). However, please note that our service is generally limited to the months of May and June so please book us in advance!

Wildlife Areas within our Local Schools

The Countryside Team have worked with a number of local schools to advise them on creating and maintaining wildlife areas in their school grounds. As part of the Team's role in implementing the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, continuing working with schools to manage their grounds for the benefit of wildlife is extremely important. School grounds along with back gardens contribute a great deal to the green infrastructure of the Borough.

As well as ensuring schools plant a variety of native plants that attract local wildlife, wildlife areas can include many other features. Examples include:

- Herb gardens
- Vegetable patches
- Sensory areas (with plants with distinctive scents, colours and textures)
- Ponds and bog gardens
- Wildlife feeding stations
- Composts
- Habitat piles (eg log piles)
- Animal homes (eg bird boxes, insect boxes).

As well as creating important habitats for wildlife in urban areas, where sources of food and shelter are often scarce, a wildlife area within the school grounds can also be used regularly as an outdoor classroom. Here pupils can participate in a wide variety of habitat/nature studies allowing children to experience local wildlife first in a safe and conveniently located environment. Indeed, such areas can provide a pleasant environment in which any subject can be taught.

Surrey School Grounds Forum

The Council is also a member of the Surrey School Grounds Forum. The Forum consists of organisations and individuals involved with environmental education and enhancement projects in school grounds. They meet regularly to exchange information and ideas, and provide a coordinated approach to assisting schools.