

Stoke Common Management Plan



RESTORATION OF HEATHLAND AT STOKE COMMON, 2008 - 2018

Glossary

Ancient woodland: woodland that has existed since at least 1600.

Heathland: an area of vegetation characterised by heathers, on impoverished soils, that is the result of thousands of years of exploitation by humans.

Herptiles: reptiles and amphibians.

In favourable condition: a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) meeting with Natural England conservation objectives.

Mire: a wetland area with peaty soils.

Secondary woodland: woodland that has grown up on previously open land such as heathland or farmland.

Site of Special Scientific Interest: designation giving legal protection in order to conserve the best of the UK's wildlife and geological heritage.



The City of London

The City of London owns and manages a number of Open Spaces, parks and gardens in and around London as part of its commitment to sustaining a world class city.

Each Open Space is a unique resource managed for the use and enjoyment of the public and for the conservation of wildlife and historic landscape.

A Legal Duty to Manage

The City of London's Open Spaces are protected under their own Acts of Parliament, brought in to acquire land for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

As a public body managing open spaces, the City of London is required by law to comply with certain duties relating to conservation as set out in section 28G of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). These require the City of London to take reasonable steps to further the conservation and enhancement of its Open Spaces.



Rights of Access

Public Rights of Way (PROW) are legally defined routes across countryside that allow access by certain types of user. The user has a right to use the path, but not any adjoining land.

As legal highways PROW are the responsibility of the local authority. Often these paths are way-marked with coloured arrows that show their status.

Footpaths may only be used by people on foot (or in a wheelchair or pushchair). **Bridleways** may be used by people on foot, bicycle or horseback.

In 2000 the **Countryside Rights of Way Act** granted open access to specific areas of countryside to people *on foot*; access is subject to certain restrictions such as keeping their dog on a lead during nesting seasons. These areas are all shown on up to date Ordnance Survey maps. Open access does not apply to cyclists or horse riders. *For more information, visit www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk.*

In addition, the City of London's **Open Spaces Act (1878)** allows access on foot to all areas of the City's Open Spaces, by all persons at all times.

A **common** is an area of land registered as a common under the 1968 Commons Registration Act. A common has an owner but is often used by other people who have common rights, for example, to graze animals or cut wood. There are, however, no commoners for Stoke Common.

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Following its transfer to the City of London Stoke Common is now protected under the City of London's 'Open Spaces Act', 1878. The City has a legal duty to protect and conserve Stoke Common for public recreation and wildlife conservation 'in perpetuity'.

Stoke Common contains the largest area of heathland in south Buckinghamshire. Created by a combination of poor, acidic soils and land management (including grazing) that keeps the vegetation open, heathland is home to many plants and animals that are quite different from those of the grassland and woodlands with which we are more familiar. Heathland is one of the rarest habitats in the United Kingdom.

The Common is of great value to local people who prize the open aspect and wilderness feel to the site and use it for quiet recreational activities such as walking.

This management plan aims to show how the City of London will be working with local people to protect and improve this important piece of countryside. It provides a brief record of what is known about the site, the issues affecting it, sets out the long term vision for the Common and describes the steps to be taken to reach this vision. The plan is also a practical working document that will guide the many hundreds of tasks that will take place on Stoke Common over the next ten years.

This plan has been a collaborative process between the City of London, recognised conservation experts and the local communities. We have carried out extensive consultation at various stages of the plan, both with experts and members of the public and regular visitors to the Common. We have received a high level of support for all aspects of the plan, including the aims and methods outlined here.

Our thanks are extended to all those who helped to influence and produce this document, including:

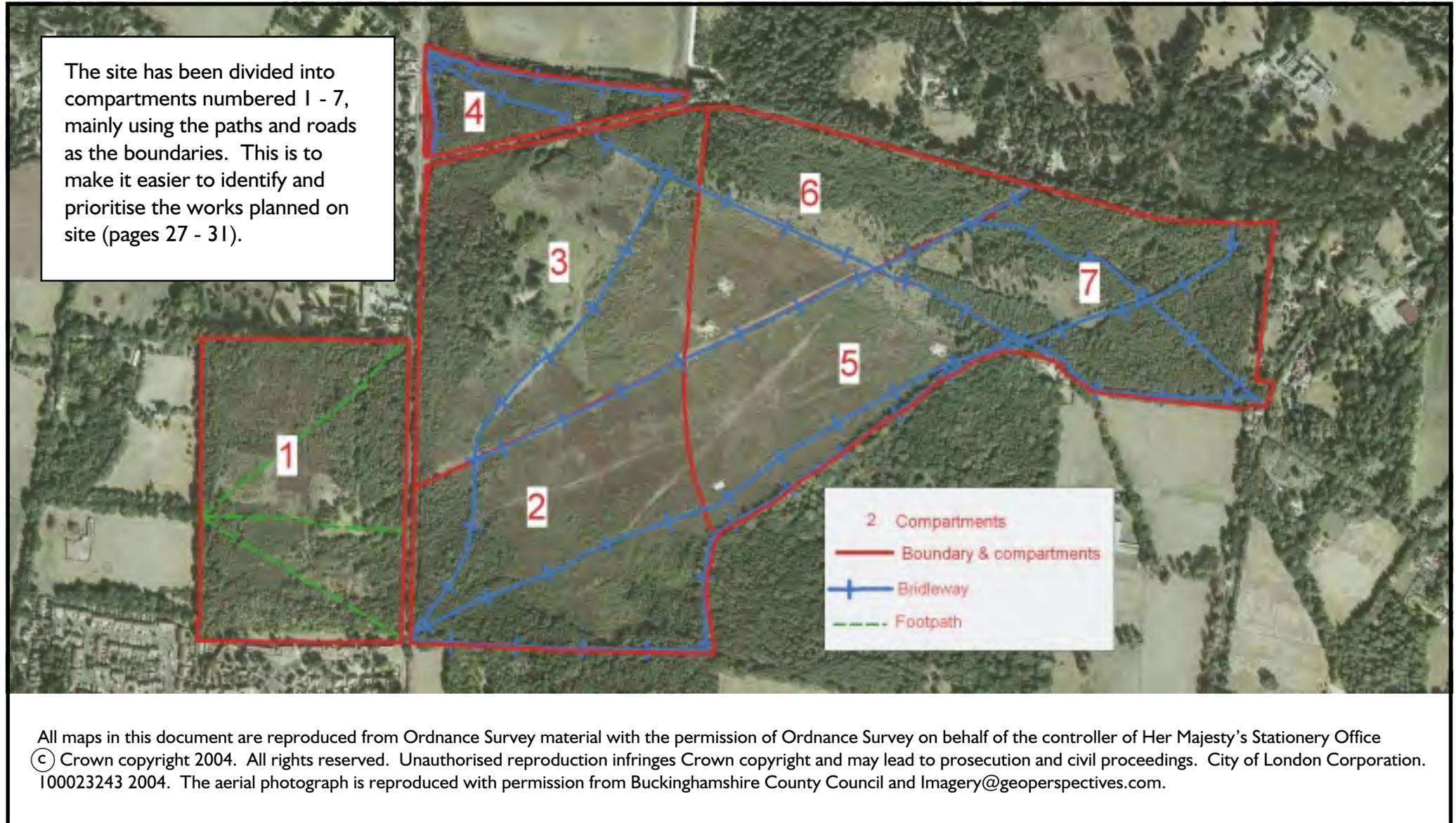
- ♦ Martin Albertini, Martyn Ainsworth, Vanessa Burley, Andy Byfield, Jeremy Dagley, David Ferguson, Simon Gray, John Ismay, Roy Maycock, Rob McGibbon, Andy McVeigh and Jim Swanson
- ♦ The Epping Forest and Commons Committee
- ♦ The staff of Burnham Beeches
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The Stoke Common Management Plan has been drawn up by Helen Read and Rachel Mackie; editing and design by Feste Design & Interpretation Services; illustrations by Dan Powell; photographs by Andy Barnard, Chris Morris, Andy McVeigh and other members of the Burnham Beeches' team. Date of publication: 2008.



1.1a Location Map

Grid reference SU9885



1.1b Location

Stoke Common lies in the Parish of Stoke Poges, abutting the Parish of Fulmer. It covers 83 hectares divided into three unequal parts: the B416 separates the eastern and western sections; Stoke Common Road cuts off a small triangle to the north.

1.2 Ownership and Designations

Stoke Common was acquired by the City of London on 31st October 2007. Prior to this, it was owned by South Buckinghamshire District Council, which bought it from Stoke Poges Parish Council in 1993.

The site is freehold and is considered open land under the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000). In addition, the land is now covered under the City of London's Open Spaces Act (1878) allowing access on foot to all areas by all persons at all times.



1.3 Site Status

Stoke Common was registered as a Common in 1967 under the Commons Registration Act (1965). However, there are no commoners listed on the register; at the time of registration it was not a common but a poor's allotment owned by the Stoke Poores' Fuel Allotment Society.

Stoke Common was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1972 based on the rarity of lowland heathland in England. The reasons for notification cited both the drier and wetter heathland communities and included some notable invertebrate and reptile species associated with these areas.

1.4 Physical Features

The solid geology is Reading Formation overlying chalk. On top of the Reading Formation are sands and gravels from the ancient fluvio-glacial Thames Valley gravel terraces. Drift material accumulated during the last ice age covers the gravels. The uppermost layer has a high component of clay which is prone to water-logging; although the Common can become very dry during the summer months it is often flooded during the winter.

Much water flows off the site, along paths and over the site boundary into a ditch adjacent to Frame Wood at the southern border.

The ponds are subject to seasonal drying.

The soils on the site are mostly acidic, with a pH between 4.5 and 6 but some soils on the western section of the common have a higher pH of 7. This is due to the application of lime to the soil in wartime when this section was ploughed and attempts were made to grow crops. However, lack of continued fertilisation has seen the soils becoming gradually more acidic with time.

There is little peat in the soil due to a number of factors, not least that the drying of the site in summer does not favour peat formation. The commoners' rights to remove turf were exercised until the late 19th century and any remaining peat was subject to burning in the many fires that occurred on the site.



1.5 Cultural Information

1.5.1 Landscape

England has been divided into areas with similar landscape character. These are called Joint Character Areas (JCAs). Stoke Common is in the Thames Valley JCA.

Historically, Stoke Common was part of a large tract of heathland that once stretched from Iver Heath in the east to Wooburn Heath in the west and included what is now Burnham Beeches.

1.5.2 Archaeology

The southern boundary of the site with Frame Wood is marked by an ancient boundary bank and ditch.

Many of the small depressions on the site are thought to be old gravel diggings. Three are believed by some to have been built as revetments for military vehicles during the Second World War.

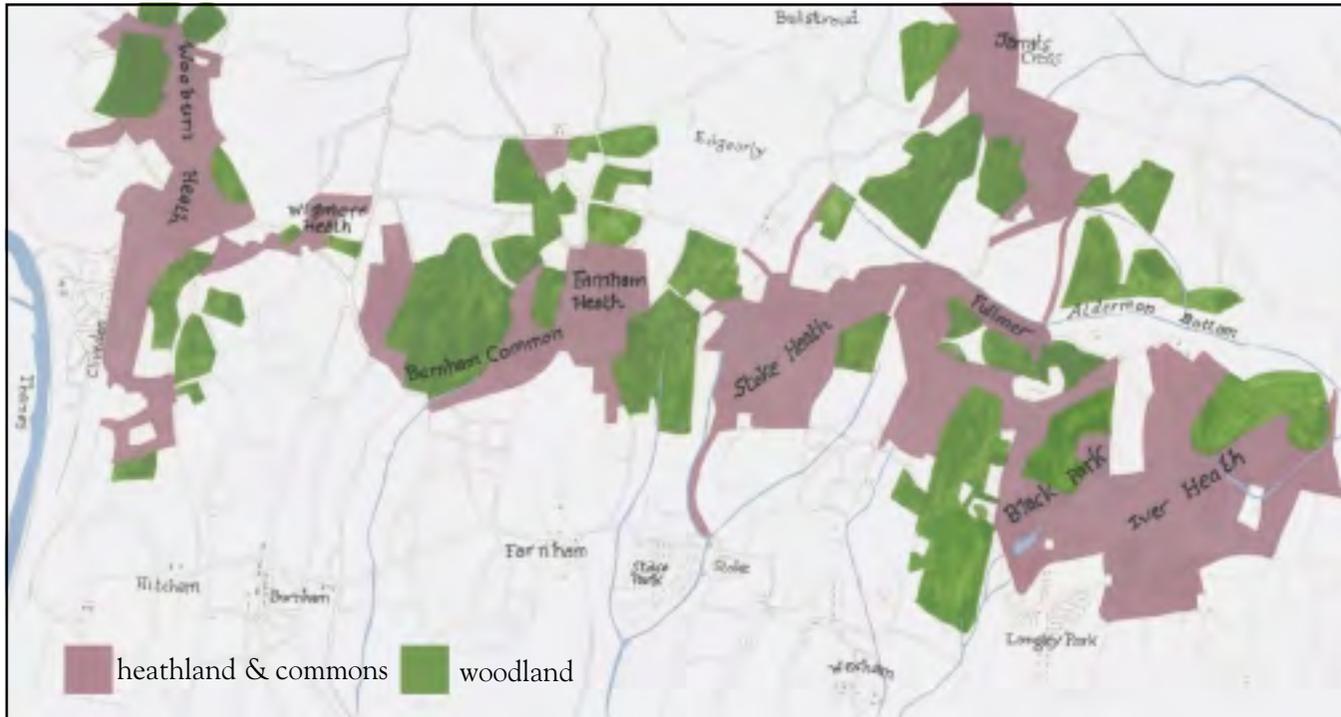
1.5.3 Land Use History

Originally ancient woodland, the site was cleared in prehistoric times. Crops were probably grown for a few seasons, until nutrients in the soil were exhausted, and the area then underwent cycles of abandonment, grazing, succession to woodland, fires and fuel collection until the start of the nineteenth century. This management promoted the maintenance of an open, nutrient poor community, dominated by heathland plants and animals.

Only limited grazing continued after the Enclosure Act of 1810, but collection of fuel continued and may have even increased. This, plus numerous fires, was enough to stop much of the heathland becoming overgrown until the 1950s.

During the Second World War the western part of the site was requisitioned by the Agricultural Executive in order to grow potatoes: this was not particularly successful and by the end of the war aerial photos reveal cereals being grown on the site. In 1943 the eastern part of Stoke Common was used by the War Office for training and storage of equipment. The War Office gave up their section of the Common in 1945 and the Agricultural Office had de-requisitioned theirs in 1948, having abandoned plans for the long term cultivation of the site.

After the war, Stoke Common was mainly used for recreation and only occasional fires stopped it from becoming completely overgrown.



The original tract of heathland in south Buckinghamshire, redrawn from a map by Rocque dated 1761.

1.6 Access and Visitors

1.6.1 Visitor Appeal

The main attraction to Stoke Common lies in the intrinsic appeal of a large open space; it is well used by local residents who visit it in low numbers all year round. The site is easily accessed by foot, on horseback or by bike.

The nearest villages are Stoke Poges (0.75 km) and Fulmer (0.5 km).

The nearest schools are Fulmer Infant School and Stoke Poges Primary School.

1.6.2 Access Provision

There is a bus stop adjacent to Stoke Common on the B416, linking the site with Slough and Berkhamsted via the 353 service. The nearest railway stations on London lines are at Gerrards Cross (3.5 km) and Slough (5 km). There are good bus services to both stations.

The site is dedicated as access land under CROW. Public footpaths run across all three sections, and there are bridleways on the eastern part of the Common.

The Beeches Way crosses the site, linking Stoke Common to the Thames near Cookham through to the Grand Union Canal at West Drayton. The Shakespeare Way, running between Stratford upon Avon and the Globe Theatre, also passes through the Common.

1.6.3 Visitor Facilities

There are few facilities for visitors. Car parking is limited to a small layby off Stoke Common Road where a bridlegate also allows wheelchair and pushchair access. The main paths and bridleways are well surfaced and some are suitable for wheelchairs and prams; many paths, however, become waterlogged in autumn and winter.

There are interpretation boards at the two main access points to the site, opposite Vine Road and off Stoke Common Road.

1.6.4 Other Estate Features

Other estate features include a post and wire fence and a gas pipeline which runs through the site.



1.7 Current Use

1.7.1 Grazing

A local farmer is employed to graze the site with cattle. However, in the recent past this has been mainly for conservation purposes and with breeds of cattle that do not generally appreciate in value through this particular grazing regime.

1.7.2 Recreation

Data gathered at public consultation events indicate that approximately 87% of visitors to the site come from less than 5 miles away, using it for informal pursuits such as walking, dog walking, horse riding, cycling and watching nature.

The site is also used by naturalists observing the rare heathland flora and fauna. Informal walking tours occasionally take place.

1.7.3 Education and Research

Little educational use is currently made of Stoke Common, but the proximity of local schools gives potential for future use. Some schools have been involved in the past; the sculpture benches on the site were, for example, designed by local children.

Little use has been made of Stoke Common for research purposes in recent years. There are however occasional visits from local natural history groups. The site has potential as a demonstration site for heathland management.

1.8 Biological Features

1.8.1 Communities and Flora

Heathland

A mosaic of heathland covers much of the site. The majority of this is dry heath, dominated by common heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and common gorse (*Ulex europaeus*).

Grasses include wavy hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), heath-grass (*Danthionia decumbens*) and mat grass (*Nardus stricta*). Other flowering plants found include tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), slender St John's wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*) and heath spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*). Bell heather (*Erica cinerea*), dwarf gorse (*Ulex minor*) and petty whin (*Genista anglica*) are also found.

The gorse species completely dominate some areas, particularly those affected by wartime soil enrichment and fires.

After a fire, burnt areas are quickly re-colonised by purple moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), gorse, and the hair cap mosses (*Polytrichum commune* and *Polytrichum juniperinum*), although birch re-generation may subsequently take over these areas.

Some areas of the heathland are dominated by bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). Little else grows amongst bracken other than brambles and the occasional birch and oak.

There are also some areas of wet heath. The vegetation here is characterised by *Molinia caerulea*, cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*) and creeping willow (*Salix repens*).

In the very wettest areas specialist bog plants are abundant.

These include water purslane (*Lythrum portula*), heath rush (*J. squarrosus*), bulbous rush (*J. bulbosus*) and sharp flowered rush (*J. acutiflorus*). Bog moss species of *Sphagnum* can be found in some areas, and can withstand the seasonal drying. Colonies of sundew (*Drosera spp.*) once existed on the site, and it is possible that its seeds may lie dormant in some areas.



Woodland and Scrub

The margins of the site are dominated by secondary oak woodland consisting of pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), willows (*Salix spp.*), Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and some holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). Other trees/shrubs include blackthorn (*Prunus spinosus*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and hazel (*Coryllus avellana*). The ground flora is dominated by wavy hair grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and brambles (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*). Isolated glades in the woodland areas contain patches of common heather (*Calluna vulgaris*).

Frame Wood to the south of Stoke Common is classified as ancient woodland: some old trees can be found on the boundary between the two sites.



Grassland

There are several small pockets of grassland. One of the largest is on the western side of the Common where the soil was “improved” during the Second World War. A remnant population of neutral grassland plants survives here. Among these are green-winged orchid (*Anacamptis morio*), the tiny adder’s tongue fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) and grass vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*).

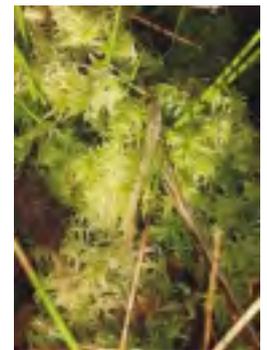


Open Water

In 2001 the ponds on the site were improved and the number increased. There are two large ponds and many small pools and scrapes, most of which dry up in summer. Of the large ponds, only one retains water all year round and this supports various sedges and rushes. The very rare starfruit (*Damasonium alisma*) is found on the site, and some ponds are managed with this species in mind. Two ponds support communities of floating clubrush (*Isolepis fluitans*).

Valley Mire

There is an area of overgrown valley mire next to Stoke Common Road which contains several species of the bog moss *Sphagnum*. The fence line runs across one end of the mire.



1.8.2 Rare Species

Flora

Twenty six of the plant species recorded at Stoke Common are considered to be rare or scarce on at least a County basis; two are National Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) species. A recent analysis by the local Environmental Records Centre of the number of County Rare and County Scarce plants recorded revealed that Stoke Common has more of these plants than any other site in Buckinghamshire.

Fungi

The fungal flora is very poorly known. Only 28 species have been recorded (and most records are very old), although four of these can be considered rare on a County or National basis.

Fauna

Invertebrates: nine UK BAP moth and butterfly species have been recorded and an additional 6 species are considered of County importance. There are also 3 notable spiders and one notable true bug.

Herptiles: four UK BAP species have been recorded on the site, including the adder (*Vipera berus*) and common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

Birds: Fourteen Red list species have been recorded at Stoke Common all of which are either UKBAP species or local BAP species and also of principal importance. Twenty two Amber list species have been recorded. Particularly noteworthy birds include the Dartford warbler (*Sylvia undata*), nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), stone chat (*Saxicola torquata*) and skylark (*Alauda arvensis*).

There are many different designations that can be given to plants and animals to identify their importance locally, nationally and internationally.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP): a nationwide scheme aiming to reverse the decline of certain threatened species, resulting from the 1992 biodiversity summit in Rio. As part of this government initiative, each County has drawn up a local BAP that identifies species under threat and contains plans to reverse their decline. As of 2007 there were 1,149 UKBAP species in Britain.

European protection is given to birds listed on the **EC Birds Directive** and plants and animals listed by the **EU Habitats Directive**.

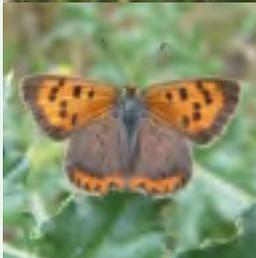
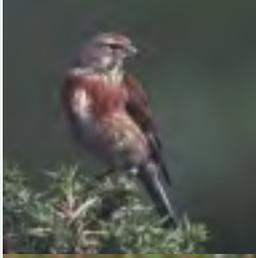
National Red Data Book: a list of species that, in the opinion of experts, fulfil international criteria for being rare, threatened or vulnerable in the UK.

The National Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 lists species of **Principal Importance** which are those that should be promoted and managed for.

Red and Amber lists: a designation for birds only, drawn up by the RSPB. Birds on the list are either under threat on a global level or have shown a serious decline in numbers in recent years. Birds on the red list are more vulnerable than those on the amber list. (see www.rspb.org.uk for more details)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, amended) gives certain species legal protection: **Schedule 1** lists those where it is against the law to disturb their nests or young; **Schedule 5** lists those where it is against the law to kill or injure these species, disturb their places used for shelter or protection or to disturb the animals whilst they are using these places; **Schedule 8** lists plants protected by law.

Each County has a **Local Environmental Records Centre** that stores and analyses biological data gathered and sent in by natural history groups, professional ecologists and members of the public. These data are shared nationally. Two of the classifications used by the Centre are: **nationally notable** (found in 15 or fewer hectads (one hectad is 10 km²)) and **County scarce/rare/extinct** (considered to be threatened, rare or extinct within Buckinghamshire).



BIRDS			BIRDS			FUNGI		
Species	last recorded	Status	Species	last recorded	Status	Species	last recorded	Status
black-headed gull	1973	Amber	lesser spotted woodpecker	1973	BAP; Red	<i>Cantharellula umbonata</i>	2007	CR
common bulfinch	1973	BAP; PI; Red	marsh tit	2006	BAP; Red	<i>Discinella marginata</i>	1923	NR
common cuckoo	1973	BAP; Amber	meadow pipit	2006	Amber	<i>Faerberia carbonaria</i>	1923	CR
common kestrel	1973	Amber	nightingale	2004	Amber	<i>Rhodocybe gemina</i>	1982	CR
common linnet	1973	BAP; PI; Red	nightjar	2006	BAP; PI; Red	HERPTILES		
common snipe	2006	Amber	redwing	1973	1; Amber	Species	last recorded	Status
common starling	1973	BAP; Red	reed bunting	1973	BAP; PI; Red	adder	2007	5; BAP; PI
Dartford warbler	2006	1; Amber; EU	sky lark	2007	BAP; PI; Red	grass snake	1969	5; BAP; PI
dunnock	1973	BAP; Amber	snipe	2006	Amber	great crested newt	2007	5; BAP; PI
fieldfare	1973	1; Amber	song thrush	1973	BAP; PI; Red	slow worm	2007	5; BAP; PI
goldcrest	1973	Amber	stonechat	2006	Amber	viviparous lizard	2007	5; BAP; PI
green sandpiper	2006	1; Amber	tree pipit	1973	BAP; Amber			
green woodpecker	1950	Amber	tree sparrow	1973	BAP; PI; Red			
herring gull	1973	Amber	turtle dove	1973	BAP; PI; Red			
hobby	1997	1	willow warbler	2006	Amber			
house martin	1973	Amber	willow tit	1973	BAP, Red			
house sparrow	1973	BAP; Red	woodcock	2008	BAP; Amber			
lapwing	1973	BAP; Amber	woodlark	2007	1; PI; EU			
lesser black-backed gull	1973	Amber	yellowhammer	1988	BAP; Red; PI			

INVERTEBRATES			FLORA					
Species	last recorded	Status	Species	last recorded	Status	Species	last recorded	Status
Moths			adder's tongue fern	2008		green-winged orchid		2008 RDB
beautiful brocade	2002	CR	allseed	1972	CE	heath dog-violet	1972	CS
clouded buff	1992	CR	annual knawel	1970	RDB; BAP; CS	heath rush	2008	CS
grass emerald	1987	CS	bell heather	1978	CS	hoary cinquefoil	1970	RDB
grass wave	2002	CI	bilberry	2007	CS	lesser marshwort	1972	CS
neglected rustic	1982	CR	bladder sedge	2007	CR	little mouse-ear	1972	CS
<i>Pelempelia palumbella</i>	2008	CR	bottle sedge	1964	CR	lousewort	1964	CR
silvery arches	2002	NS, CI	chaffweed	1972	CE	marsh clubmoss	1861	RDB; BAP/PI; CE
striped wainscot	2002	CR	common heather	2008		marsh speedwell	2007	CS
waved black	1983	NS, CI	creeping willow	2008	CR	mat-grass	2008	CS
Butterflies			cross-leaved heath	2008	CS	oblong-leaved sundew	1993	CR
grizzled skipper	1976	BAP; PI	deergrass	1978	CE	petty whin	2008	RDB
white admiral	1988	BAP	dodder	1972	CS	round-leaved sundew	1978	CE
True Bugs			dwarf gorse	2008		sheep's-bit	1972	CR
<i>Sehirus biguttatus</i>	1984	NN	eared willow	1988	CS	shoreweed	1993	CR
Spiders			flea sedge	1970	CS	silver hair-grass	1970	CS
<i>Evarcha arcuata</i>	1990	NN	floating club-rush	2007	CR	starfruit	2008	8; RDB; BAP/PI; CS
<i>Hypsosinga sanguinea</i>	1990	NN	green-ribbed sedge	2008	CS	water-purslane	2008	CS
<i>Philodromus praedatus</i>	1990	NN						
Grasshoppers/crickets								
bog bush cricket	2008	NN						
Cockroaches								
dusky cockroach	2008	NN						

KEY

CS - County Scarce; **CI** - County Importance; **CR** - County Rare; **CE** - County Extinct;
NS - Nationally Scarce; **NN** - Nationally Notable; **NR** - Nationally Rare; **RDB** - Red Data Book;
PI - Principal Importance under NERC Act; **BAP** - Biodiversity Action Plan;
1,5,8 - Schedule of Wildlife & Countryside Act; **Red/Amber** - RSPB threat list; **EU** - European Protection.
Species marked in **bold** are of key concern; plant species marked in **magenta** are believed to be extinct on site, but may re-establish; both are targets for management.

2.0 Vision

Stoke Common, conserved and protected “in perpetuity”, will become a first class, sustainable public open space and a site of national conservation importance.

2.2 Stoke Common, 2018

The objectives, targets, actions and projects detailed on pages 14 - 31 will create the landscape illustrated on the facing page. It will have the following qualities:

The site will be in favourable condition.

- ♦ A number of rare and notable species of birds, insects, reptiles and plants will thrive here.
- ♦ The historical features, such as ancient boundary banks, will be maintained.

The majority of the site will be open heath, with a few mature trees dotted across it.

- ♦ The heather will be a mixture of different ages, height and density.
- ♦ The heathland will be a mosaic of different elements, including heather, bare ground and wet patches.
- ♦ The site will be grazed by a traditional breed of cattle, supporting the local farming economy.
- ♦ The western common will feel like a “secret garden”, with small sun traps and sheltered spots.
- ♦ In winter the west common will be grazed by Exmoor ponies from Burnham Beeches, helping to control the gorse growth.

The local community will be proud of the Common and the changes there.

- ♦ Local residents will use the Common for quiet recreational pursuits such as walking the dog, picnics or riding; few visitors will come by car.
- ♦ Walkers, cyclists and horse riders will use clearly defined, well maintained paths.
- ♦ The Stoke Common Volunteers will carry out much of the site management, including weekly conservation work tasks.
- ♦ Fundraising by the local community will provide extra revenue for important works.



Other habitats will be managed to add to the diversity of the Common.

- ♦ Mixed deciduous woodland will grow around much of the edge of the Common, shielding the heathland from the roads.
- ♦ Woodland edges leading on to the heath will be gradual and sinuous.
- ♦ Small areas of birch will be left.
- ♦ There will be areas of open water (some of which will dry out in summer), providing an additional habitat for rare plant species.
- ♦ Cattle will trample the edges of the ponds, adding to the diversity of habitat.
- ♦ The valley mire will thrive, supporting *Sphagnum* and other wetland plants.
- ♦ The combination of habitat and good management will make the Common attractive for higher educational use, particularly M.Sc. projects.



2.2 Stoke Common in the Future



3.1 Objectives, Actions and Targets

The works that will be carried out on Stoke Common all contribute towards meeting the following objectives. The targets and actions for the next ten years outlined here will be monitored throughout the lifespan of the plan and, if necessary, adjusted. The three objectives are:

Objective 1: Biological

To restore and maintain the heathland and associated habitats to favourable condition.

Objective 2: People

To encourage low-key public access at a level that is compatible with the conservation features of the reserve and to encourage local community involvement in the management of the Common.

Objective 3: Estate Assets and Legal Issues

To fulfil all legal obligations and to maintain estate structures in good condition.

3.2 Objective 1: Biological

The City of London aims to restore and maintain the heathland and associated habitats to favourable condition.

Habitats and species cannot be managed in isolation because of the interdependence between the various elements. In general, the stronger the site is in terms of habitat vigour and diversity, the more resilient it will be to the impact of outside influences such as climate change, pollution and habitat loss in surrounding areas.

Heathland restoration is the key to restoring Stoke Common to favourable condition. Although it is not the most diverse habitat in terms of the number of species found, it is important to ensure that those species thriving here are truly representative of this habitat.

In addition, the management plan aims to produce a mosaic of habitats, adding to the diversity of species and landscape. For example, although birch trees will be cut down in order to increase the amount of light reaching the heather, other trees will be retained for birds to nest in and use as perches and for invertebrates to gain nectar. Grassland, scrub and pond habitats also have their place in the overall picture.



3.2.1 Heathland

The most important habitat at Stoke Common is the heathland: the reason for its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest is largely because of the dwarf shrub heath. However, much of this heath has been overgrown - primarily by birch - and other parts are in poor condition which is worsening.

The heathland is additionally vulnerable because of the increase in nutrients from past management and current levels of nitrogen pollution.

Restoration

A programme of intensive restoration work has been planned to revitalise the heath. It aims to eradicate most of the encroaching birch trees and to promote heather growth. Much of this will involve the use of a variety of mechanical techniques, although grazing (see page 21) will continue to be used to help control the scrub.

Heather needs open conditions to seed and prosper; the birch trees are shading out and causing the heather to die. The birch will be cut down and re-growth prevented by treating the stumps with herbicide or digging them out.

Weed wiping may be used to kill young birch of a uniform height, particularly where there is healthy heather underneath that should not be disturbed.

Stages of Heathland Restoration

- (1) *before: birch scrub*
- (2) *clearance and disturbance of soil layer*
- (3) *after a few years: heather growth*



Mulching is a quick, effective way to remove young trees, killing roots so that no stump treatment is needed. It disturbs the soil layer, letting light in but does not remove the humus/ leaf litter layer; nutrient levels may remain relatively high.

Heather needs bare ground to set seed and thrives when nutrient levels are low. *Soil stripping* will expose suitable ground and remove nutrients from the soil. Ideally this will be done in the same year as tree clearance. The soil/humus removed will be taken off site or heaped/spread as unobtrusively as possible in the woodland areas.

Bracken is a native species and, at present, is only found in minimal amounts. It may, however, need to be controlled in future because it casts a dense shade which is detrimental to heather and other plants. If so, the methods used will include rolling, mowing and spraying.

There will be opportunities (such as where a digger might be working) to create micro habitats in appropriate areas. Some of the soil removed during mechanical restoration works will be used to create areas of small scale relief, adding to the diversity of this otherwise flat environment.

Mature trees are a valuable habitat for many species, particularly birds and invertebrates, and a few will be left in the heathland. Scots pine, although technically no longer native to southern England, is considered appropriate in this habitat because it was part of the landscape over 400 years ago.

Target: fewer than ten trees per hectare, either single or in clumps. These will be broadleaved trees other than birch, such as oak, willow, rowan and hawthorn, and pine left following clearance.



Long Term Management

Once the majority of the birch scrub has been eliminated it is hoped that grazing (see page 21), coupled with smaller scale removal work, will do much of the work of keeping the scrub under control.

Some mechanical work, and possibly controlled burning, will be used to ensure a variety of heather ages are maintained. Bracken control may be needed, as outlined overleaf.

Continued liaison with other organisations carrying out heathland restoration may suggest other techniques and a certain amount of experimentation will be necessary to find out what works best in this particular situation.

Options already tried include the use of a harrow.

Target: area of heathland to be at least 62 hectares, of which 80% should be referable to National Vegetation Classification type H2 or similar.

Achieved by: mapping/measuring at regular intervals.

Target: the current extent and viability of key rare/scarce species to be known and targets developed for 5 key species.

Achieved by: survey work.



The rotational cutting of heather blocks will create a diverse landscape for both visitors and wildlife.

Target: heathland structure to be composed of 10-40% pioneer phase, 20-80% building/mature, less than 30% degenerate and less than 10% dead.

Achieved by: targeted cutting and grazing.

Target: overall heathland composition to be as follows:

- ♦ 1-10% bare ground, at least two species of dwarf ericoid shrubs present (*Calluna vulgaris*, *Erica tetralix* or *Erica cinerea*) and covering 25-90%.
- ♦ Gorse cover not to exceed 50% and less than 25% of this to be *Ulex europaeus*.
- ♦ At least one species of desirable grass (i.e. typical heathland species) to be present; *Deschampsia flexuosa* and *Nardus stricta* not to exceed 25% cover.
- ♦ At least 2 species of “desirable” plants other than grass or heather to be present.
- ♦ Bracken not to exceed 10%.
- ♦ Trees and shrubs not to exceed 15% trees/tree seedlings.
- ♦ Less than 1% of the habitat to be heavily eroded, burnt or otherwise damaged.
- ♦ All non-native species (for example rhododendron) to be removed from the Common.

Achieved by: removal of trees and regrowth and also by disturbance of ground/removal of humus layer.

3.2.2 Woodland and Scrub

Although woodland provides an additional three dimensional structure and microhabitats for wildlife it is also a source of unwanted birch seed. In the long term, the width of the woodland belt will be reduced and the land restored to heathland. The areas of woodland targeted will be those that exhibit low tree diversity and have few older trees.

The woodland fringe will be left around most of the site as a barrier against noise, pollution and visual disturbance from the surrounding roads. An access area will be cut around the fence line to provide access for maintenance.

Most of the remaining scrub left will be in the woodland edge.

Action: reduce woodland fringe to a maximum of 21 hectares.

Achieved by: restoration to heathland of the areas of woodland that are almost 100% young birch and/or pine by tree felling and subsequent stump treatment to extend or link existing open areas. There will be a gradual transition between woodland and heathland, with sinuous rather than straight edges. The remaining woodland should consist of native species.

Deadwood is a valuable habitat, particularly for invertebrate species which are in turn eaten by birds and small mammals. Standing or fallen dead trees will be left *in situ*; small amounts of large diameter deadwood from tree clearance will be left on site, ideally as small piles that will not be in the way of other management work. Deadwood will also be used to make natural “fences” to deter access to sensitive areas or the use of desire lines.

Target: 90% of naturally created deadwood will be left in the woodland areas and the natural processes of decomposition allowed to continue.

Achieved by: following Burnham Beeches’ protocol for deadwood management.

Gorse and scrub are important for birds and invertebrates older gorse is a particularly good habitat for fungi. Areas of the western side of the Common heavily overgrown with gorse will be managed as if they were dwarf shrub heath; small patches of scrub and gorse will be left across the heathland.



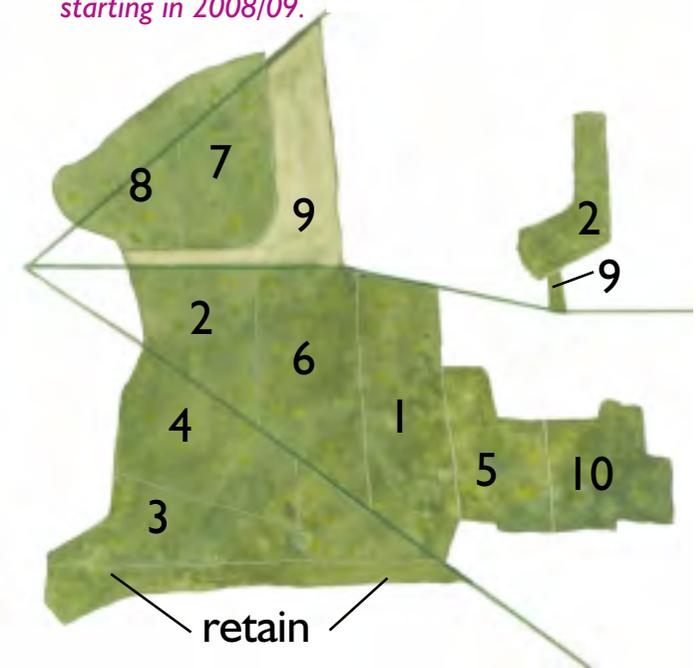
Target: scrub will be limited to between 1% and 5% of vegetation, varied in structure with no more than 15% of the same age.

Achieved by: cutting sections each year.

Target: gorse will be limited to a maximum of 20% ground cover on the western side of the Common. It will be managed to ensure it is varied in height and composition and that no more than 10% is of the same age.

Achieved by: grazing and rotational cutting.

Large stands of gorse will be broken up by cutting one block of the Common each year, starting in 2008/09.



3.2.3 Grassland

Acid grassland is an important component of heathland systems, adding to the overall diversity. Where the ground flora allows, some of the tree clearance will result in a community dominated by grasses rather than heather.

The area on the western section of the Common which was improved during the war contains many neutral grassland species; this is due to the liming of the soil. This area is gradually returning to its acid heath precursor and should be left to do so with no soil improvers added.



Action: to have the current extent, composition and quality of grassland known.

Achieved by: survey work.

Action: to extend the small area of grassland on the north common and other small pockets of grassland.

Achieved by: mechanical cutting (short term) and grazing (to maintain in the long term).

3.2.4 Open Water and Temporary Pools

The ponds of Stoke Common support a wide variety of rare plants and animals and provide drinking water for the cattle. The ground disturbance by the cattle and seasonally fluctuating water levels mean that many different plants (niche species) thrive here.



Although the standing open water on the site is in good condition generally, some clearance and re-landscaping would be beneficial.

Target: ponds and temporary pools to have at least 50% of their margins free from overhanging trees/scrub.

Achieved by: cutting and clearing woody vegetation by hand where needed.

Action: 'artificial' banks around ponds to be re-landscaped in order to allow free flowing water and natural variations in water levels throughout the year.

Action: link the isolated pools around the large pond on the western side of the main common to make the edges more gradual and create areas of small scale differences in relief.

Achieved by: minor landscaping and re-profiling using mechanical diggers.

Target: 15% of pond margins to benefit rare plant communities and invertebrates that thrive in disturbed ground.

Achieved by: grazing – the cattle will trample the pond margins as they come to drink.

Target: species in ponds and temporary pools to be 100% native.

Achieved by: removing non-native species such as New Zealand pygmy weed (*Crassula helmsii*) by spraying.

Action: once improvement works are complete the ponds will be checked regularly and the presence of rare plants, such as star fruit, noted.

Achieved by: survey work.

3.2.5 Valley Mire

The valley mire is in poor condition: tree growth - primarily birch - has reduced the amount of water and light available for *Sphagnum* mosses and associated species to survive. The proximity to the road and position of the fence line need to be considered when work is carried out.

Target: restoration of the valley mire until it has at least 50% cover of *Sphagnum*.

Achieved by: removing trees growing in and around the area.

3.2.6 Management

3.2.6.1 Grazing

As a heathland site, Stoke Common would traditionally have been grazed by a variety of animals.

Grazing will assist the restoration phases of the heathland and is essential to maintain the open aspect of the site and keep scrub under control. It is an environmentally friendly and financially viable method of management that produces a more varied landscape (on a small scale) than mechanical methods of control such as cutting and mowing.

The existing grazing regime will be changed so that, although the site will continue to be grazed primarily by cattle, these will now be a traditional native beef breed such as Sussex. Unlike the modern breeds that have been used, these thrive on the poor quality forage and eat the coarse vegetation, allowing the more fragile heathland plant species to flourish.

The herd will include older 'sentinel' cattle, familiar with the reserve, that can show the younger cattle how and where to browse. Mixed age herds tend to be relatively calm and unquiescent; this will help with possible problems such as people being followed by cattle. A mixed herd including young animals will be commercially viable and could be marketed locally at a premium as "conservation-grazed" meat.

Ponies may be useful on the western side of the Common for controlling gorse, especially in the winter. Care will need to be taken to ensure they are not fed by members of the public, as this can cause problems, but experience at Burnham Beeches shows that this is possible.

Sheep and goats may be used to control young birch growth, but fencing and potential dog problems may make this unfeasible.

Target: to graze the Common for at least 2,600 animal days each year.

Target: 100% of grazing animals to be native, traditional, appropriate stock. This will involve mainly cows and ponies but other species such as sheep, may be considered.

Achieved by: contracting a local grazier to provide the animals and look after them; animals from Burnham Beeches will be used if appropriate.

Action: grazing heathland, grassland, scrub and gorse to achieve variation of sward structure (see *heathland targets*, p18) without letting grazing tolerant species dominate the sward.

Achieved by: flexibility over the number and type of animals put out and the number of days they graze each year, dependent on weather conditions and the condition of the site.

3.2.6.2 Protocol

All major mechanical work should be carried out between the end of October and the end of February, with the following exceptions:

- ♦ bracken control should be carried out in July/August after a check of the area for late ground nesting birds;
- ♦ weed wiping should be done in June when it is most effective, but great care should be taken to avoid ground nesting birds; to minimize risk to reptiles it should be done on a hot day (when they can move away quickly).

If appropriate, surveys should be carried out for woodlark, Dartford warbler, reptiles and amphibians before works commence.

All blocks of trees will be surveyed for bat roosts before clearance works, following the protocols developed for Burnham Beeches.

Surveys for reptile hibernation and egg sites should be carried out in clearance and dumping areas the year before works are undertaken. This will prevent disturbance or damage during works.



3.2.6.3 Monitoring

Monitoring includes both the gathering of data to inform work plans and the assessment of projects. Examples include:

- ♦ Simple vegetation monitoring, which can also be used to help assess the impact of grazing.
- ♦ The regular assessment by Natural England of targets set by them as part of the conservation objectives.
- ♦ The number of days grazing.
- ♦ Monitoring the extent and population viability of key species such as bog bush cricket, brocade moth and heathland birds that have been recorded in the past. This may be carried out by local enthusiasts.
- ♦ Mapping the extent of species such as gorse every five years.



3.3 Objective 2: People

The City of London aims to encourage low-key public access at a level that is compatible with the conservation features of the reserve and to encourage local community involvement in the management of Stoke Common.

3.3.1 Access and Recreation

The majority of people using Stoke Common are at present local residents. The exact number of visitors is unknown, but public use appears to be low key, informal and in keeping with the site.

Although the majority of visitors to Stoke Common are likely to remain locals, the site is, of course, open to those who live further afield. While this relatively small site cannot support large number of visitors, the Common is an important part of the City of London's network of green spaces accessible to the people of London.

Access initiatives will focus on ensuring that existing facilities (paths, layby and benches) are in a good condition so that visitors can explore and enjoy the site.

The Common will benefit from the expertise of City staff at Burnham Beeches in providing information and interpretation to ensure that existing and potential visitors are aware of the opportunities provided by Stoke Common and understand the need for management work.

Target: to measure the current usage of the site and repeat regularly. The information will be used to guide access strategies.

Achieved by: estimation of visitor numbers at regular intervals.

Target: 90% of visitors satisfied with the experience of their visit.

Measured by: a questionnaire every five years if no other public consultation is held.

Target: at least 2 low-key events to be held on the Common (for example guided walks) per year.

Achieved by: organisation and promotion of events via the Burnham Beeches events programme and newsletter.

Target: up to date, relevant on-site information.

Achieved by: replacement and maintenance of information boards as needed; monthly update information/ bulletins posted at gateways.

Target: up to date and relevant information available to a wider audience.

Achieved by: monthly information bulletins on the City of London website; articles in the twice yearly Burnham Beeches newsletter, available free on request.

Some paths and bridleways and paths are in a boggy condition, particularly in winter, and users are damaging the adjoining areas by seeking dry routes.

All the paths need to be defined and maintained in order to reduce erosion elsewhere. “Desire lines” should be monitored in case of damage to habitats, and alternative routes may be suggested at certain times of year to take a count of ground nesting birds.

Discrete but clear waymarking will help users follow the Rights of Way.

Target: routes of all Public Rights of Way (ROW) to be surveyed and clearly defined with a well maintained path, wide and high enough for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

The immediate edges (2 - 5m) will be cleared of trees and kept as low vegetation to create a fire break and maintain access for fire engines and water bowsers. A higher scrub border may be encouraged to grow beyond this.

All surfaces will be maintained to a good standard and, where possible, will be of locally sourced gravel.

Achieved by: survey and practical remedial and improvement works in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council and the Chilterns Society.

3.3.2 Community Involvement

Considerable manpower will be needed to carry out the works listed here. Since the site is valued by local residents there are opportunities to involve the community in volunteer tasks.

A Stoke Common Project Officer has been appointed by the BTCV (formerly known as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers), working in partnership with the City of London. The Project Officer will initiate and coordinate volunteer activities to create a self-sustaining group of volunteers to help manage Stoke Common through practical, advisory and fundraising activities.

Action: to set up the Stoke Common Volunteers group.

Achieved by: three year Project Officer post.

Target: to hold at least 5 practical volunteer tasks per year.

Achieved by: BTCV Project Officer, Stoke Common and Burnham Beeches volunteers.

Local residents should be kept aware of work planned or in progress and issues affecting the site.

Action: to create opportunities for the public to meet staff and learn about the site.

Achieved by: regular site visits by staff; articles in the Burnham Beeches newsletter and website; local press; on-site bulletins.

3.3.3 Education and Promotion

Stoke Common is rarely used for educational visits despite its proximity to primary, secondary and further education institutions, although it is used regularly by Cubs and Scouts. There should be a policy which promotes the use of the reserve for educational visits; higher level research projects should be encouraged as they will help to increase knowledge about the site.

The Common has potential as a demonstration site for heathland management. Local wildlife groups and specialists should also be encouraged to perform surveys on the site, as information on the species present on the site is currently very limited.

Action: to encourage school and youth groups to use Stoke Common.

Achieved by: building links with local schools and youth groups.

Action: promotion of the site to specialist interest groups.

Achieved by: facilitating meetings and visits by specialists and specialist organisations.

Action: promotion of the value of Stoke Common to interested parties.

Achieved by: ensuring management, issues and events are covered in City of London Committee reports and appropriate publications of other statutory bodies.

3.4 Objective 3: Estate Assets and Legal Issues

The City of London aims to fulfil all legal obligations and to maintain estate structures in good condition.

3.4.1 Historic Features

It is important to identify any historic features that need to be conserved. This information will be used to protect features during habitat work – for example pond enlargement could potentially damage earthworks created during the Second World War. Other than this, there is no conflict between management of potential historic features and the rest of the site.

Action: to identify, map and protect any historical features remaining on the site.

Achieved by: survey work.

3.4.2 Tree Safety

Tree safety is a legal obligation and all inspections and subsequent work must be carried out in the required time span.

Target: to ensure that all tree safety surveys and subsequent work is completed on time

Achieved by: tree safety will be recorded and carried out using the City of London standard.

3.4.3 Fencing and Gates

Regular maintenance of infrastructure - *fencing, gates, water troughs and associated equipment* - is required to keep livestock enclosed and healthy. All gates should be safe and appropriate for use.

Action: improve access for maintenance.

Achieved by: creation of a track way through the woodland and adjacent to the fence line.

Action: secure the fence line.

Achieved by: regular fence inspection during and at the end of the grazing season; running repairs to existing fence line while grazing; major repairs at the end of the season; complete replacement by 2018.

Action: ensure the cattle can be managed effectively.

Achieved by: improvement of the current catch up area and creation of a second corral on the western side of the Common.

Action: ensure all access points are appropriately gated.

Achieved by: survey and replacement if necessary (e.g. putting gates suitable for riders where bridleways come on to the common).

3.4.4 Fire

Fire presents a very real risk at Stoke Common, both to the wildlife and adjoining properties. The last major fire was in 1995, destroying over 50 acres of vegetation.

Target: no significant fires on the Common.

Achieved by: regular liaison with local fire services; maintenance of firebreaks near houses and along major Rights of Way on the main common; maintenance of fire posts and associated equipment; review of location of fire posts; improved access to water in case of fire; access to allow fire service vehicles to leave public roads; on-site information about the danger of fires; all staff and relevant personnel to be kept up to date on plans and drills.



3.4.5 Staff Presence

A regular staff presence offers both reassurance and a point of contact for visitors. It can help ensure that problems and issues such as the dumping of garden refuse, fungus collection and misuse of the site are dealt with promptly.

Target: to ensure at least 3 staff visits per week and to respond to emergencies within 30 minutes.

Achieved by: Burnham Beeches staff patrols and the BTCV Project Officer.



3.4.6 Illegal Access

Action: to minimise illegal encroachment.

Achieved by: ensuring boundaries are secure; clear contact details; a timely and effective response to incidents.

3.4.6 Finance and Income

The City of London has agreed an outline business plan for the site over the next 10 years which will guide site expenditure.

The City's own resources and the endowment provided with the land will meet only part of the site's projected annual running cost. The success of this management plan depends on identifying and securing external funding.

Action: to meet the annual income targets for project delivery (see *Action Plans*, pages 28 - 31).

Achieved by: identifying and applying for appropriate grant aid (City of London); encouraging fundraising and donations (Stoke Common Volunteers).

3.4.8 Gas Pipeline and Other Utilities

Maintenance or replacement of underlying pipework will need careful management to minimise damage to the Common.

Action: to ensure that there are maps showing the precise location and details of all utility lines and that the gas pipeline is maintained to correct standard.

Achieved by: liaison with relevant utility companies.

3.4.9 Geology/Hydrology

The hydrology of the site has been studied in the past because of gravel extraction and subsequent infill at the land to the north of and adjoining the common; the information is currently being collated. It needs to be established whether there is anything that should, or could, be done to monitor this, or if the existing gravel operator (SITA) has any ongoing requirements in respect of Stoke Common.

Action: no significant avoidable changes to the hydrological regime.

Achieved by: identifying relevant past and current data and taking expert advice if and when necessary.

3.4.10 Other Legal Obligations

The legal status given by SSSI designation means Natural England needs to give permission for actions not specifically detailed in the management plan.

Action: to ensure all legal requirements are fulfilled.

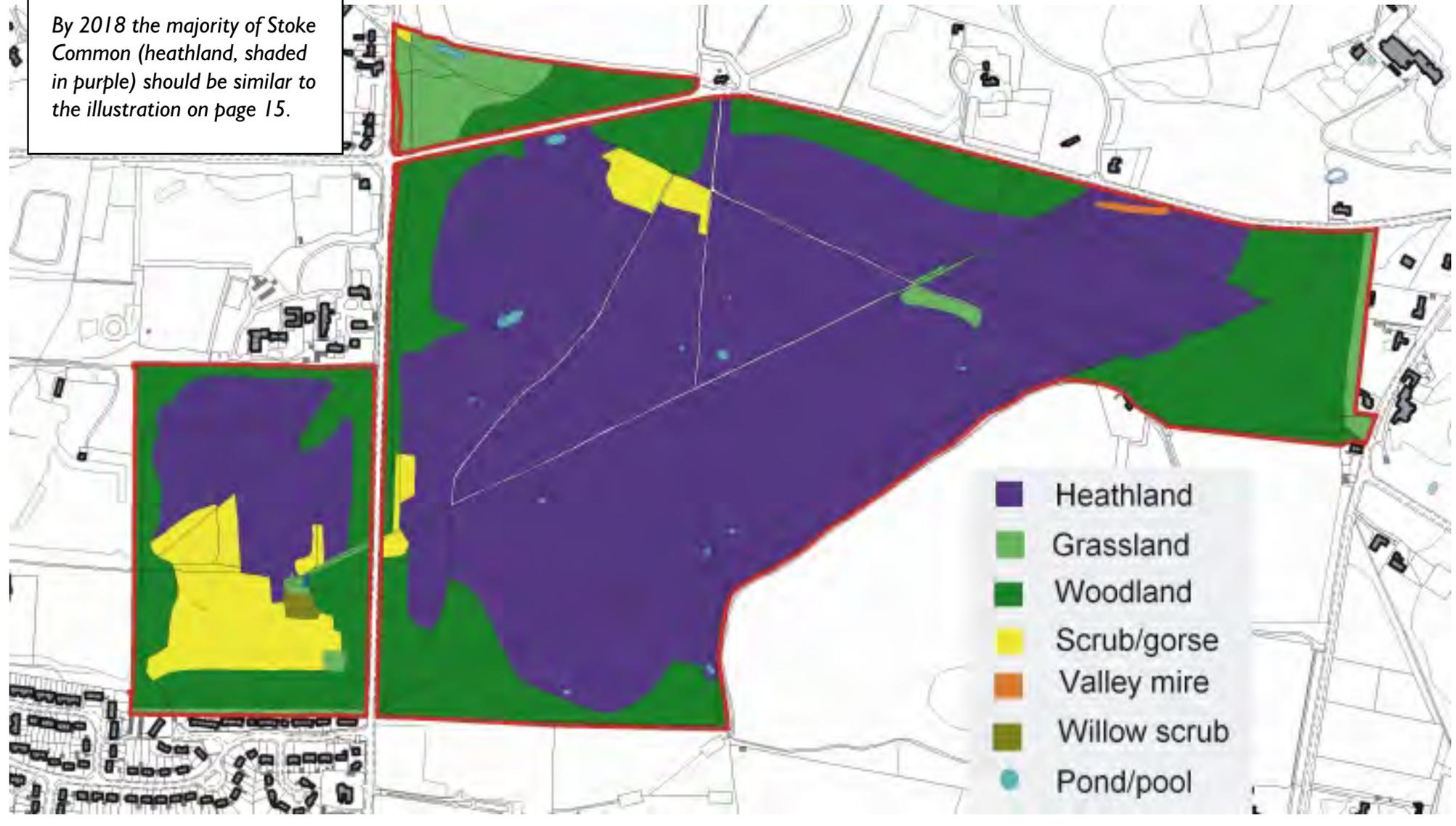
Achieved by: meeting with Natural England, the local police and other relevant authorities.

4.1 Habitat Management Required



4.2 Long term vision for Stoke Common

By 2018 the majority of Stoke Common (heathland, shaded in purple) should be similar to the illustration on page 15.



OBJECTIVE 1: to restore the heathland and associated habitats to favourable condition and carry out management to maintain them in good condition

PROJECT	WHERE	WHO	WHEN (work years run from November to October)									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Heathland - restoration												
mulching machine	2 5	C	2.07	2.27	2.00	2.17	2.51					
soil stripping/disturbance	2 3 6	C	1.02	0.85	2	2.07	2.25	2				
flailing as preparation for soil disturbance	2 3 6	C/S			2	2.07	2.25	2				
other restoration techniques as needed, incl experimental work		C/S	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
birch/pine control by hand and treat stumps	1 2 3 5 6	V/S/C	4	4	4	4	4					
clearance of trees	All	C/S	1.18	1.06	0.5	0.2	1.9	1.75	3.3	0.7	0.63	0.92
weed wiping	3	C		0.61								
soil scrape in sundew area by hand	3	V	0.1									
remove non-native species (rhododendron)	All	S/V	0.1	0.1								
obtain burning platform	off site	S	⊙									
obtain trailer for Polaris (to help with practical work)	off site	S	⊙									
Heathland - maintenance												
bracken control - spray (roll or cut)	3 + All	C/S	0.5				2.3	follow up			2.3	follow up
cyclical cutting/burning of heather, after production of plan	All	C/S					⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Gorse												
cyclical cutting of blocks	1	C/S	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Scrub												
cyclical cutting of blocks		C/S				⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Grassland												
restoration by tree felling and treat stumps	4 5	C/S/V						1.55				

PROJECT: ⊙ - to be carried out in this year ○ - may be carried out if appropriate 0.75 - area of work in hectares

WHERE: numbers refer to the compartments shown on page 5

WHO: Contractors (C), Staff (S), volunteers (V), BTCV (B), County Council (CC), Natural England (NE), relevant companies (RC) and fire brigade (F)

WHEN: Year 1 (08-09); Year 2 (09-10); Year 3 (10-11); Year 4 (11-12); Year 5 (12-13); Year 6 (13-14); Year 7 (14-15); Year 8 (15-16); Year 9 (16-17); Year 10 (17-18)

PROJECT	WHERE	WHO	WHEN (work years run from November to October)										
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Grazing													
negotiate agreement with graziers	All	S	⊙					⊙					⊙
annual contract with graziers	All	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
change stock type to traditional beef breed	All	C	⊙	⊙	⊙								
trial pony grazing on west common	I	S	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
obtain overwintering land to support grazing	off site	S	⊙										
trial other grazing animals where necessary	All	C/S			○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Open Water/Temporary Pools													
landscape banks of large pool	3	C	⊙										
clear trees from edges	All	C/S/V	⊙										
remove <i>Crassula helmsii</i> from pond (spraying)	3	C	⊙	follow up									
Valley Mire													
remove trees and treat stumps	7	C/S		⊙									
Key species (what occurs and establish current extent/population size)													
heathland birds	All	S/V/C	⊙										
bog bush cricket	All	S/V/C	⊙										
flora (including seasonal pools)	All	S/V/C		⊙									
moths and butterflies	All	S/V/C			⊙								
reptiles	All	S/V/C	⊙										
fungi	All	S/V/C		⊙									
bees, wasps and ants	All	S/V/C			⊙								
beetles	All	S/V/C						⊙					
flies	All	S/V/C							⊙				
Monitoring for Objective 1													
success of heathland restoration	All	S/NE	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
review grazing impact assessment/assess grazing success	All	S						⊙	every 5 years				
map extent of gorse and potential problem species	All	S						⊙	every 5 years				
some key rare species, e.g. birds	All	C/V/S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
carry out National Vegetation Classification	All	C								⊙			

PROJECT	WHERE	WHO	WHEN (work years run from November to October)									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grazing Infrastructure												
maintain all fences, gates, corral areas and water troughs	All	S/C	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
move water troughs to more suitable locations	1 3	S/C		⊙								
cut track adjacent to the fence for maintenance access (mulching machine)	1 2 3 5 6	S	⊙									
replace/install catch up areas	1 6	C	⊙									
replace fencing	1 2 3 5 6	S/C		⊙		⊙		⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙
repair or replace gates, add field gate on west common	1 2 3 5 6	S/C	⊙	⊙								
Fires												
cut vegetation to maintain fire breaks & 10m vehicle access behind field gate	1 7	S/C	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
maintain fire posts and access to them, review positions of posts	All	S/V	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
liaise regularly with fire brigade	off site	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
develop full fire plans as required and carry out drills	All	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
installation of water supply on Common (or better access to water)	Any	S/FB	⊙									
Maintain Physical Presence												
continue regular patrols by staff	All	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
deal with any misuse of Common, including prosecution if necessary	All	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Illegal Access												
inspect boundaries and ensure secure; deal with any encroachment	All	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Financial Needs												
apply for grants to enable work to be carried out	off site	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
encourage Friends Group/local people to assist with fund raising	off site	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
apply for HLS and comply with all reporting needs	off site	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Gas Pipeline and Other Utilities												
make contact with utility companies and map location of all lines	All	S	⊙									
ensure gas pipeline and other utilities are maintained to suitable standard	All	S/RC	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Other Legal Obligations												
Liaise with Natural England	off site	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
Liaise with police	off site	S	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙

Contact Details

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If you would like to receive this publication in your language or an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio tape, please contact the Open Spaces Department, City of London, PO Box 270, Guildhall, London EC2P 2 EJ. Telephone 0207 332 3505.



Further Information

If you would like more information about Stoke Common or have any comments on the works proposed on the Common, please contact the Burnham Beeches office.

Further documents relating to Stoke Common are available to view at the Office, including:

- ◆ Natural England Conservation Objectives
- ◆ A list of Natural England “operations likely to damage the site”
- ◆ Maps relating to the Action Plans, showing the work that will be done each year
- ◆ The citation for Site of Special Scientific Interest designation
- ◆ A complete species list for Stoke Common

