



# **RSPB Report Feb 2025 – Winter Work at Blackbushe Airport Old Runway – Mark Crisp, Warden**

## **Firebreak**

Work has continued along the proposed firebreak next to the residential area (see photo below). Staff and volunteers have been working hard to clear back overgrown gorse, bramble and dangerous trees to make the area safer. Lots of positive comments from members of the public, some have even signed up as volunteers!

Feels like we are making good progress but there is still a lot to do, so we will be spending the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Feb making one final push to get it finished before the start of the breeding season.

Volunteer work parties have been taking place every other Thursday during the winter. Practical work will cease during the breeding season, and we will focus more on surveying birds, butterflies, and reptiles. If anyone is interested in volunteering with us, please contact the assistant warden on: [Natalia.azzopardi@rspb.org.uk](mailto:Natalia.azzopardi@rspb.org.uk).



## Anti-social behaviour

Unfortunately, there have been multiple reports of quad bikes and dirt bikes on site, sometimes whilst we've been present. We managed to speak to a few people which seemed to have a positive end. However, as these occurrences keep happening, we've been advised to contact the police straight away. We tend to contact the police anyway if we are unable to speak to the riders. Happy to accept suggestions as to how we can prevent these occurrences from happening.

## Wildlife

Volunteers have been conducting fortnightly bird surveys after eating the Pathfinder Café out of food. Highlights have included lots of wintering thrushes making use of the fruit trees, large numbers of smaller birds such as greenfinch. Key species sightings have included Dartford warbler, stonechat, lapwing, bullfinch, and woodlark. Some interesting visitors have included ringed plover and wheatear on the runway.

We're all very much looking forward to the spring and summer season of surveying.

Any questions or queries, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

All the best,

Mark Crisp - RSPB Warden