

Yateley Common Management Committee
Hampshire Countryside Service North Sites Team Report July 2025 – compiled
18th June by Nicki Paton

The team have been working hard across all sites, focussing on holly coppicing, tree inspections/management and site maintenance tasks.

➤ **Site Maintenance**

Regular works

There have been regular site checks and litter patrols across Yateley Common and all other sites.

Safety inspections of site infrastructure on-going

Ongoing site signage maintenance and replacement

Replace dragon's teeth as required

Monitoring of culverts and ditch clearance as necessary

Maintenance of machinery carried out

Ongoing Ranger's depot maintenance and management carried out

Ongoing facilities management and H&S functions at the Ranger's depot

Infrastructure checks across sites

(On-going regular works on other sites within our remit)

Additional works

Inspection and removal of numerous trees as part of the ongoing tree safety inspections (YC and all sites)

Ash Dieback surveys in High Risk Red Zones

Removal of fly tipping

Boardwalk repairs

Maintain social media pages

Staff training

Completion of ROW bridleway surfacing, drainage and installation of finger posts/waymarkers

Annual infrastructure checks

Ditch clearance

Track and car park repairs

Boardwalk removal at Stroud Pond – new path surfacing to be installed

Education sessions with badged groups

Clearing sight lines

Events – Big Spring Clean, Easter Trail and Yateley May Fayre

(On-going works on other sites within our remit)

➤ **Conservation Management**

Yateley Common

Checked Pennywort at Wyndham's (main) pond

Holly coppicing

Rapid assessment surveys

SPA bird surveys

Invasives Species Week – rhododendron removal

Other sites work

Monitoring of Exmoor pony herd and regular fence checks at Castle Bottom
Surveys and habitat assessments
Infrastructure checks (all sites)
Boardwalk installation at Shortheath Common
Monthly fence line checks at Castle Bottom
Boardwalk repairs at Zebon Copse
Holly coppicing at Herbert Plantation
Hazardous tree management
Removal of fly-tipping (Shortheath Common)
Site visit to new SANG

(On-going regular works on other sites within our remit)

➤ **Illegal/Antisocial Activities**

Fly Tipping – Since March 2025 we have had 2 fly tip events (a further 2 fly-tips on other sites). All the fly-tipping signage has been refreshed.

Dumped vehicles – We have had two cars parked in car parks for over two weeks. One was sign-written so reported to company. A caravan was abandoned in the Vigo Lane layby – removed by Hart DC.

Motorbikes – Please report any sightings to the Police using the Hampshire Constabulary website - [Home | Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary](#) – or on 101.

Fires – We have had one fire since the last meeting which occurred on 11th May on Brandy Bottom. It was just under 0.5ha in size.

Fly-grazing – There has been no fly grazing since the last meeting.

➤ **Tree Inspections**

Ad hoc tree inspections by staff are ongoing. The Service Tree Team are progressing with surveying our High Risk areas. Surveys are ongoing and we action any works accordingly as a result of those surveys.

All Ash trees have been identified in High Risk areas. Due to Ash Dieback some of these trees are vulnerable and likely to need reducing/removing. The Tree Team are instructing works which will be paid from a central budget.

➤ **Signage & Interpretation**

‘Ground nesting birds’ signs were put back up for the spring/summer period. Dogs are still required to be on a lead at Castle Bottom due to grazing livestock.

The replacement map board was replaced at Gravel Pit.

We ran a competition in half term asking local children to design a new wildfire poster to go up around site. Unfortunately, we only had two entries, neither of which were really suitable as they related to ‘forest’ fires. We did however award both entries a prize. A new wildfire information poster is being developed in-house ready for erection before the summer holidays.

There are currently posters up around the site noticeboards informing people of the consultation regarding the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire. A [public consultation](#) on the draft Strategy is running until 23 June 2025.

[LRNS Consultation video](#)

➤ **Wildlife, Surveys and Monitoring**

Staff have been up early carrying out the SPA bird surveys across our suite of sites. So far numbers are looking pretty good for all three target species. We have also been completing our rapid habitat assessments which helps us monitor the condition of habitats and species across the area and adapt our management accordingly. Volunteer reptile surveyors from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian & Reptile Group (HIWARG) will be carrying out surveys for reptiles and amphibians and we continue to record any ad-hoc sightings.

➤ **Community Engagement**

The Natural England SPA Wardens have been patrolling the sites assisting with user engagement. They have erected their Ground Nesting Birds/Stick to the Paths signage (1st March – 15th September). The summer warden staff have been recruited and are already out engaging with the community.

We attended the Yateley Society meeting regarding the Berkley homes development at Firgrove Farm following their EIA screening application and will be engaging with the consultation process moving forward.

Staff have continued to update social media with information and news.

➤ **Rights of Way (RoW)**

The Rights of Way Diversion Order (west of Cricket Hill) is now complete, certified and digitised. All routes are now open and signposted.

Path cutbacks will be completed with staff and volunteers over the summer and mowing of paths has already been started by staff.

➤ **Wyndham's Pool**

Angling is available as a member with Hartley Wintney Angling Society or by day ticket from Yateley Angling.

Open season commenced on the 15th June.

We have been called out to a couple of very small peat fires in the area surrounding Wyndham's. It is not known who or how these fires started. Thankfully members of the public called in the smouldering 'fires' and staff were able to respond quickly to put them out.

➤ **Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)**

Scrub clearing for the autumn/winter was completed on 28th February following a very wet winter. Our contractor completed all the work that was assigned to them.

We will be carrying out a small amount of manual bracken treatment this summer, but investigations into future treatment continues (since the removal of Asulox from the market).

We have been carrying out site visits to check for Ragwort but there doesn't appear to be that many plants this year. As a biennial we may see more plants next year. Small patches will be removed from the West End near the airport in a couple of weeks' time.

We are already planning habitat management works for the coming autumn/winter hope to instruct a contractor by the end of the summer. Plans will be shared with the committee at the next meeting.

➤ **Track Maintenance**

Track repairs were carried out in early June with the work being carried out by HCC staff. Repairs were made to tracks at Wyndham's Pool, Brandy Bottom, entrance to Sunnyside off Handford Lane, Stroud Pond car park and Gravel Pit car park and the surrounding tracks. (The layby at Castle Bottom has also been resurfaced.)

➤ **Yateley Common Grazing Consultation**

Discussions are ongoing with other organisations in the area about the operational responsibilities and practicalities of grazing livestock on heathland sites.

Discussions with FE regarding additional grazing at Castle Bottom are ongoing. This will hopefully go ahead this winter when the timber crop has been harvested, and a new Countryside Stewardship agreement can be put in place for funding works.

➤ **Archaeology**

Nothing to report.

➤ **Volunteers**

We continue to receive much needed support from our dedicated team of volunteers. This is primarily from the Yateley Society Conservation Volunteers (YSCV) and our regular 'Thursday' Volunteers. HIWARG continue to monitor the site for amphibians and reptiles.

We thank all our volunteers for their continued support. It is very much appreciated.

Volunteer hours since the last meeting:

Month	YC Hours	Other Sites Hours	All Sites Hours
March	515.5	22	537.5
April	112	22	134
May	124	48	172
June	40	15	55
TOTAL	791.5 (530)	107 (181)	898.5 (711)

Note: Figures compiled 18th June 2025. Bold figures in brackets are for June 2024.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or know someone who might be, please get in touch with us via email at northern.sites@hants.gov.uk or telephone on 01252 870425.

➤ **Education**

We have run many education sessions with the badged groups such as Cubs and Beavers in recent weeks and have several sessions booked in over the coming weeks. We also have a school visit to Charles Kingsley School and Yateley Community Preschool booked in during the summer term.

➤ **Events**

Our Big Spring Clean event ran again on 1 March 2025, which was very well attended by the local badged groups and members of the public. 179 volunteers amounted a staggering 335.5 volunteer hours that morning!

We ran our Easter Trail on Good Friday 18th April which was attended by 57 eggcellent children, and we attended the May Fayre on 5th May where we spoke to members of the community about our work on the common.

We are running two Twilight Nightjar Walks again this year, one in June at Castle Bottom and one in July at Yateley Common. Tickets can be purchased from the Hampshire online shop - [Hampshire County Council Shop](#) (click on 'Hampshire Countryside Service Yateley Common')

Heath Week is running 28th July – 3rd August and we will be hosting our Family Fun Day at Wyndham's Pool area on Wednesday 30th July. The event is free but bookable via the Hampshire online shop - [Hampshire County Council Shop](#) (click on 'Hampshire Countryside Service Yateley Common')

➤ **Website & Social Media**

Facebook – 1639 (1617) follows

Instagram – 285 (279)

(last meetings figures in brackets)

[END]

To circulate: Countryside Team Manager (North) Report