

**Frensham Common Management Plan
Aims and Objectives, 2010 – 2020**

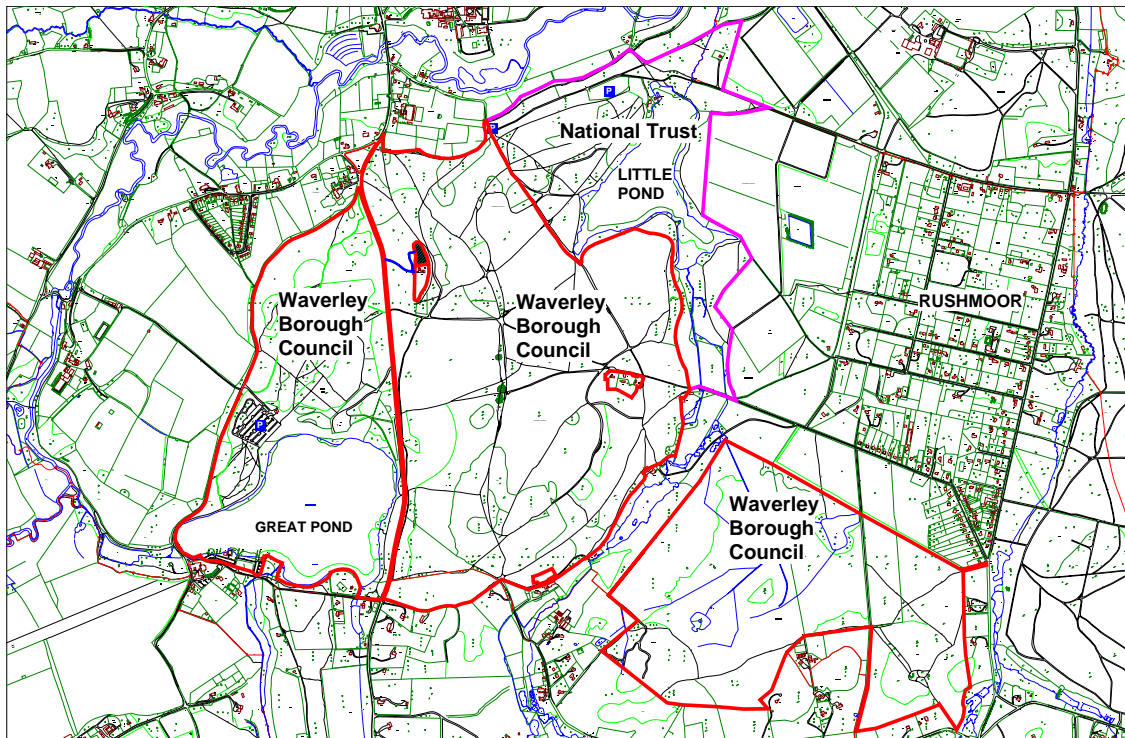
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S. Webster – WBC Ranger for Frensham Common

Background

Frensham Common covers 951 acres, (385 hectares), owned by the National Trust. Waverley Borough Council lease 822.5 acres, (333 hectares), from the NT.



In November 2008, WBC was approached by Natural England to upgrade our current grant aid programme, called Countryside Stewardship, to the next level of funding, Higher Level Stewardship. The payment difference between the two schemes is £50 per hectare for CSS and £200 per hectare for HLS. The current CSS grant expires in 2011. The anticipated HLS bid should start in April 2010, taking over from the last year of CSS, and run until the end of March 2020.

Before this, the CSS grant aid was driving and prioritising the management across the Common. The upgrade to HLS will also drive the actual management work as part of a rewritten and more extensive management plan.

Work so far

Under CSS, only 235 hectares of the Common was allocated field numbers, leaving nearly 98 hectares not attracting any grant aid at all. After extensive negotiation over four months, Steve Webster was able to get the Rural Payments Agency to recognise new field boundaries, which totalled 319.5 hectares. The remaining 13.5 hectares includes roads, tracks and car parks, which cannot be mapped as fields or attract funding under the scheme.

The completed HLS application was submitted in early November 2009, and is currently being scrutinised by Natural England.

Aims

- To restore some areas of planted pine plantation back to heathland
- To maintain some forestry blocks for mature pine woodland by carrying out selective thinning as part of good silvicultural management.
- To maintain areas of open heath as such, and to diversify that habitat with bare sand, pools and selective low density grazing.
- To get the Great Pond back into “unfavourable – recovering” or even “favourable” condition by restoring the plant communities once present.
- To create open vistas where once great views have been lost to encroachment.
- To control and eradicate as many of the invasive non native plant species as possible – rhododendron, laurel, black cherry, *Gaultheria* etc.

Objectives

- Maintenance of lowland heath – 190.45 hectares
- Restoration of neglected heath – 6 hectares
- Restoration of heath from forestry – 26.34 hectares
- Maintenance of ponds with high wildlife value – 31.7 hectares
- Maintenance of reed beds – 0.26 hectares
- Bracken control 17.12 hectares
- Control of invasive plants – 4.61 hectares
- Maintenance of woodland – was originally 30.90 hectares but being reviewed by Natural England at present.
- Under the Commons Act 2006, temporary fencing can be used for 6 months of the year, to enclose an area of 10 hectares or 10% of a Common Land parcel, whichever is the smaller. This 10ha area can be moved around within that 6 month period. This is the technique currently being trialled successfully at Thursley National nature Reserve. It is planned to trial this on the Flashes, starting in either 2011 or 2012. There are no plans for permanent fencing or erecting temporary grazing areas across Public Bridleways, Public Footpaths or permissive bridleways. Full access will be maintained as far as possible.
- It is intended to utilise the many years of experience gained by the Heathland Management Project to deliver the majority of the scheme, due to the increase in work being carried out, under a service level agreement.

Consultation

The publishing of these aims & objectives is the first step in the consultation process, allowing local users, residents and groups associated with the Common to have access to the plans submitted as part of the HLS application. There will be other meetings and a full management plan available in 2010 for more detail and comment. There will also be a display in the information room, at Frensham Great Pond during 2010, with maps and more detail of the scheme once English Nature has returned it's verdict on the scheme and what is financially possible. If you have any questions or comments on these outline details please contact Steve Webster at The Ranger's Office, Frensham Great Pond, Bacon Lane, Churt, Surrey, GU10 2QB, telephone him on 01252 792416, or email him at steve.webster@waverley.gov.uk