



Nonsuch Park

Habitat Management Plan
Progress Update Jan 2026

Progress Update

The main aims of this five-year management plan was to:

- Highlight the importance of Nonsuch in terms of its Biodiversity
- Seek ways to increase the management resource
- Identify practical habitat management techniques, which can continue in to the future.

Nonsuch contains **three priority habitats**, Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, Hedgerows and Ponds.

There are also **32 priority species** including butterflies, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians as defined under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.



Pyramidal Orchid



Key achievements –
reintroduction of hay
meadow management

- 2022 One meadow was cut for hay
- 2023 Three meadows were cut for hay
- 2024 One and a half meadows were cut for hay due to high levels of ragwort
- 2025 Three different meadows cut for hay
- Every year, volunteers have to pull ragwort!

Nonsuch Grassland Management



Key achievements – purchase of flail collector to carry out rotational grassland management

- Cutting and clearing grassland has been a technique used in the Borough for many years (on Epsom Common and Horton Country Park), but the machine was only hired in for a short period of time and there was not time to cut all the desired areas in this way.
- In early 2024, EEBC purchased their own flail collector which enabled many more areas to be cut using this desired technique.

Key achievements - Nonsuch Voles continue to do amazing work

The volunteers continue to work hard not only in the formal gardens, but in the wider park, including The Wood, Boundary Copse, Round Pond, The Main Ditch. The Walnut Grove and more recently the Banqueting Site.



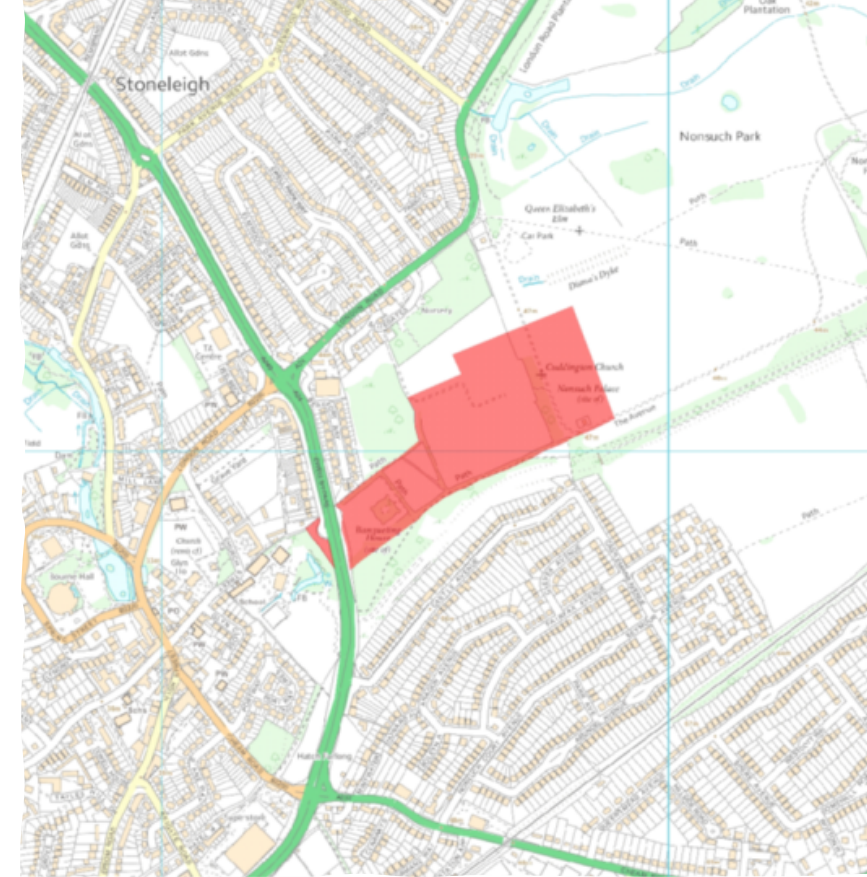
Highlight importance of Nonsuch's Biodiversity

- Guided walk summer 2023 for JMC Cllrs.
- Recorder Day held in July and October 2024.
- Annual reptile survey of Cherry Orchard.
- Comms team assisted with communicating activities.
- Entry in to South and South East In Bloom – Large Conservation Area. Won Gold in 2025.



Seek ways to increase the management resource

- In April 2025, Historic England asked to visit Nonsuch Park, in particular the area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Due to its designation, it is possible to apply for Countryside Stewardship funding.
- CIL funding could be applied to for particular projects.
- Biodiversity Net Gain is potentially possible but there are some complications.
- District Level Licensing may offer opportunities for pond creation/restoration.



A landscape photograph showing a wide, grassy field in the foreground. In the background, there is a dense line of green trees under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text "There's lots more to do!" is overlaid in white on the grassy field.

There's lots more to do!

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat)

- The Nonsuch Voles have continued to carry out woodland management in The Wood.
- A felling licence is being applied for to enable the possibility of woodland management being carried out within other woodlands in the park. This work will prioritise the work needed to manage Ash Die-back.



MANAGING WOODLAND AS COPPICE IS IMPORTANT FOR WILDLIFE

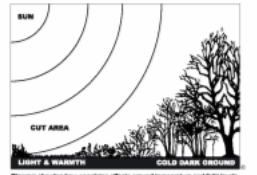
Coppicing may look drastic but is essential for much of our best-loved woodland wildlife which may be threatened with extinction if this is not continued.

In this traditional management system, trees are regularly cut to the ground and re-grow with several stems, providing the wood needed for a wide range of products.

Time between cuts varies depending on the intended use of the wood but needs to be regular so that there are always some open areas. Here warmth and light can reach the ground.

This encourages plant growth and insect activity - but this effect decreases yearly as trees re-grow until branches meet overhead, and light can no longer reach the woodland floor.

So coppice cycles, with some cut each year, must be maintained, to ensure continuity of open space.



Help wildlife by supporting the coppice industry buy local logs, charcoal and other wood products.



Ponds (Priority Habitat)

- 70% of ponds have been lost from the UK Countryside over the last century.
- The two ponds that still exist in Nonsuch are extremely important in that context and great work has begun on the restoration of Round Pond, again by volunteers.
- The Nonsuch Voles regularly manage the vegetation on the southern side of the pond to ensure it stays open.
- Round Pond is particularly interesting due to the presence of Great Crested Newts.
- As part of District Level Licensing, we are working with the Newt Partnership to create new ponds in Epsom and Ewell. So far, two new ponds have been created in Horton Country Park and more are planned here, along with sites on Epsom Common.
- Nonsuch has been highlighted as having potential.



Scrub management

- A very important habitat for birds and invertebrates and is found within Nonsuch in Russet Field, Cherry Orchard Farm and along the some of the woodland edges.
- However, scrub is quickly encroaching in to the grasslands. It is important that we manage the scrub for nature conservation by creating age structure and controlling dominance over other habitats.



Hedgerows (Priority Habitat)

- The hedgerows that are present within Nonsuch Park have largely developed in to treelines and consist of species such as Oak, Elm, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Ash, Elder and occasionally Hornbeam, Cherry, Field Maple and Sycamore.
- Very little active management is possible with current resources.



Black Hairstreak



Brown Hairstreak

Veteran Trees

- There are a number of veteran trees across the park, mainly oak.
- Specialist contractors will be needed to manage these incredible trees. Volunteers could assist in assessing their condition.



Hazel on the edge of Cherry Orchard



Oak tree on the edge of Six Acre Field

Our Biodiversity Duty as a Local Authority

- The Environment Act 2021 has made it mandatory that all planning permissions granted in England (unless exemptions apply) will have to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This sits alongside:
- **a strengthened legal duty for public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity,**
- new **biodiversity reporting requirements** for local authorities, and
- mandatory spatial strategies for nature: Local Nature Recovery Strategies or 'LNRS'.
- The **production and implementation** of a management plan will be a key part of adhering to this duty.



Our Biodiversity Duty as a local Authority



The UK government has proposed the declaration of a **national environmental and climate emergency** and Surrey County Council has enacted this declaration.

The 2017 State of Surrey's Nature report Surrey has estimated Surrey's historic rate of biodiversity loss. It demonstrated that our rate of loss is likely to be far higher than the national rate, hence indicating that in Surrey we have much further to go secure the recovery of nature.

