

Normandy

PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of **NORMANDY PARISH COUNCIL CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE** held at the **ROYAL BRITISH LEGION HALL, GUILDFORD ROAD** on **THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2025** at **7.30pm**.

Committee Members present Cllr Philippa Mitchell Chairman
Cllr Simon Schofield
Roger Sage
Bill Stanworth

Non-committee members present Briony Howarth (Assistant Parish Clerk)

CM25-001 COMMITTEE MATTERS

Cllr Mitchell was elected as Chair
Nick Barroclough was elected as Vice Chair
Terms of Reference was agreed

CM25-002 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Nick Barraclough, Heather Sole and Linda Pike.

CM25-003 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CM25-004 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2025 were approved as a true record.

CM25-005 WORK PARTY REVIEW

Since March, the work parties have been reasonably well attended, with enthusiastic and energetic volunteers.

- Much of the bamboo to the north of the Cricket Club was cleared by volunteers, with the remainder removed by a contractor.
- The contractor is currently working on clearing the bamboo near the Pond.
- This year's focus was Montbretia along the horse ride. A large clump was removed and bagged.
- Volunteers also cut back bracken and bramble from the horse ride edge, widening access and allowing more light to reach the ground flora.

The Wildlife and Habitat Surveys generally attract fewer participants, but those who attend always enjoy the sessions.

- **Tree Aging** – A productive morning sharing knowledge and adding two trees to the Ancient Tree Inventory.
- **Wildflower Survey** – Unfortunately, the forecast forced a date change, and attendance was low. However, the small group successfully surveyed over 40 quadrats (50cm² each) across the football pitch and the wet/orchid area west of the tennis courts (see attached data and maps).
- **Butterfly Surveys** – The MFF survey coincided with poor weather, resulting in fewer butterflies than last year, though species diversity was good. The Normandy Common survey had fair weather but again low numbers, likely due to the dry year and timing at the end of the Big Butterfly Count period.

The committee discussed how they could improve attendance for the work parties and habit surveys and they agreed to vary the timings throughout the day. It was also recommended that there is a contingency date set each time, if bad weather should occur.

CM25-006 Work Parties to March 2026

Date	Time	Location	Details
13.9	9.30-12.30	Normandy Pond	Removal of invasive non-native pond weed, edge dredging, litter removal, management of rushes and edge vegetation, ditch clearance. Need wellies, spades and shovels, loppers, saws, gloves and possibly wheelbarrow.
18.10	9.30-12.30	Manor Fruit Farm	Tree Care and Maintenance: the young trees need annual care to ensure they have the best chance of survival. We will be cutting back brambles and other vegetation, re-staking trees/adjusting tree guards and possibly mulching trees by Therapy Garden. Useful tools include loppers, secateurs, sickles, rakes, wheelbarrow, spade/shovel, strong bramble-proof gloves.
15.11	9.30-12.30	Normandy Common	Horse Ride maintenance: clearing the edges of the horse ride to create more open glades to improve biodiversity. Useful tools include loppers, rakes, bramble-proof gloves and wheelbarrow.
6.12	9.30-12.30	Normandy Common	Holly coppicing: opening up glades in the dense holly to clear around some of the mature oaks and improve light levels near the ground to increase biodiversity. Cut holly to be used to create rough dead hedges for invertebrate/small mammal cover and reduce likelihood of people and dogs entering the cut area. Useful equipment to bring – cutting tools such as saws and loppers and good quality gloves.
x.1.26	9.30-12.30	Normandy Common	Rhododendron Removal: Rhododendron is a highly invasive species that prevents other ground-level plants from growing and reduces biodiversity in woodland areas. We will continue to cut back the area previously worked on and expand into new parts. Cut wood is piled to create deadwood habitats as well. Useful equipment to bring – cutting tools such as saws and loppers, good quality gloves.
7.2.26	9.30-12.30	Manor Fruit Farm	Creation of dead hedge around seasonal pond by Therapy Garden. A lot of willow and other trees were cut by the seasonal pond a year ago to improve the ponds ability to hold water and enable access. We will create a dead hedge to provide a clear edge to the pond and to create habitat for invertebrates, amphibians and small mammals to live. Useful equipment to bring: cutting tools such as saws and loppers, good quality gloves.
14.3.26	9.30-12.30	Normandy Common	Rhododendron Clearance #2. Continuing the work and if the weather is suitable having a bonfire to burn the brash. We will check all areas of rhododendron prior to cutting to ensure there are no nesting birds.

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CM25-007 HABITAT MANAGEMENT

A number of areas may benefit from changes to current management practices.

- **MFF Swales** – willow growth is spreading across several swales. Currently, they are cut only in autumn. The committee recommended that the maintenance team should be asked to control the willow with a brush cutter. Bill will mark out the orchids and shear around them by hand.
- **MFF Hay Meadow** – cut once at the end of summer. The committee were asked if it would be beneficial for a second cut. It was recommended that one cut is enough.
- **MFF Planted Trees** – needs more weeding and some more mulch. A spring work party will be organised for this.
- **Horse ride** – no second cut, but a summer work party to cut back brambles.
- **Football Pitch** – will be cut twice in the autumn
- **Pond Management** – The council are keen on getting the pond electro fished, so they can make it more of a conservation and wildlife pond. It was recommended to contact the angling societies.
- **Rural Area** – a lot of non-natives are growing next to the pond – this work will be included in the Surrey Choices work parties.
- **The Orchard** – Bill agreed to continue to manage the Orchard.

CM25-008 SURREY CHOICES

Last year, Surrey Choices focused on clearing the holding pond at Manor Fruit Farm (MFF) next to the Therapy Garden and the adjacent ditch to the culvert. The holding pond will soon have a passive sluice gate reinstated, allowing controlled water flow. NPC is responsible for maintaining the ditch between MFF and the rear of gardens, but only part is currently clear.

Suggested Surrey Choices Tasks

- Clear the ditch between MFF and gardens in both directions from the culvert, trimming vegetation to maintain access and prevent blockages (ideally in autumn before conditions become too wet).
- Re-cut the Rural Area east of the Pond, last cleared two years ago.
- Brush Cutting area behind noticeboards at Hunts Hill.

CM25-009 MANAGEMENT OF WESTERN HEMLOCK WOODS

Penfolds have been appointed to produce the Woodland Management Plan for Normandy Parish Council, following quotes from three companies (all at similar cost). Penfolds were selected due to their local conservation woodland experience at Puttenham Common. The Plan will cover the entire Normandy Common, and funding applications can be made to support work such as non-native removal. The Assistant Clerk and Cllr Mitchell are liaising with Penfolds to initiate the process. Sub-Committee members and volunteers who wish to contribute ideas are encouraged to get involved.

CM25-010 COMMUNICATIONS

Since the last meeting, a leaflet has been produced and is now at the printers. These will be distributed around the village and nearby locations. The Facebook page is generating some interest, but the WhatsApp group remains small. The Clerk and Cllr Mitchell will also update the NPC website to make it more relevant.

CM25-011 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND/OR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

To receive any urgent information items and agree any items for inclusion on future estates and facilities and/or committee agendas.

RESOLVED: None

CM25-012

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED 26th February 2026

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.55hrs

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