

# CMA 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference 2026

## 23-25 September – The Sustainability Centre

### Petersfield, Hampshire



## Field trips, topics and learning outcomes

### 1. Coastal Change, Habitat and Recreation

#### ***Hayling Island, Sandy Point Local Nature Reserve, Gutner Point Local Nature Reserve***

We will start at the northern end of the Hayling Billy Line, a disused railway that once connected Hayling Island to the Mainland, now resurfaced as a multiuse path. The line sits alongside an internationally important harbour complex including breeding grounds for Gulls and Terns and overwintering for waders and wildlife fowl. The walk will be about 3 – 4 miles.



This will be followed to a visit to two local nature reserves to look at saltmarsh and vegetative shingle, these visits involve quite short walks on flat terrain over field and shingle. This is a coastal visit so expect a sea breeze!

Topics to be covered during the visits:

- Coastal erosion
- Coastal squeeze impact
- Habitat decision making
- Access v Conservation
- Mitigation and Education Measures

Image: Sandy Point LNR ©Alison Perry

Learning outcomes via verbal information:

- The difference between preservation v conservation v restoration
- How to encourage access at the same time as protecting nature
- What nature recovery looks like on the coast
- When do you say no – we cannot protect that site
- Learning from a multi-award-winning people project Bird Aware
- Plus discussion around evidence-based decision making

## 2. Managing Nature and Heritage on the Chalk Downs

### ***Butser Hill, Old Winchester and Ashford Hangers National Nature Reserves***



Two National Nature Reserves, similar but different, both chalk grass and downland. We will tour Butser Hill and Old Winchester Hill all the while comparing and contrasting the varying approaches to habitat and people management.

Topics to be covered during the site visits:

- Chalk grassland management
- Use of grazing animals (including Exmoor ponies and Highland cattle)
- Species recovery projects (in particular butterflies and Duke of Burgundy)
- Visitor management and visitor impact
- Heritage Conservation
- Future plans – partnership work, farm clusters, Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Learning outcomes via verbal information:

- The importance of partnerships in landscape level conservation
- Adjusting to the changing needs of visitors
- Balancing nature, heritage and landscape conservation
- The importance of species conservation as a communication tool
- Planning for the future, alternatives to rewilding and the LNRS.

### 3. Protecting Lowland Heaths

#### ***Yateley Common Local Nature Reserve and Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve***



This field trip takes us to the north-east of Hampshire, close to the borders of Surrey and Berkshire where the pressure on our open spaces is ever increasing. The main part of the visit will explore Yateley Common Local Nature Reserve, before heading to Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve. The walking is mostly level across exposed heathland/grassland, some walking through wooded areas and wet heath, we will be in close proximity to grazing animals.

Topics to be covered during the walk:

- Management of lowland heaths
- Management of NNRs
- Conservation Grazing on heathlands (Exmoor ponies and Highland cattle)
- Wildfires, prevention and response
- Community engagement and partnerships on common land
- Thames Basin heaths
- Species conservation, SPA birds
- Nature Recovery Project – leaky dams and fen management
- The threat from development

Learning outcomes via verbal information

- Contrast and comparison of the subtle differences between management of a LNR and NNR.
- How to deal with the ever-increasing threat from development and the impact of visitors on nature conservation
- Learn how Exmoor ponies have been used to help transform the management of heathland.
- How climate change is impacting management decisions.
- Understanding the need to remain a local facility whilst understanding the importance of landscape scale conservation.
- The importance of being part of a network and partnerships.

## 4. A Tale of Two Country Parks

### *Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Staunton Country Park*



In this tale of two country parks we will visit two sites, different in character and use. Queen Elizabeth Country Park, the more rural of the two, is seen as a tourist destination and a regional centre for outdoor activities such as mountain biking. By contrast Staunton Country Park, with its regency parkland setting and historic buildings, is more urban and very much embedded in the local community.

This visit will involve walking up hills, through Forestry Commission plantations and potentially across downland at Queen Elizabeth, Staunton Country Park is on more level ground.

Topics to be covered during the site visit:

- Country Park management
- Visitor Management
- Lottery funding and major transformation projects
- Partnership working and working in networks
- Heritage conservation
- Balancing nature and conservation
- Community buying and engagement

Learning outcomes via verbal (and visual) information:

- How to stay relevant in an ever-changing environment.
- Does Green Flag matter?
- How you put the community at the centre of your park.
- What is the secret of partnership and networking.
- People or nature, what are the choices?
- Is there a future for large country parks, given the issues around funding and resources.

## 5. Nature Recovery on the Coast

### ***Titchfield Haven NNR, Chilling and Brownwich County Farm Estate and Hook-with-Warsash LNR***



A level walk around Titchfield Haven NNR, a nationally renowned nature reserve and celebrated refuge for wildfowl and wading birds including a visit to the bird hides. We will then go to the nearby County Farm Estate, a roughly 1,000 acre agricultural and coastal property managed by Hampshire County Council as part of its Hampshire County Farms smallholdings portfolio. This will also be on level flat ground, some parts on rights of way, but exposed to coastal winds.

The final site is Hook LNR, with varied coastal habitats of shingle, grassland, wetland and woodland at the mouth of the River Hamble. The terrain is flat but exposed to the coastal winds and some parts of this walk will be on a shingle beach.

This field visit will cover the following topics:

- Coastal erosion issues
- Coastal squeeze impact
- Habitat management decision making, where the future of a site cannot be guaranteed
- Access v conservation
- Nature Recovery Projects
- Managing change and people's expectations

Learning Outcomes via verbal information:

- Look at the difference between preservation v conservation v restoration.
- Looking at how to encourage access at the same time as protecting nature.
- What does nature recovery look like on the coast.
- Lessons learnt from having to manage change.
- And discussion around evidence-based decision making.

## 6. Urban and Greenspace Projects

### *The Blackwater Valley, north-east Hampshire*



The Blackwater Valley, bordering Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire, runs for over 35km following the path of the river Blackwater. Given the surrounding urban pressure the valley has a surprisingly varied landscape, rich in wildlife with many lakes and wet meadows, set amidst extensive heathland and woodlands.

On this field trip we will visit multiple sites, some countryside, some urban greenspace as well as walking along the Basingstoke Canal towpath and exploring a new country park and SANG.

Topics to be covered during the site visit:

- Partnership working
- Community engagement/involvement
- Urban greenspace management
- Building new green space sites from scratch
- Nature Recovery Projects in a suburban/urban setting
- Funding countryside teams through contractual work

Learning outcomes via verbal (and visual) information:

- What makes a successful countryside management project.
- Making the most of Section 106/SANG agreements.
- Development pressure on greenspace.
- Alternative financing of countryside management activities.
- How to connect and green up the urban environment.
- What is the future for urban wildlife.