

# **FLEET POND VISITOR STRATEGY 2013 - 17**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### I.1. Preamble

By contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of the environment parks and nature reserves help to enhance the delivery of ecosystem services that are valued by society and contribute to a wider well-being. The protection, conservation and educational issues associated with sites such as this are well understood. However the benefits are even greater and wider and a variety of delivery, regulating, cultural and supporting services are enhanced by the high quality ecosystems of parks and nature reserves. These services are hard to value in a quantifiable form but, nonetheless, provide economic and social benefits in a number of different ways including:

- Underpinning of economic activities such as farming, forestry, extractive industries, tourism and recreation;
- Reducing costs to society by improving our health, sequestering carbon, and purifying our water;
- Enhancing the wellbeing of people and communities by providing recreational experiences, tranquillity and fine views;
- Maintaining a liveable environment by regulating climate, air quality, soils and water cycles.
- Improving water quality, reducing the impacts and costs of floods, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### I.2. Visitor Consultation

The natural environment at Fleet Pond is being enhanced by the on-going Restoration Project. This reversal of the decline in the Nature Reserve's biodiversity will provide associated benefits for visitors such as improved bird watching. As well as this, Fleet Pond has the potential to provide a richer visitor experience, and to be an attractive destination for a wider section of the community.

A visitor survey was conducted in 2012 by Johns Associates and from this a consultation document, Recreation and Amenity at Fleet Pond: Options for Public Consultation (Styles et al, 2012), was produced to outline options to enhance the experience of visitors to the Pond.

The Consultation ran from 7<sup>th</sup> December 2012 to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013 with an electronic copy of the consultation document available from the Hart District Council Website ([www.hart.gov.uk](http://www.hart.gov.uk)), and advertised on the home page. Hard copies of the report were available from the civic offices and libraries. Further to this a drop-in exhibition was held at Hart Leisure Centre, on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2013. This was staffed by representatives of the project team from Hart District Council, Johns Associates and the Fleet Pond Society. The event provided a

forum for interested parties to discuss the contents of the report and highlight concerns they may have had, or put forward further ideas, as well as gaining additional information and insights into the concepts within the report.

The consultation document was sent by email to various Stakeholders outlined in Appendix 6.16

The Fleet Pond Visitor Strategy has been constructed using the responses from the Visitor Survey and the Consultation exercise (Styles, 2013).

### 1.3. Site Description

See map (Appendix 6.1)

Fleet Pond is the largest fresh water lake in Hampshire. The nature reserve has 57 hectares (141 acres) of varied habitats for the enjoyment of the local community. The pond itself occupies about half this area.

The surrounding land features many rare habitats including heathland, woodland, reedbed and marsh. Because of the variety of habitats, visitors may see a great range of wildlife many of which are nationally or internationally important.

This designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is home to many species of interesting wildlife - several of which are nationally and regionally scarce. The area is managed in partnership with the Fleet Pond Society which provides support to the Countryside Rangers as well as offering exciting volunteer opportunities for the local community.

### 1.4. History of Fleet Pond

Fleet itself is an Old English term, referring in some sense, to a stream. Fleet Pond was included within a gift of a large expanse of land bequeathed to the Old Monastery at Winchester in 940 AD, which included all of what is now Crookham and Hawley.

The first clear reference to Fleet does not come until 1313, followed by a more detailed mention in 1324 when "the great fishery (of) the Fleet Ponds" is referred to in the rolls of Account of Crondall Manor. By this time there seems to have been a thriving fishery of considerable importance and two ponds.

Many bishopric ponds were created in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, thus Fleet Pond could have been in existence by 1200. An existing watercourse would have been dammed to build up a head of water, and it has been conjectured that the combined surface area of the two ponds exceeded 200 acres. The fishery was supervised and managed locally, probably from the two farms recorded at Fleet.

Later medieval references to Fleet Ponds are few, but include further expenses for nets, boats and repairs to the bridge. There seems to have been some kind of

causeway dividing the two ponds, which possibly carried a road of some importance, given the often repeated requirement to keep it in good condition.

In 1491 a new arrangement was instigated. The Prior at Winchester began to lease Fleet Ponds and the pastures there to a tenant at Fleet Farm, at an annual rent of 23 shillings and 4 pence, plus “a hundred of the fishes, pike, tenches, perches, bream and roaches, to be carried and delivered (to Winchester) in a good and fresh state”.

On 7<sup>th</sup> April 1836, the London and Southampton Railway Company purchased, for £50, “the Fleet Mill Pond and certain allotments of wasteland belonging to Fleet Farm”, from the Dean and Chapter of Winchester. Allotments were heathland. Without the legal protection afforded to common lands, the surrounding land was ripe for development and a new settlement, taking its name from the Pond, began to grow.

The Pond itself, meanwhile, became a part of the new military estate based at Aldershot, and was under the jurisdiction of the army from 1854 until 1972.

In 1951, it became one of the first Sites of Special Scientific Interest to be notified in Hampshire. The reasons for the designation were for standing open water supporting a high diversity of aquatic flora, breeding Odonata assemblage, invertebrate assemblage associated with wet woodland fen open pools and heath, reedbed, and wet woodland. Fleet Pond is the largest freshwater lake in the county of Hampshire. The SSSI was reaffirmed in 1984 under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, but covering the smaller area of 48.34ha.

In 1972, the then Fleet Urban District Council purchased the Pond, together with adjacent heathland and woodland, from the Ministry of Defence. The Fleet Pond Society was founded four years later (April 1976) and, at the Society’s suggestion, the land was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 1977. (Hall, 1997)

## **2. VISION**

A crucial part of the work of Hart Countryside Services is to make the experience of visiting the countryside come alive. There will be a welcoming ranger team, lots of opportunities to join in guided activities and to learn more about the natural world. A visit to a Hart Countryside site is a special experience. Providing an excellent service for our visitors will be a core value for Hart Countryside Services. The Ranger team will be committed to making this available to everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Most importantly Fleet Pond is a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and will continue to be managed for wildlife and visitors in harmony. Sensitive areas such as the Reedbeds and Marshes shall remain as no access areas to the public. The lake will have lots of interesting plants and the new islands will have provided a great habitat for wildlife.

Fleet Pond will be a place where people can experience the outdoors in a safe environment, with high quality access routes where they can walk, cycle or run. Fleet Pond will be a place where everyone can experience the fun and excitement of discovering something for the first time.

Fundamentally, Hart Countryside Services will be managing Fleet Pond for the wildlife and the people who benefit from and enjoy them.

### 3. AUDIENCE AND VISITATION

A visitor survey and consultation exercises were conducted at Fleet Pond. From these responses we have gleaned information about who the user groups are and how they envisage Fleet Pond in the future.

The visitor survey was conducted using a questionnaire approach, designed to canvas the opinions of both the existing visitors to Fleet Pond and other potential visitors. Surveys were carried out using three methods:

- Face to face interviews at various locations around the Pond and in Fleet;
- An on line survey via the Home page of the Hart District Council's Website ([www.hart.gov.uk](http://www.hart.gov.uk)); and
- Directed email communication.

In total 198 responses to the Fleet Pond Visitor Needs Survey were received.

**Table 3.1 Comparison of Fleet Population Demographics with Surveyed Sample**

	ONS modelled data – Fleet 2010			Fleet Pond Visitor Needs Survey sample - 2012			Difference		
	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Total	91,200 (100)	45,400 (50)	45,800 (50)	198 (100)	116 (58)	82 (42)	0	+8	-8
0-15	18,500 (20)	9,600 (21)	8,900 (20)	7 (4)	4 (3)	3 (4)	-16	-18	-16
16- Retirement age	55,300 (61)	29,300 (65)	26,000 (57)	155 (79)	92 (79)	63 (77)	+18	+14	+20
Retirement age	17,300 (19)	6,500 (14)	10,900 (24)	35 (18)	19 (16)	16 (20)	-1	+2	-4
Working	44,500 (78)	n/a	n/a	119 (69)	62 (53)	57 (70)	-9	n/a	n/a
Unemployed	2,200 (5)	n/a	n/a	5 (3)	1 (1)	4 (5)	-2	n/a	n/a

It can be seen in Table 3.1 that certain groups are under represented compared to the wider population. For example, the proportion of views of young people is much lower than might be expected.

In table 3.2 it can be seen that overwhelming majority of survey participants, over 70%, are from postcode areas GU51 and GU52. GU51 encompasses Fleet, including Fleet Pond, and GU52 is neighbouring Church Crookham, and southern Fleet. This high proportion of very local visitors was expected, as Fleet Pond Nature Reserve is primarily a local amenity.

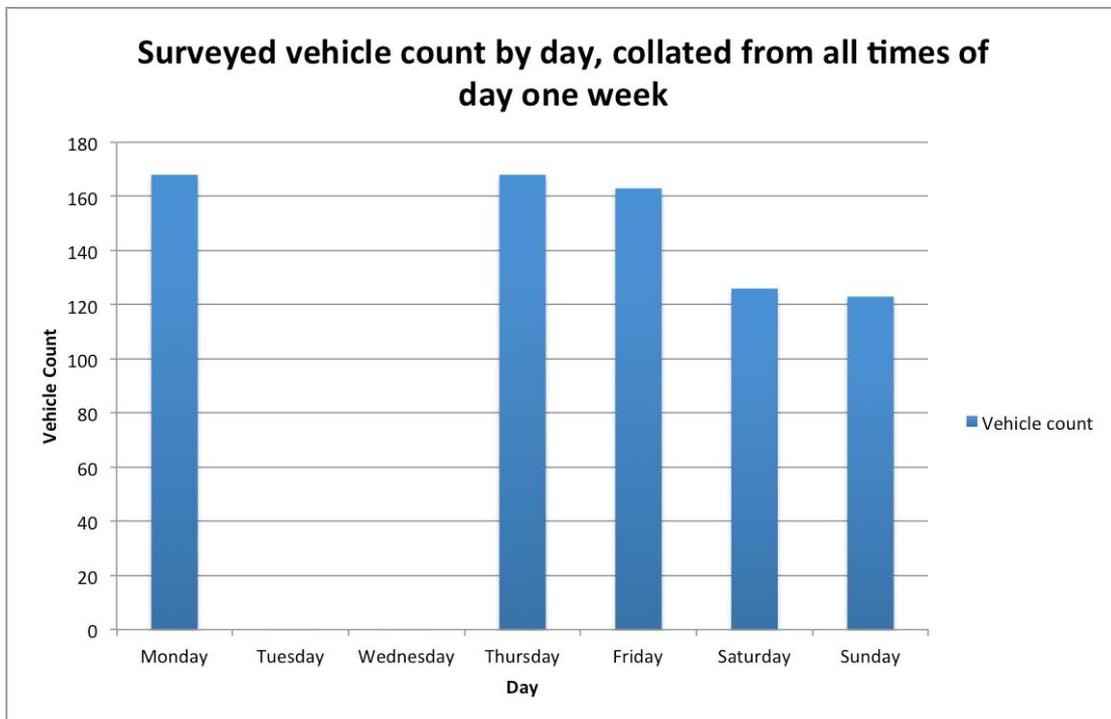
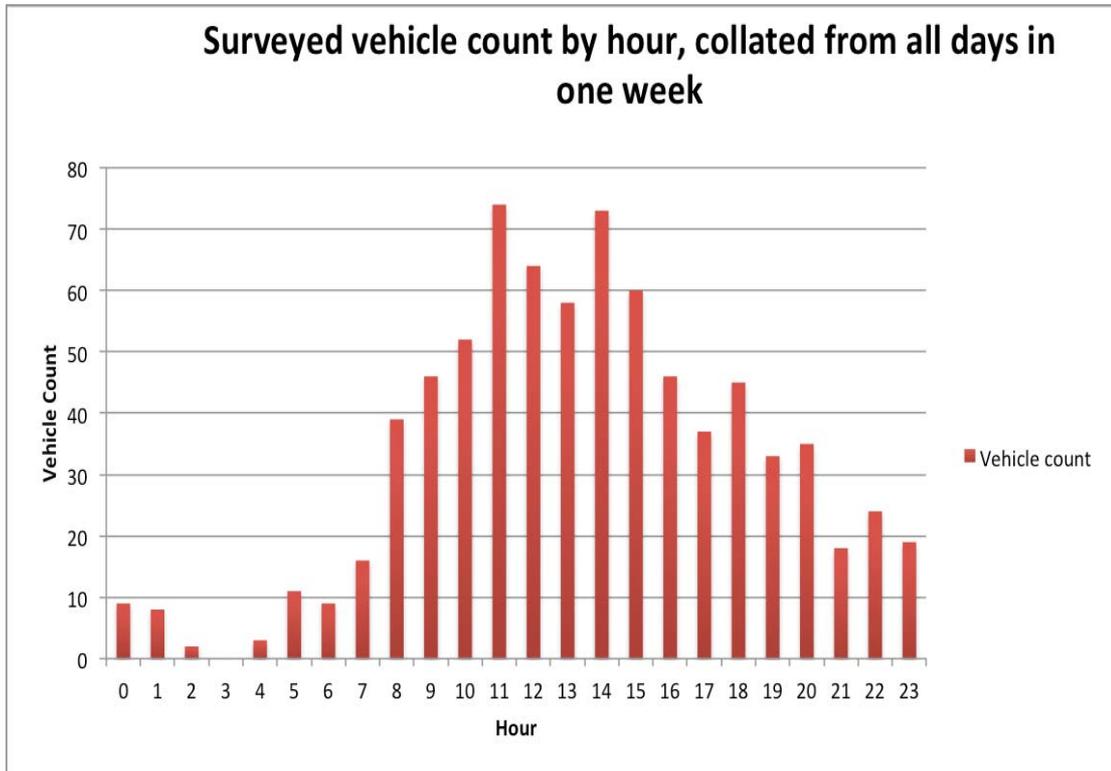
Despite this, almost 30% of participants are from outside Fleet. The next 10% of visitors are from GU46 (Yateley) and GU14 (Farnborough). The 7% of visitors from Yateley are particularly interesting as they would have to pass Sean Devereaux Park and Yateley Lakes (local similar recreational destinations), as well as Hawley Lake to travel to Fleet Pond.

**Table 3.2 Postcode Origins of Survey Participants**

Postcode	Count	%	Cumulative %
GU51	95	52	52
GU52	35	19	71
GU46	12	7	78
GU14	9	5	83
RG27	6	3	86
GU17	5	3	89
GU10	4	2	91
GU47	3	<2	93
RG29	3	<2	94
12 postcodes with one participant	12	6	100
Total	184	100	

Car park use data was also collected to provide an indication of usage peaks at the nature reserve. The data was collected using a car counter. The counter counts cars as they go past, the data includes cars going in and out of the car park. The surveyed use for the week commencing 23rd August 2012 is displayed below in Figures 3.3 and 3.4.

**Figure 3.3 Histogram of Car Park Use, by time, for week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2012. This graph includes counts of cars in and out.**



**Figure 3.4 Histogram of Car Park Use, by Day, for Week Commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2012. This graph includes total number of cars in and out past the counter.**

From Figure 3.3, the car park is in use to some extent almost 24 hours per day in a pattern that the data shows is not limited to weekend activity. On Tuesday and Wednesday the car counter was not active and this explains the lack of data for those two days. It is interesting to note that the car park is used more frequently during the week, with relatively stable vehicle numbers of approximately 160. At the weekends the visitor numbers tend to approximate 120. The possibility that during the weekend period the visitors have a more leisurely experience and thus choose to walk to Fleet Pond should not be discounted. (Styles & Lemon, 2012)

## **4. SITE MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

### **4.1. Grounds Maintenance and Street Care**

A shared service is provided by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to implement grounds maintenance and street care on Hart District Council owned land. At Fleet Pond the grounds maintenance and street care team are responsible for the following:

- Clearing the ditch by Wellington Avenue
- Clearing the ditch between Guildford Road and Kenilworth Road
- Mowing and clearing the entrance at Avondale Road.
- Cutting the hedges at the main car park off Cove Road and mowing the islands in the centre. The hedges are to be removed by no later than Spring 2014 and replaced with dragons teeth/wooden bollards. This will make the car park appear more welcoming and will also reduce vehicle crime by opening up the view cross the car park.
- Assisting with scrub clearance, when necessary.
- Collecting waste from the 10 bins located around the site,
- Collecting fly tipping.

### **4.2. Capital Projects**

All capital projects must go through the following process:

Stage 1: Discuss with Hart District Council Senior Ranger the Outline Project

Stage 2: Obtain formal authorisation to carry out the works from Hart District Council.

Stage 3: If Planning Permission is required this must be gained before continuing to the next stage. Consent may also be required from the Environment Agency and/or the Reservoirs board if projects effect or possibly effect, in flow and/or outflow to and from the pond and/or the carrying capacity of the body of water.

Stage 4: Fleet Pond is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and all projects require the consent of Natural England before progressing onto the next step.

Stage 5: Funding for a project must not be drawn down until all permissions are in place.

Stage 6: Structures must meet British Standards, DDA Standards and/or have structural engineer sign off.

Stage 7: All Capital projects must have a project plan outlining maintenance and monitoring regimes and the financial implications of such.

A list of Capital Projects is contained in appendix 6.17

### 4.3. Parking

Parking is provided at the Fleet Pond Main Car Park off Cove road. Additional parking is available at the Fleet Train Station Pay and Display Car Park; however it can become busy during the week. Parking in the residential streets around Fleet Pond is discouraged; parking restrictions are in place.

Parking will be revisited as a separate issue in 2014.

## 5. ACTION PLAN

**Key to who: (ECM) Ecology and Countryside Manager, (SnR) Senior Ranger, (ASR) Assistant Senior Ranger, (MER) Marketing and Education Ranger, (LDO) Leisure Development Officer, (SR) Site Ranger, (FPS) Fleet Pond Society.**

### 5.1. Access

**Aim:** To provide and maintain an accessible series of walkways around Fleet Pond. To provide areas for rest and information, incorporating good design and art and a variety of experiences and durations.

No.	Action	Who	Capital/ Revenue	Timescales
5.1.1	Footpath resurfacing to specification laid out in 6.6 (Footpath Procedure)	SR, SnR, FPS	Capital/ revenue	As and when needed
5.1.2	Boardwalk replacement to specification laid out in 6.7 (Boardwalk Procedure)	SR, ECM, SnR	Capital	2015 - 2017
5.1.3	Replace bins to specification laid out in 6.8 (Waste and Recycling Procedure)	MER, SR, ASR, SnR, ECM	Capital	2014
5.1.4	Install recycling bins to specification laid out in 6.8 (Waste and Recycling Procedure)	MER, SR, ASR, SnR, ECM	Capital	2014
5.1.5	Replace benches to specification laid out in 6.9 (Bench procedure)	MER, SR, SnR,	Capital/ revenue	2015

		ECM, FPS		
5.1.6	Replace waymarkers to specification laid out in 6.10 (Waymarker Procedure)	MER, SR, ECM	Capital	2014
5.1.7	Replace Notice boards to specification laid out in 6.12 (Notice Boards, Interpretive Panels and Leaflets Procedure)	MER, SR, ECM	Capital	2014
5.1.8	Top dress the Main Access track to Boathouse corner	SR, SnR ECM	Capital	After the Restoration Project has finished

## 5.2. Art and Heritage

**Aim:** To provide stimulation and to encourage repeat visits by incorporating into the facilities and site furniture art reflective of the local natural environment. To provide education and an appreciation of the local heritage contained in the natural environment. Links with section 5.4.

No.	Action	Who	Capital/ Revenue	Timescales
5.2.1	Where appropriate consider artistic value when designing site furniture.	MER, ECM, SnR, ASR, SR, FPS	Capital/ revenue	Ongoing
5.2.2	Where appropriate include art and education opportunities in tree management	MER, ECM, SnR, ASR, SR, FPS	Capital/ revenue	Ongoing
5.2.3	Viewpoint on the army bank to include interpretation board and carving.	MER, FPS, ECM, SnR, SR,	Capital (part funded by FPS through the Fleet Lions)	2014

## 5.3. Dog Walking

**Aim:** Hart Countryside Services aims to reduce the amount of dog related incidents on Fleet Pond, including, but not limited to, dog fouling, worrying of livestock, worrying of wildlife and ensuring that dogs are under control at all times. Dog policy and procedures detailed in section 6.5.

No.	Action	Who	Capital/ Revenue	Timescales
5.3.1	Follow the agreed Dog Policy	SR, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.3.2	Install traffic light system detailed in appendix 6.5	MER, ASR, SR, FPS	Capital	2014
5.3.3	Publicise traffic light system, code of conduct and Dog Policy detailed in appendix 6.5	MER, ASR, SR, FPS	Revenue	Ongoing
5.3.4	Contact Professional Dog walkers about Professional Dog Walking Policy	MER, ASR, SR, FPS & Dog Warden	No impact	Ongoing

#### 5.4. Education

**Aim:** To educate the general public and school groups about the countryside, wildlife and history of the site.

No.	Action	Who	Capital/ Revenue	Timescales
5.4.1	Follow the agreed education procedure (6.14)	MER, SR, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.4.2	Agree a calendar of guided walks and events	MER, SR, SnR, ECM, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.4.3	Record attendance figures	MER, SR, FPS	No Impact	Annually
5.4.4	Pricing Policy	ECM, SnR, SR, FPS	No Impact	Review Annually
5.4.5	Maintenance of Educational equipment including pond dipping platform	MER, SR, FPS	Revenue	Review Annually

#### 5.5. Fishing

**Aim:** Fishing is a popular pastime at Fleet Pond. To date the subject has not been completely reviewed. Accordingly we intend to assess fishing and fish management to create a Fish Management Strategy as a separate document. This document will be produced after consultation with Stakeholders including the local fishing groups and casual anglers. The existing policy is appended at 6.2.

No.	Action	Who	Capital/Revenue	Timescales
5.5.1	Fishing permits available to purchase online.	MER SR, FPS, EA, ECM, SnR	Revenue	2015
5.5.2	Create a fishing survey to send out to all anglers at Fleet Pond and local fishing groups.	SR, FPS, EA, ECM, SnR	Revenue	Autumn 2015
5.5.3	Organise an angling consultation	MER, ASR, SR, FPS	Revenue	Winter 2015
5.5.4	Produce a Fish Management Strategy	MER, ASR, SR, FPS	Revenue	Spring 2016

## 5.6. Green Flag

**Aim:** The Green Flag Award is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK and is fast becoming recognised internationally. It is a prestigious award recognising the best green spaces in the country. The Hart Countryside Service has already achieved Green Flag status for Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve. The intention is to build on this success by including Fleet Pond Nature Reserve within this nationally recognised award scheme.

No.	Action	Who	Capital/Revenue	Timescales
5.6.1	Re-new the site management plan and incorporate Green Flag	ASR, SR	No Impact	2016
5.6.2	Apply for Green Flag award	ASR, SR	Revenue	Feb 2017
5.6.3	Prepare for judges visit	ASR, SR	Revenue	Spring/Summer 2017

## 5.7. Health and Wellbeing

**Aim:** Fleet Pond is already a very popular site for a variety of sporting activities including cycling, jogging and Nordic walking. We currently have several groups that volunteer to work at Fleet Pond as a way to improve health and wellbeing. These include: “Minding the Garden”, a local ecotherapy project run by Hart Voluntary Action, and “Green Corridor”, a project set up to get young people working in the countryside, in order to improve their self confidence and their chances of gaining skills and employment.

No.	Action	Who	Capital/ Revenue	Timescales
5.7.1	Promote Minding the Garden Volunteer group monthly visit	SR, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.7.2	Continue Green Corridor volunteer group monthly visit	SR, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.7.3	Actively Manage current group visitors eg Nordic Walking groups, running races etc.	ECM, SnR, SR, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.7.4	Liase with local Access Groups	SR, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.7.5	Create an access leaflet detailing Hart's Access trails	MER, SR, FPS	Revenue	2013
5.7.6	Maintain paths at appropriate widths according to DDA guidelines. (appendix 6.6)	SR, SnR FPS	Revenue	Ongoing
5.7.7	Install fishing jetties and platforms according to DDA guidelines	SR, MER, ECM, SnR, FPS	Capital	Ongoing
5.7.8	Encourage youth groups such as Scouts and Guides to incorporate volunteering and nature into their programmes	SR, MER, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing

## 5.8. Marketing

**Aim:** To maintain a marketing strategy between HDC and FPS for all aspects of advertising, promotion and interpretation at Fleet Pond. The marketing strategy is appended in section 6.13

No.	Action	Who	Capital/ Revenue	Timescales
5.8.1	Comply with the agreed Marketing Strategy (appendix 6.13) regarding press releases, marketing and corporate standards.	MER, SR, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.8.2	Production and implementation of a Marketing Plan	MER, SR, FPS	No Impact	Ongoing
5.8.3	Create online booking and payment for fishing permits, guided walks, open spaces booking etc.	MER, ECM, SR, FPS	Revenue	2015

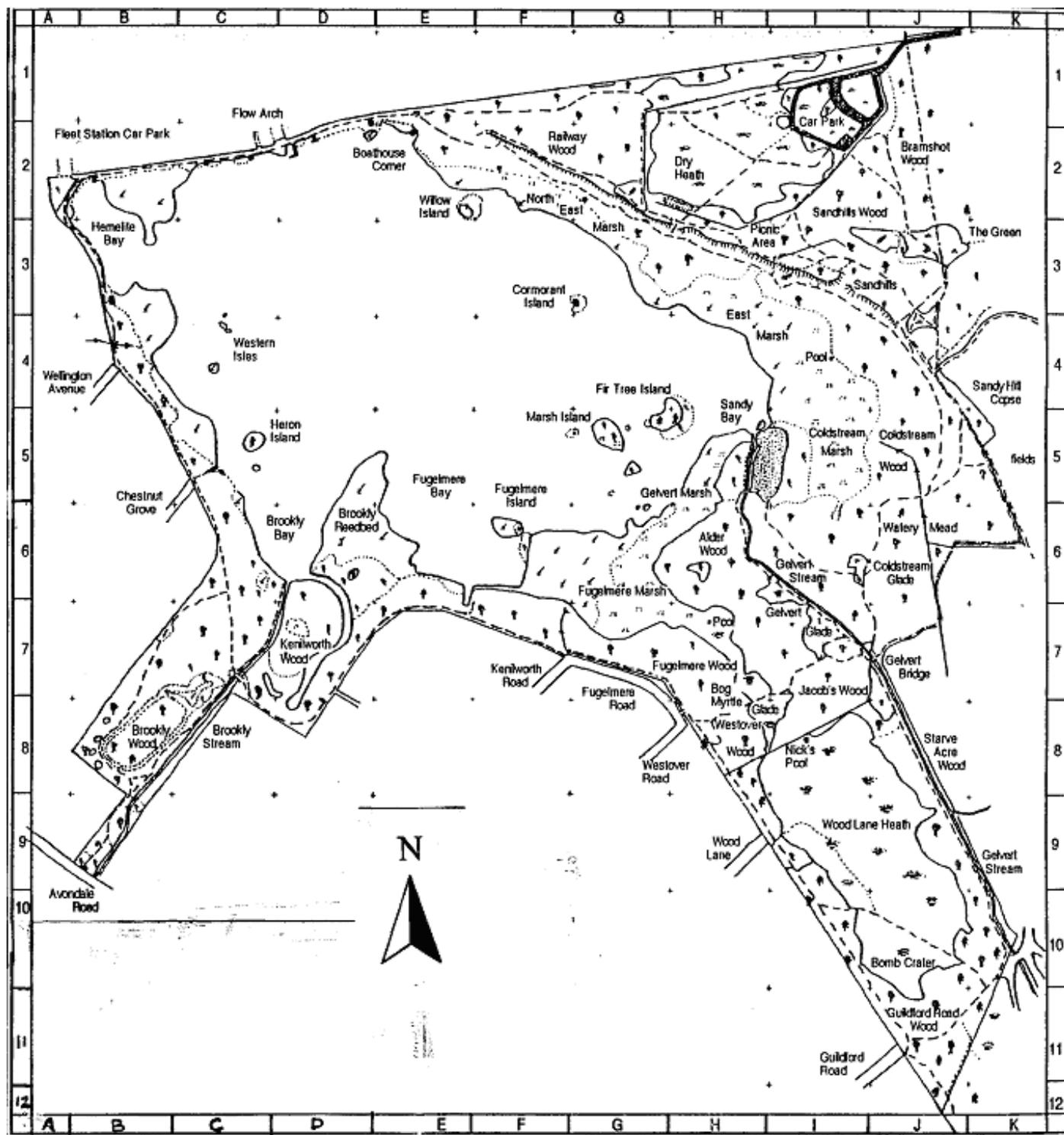
## 5.9. Recreation

**Aims:** Fleet Pond is a popular destination for families. Natural play has an important role to play in a child’s development and learning about the natural environment around them. We aim to enhance the present experience.

No.	Action	Who	Capital/ Revenue	Timescales
5.9.1	Install stepping stones at Sandy Bay	MER, SR, ECM, SnR, ASR	Capital	2014
5.9.2	Where appropriate consider natural play when carrying out tree management.	MER, SR, ECM, SnR, ASR	Revenue	Ongoing
5.9.3	Include art and education opportunities where appropriate	MER, SR, ECM, SnR, ASR	Revenue	Ongoing
5.9.4	Install wildlife cameras in the Heronry and Tern Island linked to the website.	MER, SR, ECM, SnR, ASR	Capital	2016

## 6. APPENDICES

### 6.1 Map of Fleet Pond



Fleet Pond, Fleet

1999

OS Grid ref: SU 820550

## 6.2 Fishing Policy

Fleet Pond is a popular fishing lake with 6 platforms which visitors can fish from including one large T shaped jetty. Fishing is permitted by annual permit or day ticket only and in line with the Environment Agency Rod License rules and Fleet Pond's Fishing Regulations. Permits are available from Tackle up the fishing supplies shop in Fleet. New permits are also available from the patrolling rangers and the Countryside Workshop. Fishing permits will be available to purchase online in 2015

The fishing season runs from 16<sup>th</sup> June – 14<sup>th</sup> March and Fleet Pond is bailiffed by Hart Countryside Services staff several times a week and ad- hoc visits by the Environment Agency.

The water may be closed at anytime under the discretion of Hart District Council or the Environment Agency eg due to blue/green algae outbreak. Notification to anglers will be through Tackle Up, Social Media, the council website and onsite posters.

### **Fleet Pond Fishing Regulations**

- Fishing is only permitted from 1 hour before dawn to 1 hour after dark.
- Only 2 rods are permitted per person.
- Anyone over the age of 12 is required by law to have an Environment Agency Rod Fishing Licence.
- Fishing must only be from authorised jetties.
- Pathways, bridges and facilities must be kept clear form obstruction.
- No rods are to be left unattended.
- Lead shot is not permitted.
- Please respect other users by keeping radios/music turned down.
- No camping.
- No fires or barbecues.
- No weapons including hunting catapults.
- No barbed hooks, except for pike fishing lures.
- No fish whatsoever are to be killed or taken away from Fleet Pond.
- No litter or discarded fishing tackle of any description to be left because of the danger to wildlife.
- All fishing equipment should be cleaned, disinfected and dried before bringing to the pond and likewise if taken to be used elsewhere.
- No fish are to be introduced from other waters.
- On request all permits must be produced along with appropriate identification.
- All permit holders must comply with any condition laid down by Hart District Council, its Wardens, Rangers and Officers.
- Permits are not transferable.
- All anglers must be in possession of a landing net and forceps or a disgorgers.
- Anglers must have an unhooking mat of a size suitable for the fish targeted.

## 6.3 Boating Policy

Boat fishing is permitted in a responsible manner on Fleet Pond. Fleet Pond Nature Reserve is primarily a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and any recreational activities that take place must be compatible with the conservation interest. Boat fishing is only permitted subject to the possession of a boat fishing permit. This can be acquired from Tackle up (151 Fleet Rd, Town Centre, Fleet GU51 3PD, 01252 614066). If a boat fishing permit is purchased this includes the cost of an adult season fishing permit.

The boat fishing season runs from 16<sup>th</sup> June – 14<sup>th</sup> March and Fleet Pond is bailiffed by Hart Countryside Services staff several times a week.

### **Boating Regulations**

- Only boat fishing allowed, no other forms of recreational boating.
- Only 10 boat fishing permits will be sold each year on a first come first served basis. This can be acquired from Tackle up (151 Fleet Rd, Town Centre, Fleet GU51 3PD, 01252 614066).
- The launching of boats is to only be from the landing stage provided at the end of Chestnut Grove.
- The use of sailing and powered crafts is forbidden.
- Boats shall not exceed 4 metres lengthways.
- The maximum number of occupants per boat is 4, but this can be reduced in smaller boats.
- A maximum number of 5 boats are allowed on the water at one time.
- Persons boat fishing are also bound by the Fishing Policy.
- Boats must remain 20 metres clear of the reedbeds and islands at all times.
- Access to and mooring next to the islands is prohibited.
- The wearing of a British Standard life-jackets or buoyancy aid is a non discretionary requirement at all times.
- Failure to abide by the Boating Regulations may result in the withdrawal of the boating permit and a refusal to sell a permit to anyone associated with the failure. eg guests
- No beach or swimming pool type inflatable's allowed. Inflatable dinghies must comply with the present British Standard.
- No radio controlled craft to be used on the water.
- Neither the Council nor its Officers, servants or agents will accept liability in contract or tort or in any other way whatever in respect of any damages, destruction, loss or injury to person or property sustained directly or indirectly in the exercise of any right herein given
- The water may be closed at anytime under the discretion of Hart District Council or the Environment Agency. Notification to anglers will be through Tackle Up, Social Media, the council website and onsite posters.

## 6.4 Sponsorship Policy

The Hart Countryside Rangers are aware of how much Fleet Pond Nature Reserve means to many people and understand the desire to mark the passing of a loved one in the special place that they enjoyed so much. In order to recognise this and still retain the intrinsic character of the nature reserve the erection or installation of any memorial or site furniture will require the written approval of the site Ranger

### **Benches**

Hart Countryside sites feature three types of bench which can be installed as memorial benches; i.e. picnic bench, backed bench and bespoke backed bench. These benches are robust, made from English Oak, FSC certified or sourced sustainably and grown in the UK. Prices (including ordering and installation) will vary depending on the cost of timber at the time of ordering.

There are set sites around the pond where benches can be placed. The bench and the foundations of the bench will be maintained and repaired when deemed necessary by the Rangers. The ground below the bench will be reinforced with path gravel; this reduces the growth of weeds and provides a durable surface for users. Benches have an expected minimum life and will be maintained for a maximum period of a) 6 years or b) 10 years to be agreed between the sponsor and the Countryside Rangers. After this time the bench will be removed. Customers will then be given the option to replace the bench with a new one at extra cost, if required, or relinquish the site.

Memorial benches can also be embellished with plaques, carvings and engraving at an additional cost. We prefer these to be inspired and related to nature.

Annual floral tributes must be removed after a week when they are past their best. If not we will arrange for them to be removed on your behalf.

### **Flowers**

The planting of plants, flowering or not, is not permitted under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in relation to introducing vegetation to a SSSI. Species not native to Britain or this part of Hampshire could have adverse impact on the biodiversity of the nature reserve. Floral tributes (cut flowers etc) will be considered as long as they do not include seeds. However, we do expect that customers will remove them after a week when they are past their best. If not we will arrange for them to be removed.

### **Trees**

Memorial trees are not permitted under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in relation to the introduction of any vegetation to a SSSI. Species not native to Britain or this part of Hampshire could have adverse impact on the biodiversity of the nature reserve.

## **Business Sponsorship**

Fleet Pond Nature Reserve welcomes sponsorship contributions from businesses and organisations to help enhance the facilities around the pond.

Some suggestions which would benefit the Nature Reserve include:

- Funding of environmental initiatives such as bird or bat boxes.
- Funding towards projects such as natural play and art, pathways, boardwalks, fishing jetties and sponsorship of exhibitions or special events.

NB: All structures are subject to the Hart Countryside Services discretion to move or remove if necessary. Terms and conditions will be available upon application.

## **6.5 Dog Policy**

Hart Countryside Services welcomes responsible dog owners. Hart Countryside Services has a dog policy so that all of our countryside sites and public open spaces are a safe and enjoyable place for all visitors, their pets and the local wildlife. Should you bring your dog to any of our sites, we would like to remind you that you are legally responsible for your dog and its actions for the entirety of your visit.

Sites within which this policy is in place: Fleet Pond Nature Reserve, Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve, Odiham Common, Hazeley Heath South, Hartley Wintney Central Commons, West Green Common, Royal Oak Valley, Ashwells Copse, and Edenbrook Country Park.

1. Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 3
  - a. All dogs must be kept under control at all times in a public place.
  - b. It is an offence for a dog to cause fear of injury
2. Hart Dog Fouling Order 2001
  - a. All dog owners are required to clear up after their dog.
3. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
  - a. It is illegal for a dog to kill, injure or 'take' any wild bird, take or damage the nest of any wild bird whilst in use or being built. The eggs of all wild birds are also protected.
4. Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953
  - a. It is an offence for a dog to worry livestock.

### **Procedure**

Offences covered under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 must firstly be reported to the Police, as these are Criminal Offences and then secondly reported to the Hart District Council Dog Warden.

Offences under the Hart Dog Fouling Order 2001 ([http://www.hart.gov.uk/index/environment-and-planning/environmental\\_health/dog\\_warden\\_service/fouling.htm](http://www.hart.gov.uk/index/environment-and-planning/environmental_health/dog_warden_service/fouling.htm)) must be reported to the Hart District Council Dog Warden.

To encourage responsible dog ownership, Hart Countryside Services are going to install a dog walking, "traffic light system". The traffic light system has been implemented at several sites throughout the UK and has been very successful. Way-marker posts at Fleet Pond will be carved with dog paws and painted Red, Amber or Green. These colours signify the following:

- Red signifies areas where dogs are not allowed to go.
- Amber signifies areas in which dogs must be on a lead
- Green signifies areas where dogs can be let off the lead under the supervision of the owner.



A sign will be installed on the notice boards, explaining the new dog walking traffic light system. It will be widely advertised on the website, social media and via leaflets at community events and local community centres.

### **Dog Walker's Code of Conduct**

The code is a voluntary guideline that if followed will ensure that Fleet Pond stays a pleasant, safe and enjoyable place for all visitors. The main things required are to:

- Follow the Fleet Pond Traffic Light System. Dogs are allowed off a lead in areas marked with a green paw print, dogs must be on a lead in the areas marked by an Amber paw print, and no access for dogs in areas marked with a red paw print.
- Put your dog on a lead if it fails to come back promptly on command or if it has a tendency to chase wildlife.
- Keep your dog in sight as a dog out of sight may be a dog out of control.
- Be aware and cautious of other users of the site.
- Clear up after your dog. Always make sure you have a suitable bag with you - BAG it, BIN it. Bags are available free from the Civic Offices and the Countryside Workshop on Old Pump House Close.
- Prevent your dog from entering the lake
- Make sure your dog has an ID collar on at all times
- Don't assume that everyone likes dogs. Many people are fearful of dogs.
- Do not walk more than 4 dogs in a group

- Please respect all wildlife and their young whilst visiting the site.

### **Professional Dog Walking Policy**

Sites within which this policy is in place: Fleet Pond Nature Reserve, Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve, Odiham Common, Hazeley Heath South, Hartley Wintney Central Commons, West Green Common, Royal Oak Valley, Ashwells Copse, and Edenbrook Country Park.

1. Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 section 3
  - a. All dogs must be kept under control at all times in a public place.
  - b. It is an offence for a dog to cause fear of injury
2. Hart Dog Fouling Order 2001
  - a. All dog owners are required to clear up after their dog.
3. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
  - a. It is illegal for a dog to kill, injure or 'take' any wild bird, take or damage the nest of any wild bird whilst in use or being built. The eggs of all wild birds are also protected.
4. Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953
  - a. It is an offence for a dog to worry livestock.

Fleet Pond is a popular destination for professional dog walkers. To ensure public safety and wellbeing the following procedure must be followed.

- Obtain formal authorisation to use the site for professional matters from Hart District Council.
- A risk assessment must be submitted to Hart Countryside Services
- A copy of Public liability insurance must be submitted to Hart Countryside Services and carried with you at all times.
- The dog walker's code of conduct must be followed.

These documents can either be emailed to [countryside@hart.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@hart.gov.uk), or posted to Hart Countryside Services, Civic Offices, Harlington Way, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 4AE. The Council reserves the right to levee a fee for the use of the site for professional matters.

## **6.6 Footpath Specification**

Currently some of the footpaths around Fleet Pond are very narrow and conflict occurs between user groups including wheelchairs, pushchairs, dog walkers, cyclists, joggers etc. Where appropriate, we would like to widen these footpaths to reduce potential conflicts.

All footpaths must be constructed following the specification below:

- Footpaths must be a minimum of 1.8m wide to meet Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) standards where possible.
- Edgeboards must be a minimum of 2.5cm thick and 15cm deep.

- The footpath must have a sub base of hoggin with a neutral pH and a thin layer of Coxwell self-binding gravel as a top dressing.
- The footpath must be cambered in the centre to allow run off.
- The footpaths must be kept clear of leaves to increase lifespan. The footpaths will be cleared using a leaf blower as and when needed.

## 6.7 Boardwalk Specification

All boardwalks must be constructed following the specifications below

- Structural support - galvanised steel beams, tanalised timber or recycled plastic
- Boardwalk boards - softwood (45 x 125mm) with “Anti-slip inserts”
- Board walks with hand rails – 0.5 metres high – softwood with 1 horizontal rail & kick-rail.
- All timber must be FSC certified or sourced sustainably
- The boardwalk must be installed onto hardwood or recycled plastic legs.

At Fleet Pond there are currently 5 boardwalks, locations shown in appendix 6.13. The boardwalk near Guildford Road is going to be removed and replaced with a raised footpath (now that the stream diversion is in place this area no longer floods). The boardwalk between Fugelmere Marsh and Sandy Bay is going to be removed and replaced with a raised footpath as this area also no longer floods.

The Boardwalks at Chestnut Grove, Westover road and Sandy Bay need to be replaced.

## 6.8 Waste and Recycling Policy

Currently at Fleet Pond there are 10 bins for both general waste and dog waste. Several of the bins need replacing. Any new bins will meet the following specification:

- Produced from Green English Oak.
- Stainless steel hinges and camlocks.
- Galvanised bin.
- Timber must be FSC certified or sourced sustainably
- Steel legs for concreting in.



Recycling bins will be situated at Fleet Pond Main Car Park, Chestnut Grove and Fleet Train station entrance. These bins will meet the following specification:

- Green English Oak Double Sized Litter Bins (2 doors)
- Timber must be FSC certified or sourced sustainably.
- Custom design to incorporate one door with 8" circular aperture.
- Doors fitted with Stainless steel camlocks (for use with triangular key)
- 2 galvanised steel bins with each.
- Fitted with extended steel legs for concreting into the ground.

The general bins will be emptied by the Hart District Council/Basingstoke and Deane joint Street Care Services. The council will employ a registered operator to empty the recycling.

## 6.9 Bench and Seating Policy

The current positioning of benches needs to be revised as there are large gaps without benches and other areas with benches in short succession. The favoured side for benches is between Chestnut Grove and Boat House Corner where visitors can sit and enjoy the view of the lake. A number of locations along this edge can be opened up to install a bench. In addition, popular areas for families and children are Boat House Corner and Sandy Bay. These areas would benefit from additional seating. Bench purchase and installation must be agreed by Hart Countryside Services and follow Capital Projects procedures (section 4.2). All benches must follow the specification below and the Sponsorship Policy (see 6.4).

### **Picnic Bench**

- Must be made from Oak
- Timbers must be at least 10cm thick to avoid vandalism
- Must have extra long legs for concreting in place.
- Bench must be accessible by wheelchairs to meet DDA standards
- Timber must be FSC certified or sourced sustainably

### **Backed Bench**

- Benches must be made from Oak
- Timbers must be at least 10cm thick to avoid vandalism
- Must have extra long legs for concreting in place.
- Timber must be FSC certified or sourced sustainably

## 6.10 Waymarker Policy

The current waymarkers only align with the current map. The map is to be updated to include the new islands and the revised walking routes. The waymarkers are to be removed and replaced with a series of finger posts which clearly indicate the main features of the site. For example, Car Park and Sandy Bay. Additional waymarkers

will be installed as and when Hart Countryside Services deems necessary. For example, temporary nature trail or dog walking traffic light system (detailed in appendix 6.5)

### **Finger Post Specification**

- Each individual finger post will be designed to reflect its location and intention. Installation will require the approval of the Site Ranger
- Timber must be FSC certified or sourced sustainably

### **Waymarker Specification**

- Posts must be 18cm by 18cm by 1.8m
- Timber must be FSC certified or sourced sustainably

## **6.11 Post and Rail Fencing Policy**

Post and rail fencing is used in several places around Fleet Pond to prevent visitors from going into such areas as the Bluebell glades and the marshes. All post and rail fencing design and specification must be authorised by the Senior Ranger. Hart Countryside Services will purchase all materials. Installation subject to specification by Senior Ranger.

## **6.12 Noticeboards, Interpretive Panels and Leaflets Policy**

The display of information and guidance relating to many aspects of the site is of major importance within the site. It is essential that all forms of media match an accepted standard and reflect the intrinsic values of the nature reserve. This may include such items as a site map, phone numbers and information about activities and events. The current notice boards and interpretive panels are susceptible to vandalism. Many are reaching the end of their useful life; replacements need to be of a more robust media that still reflects the site values. The notice boards require a minimum content if they are to be uniform and attractive to the eye:

- Made from oak.
- Small pitched roof.
- No Perspex (which is prone to vandalism).
- Map boards made from High Pressure Laminate which is vandal proof, fade resistant, anti graffiti and is environmentally friendly.
- An area to staple/pin on notices.
- An area to add a "sightings" or "stop press" chalk board if needed.
- Leaflet dispensers x 4.
- Header on the board routed with the site name, HDC logo, FPS logo.
- All content must be approved by HDC and FPS.

The current interpretive panels are outdated and subject to constant vandalism. The current interpretation boards will be removed and replaced as and when necessary.

All interpretation panels must be agreed by Hart Countryside Services, and go through the Capital Works Procedure outlined in section 4.2. The interpretation panel at Chestnut Grove is on a jetty going out into the Reedbed. This will be removed along with the jetty as the site doesn't warrant refurbishment. All interpretation panels must follow the specification below:

- Interpretation boards must be made from High Pressure Laminate which is vandal proof, fade resistant, anti graffiti and is environmentally friendly.
- We will endeavour to keep to about 150 words on a panel to ensure short interesting messages that capture people's imagination.
- Text must be at least font size 36 to meet DDA standards.
- All panels must have the Hart District Council Logo, Hart Countryside Services Logo and Fleet Pond Society logo.
- All panels must carry a link to further information on the HDC and/or FPS website.
- All content must be approved by HDC and FPS.

The Fleet Pond map leaflet is now out of date. The production of leaflets for Fleet Pond must be agreed by Hart Countryside Services. Leaflets must follow the specification below.

- All Leaflets must carry the Hart District Council Logo, Hart Countryside Services Logo and Fleet Pond Society Logo.
- All leaflets must have a link to the HDC and FPS websites.
- Maps must be clear and colourful outlining the main features.
- Adjoining text must not exceed 500 words.
- Font size must be size 12 or greater to meet DDA standards.
- Leaflets must be folded to DL
- All HDC leaflets must carry the Hart District Council Spotlights and a reference to FPS
- All FPS leaflets must carry the FPS logo and a reference to HDC

## 6.13 Marketing Strategy

A survey carried out in 2012 identified that the most significant reason why current non-visitors do not use Fleet Pond is lack of awareness (46%). One objective must therefore be to raise the public awareness of the site.

Any approach to marketing must contain an objective and an understanding of the value due to be created; the results must be recorded and evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the campaign.

### **Marketing Plan**

Hart Countryside Services works to a marketing plan which is created by the Marketing and Education Ranger in cooperation with the Fleet Pond Societies' Marketing Officer and monitored by the Senior Ranger. The Marketing Plan is in the

format of an excel spreadsheet, shared on gmail (this being accessible by all) and stored in o:/countryside/marketing.

## **Websites**

Information about the Hart Countryside Services and the sites managed by the service is on <http://www.hart.gov.uk/index/leisure/leisure-countryside> and <http://www.threesixfive.org.uk/countryside>. The Marketing and Education Ranger is responsible for maintaining the presence on these websites and ensuring all of the information is up to date and of relevance. The success of these websites is monitored on Google analytics and this data is recorded alongside the marketing plan.

Online booking and payment for guided walks, open spaces booking and fishing permits will be added to the websites by 2015.

The Fleet Pond Society posts information about Fleet Pond, events and fund raising on their website <http://www.fleetpond.fccs.org.uk/>. The website is maintained by the Fleet Pond Societies' webmaster.

## **Press Releases**

Press releases should be produced throughout the year. Consistency in the style and approach of publicity material, whilst allowing for tailoring to targeted market sectors, needs to be maintained. All press releases must go through the Marketing and Education Ranger and Hart District Council's Communications Officer. All Press releases regarding Fleet Pond must go through the Fleet Pond Societies Marketing Officer, Hart District Council's Marketing and Education Ranger and Communications Officer. All press releases regarding Fleet Pond Society and Hart District Council must reflect each other in a positive light.

Hart District Council's Communications Officer will then circulate to agreed media contacts in accordance with Hart District Councils Communication Strategy.

## **Social Media**

Hart Countryside Services currently uses a blog ([www.hartranger.blogspot.com](http://www.hartranger.blogspot.com)), Facebook (HartCountrysideServices), and Twitter (HartCountryside) to communicate information about events, activities and wildlife sightings.

Hart Countryside Services regularly posts new information during business hours, Monday to Friday, The Marketing and Education Ranger is responsible for replying to all messages as soon as possible.

The success of these sites is monitored on the relevant stats pages and this data is recorded alongside the marketing plan.

The Fleet Pond Society uses a blog (<http://fleetpond.wordpress.com/>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FleetPondSociety>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/FleetPondSoc>)

### **Events and Activities**

Events and activities are promoted through posters placed in notice boards, libraries, supermarkets, leisure centres and community centres. The events are also advertised on our websites, Facebook, Twitter, free magazines and via press releases in local news media. For larger, high profile events additional advertising is required which includes radio interviews, email campaigns and paid adverts in local newspapers and magazines.

The attendance figures for these events are recorded alongside the marketing plan.

## **6.14 Education Policy**

Many school groups and local organisation such as Scouts and Guides often visit Fleet Pond to use the site for educational purposes. Unfortunately groups cannot stay longer than 2 hours as there are no toilets on site. Education leaders are provided by Hart Countryside Services, and Fleet Pond Society's Education Volunteers. Education leaders must have the following:

- Valid CRB check.
- Valid First Aid at Work Certificate.
- Public Liability Insurance.

A copy of these documents must be retained by Hart Countryside Service.

The education opportunities available at Fleet Pond include tree walks, bat walks, pond dipping, bug hunting and bird walks.

## **6.15 Volunteer Policy**

We have a wide range of groups volunteering at Fleet Pond including Fleet Pond Society, Minding the Garden, Green Corridor, Hampshire Conservation Volunteers, local scout and guide groups and corporate groups. Some groups provide their own qualified leaders. For example, Green Corridor is a conservation group which brings young people out of London to volunteer in the Countryside in order to introduce them to a different aspect of society. All volunteer groups and tasks must be agreed by Hart Countryside Services. All volunteer groups at Fleet Pond must be accompanied by a designated leader who must have the following:

- Risk Assessment for the task.
- Valid CRB check.
- Valid First Aid at Work Certificate.
- Public Liability Insurance.

- If undertaking any tasks which have been discussed in this document the leader must be aware of the relevant specification and either be supplied with or be in possession of the correct equipment and materials.

## 6.16 Consultation Stakeholders

The Fleet Pond Consultation - Recreation and Amenity at Fleet Pond: Options for public Consultation was sent via email to the following organisations:

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE),  
Elvetham Heath Parish Council,  
Environment Agency,  
Farnham Town Council,  
Fleet Town Council,  
Hampshire Ornithological Society,  
Hartley Wintney Parish Council,  
Hook Parish Council,  
Ministry of Defence  
Natural England  
Rushmoor Borough Council,  
RSPB,  
Tackle Up  
Thames Water Sewage

Leaflets were distributed to the following roads:

Brookly Gardens  
Kenilworth Road  
Kenilworth Crescent  
Pond View Close  
Old Pump House Close  
Avondale Road  
Chestnut Grove  
Wellington Road  
Kevins Grove  
Berkley Close  
Kent Road  
Southby Drive  
Dunmow Hill  
Pinewood Hill  
Westover Road  
Honister Gardens  
Lestock Way  
Wood Lane  
Woodside Gardens  
Coombe Drive  
Adams Drive  
Guildford Road  
Kenwith Avenue

Williams Way  
 Camden Walk  
 Denhan Close  
 Howard Close  
 Hermes Close  
 Frensham Avenue  
 Cypress Drive  
 Cedar Drive  
 Alton Road  
 Elms Road  
 Pondtail Road  
 Pondtail Close  
 Farnham Road  
 Lyndale Drive

### 6.17 Capital Projects

No.	Year	Action	Who	Estimated Cost
6.17.1	2013/14	Car park improvements	MER, SR, FPS	£5,000
6.17.2	2014/15	Car park improvements continued, picnic area improvements, Fleet Train Station entrance improvements , footpath resurfacing	MER, SR, FPS	£40,000
6.17.3	2015/16	Hemelite Bay improvements, Avondale Road improvements, Sandy Bay improvements, Chestnut Grove improvements, site furniture and access improvements.	MER, SR, SnR, ECM, FPS	£124,000
6.17.4	2016/17	Fishing Jetties and resurface the access track	MER, SR, FPS	£100,000

### 6.18 Policy Statement

We reserve the right to remove pieces of site infrastructure.

## **7. REFERENCES**

**Chris Hall, 1997**, History of Fleet Pond.

**Tom Styles & Becky Lemon, 2012**, Fleet Pond Visitor Needs Analysis: Customer Survey Evaluation.

**Tom Styles, Becky Lemon, Alison Padkin, & Matt Johns, 2012**, Recreation and Amenity at Fleet Pond: Options for public Consultation.

**Tom Styles, 2013**, Fleet Pond – Responses to consultation on Enhancement Options.