



The City of London Open Spaces

The City of London Corporation manages over 11,000 acres of historic and natural open space within and beyond London. Most of our sites include a wide variety of important wildlife habitats, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation and National Nature Reserves and many hold Green Flag accreditation and Green Flag Heritage awards.

These open spaces play a critical role in enabling the Corporation of London to achieve its Climate Action Strategy target of net zero on its direct carbon emissions by 2027. In addition, the enlivening array of forests, heath, grasslands and urban parks provide a vast assortment of formal and informal opportunities for London's residents to improve their physical wellbeing and mental health as well as benefit from education and volunteering opportunities.

These open spaces are managed by officers from the Natural Environment Division which forms part of the Environment Department.

The four committees which oversee these rich and diverse open spaces are:



Emily Brennan
Natural Environment
Director

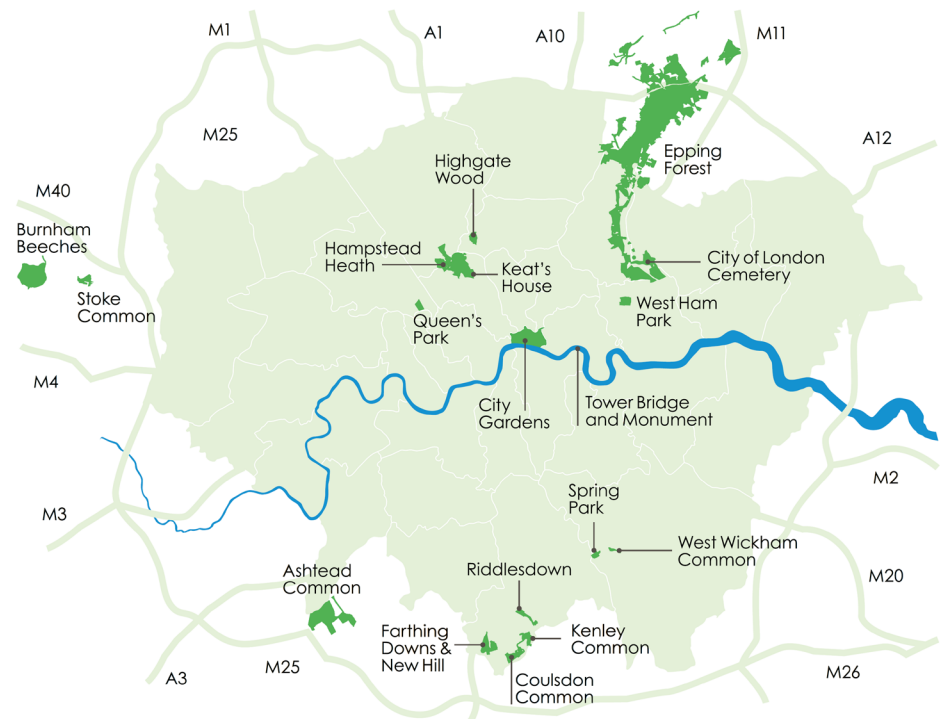


Andrew Impey
Natural Environment
Deputy Director



Amba Nkundo
Executive Assistant to
Natural Environment Director

- **Natural Environment Board** – sets the strategic direction for the Natural Environment Division where such matters are not specifically the responsibility of another Committee.
- **Epping Forest and Commons Committee** – the decision making body for the following charities: Epping Forest; Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common; Coulsdon and Other Commons; West Wickham Common and Spring Park.
- **Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee** - the decision making body for Hampstead Heath charity plus Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charity.
- **West Ham Park Committee** - the decision making body for West Ham Park charity.



9 Charitable Trusts
Governed by **4** Committees



Natural Environment
employs approx.
350 staff

11,000 Acres
under management
equivalent to **2,800**
football fields



Achieving **net zero** by
2040



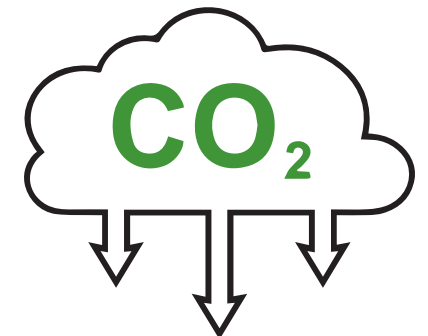
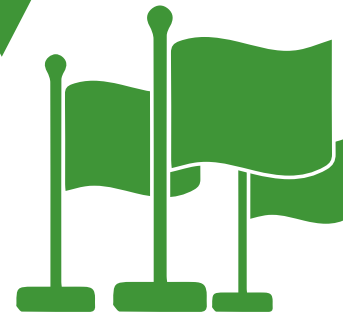
79 sports pitches
3 swimming pools
32 tennis courts and
1 golf course

The net budget for 2024/25 for
open spaces charities totals
£15,230,000



c1000 volunteers and approx. **72,000** hours

15 Green Flag awards



Climate Action Strategy target of **net zero**
on direct carbon emissions by **2027**

Epping Forest

Epping Forest and its Buffer Lands provide a landscape-scale open space of international importance for nature conservation covering over 12 square miles from Manor Park in the south to beyond the north of Epping. Epping Forest is made up of many distinct areas of open canopy wood-pasture, woodlands, grasslands and heaths.

Traditional cattle grazing helps restore historical semi-natural wood pasture for future generations to enjoy. The 6,118 acres of Forest are a unique combination of nationally rare wood- pasture habitats including over 50,000 ancient trees, the largest concentration in northern Europe.

It has more than 109 lakes and ponds of varying size and age, formal sports provision, particularly for football at Wanstead flats, four visitor centres and an historic hunting lodge. Epping Forest is the primary location for delivery of the open spaces carbon removal projects. Other priorities include diversifying income opportunities, landscape restoration post-Covid, mitigating the impact of developments and pursuing partnerships to improve and enhance sport facilities.



Jacqueline Eggleston
Assistant Director
(Superintendent)



North London Open Spaces



Hampstead Heath is the collective name for Parliament Hill and Golders Hill, an area totalling 791 acres. Hampstead Heath is just six kilometres from the centre of London and is one of London's most popular open spaces. The Heath contains woodland and scrub, grassland, hedgerows, ponds and wetlands, along with remnant areas of the original heathland. There are a wide range of sports facilities including the outdoor swimming ponds. A programme of events take place on the Heath including regular fun fairs, a circus, major cross country and athletics races. Golders Hill Park's landscaped grounds include the peaceful Mediterranean and water gardens.

Highgate Wood and Queen's Park: Highgate Wood comprises 70 acres of ancient woodland providing a haven for wildlife and numerous easily accessible and scenic woodland trails. Queen's Park, in the London Borough of Brent, retains its founding designer, Alexander McKenzie's figure-of-eight layout along with sports facilities and playgrounds.

West Ham Park has been owned and managed by the City of London Corporation since 1874, following its transfer to the City from the Gurney family. At 77 acres, it is the largest park in the London Borough of Newham. The Park is listed as a Grade II site and provides a range of sports facilities. It offers a large playground, ornamental, rose and rock gardens. Its wildlife meadows, ponds and long grass areas provide wildlife habitat areas which are used as a valuable learning resource by local schools and community groups.



William LoSasso

Assistant Director North London
Open Spaces

The Commons

These comprise nine sites (four charities) extending as an arc from Burnham Beeches in Buckinghamshire to the west of London and culminating finally at West Wickham Common to the Southeast of London.

Burnham Beeches is 545 acres and known internationally for its collection of beech pollards, wood pasture and heathland. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and European Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Stoke Common is the largest area of open heathland in South Buckinghamshire. The heathland's open vegetation and acidic soils provide specialist habitats for some very rare plants, animals and insects and the site is a SSSI.

Ashted Common covers 500 acres in north-east Surrey and consists of ancient oak pollards, scrub grassland, meadow, it is an NNR, SSSI and has two Scheduled Monuments.

The 125 acres of **Coulsdon Common** are part of the newly designated South London Downs National Nature Reserve. The NNR is managed jointly with the London Borough Croydon.

Farthing Downs and New Hill (235 acres) in the London Borough of Croydon have the most extensive area of semi-rural natural downland in Greater London and are an NNR.

Riddlesdown shows evidence of thousands of years of human activity with earthworks, trackways and a Roman road. It is also a NNR.

West Wickham Common is smallest of the seven City Commons and contains some unique heritage features.

The 140 acres of **Kenley Common** in Tandridge surrounds Kenley Airfield which is the UK's most complete surviving Battle of Britain airfield. The Common holds seven World War II fighter pens which are designated as a Scheduled Monument and a site of national historical significance.



Geoff Sinclair
Assistant Director
The Commons

Learning, Culture and Projects



Learning Team

The current learning programme engages schools and communities across three sites: Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest (including Wanstead Flats) and West Ham Park. The programme consists of the following workstreams:

- Schools services at Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, West Ham Park
- Green Talent programme working with 13–25 year olds struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market
- Play activities at Hampstead Heath (two play centres) engaging children, parents, and carers
- Volunteer development and community outreach work engaging families, children, and adults
- The programme works with a variety of organisations including Culture Mile Learning, Camden Council, University College London, and the Refugee Council.



Andrew Impey
Natural Environment
Deputy Director



Culture and Heritage



This team manages and advises on heritage across the Natural Environment Division. The Head of Heritage and Museums leads a small operational team at Keats House, Hampstead, which is supported by Heritage Officers recruited to special projects. The team is responsible for:

- Operating Keats House, developing options for the future operation of the Monument and other, key, heritage assets.
- Developing heritage strategy, policy frameworks, advice and guidance.
- Supporting community-led projects, e.g. working with Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln and North London Open Spaces, to deliver the National Lottery funded 'Firing London's Imagination' project.

Vision



Open spaces that are rich in diversity, conserving nature, creating memories, and enhancing lives.

Mission



To achieve our vision by protecting and improving 11,000 acres of open space in London and the Home Counties, working in partnership to ensure it is more accessible, sustainable, and preserved for the benefit of the public.

The Four Key Strategies...



Nature Conservation and Resilience:

We will conserve the special biodiversity and habitats of our open spaces and manage them to secure their future.



Community Engagement:

We will act as stewards of our public open spaces in partnership with communities to ensure their responsible use and conservation in perpetuity.



Access and Recreation:

We will conserve, enhance and sustainably manage our open spaces' special natural environments and their heritage; and we will welcome, encourage and inspire our visitors to enjoy and protect these spaces for future generations.

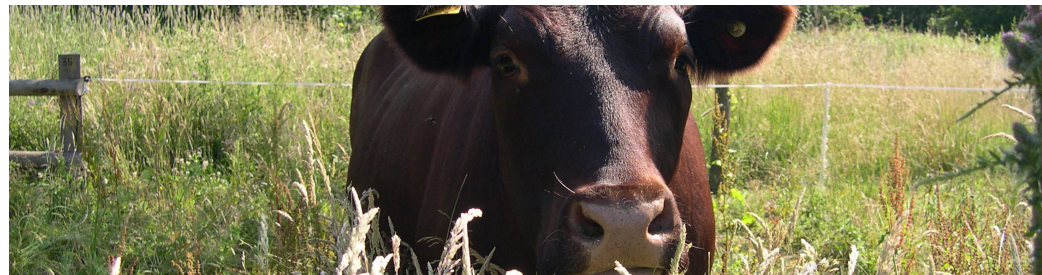


Culture, Heritage and Learning:

We will take care of our cultural assets, and our culture, heritage and learning offer will develop participation, confidence, connection, opportunity and wellbeing of, and support from, our priority audiences.



1. Nature Conservation and Resilience Strategy



Proposal

We will protect and enhance the special biodiversity and habitats of our open spaces, securing their resilience through a time of significant change and providing the evidence of the impact of the actions we take.

Key Themes

The Nature Conservation and Resilience Strategy has three key themes informing our work to deliver the City of London Corporation's response to the biodiversity and climate crises through its open spaces:

- 1. Biodiversity:** To protect and enhance the biodiversity of our open spaces
- 2. Resilience and Adaptation:** To increase the resilience of our open spaces within a wider, interconnected natural landscape
- 3. Evidence:** To establish a natural capital based management approach across our open spaces



2. Community Engagement Strategy

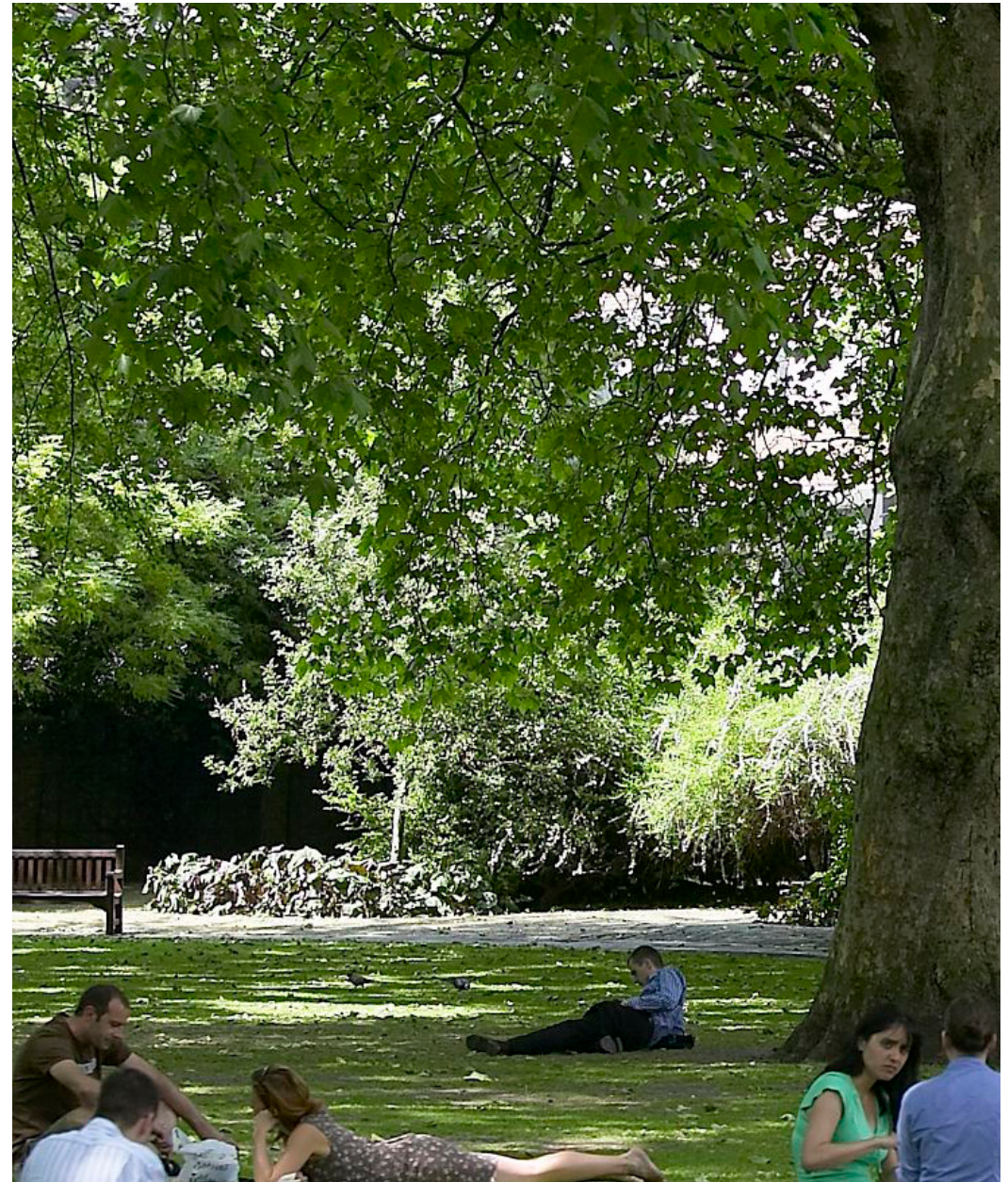
Proposal

As stewards of the environment and public open spaces, our success in community engagement is a measurement of our success in our public service, charitable, and stewardship obligations. We define our obligation as 'active participation of residents and communities in decisions that affect their lives.' The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that those we serve are actively and appropriately welcomed into our work and public spaces, leading to improved ways of working and service delivery. Importantly, community engagement is both an end and a means to an end. It is something we do in furtherance of our commitment to good governance, but also is a means to succeeding in delivering our other strategies and achieving our other goals.

Key Themes

Five identified strategic themes are:

1. **Partnership:** Creating meaningful and lasting partnerships
2. **Removing barriers:** Identifying and removing barriers to participation in our spaces and work
3. **Ownership:** Cultivating a sense of deep pride in, and attachment to, our spaces amongst users
4. **Thriving spaces:** Creating spaces that attract people and improve their lives
5. **Knowledge exchange:** Continuous transfer of information between the Corporation and its customers



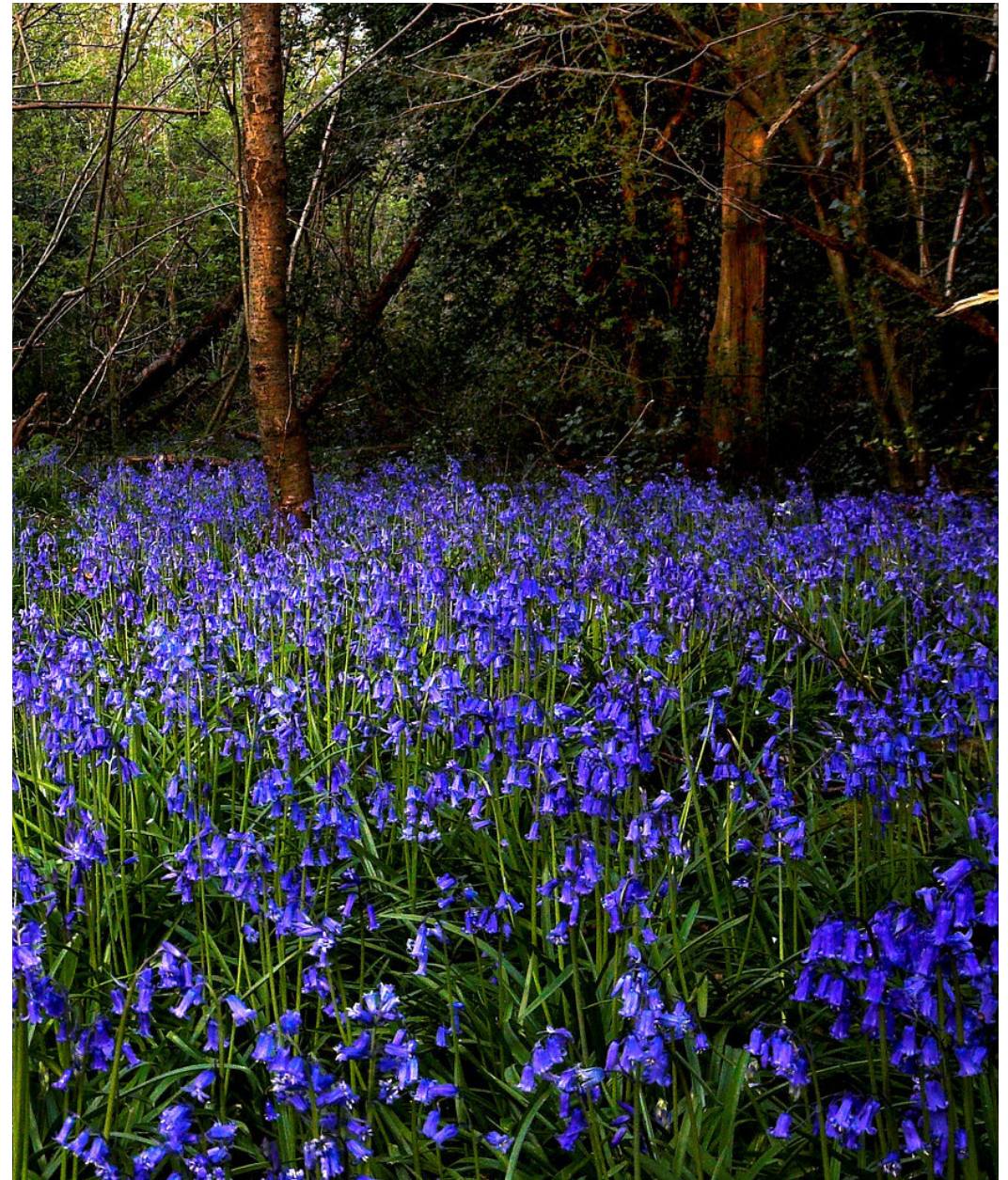
3. Access and Recreation Strategy

Proposal

Our iconic and exemplary open spaces and heritage assets have provided enjoyment, recreation and well-being to millions of visitors for nearly 150 years. As visitor numbers continue to grow, preserving the fundamental benefits these spaces provide to our communities, alongside protecting and enhancing their environment and biodiversity, is increasingly a challenging balance. This strategy provides key objectives to direct how we can both welcome visitors and continue to protect our special, historic, and biodiverse sites and assets for the future.

Key Themes

1. Balance the needs of visitors with the requirements of protecting the natural and heritage assets of the open spaces
2. Enable the best possible visitor journey, creating the right information from pre-visit to a stress-free and enjoyable on-site experience
3. Provide welcoming places that visitors from all backgrounds and abilities are comfortable to explore
4. Build understanding and knowledge about the open spaces. Visitors will respect one another and will care for and advocate for the sites.



4. Culture, Heritage and Learning Strategy

Proposal

The culture, heritage and learning offer within the Natural Environment Division will develop the participation, confidence, connection, opportunity and wellbeing of, and support from, our priority audiences. We will take care of our assets and ensure that our work is environmentally sustainable.

Key Themes

The themes of this Strategy are:

1. Developing nature connection and pro-environmental behaviours
2. Developing wellbeing through spending time in nature or through our heritage
3. Providing more opportunities through education and employment
4. Developing greater engagement, confidence and enjoyment
5. Ensuring the effective care, management and promotion of our offer.



Contacts



Emily Brennan – Natural Environment Director

Emily is the Natural Environment Director. Her strategic and operational oversight spans nine charitable trusts, including Epping Forest, Ashted Common, Burnham Beeches, Coulsdon and Other Commons, West Wickham and Spring Park, West Ham Park, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen's Park Kilburn, and Keats House. Together, these open spaces provide vital natural capital assets that deliver an estimated £86.7 million in annual benefits, which underscores the importance of Emily's leadership in preserving and enhancing these assets for public benefit.



Andrew Impey – Natural Environment Deputy Director

Andrew is the Natural Environment Deputy Director. He is responsible for the management of the internal consultancy function within the Natural Environment Division. This initiative includes key teams and projects, such as the Learning Team, Heritage Team, Carbon Removals Project, and other major undertakings, ensuring the division continues to deliver impactful and sustainable outcomes.



Amba Nkundo – Executive Assistant to Natural Environment Director

Amba is the Executive Assistant to the Natural Environment Director, providing high-level support to ensure the effective operation of the Natural Environment Division. She plays a pivotal role in coordinating strategic priorities, managing complex schedules, preparing briefing materials, and maintaining oversight of key governance processes, including the submission of reports to Committees. Amba supports the Director to ensure the division operates efficiently, enabling the delivery of impactful outcomes across the Corporation's open spaces.



Geoff Sinclair – Assistant Director: The Commons

Geoff is the Assistant Director (Superintendent) of The Commons. He is responsible for the management of Burnham Beeches and the City Commons (Ashted, Coulsdon, West Wickham and Riddlesdown Commons, Spring Park and Farthing Downs).



Jacqueline Eggleston – Assistant Director: Epping Forest

Jacqueline is the Superintendent and Assistant Director for Epping Forest. Spanning 8,000 acres, her remit is overall management of the Forest and the buffer lands. This includes two registered parks and gardens, eight listed buildings and four scheduled ancient monuments. Over 40 football pitches and an 18 hole golf course are also directly managed within her team. Two thirds of Epping Forest is designated as a Special Area of Conservation with over a million trees and 55,000 veteran trees; so her role in managing the team is a constant balance of protecting this internationally ecologically significant Forest alongside providing an excellent visitor experience to 10 million visitors a year.



Bill LaSasso – Assistant Director: North London Open Spaces

Bill is the Assistant Director (Superintendent) of North London Open Spaces. He is responsible for the management of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen's Park and West Ham Park.



Jo Hurst – Assistant Director: Charity and Development

Jo is the Assistant Director Charity Development for the Natural Environment Division. She is currently leading on the Natural Environment Charity Review, income and asset management.

