

Newsletter

Haysden Country Park

MAY 2023

ISSUE 7

Welcome to the newsletter for Haysden Country Park.

Top stories in this newsletter



Accreditation



Orienteering

Public Space Protection Orders

Public Space
Protection Orders



Sharpes Bridge



Country Park Accreditation – We have been successful in renewing our accreditation for the park with the government department Natural England. We reapply every 3-years and provide evidence that we still meet all the criteria for the scheme. There are currently only 3 parks accredited in the Southeast and 30 in England. Thanks to everyone who assists with the management of the park and run events as this all contributes to the success of the park. [More...](#)



Orienteering – Virtual orienteering courses are now available starting from either Tonbridge Castle extending to Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground or Haysden Country Park. This is a new fun way to learn orienteering at your own pace, you do not have to join or be an expert to take part. The courses are free for anyone to use and use the **MapRun** app which can be downloaded to your mobile device has a map. If you prefer copies of printed maps these can be purchased from the Castle Gift Shop or the Café in the Park at Haysden Country Park for £1. Our thanks go to the Saxons Orienteering Club for setting this up with us.

Public Space Protection Orders

Public Space Protection Orders – public consultation is now completed, and these have now been adopted by the Council. £100 fix penalty notices or £1000 maximum fines on summary conviction now apply for:

- **Alcohol** it is an offence to continue drinking when asked to stop by an authorised officer
- **Barbeques** these are not permitted in the park
- **Camping** unauthorised camping is not permitted in the park
- **Dogs** you must clear up your dog fouling, no dogs allowed in the children's play area, dogs on leads by instruction by an authorised officer, dogs on leads in all car parks, and the maximum number of dogs per single person is six
- **Public urination/ defecation** it is an offence to go to the toilet in a public place except in a public lavatory.
- **Drones** may not be flown on any Council owned land
- **No swimming, bathing, or boating** except where specifically authorised
- **Vehicles on public open spaces** no person may park save in a designated parking place.

[More...](#)



Sharps Bridge – Kent County Council has now replaced Sharpes Bridge with a wider new bridge with ramps at each end. The ramps were a requirement of the Environment Agency consent. The bridge has now been opened a few weeks. Reinstatement around the newly surfaced Barden Lake path will be carried out in due course.

Other news

Natural history –

Volunteer Alan over recent months has continued his surveys of the park conducting surveys discovering many new mosses, lichens, and fungi.

Great crested newt licenced surveys – as part of a wider Kent Pond survey a volunteer working for the Kent Amphibian and Reptile Group is about to start a survey to see if we have these newts present in the park. [More...](#)

Zebra Mussel survey - a PhD student from the University of Cambridge is currently conducting a study to discover more about these invasive non-native mussels which are present in our lake and throughout the UK.

Staffing – Michael Harris Outdoor Manager, has now left the Council and James Fay has been appointed as Interim manager.

Stephen Henderson who covered the Park Ranger role has now left the Council, we welcomed back Jane Brazier our ranger after her maternity leave.

Sponsored seat scheme – We continue to see a rise in enquiries and demand for seats and several more have been installed around the park. Over the last two years twenty new seats have been installed in the park.

Green Flag Award judging – The park has been entered for the award again this year, judging will take place shortly and announcement will be made in the summer. [More...](#)



Work completed.

- Revetment work around Barden Lake
- We have tarmacked a small part of the Children's play area, around the toddler play equipment using funding from a developer contribution
- Replaced two new litter bins outside the toilets (two bins had worn out)
- Approved access for more contractors wanting to conduct maintenance work on

their land

- Investigated another use for Tile Barn Field but this use was not feasible
- Planting of trees by the EA as mitigation for the Leigh Barrier works
- Council website updates adding events etc.
- Purchased some new volunteer clothing for the HCPV
- Avian flu risk assessment and protective equipment ordered
- New seat installed at Haysden Water thanks to another sponsor
- Tree inspections highlighted issues with a few trees which have been reduced or felled
- Botany Pond removal of silt and vegetation EA mitigation works

Work in progress

- Management plan rewrite ready for a start date in January 2025
- An onsite market survey of visitors will be conducted this summer, in preparation for the new management plan
- Our Access Audit will also be reviewed, in preparation for the next management plan
- The dipping platform is closed as it is unsafe, awaiting repair or replacement – budget prices obtain – but there is no funding for this project at present
- Waymarking project – some volunteers have started work planning circular routes around the park using the free GoJaunty smartphone app
- Disabled fishing platform replacements at Barden Lake – we have been working on a grant proposal with the Angling Society
- Exterior redecoration of the toilet block being arranged via Property Services
- Mural being repaired for the gates
- Carry out a Breeding Birds Survey thanks to our volunteer Martin

Licensed activities

New licenses signed with Flyball and Positive Paws extended the days of the week

New lease signed with Sailing Club now also includes powered model yachts

New license signed with Nordic Walking extended the days of the week

Volunteering update

We are fortunate to have a large group of regular volunteers working at the park. Our thanks to all of them for helping in the park.

Highlights of work completed.

Haysden Country Park Volunteers (HCPV)

- Tree planting
- Scrub clearance by the River Medway
- Hedge cutting
- Dead hedge laying at Barden Shaw

- Coppicing Barden Shaw
- Nest box building
- Cutting back vegetation along paths
- Recording of flora and fauna

Number of volunteer hours (September 2022 to March 2023)

Haysden Country Park Volunteers have completed 2204 hours

Photo Scavenger Hunt – There has been lots of interest in this competition you will have seen the photographs on the noticeboards. Look out for the posters with the letter for the monthly competition.

Finance – There have been some minor increases in income due to renegotiation of fees for licences and leases. The park is still being financially supported by expenditure from the Council.

Events

A number of these have been arranged by us and with our partners and we have also approved other events to use the park with external organisations:

Past events

- 30 Oct 2022 - a Sponsored walk organised for Parkinsons disease
- 4 April - Launch event for Find my way virtual orienteering at Tonbridge Castle, Free 87 people took part
- October - Halloween self-led trail, Free 100 copies of the leaflet used
- December - Christmas self-led trail, Free 60 copies of the leaflets used
- January – RSPB Big Garden Bird watch, Free 50 copies of leaflets used – [RSPB UK results](#)
- February – Saxons Night-time orienteering event at Haysden Country Park and Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground
- 1 March - Bird song (in partnership with MVCP) £
- 4 April - Bushcraft activities (in partnership with MVCP) £ cancelled due to low numbers
- 1-16 April - Easter trail a self-led trail, Free
- 28 April - Bat walk (booking required in partnership with MVCP) £

£ symbol equals a charged event

What's on

- 12 June - Wellbeing nature walk, a gentle stroll 1-2 hours (booking required in partnership with MVCP) Free

- July - The Big Butterfly Count (Butterfly Conservation) date TBC
- 1 August - Bushcraft activities (booking required in partnership with MVCP) £
- 15 August - Bushcraft as above
- 6 October - Bat walk (booking required in partnership with MVCP) £
- 1 September - Bat walk as above
- December - Willow weaving (booking required in partnership with MVCP) date TBC £

For details on all the latest events see our website – [Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](http://Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (tmbc.gov.uk))

Book for MVCP events at www.eventbrite.co.uk search for MVCP and book your place online.

Field surveys - We are still looking for more volunteers to run field surveys and to help when others are away. The regular surveys that we want to organise are for ponds, small mammals, bats, reptiles, and amphibians. If this is something you would like to help us with, please contact Chris Fox.

Keep in touch - If you have any ideas for the new management plan, comments, or questions for our team, we would be happy to answer you.

If you know other people who would like to receive this newsletter, please ask them to contact us at leisure.services@tmbc.gov.uk

The next newsletter is due to be published in the Autumn of 2023.

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