



MINUTES

MEETING NAME: Bracknell Forest Nature Partnership

DATE AND TIME: 2 October 2025 10:00 – 12:00 Time Square

PRESENT:

In person

Rosie Lear (chair)	Bracknell Forest Council Biodiversity Officer	RL
Sheila Collings	Warfield Environment Group, Climate Change & Biodiversity Working Group	SC
Michael Brossard	Sandhurst Town Councillor	MB
Ulrike Halmer	Bracknell Forest Natural History Society	UH
Mike Coker	Binfield Environment Group, Survey sub-group, Binfield Churches Eco-church project	MC
Paul Adkins	Wild Bracknell, Climate Change & Biodiversity Working Group	PA
Michele Fox	Bracknell Conservation Volunteers (BCV)	MF

Online

Malcolm Hawkes	Wildlife in Ascot, Bracknell Conservation Volunteers	MH
Purveen Hira	Binfield Parish Council	PH
Gareth Ryman	Bracknell Forest Council Green Infrastructure Strategy Manager	GR
Liz Hadden	Warfield Parish Council	LH
Ian Evans	Bracknell Town Council Recreational Facilities Manager	IE
Caroline Pragnell	Involve - Get Green & Active Volunteer Coordinator	CP

APOLOGIES:

Chris Kersley Hedge and Woodland Conservationists

MINUTES:

1.	Welcome and introductions
	The meeting was chaired by Rosie Lear, Biodiversity Officer, Bracknell Forest Council. The minutes for the meeting will go on BFC website with names and organisations of attendees and apologies – if any issues please let RL know.
2.	Actions from minutes of the last meeting
	<i>Ongoing action:</i> Capability & survey spreadsheet - all partners to review and provide RL with

	<p><i>updates as required - ongoing</i></p> <p>Action: <i>Biodiversity Net Gain and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy update to be added to Oct 2025 agenda – complete, included in the agenda for this meeting</i></p> <p>Action: <i>RL to organise printed copies of the BAP for NP members – complete and several groups already have copies. Please contact RL if you don’t have a copy yet and would like one.</i></p> <p>Action: <i>Survey sub-group to investigate benefits setting up an iNaturalist project – complete and MC has set up a project to bring together records of the BAP target species. To access, join iNaturalist (A Community for Naturalists · iNaturalist) and then search for “Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Project”.</i></p> <p>Action: <i>RL and MC to organise a summer site visit in Binfield – complete, thanks to MC for hosting and to all who joined the visit in August</i></p> <p>Action: <i>RL to invite Jealotts Hill Community Landshare Manager to join Nature Partnership – not complete, and this role is currently vacant. Action on hold for now.</i></p>
3.	<p>Bracknell Volunteer Fair (Saturday 25th October 2025)</p>
	<p>Led by Involve</p> <p>Taking place on 25 October, 11am-3pm, at Princess Square</p> <p>Autumn Volunteer Fair - Involve Community Services</p> <p>The fair is an opportunity for charities and groups to promote their work and engage with volunteers.</p> <p>Wildlife in Ascot and Binfield Environment Group are signed up to share a stall.</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Natural History Society also offered to help and to provide some of their event programmes. Wild Bracknell may also be able to support. WEG already have an event on that day but can provide some materials.</p> <p>Please contact Malcolm (Wildlife in Ascot) and/or Mike (Binfield Environment Group) to arrange schedule and sharing materials.</p>
4.	<p>National and regional strategies update: Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies</p>
	<p>RL presented an update on the LNRS and BNG. See attached slides.</p> <p>Further details/discussion on LNRS</p> <p>The LNRS is soon to be published by RBWM. Update since the meeting: the LNRS is now published - Berkshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy RBWM Together</p> <p>MC highlighted the video produced as part of the LNRS development process – see above link.</p> <p>There was some discussion about veteran trees as these are included within the “Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity” layer (which shows existing designated sites and irreplaceable habitats). It should be noted that the LNRS map layers show a fixed point in time and will not be regularly updated as new records come forwards. The LNRS will be updated after 3-10 years (dependent on central government decision). For publicly available, up-to-date data on veteran trees, see the Woodland Trust inventory - Ancient Tree Inventory - Woodland Trust. Also important to share records with TVERC so their records stay up-to-date and can be included when the LNRS is updated - Share your records Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.</p> <p>BTC mentioned that they have recently been through the BNG process as an applicant, and highlighted that it is complex and small changes in the overall site plan can affect the BNG score.</p>

	<p>There was a question about enforcement. As BNG sits within the planning system, it will be enforced through the planning enforcement system.</p> <p>There was also a question about how we know that the assessments developers provide are correct. The reports are checked and reviewed by BFC Biodiversity Officers. Most assessments (apart from those for very small sites) will be completed by qualified ecologists following guidelines including a Natural England User Guide and CIEEM guidelines.</p> <p>Activity</p> <p>It will now be important for groups across Berkshire to look at the LNRS and identify opportunities to help deliver some of the targets. In Bracknell Forest, we already have a BAP, so it will be useful to compare and identify similarities/differences and where we may be able to deliver on both.</p> <p>Working in small groups, attendees had a go at comparing the LNRS and BAP targets. Feedback from groups included that there are some targets which match up well and some which we are already tackling in Bracknell Forest. The LNRS is more detailed, including some more detail on specific habitats such as orchards. There is less focus in the LNRS on engagement compared to the BAP.</p>
4.a	BAP – printed copies
	As noted above, please contact RL about printed copies.
4.b	BAP updates from partners
	<p><i>Note: Some partners sent updates by email, as indicated.</i></p> <p>Binfield Environment Group <i>Updated in person, and provided the following target updates by email</i></p> <p>Events & articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We ran a signs of spring event highlighting butterflies and plants in our urban green-spaces (T8, T67) • We support Binfield Women’s Institute Environment Group and led a walk round the Blue Mountain SANG for them and ran a brief session on butterfly id (T8) • We took part in the City Nature Challenge and use both BEG and personal blogs to promote wildlife recording (T6). • We ran a stall with WEG at Jealott’s Hill Community Landshare including a bioblitz (T6). • We spent a morning with Newbold Junior School learning about trees (T7, T32). • With the Binfield Eco Church team we put on a week of events Eco Week including an Eco Fair, bat walk, moth trapping, and SANG visits. We are hoping this will be a regular event (T8) <p>Volunteer hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 237 hours not including our October task <p>Surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We survey six greenspaces in the parish every month. For five of the six, we are surveying birds, butterflies and bumblebees. In the sixth, we are surveying a range of flora and fauna. The survey sites include parks, meadows, woodland (copses), wood pasture, and a few small ponds. (T6, T15, T20) • We also have members conducting a BTO BBS, and a churchyard butterfly survey

covering St Mark's, All Saints and Binfield Cemetery (note that we are considering dropping this) and championing the Butterfly Conservation 10K square for Binfield. (T57, T58)

Enhancements for wildlife

- Bisham Nestbox Group joined us at the Eco Fair and sold a lot of boxes to Binfield residents, mostly tit and robin boxes. At least one starling box was also sold.

Other/upcoming:

- We are championing the use of iNaturalist for recording BFC BAP species and have set up an iNaturalist "project" to bring together relevant data (T6).
- In the next six months we will be running work parties in Foxley Field, Popes Meadow, Wicks Green, and possibly Farley Copse and Blue Mountain.

Wild Bracknell

Updated in person, and provided the following notes by email

Habitat Creation and Monitoring

Pond creation (In partnership with Bracknell Forest Natural History Society)

- Plan in progress to create ponds on Town Council parks and green spaces in partnership with BTC.
- Agreement reached in principle, currently surveying for sites. Health and safety is a major consideration on BTC land which limits potential sites but there are some opportunities.
- We had a site visit to nearby Crown Estate ponds in June which was very informative and enjoyable, hosted by Des Sussex. Wild Bracknell, Bracknell Forest Natural History Society and Bracknell Town Council attended.
- We have recently started discussing nature projects including ponds with Abri.

Freshwater Monitoring (In partnership with Bracknell Forest Natural History Society)

- Earthwatch Waterblitz Sampling for Phosphate and Nitrate – 10 test kits for April survey and we were only able obtain 1 test kit
- Test locations were on the Cut, Downmill Stream and Blackwater. Both surveys showed that all of our watercourses are polluted with either moderate or severe pollution recorded.

Biodiversity Monitoring (In partnership with Bracknell Forest Natural History Society)

- In the process of setting up projects using iSurvey for sites of biodiversity significance, the first two sites are Mill Pond and Ennerdale Recreation Ground – where BTC have a project to plant native trees, an orchard and a wildflower meadow. We will extend habitat creation to included the surrounding area, hopefully with Abri involved as well.

Hedgehogs

- The hog crossing warning signs on Opladen Way organised by Barbara have been installed by Highways department.

Beaver reintroduction

- No progress. This is on hold for now due to time constraints but remains a long term goal.

LNRS

- Survey completed and 6 projects proposed. No update since the last BFNP meeting.

Community Engagement

Swift walks

- We led 6 swift walks in collaboration with BFBC and BTC, all of which were very well attended. A further house martin talk was delivered for the Reading climate festival.

These events aim at raising awareness on these red listed species. We are hoping to create a swift street in Bracknell next year, with the help of local councillors

Bat walks

- We led two bat walks around Mill Pond, (one with Bracknell Forest Natural History Society). Both were well attended and we will try to run another in October.

Inclusion

- Planning ahead we hope to be able to offer walks and other events for communities with disabilities or other barriers to enjoying nature.

MECC Training (In partnership with BFC Public Health)

- Making Every Contact Count is a way of interacting with individuals to support them to change their behaviour to achieve a positive outcome. It was created by the NHS and Public Health to support people with health needs such as stopping smoking and is evidence based.
- Paul is currently working with BFC Public Health to deliver this training to support healthcare workers. We are adapting it for other scenarios such as for carers. A version for influencers working with the community on environmental and climate change projects will be available by the end of the year.

Warfield Environment Group

Updated in person, and provided the following notes by email

Activity since last meeting on 27 March 2025:

- Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean around Larks Hill
- Annual newt survey at the Newt Reserve
- City Nature Challenge – group survey of Newt Reserve following newt survey, individuals also surveyed in various Warfield locations
- Earthwatch Great UK WaterBlitz – tested in 5 locations in April, 3 locations in September including E. coli test at Bracknell Sewage Treatment Works outfall (result awaited). Only one location has good ecological status, remainder are poor
- Litter picks with 2nd Bracknell Beavers (2)
- Verge surveys – May and July
- JHCL Spring into Summer Fete – joint stall with Binfield Environment Group (BEG), promoting wildlife surveying with bioblitz of the site
- Bat Conservation Trust bat field survey at Jealott's Hill – July
- Bat Conservation Trust bat waterway survey of the Bull Brook – August
- BEG/WEG joint wildlife walk at Blue Mountain and Cabbage Hill
- Annual bat walk at Hayley Green Wood/Westmorland Park

Upcoming events/activities:

- Bird nest box erection/maintenance – Saturday 25 October
- Verge maintenance along Harvest Ride – date to be confirmed once BFC contractors have mown
- Hedge planting, maintenance at Larks Hill – Saturday 29 November
- Thames21 road run-off citizen science project (part 2) – weather conditions have not yet been suitable this year
- Working in partnership with BFC rangers to obtain funding for swift boxes for sites in Warfield (ongoing)

Wildlife in Ascot

Updated in person, and provided the following notes by email. Also provided BAP target update template.

As ever, we continue our work in both RBWM and BFC.

In BFC our regular practical work continues at Carnation Hall pollinator patch, Ascot Heath junior school wildlife garden and Blackmoor pond/stream.

Surveys of trees, bats, small mammals continues but we are running out of trees in our BFC green corridors, unless someone can nominate some for us.

We took part in waterblitz and a few fetes etc over summer.

Just over the border in Sunninghill and Ascot PC (part of RBWM) we carried out a balsam bash along Blackmoor stream, in Blythewood local wildlife site. We believe this is the most upstream patch in what becomes the Cut so are keen to ensure this work is continued downstream and we will repeat in following years. With S&APC we will leaflet riparian homeowners (in BFC) who have balsam in their gardens that border this site. Will share progress with BFC BAP.

BCV

Updated in person

- Buckler's Forest – working on bee banks, poly tunnel
- Englemere pond – heather banks, clearing birch and pines, dead-hedging to help manage dog access
- Temple Copse – holly reduction, coppicing, creating cages around coppices
- Working at the Heritage Parks on changes to landscaping
- Frost Folly & Cabbage Hill – ragwort pulling
- Peacock Meadows – replacing knee-rail fence – not felt to be best use of time
- Recent wildlife spots include toads, a snakeskin, lizards and lots of stonechats

Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

Updated in person, and provided the following notes by email. Also provided BAP target update template.

- The Society started its new year in September
 - The new programme of evening talks, walks and outings has a greater focus on local and UK oriented topics. The aim is to stimulate interest in the local environment and citizens science.
 - Membership fees and visitor charges have changed to reflect a slight increase and make it easier for people to pay and reduce cash handling.
 - At the AGM all committee members confirmed they will carry out their duties into the new year 2025-26.
- The woodland restoration project at Nightingale Triangle remains active, with around 10 volunteers each month.
 - Sadly, vandals set fire to tree stems at the edge of the woodland in early summer. After managing the situation, we created a dug-in woodpile with the tree stems to provide a habitat for stag beetles. (June's evening talk on Stag Beetles provided the necessary guidance for making it.)
 - Walkways are being maintained with regular distribution of wood and leaf chippings, and litter is regularly removed.
 - A flowering plant survey was carried out in the woodland during the summer.
- Representation at Crowthorne's 'Great Big Green Week' in June 2025
- Hosting 2 Employee Volunteering days for Cadence
- Environmental surveys carried out or supported:

- Bird survey at South Hill Park
 - 18-month survey lead by Mike Collings concluded, but the team will continue monitoring. Results submitted to TVERC
- Orchid Surveys
 - 2024 results submitted to TVERC
 - 2025 results to be submitted to TVERC
- Bat Walk at Mill Pond
 - Evening walk with members in June. Results submitted to Bat Society.
- Supported Silver Studded Blue Butterfly Survey
 - Supported the Butterfly Conservation's Upper Thames Branch and Surrey Wildlife Trust in carrying out the survey at MOD Barossa on June 29th. Results submitted on the day to iRecord Butterflies.
- Members outings and walks
 - April: Spring Walk along THE CUT COUNTYSIDE CORRIDOR on the edge of Bracknell
 - May: Day trip to the NEW FOREST WILDLIFE PARK
 - June: Evening Bat Walk at MILL POND, Bracknell
 - July: Summer Walk to Lily Hill Park, Bracknell

Bracknell Town Council

Updated in person and provided the following target updates by email

- North lake self-sets removal from balancing pond. September 2025 JDB contractors 3 days BFC and BTC collaboration.
- Larges lane September 2024+ 2025 annual wildflower meadow maintenance- community payback 320 man hours contributed to clearance of wild flower meadow.
- Himalayan balsam removal – along the River cut@ Binfield road. BTC
- Log piles habitats ongoing from tree works BTC have completed- Crown woods- Great hollands woods Dryden woods and Garswood.
- Re-wilding of grass areas encroaching woodland or coppice areas Braybrooke- Millpark- Jocks lane.
- Continued wild flower meadow maintenance The Elms and larges lane over seeding- BTC staff.
- Native hedgerows installed at sites- Home Farm- Braybrooke-Ringmead allotments- South road allotments donated by woodland trust.
- Aquatic works carried out on North lake balancing pond to remove reeds from pond to open up water space to encourage bird species.
- Aeration device installation at Braybrooke pond (Jeans pond) to increase O2 levels for aquatic life.
- Ash tree works and pine trees log piles stacked for insects.

Binfield Parish Council

Updated in person

- Unfortunately, some trees were lost over the hot summer – will be looking to plant native replacements
- Work to improve some grass verges ongoing.

Warfield Parish Council

Updated in person

- Updated environment policy, covering biodiversity and greenspaces

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking over running of Warfield Memorial Ground • Warfield Hub project progressing – public consultation coming up – Warfield Community Hub – Public consultation Warfield Parish Council <p>Sandhurst Town Council <i>Updated in person</i> Green Flag award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved 22nd year of Green Flag Award – there will be a public event to celebrate the award • A recommendation within the Green Flag Award assessment was to consider starting composting – will be looking into this <p>Bulb planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking place on 14th October • Need to start mapping bulb planting areas for reference in future years <p>Flower towers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 areas designated for flower towers • Complex process including highways permissions, land registry, site owner etc. • To include both summer and winter planting so the towers don't have to be removed and reinstated each year <p>Litter picking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working toward a more joined up approach across Bracknell Forest, meeting with other litter picking groups <p>Bracknell Forest Council <i>Updated in person and compiled following updates</i> Surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular programme of summer surveys at various sites – birds, reptiles, newts, butterflies (see capability/survey spreadsheet) <p>Habitat creation/enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Grassland</i> – Target 16 – No Mow May trialled across 10 selected sites/areas • <i>Wetlands</i> - Target 39 - Himalayan Balsam removal by 32 BCV volunteers at Horseshoe Lake • <i>Heathland</i> - Target 45 – Western Hemlock sapling removal at Buckler's Forest • <i>Urban</i> - Target 59 – Trees for Streets scheme officially launched, which will enable progress towards this target <p>Enhancements for wildlife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 63 - Bee bank creation at Buckler's Forest <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 12 – <i>Engage with the development of the Berkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy</i> – Bracknell Forest Council provided feedback and approval for the pre-publication draft.
4d	Topics for next meeting
	Suggested topics to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive species (particularly Himalayan Balsam) – BAP target 39 • Community engagement • LNRS update • Survey sub-group update
5.	Update from Climate & Biodiversity Working Group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently held a successful wildflower site visit, visiting the wildflower areas at The Elms (BTC) and the WEG verges – possible future sites identified in Crowthorne, Binfield, Bracknell • Zero Hub now open in Bracknell Library – opportunity to exchange local ideas to address the climate and biodiversity crisis, local stories of what the community has done in their own lives and organisations, resources and information
7.	Any other business
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCVs requested an updated Rangers chart • Bracknell Forest Council starting the 2 year process of reviewing the ROWIP • Piglittle SANG is close to being transferred to BFC
8.	Plans for next meeting
	<p>Next meeting dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 March 2026, 10am-12, Function Room Time Square • 1 October 2026, 10am-12, Function Room Time Square