

## Wandsworth Common – Statement of Ecological Value

### Ecological Site Context:

Wandsworth Common extends across 69ha and is a Grade 1 Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The common supports a mosaic of habitats including acid grassland, a national and local priority habitat. Further habitats on the common include veteran trees, secondary oak and birch woodland, lakes, ephemeral waters, areas of scrub and ruderal vegetation alongside rough grasslands, short amenity grasslands, grass sports pitches and hedgerows.

### Priority and Protected Species of relevance:

#### Mammals:

7 species of bat have been recorded on Wandsworth Common:

Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*), Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) and Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*). Bats require dark areas to roost, commute and forage. Features within Wandsworth Common suitable for roosting include surrounding buildings, trees and standing deadwood. Bats will commute along linear features such as the woodland edges, hedgerows, rivers and tree-lined footpaths and will forage over varying habitats including woodland, grasslands and waterbodies. Further there are records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and shrew (*Sorex araneus*) are present associated with woodland and scrub habitats. These are also highly active at night.

#### Amphibians:

3 species of amphibian have been recorded on Wandsworth Common:

Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) & Smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*). These amphibian species will use both the lake and ephemeral ponds on the common to breed as well as feeding in the immediate surrounding woodlands, scrub, hedgerows and grasslands.

#### Invertebrates:

Priority and protected invertebrates on the common fall into groups associated with key habitat types. Bees, wasps, ants, butterflies and sawflies are typically associated with the acid grassland habitats on the common. Recorded species on the common include butterfly species (*Lycaena phlaeas*, *Ochlodes sylvanus*, *Satyrrium w-album*, *Thymelicus lineola*, *Thymelicus sylvestris*), dragonfly species (*Sympetrum striolatum*, *Lestes dryas*, *Somatochlora metallica*) and Stag Beetle (*Lucanidae*). Butterflies and moths are most associated with the grassland areas onsite as well as along hedgerows and woodland edges. Dragonflies will further use the lake habitats onsite. Beetles are associated with dead and decaying wood found either within woodland compartments or with individual monoliths or fallen dead wood.

### Birds:

A large number of bird species are associated with the common. The most pertinent for consideration here are those that are associated with the areas intended to host events which includes various thrush species (*Turdidae*), starlings (*Sturnus*), and gull species (*Chroicocephalus*, *Hydrocoloeus*, *Larus*) which forage on areas of open amenity grass and grass sports pitches. Other priority and protected species recorded on the common using woodlands, scrub and grasslands are Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), Waxwing (*Bombycilla*), Swift (*Apus apus*) and Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*).

### Summary:

Guided by the characteristics of the known protected and priority species recorded on the common it can be demonstrated that the key habitats for consideration are acid grassland, woodlands, tree avenues and dead / decaying wood, long and short grasslands, waterbodies and surrounding habitats.

### Event Impacts:

Events are proposed to be held at 4 locations on the Common. Site 1 of these is the existing “events site” on ‘Bellevue Field’ where events have been a regular but intermittently recurring feature for over 20 years. This area is short amenity grass and notably includes acid grassland and bordering woodland to the West. Tree avenues boarder to the North and East with a lake and associated habitats to the immediate North (Appendix 1).

Site 2 proposed is an area of neutral grassland supporting wildflower and grassland species. Avenues of trees border the field to the North and South and include deadwood felled and standing (Appendix 2).

Site 3 proposed comprises of sports fields bordered to both the North and East by neutral grassland supporting wildflower and grassland species. Behind this grassland is woodland habitats with glades (Appendix 3).

Site 4 proposed is to the Northmost field on the common consisting of both sports fields and short amenity grass. The field is bordered on all sides by avenues of trees and borders and area of gorse scrub to the North (Appendix 4).

Across all sites there is therefore a need to ensure that permitted events are suitable to preserve and protect the physical integrity of these habitats along with minimising disturbance to sensitive priority and protected species.

Key potential impacts:

Physical damage to habitats via increased footfall, trampling and compaction from repeated, intense but intermittent high numbers of visitors travelling to and spectating on licensed events.

Repeated but intermittent light associated with licensed events & repeated but intermittent noise associated with licensed events.

Mitigation proposals:

Light: Should any event be proposed which requires temporary lighting for reasons of health and safety – such lighting will be designed in accordance with Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the ‘UK: Bats and the Built Environment series by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals’. Events where this cannot be achieved will not receiving booking approval from the Enable Events team.

Noise: It is proven in some bat species that anthropogenic noise can have negative effects on bat foraging – these impacts have been determined for species known to forage within the common (*Nyctalus noctule*, *Nyctalus leisler*). Site 2 neutral grassland and the woodland bordering site 3 both have recent records of both species and highlights these areas particularly susceptible anthropogenic noise. Events management at outdoor venues includes maximum thresholds for noise levels at 10m from the events site and includes regular noise monitoring throughout each event. Speakers etc are always directed with noise facing away from habitat areas known to support protected and priority species (e.g. with their “backs” to those biodiversity features). Events where noise cannot be appropriately directed will not receiving booking approval from the Enable Events team. Site 2 habitat areas known to support protected and priority species cover the entirety of the proposed events area and therefore noise mitigation would not be possible.

Physical damage: There will be a mixture of ticketed/fenced events and non-ticketed/non-fenced events. Both event types have the potential to impact upon key habitats on site 1 and proposed sites 2, 3 and 4.

Site 1 includes the commons acid grassland to the West. To protect this priority habitat in ticketed/fenced events, all event footfall, vehicles and structures should be excluded from this area at all times.

Site 2 habitat areas known to support protected and priority species cover the entirety of the proposed events area and therefore physical damage mitigation would not be possible.

Site 3 is bordered to both the North and East by neutral grassland supporting wildflower and grassland species. To protect this priority habitat in ticketed/fenced events, all event footfall, vehicles and structures should be excluded from this area at all times.

Site 4 southern end has been found to support brown letter hairstreak butterflies (*Thecla betulae*) at the southern end boarder of site 4. There is also scrub area bordering to the North highlighting the importance of events remaining in the footprint of short amenity grassland,

Non-ticketed/non-fenced events also have the potential to impact upon key habitats. The events team will make it mandatory for any such event to submit a pedestrian traffic management plan to demonstrate that that access routes to or between the event sites do not travel through habitats and to ensure that measures are in place to prevent “overspill” which would otherwise lead to trampling or compaction.

Conclusion:

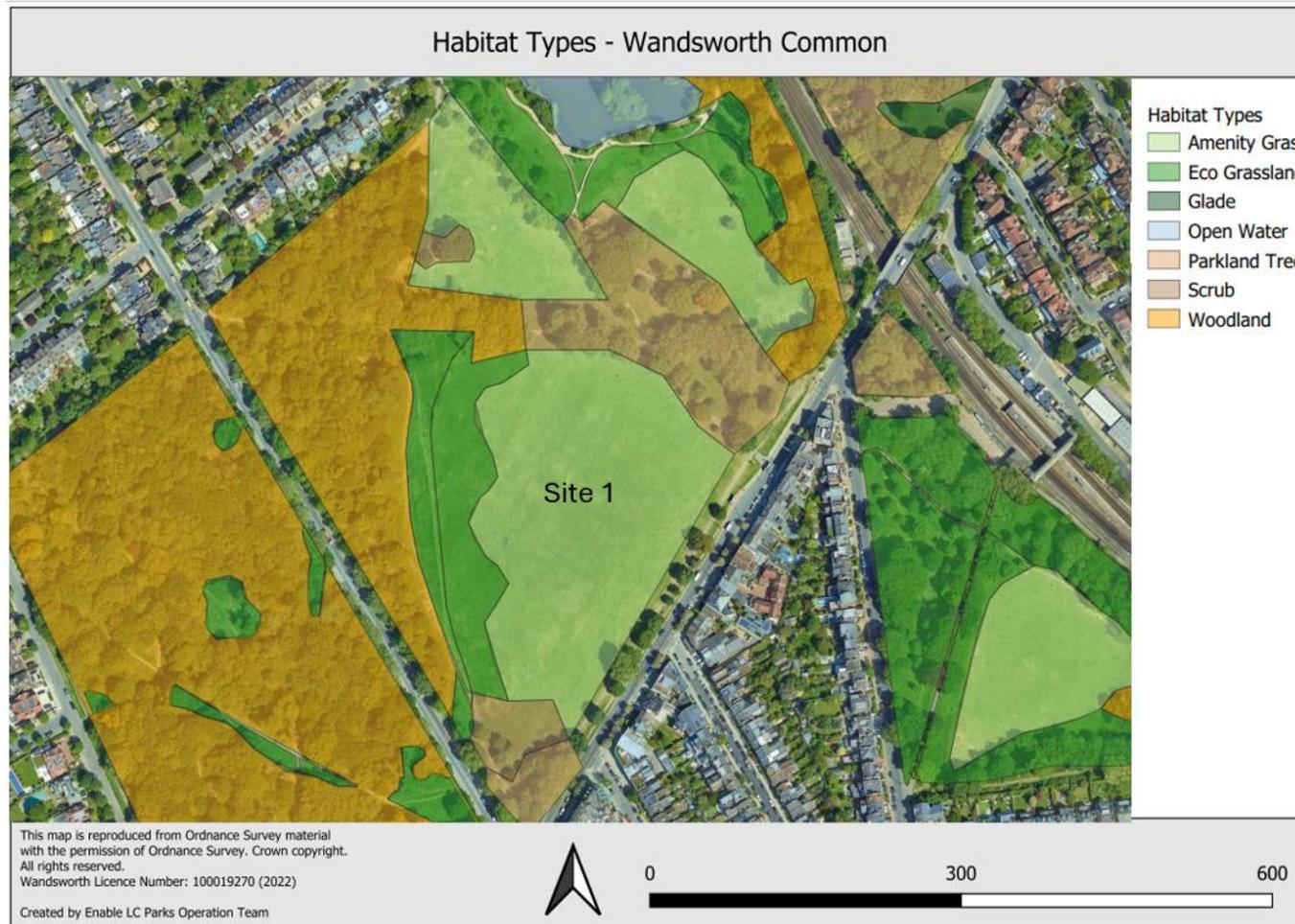
I am therefore satisfied that the licensing of events at this site on sites 1, 3 and 4 should not be detrimental to the continued regular use of the site by protected and priority species. I also conclude that licencing of events on site 2 would be detrimental to the continued regular use of the site by protected and priority species and would not be suitable.

Yours sincerely



Owen Dodgson  
Parks Delivery Manager

Appendix 1:



Appendix 2:



Appendix 3:



Appendix 4:

