



Sevenoaks Greensand Commons Project

Local commons are set for improvements after Sevenoaks District Council, together with Kent Wildlife Trust and other partners, secured £483,600 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Sevenoaks Greensand Commons Project. Including match funding the project has a value of just over £685,000.

The project aims to reinstate the historical Commons as important and valuable spaces for people and wildlife with the help of local volunteers.

Thanks must go to the very many people locally who contributed so positively to the consultation walks and surveys carried out as part of the successful bid. There was a strong groundswell of support for the project that enabled the Project Development Officer to put together a comprehensive proposal that can be effectively delivered, and improved upon, with the continued involvement of so many local people.

The Sevenoaks Greensand Commons include Hosey, Farley, Crockham Hill, Bitchet and Fawke Commons, Seal Chart, Redhill Wood, Sevenoaks and Sevenoaks Weald Commons. They are some of the most beautiful, wild places in the south-east, providing an important habitat for animals, including some rare species, but in recent years they have become overgrown and little used.

Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, the Greensand Commons Project will help restore the landscape, improve footpaths and bridleways and provide new, clearer signage.

Crucially the project will support local volunteers to take a lead role in the on-going management of the Commons, their conservation and promotion of their heritage.

While much of the area is dominated by woodland, there are sections of rare acid grassland and heath habitat. A rich variety of wildlife is also present. Hosey Common, for example, includes the former Westerham Mines complex, which is now used by hibernating bats and is nationally important.

With three part-time staff set to join the project, work is scheduled to begin later this autumn. There will also be four apprentices over the lifetime of the project.

Cllr Matthew Dickins, Sevenoaks District Council's Cabinet Member for Direct and Trading Services, says: *"With this National Lottery funding, we'll now be able to crack on with rejuvenating these much loved-commons, opening up their history, flora and fauna and natural beauty for the enjoyment of all."*

“I very much look forward to continuing to work with the community who have already given so much time, expertise and passion to this important project.”

More information, including volunteering opportunities, visit the project pages on the Kent Wildlife Trust website: <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/our-projects/sevenoaks-greensand-commons>.

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