



**Epping Forest  
Heritage Trust**

# **Strategy 2022-2025**

# Introduction

Epping Forest is a hugely important ancient Forest, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation, with iron age camps, 1,000 year old trees and rare woodland pasture habitats. It is owned and managed by the City of London Corporation, who as Conservators have a duty to preserve the Forest, and loved by local communities as well as visitors from further afield.

An integral part of our strategy is to work in partnership with the Conservators to educate and inspire people about the Forest, to conserve and grow the Forest, and to advocate on behalf of the Forest, acting as a critical friend to the Conservator when necessary.

Epping Forest now faces the gravest threats that it has seen since it was first protected in 1878.

Climate change, high levels of pollution and loss of biodiversity threaten its flora and fauna; neighbouring development, including plans to build 68,000 housing units in its vicinity threaten its resilience to increased visitor numbers; budget cuts mean conservation, habitat improvement and maintenance is curtailed and biodiversity is reduced.

At the same time the Forest has the potential to help us tackle the crucial issues of our time: it helps us tackle climate change by reducing temperatures and capturing carbon; it provides a vital amenity for people's health and wellbeing as a space to walk, cycle, ride, relax and enjoy.

It is essential that we protect and preserve the Forest not just for our own current enjoyment, but also for generations to come, and for the sake of the planet. We set out below the vital role we believe Epping Forest Heritage Trust has in doing just that.

# 1. Our vision

A thriving Forest, rich in biodiversity, heritage and culture; enjoyed and conserved now and for generations to come.

# 2. Our mission

To protect, conserve, grow and celebrate the Forest's biodiversity, heritage and culture, and engage, educate and inspire other people to do the same.



# 3. Our values

Our values underpin our approach to all our work

a) **Inclusive.**

We believe everyone should be able to enjoy the Forest responsibly, and everyone should be able to participate in our work. We want to encourage people and communities who do not currently visit the Forest to do so.

b) **Collaborative.**

We want to collaborate with other people and organisations to optimise delivery of our mission.

c) **Trustworthy.**

We will be open and honest in all our work, give evidence-based advice and be clear about our areas of expertise and where others may be better able to help.

d) **Sustainable.**

We will work to reduce our environmental impact, and encourage others to do the same.



## 4. Our beliefs

a)

That the Forest is **irreplaceable** due to its biodiversity, heritage and culture, and that it should be protected and preserved for **generations to come**.

b)

That the **Forest is good for people**. It is good for their health and well-being, from encouraging people to be physically active to connecting them with nature, history and culture.

c)

That interaction between people and the Forest is essential for **both to flourish**, but this interaction needs to be carefully balanced.

d)

That the Forest should be **accessible** to everyone to **enjoy responsibly**.

e)

That the Forest contributes to the health of the planet. It helps **tackle the climate emergency**, captures carbon and produces oxygen. The more biodiverse it is, the more resilient it is to climate change.

f)

That **pollution** in and around the Forest needs **to be reduced** to protect its biodiversity.

g)

That more needs to be done to encourage **sustainable transport** to, from and around the Forest.



## 5. Strategic objectives

### Educate & inspire

We will educate and inspire people about Epping Forest

### Conserve & grow

We will do hands on work to conserve and grow the Forest

### Protect

We will protect the Forest through research, engagement and advocacy

# 6. Theory of change



## Strategic objective 2:

we will do hands on work to conserve and grow the Forest

### Programme of work

#### a) Green Team, Happy Loppers, others

We will run hands-on conservation projects to increase the biodiversity of the Forest and engage people in its conservation

#### b) Funded programmes

We will work to grow the Forest, secure and grow the Buffer Lands, and support appropriate planting of the Buffer lands

### Aim

Develop people's knowledge of, and care for, the Forest

Improve the health and well-being of people involved

Directly improve the biodiversity of the Forest

Demonstrate the impact of high quality conservation work

Directly improve the biodiversity of the Forest

Inform our conservation policy work with hands on experience

Enable the Conservators to optimise the use of their resources

Safeguard the existing Buffer Lands and help to create more Forest and Buffer Lands to protect Epping Forest itself from the impacts of adjacent development and increased usage

Make available a wider area of Forest to enjoy, spreading the burden of increased usage across a larger area, and therefore protecting Epping Forest itself

Enable the Conservators to optimise the use of their resources through supporting the appropriate planting and conservation of existing Buffer Lands

Make conversations about the Forest positive and forward-looking

### Strategic objective 3:

we will protect the Forest through research, engagement and advocacy

## Programme of work

### a) Funded knowledge hub / research

We will be expert on conservation research and policy relevant to Epping Forest

### b) Epping Forest Consultative Group / member consultation / surveys etc

We will engage with the public and local stakeholders in relation to public policy in relation to the Forest

### c) Planning applications/ Local plan consultations/ local elections/ Epping Forest & Commons Committee etc

We will advocate on behalf of the Forest to the City of London Corporation, neighbouring local authorities and other stakeholders

### d) Policy and delivery work to encourage sustainable transport with CoLC/others/ CoLC TFL signage project

We will champion sustainable transport to, from and around the Forest in order to reduce pollution and protect the Forest's biodiversity and enjoyment by the public

## Aim

Help the public, politicians and policymakers make the best decisions about the Forest

Ensure we understand the needs and desires of local communities as well as the needs of the Forest

Generate more public support for the Forest

Ensure politicians and policymakers have the Forest front-of-mind when they are making decisions

Engage people in issues that affect the Forest, and encourage them to stand with us to protect the Forest

Ensure inclusion and accessibility are at the heart of decision-making about the Forest moving forward

Reduce the negative impacts of pollution, traffic and noise on the Forest by enabling people to visit and travel around the Forest without causing damage to it

Enable more people to safely visit the Forest and care about it

Reduce levels of pollution around the Forest, supporting its biodiversity

## 7. Embedding our values

We believe we will optimise our impact by embedding our values in all our work. We give examples here

### Inclusion

By putting inclusion at the heart of our work we will enable more people to enjoy the Forest, to contribute to our conservation projects and our advocacy work. This will strengthen our work and the outcomes we deliver.

For example – Happy Loppers; Magpie Project.

### Collaboration

We will optimise our impact if we work effectively with others.

For example – Big Walk with the Ramblers and CoLC; sustainable transport to the Forest with CoLC, local boroughs, TfL; work with local groups such as WREN; CPRE London.

### Trustworthy

Through doing what we say we will do and being a trusted source of advice to the public and partners. We will build our reputation and profile so that we are able to build our collaborations and our advice is given more weight.

### Sustainability

As part of a world that is responding to climate change, and where our charitable objectives are about caring for a precious ancient Forest, it is essential that we minimise our negative impact on the environment and encourage others to do the same.

## 8. The need for ongoing protection and preservation of the Forest

We believe that the Forest is currently facing unprecedented threats and will continue to face these and other threats for the foreseeable future. These threats include neighbouring development, high levels of pollution, high levels of usage and climate change.

In order for the Forest to be conserved and protected now, and for generations to come, we believe that the work we have set out in our strategic plan will be needed on an ongoing basis. The Forest will need people to care for it and advocate on its behalf for years to come.

Our approach is therefore to develop programmes of work that are sustainable long into the future.

As an organisation that means that over the next 3 years we are planning to invest our reserves in a thoughtful and measured way to ensure that we are able to deliver our strategic objectives in the longer term.

We will aim to maintain at least six months full operating costs from time to time as reserves. We will work to reduce our environmental impact, and encourage others to do the same.

In order to achieve that we will:

Grow membership, supporters and partnerships (*e-mail & hard copy newsletter; member benefits; fundraising; partnerships; grants*)

Modernise our processes and systems (*website, CRM*)

Develop our staff and volunteer team (*training, development*)

Raise our profile through all of our activities (*PR, website, social*)

Strengthen our governance (*diversify and strengthen our Board*)

Work in close partnership with the City of London Corporation and other stakeholders

**The Warren Lodge  
Loughton  
Essex  
IG10 4RN  
Tel: 020 8508 9061**

**[enquiries@efht.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@efht.org.uk)  
[www.efht.org.uk](http://www.efht.org.uk)**

Epping Forest Heritage Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales 275076 and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales 1339783. Registered office: The Warren Lodge, Loughton, Essex IG 10 4RN

   **EppingForestHT**



**Epping Forest  
Heritage Trust**