



# FRIENDS OF HATTON FIELDS

## VISION STATEMENT

Hatton Fields is a valued asset to the communities of Bedfont, Hatton and beyond. The fields act as green belt separation in between Bedfont and Hatton villages and provide a much-needed buffer of green space between residential properties and London Heathrow airport. We have an opportunity to enhance and develop these fields as an interconnected, environmentally friendly and biodiverse area to the benefit of the residents, wildlife and the local community.

Rather than the proposed Airport Business Park, the Friends of Hatton Fields would like to see these fields and neighbouring community services enhanced as follows:

1. Support **Bedfont FC** in offering youth club opportunities by helping to find volunteers and advertise any clubs on Friends of Hatton Fields platforms. This club is self-funded and sits on the edge of Hatton fields. Friends of Hatton Fields believe it could be an even stronger, long term community asset for the local population if we work together to reach young people. We would like to connect Friends of Hatton Fields groups and the allotment community with Bedfont FC to capitalise on collaboration opportunities (youth volunteering at allotments for example, dog walkers using the social club and hall space for gatherings, community hire of the hall).
2. **Maintain horse fields and Flights stables** and consider ways for the horse owners and stables to be more accessible to the local community. Already Flights Stables organise local charity events and provide free manure to the local community. Horses have been on these fields for decades and the children of local residents enjoy going to the fields to see them. This acts as free education and encourages respect for the animals. Explore opportunities for communities to Meet the horses in collaboration with the horse owners and Flights Stables. Explore opportunities for qualified horse-riding lessons to be made available to the local community including consideration of horse therapy groups that could come and use the land for SEN children. These sections of the fields also act as important refuges for wildlife and feeding grounds for many birds of prey.
3. **Improve pathways** for our various Friends of Hatton Fields community users. There is widespread use of the wild fields accessible to the public at the Duke of Northumberland River end of this green belt and up to the periphery with Bedfont FC. Examples of community use: dog walking, walking, running/jogging, photography, nature walks, children play areas (unstructured), bird watching, horse riding. As mentioned above, a big draw of these fields for the local children is to see the horses. The pathways (installed by Hounslow Council) need some maintenance and **extra bins** would be beneficial. We would like to see consideration of some **benches** along the Duke of Northumberland and some limited clearing in places for access to sit by the river (balanced with minimal disturbance to the wildlife) as well as some benches on the fields behind Bedfont FC where dog walkers often congregate. Install **signs** to educate visitors – information on wildlife that can be seen. Mark out areas of wild meadow that might be home to nesting birds if left undisturbed. Establish a **trim trail** along pathways that run in parallel to Duke of Northumberland in response to the findings by Hounslow Council on local physical conditions where exercise could be part of the solution.

4. **Fruit tree planting** in public access areas. In years gone by, this land had an orchard of fruit trees. Friends of Hatton Fields would like to see fruit tree planting in public access areas which would give shelter in summer and winter months to both the community and the wildlife. We suggest this could be focused in the field directly next to the existing horse paddock which currently acts as a flood mitigation area, becoming very wet in heavy rain.
5. **Community garden.** While Hatton allotments are already installed, in order to increase community value and use, and to act as an education and learning opportunity for children at local schools, the Friends of Hatton Fields would like the council to consider an allocation of some of this land to a community garden of raised beds to grown vegetables and flowers. This is in alignment with the council's strategy as described in Hounslow Matters December 2022 edition. In order to not disturb the existing wildlife and wild characteristic of these fields, we would suggest this is kept to a small area near to Flights Stables who has already committed to supporting such a venture in providing manure to the garden. Exact location should be determined alongside a wildlife study in order to pick a location that has the least impact on wildlife habitat. We would like this community garden to be used by schools, Bedfont FC and the general public. We would encourage cultivation by seed in order to make the costs of running this garden free or minimal and the garden would include varieties whereby annual seed harvesting is possible. We would connect this community garden with the allotment holder community as well as Feltham in Bloom local group.
6. **Wildlife and nature reserve.** The community feels most strongly about the protection of these fields in order to protect the home of our wildlife. With the climate crisis and biodiversity needs of our planet, the Friends of Hatton Fields wants to see the wild characteristic of this land to continue and to be protected for future generations. Wildlife sightings on these fields and along the neighbouring stretch of the Duke of Northumberland include:
  - a. Barn owls
  - b. Bats
  - c. Red kites
  - d. Kestrel
  - e. Sparrow hawk
  - f. Various gulls
  - g. Parakeets
  - h. Sparrows
  - i. Starling
  - j. Nesting coot
  - k. Nesting moorhen
  - l. Nesting swan
  - m. Nesting ducks
  - n. Nesting kingfisher
  - o. Heron
  - p. Shelduck
  - q. Fox
  - r. Muntjac deer
  - s. Rabbits
  - t. Frogs, toads, common newts, slow worm, grass snake
  - u. Multiple species of pollinators – bees, wasps, dragonflies, butterflies

We would like this site to be assigned wildlife nature status. We would also like to enhance the wildlife at this location by providing bat boxes, bird boxes and feeders across the site.