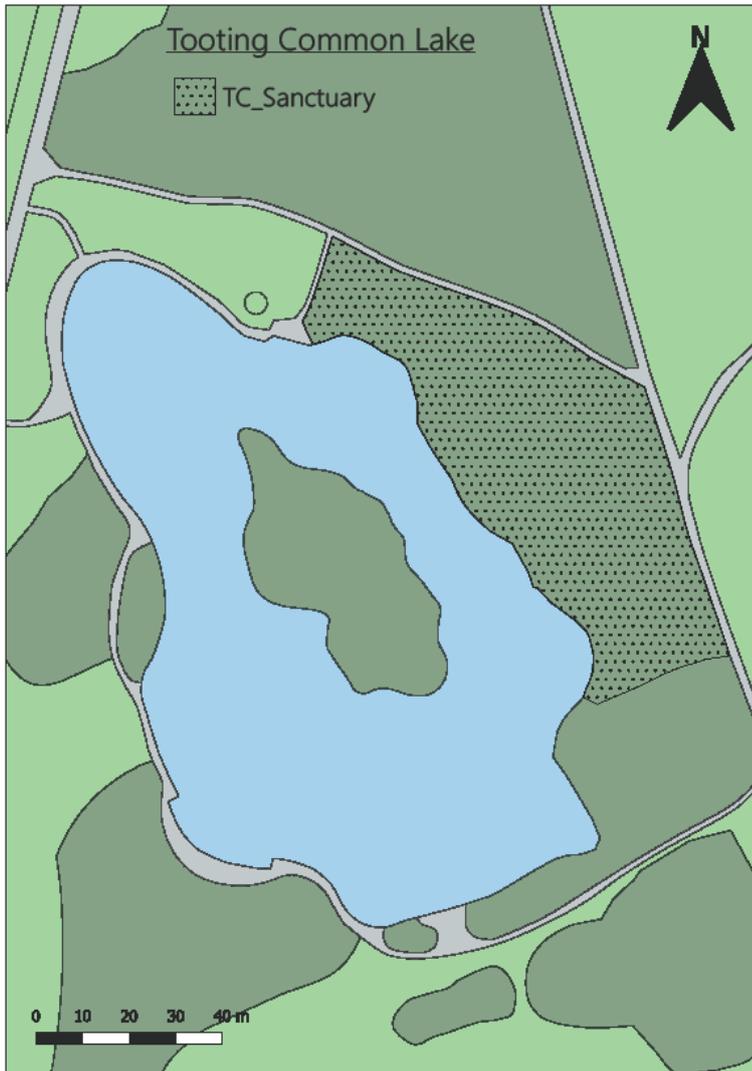


Tooting Common

Enhancement of Woodland on Eastern Edge of Lake

Contact Person and Details:	Parks@enablelc.org
Aims of Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce antisocial behaviour in this area, including littering, unauthorized fishing, drug use and drinking, by opening up the area thus reducing secluded feel. • Improve understory vegetation by increasing light levels and steering footfall along pathways. • Improve public understanding of lake/woodland habitats through interpretation boards. • Improve quality of aquatic vegetation along the lake edge through some tree lifting/thinning and dead hedges. • Provide improved refuges for amphibians through creation of underground hibernacula.
Delivery Partners:	Continental Landscapes KPS Tree Surgeons Enable LC Parks Biodiversity Officer and Tree Officer Friends of Tooting Common and TCMAC
Timeframe:	Autumn/Winter 2022-2024
Project Description	
Background:	

The area in question has previously been referred to as 'The Bird Sanctuary', and historically was fenced off to exclude the public from this area. A map of the area is shown below. The reasons for why this was done, and when are unknown, and large sections of the fence have now been removed through vandalism. In recent years, attempts have been made to reinstate fencing using dead hedges, and chestnut paling, however these have been unsuccessful through further vandalism and destruction of these structures. In 2019, dead hedges were destroyed within 2 weeks of being built.



Due to the clandestine nature of this area (secluded, partially fenced, dark, no sight lines), it attracts antisocial behaviour, including littering, drug taking, illegal fishing, and excessive alcohol drinking.

The understory of this area is not able to establish for various reasons including trampling, compacted soil, and lack of light (tree canopies). Lake edge vegetation growth is also impeded by tree canopies over-

hanging the lake edge. Leaf fall from these trees is also adding nutrients to the water when they decompose, and adding to the silt within the lake.

Evidence of need:

Within the Management and Maintenance Plan, the following actions are highlighted:

- Maintain visibility into and across the Common where appropriate/at specific points to encourage public surveillance. Carry out vegetation management in accordance with the maintenance schedule. Ensure that good sightlines are maintained to provide good views of traffic and allow public surveillance.
- Provide ecological and biodiversity information for visitors including historic land management practices.
- Re-naturalise the Lake. Investigate options for re-naturalising enhancements to the Lake and its management. Consider timber stakes and chicken wire with horizontal wires at intervals with coir rolls surrounding future marginal planting to protect from waterfowl and allow establishment. Surrounding zoned scrub clearance should be carried out in tandem.
- Encourage dead wood habitat within the Common. Retain standing dead wood and dead wood piles where it does not conflict with health and safety concerns and does not form part of formal designed areas including tree avenues. This will help to encourage invertebrates, fungi and birds and conform with the Picturesque style in keeping with parts of the Common.

Details of proposal: We propose that the following actions are undertaken, to fulfil the objectives listed above in the MMP, and to enhance the area for biodiversity, and the enjoyment of the public:

- Remove the dilapidated fencing around the area. (N.B Some hedges surround the area which will be retained, and continue to be managed for biodiversity.)
- Thin out selected trees through the area and use the timber to create [underground hibernacula](#) and [deadwood piles/logger](#). These will benefit amphibians and invertebrates through providing over-wintering nesting/hibernation sites.
- Dead hedges will also be situated along the front edge of the woodland, to act as a visual and physical barrier to prevent dogs/people entering the water, to minimise disturbance to nesting wildfowl, and to protect the aquatic vegetation.
- Timber will be used to demarcate a route through the area and encourage the public to stay on one path. An example of the style is shown below. This work will allow areas of vegetation to recover.



- Some supplementary understory planting may be necessary to increase low level vegetation cover. Species such as gorse, broom, hawthorn and hazel would be suitable and can be managed to keep sightlines clear.
- During works, temporary information notices will be displayed to explain the work being carried out. In the longer term, educational interpretation in a style matching the existing interpretation panels on the Common should be installed to provide further information to the public about the management of the area. This wider interpretation project would most likely require external funding

Timeframe for the work:

Work needs to be undertaken in the winter, to minimise the risk of disturbing nesting birds. Fence clearance and initial tree thinning will be carried out in winter 2021/22 (November – February). This work will be undertaken by Continental Landscapes, under the supervision of the Parks Biodiversity Officer, and by KPS Tree Surgeons, under the supervision of the Tree Officer.

The creation of loggeries, deadwood piles and hibernacula can be undertaken by volunteers from the Friends of Tooting Common, MAC and other users of the park (possibly fishermen, Lido members). This work will happen after the tree thinning works have been completed.

Expected Outcomes

- Reduce antisocial behaviour in this area, including littering, unauthorized fishing, drug use and drinking, by opening up the area thus reducing secluded feel.
- Improve understory vegetation by increasing light levels and steering footfall along pathways.
- Improve public understanding of lake/woodland habitats through interpretation.
- Improve quality of aquatic vegetation along the lake edge through some tree lifting/thinning.
- Provide improved refuges for amphibians through creation of underground hibernacula.