



BEDDINGTON FARMLANDS – DELIVERING CONSERVATION AND PUBLIC ACCESS
A Wandle Valley Forum note for Sutton Council’s Housing, Economy & Business Committee
March 2021

1. Wandle Valley Forum provides support and an independent voice for over 140 community groups, voluntary organisations and local businesses and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle.
2. We welcome the continuing focus of Sutton Council on delivery of the commitments to provide conservation benefits and public access at Beddington Farmlands following our 2019 petition. Viridor’s progress continues to be too slow and is well behind schedule. There is virtually no public access to the site and the results of the Beddington Farmlands Bird and Wildlife Report 2020 “*show an overall declining situation*”. The situation for the ten target species targeted by the Conservation Management Scheme is “*dire*” with eight out of ten in decline. Beddington Farmlands has been highlighted as one of ten potential new parks for London by CPRE London and the Save the Lapwings petition has attracted a remarkable 66,000+ supporters. Public awareness of the importance of the site and demands for better access has accelerated with significant increases in the numbers using the “permissive path” and wildlife hides. The high demand for using the path and hides during COVID-19 is testament to its public value.
3. The officers’ report for the Committee confirms the continuing problems with ensuring Viridor meets its obligations to Beddington Farmlands. It shows delays in delivery of key habitats, including acid grassland and wet grassland, and failures to manage the site. Trees have been planted and allowed to die, twice, the new warden hasn’t been provided with tools and no restoration plan has been provided since 2019. The quality of public information provided is derisory.
4. Wandle Valley Forum does not agree with the view that enforcement action cannot be taken prior to December 2023. Where it is evident that planning conditions will not be delivered by this date then earlier action can be taken.
5. We welcome the progress that is being made to provide public access to the site and its delivery should be before 2023. It is important that the new public access is linked to actions by Sutton Council and others that also provide East/West access across the site between Beddington Lane and London Road, additional access to Beddington Park and new access across the land west of the railway by the new Hackbridge Primary School.
6. We support the recommendations for substantial commencement of the restoration plans and a clear project plan for delivery of all the remaining work by 2023. Additionally we seek:
 - Enforcement action to commence where delivery by December 2023 is already not possible
 - Delivery of the commitments to new public access within 12 months
 - Improved public communication of what is happening on site and how the public can get involved
 - Action to deliver additional access in the wider area
 - Continuing scrutiny with a requirement for a progress report at least every six months until all the remaining work has been complete
 - An invitation to contribute to and speak at future meetings

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