



As part of our wider commitment to improving environmental quality, we have responsibility to conserve and, where possible, enhance biodiversity on land we own. We own and manage 44 operational sites, including 19 water treatment works. Sites are located in a variety of habitats including chalk downland, river catchments, coastal margins and includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the Itchen Water Treatment Works.

The Biodiversity Action Plans produced for each site we own are now currently under review. In 2012 a local botanical specialist was appointed to survey six of the highest priority sites and give advice on habitat management. The surveys produced an impressive list of plants including abundant cowslips, helleborines and four other species of orchids, which is a testament to the good management of our sites. The advice of the consultant is being reviewed and a number of the recommendations have already been implemented.

Significant biodiversity improvements have been completed at the Itchen Water Treatment Works one of our largest sites and includes:

- Staff working parties in summer 2012 to remove Himalayan Balsam
- Removing non-native trees
- Thinning the planted woodland block and coppicing an area of hazel woodland
- Planting native species of trees grown from local seed harvested in Hampshire

For every tree removed to allow solar arrays to be installed at our sites in 2011, volunteers have now planted two trees to replace them. This included creating a new hedgerow at the George Service Reservoir on Portsdown Hill. The tree guards used were recycled from a local nature reserve, adding to the sustainability of the project.



**Hampshire & Isle of Wight  
Wildlife Trust**  
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.

**water for wildlife**

## Recreation and Access

**Staunton Country Park:** The proposed Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir site is owned by us but managed through an agreement with Hampshire County Council as part of the Staunton Country Park. In 2013 we extended the tenancy to enable the whole of the 167 hectare site to be managed by the Staunton Rangers. The site includes a public bridleway and network of permissive paths through woodland and grassland.

In November 2012 we led a partnership project to provide a new path across our land to link the Forestry Commission woodland at Havant Thicket to Staunton Country Park, opening up 10km of all weather off road tracks for walking, mobility scooters and cycling. The project involved moving a fence to provide more space for the path, trimming vegetation, clearing out an old ditch to improve water drainage, and constructing a 2.5m wide all weather surfaced path.

**Highwood Reservoir:** The raw water storage reservoir site owned by us is located within the popular Itchen Valley Country Park operated by Eastleigh Borough Council. The site is not fenced and is open to the general public, with a circular permissive path around the reservoir. In 2011 scrub clearance work helped to open up the circular path and improved the habitat for wildlife.

At other company sites there is limited access via public footpaths and bridleways. Special arrangements have been made for access at:

- The Itchen Water Treatment Works to enable schools, universities and other organised groups to participate in educational visits
- The Clanfield Service Reservoir site for the Hampshire Astronomical Society who organise a number of visits for the benefit of its members. Small groups of members of the public are able to visit by prior arrangement with the Society

