

Sands Bank

Local Nature Reserve

2025-26



Bucks BAP Priority & BCUTB Key Species

Target Species

Grizzled Skipper

2025 transect data shows this species has declined despite it being an otherwise good year for butterflies. We are starting to address this by planting the caterpillar foodplant Wild Strawberry and creating more open bare ground – scraping off fire sites. Also cattle help poach the ground with their hooves. We will create some more bare earth later in the year by removing dogwood regeneration with mattocks and tree poppers.



Chalkhill & Adonis Blue

Populations are stable but not in huge numbers. Ultimately, we need more Horseshoe Vetch - the caterpillar's only foodplant. It's hard to propagate and we have been trying at our Community Wildflower Nursery. If this does not succeed we will need to invest and buy some.



White-letter Hairstreak

We planted Wych Elm in the bottom left corner by the overflow car park this autumn and will add a few each year around the boundary. White-letter Hairstreak are usually seen at the top woodland edge near the 5-bar gate.



Common Blue, Green Hairstreak & Dingy Skipper

We would like to plant some Bird's-foot trefoil to support these species.



Duke of Burgundy

This iconic species is one of the UK's rarest but isn't present at Sands...yet. However, it is close by in the Chilterns at sites in Bradenham & Saunderton. We will plant some cowslips here for it as we hope it spreads local in the coming years. We are working at over 12 sites nearby for this species it may even be a candidate for reintroduction in the coming years maybe at Buttler's Hangings too...now that would be quite something.



Overview



VOLUNTEERS

334 volunteers have been out to Sands Bank this year.

128 of the volunteers who joined us were under 18.

In addition, 234 school children joined us at our school sessions for over 660 hours!

Our wonderful volunteers joined us for a total of 1,521 hours.



COMMUNITY GROUPS

We were delighted to welcome:

Juniper Hill, Disraeli, Carrington Junior, Booker Hill & Gt Marlow Schools

Amicus, Symrise, J&J & Origin
Bucks Council
Butterfly Conservation UTB

Florence Nightingale Hospice

WWFC Foundation



ENVIRONMENTAL OUTPUTS

In addition to clearing 1400m2 of scrub, we also:

Cleared litter

Maintained footpaths

Planted 150 wildflowers

Installed 4 bird boxes

Planted 3 Wych Elm

Took groups on guided walks of the nature reserve.



Overview

The work has delivered really well so far this season and we will hopefully continue to deliver sessions until the end of March 2026.

Grazing is an issue as the water supplier won't put it on during winter in case it freezes – apparently some pipes are above ground and understandably they don't want bursts. So we have to reconsider that. We are on the case, maybe some sheep might be beneficial for winter grazing, they drink far less and we can keep the troughs filled manually if required.

We are looking for a local farmer/grazier who could help – perhaps someone in your world could help?

Ultimately, cattle are key though. They graze it differently and they add so much more ecologically with dung and poaching of the ground which creates niche conditions for plants & invertebrates that can't really be replicated.

A late winter/early spring cattle graze in Feb/March will suffice and then get them on earlier in Sept/Oct, getting them off site in November so we can cut scrub and have fires!



What's next?

There's still a lot to do!
In 2026-27 we want...

—● **More scrub bashing!**



—● **Butterfly food planting**



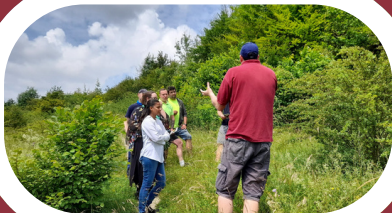
—● **up to 10 conservation sessions**



—● **2 days Contractor cutting (James Day)**



—● **Guided walks**



And not forgetting:

- Creation of a wildlife scrape
- Grazing
- Surveys
- Return of the Duke of Burgundy?!

