

## Friends fund four conservation projects

By Ron Crompton

The Friends are partnering with the Visitor Centre and The Royal Parks to provide £70,000 in funding for four conservation projects in the Park.



The largest, funded partly by a donation from Thames Water, is the next phase of the Beverley Brook restoration. This will be on the stretch opposite Roehampton Gate car park, where the stream from Pen Ponds enters the brook. The present stone and concrete will be removed, the banks re-naturalised, a new backwater habitat for fish created and a kingfisher nest bank installed. The horse track crossing and nearby pedestrian bridge over the stream will be replaced and a new gauge board measuring the height of the brook installed. The work will be done this summer.

We have also agreed to create an annual fund for small-scale improvement schemes and maintenance work to the recently restored stretch of Beverley Brook. The first such scheme – to put more large woody material in the water to create a more natural stream – was completed last autumn.

The third project is to put up a new deer fence in Pen Ponds Plantation, where Friends volunteers have been working to remove rhododendron. As this has been removed, a new perimeter hedge has been planted, with a mix of hawthorn, sloe, briar rose, rowan and willow, creating a habitat for birds and insects. The hedge needs protection on its interior side from deer, which get into the plantation from Pen Ponds. There will also be a new wetland habitat where the fence meets Pen Ponds, with reeds and other marginal vegetation similar to Adam's Pond.



Finally, we are funding new metal fencing on the west side of Upper Pen Ponds to protect the shoreline and breeding waterfowl. This was put up in the autumn and is already allowing the regrowth of vegetation that will provide a screen for the breeding birds.

*Top photo: Stream from Pen Ponds meets Beverley Brook courtesy of South East Water Trust.  
Bottom photo: Fencing at Upper Pen Ponds*