

Proposed projects for 2024 to be funded by the Freehold Tenants

1. St Helena - Restoration of views of the Rocks from London Road

This is a project which is designed to re-expose the beauty and majesty of the rocks upon which St Helena sits. The focus will be entirely upon the eastern side of the rocks which can be seen from the London Road.

The project will include:

1. Removal of all lower tree and shrub (elder and bramble) growth at the immediate base of the rock face by the side of the road. It will NOT expose the old blocked up entrance to the cave/stables or re-establish any form of access path between St Helena and Gibraltar Cottage.
2. Slightly crown-lift the Scots Pine by removing the two lower branches which currently obscure the face and shape of the rocks.
3. Remove the large Sycamore (to the right of the Scots pine) to ground level and leave all timber and debris as a combined barrier/natural habitat pile. It will be spread sufficiently to ensure that it is not visible from the road, and it will be subsumed by the naturally occurring brambles which are already present.



2. Mount Edgecumbe Rocks - Feasibility Study for Restoration of Historic Pond

Historically there was a pond of some description at the base of the rocks. It features in paintings of the Common by Charles Tattershall Dodd. It would be delightful Aesthetically to restore the pond if possible. The proposal at this stage is simply a research/feasibility project which will:

1. Research all available historical information about the pond and its precise location. This part of the project is not expected to necessarily have any cost as the community will be asked to assist. This might perhaps be the Museum and/or TW Civic Society.
2. Consult with TWBC Planning Dept to determine what permissions might be required.

3. Investigate the feasibility of restoring the pond in some way. This would involve digging test trenches/pits and/or creating auger holes in several locations. This would be undertaken in line with any planning requirements. There would also potentially be a need for hard covers to be purchased in order stop the public from falling into planned holes. The test trenches/auger holes would need to be left in place from Spring to September to assess how well/long they hold water. The results would then determine whether any potential pond would be feasible.
4. The outcome of the feasibility project would be used to inform Conservators so that a decision might be made about whether to proceed with a formal project to restore the pond.



Pond under Mount Edgcumbe Rocks, water-colour, c.1860.

3. Wildlife Scrape at (Rusthall Village) end of the Tarry Path.

This project creates a new secluded scrape/glade adjacent to Coach Road and the Tarry Path. It will take advantage of what is already an extremely wet area of woodland and would be of significant benefit to allow for the potential spread across the Commons of Great Crested Newts and other amphibians and reptiles. The scrape/glade would increase and improve biodiversity and wildlife value.

The project will have two key components as follows:

1. Creation of a small glade around the area of the scrape. This will be undertaken in-house by the Ranger with the help of volunteers.
2. Digging of the scrape will require a contractor using a digger for a period of two days.

4. Restoration and installation/improvement of the existing 'path' from the Langton Road through to the Beacon.

This project aims to significantly improve an existing 'path' to make it available to walkers all year round and in all weathers. Also, the proposal should for possibly the first time, allow year-round disabled access.

By connecting with the Happy Valley path this newly improved path provides the potential to allow walkers to travel all the way from the Rusthall Road/Langton Road junction, via St Paul's Church, along Happy Valley and then to the entrance of Langton Green on the Langton Road.

5. Eales Terrace phase 2 (towards Apsley Street).

In February 2023 the Friends of the Common funded a project to clear the overgrown trees at the Denny Bottom end of Eales Terrace. It is now proposed that the Apsley Street end of the rocks and slope be selectively cleared to expose the rocks and so significantly improve the wildlife value and aesthetic beauty of the area.

6. Happy Valley Vistas Improvements/ Restoration

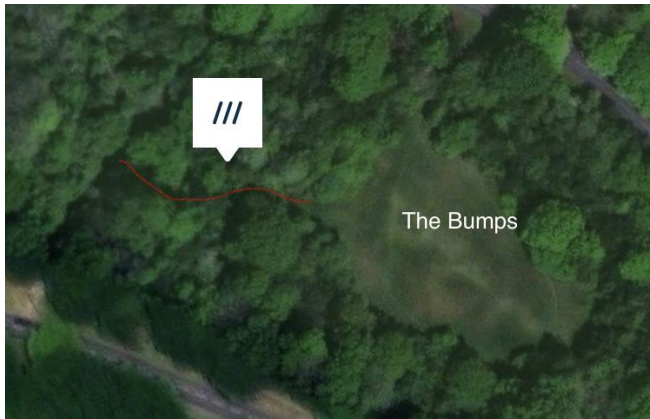
This project will focus on carefully selecting low birch trees for removal and crown lifting of other trees such as beech/oak to provide walkers on the top path with the most beautiful views.

The project will be undertaken in part by the Ranger with the help of volunteers, but the higher risk trees will be worked upon by contractors.

7. Improve aesthetic quality and wildlife value of Bumps Path towards Tarry Pond.

This project will widen the sides of a section of the path between the Bumps and the Tarmac path to the West (see image).

By selectively removing poor quality sycamore and holly it will be possible to create a significantly improved vista from and of the path. This project will also improve the wildlife corridor/connectivity which will allow for a better grass/wildflower layer. This will in turn attract more pollinators, birds and bats.



8. Laurel Eradication

Two days using a professional invasive species (INNS) control expert to help keep this highly pernicious species under control.