

Ranil Jayawardena MP visits HLF supported RSPB reserve at Hazeley Heath

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Ranil Jayawardena MP discussing the work being undertaken at the reserve

Member of Parliament for North East Hampshire, Ranil Jayawardena MP, visited the RSPB reserve at Hazeley Heath to see how, thanks to National Lottery players, a programme of habitat conservation and public engagement is underway.

Mr Jaywaradena was able to see on the visit how the project is making a real difference to the local environment, and meet the people responsible for making that happen.

In 2013, HLF awarded £859,900 to the RSPB for work on the Hazeley Heath, which forms part of the internationally important Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. It is recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and is habitat for a range of important species.

[quote=Ranil Jayawardena MP]"It's all too easy to miss this wildlife haven on our own doorstep and Hazeley Heath is a fantastic place to visit"[/quote]

Natural England's last report on the condition of the heath indicated that it was 'Unfavourable'. However, working with Hart District Council and through the Hazeley Heath Consultative Group, the RSPB has purchased the land and delivered a habitat restoration and management plan which aims to return the area to Natural England's 'Favourable' Condition within

five years.

As a new MP, being elected to represent North East Hampshire only a few months ago in May 2015, Mr Jayawardena grew up in Hook and now resides in Bramley, where he has lived for over a decade. With a strong local interest he wanted to visit the project and learn more about what HLF's funding will achieve.

He said of his visit: "I had a wonderful time visiting the Hazeley Heath RSPB Reserve. It is a unique patch of heathland; home to many rare species of plants, birds and animals, including nightjars, tree pipits, woodlarks and silver-studded blue butterflies."

In the South East alone HLF has funded 80 parks which is equivalent in size to two and a half Gatwick Airports, and we have supported enough landscape projects in the South East to cover an area larger than three and a half Isle of Wights. We have funded projects to help protect an amazing range of species and habitats across the South East from birds to bumblebees, red squirrels, natterjack toads, wildflower meadows and orchards.



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