



## PRESS RELEASE

**Date:** 8 July 2019

**Subject:** Virgin Media's on the Pull! Large business from Hook do their bit for the local environment

Earlier in June, it was National Volunteers' Week and Community First had a varied programme of events throughout the month. Community First were delighted to be asked by Virgin Media to organise a volunteer day for one of their teams from the Hook office, which has 1,200 employees.

The Hampshire Countryside Service welcomed their help at Yateley Common Country Park where there is always work to be undertaken. Yateley Common is a marvellous open space on the doorstep of the communities of Yateley and Blackwater, its dense network of bridleways and paths allows the public to explore its varied landscape. The Common comprises 193 hectares of heathland, woodland, grasslands and ponds. It is designated a site of special scientific interest and special protection area due to its importance for wildlife.

Martin Hare, Data Intelligence Manager, said, "Virgin Media encourages all of its teams to carry out charity work in the local area, and is a great opportunity to get the team working together improving the area for local people."

Andy Ashton, Senior Data Analyst, lives adjacent to Yateley Common and says, "It is great to be able to volunteer in the country park that I have grown up in. We spent the day cutting back the overgrown bushes along the access tracks: a couple of years ago, there was a major fire and so it is important to maintain the routes in and out of the Common."

Binz Chapman, Assistant Ranger at Yateley Common said "it's been great working with Community First who have organised a corporate volunteering day with Virgin Media. The teams were divided into two, with one team removing ragwort to help maintain the acid grassland and the other clearing tracks to maintain access. We are extremely grateful for the contribution that the volunteers from Virgin Media have made in helping to manage Yateley Common."

If you are a business who would like to volunteer like Virgin Media, contact Rachel Taylor at [Rachel.taylor@cfirst.org.uk](mailto:Rachel.taylor@cfirst.org.uk) or call 01730 774057.

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**Photos:**

The volunteers from Virgin Media, with Community First's Rachel Taylor (far left), and Yateley Common's Binz Chapman (far right):



### **Notes for Editors**

1. Communities First Wessex (known as Community First) provides support and advice to local voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises in order to build their capacity and ensure a thriving and successful voluntary sector across East Hampshire, Fareham, Havant and Winchester. We also provide a one stop shop for all aspects of volunteering; helping recruit and place volunteers throughout our local communities and providing specialist training for voluntary organisations.
2. Communities First Wessex also delivers critical community services including:
  - a. Community Transport and Dial a Ride in East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Winchester and Basingstoke
  - b. Shopmobility in Fareham, Havant and Chichester, and Winchester

Community First is the trading name of Communities First Wessex

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- c. Health and wellbeing services including surgery signposting with GP surgeries in Bordon, Fareham and Waterlooville, Walking 4 Health in Fareham, and a Home Help and a Gardening Service for vulnerable people in Fareham.
  - d. Support for Community Buildings and managing agents for Leigh Park Community Centre in Havant
  - e. Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling services
  - f. Specialist youth work including support for young people's mental health
  - g. Work and skills based training and support for unemployed people
  - h. Supported volunteering for people with a range of needs including mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, and those with a physical or mild learning disability.
3. Communities First Wessex employs 116 staff, has more than 80 regular volunteers and has a turnover of £2.6m. Its main sources of income are local authority and government grants and contracts, Big Lottery Fund and a range of charitable trusts.
4. For further information contact:  
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