

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Supports New Access



Providing access is an important way of enhancing public enjoyment of the countryside. HLS provides financial incentives for landowners to create new permissive access routes through particularly attractive tracts of their land. At Hurst Wood in Charing Heath, a new circular walking route and linear permissive bridleway has been created. The majority of the site is ancient woodland with many ancient woodland indicator species and areas of unmanaged hazel and ash coppice. Volunteers from the KSCP have installed a culvert and waymarkers along the route to increase access for a range of abilities.

Terry

It is with great sadness that the Project reports the passing away of Terry Feeny. Terry was a volunteer with KSCP for 10 years. With his witty anecdotes and sharp wit he was usually the centre of attention when it came to break times out on task. He provided much laughter over many years. He will be missed by many.



Farmers' Markets in the Stour Valley

Chartham Farmers' Market - Chartham Village Hall, every Thurs. 2.30-6pm, inc. a special celebration of British Food 2nd October & Xmas Market Sat. 6th December 10-12.30 also in the hall

Egerton Farmers' Market - Egerton Millennium Hall, access via Rockhill Road or Elm Close - every Fri. 2-4.30pm

Sandwich Farmers' Market - Guildhall Forecourt - the last Sat. of each month 9-1pm

Whitstable Farmers' Market - St Mary's Hall, Oxford St, 2nd & 4th Sat. of the month 9.30-2 pm

Wye Farmers' Market - Wye Green - first and third Sat. of the month

BTCV Tree Warden Scheme

Are you interested in trees and do you want to volunteer to help protect trees in your patch? If so, find out all about becoming a Tree Warden for your local area by attending a free introduction day. The day is led by inspirational speaker, Jon Stokes, who is director of The Tree Council and who also appears on the TV programme, "The Trees That Made Britain". You will also get the opportunity to visit some amazing hornbeam pollards. Smeeth County Junior School on Saturday 11th October 10am-3pm, to book a place 01233 666519 or M.Phillips@btcv.org.uk



Volunteering

Come along and lend a hand with a variety of enjoyable and worthwhile practical conservation projects throughout the Stour Valley!

For our detailed programme phone us on 01233 813307 or go to our website and click on 'get involved'.

Volunteer days

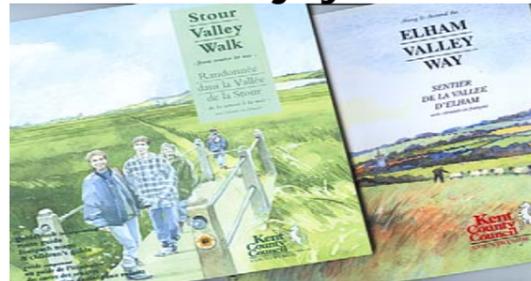
Wednesdays (Ashford area): Meet 9.15 at the KSCP offices.

Thursdays (Canterbury & Wantsum): Meet 9.15 at KSCP offices or 9.45 at North Lane Car Park, Canterbury.

KSCP publications, for those who enjoy the countryside



Train Rides to Ramble (£3.99) & Bike Trails by Train (£2.50) Circular walks and cycle rides from railway stations in the Stour Valley. Full colour, clear maps and directions, packed with information and illustrations.



Stour Valley Walk & Elham Valley Way (£5.00) Recreational walks produced by Kent County Council with help from KSCP.



Wildsites (£1.00) A guide to 31 wildlife sites in the Stour Valley.

All available from local Tourist Information Centres, quality bookshops, KSCP, and Kent County Council (08458 247600 or env.publications@kent.gov.uk).

Stour View for Ashford & The Low Weald, Downs, Canterbury & Wantsum is produced in January, May and September. Stour View is printed on Elemental Chlorine Free paper from wood pulp from sustainable forests and includes recycled fibre.



The countryside & urban green space newsletter for people living in & around Ashford & the Low Weald

Stour View

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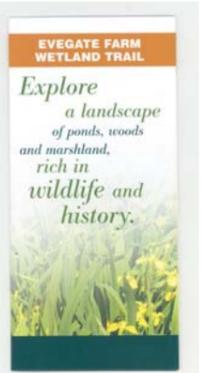
Ashford & The Low Weald

CONSERVING, ENHANCING AND PROMOTING THE COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREEN SPACE OF THE STOUR VALLEY

Once a traditional rural market town, Ashford is changing rapidly. The River Great Stour, being the only major river in East Kent, is a special asset, along with its green corridors running through the town into the countryside. Outside of the town are the pretty settlements at the foot of the downs, and of the Low Weald and Greensand Ridge. There is a good hedgerow network and many ponds on the clay soils. Views from the Greensand Ridge across the Weald are stunning.

Wetland Trails open up to the Public

Evegate Farm, located in Smeeth, near Ashford, has created a diverse range of trails exploring a landscape of ponds, woods and marshland rich in wildlife and history. The site boasts far reaching views up to the Downs and across the Weald. Historical interest is evident in old dams and windmill sites whilst wetlands create a haven for spring and summer floral blooms. Walk under the golden autumn canopy of Park Wood or visit the site in winter and you may be rewarded by the trill sound of a Snipe bursting up from the rushes. A free leaflet is available from Evegate Business Centre or KSCP, providing a useful guide around the site and highlighting features of interest.



Withies, Woodland Notes and Wildlife

Over the summer holidays the Ashford Green Corridor staged a number of events for youngsters. Children learned about dragonflies and made their own colourful creatures with the help of artist Nikki Dennington. Nikki demonstrated how to bend withies (pieces of willow) into a dragonfly structure and then to cover the frame with colourful paper to create a delicate dragonfly. At South Willesborough, collages of beasts that live in or near ponds were made, and around Singleton Lake a Safari took place in the different habitats ... the lake, meadow, pond, stream and woods to capture images of wildlife (both plant and animal) on camera. At Buxford Meadow about 30 adults and children armed with special bat detectors, that enable people to hear and identify the different types of bat, spent a delightful hour or so peering into the dark, looking for these elusive creatures. At the Woodland Notes event children made musical instruments out of wood. The final event celebrated the community orchard off Earlsworth Road, South Willesborough, planted in 2004. East Stour Primary School had the job of thinking up a name for the orchard and the winner was **Frog Orchard**.



Making collages in the Green Corridor

Tree dressing, wood carving, a plum and spoon race, longest apple peel competition and orchard quiz all took place along with lots of picnics!

All the events were designed to underline and celebrate the importance of the green and 'wild' spaces in Ashford, for both the wildlife and for the people that live and visit there. The events were supported by funding from the Rail Link Countryside Initiative and Ashford Futures.

Project Sponsors



Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate. The publishers can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Kentish Stour Countryside Project.

That old Chestnut

Kent is lucky to be one of the country's most wooded counties. Much of this woodland consists of traditional coppice. Coppicing involves cutting trees down close to the ground, leaving the stumps. The tree then re-grows from the stump. This is done in rotation allowing the trees in one area to regrow whilst others are cut. This technique provides a long-term sustainable supply of wood, and in allowing more light to the ground it encourages more woodland plants to flourish.

Coppicing used to provide many products, from hurdles to hop poles. This has declined in recent years, however, there are a few people making use of the coppice and continuing the traditional management. The KSCP try to use local materials and suppliers wherever possible. One such material we use is sweet chestnut fencing stakes for stock fencing. By using these materials we don't have to use heavily treated tanalised or pressure treated softwood posts, and the materials have not travelled miles to get to us. If you would like to know of a supplier of chestnut stakes near you please contact KSCP.



Fencing with chestnut



Recent coppicing

Oh deer, deer, deer



Fallow deer at Hatch Park, near Ashford

When deer are mentioned, many people will think of classic haunts such as Scotland or Exmoor. However, you can see some of Britain's biggest wild mammals on your doorstep throughout the Stour Valley and East Kent.

Of all the deer that can be found in Britain only the Red and Roe species are indigenous. It is thought Fallow deer were introduced after the Norman Conquest in 1066. They have been joined in the last 100 years by the Muntjac, Sika and Chinese Water deer following escapes and deliberate release from deer parks and private collections. In fact, in most of the country today, deer are rapidly expanding in numbers and territory, causing problems for farmers, drivers, foresters and even wildlife habitats. East Kent has yet to suffer the sort of problems being faced in other parts of the country but the problems are likely to arrive, with the deer.

Autumn is the ideal time to look for deer as it's rutting season and the old hunting forest of King's Wood is one of the best places to see wild deer in the area, but it's always worth keeping your eyes peeled when taking a walk through the countryside as you never know what you might find just around the corner! For more information on deer, visit the British Deer Society website: bds.org.uk

Autumn Activity Watch

Many people may think of the autumn as nature shutting down for the winter. Look closely and you will find a lot going on in the countryside. Perhaps the most spectacular places to visit in the autumn are the wetland reserves such as Pegwell Bay, Stodmarsh, Dungeness, Oare and Elmley. These offer fantastic views of wildfowl and wading birds arriving to spend the winter. However, even arable fields can play host to thousands of Lapwing and Golden Plover, and estuaries and coastal fields can see a thousand Brent geese and other wildfowl. Even close to towns one can see many thousands of starlings doing aerial displays. So when you're out and about this autumn keep a look out for all this activity.



Greylag geese at Stodmarsh

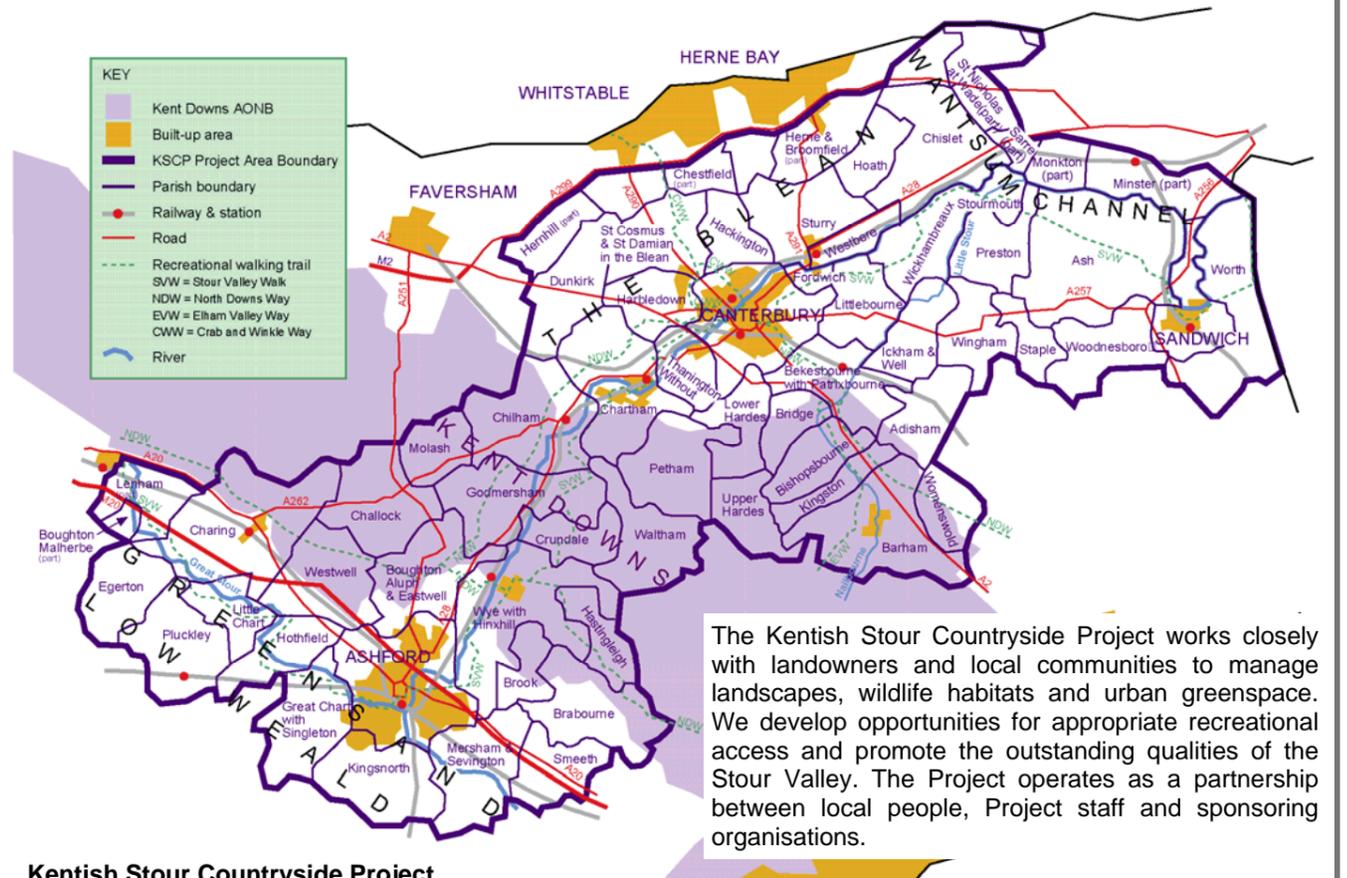
Are You Cross Compliant?



Fieldfare enjoying winter hawthorn berries

In England, farmers claiming the Single Payment and other direct payments are responsible for understanding and meeting cross compliance (CC) requirements. These requirements are met by securing Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions across the farm. Of particular note at this time of year is hedge cutting. Hedges provide essential nesting, roosting, sheltering and feeding sites for many birds. A requirement of CC is to leave hedgerows uncut through the bird nesting season 1st March – 31st July. Many farmers leave hedge cutting until deep into the winter months, ensuring wildlife is able to feed on the fruits, nuts and berries produced by the plants. In a domestic context, can we be seen to be managing our environment for wildlife? Domestic gardens are full of opportunities to support wildlife through selective pruning, mowing and provision of water. If you would like any help or advice on how to make your garden more environmentally friendly please contact us at the KSCP.

About the Project



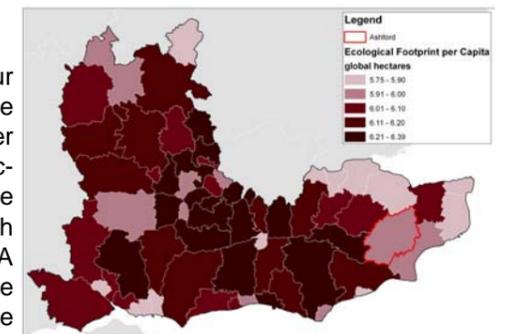
The Kentish Stour Countryside Project works closely with landowners and local communities to manage landscapes, wildlife habitats and urban greenspace. We develop opportunities for appropriate recreational access and promote the outstanding qualities of the Stour Valley. The Project operates as a partnership between local people, Project staff and sponsoring organisations.

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Ashford Ecological Footprint

The ecological footprint is an indicator of resource use; it measures our demand on the earth's resources and expresses this as an area of land. The world average ecological footprint is 2.2 global hectares per person (gha per capita). The amount of land available per person globally is 1.8 global hectares. This means that humanity's demand for resources is greater than the biologically productive land available to supply it. Ashford is the first growth area to utilise footprinting to assess the environmental impacts of growth. A study by the Stockholm Environment Institute has been able to demonstrate the impact of Ashford policies towards securing a sustainable future for the town. The base line ecological footprint of 5.99 global hectares per capita for Ashford is predicated to fall to 4.96 over the next 25 years as a result of Ashford's local planning, transport, housing and sustainable development policies. For an Executive Summary and full report go to: www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk



A scavenger hunt activity

Environmental Action Week for Swadelands

Pupils from Swadelands School put down their pens, picked up their tools and joined wildlife experts from the KSCP for a week of environmental management at Bull Heath, a wildlife haven deep in rural Kent. The site is owned by the Heath's Countryside Corridor, a community based group, which is committed to conserving areas of natural beauty between Charing and Lenham. Bull Heath, once a busy industrial sand quarry, is now a thriving sanctuary for birds, insects and plants. Sand martins are summer visitors to the UK and the quarried sand cliffs at Bull Heath provide invaluable nesting sites for this small bird. Of particular interest is the rare lichen and moss plant community that prosper in the nutrient poor sandy soils.