

The countryside & urban green space newsletter for people living in Ashford, Canterbury and the surrounding countryside

Stour View

Issue 52
Winter 2014/15

Westgate Parks new Physic Garden

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

A physic garden for the growing of medicinal herbs was first recorded in Canterbury in 1165. Now pupils from Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School (SLGGS) are cultivating

a 21st century version thanks to Parks for People Heritage Lottery Fund. Pupils in Year 9 had been planning and designing the garden with Westgate Parks Development Officer Anna Bell for around three months, before the first planting session in Westgate Gardens.

The space has been divided into sections with plants reflecting ancient remedies, so there is a garden with plants to support digestion such as bergamot and caraway, as well as one for heart, blood and lungs with wood sage and St John's Wort. Plants to aid the eyes include yellow flax and sweet violet, while the bones are helped by primrose and comfrey. Infections are treated with liquorice and sage.

More than 300 plants are now in place in the raised borders, with around 100 more to be added in the spring. In November apple and pear trees will be added.



Volunteers also helped out in the new Physic Garden.

Throughout the year SLGGS pupils have been spending their enrichment time researching the garden and plants, as well as making visits, to ensure the success of their project. Elisa Monje-jelfs, 16 said: "The physic garden has been a great project to work on and is such a lovely idea for the Canterbury community. It's been nice to be involved and to see the garden develop." Teacher Rachel Watmore said: "Pupils have worked really hard to create the physic garden and it's wonderful that their plan follows ancient traditions and may become part of the history of Canterbury. It's great to get them out of the classroom to learn in a practical and creative way and to support the community."

Westgate Parks Photo Competition

It's time to get your cameras out; The Friends of Westgate Parks are launching a photographic competition which will run from October 2014 until 30th September 2015. You don't have to be an expert photographer; the aim of the competition is to showcase the parks, the wildlife and its heritage. We would like a varied selection of photographs taken throughout the seasons. The best 12 photographs will be selected to feature in the 2016 Westgate Parks Calendar. The Calendar will go on sale to raise money for future projects and activities in Westgate Parks.



Each entrant can send in up to four **photos**, which must be photographs taken within Westgate Parks (Westgate Gardens, Toddler's Cove, Bingley Island and Tannery Field). Photos should be emailed to: westgate.parks@kent.gov.uk Please state your name, age if under 16 and contact details and a photo title or description. If you require any further information email: anna.bell@kent.gov.uk or telephone: 07850715596

Partnership Sponsors



Willesborough Dykes foot & cycle path officially opened

The new Willesborough Dykes foot and cycle path officially opened to the public in September. Ashford Mayor, Cllr John Link, cut the ribbon and welcomed some keen cyclists and walkers to try out the new path. He was joined by Ashford MP Damian Green, and representatives from the partnerships involved, including KSCP.

School children try out the new route



Children from East Stour and Furley Park schools cycled to the event and were the first to explore the new path. Once declared open, the procession of cyclists and walkers moved off to enjoy the sunshine and take in the views of the sheep filled meadows lining the route.

The new route stretches just over a mile and connects the existing cycle path in Sheepfold Lane in Park Farm with the existing path adjacent to Ashford's Asda store. Not only will the new path give Park Farm residents - and those beyond - an easy, traffic-free route to and from the town centre but it will also serve as a picturesque leisure path for families who want to access other cycle paths around the Ashford Green Corridor and explore the countryside.

Cllr Link, Mayor of Ashford, said "This is a really important occasion that we have all been waiting so long for and one that will make a huge everyday difference to so many people's lives. Now, for the very first time there is a safe, quiet, quick and green route between Park Farm and the Town Centre, linking in with the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet and International Station."

Cllr Jessamy Blanford, portfolio holder for culture and the environment said: "It has for the very first time opened up public access to the beautiful Willesborough Dykes area. Of course all of this wouldn't have been possible were it not for really strong partnership working and a successful funding bid to Sustrans in 2012 that enabled Ashford Borough Council to start work on the new route."

For more details on the route, people can visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/willesboroughdykes

Stag Beetle lands on Prospect Field, Whitstable

Prospect Field, off Joy Lane, Whitstable has acquired a new guest - a two metre long Stag beetle. The beetle is of the wooden variety and has been carved by Dan Hilton from Canterbury.

The beetle was unveiled by Councillor Jean Law on behalf of Whitstable Area Members Panel at a ceremony in October with 85 Year 1 pupils from Joy Lane Primary School.

The beetle was commissioned by the Friends of Prospect Field and KSCP. Arc Creative Design produced the beetle with their sculptor Dan Hilton. Funding was provided by Viridor Credits, the Whitstable Area Members Panel, Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council, the Friends, and the local community.

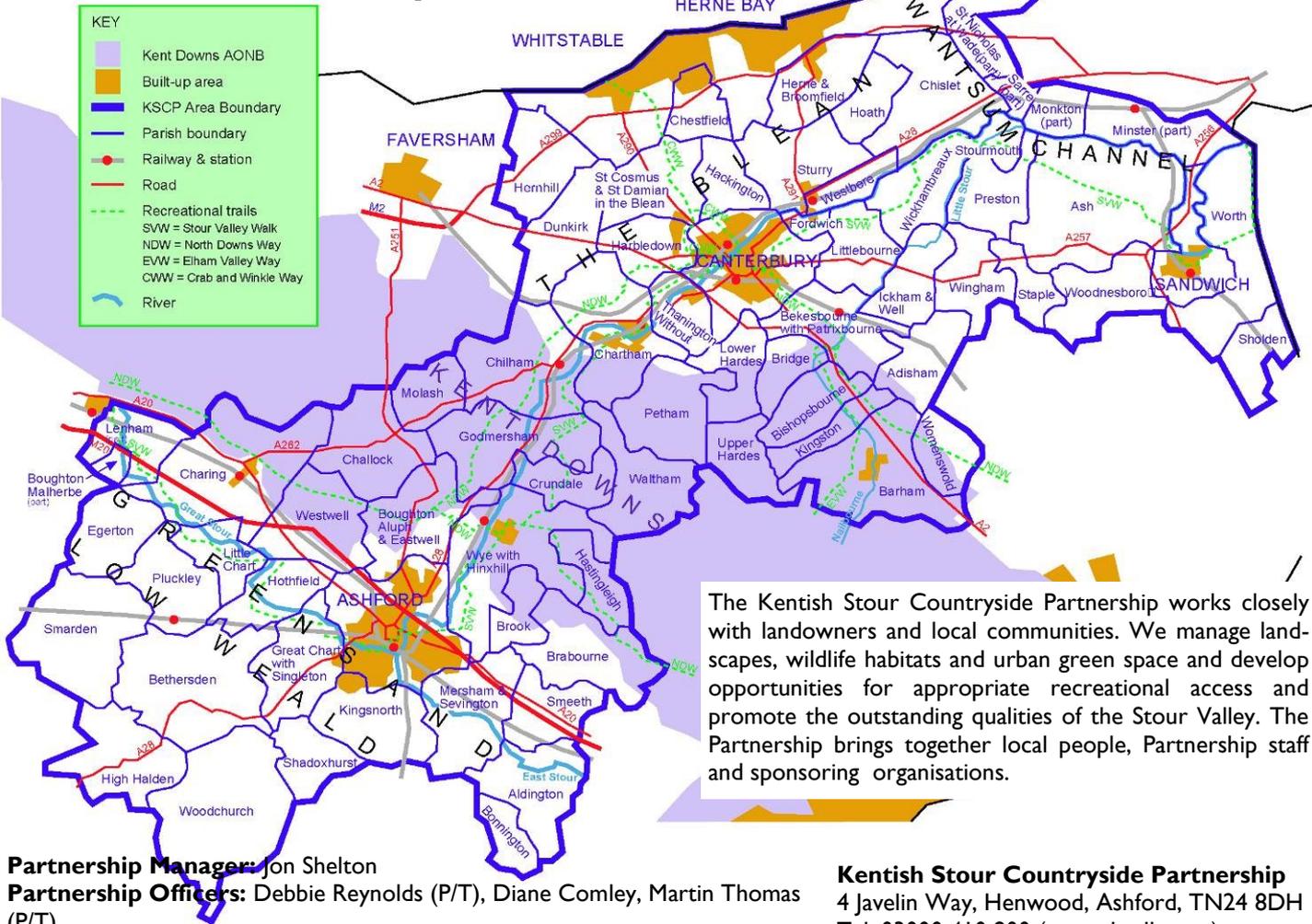
The Stag Beetle comes with an adjacent picnic table in the shape of a leaf and seats in the form of Stag beetle larvae and eggs.

Enjoying the view from the new Stag Beetle picnic table



Stag beetles are regularly seen at Prospect Field from the railway bridge at West Cliff to Sherrin's Alley from May to July. They are our largest native beetle with the male having large antler-like mandibles. They feed as larvae on decaying wood, underground, for three to seven years before pupating and emerging as the adult beetle. They have been undergoing a decline nationally. Tidying up places is a main threat and development and removal of old tree stumps or hedges results in a loss of habitat. Stag beetles are harmless and do not damage living wood or timber. They are a protected species under the Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981.

About the Partnership



The Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership works closely with landowners and local communities. We manage landscapes, wildlife habitats and urban green space and develop opportunities for appropriate recreational access and promote the outstanding qualities of the Stour Valley. The Partnership brings together local people, Partnership staff and sponsoring organisations.

Partnership Manager: Jon Shelton
Partnership Officers: Debbie Reynolds (P/T), Diane Comley, Martin Thomas (P/T)
Westgate Parks Development Officer: Anna Bell
Sturry Road Community Park Officer (P/T): Martin Thomas

Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership
 4 Javelin Way, Henwood, Ashford, TN24 8DH
 Tel: 03000 410 900 (normal call rates)
 E-mail: kentishstour@kent.gov.uk
www.kentishstour.org.uk

Please note our new telephone number 03000 410 900

Football, volunteers and reptiles!! all at Sturry Road Community Park



Sturry Road Community Park is found behind the Park and Ride/TK Max store on the outskirts of Canterbury. To get local youngsters using the park, Park Officer Martin Thomas has been organising sports events using the park's excellent facilities. A football competition was held over the summer to celebrate the reopening of the refitted basketball/football court.

Councillor Graham Gibbens attended the event, and pledged over £1000 to fund a further series of sports competitions at the park.



Also, a monthly Saturday morning practical volunteer group has recently started. Martin is currently looking at past reptile translocations and planning habitat enhancements with a view to further translocations in the future.

Cutting the ribbon at Sturry Road Community Park

News updates from the Stour Valley

Bybrook Local Nature Reserve

KSCP & Ashford Borough Council are seeking views and support from the residents of Kennington on how best to improve the wildlife and community value of this important alder carr wildlife habitat. Please come along to the public consultation Tuesday 25th November 7.30pm at St Mary's Community Centre.

KCC staff volunteer at Givaudan Meadow

KCC highway staff took a break from the roads and joined forces with KSCP volunteers to do some conservation work in the river and meadows at Givaudan. They helped to mow the small meadow, cut back a hedge, and move a hibernaculum!

Godmersham River Restoration

KSCP have been successful in a bid for funds to improve the river habitat at Godmersham. The river in places here is too deep and wide to support too many fish and other wildlife and so the plan in the next year is to move material in the river around, and hold it in place with faggots and logs until vegetation establishes.



KCC Highway staff with KSCP volunteers at the end of the day.

Ashford Green Corridor Leaflet

A new, improved version of the Ashford Green Corridor leaflet has been produced by KSCP. The Ashford Green Corridor is largely protected open space following the course of the rivers through Ashford from South Willesborough in the south to Godinton in the west and Little Burton in the east. For a copy contact KSCP or visit the library/visitor information centre.

Westgate Parks Roman Haul

Over 70 members of the local community including the Friends of Westgate Parks Volunteers helped to reveal what is thought to be Britain's oldest road, Roman Watling Street. Other discoveries included: over 20 Roman coins, a Roman ear scoop which would have been used to remove ear wax, carved bone which may have been a handle or hair piece, Roman glass and vast quantities of tile and pottery. Anna Bell, Westgate Parks Development Officer said: 'The dig has been a huge success with over 600 people coming to view the finds.' The excavation was led by Canterbury Archaeological Trust.

Goodbye to Carol

Having worked with the Partnership for over 5 years Carol Donaldson, Canterbury Partnership Officer is moving on. She has always had a talent for writing and Carol is to focus on completing a book, although she intends to keep her hand in doing some environmental consultancy work. Thanks to Carol and good luck!



Farewell Carol!

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 or go to www.kentishstour.org.uk and click on 'get involved'.

Wednesdays (Ashford area): Meet 9.15 at Wye or 9.30 at the back of the Stour Centre.

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

Saturday mornings Westgate Parks & Sturry Community Park
Contact us for further details

Countryside events in the Stour Valley

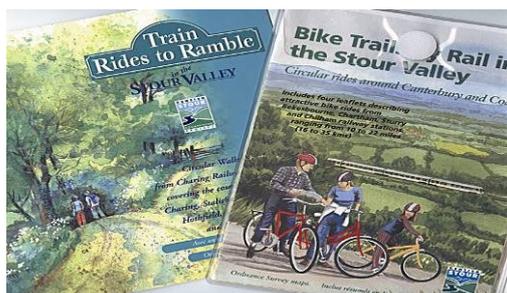
For information about events in the Stour Valley visit the following websites:

kentishstour.org.uk
friendsofkingswood.org
wildwoodtrust.org
westgateparks.co.uk

theblean.co.uk
wildsites.org
spokeeastkent.org.uk
abbotsmillproject.co.uk

KSCP publications, for those who enjoy the countryside

All available from quality bookshops and KSCP. For information on other publications and free downloads visit kentishstour.org.uk



Train Rides to Ramble (£2.00) & *Bike Trails by Rail* (£1.00) Circular walks and cycle rides from railway stations in the Stour Valley. Full colour, maps & directions, packed with information and



Big Blean Walk - free guide to this ancient woodland with map.



Various free walk and cycle maps. Available from Tourist Information Centres.