

Welcome to the Colne Valley Virtual Forum



An update of our activity, achievements, threats to the Colne Valley and highlighting some of the opportunities, too:

“Warm greetings to you all and thank you for your continued support for this precious, important and fragile landscape.

The Colne Valley Park team has been busy protecting and enhancing the park, delivering the Landscape Partnership suite of projects, and working towards achieving our six objectives. These include improving our landscape, safeguarding our countryside, providing recreation and helping biodiversity, our rural economy and community engagement.

We are keen to work in partnership with you all and look forward to making a real and positive difference for the future. Please make yourself a tea or coffee, settle down and spend a few minutes to enjoy our concise presentation.”

Colne Valley Park President, Lord John Randall





Here are just a few updates on our work to
protect and enhance the Colne Valley
Park

Landscape Partnership Programme Highlights



We are halfway through our Heritage Lottery three-year programme of projects for the Colne Valley – here are some highlights for you. If you want more detail please look at the project on the website, or get in touch with us directly.

Rivers

- Recruitment of 70 Volunteer River Rangers
- Angling and Nature Conservation Programme with Fisheries: first successful course run.
- Invasive species removal and education programme



Conservation

- Enhancing Colne Valley entry points (footpath improvements and information)
- Conservation grazing at three sites
- New sites given a facelift either for people (Swallow Street) or wildlife (Maple Lodge Marsh)



Engagement

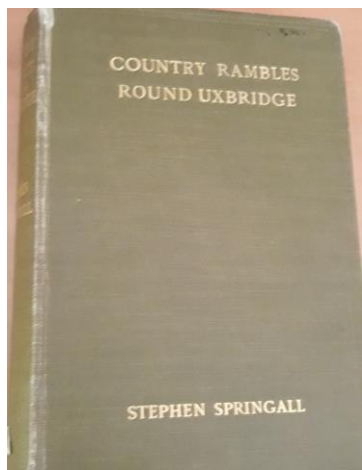
- 78 events reaching diverse audiences.
- Colne Valley Festival 2019 attracted 3,000 people (sadly cancelled this year thanks to Covid-19)
- 30000 broadsheet newsletters delivered



How have we been connecting people to our range of Landscape Partnership Projects?



Website updates for the projects and social media posts to communicate these, for example *The Colne Valley Trail* and *Following the footsteps of an Edwardian*.



Online training, workshops and talks for our volunteers and engaged groups via Zoom, e.g. River Rangers and cow checkers.

Riverine Mammals

Free Online Workshop

Calling all volunteer River Rangers, do you love water voles? Yes, then join us for the free online workshop to explore water voles and other riverine mammals which are living on your doorstep.

Supported by Heritage Lottery Fund

Date: Tuesday 19th May
Time: 10:00am - 11:30am
Topic: Riverine Mammals

To register for free please contact Chloe at:
07736133057 or
chloe.crompton@groundwork.org.uk

Logos for Heritage Lottery Fund, Colne Valley Regional Park, Wildlife Trusts, and social media handles for Colne Valley Regional Park.

Social Media posts and videos – River Rangers Facebook page with daily communication. Live videos of the cows arriving at Denham and live Nature workshops for children at Iver Environment Centre.

Below: Adam our habitats and access manager live on Facebook introducing the cows arriving at Denham Country Park and the Colne Valley grazing project on the website



Please find more project updates at <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/project/landscape-partnership/> And you can see our latest activities and events here: <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/things-to-do-2/events/>

Rivers Projects



Working closely with the Colne Catchment Action Network www.colnecan.org.uk

Fish Passage Project. Adaptation of weirs to help fish move easily through the catchment



Grants to local groups to install Kingfisher nest boxes at various sites.



Invasive species: Phase 1 of Floating Pennywort control programme completed. Including grants to local groups. We are now developing funding applications for the next few years



Thanks for funding from the Environment Agency and others.

Denham Woodlands and other green spaces



We hold 99-year leases of ancient woodlands in Denham. Objectives of our management plan are:

- **Environment:** Maintain as mixed native species high forest. Improve woodland biodiversity.
- **Economic:** Take opportunities to generate income that can contribute towards costs of management
- **Social:** Maintain safe public access. Provide volunteering opportunities and engage people with woodland management.



Members of the Slough Good Gym helping restore the Horton Brook at Crown Meadow, Colnbrook.

Groundwork South delivers other green spaces, conservation and paths work for the Ivers Parish Council, Denham Parish Council and Windsor & Maidenhead Council as well as working on sites in Colnbrook with the Colnbrook Community Partnership and Slough Borough Council

Colne & Crane Valleys' Green Infrastructure Strategy



The formation of the Regional Park in the mid-1960s was a far sighted step by the previous generation that seized the opportunity to restore derelict areas.

In the 21st century, the Colne Valley is subject to many huge development proposals. The CVRP is arguably the most threatened landscape of its kind in the country.

If this area is to host so many developments 'in the national interest', then local and national government must respond by creating conditions for a Regional Park that offers high quality green space for our capital city and beyond.

Published in 2019, this strategy is a **call to action**. It can be used by local authorities and others to co-ordinate planning and environmental mitigation.



The Strategy has already been used to inform the draft Spelthorne Local Plan. We hope other local authorities can follow that lead

We are grateful for funding from the Lottery Landscape Partnership, government Planning Delivery Funds and the Environment Agency.

<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/project/green-infrastructure-strategy-colne-and-crane-valleys/>



The Strategy was shortlisted for the Landscape Institute Awards. Unfortunately it didn't win - it lost out to a strategy from Shropshire - but the national recognition was most welcomed.

Responding to development pressures

Written responses to development proposals and other consultations. Including:

- M25 West Motorway Service Area
- Maple Cross warehouses
- Lakeside Energy from Waste
- HS2 Schedule 17
- Lea Denham Crematorium
- Airspace 2050
- Heathrow Expansion

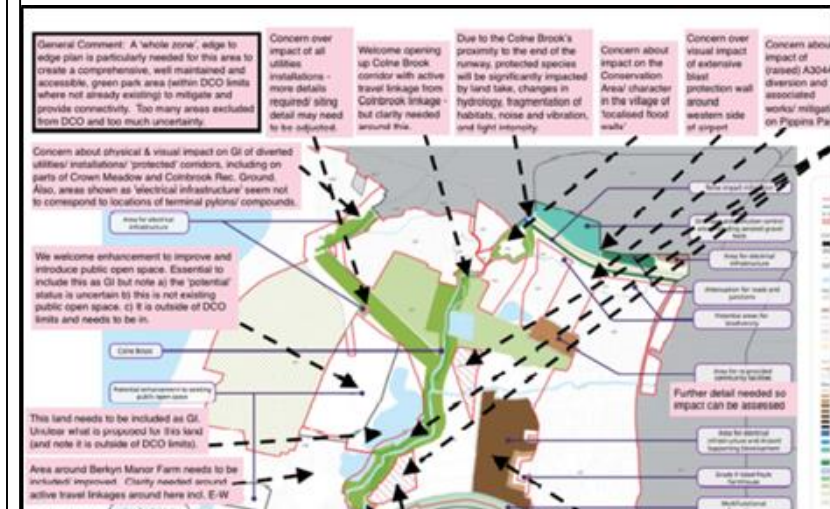
We have also engaged with the River Thames Scheme's emerging plans, making the case for mitigation sites. And we don't only write letters of objection – if a plan is positive and benefits the environment we will support it. For example we have written in support of docking points for a new Thames Ferry from Ankerwycke in the Colne Valley to Runnymede.

The Colne Valley Park is publicly and determinedly opposed to the HS2 project, which will have a direct, negative and permanent impact on a precious and already vulnerable landscape. In light of the government announcement to proceed with HS2, and the court decision on Heathrow expansion, we have updated our position statements:

<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/what-s-special/safeguardthecountryside/>

With the help of our President and some local MPs, we have taken issues relating to HS2 and Heathrow expansion to the highest level e.g. a complaint about premature closure of Broadwater nature reserve that reached the Secretary of State. We have written to developers to express concern e.g seeking assurance that bird netting will not be used in the Colne Valley.

An extract from our 90-page response to Heathrow expansion



Full response : <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/library/>

Formal responses to local authority consultations. Including:

- Spelthorne Local Plan
- South Bucks & Chiltern Local Plan
- Central & East Berks Minerals and Waste
- Bucks Rights of Way Improvement Plan

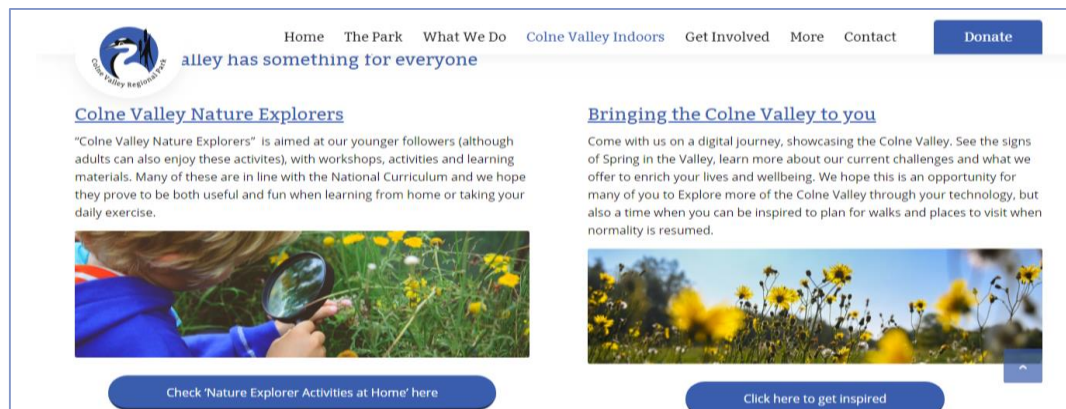


Coping with a pandemic

How has the Colne Valley Park team kept people engaged during the lockdown restrictions?



Website update with new pages – *Bringing the Colne Valley to you* and *Colne Valley Nature Explorers* for children and families.



<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/bringing-the-colne-valley-park-indoors/>

Adaptation of our social media programme and website, with virtual tours of the valley, visual walks, *Mindful Monday* and information on places to visit.



A virtual tour of Harefield Nature Reserve on Facebook

Volunteer training goes virtual



Sharing the Joys of the Colne Valley 'Outreach' communications



Cara (left), a nurse at Hillingdon hospital, sharing our visitor guide and walks with her teams for their very much needed down time and well being.

What has been the response to our online communications ?



A big increase in Social media popularity

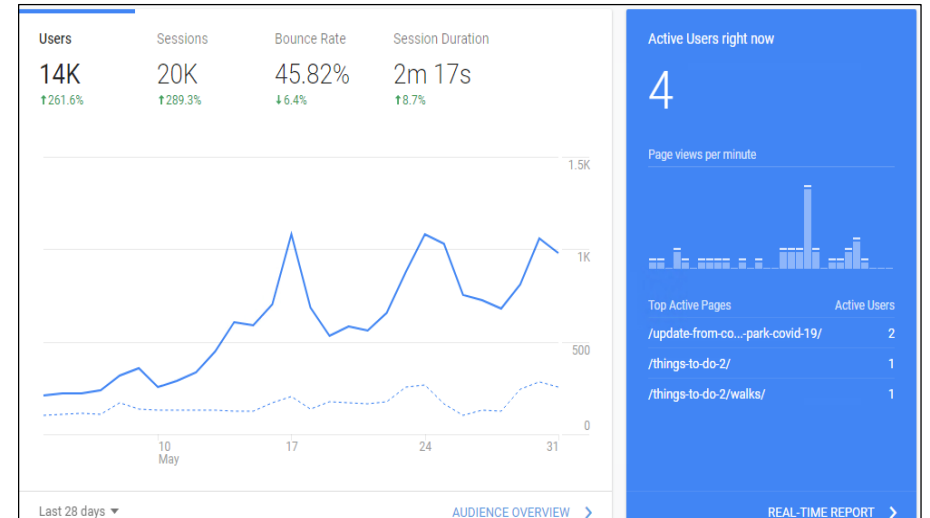


This Facebook post on the Woodoaks farm walk was seen by over 16,000 people.

A social media post of the map was seen by over 30,000 people.



Our website saw a big spike in users



In May, over 55,000 people saw our posts and over 15,000 people engaged with them .

The feedback was encouraging:

“I've been loving the videos the Colne Valley page has been posting recently - I didn't know Thorney Lake existed, despite it being a short walk from me.” - Hannah, Thorney

“Thank you for all your posts and photos on your FB page - we've really enjoyed discovering what's on our doorstep.” Val

“This is a good page to follow if you haven't already seen. Lots of ideas for walks” Hayley on Facebook

How we are supporting rural tourism...

18 circular walk leaflets revamped to be distributed to our key tourism partners – pubs, cafes and museums.

<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/things-to-do-2/walks/#shortcircularwalks>



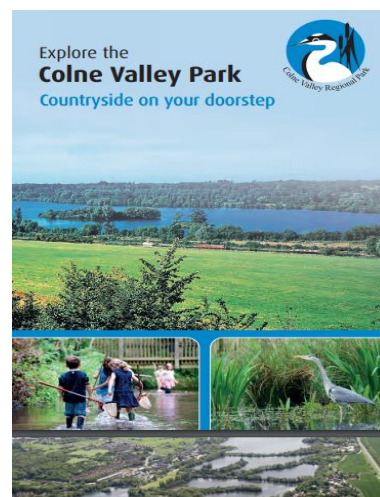
Website development: *Places to go stay, visit, eat and enjoy and Things to do*

<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/visit-colne-valley/>



Reprint of our visitor guide, with 7,000 copies to be widely distributed to key events, venues and supporters.

<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CVP-Visitor-Guide-2020.pdf>



Explore Your Colne Valley Park broadsheet with 15,000 copies to promote the valley launched last year. Two editions published and four to come. Lots of positive feedback from readers, partners and businesses.

<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/explore-your-colne-valley-park-our-second-edition-is-ready/>



Plans for the next year:



Core Funding

The financial position of the Colne Valley is far from secure:

- We are grateful for continuing help from local authorities, corporate supporters and our member organisations, especially to those who have increased their level of financial support recently.
- In these particularly tough times we all have to work harder to improve funding and extend what we can do as the threats increase.

Given threats posed by development, water shortages, pollution etc the Colne Valley is perhaps the most threatened landscape of its type in the country.

Project Fundraising

We work with our partners to apply for funding. Work in development includes:

- Mitigating the impact of motorways on connectivity for people and for wildlife.
- Improvement and protection of green spaces; landscape management, including ancient woodland.
- Landscape Partnership legacy. To ensure the good work of this three-year programme continues.

Development

Monitor and respond to planning applications and consultations to make the case for the local environment. In particular:

- South Bucks & Chiltern and Windsor & Maidenhead local plan examinations.
- Neighbourhood plans for Denham and Iver
- HS2 Schedule 17 applications including the restoration plans for the Chiltern tunnel and Colne Valley viaduct construction sites.

The Colne Valley is perhaps the most threatened landscape of its type in the country

How you can help?

- Share this presentation amongst your organisation's members
- Like the Colne Valley Park on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/colnevalleypark/>
- Follow and engage with us on Twitter @Colne_Valley
- Join the Friends of the Colne Valley Park <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/become-a-champion/trust-friends/>
- Donate, and gift aid it, via <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/donate/>
- Get out and explore the Park.
- Spread the word – tell others about the Regional Park.

Thank you for taking the time to read this presentation. We look forward to seeing you all face to face at the forum next year, and to working with you to protect and enhance this precious landscape.

email: colnevalley@groundwork.org.uk

