



Explore Your Colne Valley Regional Park

FREE

COLNE VALLEY PARK FESTIVAL FORTNIGHT

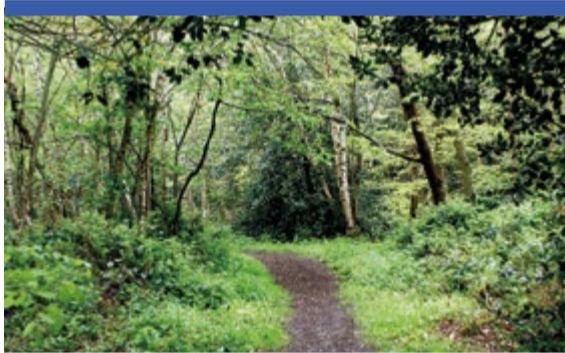
Festival Fortnight will be a fantastic programme of events between **Saturday July 24th to Sunday August 8th 2021**, so please put the date in your diary.

Check on our website and social media channels to see what will be on offer, including guided walks, special events, informative talks and children's activities

See below for more details.



Harmondsworth Great Barn.



Explore our hidden gems

Here is Northmoor Hill Wood Local Nature Reserve in Denham.

This ancient woodland is full of wildlife and geological interest, including the fascinating swallow holes where streams disappear into the ground.

We would love to hear from you if you would like to join local volunteers who help with monthly conservation tasks and act as our 'eyes and ears' on the ground. We are grateful to a local resident who has generously donated the funds for a new information board to be installed.

Our website lists many local places you can explore – search on our '[places to go](#)' page and make some new discoveries.



Welcome to Summer with the Colne Valley

Summer has finally arrived, and it is time to get out, explore and really enjoy the local countryside on your doorstep.

The Colne Valley Park has a truly wonderful variety of landscapes and places to visit, ranging from woodlands to Country Parks and from hidden nature reserves to tranquil lakes and water courses. There are also some stunning views and walks.

Our aim is to help protect and improve the local countryside and its biodiversity and landscapes, as well as helping local people discover more of the Park. We are working on a wide programme of projects, all designed to enhance the Colne Valley Park countryside for the benefit of people and wildlife. These projects have been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

amongst others, and include recruiting more than 90 volunteer River Rangers to help care for the major rivers in the Park; establishing three new conservation grazing areas with lots of lovely cows to help encourage new wildlife; working with the local Wildlife Trust to enhance habitats for Water Voles; transforming council-owned areas into community green spaces for local residents; improving direction signs for walks and many other river conservation and habitat improvement programmes.



Blue Butterfly

You can read about these important projects making a difference to your local area on our website under '[what we do](#)'.

Get involved this summer

On the next few pages you can learn more about how to get involved with supporting the Park, places you could explore in the summer, local people making a difference, and on Page 4 we explain why it is so important to protect this constantly-threatened and fragile landscape.

Have a look on our website and follow us on social media, where you will find lots of useful information on places to go, things to do, volunteering opportunities and updates about the Park and your local countryside.



Some of our fantastic River Rangers hard at work.

Enjoy your Colne Valley Park

Colne Valley Park Festival Fortnight replaces our usual busy one-day festival. Designed to entice everyone to explore and enjoy the whole of the Valley there will be an array of events, walks, online talks and activities at different parks and venues across the region.

Festival Fortnight will run from **Saturday July 24th to Sunday August 8th 2021**, and events will include a great host of river and children's activities, an open day at Harmondsworth Great Barn, boat trips at Batchworth Lock Canal Centre in Rickmansworth, guided walks at places such as Staines Moor and local nature reserves, a talk on

'Life on the canal' amongst many others.

As well as planning the Festival Fortnight, we have also been improving the signs for local rivers, The Colne Valley Trail (see Page 2) and Langley Park trails – we do hope you have spotted them on your travels. Connecting with your local countryside has an array of benefits for your whole family, and through our website and social media posts we help you to explore the Park. Don't forget to go to our '[visit](#)' and '[activities and events](#)' website page to stay up to date with everything on offer and for details of our Festival Fortnight – and for details of our



Children's nature activities available throughout Festival Fortnight.

Festival Fortnight go to '[news and articles](#)'.

Explore the Colne Valley Trail

The Colne Valley Trail is a walking route that weaves its way through the heart of the Regional Park. Its main branch runs from Rickmansworth Aquadrome to Colnbrook, whilst another veers off at Cowley Lock and takes you to Langley. The route follows the Grand Union Canal, through woodland at Denham Quarry and beside the many still lakes and flowing rivers of the Valley, providing a wonderful walk of discovery, with varied landscapes, lots of hidden gems and pockets of nature to explore along the way.

The trail is 23 km long, with the Langley arm adding a further estimated 7km. There are lots of beautiful stop-off points to enjoy along the route: they include Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Stocker's Lake, Frays Valley Nature Reserve, Denham Country Park, Little Britain Lake and Langley Park. You could walk the whole route in one go, or you may prefer to enjoy the trail in sections and explore some of the key sites more fully. Either way, the walk will really allow you to get to know your local countryside and bring you closer to nature. You can download the trail map from our website [walks](#) page, under [visit](#) or come to the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre at Denham Country Park and pick up a free trail map.

It's a great weekend activity to plan, and it's local, free, fun and provides great exercise for the mind and body.

As part of our Landscape Partnership Project, the team has been busy improving signs and access on the trail to help making it far easier to follow as it winds its way through town and country.

Adam Bolton is one of the Colne Valley team. He says: *"The works completed so far have revitalised the trail and made it a lot easier for people to find*



Adam Bolton



Grand Union Canal



Denham Country Park



Langley Park



their way along this beautiful walk. We hope people notice the new signs, waymarker disks and wooden carved landmark posts, and that these improvements to the local area and The Colne Valley Trail will help people engage more with our wonderful countryside and wildlife."

As well as the new Colne Valley Trail leaflet/maps, we have also put together an informative Colne Valley Trail pack, providing information about the route, key sites to visit and the fantastic wildlife you might spot along the way. They are handy to

take on your walk, allowing you learn about the areas you are passing through and are available for a £2 donation to the Colne Valley Park, and can be obtained from the Colne Valley Visitor Centre at Denham Country Park.

Please be aware that HS2 construction will affect the Trail between Harefield and Denham. Keep an eye on our Colne Valley website for updates.

THE GREEN TEAM MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We were absolutely delighted last year to receive funding for a new Green Team to help improve your local countryside and green spaces.

Since early this year, the team has been making a great impact with projects like improving the habitats at Iver Mud Wharfs, managing overgrown areas at Denham Country Park and other public pathways, working with our rivers manager Chloe Crompton to tackle damaging Non-Native Invasive Species, building natural fences in Ruislip woods, and carrying out many other valuable tasks. Groundwork's Green Teams is a successful model which prepares local unemployed residents for careers in conservation and horticulture by offering them a paid six-month work placement in grounds improvement and maintenance as a pathway into further employment.

Martin Kennedy who helps to manage the Green Team Project, explains: "The Green Team is a really exciting opportunity for both the individuals involved and the community. We are engaging with young people, helping them connect with the local



Some of the Green Team improving habitats at Iver Mud Wharfs.

environment whilst also developing real skills that they can use to kick start a career in conservation and habitat management."

The project has been a great success and we look forward to seeing more young people join the team to learn new skills and help us to make further environmental

enhancements in the Colne Valley Park for both wildlife and people to enjoy. If you would like to find more about this project, go to... <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/project/green-teams/> This new team was made possible by a grant from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

RIVER POLLUTION – A serious problem we must not ignore

Our rivers are the veins of the Colne Valley Park, vital to the region's people and wildlife, yet how well do we look after them? Tony Booker was born locally near the River Colne and is Chairman of the Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative (CVFC). He has many roles in conservation, and tells us:

"A healthy river is vital in creating the rich habitats upon which so many species depend. They are linked to our groundwater supplies and can be affected by abstraction, so if we waste water, we waste our rivers – it is that simple.. Sadly, it seems the government fails to recognise that cheap water can encourage waste. Water companies are forced to hold, if not decrease, water charges and that in turn leads to a lack of investment in our water and sewage systems. Our catchment has one of the highest uses of water anywhere in Western Europe. That needs to be reduced, and we all have a role to play.

Another major blight is regular discharges of diluted but untreated sewage – especially at times of heavy rainfall. Many of these are permitted. Some are not.

Groundwater seeping into broken sewer systems doesn't help, but it all comes back to an urgent need for investment in the creaking infrastructure.

These pollution discharges cause serious damage. I have witnessed incidents killing hundreds of fish: everything becomes coated in sewage fungus and this can last for weeks after a severe event. That leads to crashes in invertebrate numbers, and that has a negative impact right up the food chain, currently, nearly nine out of 10 rivers in England fail to meet standards for good ecological status.

Another big concern is the increasing problem of polluting outfalls discharging straight into our rivers. Most should only be carrying surface water run-off, but all too often misconnections



River pollution threatens to blight our rivers



Tony reviewing the poor health of local rivers.

occur when a building's foul waste is connected to surface water drains. Between the source of the Colne at Colney downstream to West Drayton, my colleagues and I at (CVFC) www.cvfc.org.uk have recorded more than 200 outfalls. All too often it is left to voluntary groups to monitor these, because the statutory organisations are not doing it. This is partly due to significant cuts to the Environment Agency's budget that have simply left it unable to do its job.

This is a grave cause for concern, especially when you consider how many of us enjoy our local rivers and what the potential harm could be to people's health.

I am just appalled at this complete lack of care and commitment to our environment, and far more needs to be done before we reach the point where the damage is irreversible."

How are you helping?

"I am on a constant mission to highlight these problems and to call out those who are not doing what they should be. I 'work' voluntarily most weekdays and more, helping with numerous local projects and trying to make a difference where I can. Among others, I liaise with Chloe Crompton, the Colne Valley Park's River project manager and Lydia Murphy from Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, on river

improvement and conservation projects. Affinity Water Ltd is also an active partner. Initiatives include the monitoring of polluting outfalls, aiding research into harmful river pollutants and more. These projects are lifelines to our wildlife and environment. Dedicating so much time does mean sacrifices, and that is why I am constantly looking for people who can share the workload."



Dead fish following a pollution incident.



Sewage entering local rivers.

How can people get involved to help?

- Walk, enjoy and keep an eye on your local rivers.
- Report any pollution incidents to the Environment Agency on 0800 807060.
- Please also report pollution incidents to the Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative cvfc.org.uk/npr this helps maintain a crucial log of evidence.
- Visit our website to find out more.

We would like to thank Tony for being such an important voice in helping local rivers. Read more or get in touch with Tony on our 'news' page if you would like to help. We need more people like Tony.

SUMMER WITH THE COLNE VALLEY PARK

If you will be enjoying much of the summer at home this year and are looking for things to do, then let The Colne Valley Park be your source of fun, local and outdoor activities to keep everyone fully occupied and entertained.

1 Colne Valley Park, website – www.colnevalleypark.org.uk – look on our 'visit' page for some inspiration of plenty of places to go. Highlights include The Chiltern Open Air Museum, 18 Colne Valley Park circular walks, Batchworth Lock Canal Centre with boat trips, The Colne Valley Trail, Harmondsworth Great Barn open days, and plenty of other enjoyable events and activities at water sport venues you may like to try this summer.

2 Denham Country Park and The Colne Valley Visitor Centre Come and enjoy Denham Country Park's woodland adventure playground, the gravel beach

and riverside café, The Grand Union Canal and local walks. The Visitor Centre is the information hub for the whole of the Colne Valley Region and it is an ideal place from which to start exploring the countryside on your doorstep with lots of maps, walks, our visitor guide and information on places to visit.

3 Our Visitor Guide is available to download from the 'visit' page, or you can pick up a free copy from The Visitor Centre. This will

give you a taste of what you'll find in the Park, a map of the valley and descriptions of some key places to visit.

4 The Top 15 amazing things to do in the Park – is a great selection of things to try this summer to get everyone out exploring and closer to nature. It is available on our 'things to do' page.

So, let us help you plan ahead to really make the most of what is available in the Colne Valley Park and create some wonderful memories this year.



Batchworth Lock Canal Centre in Rickmansworth

Safeguarding the Colne Valley Regional Park for future generations

The Colne Valley Park stretches from Rickmansworth to Staines on the western edge of London, a highly valued green lung to many of the three million people living locally. However, despite its vital importance to both people and wildlife, the Park faces constant and significant threats from planning developments, general urbanisation and countryside neglect.

The major threats currently to the Park's countryside and green belt include plans for;

- Heathrow third runway
- Further expansion of Pinewood studios right up to Black Park and beyond
- Two motorway service stations at Iver and Chalfont Common/West Hyde
- Extensive housing and industrial areas in draft Local Plans (for example on all 4 sides of Maple Cross).
- Denham Crematorium

Construction of HS2 continues to have a huge impact on the Park and we continue to press for mitigation, keeping a close eye on the effects of the building works. This includes submitting comments on the project's various applications and challenging it when things have gone wrong.

Heathrow Airport remains an ever-present threat. This extremely damaging development would mean a loss of 1,200 hectares of green belt in and around the southern third of the

Colne Valley Park (including Harmondsworth Moor and important local floodplains), and will adversely affect five rivers, four of which will be culverted for many miles. As things stand, the proposals will sever the link between the Thames and the internationally rare chalk streams of the Chilterns.

The Park's president, Lord Randall of Uxbridge, takes a particularly grave view of the continual challenges facing the Park. He said: *"The Regional Park is sadly being chipped away by a constant stream of large and small developments and change is desperately needed to protect this precious landscape. We punch well above our weight as a small organisation, but the fact is we have only limited resources with no public funding. We do all we can to act as custodian of the Park, keeping an eye on developments, commenting on planning proposals, raising support locally and lobbying government."*

A webinar titled, 'Improving the Green Belt and its planning', was organised early July and aimed at local authority planning officials to help them understand and review the unique challenges faced by the Park. Go to our website "[news](#)" page to read more. Lord Randall added: *"The idea is to create a collective solution to enhance and protect the region. There is much more work to be done. Please take some time to get to know your local countryside better, join us in supporting the Park, and protecting it for the future."*



There is however some good news for the Park, too. One example is 'Woodoaks Farm' in Maple Cross near Rickmansworth, where owner Sally Findlay has donated her land to the Soil Association. This will ensure it is preserved as a working farm and used to encourage further biodiversity and wildlife habitats, acting as a local food hub for its local community. The Colne Valley Park is excited to be working on a joint project at Woodoaks Farm to improve access and walking routes so people can enjoy the site, wildlife, views and amenities including an art gallery, an outside café and brewery. This is a great example of a landscape being protected and enhanced, as part of our heritage for future generations.

Your support is vital. There are lots of ways you can help us – see our website under the '[get involved](#)' section. Please follow us on social media, sign up to our E-Newsletter or see the below blue boxes for more ideas.

To read more on the work we do to protect the Colne Valley Park landscape, letters, planning responses and other documents can be seen on our website under the page titled '[more & library](#)'



Lord Randall

Nature snaps

Here are a few of the recent sightings around the Park.



A Large Red Damselfly at Harmondsworth Moor



A jay enjoying the Grand Union Canal at Harefield



A Peacock butterfly at Denham Country Park

Thank you to all the entries for our children's art competition in partnership with Gerrards Cross Art Society. One of the winning entries below from Ellie aged 12...



Volunteer with us

Are you interested in helping to make a difference for nature and the countryside?

We have lots of river, woodland and nature reserve projects where help is really needed. Come along and get outdoor active, meet new people, learn new skills and help your local environment. For more details follow our social media pages, check our website or sign up to our newsletter via the website.

Donate to the Colne Valley Park

This is your local countryside – support important work to protect and enhance this precious landscape. Your gift could help:

- Weekly conservation tasks in parks, meadows and wetlands
- Maintain woods and wetland for the benefit of people and wildlife
- Respond to development proposals including Heathrow, motorway services etc.

Please see www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/donate

Become a Colne Valley Friend

Would you like to help us protect and enhance the Colne Valley Park?

Please consider joining the Friends of the Park to support our endeavors. Benefits include:

- Invitations to events and guided walks
- Opportunities to volunteer locally
- Regular newsletters and information

Please see our website: www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/become-a-champion or send us an email.

With thanks to our corporate supporters for their continued commitment to us: Lakeside Energy from Waste, Mad Squirrel Brewing Co. and



Could you become one of our latest **Corporate Supporters**? Please consider us as part of your environmental and community support.

The Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company represents over 70 member organisations. Each of these organisations and our financial contributors support our six objectives for the Colne Valley Regional Park which revolve around improving and protecting the local;

- Landscape
- Countryside
- Biodiversity
- Countryside recreation
- Rural economy
- Community participation

With thanks to; Buckinghamshire Council, Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council, Denham Parish Council, Friends of the Colne Valley Park, Iver & District Countryside Association, Iver Parish Council, London Borough of Hillingdon, Slough Borough Council, Horton Parish Council and Wexham Parish Council, for their financial contributions.

Newsletter sponsors



HS2 Mitigation Funds Some readers have told us they were surprised to see we have received some funding from HS2, despite our opposition to the project. HS2 is legally obliged to provide funding to compensate for its considerable impact on the local countryside, and we make no apology for applying for those funds where applicable. You can find our position statement on HS2 on our website, in the Safeguarding the Countryside section. If you have any further questions, please email us at enquiry@colnevalleypark.org.uk