



Explore Your Colne Valley Regional Park

FREE



SHAKE OFF THE WINTER BLUES

It's time to shake off the winter blues, so grab your boots and head out for an uplifting walk through one of the beautiful ancient woods within the Colne Valley. Walking not only keeps you fit and in good health physically and mentally, but it also helps you appreciate the beauty around you, so have a look at Page 3 for details on our top Bluebell walks.



WELCOME TO SPRING IN THE Colne Valley

Uxbridge Alder glade



Explore hidden gems

Spotlight on Uxbridge Alder glade

This is a small urban nature reserve managed by Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust. It is situated along a wooded former railway embankment, bordered by the ancient Shire Ditch and Frays River. It's a great place to explore and you can listen out for chiffchaffs, blackcaps, wrens and song thrushes. From April onwards butterflies including speckled woods, orange tips, red admirals, commas and brimstones abound. If you tread quietly, you might be lucky enough to see a water vole.

Our website lists many local places you can explore (including Uxbridge Alder glade) – search on our ['visit/places to go'](#) page and make some new discoveries this Spring.

We are excited to see the first shoots of spring appearing around the Park.

Everything we do in the Park is guided by six objectives: Landscape, Countryside, Biodiversity, Recreation, Rural Economy and Community Participation. Our National Lottery Heritage-funded Landscape Partnership has brought together wildlife organisations, local authorities, and water companies, and is led by community charity Groundwork South to preserve and enhance this precious landscape for people and wildlife.

Projects underway in recent months include:

- Working with Woodoaks Farm to install new signs and viewpoints.
- The opening of the new Woodland Centre at Ruislip Lido (see page 2).
- Clocking up 214 volunteer hours on crucially important riverfly surveys in 2021.
- New Information boards and signs at Arthur Jacobs Reserve in Horton, the River Ash and Stanwell Moor in Spelthorne, and at various sites in Hillingdon.
- Completing our first successful Outfall Safari (see page 3).
- A series of additions and improvements at Langley Park including the installation of fabulous Destination Deadwood Play Space, 1km and 2km walking trails around the Temple Gardens, welcome signs and new interpretation panels.
- A range of projects at Batchworth Lock including a new audio post, an

interpretation sign and children's activity sheet celebrating Batchworth's history and promoting the Canal Centre and local activities.

- Installation of a new brass-rubbing posts trail at Denham Country Park, and footpath improvements on the trail.
- 26 conservation volunteering sessions, representing 681 community hours spent enhancing the Colne Valley Regional Park.
- Launch of our Water Ambassadors Challenge, reaching out to thousands of people, exploring how our daily water use directly affects rivers and wildlife, and what we can do to stop our rivers drying up.
- Completion of habitat enhancement works for water voles along 1.4km of river bank and ditch network in Denham Country Park and Fray's Farm Meadows.
- Ninety-five volunteers took part in our pennywort removal sessions in 2021.
- Working with anglers at 23 sites to find ways to manage fisheries that protect and enhance fish stocks, restore biodiversity in the Colne Valley, and enhance angling experiences.

Thanks to this vital and diverse scheme, the partnership is taking steps to bring a cherished landscape back from the brink of decline by co-ordinating conservation work, and helping connect communities with their heritage, enabling them to understand and take responsibility for it.

Get to know your Colne Valley Park

There are lots of great reasons to get to know us better, especially if you like being outdoor active, enjoy wildlife and green spaces, and care about your countryside. To help get you started we have...

- A website to tell you more about the Park, things to do, ways you can get involved, the challenges and threats to your local countryside, events, places to go and more.
- Information in the visitor centre at Denham Country Park.

- Our annual summer festival for people to get to know and enjoy the Park more – this year's will be held between 24th July and 8th August, so please watch out for the programme of events.
- Social Media pages which keep you up to date on your local countryside and events
- A range of wildlife, family and walking [events](#) happening every month.
- A [supporter's page](#) for companies to join with team events and donations. You can find out more here: www.colnevalleypark.org.uk



RUISLIP WOODLAND CENTRE OPENING

The newly-refurbished Woodland Centre at Ruislip Lido was recently opened by the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Roy Chamdal. With the help of Landscape Partnership funding from the Heritage Lottery, Grundon's Landfill Fund and Hillingdon Council, the upgraded Centre now has exciting interactive displays for everyone wanting to learn more about the Woods, including;

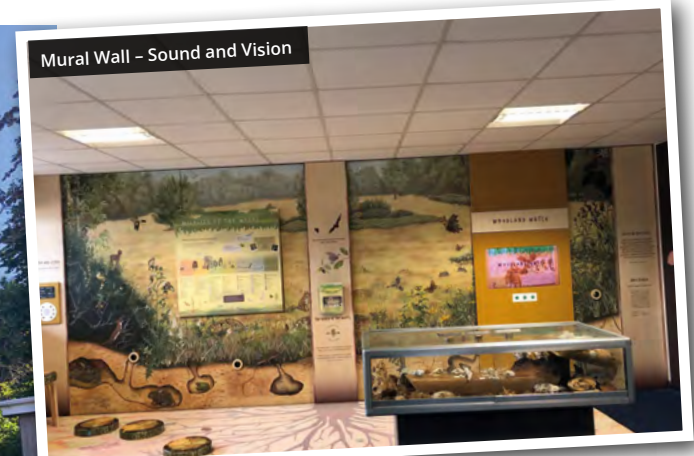
- displays on the changes you can spot each season – simply turn the wheel to see what they are.
- a time-line putting the woods into context with major dates in history.
- a story corner with children's books and reference books
- tracing tables where you can create your own masterpiece
- a large map of the woods and walk instructions that you can photograph and take with you.

There are microscopes and magnifiers which can be used by teachers/group leaders on class visits or by the officer or volunteer on duty on quieter days. A huge selection of wildlife photos are scrolling on the TV (many kindly donated by Tony Hovell) and a cabinet of moths loaned to the Centre by Andrew George can be viewed on request.



Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Roy Chamdal opens the refurbished Centre.

The Council organises regular events so keep an eye out for posters or on social media.



We are delighted to confirm that Flo Cordner has joined the team as Project Officer (Habitats & Access). Flo already works part-time at Iver Education Centre. She is currently planning Spring and Summer volunteer conservation activities to include:

- Hardings Row Nature Reserve, Iver Heath
- Crown Meadow, Colnbrook
- Northmoor Hill Wood, Denham

Our activities are designed to be widely accessible, offering a chance for everyone to engage with the countryside at their own pace, and meet new people.

Here, Fiona, one of our volunteers, shares her experience: **"Have you ever thought about conservation volunteering? Well, it is so much more than weeding, pruning, and clearing – it is an opportunity. When I wasn't working, I realised that it could be quite easy to become isolated or feel lost – something we all might have experienced over the past couple of years. So, while I considered my next step, I thought it would be good to incorporate some routine in my life and I investigated conservation volunteering. It is something I am very pleased I did as it provided so many benefits: a great chance to learn about the environment around me, acquiring new skills, being outside in the fresh air, doing something productive and useful, providing regular sessions, mindfulness, and being part of a team. I also discovered that it isn't all about hard work – it's about having fun and enjoying where you are."**

If you are considering volunteering for a conservation task then visit <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/things-to-do-2/events/> to see which conservation tasks are coming up, choose an activity and get involved to help your countryside.

Go Green team!

We are delighted to report that two of our trainees have moved on to full-time employment with Maydencroft as [Environmental Grounds Maintenance Operatives](#). We are also delighted to welcome Maydencroft as our newest corporate supporter to help us protect and enhance the Colne Valley.

The green team consists of young people who are being employed and trained, gaining qualifications and valuable experience to help kick-start their future careers.

Their tasks involve managing nature reserves across the local area. The team also gets hands-on experience at tackling invasive species, such as removing floating pennywort from the River Colne. Left to its own devices, pennywort can grow up to 20cms a day.

Sam Eagling Fernandez Regional Director at Maydencroft Ltd said:

"This is fantastic news, and we are pleased that Harry and Andrew are continuing their careers with us, having sparked their interest in the industry through the Kickstart opportunity the Groundwork South Green Team at Colne Valley Park provided. They are now officially continuing on in the industry with us, and we are all fully behind them and looking forward to seeing how they develop with us."

"A big 'thanks' from all of us here at Maydencroft, and we are looking forward to meeting the next candidates you may be able to send over for interview who will hopefully follow in Harry and Andrew's footsteps."



Find out more about the vital difference you or your company could make to help us enhance and protect the [Regional Park](#) at the link below.



RIVERS UPDATE

Our rivers are under threat – they are drying up and disappearing across the Colne Valley and beyond and we really need your help! This is not good news for wildlife and represents a grim future of a drier river valley for us all, but we can still make a massive difference by working together.

Water Ambassadors

We have been running a new on-line challenge called Water Ambassadors, exploring how our daily water use directly affects our rivers and wildlife, and what we can do to stop our rivers drying up.

Our on-line updates have been viewed around 9,000 times and we have interacted with more than 250 people who have been learning about:

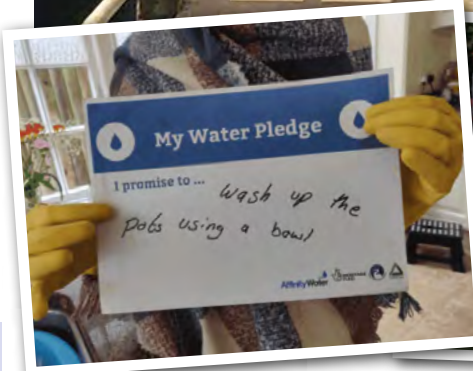
- Where our water comes from
- Where we use most water
- The real threat to our local rivers
- River wildlife and its importance for biodiversity
- How to make positive changes to save water, money and help wildlife

Did you know that our drinking water in the Colne Valley area comes from the Aquifers underground? The more water we use, the less is in our local river.



Join our Water Ambassadors challenge and learn how to protect our rivers

Our Water Ambassadors have pledged to make positive changes to save water, money and help wildlife



More details on the Water Ambassador Programme can be found at www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/water-ambassadors

Surface water outfalls: What are they?

- Discharge point of pipes that convey rainfall run-off into rivers – move water from land to the river
- Generally >20cm diameter
- If in doubt, or you see signs of pollution, assess it

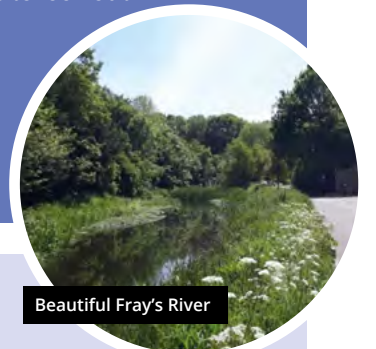
On-line Outfall Safari training © Zoological Society of London

OUTFALL SAFARIS

Following our first successful Outfall Safari last year, we are making plans for more water adventures in 2022 on the River Pinn and the River Colne.

The Outfall Safari is a river survey developed by ZSL. Following its methodology we worked in partnership to train a group of enthusiastic volunteers to look out for signs of pollution from outfall pipes in 2021.

Those observant people found one outfall spewing fat and oil into a section of the Fray's River and informed Thames Water immediately. TW has now cleaned up the mess and the source of the pollution has been stopped, leaving the Frays River cleaner, more enjoyable and less polluted for wildlife.



Beautiful Fray's River

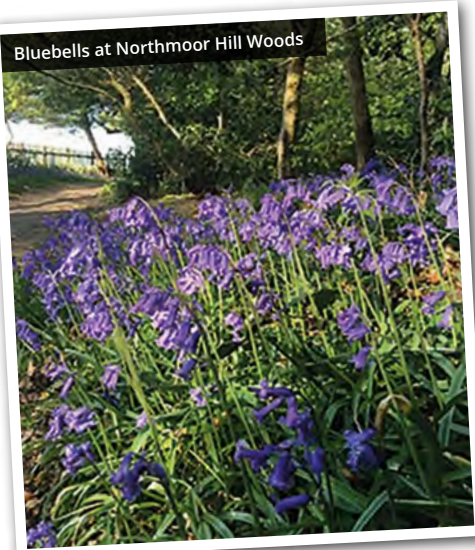
If you are interested in joining, or want to get involved in other conservation activities as a River Ranger, please email joshua.bowes@groundwork.org.uk to be added to our email list. You can also look out for Events on our website.

Spring Walks

See one of the most welcoming signs of Spring and make the most of the woodland wildflowers in the Colne Valley Regional Park.

There is something very special about the stunning blanket of bluebells in a natural ancient woodland. There are a number of woods you can visit in order to see this gorgeous spectacle, but be warned – they don't last for long.

Typically, bluebells appear from mid-April to late May, depending on the weather. Plan ahead and put the dates in your diary so you can capture some unique moments, but please stay on the paths, tempting as it might be to get in amongst the flowers for a photo. A trampled Bluebell takes over 5 years to recover.



Bluebells at Northmoor Hill Woods

Top places to see Bluebells in the CVRP include:

- Bayhurst Woods, Ruislip
- Bottom Wood, Herongate
- Old Park Wood, Harefield
- Northmoor Hill Woods, Denham
- Caps Wood, Denham

Affordable Boating for the Community

Hillingdon Narrowboats is a charity which owns and operates six narrowboats on the Grand Union Canal, based in Harefield.

Much of Hillingdon Narrowboats' work is with schools, Scout, Guide, Cubs and Brownies groups, disadvantaged people, DoE Gold students, Princes Trust and other community or voluntary groups, where the charity provides boats for anything from a single afternoon to a full five-day event on the local canal system.

It also offers private and corporate hire and has provided boats for team-building events, a family reunion, a five-day adventure with three boats for a local school and much more.

Whatever your background, and whatever you're doing, narrowboating has something for everyone and is an excellent way to explore the Colne Valley Park. Have a look at www.hillingdon-narrowboats.org.uk to find out more or get in touch to discuss your event ideas and so the team can come up with something fun, educational, relaxing or motivating for your occasion.



Historic narrowboat, Pisces

Crisis point for Colne Valley Regional Park

GREEN BELT IS POSITIVE AND VITAL

The Colne Valley Regional Park views the Green Belt as a positive thing for a better natural environment with recreation opportunities and access to nature to improve physical and mental health for the benefit of millions of people who live nearby. We aim to ensure the park thrives as a place for recreation, agriculture and wildlife, whilst playing its part to combat climate change.

It's no exaggeration to say the threats to the Colne Valley Regional Park and indeed the Green Belt as a whole, have reached crisis point. We have written to Michael Gove to explain seven positive suggestions for improvement to the government's planning policy in a bid to relieve the situation.

Development proposals are a fact of life. Here at the Colne Valley Regional Park, we have noticed an alarming increase in speculative, commercially-driven projects that are completely unsuitable in the Green Belt.

There has been a tendency among planners to view proposals as one-offs, rather than looking at their cumulative impact on the character of a wider region. This is particularly true of the Colne Valley, which straddles several different council areas.

The result risks a kind of 'death by a thousand cuts' – lots of development proposals, ranging from gigantic infrastructure projects like motorway service areas, a theme park, HS2 and potential Heathrow expansion, to a myriad of smaller but still potentially damaging plans. If these were all approved – and many appear to be heading that way – the future will be wide urbanisation of the Colne Valley Regional Park.

Find out more about what you can do to help the Colne Valley Regional Park protect and improve the Park and fight development proposals at:

www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/colne-valley-regional-park-urges-government-to-review-green-belt-policy/



Staines Moor – SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)

Nature snaps

Here are a few images captured by visitors to the Park.



Song Thrush © Josh Kubale



Comma butterfly at Staines Moor

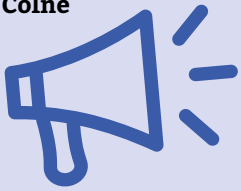


Caterpillar of the knot grass moth – Denham Country Park.

Help us to protect the Park

To help us safeguard the Colne Valley Park for the future, please:

- Write to your MP to highlight the importance of conserving the Park
- Sign up to our newsletter via our website to stay up to date
- Follow us on our social media pages listed below, and help us to speak up for the Park
- Volunteer with us via our website



Become a Colne Valley Friend

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

Please join 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
- Special offers with our Riverside café and other venues

Please see our website:

colnevalleypark.org.uk/become-a-champion/ or send us an email.

Donate to the Colne Valley Park

Your gift could help us:

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

Please see our website:

colnevalleypark.org.uk/donate or send us an email.



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



Harleyford Valley Limited



The Colne Valley Regional Park is supported by more than 75 members organisations. Each of these organisations support the six objectives of 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, Horton Parish Council, Iver & District Countryside Association, Iver Parish Council, London Borough of Hillingdon, Spelthorne Borough 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 mitigation funding from HS2, despite our opposition to the project. HS2 is 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