



Explore Your Colne Valley Regional Park

FREE

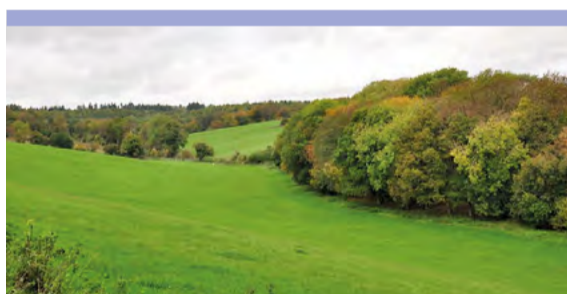


JOIN IN OUR SUCCESS

In 2019, the Colne Valley Regional Park received funding for a Landscape Partnership. These are part of a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant programme for the conservation and enjoyment of areas of distinctive character. Our project is now in its final stages and will end in September 2022.

Our Landscape Partnership was set up with £1.6m from the National Lottery, and a further £900k of local funding to preserve and enhance the landscape for people and wildlife. This hugely successful scheme has brought together wildlife trusts, local authorities, and water companies, and has been facilitated by community charity Groundwork South.

We have developed a legacy for the Park, with detailed plans, partnerships and projects but we need your continuing support to carry on the crucial work of protecting this precious landscape. Please read on to discover how you can help.



Explore hidden gems

Bottom Wood, (or No Dragon Wood), is a quiet oasis close to the bustle of the M25 and is part of the Heronsgate Walk. The wood has a diverse selection of trees, including apple, beech, cherry and conifers. You may come across tawny owls, red kites or dormice that all inhabit the 35 acre site. Woodland wildflowers include bluebells, wood sorrell, yellow angel, woodruff and coral root.



Chairman's WELCOME

I am delighted to introduce this edition of the Colne Valley Park Newsletter. At this pivotal moment, our Lottery Landscape Partnership is drawing to a close and we are celebrating the many achievements of the project whilst ensuring an enduring legacy is underway for the communities, wildlife and countryside of the Colne Valley Regional Park.

I am proud to be a farmer in the Colne Valley and to promote the many achievements of the Landscape Partnership. I am particularly pleased to have been involved with our conservation grazing programme and to have taken part in 'Meet the Farmer' sessions as part of Festival Fortnight.

We have built successful collaborations between our various partners, working together to protect the countryside and its wildlife. We have also encouraged our communities to join in to maintain and protect our rivers and the local environment via our extensive volunteering programme.

It has been especially rewarding to be part of the Landscape Partnership over the past few years when we have all recognised the importance of our green spaces for our overall health and well-being. Our projects have enabled more people to access the Colne Valley, with new trail maps, walking guides, better signs, views and access for everyone so that they can experience the beauty of the Colne Valley.

Looking to the future, we have put in place a framework for the Colne Valley Regional Park that enables us to carry on our work to protect and enhance what is quite possibly the most threatened area of countryside in the UK.

Please join us in celebrating the impressive achievements of our Landscape Partnership as outlined in the following pages and discover more about what you can do to support our continued fight to protect and enhance your endangered local countryside.

John Whitby, Chairman,
Colne Valley Regional Park

Get to know your Colne Valley Park

Our Lottery-funded project has helped us deliver:

- Volunteer Conservation Sessions
- River Rangers Training Days
- Walks, talks and visits to local landmarks
- Our annual festival celebrating our beautiful park
- Children's Activities
- Our annual cattle checkers programme
- And much more!

We hope to provide more activities in the future, but we urgently need more funds in order to do it. For all these activities and more check out www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/things-to-do-2/events/

Walks

Walking is the most popular form of countryside recreation, and it is well catered for in the Colne Valley Regional Park with more than 20 walks to discover. Our published list includes short circular walks and longer



Walkers on the Grand Union Canal

countryside rambles. You can also download our Ruislip Woods digiwalks. Please explore our website www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/things-to-do-2/walks/ where you will find ideas for self-guided walks.



Colne Valley Festival Fortnight walk.

ROB REES

Chair, Lottery Landscape Partnership

"Thanks to the many individuals and communities who have participated, contributing new ideas and adding their voices to calls for more to be done. In the Colne Valley we have raised our game, and we stand ready to work with others to do likewise"



LORD RANDALL OF UXBRIDGE

President, Colne Valley Regional Park

"I am delighted that this Partnership has helped celebrate the Park, whilst emphasising how precious this area is, and why it simply must be protected for the future."

DEBBIE VALMAN

Programme Manager

"New signs give people a better sense of where they are in the Colne Valley"



FIONA BREWER

Events Officer

"We have been to more than 150 events and engaged with many people about the joys of the Colne Valley, encouraging them to discover and explore the Colne Valley Park and take an interest in its future too."



Your Colne Valley Regional Park needs YOU

The Colne Valley Regional Park is a vibrant, living entity vital to good health and overall well-being; an important environment, rich in wildlife, in which people live, work and play, and one that actively encourages farming and forestry to thrive.

We urgently need your support in our fight to protect and enhance your local countryside and continue to:

- Provide detailed responses to the increasing wave of planning applications for Green Belt development
- Lobby policy makers and government to properly protect the Green Belt at national and local level
- Organise community events including walks, children's activities and our annual festival

- Run conservation volunteering days and education for schools and communities
 - Improve and create wildlife habitats across the park and restore landscape
 - Protect and maintain our rivers, and educate people on the threats facing them
- Go to <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/become-a-champion/> to discover how you can support us:
- If you do one thing to help, please join the Friends of the Colne Valley Park today
 - Follow us on social media and sign up to our Newsletter for latest details on events and activities in the Park



- Add your local community Group as a Member of the Colne Valley Regional Park
- Ask your company to become one of our corporate supporters
- Ask your company for a team building day with our Colne supporter's pack
- Other ways to help us to help you include making a donation, remembering the Colne Valley in your will, and by volunteering e.g becoming a river ranger or cattle checker.
- And most importantly get out there and explore your local countryside and tell politicians how much it means to you when they knock on your door at election time.



The benefits of becoming a corporate supporter

We are on the threshold of a new chapter of the Colne Valley Regional Park, and aim to boost local involvement and raise awareness of the area among the three million people who live within 10 miles of it. If you would like your business to join companies like Coca Cola and SEGRO and get involved, please go to www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/become-a-champion/corporate-supporter/ for details on the benefits for business, different membership options and information on how to join.

Colne Valley: A Landscape on the Edge
the Landscape Partnership in numbers

36 people trained to check for signs of water voles and monitor for mink and **44km** of rivers surveyed

1 unifying vision for improving local green and blue spaces

7 herds of conservation cattle helping to bring nature back to special places

42 wayfinding signs, 20 information boards, and 4 hand-carved statues to mark the Colne Valley Trail

800 volunteers contributing **3,000 hours** to conserve and improve the Colne Valley

32 organisations collaborating

100 River Rangers + 30 fully trained

2 weirs adapted to help fish and eels move freely along the rivers

Colne Valley Park covers 40 square miles on the edge of 5 counties

Over 70 lakes

200km of river and canals

Water saving advice in 14 different languages

70km of river checked for damaging invasive species

1.5km of river corridor enhanced for water voles

8km of river managed sympathetically for water voles by anglers

44 Fishery managers trained in nature conservation

72 training and expert sessions

2 trainees now in employment or further study

14 places improved for countryside recreation and exploration

6 areas improved for habitat, not including voles and fisheries

150 events to bring people closer to nature in their area

HERITAGE FUND

Spreading the word through:

- 1 Interpretation centre
- 4 social media platforms
- 1 website
- 20 newsletters
- 20 walk leaflets

4 knowledge exchanges to help local conservation groups swap great ideas

TIM WILLIAMS

Buckinghamshire County Council

"The four Country Parks in Buckinghamshire are the jewels in the crown of the Colne Valley, and we are proud of their role as visitor attractions within the Park. However, they do not exist in isolation and we are delighted to work with the Partnership to protect and enhance the countryside around them."



FLO CORDNER

Habitats & Access Officer

"Our much-loved conservation grazing project has improved biodiversity, promoted the importance of conservation grazing, and allowed our local communities to get involved with conservation work."



STEWART POMEROY

Colne Valley Team Manager, Groundwork

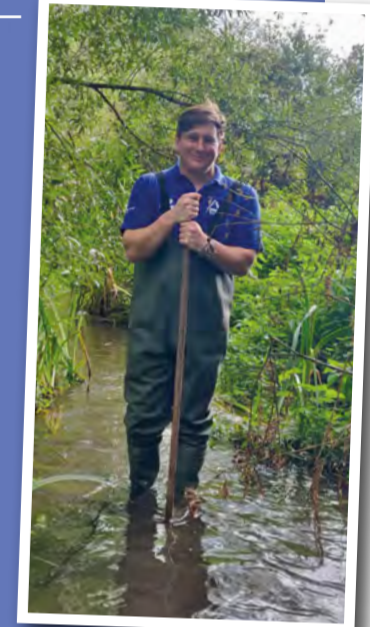
"The Lottery project funded a Green Infrastructure Strategy to create a vision for the countryside on your doorstep. This has already successfully influenced some council planning documents. We will continue to lobby and campaign for more local councils and national government to protect and enhance the countryside"



JOSH BOWES

Rivers Officer

"I have enjoyed working with the volunteers and doing some amazing River and invasive species projects with them. They have made a real difference to the Colne Valley. I hope the Park continues to be a force for good in the local area and continues to improve the environment."



CHLOE CROMPTON

Rivers Project Manager

"Improving spaces for wildlife has been a highlight for me; voles, eels, invertebrates and more have all benefited."



LYDIA ENNIS

Colne Valley Rivers & Wetlands Officer, Herts Middlesex Wildlife Trust

"Building strong and productive working relationships with angling clubs has enabled us to catalyse landscape-scale recovery for our wetland wildlife, most notably the rare and threatened water vole."



ANNA JARMOLINSKA-NOWAK

Corporate Responsibility Manager, Affinity Water

"Affinity Water is proud to have been part of this project to help share water saving information more widely within the Colne Valley Communities. The message has been produced in 14 different languages to reflect the diverse communities that enjoy and appreciate the Park each day."



IAN CRUMP

Biodiversity Field Officer, Thames Water

"Thanks to the many individuals and communities who have participated, contributing new ideas and adding their voices to calls for more to be done. In the Colne Valley we have raised our game, and we stand ready to work with others to do likewise"



BERGEY SIGURDARDOTTIR

Administration Officer

"It's great to see so many people following us on social media and visiting our website to learn more about the Colne Valley. The LLP has also made this broadsheet possible!"



COLNE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK

Possibly the most threatened area of countryside in the UK

Sandwiched between HS2, and proposed Heathrow expansion (two of the biggest construction projects in Europe) the Park is also under threat from a host of other proposals including two motorway service areas, multiple, colossal data centres, Pinewood expansion, warehouses, Slough northern expansion, and Green Belt releases for housing.

What is Green Belt?

- The Green Belt is a government policy designed to protect and improve countryside on the edge of major cities. Normally, green belt land can only be built on in 'exceptional circumstances', but these are now being used by developers so frequently that they are no longer exceptional.

How does Colne Valley Regional Park respond to these threats?

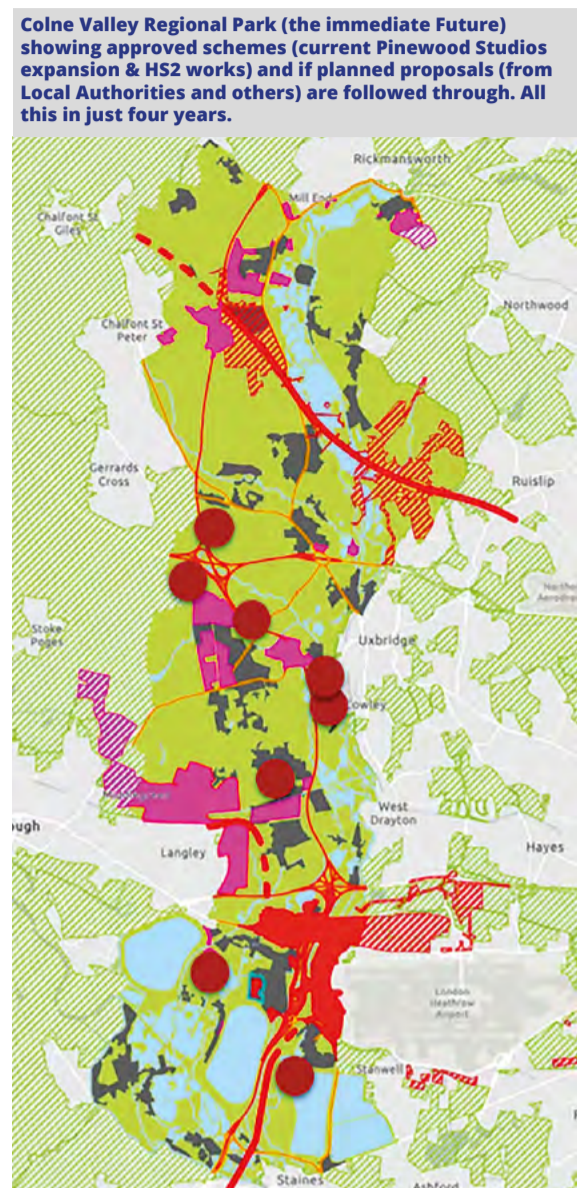
- We are not anti-development, but we are fiercely pro-countryside. Our 'day job' is to work to improve the rivers, lakes, woods and paths of the Colne Valley, raising awareness of the 'countryside on your doorstep' and encouraging community participation through volunteering.

However, in recent years we have significantly ramped up our spatial planning work. We act as champions for the local countryside; commenting on planning applications, attending planning inquiries and influencing local plans and lobbying national government.

What progress has been made?

- We are grateful to Spelthorne Council, and Iver and Denham Parish Councils, who have included Colne Valley and rivers policies in their draft local plans, but there is much more to do, particularly to support Buckinghamshire and Three Rivers.

We welcome the statements in support of the Colne Valley and the Green Belt from Boris Johnson MP, Joy Morrissey MP and others, but we need to see action. The current government discourse about protection alone is not enough and will simply not work in rural/urban fringe



areas like the Colne Valley.

We need enforcement, landscape and biodiversity restoration, and for local authorities and national government to plan positively and actively for the Green Belt.

What can I do to help?

- Please go to www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/become-a-champion for details on joining the Friends of the Colne Valley Park and other ways you can help protect your local countryside.

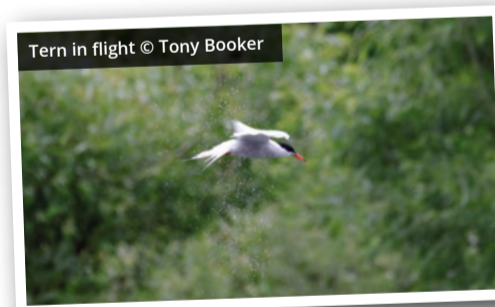


Leave us a gift in your will

The Colne Valley Regional Park has always punched well above its weight, and that can give the impression we are a substantial and well-funded organisation with armies of staff.

While that is perhaps flattering, nothing could be further from the truth. We have a tiny budget and carry out the bulk of our work by co-ordinating the efforts of a host of partner organisations, individuals and volunteers.

Today, we face a rising tide of threats to every part of the Park and need all the help and support we can get.



Thanks to the kindness of people like you, we are able to continue our work including:

- Organising practical conservation tasks in parks, meadows and wetlands

- Maintaining woods and wetland for the benefit of people and wildlife.
 - Responding to development proposals including HS2, Heathrow etc
- Some people have very kindly remembered us in their will; maybe because they have lived in the area all their lives, would like their loved ones to have a beautiful place to remember them or want to protect wildlife locally.
- You can find further details here: https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/leave_a_gift/
- Alternatively, if you would like to talk to someone personally about arranging a legacy, you can call Michelle Jones on 01895 839859.

With thanks to our corporate supporters for their commitment to your local countryside: Lakeside Energy from Waste, Mad Squirrel Brewing Co. Irwin & Colton and



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



A big 'thank you' to the Heritage Lottery Fund and everyone who has made this Lottery Landscape Partnership possible including: Affinity Water, Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, Buckinghamshire County Council, Canal & River Trust, Colne Valley CIC, Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative, Environment Agency, Friends of Colne Valley Park, Groundwork South, Hillingdon Borough Council, Iver & District Countryside Association, London Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Spelthorne Borough Council, Spelthorne Natural History Society, Thames Water, Every Volunteer, Each Participant in our events, walks and talks. Our LLP Staff Team.