



COLNE CONNECTIONS

WRAYSBURY LAKES – OPENING ACCESS

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Green Landscapes Manager

PARTNERS: Affinity Water, Wraysbury Council, Thames Water

SITE: Wraysbury Lake

LANDOWNER: Affinity Water, Thames Water

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Year 1-3 of delivery

PROJECT OVERVIEW

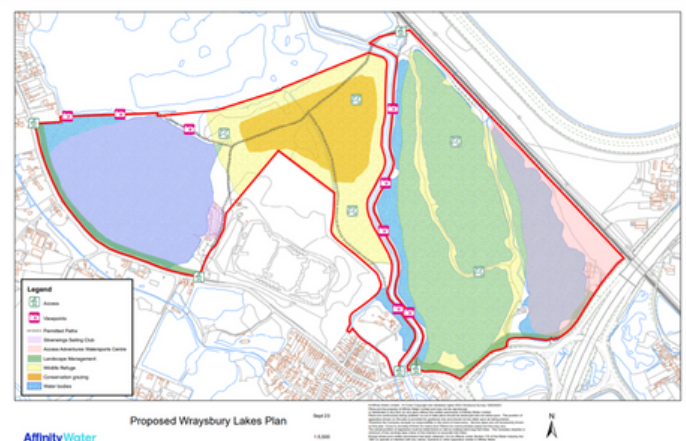
Wraysbury Lakes is a large site which is not currently open for public access. Wraysbury Lakes offers interesting natural heritage value as a SINC and SSSI. The project will put in the infrastructure to open this up as a nature site for the public to enjoy with views of the lakes, walking routes and information boards. It will include the installation of kissing gates, benches and possibly some fencing, tree works and scrub removal. The production of a management plan would also be included.

In addition, Thames Water are keen to add value to the project with biodiversity improvements on their adjacent land, to the north east of the railway line.

Ongoing management will be with Affinity Water or Thames Water according to land ownership boundaries.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** A previously under-utilised natural heritage asset will be opened up for local people to enjoy, helping to 'create' new heritage for people to make memories at this site.
- **Protecting the environment:** Opening up the space will provide opportunities for conservation volunteering, including management of invasive species, scrub removal and riparian habitat restoration, as well as ongoing activities such as removing litter and monitoring water quality.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** We will make this beautiful place available to the public to enjoy; a space that was previously totally inaccessible. All interventions will be DDA compliant; interpretation/information boards will support in way-finding and be written in easy-read, accessible English to cater to diverse audiences.
- **Organisational sustainability:** This project will benefit Groundwork South by providing opportunities for upskilling volunteers on the site; the project will also bring further investment from the landowners for Groundwork to support in managing the site long-term



AIMS

To open up a new area to public access and to ensure the area is managed, ongoing, to a high standard of conservation and biodiversity.



COLNE CONNECTIONS

WILDLIFE TRUSTS TOGETHER FORUMS

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South, Wildlife Trusts

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Countryside Connections Manager

PARTNERS: Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust; London Wildlife Trust; Surrey Wildlife Trust; Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust

SITE: Venue to be identified – likely online or at Groundwork South's head office

LANDOWNER: N/A

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Year 1-5

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project will help to enhance the connectivity of one of the key wildlife and biodiversity partnerships in the Colne Valley Regional Park – The Wildlife Trusts. Each trust would like more opportunity to put time into working more closely together to share knowledge and align their projects more closely – in the development phase, we will enable time, space and funding to representatives from each of the Wildlife Trusts: Herts and Middx, London, Surrey and Berks, Bucks & Oxon to meet, (chaired by the Colne Conservation Manager). The purpose is to focus on CVRP-wide aspirations and to facilitate projects without borders, enabling more landscape focused projects to be more effective. This project will also support with data collection efforts.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** This approach will drastically support the CVRP as a whole, galvanizing more joined up working and enabling wildlife data collection across several counties, as well as strategic decisions, to be made that consider the CVRP's heritage assets in a more holistic, joined up and effective way.
- **Protecting the environment:** By connecting the Wildlife Trusts more closely together (with one another and with Groundwork South), projects will be able to occur that are more effective and happen more quickly to prevent/respond to environmental degradation, and which can help to create/ rebuild habitats and corridors.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** By connecting Wildlife Trusts across several counties, we can have a broad reach into communities to bring the plight of the CVRP to the forefront, as well as to promote the opportunities afforded by funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project will strengthen participation through a range of methods e.g cross-referring volunteering opportunities for each Trust. More inter-connected working will also help to raise/represent people's and stakeholder's voices across the Colne to influence projects happening in specific locations - and connect skills across the CVRP.
- **Organisational sustainability:** The Wildlife Trusts will benefit from pooled resources, knowledge, staff time and volunteer resources. Groundwork South will benefit from the knowledge and influence that the Wildlife Trusts group can wield on supporting our campaign to enhance/ draw to light the need for greater protections for the CVRP.



The
Wildlife
Trusts

AIMS

To focus projects on the landscape and unite groups for the benefit of the Regional Park.



COLNE CONNECTIONS

THORNEY PARK CONSERVATION

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Green Landscapes Manager,
Green Skills Team

PARTNERS: Bucks Country Parks

SITE: Thorney Park

LANDOWNER: Bucks Country Parks

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Year 2

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This is a former landfill site occupied by a lake and area of naturally regenerated habitat including some valuable areas of scrub. The landowner, Bucks Country Parks, has identified and mapped potential biodiversity improvement areas across around 10ha of the wider site. There is potential to undertake the following measures:

- Woodland/grassland habitat creation on former hard surfaced car park areas.
- Creation of wildflower meadow in existing areas of modified grassland.
- Enhancements to existing wetland areas around the lake, including reedbeds.
- Enhancements to the landscape quality and habitat connectivity along Thorney Mill Road.
- Woodland enhancement to improve the habitat quality along the Colne Brook corridor.

Ongoing management responsibility will be with Bucks Country Parks.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** We will help create a new area of natural heritage for the CVRP for local people to enjoy, as well enhancing habitat around the riparian habitat of the Colne Brook, impacting habitats both on land and water.
- **Protecting the environment:** We will create a mosaic of habitats, opening up natural space where there was once hard-surfacing and waste materials.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** We will invite volunteers to participate in creating a diverse habitats, which will appeal to a range of groups.
- **Organisational sustainability:** Given the number of different habitats to be created, within such a contained site, this project will offer a fantastic training opportunity for our Green Team placements to gain valuable skills, which will support us in delivering other green space improvement projects.



AIMS

To increase biodiversity and improve habitat linking in with the green corridor;
To improve visitor experience



COLNE CONNECTIONS

RIVER ASH WALK

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Green Landscapes Manager,
Green Teams Manager

PARTNERS: Thames Water, Affinity Water

SITE: Alongside River Ash near Ashford (TW15)

LANDOWNER: Thames Water

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Year 3

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Thames Water have agreed to open up this approx. 7 ha corridor site for public access. There are opportunities for:

- Wetland enhancement and restoration including floodplain grassland habitats, re-establishing habitats around river banks for species such as water vole
- Existing modified grassland management changed to naturalised species rich grassland.
- Opportunity to extend and link this site as part of a wider route to the recently completed re-naturalisation project for the Ash in Ashford to the east.
- Investigate the possibility of including a SUDS project in this area.

The ongoing management of the project/site will be overseen by Thames Water.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** We will help preserve and enhance the habitats of important species such as the water vole ('Red' status on the Endangered Species List for both England and Great Britain), helping them to flourish and rebuild their populations. We will share knowledge about the populations of species with partner organisations in our network, who will in turn support in public awareness raising which helps communities to connect to their local wildlife heritage.
- **Protecting the environment:** We will undertake environmental improvements which help to restore and enhance important wetland environments, helping to diversify the types of habitats within the site and enabling species to flourish. Through the potential opportunity to re-naturalise the Ash, we will help to improve river connectivity, allowing the River Ash to follow its natural path more easily and as a result improving river health (alongside reducing flood risks). SUDS will help to further reduce flood risk and ensure the slower movement of water through the area.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** We will directly increase access to the site by opening up a new pathway. The pathway will be accessible, ensuring it is suitable to be access by people with mobility needs, as well as people with buggies, and by bike. We will provide inclusive volunteering opportunities for local people to get involved in the enhancements, sharing knowledge about why/how wetlands contribute to the overall biodiversity of the CVRP.
- **Organisational sustainability:** We will strengthen our relationship with landowner/corporate partner Thames Water, as well as strengthen the skills of our volunteers.



AIMS

To open up a new path along the River Ash corridor improving links (Staines - Staines Moor/ CVRP), providing additional benefits for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Plus Biodiversity improvements along the corridor.



COLNE CONNECTIONS

LITTER PICKING BLITZ

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Green Landscapes Manager,
Engagement Officer

PARTNERS: All

SITE: Across the Colne Valley Regional Park Area

LANDOWNER: Various

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Year 1

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A CVRP-wide blitz on litter to kick start the 'Colne Connections' theme. We have trialled this working with the Canal and River Trust (CRT), utilising volunteers from both Groundwork and CRT and found this to be a very successful approach. Not only were we able to remove a substantial amount of litter from the site, we also were able to have one of our widest reaches on social media, including sharing the images of the event and subsequent engagement with the content.

The upbeat in social responsibility and engagement that this produces would be magnified if undertaken at a number of sites across the park with all the partners. Additionally we will include the social enterprise ReAP who recycle "dirty" plastic from rivers etc which cannot be put into regular council recycling. This is an awareness raising exercise and it is hoped that the volunteers involved will continue to pick small amounts of rubbish in the area and landowners will be better motivated to continue to keep the areas clear.



HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** By connecting organisations across the Colne to undertake mass 'litterblitz' days, we will help to generate greater awareness of the CVRP and the organisations that support it, piggy-backing on each other's social media engagement. At the events, specialist staff will share knowledge about the importance of the spaces being blitzed, helping to impart heritage knowledge to local people. As litter-picking is often an 'entry level' route into greater volunteering, this is a fantastic way to educate people who may be new to the CVRP's natural heritage. In addition, by removing unsightly litter, we will help to retain the aesthetic value of the CVRP, helping to ensure people who visit it are encouraged to return and are not put off by a dirty and unclean space.
- **Protecting the environment:** The inter-connected projects will help to physically protect the environment from degradation by removing polluting items from natural habitats, helping to protect animal species from coming to harm and preventing chemicals from further leeching into the soil. In addition, by partnering with ReAP, we will help to protect the environment by ensuring recyclable plastic is able to be repurposed rather than ending up in landfill – this supports in efforts to reduce the demand for 'virgin plastics', helping reduce global carbon emissions.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** By engaging a wide range of organisations across the CVRP, we will ensure volunteers are able to get to an event that is local to them. We will run events at different times of the day/week to meet a range of schedules.
- **Organisational sustainability:** Volunteers from each organisation will be introduced to other organisations and volunteering opportunities across the CVRP, helping to increase the pool of potential attendees at other volunteering events we will put on during this project phase. By pooling resources (e.g staff) we will reduce the costs to organisations of putting on volunteering events, whilst maximising the number of volunteers and the impact of their efforts.

AIMS

The main focus of this project is to raise awareness and increase engagement. Improving the quality of the sites is a positive additional outcome of this activity.

**PROJECT LINKS: ACTION FOR HERITAGE, STRENGTHEN OUR STORY,
CONNECTING THE COLNE**



COLNE CONNECTIONS

HEATHLAND LINKS

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Green Landscapes Manager

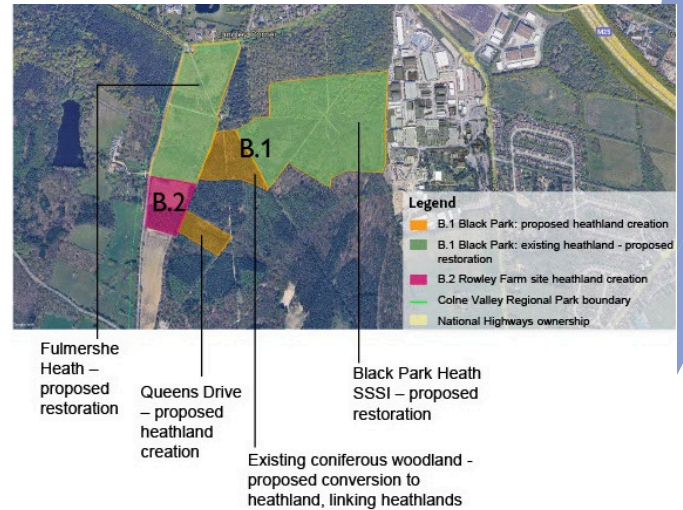
PARTNERS: Bucks Country Parks, Iver and Wexham Parish Councils

SITE: Heathland – various in Iver and Wexham

LANDOWNER: Bucks Country Parks, Iver and Wexham Parish Councils

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Years 2-4 of delivery



PROJECT OVERVIEW

It has been a long held ambition of local communities to put the 'Heath' back into Iver Heath. Work will be done to conserve the habitat of the heathland and look to join the green chain between the areas of heathland. There are opportunities for significant biodiversity improvements through heathland creation and restoration, connecting existing habitats and creating new ones and improving ecological resilience through providing connectivity between key designated ecological areas of Black Park and Stoke Common.

Ongoing management responsibility will lie with Bucks Country Parks and the Parish Councils - we will work with them to identify further volunteering opportunities to support them with maintenance and to reduce ongoing costs.



HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** In this project, we will be 'reclaiming' heritage, replacing the natural features which give the area its name and which have been sadly lost over time. Just 200 years ago, heathland was a common habitat – this project will be a milestone moment for the local area's history, signifying a return to communities living in harmony with their natural green heritage and valuing the importance of the area's unique habitats. We will include interpretation on the site, helping people to understand the history and ecology of the Heath.
- **Protecting the environment:** Heathland is rarer than rainforest, with just 15% of England comprising this unique habitat. Through connecting habitats, we will increase the biodiversity of the area helping to create corridors through which flora and fauna can flourish. We will restore Black Park Heath SSSI helping to maximise its biodiversity potential.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** The heathland will be on publicly accessible land, for local residents and visitors to Iver Heath to enjoy.
- **Organisational sustainability:** This is likely to be a very popular project, which will help to raise the profile of Groundwork South with local people.

AIMS

Restore, connect and increase lowland heathland, an exceptionally rare and vulnerable habitat in Buckinghamshire.

PROJECT LINKS: PLANNING WITH NATURE, CONNECTING THE COLNE, ACTION FOR HERITAGE



COLNE CONNECTIONS

ENGAGEMENT ON THE FLOATING CLASSROOM

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Countryside Connections Manager, Engagement Officer and Skipper

PARTNERS: All

SITE: Along the Grand Union Canal

LANDOWNER: N/A

ASSET OWNER: Groundwork South

TIMESCALE: Years 1 – 5 (Development & Delivery Phases)



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The main programme of engagement for Colne Connections will be based round the Elsdale II Floating Classroom. This is a double width electric barge on the Grand Union Canal which runs through the Regional Park. The barge itself has strong heritage value – it is the legacy vessel commemorating the Elsdale I, the original floating classroom for children living on the boats along the Grand Union Canal in the early 1900s.

Engagement activities will allow us to show communities a different view of their area, very often people have not seen their local area from the viewpoint of the canal, which is over 200 years old. Canalside is also a haven for wildlife, providing opportunities for connecting with natural heritage, and forms a good introduction to exploring the local area.

The barge will be used to host a wide range of activities from craft activities for children, including model locks and making binoculars; site seeing tours for community groups; bird watching tours; a base for litter picks along the canal or bulb planting session; focused activities to entice people who traditionally do not access the countryside such as Dementia friendly floating tea parties (there are disabled lifts for access to the boat); floating saris (design and print); historical heritage talks etc.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** We will help to save heritage by raising local consciousness, awareness and appreciation of the Grand Union Canal's interesting and colourful history and its role in making the Colne Valley, and West London, what it is today.
- **Protecting the environment:** Our activities will help to reduce negative behaviours that degrade the quality of the environment (e.g littering, polluting the waterways) by imparting education about the natural heritage in the area; we will also undertake activities which directly improve biodiversity and build its resilience
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** The Elsdale is a fantastic tool for increasing inclusion, access and participation, in that it is a fully accessible vessel able to meet people in their own communities along the Grand Union Canal; and is also able to empower people to participate by bringing them directly to the CVRP. Our free activities will be aimed at a wide range of people, reflecting the diverse communities of the area.
- **Organisational sustainability:** Driving interest in the Elsdale will help increase the likelihood of local stakeholders booking it for private hire e.g. for birthday parties, corporate days, etc. By placing the Elsdale more firmly in the heart of the community, we hope also to receive additional funding from corporates and grant-makers who recognise the value of the Elsdale II to the area.

AIMS

To give as many communities as possible the opportunity to discover their countryside from the canal.

PROJECT LINKS: STRENGTHEN OUR STORY, ACTION FOR HERITAGE, CONNECTING THE COLNE



COLNE CONNECTIONS

ACCESS FOR ALL

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Countryside Connections Manager

PARTNERS: Bucks Country Parks, Hillingdon Borough Council, Sustrans & others

SITE: Various

LANDOWNER: Various

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Years 1 – 5 of Delivery Phase



PROJECT OVERVIEW

A series of projects designed to give better access to the countryside of the Colne Valley by foot and on wheels. This project will seek to overcome some of the barriers that prevent people from fully enjoying the CVRP and will help to connect places physically as well as encouraging greater connection for the communities who live around the CVRP. Proposed projects include:

- Cycle path connectivity: with a specific focus at this stage on connectivity through Denham but with other areas to be considered with Sustrans,
- 'Where Does This Go?': Working on improving the quality and availability of signage for footpaths, making it clearer and encouraging curiosity, confidence and exploration.
- Self-Led Walks: New routes to be developed, including options to link into other existing walks e.g one of the new Chilterns walks, to give long distance/more challenging walk options.
- Active access: Activities to support opening up of new routes and greater accessibility e.g replacing stiles with kissing gates, adapting some of our self-led published walks to avoid roads.
- Inclusion: A series of improvements to enable people with additional needs/considerations to enjoy the countryside. Proposed projects include accessible and inclusive communication boards in playgrounds, to trialling motorised wheelchair hire in a country park.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** This project will ensure nobody is excluded from enjoying heritage through physical barriers to accessing it. This in turn will help to foster a greater public appreciation for the CVRP and support in efforts to speak up to protect it.
- **Protecting the environment:** By providing guided routes, we will encourage walks through more appropriate routes in the CVRP, ensuring that visitors are not walking through fragile ecosystems as they try to navigate through the area. Interpretation will also help to raise awareness of how to protect the environment when moving through the CVRP e.g. reminders to take litter home and put dog waste in the bin.
- **Access, inclusion and participation:** This project will specifically focus on tackling the barriers to access, inclusion and participation faced by people with additional needs, through physical improvements and the development of resources which help improve the experience of visitors.
- **Organisational sustainability:** By facilitating more opportunities for people with a range of access needs to be able to enjoy the CVRP and all it has to offer, we will strengthen our ability to connect with individuals from these groups, be these as volunteers, Trustees, repeat visitors, participants/trainees on one of our programmes, or other participants. This will increase our likelihood of being able to engage with them further about what they need from the CVRP and to further tailor our offer, helping us make the Colne Valley Regional Park and our work more relevant for everyone.

AIMS

To deliver a "set" of projects that together will improve access to the countryside for as many people as possible



COLNE CONNECTIONS

BLUE CONNECTIONS

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South,

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Countryside Connections Manager, Engagement Officer

PARTNERS: Thames Water; Affinity Water; Local Councils.

SITE: Various

LANDOWNER: N/A

ASSET OWNER: Groundwork South

TIMESCALE: Years 1 – 5 of Delivery

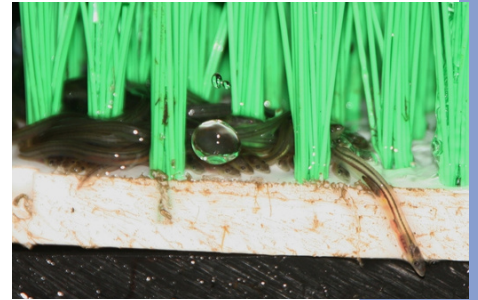
PROJECT OVERVIEW

Water is a big feature in the Colne Valley Regional Park and this variety of projects will focus on the waterbodies concerned. The proposed projects include:

- **Mill End Loop:** A small tributary near Maple Cross has become silted up and is experiencing some bank collapse. This is a major footpath access route alongside from the canal to Maple Cross which will be repaired as part of this project.
- **Angling and Wellbeing:** Putting conservation at the forefront of managing Angling Clubs was one of the major successes of our last Heritage Fund project - so much so that it has been copied in other areas. It seems appropriate to take this a step forward, offer a small training course for new members, add a wellbeing module for all members and update any management plans as necessary. Individuals from the original team of partners have come back together as volunteers for part of the Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative in order to make this happen and are extremely enthusiastic and committed to bringing this project to fruition.
- **Weir Removal:** Following on from the Eels report that will be done as part of the 'Strengthen our Story' project, there will be recommendations to remove some obstructions and a budget will be allowed to enable this. The efforts will be concentrated on smaller obstructions that can be completed before the end of this project.
- **Blue Habitat:** The Colne Valley has River Ranger volunteers and support for these and additional task organisation will be included in this project to support habitat improvements and support the role of the volunteers.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** We will help to share information and increase knowledge around the fantastic blue heritage across the CVRP, characteristic of this area. We will help ensure highly at-risk species are supported to thrive e.g the European Eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*).
- **Protecting the environment:** Physical interventions will improve the connectivity of blue space habitats, helping to build species resilience across the CVRP. We will help to remove invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Floating Pennywort, helping to boost biodiversity. Water quality monitoring will help identify pollution events.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** We will provide a supportive space for participants with additional needs (e.g mental health) to gain the benefits of time spent in blue space. Our River Rangers volunteer programme will be inclusive and flexible, providing opportunities for people to get involved in group activities as well through ongoing individual/ one-off activities.
- **Organisational sustainability:** We will expand our River Rangers programme, bringing more skilled volunteers to support our blue space projects across the CVRP. The data collected through Blue Connections projects will feed into our 'Strengthen Our Story' initiatives, which in turn helps raise our profile and ability to attract further benefits such as funding and volunteers.



Elvers in a brush pass: photo Cliff Carson



Volunteer River Rangers

AIMS

To improve the Blue landscape of the Colne Valley Regional Park.



COLNE CONNECTIONS

BUILDING NETWORKS OF GREEN CHAINS

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South,

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Green Landscapes Manager and Green Skills Manager

PARTNERS: Various

SITE: Various

LANDOWNER: Various

ASSET OWNER: Groundwork South

TIMESCALE: Years 2-5



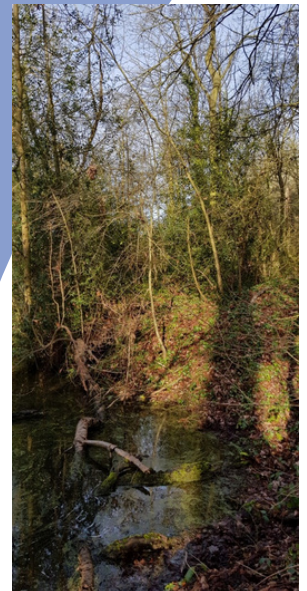
Little Britain Lake

PROJECT OVERVIEW

During the consultation for Colne Connections a number of small conservation projects have been put forward. During the development phase we will develop these and decide which ones can go ahead within our budget - the criteria in choosing once the practicalities have been assured is that they should enhance the green chain. Examples of the projects include:

- Bayhurst Wood, - Ancient Woodland general habitat enhancements/protection e.g. areas of wood anemones and bluebells
- Kingsmead Reedbeds
- Little Britain Lake - habitat work on the island
- Staines Moor – habitat work
- Various small sites owned by Thames Water
- Island at Maybeys Meadow
- Kingfisher Gardens

Ongoing management will lie with Landowners as appropriate, with support from volunteers if required/possible.



Small woodland linked to Bayhurst Wood

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** These smaller projects will help to provide enhancements to prevent heritage being lost and provide a basis upon which we can develop further programmes of work/interventions to further build heritage resilience e.g in managing unique spaces like ancient woodland.
- **Protecting the environment:** Linking with the green corridor will support in increasing biodiversity; neglected sites will be improved.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** We will showcase these sites and promote them to Colne Valley Regional Park stakeholders, helping to raise awareness of sites they may have not accessed previously. We will offer volunteering at these sites where appropriate.
- **Organisational sustainability:** These smaller projects will help us to set direction through our development phase, setting a basis for our larger projects, as well as improve relationships with landowners and building confidence in our programme longer-term by helping achieve 'quick wins'.

AIMS

To increase biodiversity and improve habitat linking in with the green corridor

PROJECT LINKS: PLANNING WITH NATURE, STRENGTHEN OUR STORY, CONNECTING THE COLNE

COLNE CONNECTION FORUMS

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South,

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Countryside Connections Manager and all staff

PARTNERS: All

SITE: N/A

LANDOWNER: N/A

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Year 2, Year 5

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In order to raise the profile of Regional Parks, highlight the problems they face, and put forward the solutions, we will arrange two conferences/forums:

- Conservation in the Rural/Urban Fringe
- Regional Parks Matter

All partners will be invited and other interested local groups. Invitations will go out to a broad list with other Regional Parks being invited and wider authorities. This will build upon our previous work delivering a CVRP forums:

<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/colne-valley-regional-park-forum-2023/>



HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** We will be able to share best practice at the forums about how to better save heritage, helping to increase the effectiveness of approaches to how heritage is managed across the CVRP (and beyond).
- **Protecting environment:** Similar to the above, the forums will celebrate environmental wins and share learning/approaches. These will also be a chance to feedback on collated data to a wider audience, helping to shine a light on species recovery methods.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** We will make forums accessible e.g remote access; recording conferences to be disseminated for later viewing. Forums will be open access to any organisation working within the CVRP or who has an interest in the CVRP. We will also provide summaries of forums for the public to understand what has been discussed.
- **Organisational sustainability:** The Forums will help Groundwork South become recognised as an expert leadership organisation for the CVRP. We will invite major stakeholders/decision-makers to attend these to help them understand how special the CVRP is and what they can do to protect it.

AIMS

To support and raise the profile of the Regional Park



COLNE CONNECTIONS

HABITAT HIGHWAYS

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Colne Conservation Manager and Engagement Officer

PARTNERS: Woodoaks Farm, Thames Water, Affinity Water, Bucks Country Parks

SITE: Various

LANDOWNER: Woodoaks Farm, Thames Water, Affinity Water, Bucks Country Parks

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Years 1-5 of delivery



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Whilst all of our habitat projects will be chosen to enhance 'green chains' across the CVRP, this set of projects are specifically chosen to enhance habitat highways. Proposed projects include:

- **Walls of wonder:** an education and implementation project, taking opportunities to plant hedgerows or dead hedging, working with volunteers and demonstrating to the public the importance of hedgerows for conservation
- **'Voles et al':** as part of the 'Strengthen our Story' project, we will undertake surveys of water voles and other species to demonstrate where and how strong populations are. We will analyse this data and see if there is habitat work that can be done to join the dots for the habitat highways.
- **Woodland to Woodland:** project undertaking woodland linking (Bayhurst to St Mary's may be a possible site).
- **Regional Rewilding:** London Wildlife Trust has a Rewilding project in the Colne Valley. Their deadline for National Lottery Heritage Fund development stage is later this year but we will work hand in hand with them to support the rewilding projects in the Colne Valley and to expand the projects beyond the London boundary. We may also seek to take advantage of additional funding (e.g. ReWilding Britain) based on the success of these projects

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** Working together collecting data through these activities will help to strengthen our ability to come up with longer-term action plans for saving heritage across the Colne Valley.
- **Protecting the environment:** These activities will specifically protect the environment by creating rich habitat for nature through which allows important populations to recover.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** Activities will take place across the Colne, enabling greater access for individuals. Some activities (e.g. our woodland work) can be undertaken by our Green Teams trainees, who will be from disadvantaged, deprived and overlooked backgrounds.
- **Organisational sustainability:** We will help to build connections for working in partnership to deliver projects with local landowners and with important local organisations such as the Wildlife Trusts. This project will help to strengthen London Wildlife Trust by supporting them to deliver upon their rewilding project in the Colne Valley.

AIMS

To improve and connect habitat corridors.



COLNE CONNECTIONS

LOCAL LANDSCAPES

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Countryside Connections Manager;
Colne Valley Park Trust Managing Agent

PARTNERS: Colne Valley Park Trust; Local Authorities across the Colne Valley Park

SITE: N/A

LANDOWNER: N/A

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Years 1-5 of delivery



PROJECT OVERVIEW

We will ensure an enduring legacy for the landscape by getting the Colne Valley, including its Green infrastructure Strategy, recognised in Local Authorities' plans and strategies and raising the profile of the Colne Valley Regional Park to help advance our call for greater designation/protection for Regional Parks .

This is a labour-intensive task but it is a major part of how we can ensure that Colne Connections has a lasting legacy with the landscape of the Colne Valley and recognised as an important catalyst in protecting the heritage of the area.

In year 5, we will review the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Vision to update as needed to provide the best possible legacy for the future.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** We will advance the call for better and more urgent protections for regional landscapes, using the CVRP as an exemplar location to demonstrate what can be done to protect natural heritage across the UK
- **Protecting the environment:** We will champion our Green Infrastructure strategy, which has a specific focus on protecting the environment from encroachment and degradation and ensuring fragile ecosystems are not destroyed.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** We will ensure inclusion, access and participation is represented in the discussions/decisions that happen in this phase of work (we will draw upon the work of our other strands to represent diverse voices and bring to life our case).
- **Organisational sustainability:** We will gain important skills and learning, which we will share with our partners in this programme, as well as with other regional landscape managing organisations across the UK.

COLNE & CRANE VALLEYS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

AIMS

To provide a long-term legacy for the Colne Valley Park, at both regional and national level.



COLNE CONNECTIONS

STRENGTHEN OUR STORY

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Green Team Manager; Countryside Connections Manager

PARTNERS: Brunel University; Wildlife Trusts; Other local associations (TBC)

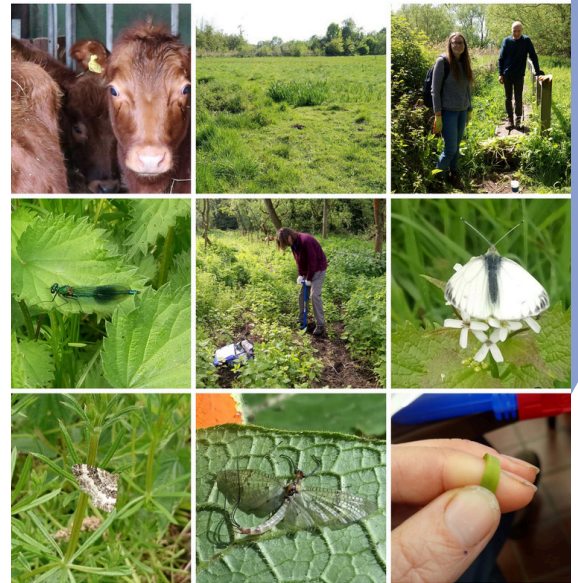
SITE: N/A

LANDOWNER: N/A

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Years 1-5 of delivery

PROJECT OVERVIEW



In order to continue to protect and enhance the Colne Valley Regional Park we first need to know more about it, to quantify and illustrate its worth and provide a basis from which we can formulate plans to protect and enhance it.

To do this we will undertake a range of activities to strengthen our story. For example, we will commission surveys of our wildlife such as the wetland birds of the southern lakes to compliment what we already know about the northern lakes. A comprehensive eel survey will follow the same methodology as the recent one on the River Lea. We will undertake other terrestrial surveys, working with partners to identify which are the most urgent/appropriate.

In addition, we will undertake citizen science as far as possible, involving volunteers to support in surveys to enhance their experience of the countryside, build local skills and deepen local people's connection to the CVRP. We will also work to compile and collate data collected by existing smaller groups e.g. birding groups, which will help not only to strengthen the knowledge base but also to connect these groups with other data-collecting groups in the CVRP, building connections and helping to cross-pollinate knowledge.

Brunel University will help us collate the data, pull out key highlights and to make it presentable for dissemination. We will also share with our partners e.g. via our 'Leadership Group' of key partners, as well as through sharing as 'bitesize' info via our social media/ that of our partners, and also via our website. We will also share this learning through events.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** We will help to create new/ strengthen existing narratives for the importance of the CVRP's natural heritage, underpinned by compelling data.
- **Protecting the environment:** We will help to build public understanding of what natural heritage is at CVRP and the state it is in
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** Citizen Science will help to invite interested individuals to partake in field science, helping to break down barriers and supporting increased ability for more diverse people to gain skills and enter careers in the natural heritage/ green skills/conservation and ecology sectors.
- **Organisational sustainability:** With clear and accurate data, we will be better able to create local action plans, use data to create compelling narratives to secure funding and engage potential volunteers and supporters.

AIMS

To strengthen our story by understanding our value and being able to illustrate and share it more convincingly and effectively.



COLNE CONNECTIONS

TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Green Team Manager; Countryside Connections Manager

PARTNERS: Wildlife Trusts; Bucks Country Parks; Hillingdon Borough Council; Ruislip Woods Trust.

SITE: Various across the Colne Valley Park

LANDOWNER: Various

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Years 1-5 of delivery

PROJECT OVERVIEW



Our trainee programmes will cover three strands in years 2,3 and 4:

- **Green Skills Team:** Groups of up to 8 people not in work or training who wish to learn about conservation and gain some skills. This is unpaid 3 days per week for 6 weeks, 2 days practical training per week and one day in the classroom for work skills CV writing.
- **Green Skills Work Experience:** Up to 3 people, completing 12-week placements as a stepping stone to full time employment.
- **Undergraduate Placement:** Set up in partnership with Brunel, we will offer 3month summer placements for students, primarily from Brunel University which has a diverse catchment cohort. This is paid and the students will gain experience of working in the conservation sector in the rural urban fringe with ourselves, Bucks Country Parks and a Wildlife Trust.
- **Graduate Trainees:** This is a paid one year post for environmental science students offered in years 2 3 and 4 of the programme. There will be a range of experience gained from supporting in writing bids for funding, budget management, practical conservation, community engagement and customer service, and data collection and analysis. We will work with our partners and especially Brunel University to make this a valuable and relevant experience.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** We will help to inspire a love and appreciation for the CVRP for those who may otherwise be unlikely to engage or else to understand and acknowledge its importance.
- **Protecting the environment:** We will utilise our trainees to support our green space improvements across the CVRP, who will pick up projects that would not be suitable for volunteers to undertake.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** Our programmes will aim to engage under-represented/diverse groups (underpinned by a targeted communications campaign) – our Green Skills Team project will specifically engage people who are un/under-employed, supporting a more diverse green skills sector.
- **Organisational sustainability:** It will also establish and reinforce organisation's working with the CVRP as conservation specialists in the rural urban fringe – this will help to support the local green skills pool, ensuring we have the right talent for the future to help protect the CVRP and we are able to attract talent who are as passionate and excited about the CVRP as they may be for working for the UK's other celebrated green spaces e.g. the Peak District

AIMS

To promote the value of gaining experience in the Rural Urban fringe as a valuable string to any career in conservation. These project strands will also specifically aim to give experience to those who might otherwise struggle to gain it

PROJECT LINKS: TRUST IN THE FUTURE, STRENGTHENING OUR STORY



COLNE CONNECTIONS

TRUSTEES IN EXCELLENCE

LEAD ORGANISATION: Groundwork South

LEAD STAFF: Groundwork South's Countryside Connections Manager

PARTNERS: Colne Valley Park Trust

SITE: N/A

LANDOWNER: N/A

ASSET OWNER: N/A

TIMESCALE: Years 1-3



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Trustees of the Colne Valley Park are key to the success of both the Colne Connections project and the future of the Park.

This project is designed to support and build their expertise, confidence and aspirations for the CVRP.

An introduction and training programme will be developed for Trustees, with detailed courses/ programmes aimed specifically at Trustees to be sourced and offered to the group. The Colne Connections Manager will undertake a skills needs assessment with the Trustees to identify gaps and desired areas of development, and then will investigate/arrange training with trusted, leading VCSE training providers.

HERITAGE FUND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES:

- **Saving heritage:** The Colne Valley Park Trust, as the main organisation dedicated to serving the CVRP, will be better placed to plan and deliver upon activities which help to raise awareness, protect and enhance of the area's unique heritage.
- **Protecting the environment:** The Trustees will be upskilled to have a greater understanding of the ecology of the CVRP and how to protect it.
- **Inclusion, access and participation:** We will make clear to potential trustees that detailed training and support will be given, helping to potentially overcome apprehension that potential applicants may face which would otherwise put them off applying. We will ensure our training is accessible and inclusive, helping to facilitate a more diverse trusteeship of the Trust and thereby supporting under-represented voices to become instrumental in how the CVRP is managed.
- **Organisational sustainability:** The Trustees will be better equipped to govern the Colne Valley Park Trust, as well as to undertake activities such as attracting investment into projects for the Trust to undertake and planning for the CVRP's long-term future and resilience. Groundwork South, who often support in fundraising for the Trust, will be supported through the upskilling of Trustees who will be better equipped to sort in writing/ partnering on funding applications.

AIMS

To support and bolster the Trustee board of the Colne Valley Park