27th June 2016



# Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership

Ashford Highways Office

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**Conserving, enhancing and promoting the Stour Valley**

**PRESS RELEASE – National Meadows Day Celebration in Ashford**

Come celebrate a marvellous meadow on National Meadows Day - this Saturday 2nd July from 11.00-2.00 in Little Burton green space. Bring a picnic and enjoy a range of free family activities taking place beside a section of meadow that the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership created in recent years. There will also be a public consultation about improvements to the park.

KSCP have created a total of 2.7 hectares / 6.5 acres of wildflower meadows, sometimes known as species rich grassland, in the green spaces of the Ashford Green Corridor. These meadows are beautiful when in flower and an essential habitat for insects and many other animals all year round.

‘The UK’s remaining species-rich grasslands now cover a minute fraction of the area they once covered, even relatively recently in the early 20th Century.  There were once natural wildflower meadows in every parish – today only 2% of the meadows that existed in the 1930’s remain.  Nearly 7.5 million acres of wildflower meadow have been lost so far and they are still being destroyed.  Of those that do survive, around 75% occur in small fragments and remain vulnerable to destruction. ….Meadows and species-rich grasslands can support a huge range of wildlife including wildflowers, fungi, bees, flies, beetles, spiders, moths, butterflies, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, bats and birds.  In the UK, more priority species (for conservation attention) are associated with grasslands than with any other habitat type. Only 1% of the UK’s land area now supports species-rich grassland and only 2% of the UK’s grasslands are species-rich.’ Quote from Our Magnificent Meadow website:

For more information or advice on wild flower meadow creation please call 03000 410900/ email kentishstour@kent.gov.uk

**Release date\*IMMEDIATE\* 27th June 2016**

For further details telephone 03000 410900/ email kentishstour@kent.gov.uk.

Ends

Attachments – 4 pictures and 1 poster

1. Little Burton meadow in flower 2013
2. South Park Meadow in flower June 2016 (one of KSCP new meadow areas)
3. Volunteers Jo Hill, sowing seeds to increase meadow area in Little Burton - 2015
4. KSCP volunteers and community members preparing area for sowing 2015. ‘Many people and their dogs – went to sow a meadow’.

The KSCP are one of nine countryside management partnerships in Kent playing a vital role in the conservation and enhancement of the Kent countryside and coast. www.kentcountryside.org.uk