

A year in view 2015 -2016



The KSCP is the principal organisation conserving, enhancing and promoting the countryside and urban green space of the Stour Valley. It is one of eight countryside/coastal partnerships in Kent and covers the largest area. In 2015/16 the Partnership carried out hundreds of projects from Lenham and Smarden in the west, to Sandwich in the east, to Whitstable in the north, and Aldington to the south. The KSCP aligns its objectives with those of its key partners - Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, the Environment Agency and Kent County Council, without whose support it could not operate. We would like to **thank** all those involved with the Partnership, and especially our volunteers, for making a real difference to the landscape, wildlife and communities of this part of Kent.

Work with local communities

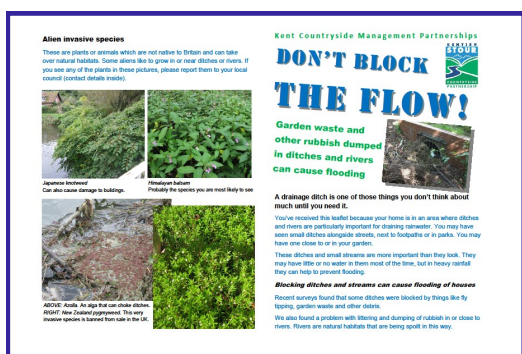
Supported **19 site based community groups** with practical help managing their land. Brought **14 schools** onto sites to carry out educational work, and worked with **19 other community groups**. Working with Loudon Wood Management Group we submitted an application to Veolia Environmental Trust and received funding in January 2015 to restore a small ancient woodland and play area. We helped Friends of Westgate Parks run a 'Clean for the Queen' event. Attended numerous evening meetings supporting and guiding local groups. Jenny Tippen from Ashford Community Woodland said "I would like to thank you and your volunteer group for all your hard work today. We achieved so much and we really appreciate your help."



Godinton Primary School children who helped to select the play equipment, pictured, for Loudon Wood, Ashford.



'Clean for the Queen' at Westgate Parks.



Advising on land and water management including surveys, monitoring and plans

Carried out **7 advisory visits to new sites** in addition to advice and support on existing sites. Two of these site visits will lead to major river restoration work in 2016 at Wickhambreax and Wingham. From the 25 reports produced on possible improvements to drainage channels in 2015, we completed **work on 5 channels**, including Bowen's Field in Ashford. *'This is a massive improvement and hopefully keeps this one in order for some time. Keep up the good work and no doubts we will speak again soon.'* Martin Kempshall, Project Delivery Engineer, Ashford Borough Council. Work is planned at a further 10 channels in 2016. Produced a leaflet '**Don't Block The Flow**' for all Countryside Management Partnerships to distribute to householders/landowners about the importance of drainage.



Bowen's Field watercourse, Ashford, where nearby flooding of property has occurred, showing before and after.

Working for the River Stour Internal Drainage Board (IDB) **25 kms of drainage channel were surveyed** with the aim of improving biodiversity. We produced a report covering the 6 years of IDB surveys we have undertaken with recommendations for work in 2016. We produced a report for Ashford Borough Council on the ecological improvement of a new wetland open space at Park Farm. Completed a management plan for Sturry Road Community Park. We surveyed sites for water vole and 48 barn owl boxes were monitored. Worked with approximately 50 farmers/landowners giving advice, writing recommendations, carrying out surveys and management.

River work

Included major river habitat enhancements in Godmersham and Chartham and riverside tree thinning in Canterbury. Continued control of invasive Himalayan balsam and volunteers removed hundreds of bags of litter from the river.



Improving river habitat at Godmersham, above, and installing woody debris to improve flow at Singleton, Ashford, below.



'Thanks for the work of you and the team last Thursday, we are now seeing a significant change on the Marshes due to your cumulative efforts.'
Steve Rogers, Love Hambrook Marshes trustee.

Supporting volunteers of all ages

1479 work days! We ran over 130 volunteer tasks and volunteers helped with school visits, events and project planning. Volunteers carried out a range of practical conservation tasks in woods, meadows and along the river.



Volunteers improving access at Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve, above, and planting apple trees in No Man's Orchard, Chartham Hatch below.



Healthier lifestyles & access



We installed a new boardwalk at Bus Company Island, Canterbury (left); bridges and paths in Loudon Wood, Ashford; carried out access work at Stodmarsh NNR; put in new steps on a public footpath in Chartham; cleared and waymarked footpaths. Our work led to 3 new seats being commissioned in riverside greenspaces in Canterbury, one of which winning a Canterbury Design Award. We also commissioned the nightjar picnic table in Blean Woods NNR (right). We continued to promote our recreational walking and cycling routes. Martin Webb of Selling Parish Council said *'This is so much appreciated by local people who daily use the path. Many thanks to all involved.'*



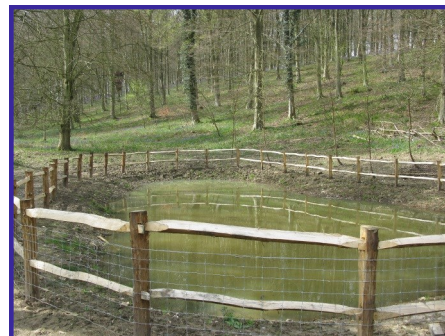
Prioritising 'designated' sites



Worked on **15 Local Wildlife Sites**. Over a number of days volunteers worked with chainsaws to coppice and create wide rides for the Woodland Trust at Dering Wood, Pluckley.

Worked on five **sites in the Kent Downs AONB**, including restoring two ponds at King's Wood with the Friends of King's Wood and supported by Viridor Credits.

Worked on **five Local Nature Reserves** including Ashford Green Corridor and Whitehall Meadows & Bingley Island. Carried out a range of work for Natural England at Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve including work on the reedbeds.



Interpretation, education and events

We stepped in to help safeguard the sculptures in King's Wood when Stour Valley Arts, an organisation we originally formed in 1994, had to cease trading. Working with partners, including the Forestry Commission, we created the Stour Valley Creative Partnership, took on accommodation in King's Wood and started to resurrect the sculpture trail.



The Westgate Parks events programme resulted in 5677 people attending 23 events. The Open Day, below, attracted around 2000 people. The outdoor learning programme welcomed 1207 children. All work at Westgate Parks is in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Canterbury City Council. *'An excellent resource – have recommended to colleagues and will return next term.'* Wincheap Primary School.



Cranmer House residents with their winning scarecrow on a Westgate Parks event.

Work with local companies

We continued our good working relationship with **Brett** and we ran community events for **Givaudan**. We chair the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership. We worked with all 3 water companies in our area, South-East Water sponsoring wildflower beds in Canterbury's riverside. We received the national **Veolia Environmental Trust Award** for 'Transforming Play' for a new children's play area at Loudon Wood, Ashford, Debbie Reynolds received the award at the House of Lords, below. We continued to work with **Viridor Credits** who supported river restoration work at Godmersham.



St Peter's pupils helped to establish heritage flowers in Greyfriars Garden, Canterbury, sponsored by SE Water.

Raising our profile

We continued to maintain a high profile locally with various press items, our new web site, and attendance at events. We are also on Facebook and Twitter. We helped with a workshop on the Ashford Green Corridor, below.



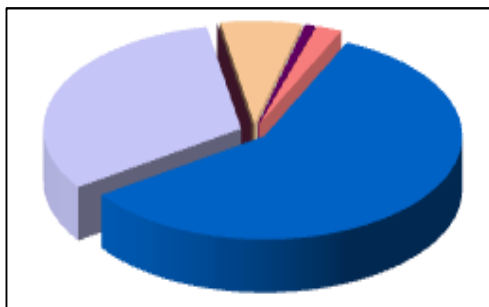
Partnership finances 1/4/15 to 31/3/16

Income

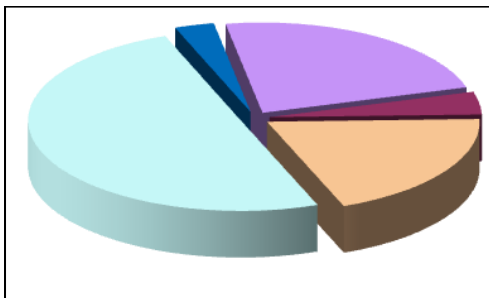
Kent County Council (inc. in kind)	31,400
Canterbury City Council (for sites)	4,000
Ashford Borough Council (for sites)	10,000
Other project income inc. Environment Agency and landowners	275,558
Roll over from previous year	149,964
Total	470,922

Expenditure

Running costs	114,013
KCC costs	20,000
Project costs	96,247
Project cost roll forward	245,873
Replacement/contingency fund	14,789
Total	470,922



The KSCP is **highly cost effective** multiplying the contribution from Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council and the Environment Agency many times over.



The year ahead - ten key activities for KSCP

River Restoration

Working with the Environment Agency, the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership, angling groups and other partners deliver habitat improvements to the River Stour.

Work with Community Groups

Continue our community work with groups such as Love Hambrook Marshes, Loudon Wood, Friends of Canterbury Riverside, Sturry Road Community Park, Friends of Bybrook Nature Reserve and Friends of King's Wood. Apply for a Lottery grant based around communities and the river.

Ashford Green Corridor

Carry out projects in the Green Corridor including at Singleton, Buxford and Little Burton. Install 14 new interpretive panels.

Health and Wellbeing

Work with new partners to develop health and wellbeing projects.

Flood prevention on behalf of KCC and other partners

Deliver work to prevent flooding in east Kent focussed on small watercourses and surface water flooding using the Catchment Based Approach.

River Stour Internal Drainage Board (IDB) Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

Continue to assist the IDB with their work to improve drainage channels for biodiversity.

Cycling/shared use paths projects

Remove some of the cattle grids on the Great Stour Way to make access easier. Continue to work on cycle routes in the Blean. Install new interpretive panels for the Crab and Winkle Way and in Forestry Commission woods.

Westgate Parks

Run an events programme, a programme for volunteering, and learning programme for schools and community groups. Install new interpretive panels and sculpture. Work with the Friends of Westgate Parks and the City Council to deliver a superb Park for Canterbury and a gateway to the Stour Valley.

Urban work

Develop green infrastructure projects in Ashford and Canterbury and develop a street tree project in Whitstable.

Stour Valley Creative Partnership

Secure funding to develop the Partnership working with local artists and local communities.

Chairman of Steering Group

George Jessel

Staff

Jon Shelton – Partnership Manager
Debbie Reynolds - Partnership Officer (PT)
Diane Comley - Partnership Officer
Anna Bell - Westgate Parks Development Officer
Martin Thomas – Partnership Officer
Trainees – Matt Mordaunt, Annie Thurgarland, Lauren Baker, Jo Hill

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