

A year in view 2011 - 2012



The KSCP is the principal organisation conserving, enhancing and promoting the countryside and urban green space of the Stour Valley. It is one of nine countryside/coastal partnerships in Kent and covers the largest area. In 2011/12 the Partnership carried out hundreds of projects from Lenham in the west, to Sandwich in the east, to Whitstable in the north, and Aldington to the south. The Partnership 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. The KSCP would like to **thank** all those involved with the Partnership, and especially the volunteers, for making a real difference to the landscape, wildlife and communities of this part of Kent.

Work with local communities

Supported **24 site based community groups** with practical help managing their land. Worked with Hastingleigh Parish Council to restore the village pond and provide a new carved oak seat and interpretive panel. At Maydowns Road in Chestfield we helped local people with a great idea to plant more street trees. Helped the Central Ashford Community Forum with improvements to the Heathfield Road end of Queen Mother's Park including a new boardwalk, and we assisted them with running a community event.



Taking a 'new' seat at the opening of the Hastingleigh Village pond restoration project supported with a grant from the Big Lottery.



Street planting at Maydowns Road, Chestfield.



Part of the community event at Queen Mother's Park, Ashford.

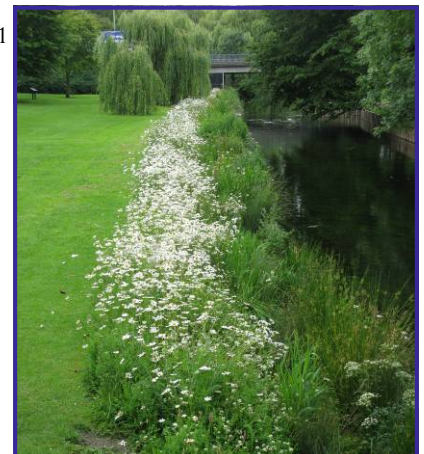
Advising on land management



2009



2010



2011

Carried out **11 advisory visits to new sites** in addition to advice and support on existing sites. Helped Canterbury City Council with a Heritage Lottery application for Westgate Parks developing ideas to improve the area like the enhancement carried out in Westgate Gardens (pictured above) where the river frontage was planted with wildflowers. Worked with approximately 75 farmers/landowners giving advice, writing recommendations, carrying out surveys and management.

Riverside work

Carried out enhancement projects at Thanington, Chartham and in Ashford at Victoria Park, Watercress Fields and Buxford Meadow. Continued with the control of Himalayan balsam.



The river in Watercress Fields in Ashford was re-aligned to stop erosion of the riverside path and then KSCP volunteers placed boulders to provide habitat for species such as white clawed crayfish.

Supporting volunteers of all ages

1211 work days!

We ran 100 volunteer mid week tasks. Volunteers mowed four meadows, cleared scrub from 11 sites, and 11 days were spent clearing invasive plants from wildlife sites.



Mowing the meadow at Ashford Community Woodland.

Landscape Enhancement Partnership Scheme

With help from Interreg (European) funding the LEPS scheme delivered work at **five sites** to improve landscape quality and wildlife habitat, costing £10,100.



Before, during and after work on Sankey Farm Pond, Brook, in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Surveys, monitoring and plans



A barn owl chick ringed as part of the barn owl survey.

Working for the River Stour Internal Drainage Board 25 kms of drainage channel were surveyed with the aim of improving them for biodiversity as part of the IDB Biodiversity Action Plan. We surveyed two sites for water vole, three sites for dormice and 46 barn owl boxes were monitored.

Healthier lifestyles & access



Work in Upper Harbledown to improve path drainage, part of the Big Blean Walk .

Working with Kent Wildlife Trust and other Blean Initiative partners we developed a new promoted route for the Blean, the Big Blean Walk. This involved installing 60 waymarker posts and one new bridge. Volunteers also helped to improve the condition of some paths.

We organised the opening of the Great Stour Way, a 5km shared use path between Canterbury and Chartham and four new seats were provided along the route.

Our European partnership

We worked on the fourth and final year of an Interreg scheme with partners including Parc naturel regional des Caps et Marais d'Opale in Nord Pas De Calais. Funding was spent on LEPS, urban wildlife habitats, and woodland habitats.



Clowes Wood Pond, Chestfield, where work was undertaken to remove years of silt and erect chestnut fencing to protect the pond from too much disturbance. A dipping platform was provided.



The Great Stour Way.

Prioritising 'designated' sites

Worked on **20 sites in the Kent Downs AONB** ceating two new ponds and restoring a further two. Carried out £15,000 of ride and roadside management work in Denge Wood (Crundale).



Contractors working in Denge Wood Local Wildlife Site in the AONB and the grizzled skipper butterfly, a potential beneficiary of the work.



Worked on **19 Local Wildlife Sites** and **six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)** including Long Rock at Whitstable where we created two new scrapes (shallow areas of water).



Redshank, a wading bird likely to benefit from the new scrapes at long Rock.

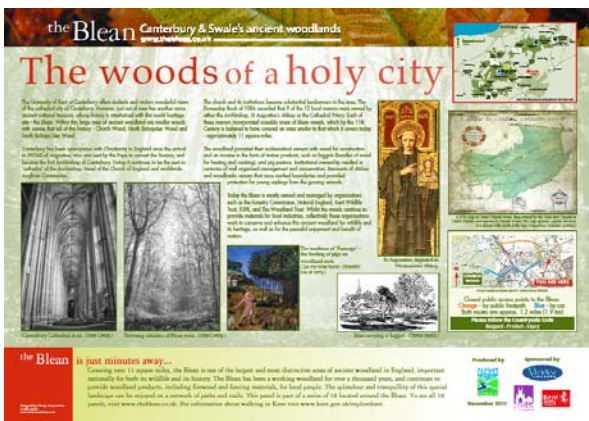
Worked on **six Local Nature Reserves** including the Ashford Green Corridor where another 0.5 ha of wildflower meadow was created close to the river.



Musk mallow in one of the wildflower meadows in the Ashford Green Corridor.

Interpretation, events and guided walks

We ran events for a wide range of groups that directly involved **500** adults and young people. Interpretive leaflets were produced for the Great Stour Way and the Big Blean Walk. We installed 20 interpretive panels including 18 in the Blean at locations such as pubs, a garden centre and a village hall. Each panel had a historic or natural theme about the Blean. A sculptured wildlife picnic table was commissioned for the Great Stour Way.



A Blean panel at the University of Kent.



The Big Blean Walk logo.



The sculptured wildlife seat on the Great Stour Way.

Work with local companies

We continued our good working relationship with **Brett Viridor Credits** sponsored the Blean Interpretive Panels and the Great Stour Way. A guide for **Givaudan** was produced. **Southern Water** provided the funding for conservation works at Long Rock, Whitstable. We benefited from the sponsorship by **Network Rail** of the Kent Free Tree Scheme, distributing 1,000 trees.

The guide to Givaudan's Great Stour Meadow.



Raising our profile

The Partnership continued to maintain a high profile locally with various press items, our web sites, and touring of the display boards. The opening of the Great Stour Way was featured in various publications and on local radio.

The opening of the Great Stour Way.



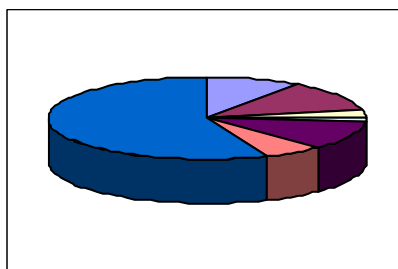
Partnership finances 1/4/11 to 31/3/12

Income

Kent County Council (inc. in kind)	36,000
Environment Agency	42,600
Canterbury City Council	12,750
Ashford Borough Council	5,000
Interreg	41,786
Viridor Credits	22,940
Other income	206,730
Total	367,806

Expenditure

Running costs	110,639
KCC costs	20,000
Project costs	127,525
Project cost roll forward	73,497
Replacement/contingency fund	36,145
Total	367,806



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



The year ahead - ten key activities for KSCP

River Restoration

Working with the Environment Agency and other partners and using the Water Framework Directive to provide priorities deliver habitat improvements to the River Stour.

Blean Access and Interpretative Plan

Complete work on the Big Blean Walk and promote it through an opening and leaflet distribution. Look to develop further ideas from the Plan.

Conningbrook

Assist Ashford Borough Council with the development of Conningbrook as a key public open space for the town.

Ashford Green Corridor

Deliver a community orchard project in Watercress Field; a pond project at Park Farm; a community seating project in Civic Centre North Park; project proposals for Boys Hall; and carry out further work at Buxford Meadow using the Management Plan written in 2010. Seek further funding to implement work to improve the river corridor for people and wildlife.

Great Stour Way Panels

Install five interpretive panels along the Great Stour Way.

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

Complete the third year of surveys of drainage channels with biodiversity recommendations for improvements.

Cycling/shared use paths projects

Look to replace the bridge at Tonford to make it suitable for disabled people to join the Great Stour Way. Continue to work on cycle routes in the Blean and help with extending the Great Stour Way to Ashford.

Westgate Parks

Support Canterbury City Council's Heritage Lottery application for Westgate Parks through organising surveys, community involvement and providing advice on greenspace management.

New funding schemes

Apply for new funds from Interreg, DEFRA, the National Lottery and other sources for a range of greenspace management projects.

Accommodation

Find new accommodation for offices and workshop.

Chairman of Steering Group

Stuart Gibbons

Staff

Jon Shelton – Partnership Manager

Debbie Adams - Countryside Officer, Ashford (PT)

Diane Comley - Ashford Officer (PT)

Carol Donaldson - Countryside Officer, Canterbury and Wantsum

Thomas Newton - CO Ashford (covering maternity leave) (PT)

Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership

Little Olantigh Road

Sidelands Farm

Wye

Ashford

Kent TN25 5DQ

Tel.: 01233 813307

E-mail: kentishstour@kent.gov.uk

www.kentishstour.org.uk

www.ashfordgreencorridor.org.uk

