

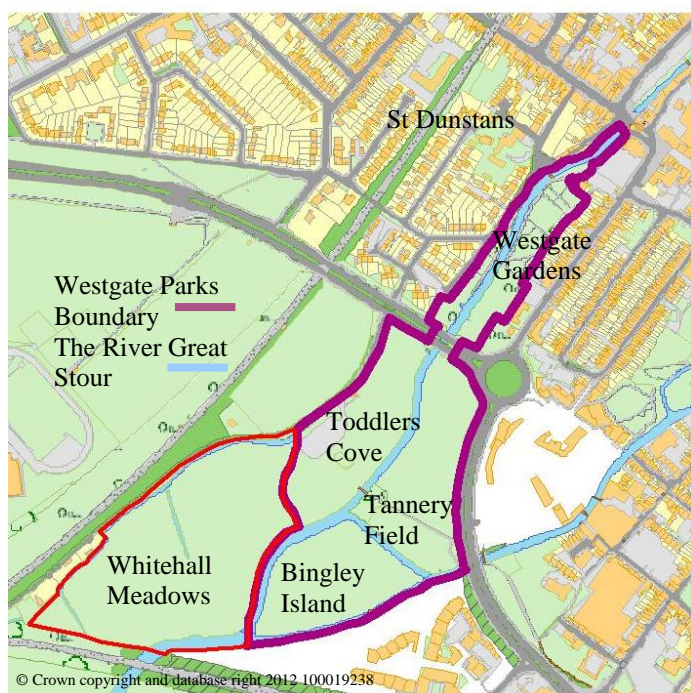
## Welcome to Westgate Parks

A partnership of organisations, lead by Canterbury City Council, is working on improving the Westgate Parks area for people and wildlife through an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 'Parks for People' Programme.

Westgate Parks consist of Westgate Gardens and the land upstream beside the River Great Stour. They run from Canterbury's busy city centre into the countryside. With the help of local groups, the KSCP have carried out wildlife surveys and ran community wildlife events this summer.

Westgate Parks are becoming busier mainly due to the recent surrounding housing development and the popular new shared use path the Great Stour Way. It's important to provide people with high quality outdoor space but at the same time not to reduce the wildlife living in the area. The area is important for bats, wild trout can be seen in the river and, in the not too distant past, otters were seen.

The parks have a rich heritage and one of the main aims of the project will be to explain this through events and activities. Hopefully, next year we will be doing projects that involve volunteers in such activities as sensory and culinary gardens, archaeology and wildlife conservation.



For more information on Westgate Parks visit:  
[www.westgateparks.co.uk](http://www.westgateparks.co.uk)



Weighing a pygmy shrew on a wildlife recording event in Westgate Parks.

### Partnership Sponsors



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# Conningbrook Lakes

An update from Terry Jones at Ashford Borough Council

Over the summer proposals for a new country park at Conningbrook Lakes in Ashford were unveiled at a public exhibition in County Square, Ashford, and on 28<sup>th</sup> July an 'Open Day' at the Julie Rose Stadium gave over 850 visitors the opportunity to try out some of the activities that will be available when the park eventually opens. On 19<sup>th</sup> August, for the second consecutive year, Conningbrook and the Julie Rose Stadium hosted the **Brett Ashford Triathlon**.

The establishment of a family-orientated country park at Conningbrook Lakes is a long held vision of Ashford Borough Council, which is working closely with the Brett Group to transform the former mineral extraction site. A range of local clubs, community groups and other stakeholders have been consulted to determine what facilities will be included in the country park, while nature conservation groups, such as the KSCP and Kent Wildlife Trust, have been asked for their views on protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats within the park.

The plans for Conningbrook will include some residential development to make it financially self-sustaining, and the proposals are for an attractive lakeside village, that is the subject of a planning application that will shortly be submitted to Ashford Borough Council by the Brett Group.

More details will be provided in a future issue of Stour View. In the meantime, further information is available from a website developed by the Brett Group, which is the major land owner and partner in the project -

[www.conningbrooklakes.info](http://www.conningbrooklakes.info)



An open day activity at the Conningbrook/ Julie Rose Stadium.



## Wildsites

KSCP are applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project called 'Wild Sites on Your Doorstep'. The project will help local people in the Ashford and Canterbury areas to learn about and care for wildlife all around them. We want to run a programme of events at nature reserves and other wildlife sites with a wide range of partners, using photography, drawing, painting and creative writing to get people involved in the environment close to where they live.

The photographs, paintings, and text generated during activities will become content for new learning materials that will help even more people to discover their local wildlife in the long-term. If you have an interest in the project please contact KSCP.

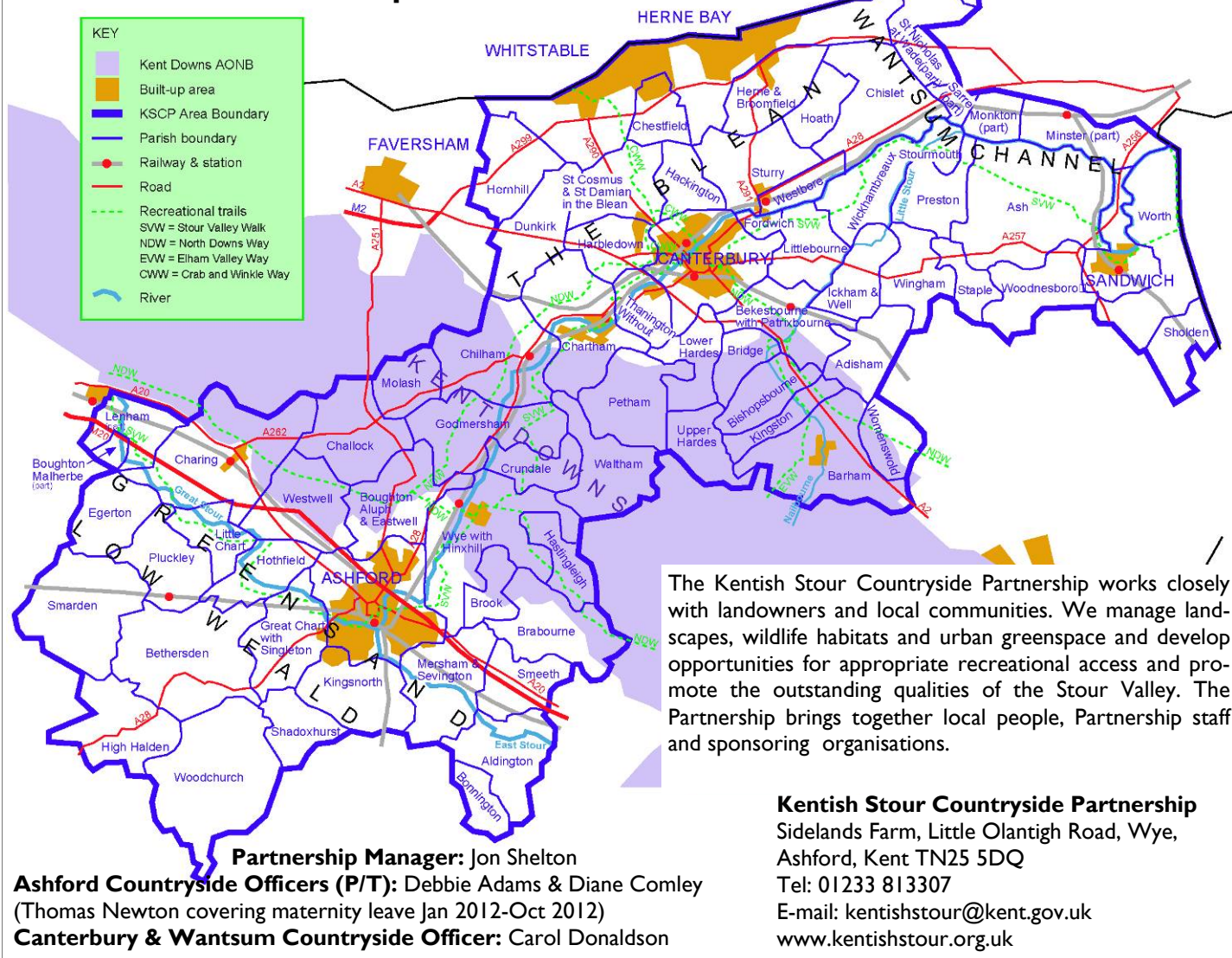
## News update on the

KSCP are making some improvements to the Great Stour Way by removing 5 cattle grids on the Kent Enterprise Trust land. These were originally installed with the expectation that cattle would graze across the path. We are also looking at making Tonford Bridge usable by wheelchairs and mobility vehicles. Look out for the 3 new interpretive panels on the Great Stour Way providing information on Whitehall Meadows, River Great Stour, Chartham Paper Mill and Thanington Lakes. Canterbury City Council are going to extend the path in the autumn along the riverside under the Rheims Way to exit onto Whitehall Road.





## About the Partnership



## Looking after your heating oil

By Lisa Westcott from the Environment Agency and the East Kent Catchment Improvement Group

Every year, leaks and spills from oil storage tanks and pipework cause many pollution incidents. These leaks are damaging to the environment and may be a serious health risk to people. Spilt oil can pollute rivers and groundwater supplies. Groundwater (water stored in the ground) is a major water resource in Kent, it provides 75 per cent of our public water supply. Groundwater is vulnerable to pollution because pollutants, like oil, can be transported underground over large distances quickly.

Cleaning up oil spills is very difficult and expensive, it can run into tens of thousands of pounds. Dealing with a spill will cause you and maybe your neighbours a great deal of inconvenience. Oil leaks can be due to the tanks being old and damaged or if there are problems with the feed pipes that carry the oil from the tank to the house. Often problems occur after the oil tank has been topped up ready for winter.

Over the last few years the Environment Agency has dealt with a number of leaks from domestic heating oil tanks in Kent. We want to prevent any more incidents where people and the environment are put at risk.

Everyone can help by:

- checking their own oil tanks and feed pipes regularly
- ensure tanks are secure from vandalism and theft
- keep a record of how much oil is being used, if it is more than usual this may indicate a leak
- check insurance covers against costs of cleaning up accidental loss of oil

If you would like more information or advice please contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 or if you need to report a leak or spill, call the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

# News updates from the Stour Valley

Environment Agency staff have helped on two projects over the summer with KSCP. At Buxford Meadow they built a chamber otter holt, a hibernaculum and made some habitat improvements to a small channel leading into the river. At Queen Mother's Park, along with members of the East Kent Catchment Improvement Group, they installed ragstone to improve riverside habitat.



People have been getting out and walking the new Big Blean Walk over the summer and some have just been enjoying reading about it from the new leaflet produced by KSCP.

KSCP have helped Canterbury City Council in the production of a new interpretive panel at Long Rock, Whitstable. The panel explains the site's importance for wildlife and the need to control dogs in certain areas.

KSCP are working with a range of partners including local authorities, fishing clubs, landowners, the IDB and the Environment Agency to improve parts of the River Stour Catchment currently ranked as poor or of medium quality. KSCP are focussed on improving habitat through techniques such as in channel works, installing woody deflectors and the creation of new channels. Partners come together through the East Kent Catchment Improvement Group.



Environment Agency staff at Buxford



The long Rock Panel at Whitstable

The next stage of the Great Stour Way is the development of a shared use path from Chartham to Godmersham. Applications for funding will be made this year now that necessary permissions are in place.

In Ashford a new orchard is going to be planted this year in a section of Watercross Fields. KSCP is working with a youth group - Hang10 and Ashford Borough Council to involve the local community with the project. Public consultation led to moving the site of the orchard in response to some local residents concerns. The project is funded by KCC, Ashford Borough Council and Affinity Sutton. The local primary school Oak Tree Primary are keen to get involved and will be going on a trip to No Man's Orchard near Canterbury this autumn to see what an old traditional orchard looks like and what theirs could look like one day. There will be a community opening event at the new orchard in the Spring of next year.



No Man's orchard

## Volunteering

Come along and lend a hand with a variety of enjoyable and worthwhile practical conservation projects throughout the Stour Valley!

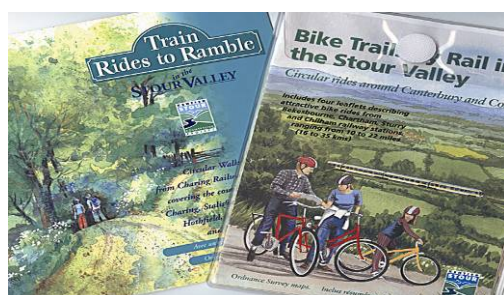
For our detailed programme phone us on 01233 813307 or go to [www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk) and click on 'get involved'

**Wednesdays** (Ashford area): Meet 9.15 at the KSCP offices or 9.30 at the back of the Stour Centre.

**Thursdays** (Canterbury & Wantsum): Meet 9.15 at KSCP offices or 9.45 outside the old Habitat entrance, Rheims Way, Canterbury.

## KSCP publications, for those who enjoy the countryside

All available from quality bookshops and KSCP. For information on other publications and free downloads visit [kentishstour.org.uk](http://kentishstour.org.uk)



*Train Rides to Ramble* (£2.00) & *Bike Trails by Train* (£1.50) Circular walks and cycle rides from railway stations in the Stour Valley. Full colour, maps & directions, packed with information and illustrations.



*Big Blean Walk* (Free) A guide to this walking route with map.



*Wildsites* (£1.00) A guide to 31 wildlife sites in the Stour Valley.

## Countryside events in the Stour Valley

For information about events in the Stour Valley visit the following websites:

KSCP: [kentishstour.org.uk](http://kentishstour.org.uk)

The Blean Initiative: [theblean.co.uk](http://theblean.co.uk)

Friends of King's Wood: [friendsofkingwood.org](http://friendsofkingwood.org)

Wildwood (Herne): [wildwoodtrust.org](http://wildwoodtrust.org)

Spokes (cycling): [spokeseastkent.org.uk](http://spokeseastkent.org.uk)