

A year in view

2016-2017



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 2016/17 the Partnership carried out hundreds of projects from Smarden in the west, to Deal 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 **18 site based community groups** with practical help managing their land. Brought **21 schools** onto sites to carry out educational work, and worked with **26 other community groups**.



Before, during and after pictures of Sainsbury's riverside in Canterbury. The riverside had been worn bare for many years, working with Friends of the Riverside and others, KSCP thinned some trees to allow more light in, erected temporary fencing and sowed seed.



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

Carried out **25 advisory visits to new sites** in addition to advice and support on existing sites. 48 barn owl boxes were monitored, see left. Worked with approximately 50 farmers/landowners giving advice, writing recommendations, carrying out surveys and management. We initiated heritage flower beds in Canterbury City parks, see right. A resident commented 'I walked my dogs in Solly's at 7:30 on Monday morning. I have done so for the last 12 years on and off. It struck me that it has never looked better.

If I was a tourist it really would have been a 'wow' moment. If you know who to thank, please do pass on my praise.' CCC, KSCP and other partners working together. Canterbury won gold in SE in Bloom in 2017 and, for the first time, a gold nationally.



River work

Included major river habitat enhancements, continued control of invasive Himalayan balsam and volunteers removed hundreds of bags of litter from the river. KSCP also chair the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership.



Improving river habitat at Seaton, near Wickhambreaux, and volunteers installing river marginal plant boxes in Westgate Gardens, Canterbury.



Healthier lifestyles & access

Our community work and volunteer conservation programmes offer people a range of options to get out and get healthy. Possibly the recreational walking and cycling routes, such as the Great Stour Way, we initiate, develop and deliver, offer the greatest opportunity to stay fit and healthy. We removed three of the cattle grids on the GSW to make access easier. Coming into contact with nature and the outdoors has been proven to improve your health. And better quality parks improve wellbeing, 'I was down at Westgate Parks yesterday taking pictures and everything looks fantastic. Well done in maintaining such an engaging park.' Mark Woolmer, Managing Director, Fitzpatrick Woolmer. Below, the Great Stour Way, and a volunteer getting close contact with a mayfly at Godmersham.



Supporting volunteers of all ages

1153 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 planting a hedge at Miller's Field, Canterbury and litter picking, below.



Prioritising sites

Worked on over **100 sites** with volunteers and contractors. Our funding partners have moved our work more into the urban environment in recent years but we still do work in the Kent Downs AONB and on protected sites. We have a priority to work on the parts of our rivers that are declining environmentally or are assessed as poor and to work on watercourses to prevent flooding and where possible increase biodiversity.

Riverside
planting in the
Kent Downs
AONB at
Godmersham.



Worked on **14 Local Wildlife Sites**. Volunteers taking a break at Bybrook LWS, Ashford.

Worked on **eight Local Nature Reserves** including Ashford Green Corridor. The wildflower meadow at Civic Centre South Park sown in 2014.



Interpretation, education and events

At Westgate Parks 4157 people attended the events programme. The outdoor learning programme welcomed 623 children. Last year interpretive panels were installed, see below right; a sculptural bull was commissioned see below; and the Rheims Way underpass was painted with a mural, see before, during and after. *'Just a brief mail to say how fabulous I thought the underpass was looking on the visit today. It's such a good project, I often refer people to it as an example of best practise. It has lifted that rather nasty, dingy space into something very special. The ultimate pigs ear into a silk purse. It sends a message to all those who manage difficult urban spaces – it is possible to create something beautiful in even the most unpromising places'* HLF Parks for People Consultant, Mike Harding. All work at Westgate Parks is in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Canterbury City Council. A big thank you to the park volunteers.



Liz Pallister's sculpture.



The Stour Valley Creative Partnership renewed the King's Wood sculpture trail with new waymarkers and posts. The Forest Studio was well used by students and artists. Volunteers maintained the sculptures and students from the University for the Creative Arts created temporary sculptures at the summer celebration, below.

Work with local companies

We continued our good working relationship with **Brett** and we ran community events for **Givaudan**, opposite. We worked with all 3 water companies in our area, **Southern Water** and **Affinity Water** sponsoring the Our Stour project due to start in May 2017. Thanks to **Brewers** for providing paint for the Westgate Parks underpass project.



Raising our profile

We continued to maintain a high profile locally with various press items. As well as our main website we run two other websites; Wildsites and Westgate Parks. We operate three facebook accounts and twitter. Westgate Parks, over the year, is the 2nd most visited place on Trip Advisor in Canterbury after the Cathedral.

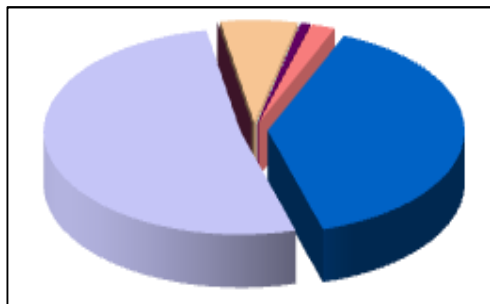
Partnership finances 1/4/16 to 31/3/17

Income

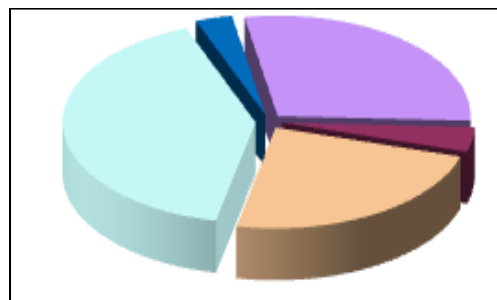
Kent County Council (inc. in kind)	31,900
Canterbury City Council (for sites)	4,000
Ashford Borough Council (for sites)	10,000
Other project income inc. Environment Agency and landowners	197,283
Roll over from previous year	260,662
Total	£503,845

Expenditure

Running costs	143,470
KCC costs	20,000
Project costs	118,896
Project cost roll forward	205,920
Replacement/contingency fund	15,559
Total	£503,845



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, landowners, angling groups and other partners deliver river habitat works.

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.

Ashford Green Corridor

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

Health and Wellbeing

Co-ordinate the 'Naturally Active for Life' programme across the county and run guided walks and 'back to the bike' training in east Kent. Identify any new opportunities.

Work on watercourses for KCC, River Stour IDB and Ashford Borough Council

Deliver work to prevent flooding in east Kent focussed on small watercourses and surface water flooding using the Catchment Based Approach. To improve for biodiversity wherever possible.

Chairman of Steering Group

Teresa Bennett

Staff

Jon Shelton - Partnership Manager

Debbie Reynolds - Partnership Officer (PT)

Diane Comley - Partnership Officer

Anna Bell - Westgate Parks Development Officer (Jan-March PT)

Lauren Baker - Westgate Parks Development Officer from Jan (PT)

Martin Thomas - Partnership Officer

Annie Thurgarland - Watercourse Officer from July (PT)

Trainees - Annie Thurgarland (to June), Lauren Baker (to Dec), Jo Hill

Cycling/shared use paths projects

Continue to work on cycle routes in the Blean. Seek funds to produce a new Great Stour Way leaflet. Improve existing routes wherever possible.

Westgate Parks

Run an events programme, a programme for volunteering, and learning programme for schools and community groups. Deliver the 3rd and 4th phase of the underpass murals project. 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. Seek opportunities to continue work when HLF funding ceases at the end of 2018.

Urban work

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

Our Stour

Start the new three year funded Our Heritage project by setting up a River Warden scheme, schools, training and activity programmes and community projects.

Stour Valley Creative Partnership

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

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