



# SOUTH PARK MEADOW

## Return of the wet meadow

A two acre meadow is not something you'd expect to find in the centre of a large town like Ashford, but there is one just a few steps from here.



Riverside meadows like this are sometimes called flood meadows, and would once have been a common site. Changes in agriculture since WW2 led to their disappearance. But in 2014 a bit of rural history returned to this urban setting and a beautiful wildlife habitat was created.



South Park Meadow in bloom



Photo: Mark Gaffney

Ragged robin



Photo: Mike Morris

Bumble bee on wild marjoram

This was a partnership project funded by Kent County Council and the Environment Agency - for the benefit of wildlife, flood storage, landscape value and water quality.

A lot of earth was moved to create the meadow. Top soil was taken off and shallow depressions called scrapes were formed. They hold water, increase flood storage capacity and form a different kind of seasonal wetland habitat. The earth was used to form the raised bank at the edge and a hedge was planted along its length.

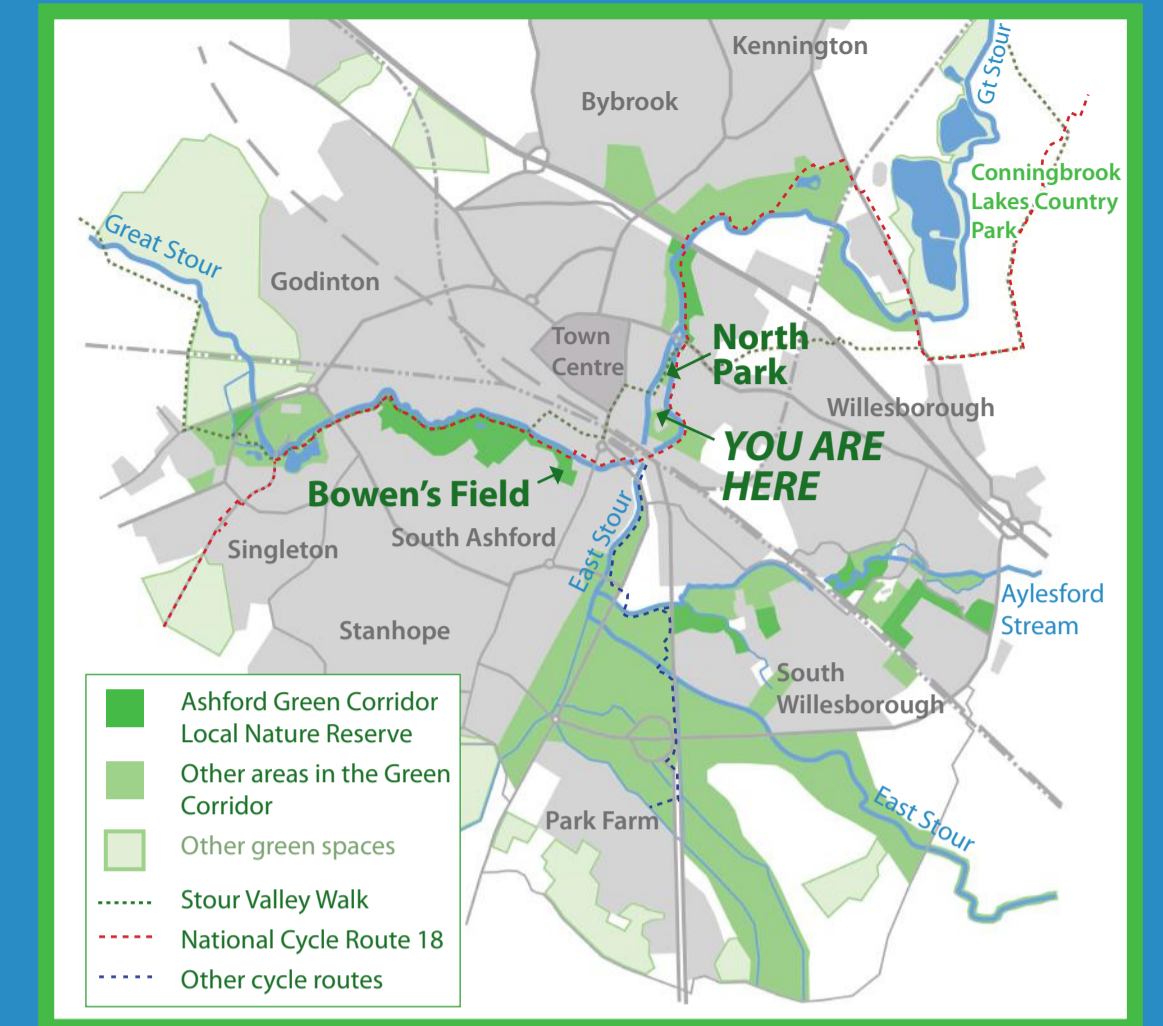
The ground was sown with a special native wild flower seed mix that included ox-eye daisy, ragged robin, yellow rattle and lady's bedstraw. The 'blank canvas' of short grass with no botanical interest has been transformed into a great habitat for butterflies, bees, birds, reptiles and other wildlife, and a restful haven for people to enjoy.

At the same time, on the East Stour River, material from one bank was scooped out and deposited on the opposite bank. This altered the flow to improve conditions for fish and aquatic invertebrates.

A rarity can be found among the newly planted trees - a black poplar. Once a common site beside our rivers it is now Britain's most endangered timber tree.



Small tortoiseshell on ox-eye daisy



### The Ashford Green Corridor

Discover one of Ashford's greatest assets!

Since the middle of the 19th century Ashford has expanded but land close to the rivers has not been built on, due to the risk of flooding and because the Borough Council has protected it as green space. Some areas are designated as Local Nature Reserves.

The resulting undeveloped 'fingers' of land, around the rivers Great Stour, East Stour and Aylesford Stream, reach right into the heart of Ashford. Collectively they connect to form the Ashford Green Corridor, which provides both people and wildlife with routes through the town and to the countryside beyond.

Bowen's Field

North Park

An Ashford Green Corridor leaflet, which includes walking maps and information on other areas of the Corridor, can be downloaded as a PDF from [www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk) or by scanning the QR code.

