

A year in view 2018-2019



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 2018/19 the Partnership carried out hundreds of projects from Biddenden in the west, to Deal in the east, to Whitstable in the north, and Bonnington 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. Last year KSCP celebrated its 25th year!

Work with local communities



Supported **18 site based community groups** with practical help managing their land. Worked with **25 schools** carrying out environmental educational work, and worked with **19 other community groups**. The Friends of Kingsmead Field, Canterbury, helped us put the finishing touches to the River Restoration project at Kingsmead Field by planting plug plants (opp).

Andrea de Roeck, Deputy Head at Goats Lees Primary School writing about Lauren and Debbie at Godinton Estate. *'The session was excellent. The children thoroughly enjoyed the pond dipping which I knew they would but the river session was excellent and a perfect start to our topic. The children will remember this more so than me talking to them in front of a whiteboard.'*

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

Carried out **61 advisory visits to new sites** in addition to advice and support on existing sites. KSCP led as the Habitat Delivery Body for Natural England's 'Ground breaking' District Level Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts on behalf of Countryside Management Partnerships (CMPs) in Kent. CMPs restored or created over 50 ponds by the end of March. Kate Bull Kent GCN Project Manager, Natural England *'As we are approaching the end of the 18/19 year, I just wanted to thank you all for your wonderful hard work over the past year and for your fantastic efforts getting so many ponds restored and created.'*

We undertook 13 biodiversity and enhancement surveys for the River Stour Internal Drainage Board. KSCP became the Natural Flood Management (NFM) lead for East Kent funded through KCC. Annie started working with landowners and local communities to devise NFM plans. We produced a walkover survey report for the North/South Stream, Sandwich, carried out water vole and mink surveys and monitored 49 barn owl boxes. Worked with approximately 70 farmers/landowners giving advice, writing recommendations, carrying out surveys and management. KSCP facilitated the East Kent Sustainable Farming Group focussing on new farming methods to help the environment.



Annie with Helen Whately MP and Lenham Meadows Trust following advice given on Great Crested Newts.

Volunteers undertaking work on the IDB Wadmarsh Stream, St Nicholas at Wade, following survey work.



River work

Work focussed on fish passage with the Buxford fish passage project completed (pic below), Sevington Mill Sluice removal, both in Ashford, and a fish pass placed on the Chartham Crump Weir. The volunteers removed hundreds of bags of litter from the river. KSCP also chair the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership.



A new fish pass structure on the Chartham Crump Weir.



Supporting volunteers of all ages

1129 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. Kieran Walsh, Sturry Road Community Park *'Just a quick note to say thank you to all of the volunteers and Annie for their hard work today. They worked exceptionally hard and made a huge difference.'*



Ashford volunteers constructing steps at Boys Hall, Ashford. Below - litter taken out of the river in Ashford by volunteers from Natural England part of an Our Stour project.



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. Coming into contact with nature and the outdoors has been proven to improve your health. We ran a Health and Wellbeing project in Canterbury in partnership with Take Off, the Mental Health Charity (pic below), *'... a really amazing experience for me. It's been interesting to learn about conservation work that is done in the area and Martin from the KSCP has been great at teaching us. It's a great group for getting outside and getting stuck in to an activity. It can be a really physical day, but we can take it at our own pace, and it's been a great way to get some exercise in. I feel so positive after being out for the day. As a sufferer of chronic insomnia I find that I sleep really well the night after from all the fresh air and hard work.'* Tamsyn, Take Off participant.



KSCP assisted the Canterbury and District Angling Group (CDAA) with new fish platforms in the river at Fordwich. The work was undertaken by volunteers from CDAA, EA provided the funding and KSCP assistance with plans and applications for permits. *'I am writing to compliment the club, committee and all the people who put in the undoubted hard work on the platforms. In particular the disabled one in the car park. I've been disabled since polio as a child...I had been considering stopping something which is a lifetime passion...with the new facility I will definitely be able to carry on!!! Many thanks once again.'* Member of CDAA.

Prioritising sites and species

Worked on over **100 sites** with volunteers and contractors. We worked with Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory to obtain a grant from National Grid to erect and monitor a further 20 barn owl boxes in 2019. The Great Crest Newt project will also provide habitat for a range of pondlife. One of the ponds being created in Bonnington, Ashford, below. A local businessman supported our proposal financially to investigate and hopefully halt the decline of our only native crayfish in the UK in east Kent.



Interpretation, education and events

In the final year of the **Westgate Parks** project 4090 people attended the events programme, making it 23,176 over 5 years. The outdoor learning programme welcomed 453 children.

The **Our Stour** project worked with 732 schoolchildren making use of the Aqua Bus. It also ran events through rivers in focus, flow film, river warden and landowner training programmes.

The educational programme at **Godinton Estate** along with other programmes involved a further 374 schoolchildren last year.

'Thank you for an excellent nature call and craft session on Tuesday. James and Adam were very proud of their art and really enjoyed collecting leaves and looking for bugs. Thanks also for your energy and knowledge as leader: it's tough keeping charge of a group like that and you did it really well.' A parent from an **Ashford Green Corridor** event.



The Stour Valley Creative Partnership submitted an application to Art England for the **Woods to Where else** project. The Forest Studio was well used by students and artists, and there was an installation in King's Wood of sculptures by UCA students. SVCP continues to maintain the sculptures at Kings Wood, helped below by KSCP volunteers.



Far left, a participant at one of the Godinton Estate Educational events with her clay Rove beetle.

Centre, educational day at Kingsmead Field with the Our Stour Project.

Right, Tinkhani Banda, University of Creative Arts, piece at King's Wood as part of a series of temporary installations.



Work with local companies

We continued our good working relationship with **Brett** and we ran community events for **Givaudan**. We worked with all 3 water companies in our area, **Southern Water** and **Affinty Water** sponsored the Our Stour project.

We completed our **Tesco** Bags for Life grant for work on Little Burton open space in Ashford. Staff from **Amey** put in a huge effort on conservation tasks and they were very generous with their time in helping build us a minibus carport.



We continued to maintain a high profile locally with various press items, website and social media coverage.

Lauren Baker, Our Stour Officer, featured on a BBC programme about the River Stour with the aquabus and children from St Peter's Primary School, Canterbury, left. At our 25th anniversary celebrations, held at Godinton Estate, Simon Houstoun receives one of the volunteer awards from the Lord Mayor of Canterbury and the Mayor of Ashford in recognition of over 1000 days volunteering.

Raising our profile



Partnership finances 1/4/18 to 31/3/19

Income

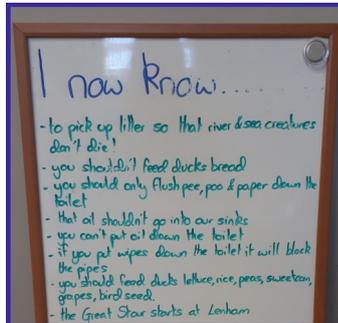
Kent County Council (inc. in kind)	37,000
Canterbury City Council (for sites)	4,000
Ashford Borough Council (for sites)	5,000
Other project income inc. Environment Agency and Natural England	560,354
Roll over from previous year	191,742
Total	£798,096

Expenditure

Running costs	166,772
KCC costs	25,000
Project costs	372,561
Project cost roll forward	180,362
Replacement/contingency fund	53,400
Total	£798,096

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.

Below/and right, an Our Stour 'Yellow fish' event in Ashford with Southern Water. Far right, Amey staff helping out at Little Burton, Ashford.



The year ahead - ten key activities for KSCP

River Improvements

Working with the Environment Agency, the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership, landowners, angling groups and other partners deliver river improvements such as river restoration, fish passage projects, and water quality work.

Work with Community Groups

Continue our community work with groups such as Love Hambrook Marshes, Loudon Wood, Friends of Canterbury Riverside, Friends of Singleton lake and Friends of King's Wood.

Ashford Green Corridor

Carry out projects in the Green Corridor including at South Willlesborough, Buxford and Little Burton. and work with Ashford Borough Council on their Victoria Park Heritage Lottery bid. Seek funding to better manage the meadows in the Ashford Green Corridor.

Health and Wellbeing

Continue to work with Take Off on mental health initiatives. Seek funds to produce a new Great Stour Way leaflet.

Natural Flood Management

Deliver work to prevent flooding in east Kent focussed on small watercourses and surface water flooding using the Catchment Based Approach. To improve 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 (PT) (to Nov)

Lauren Baker - Westgate Parks Development Officer (to Nov) & Our Stour Officer (PT)

Martin Thomas - Partnership Officer

Annie Thurgarland - Partnership Officer

Sarah Harrington-James - Partnership Officer (started Feb)

East Kent Sustainable Farming Group & work with farmers

Expand the EKSFG to include more members. Develop sites for the Interreg funding Pro-Water initiative on behalf of KCC.

River Stour Internal Drainage Board

Deliver drainage channel enhancements for the River Stour IDB. Investigate a wider invasives scheme for the Lower Stour area focussed on plants.

Our Stour

Maintain the River Warden scheme, schools, training and activity programmes and community projects.

Stour Valley Creative Partnership

Will continue to develop the **Woods to Where else** project. And work to secure funding to develop the Partnership work with local artists and local communities.

Great Crested Newts

Operate as the lead Habitat Delivery Body for the District Level Licensing scheme with Natural England to deliver pond creation and restoration in Kent.

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