



Explore Your Colne Valley Regional Park

Newsletter
Edition 4
Spring
2021

FREE

BBC'S COUNTRYFILE COMES TO THE COLNE VALLEY PARK

We were delighted to feature in [Countryfile's television programme](#) in March, and it was fantastic to share details of some of our important work for conservation and wildlife protection with more than 5.4 million people who tuned in. The programme showed the Park's watery beauty off to great advantage, but balanced it with the continuing need to protect this fragile landscape for future generations to enjoy. It also showcased our river conservation projects, including the task of tackling damaging non-native invasive species like floating pennywort, monitoring river water quality, saving endangered water voles and angling conservation (run in partnership with Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust).



Grand Union canal, Harefield

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Explore local hidden gems

The Colne Valley Regional Park has a wealth of natural hidden escapes right on your doorstep, as many more people have discovered during the last year. Here is **Hardings Row Nature Reserve** in Iver Heath, (owned and managed by The Ivers Parish Council) a great example of a natural gem waiting to be enjoyed and appreciated by local people. The site includes ponds, meadow and woodland, all helping to nurture wildlife. Our website lists many local places you can explore – search on our '[places to go](#)' page and make your own discoveries.



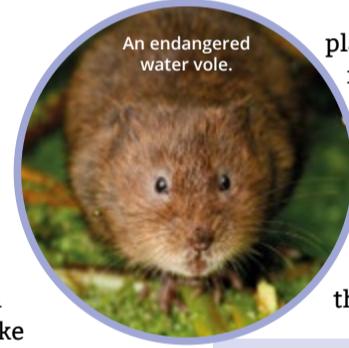
Welcome to Spring with the Colne Valley

It certainly feels like a new beginning this year. A chance to reflect on life, and perhaps make better choices for our future wellbeing.

We know lots of people discovered the Colne Valley Regional Park during lockdown, and we hope its scenery, space and wildlife helped them relax and make more time for themselves during such a challenging time. The Park has an abundance of beautiful nature reserves, walks, woodlands, green spaces, rivers and lakes, and we hope to take you on a fantastic journey to explore this amazing countryside on your doorstep through our website, newsletters and social media platforms.

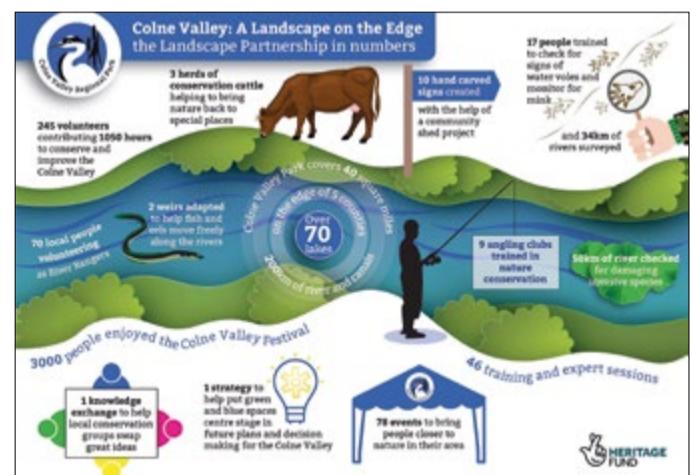
While there is much to enjoy in the Regional Park, there is also much to do if we are able to continue to protect and enhance this precious area. We are currently running a range of projects aimed at improving the Park for the benefit of people and wildlife. Here to the right is a snapshot of what we have achieved in the first 18 months of this important programme, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other partners.

On the next few pages you can read more about how to get involved with supporting the Park, information on



places you could explore in the Spring, news of local people helping to make a real difference, and our need to continuously protect this threatened, but vitally important landscape. On the back page you will find details of how we are responding to multiple development threats.

Have a look at our [website](#) and follow us on social media, where you will find lots of useful and interesting information on places to go, things to do, updates on our countryside projects, volunteering opportunities and updates about the whole park.



Connect with nature in the Colne Valley Park

The last year has shown people how important the natural world can be for health and overall well-being.

Although the pandemic has prevented us from running our usual events programme, we have still been able to share many nature trails and activities through our website and social media platforms.

We created them to provide as many local, fun and interactive ways for families and all ages to connect with Nature and spend valuable quality time together, whilst enjoying the great outdoors.

You can search on our website www.colnevalleypark.org.uk under the

[nature explorers](#) page to learn more about what is available; see the [visit](#) page for details of what is planned for Spring and beyond.

As restrictions ease, we are planning a programme of activities and events for late Spring and Summer, so please follow us on social media channels as listed below, visit our website regularly, or sign up for our newsletter (details on the welcome page of the website) so you can stay in touch. You may also enjoy our picture [gallery](#) page on the website, which helps to bring the countryside of the Colne Valley Park to you at home.



Local family exploring Denham Country Park

Keep our rivers flowing

The Colne Valley Park has around 200km of rivers and water courses and more than 70 lakes. They play a vital role in offering people the much needed opportunity to explore their local waterways, and are a lifeline for wildlife. Despite being an essential part of Nature's delicate balance, they are also under constant threat.

The increasing awareness of the importance of Nature is encouraging many of us to consider how it may be impacted by our everyday actions. Water consumption in particular has far-reaching effects on our rivers and the wider environment.

In this area, our daily water comes from deep underground sources called aquifers – naturally formed subterranean spaces that store water. Tap water is taken from them, treated to make it safe to drink, and then piped directly into our homes. Our aquifers are vitally important. They re-fill our rivers, maintaining the natural equilibrium needed to support biodiversity and wildlife, which includes endangered water voles and other species such as trout and herons. The fact is that the more water we use, the less there is for local rivers and wildlife.

We live in a severely water stressed area – the South East of England receives half the rainfall than the rest of the UK. It is densely populated and has the highest daily water consumption rate per person in the UK – 152 litres pp.

Water usage in the home (Affinity Water statistics)



Put simply, taking more water out of the underwater reserves every year than is naturally being replenished by rainfall means things are only going to get worse – not just for rivers and wildlife, but for us humans as well.

At the Colne Valley we spend a lot of time opposing development proposals that will adversely affect our rivers, whether directly or indirectly, by using substantial amounts of water. Unfortunately, we do not always win.

But the good news is that a lot of small actions can have a very big impact, so we can all help. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by Affinity water, our rivers project manager, Chloe Crompton, has helped to create an interactive online programme, 'Water Ambassadors'. Here, she tells us more: "It's really sad to think of how many brooks, streams and rivers have dried up over the last few decades and we are on a mission to encourage as many people as possible to help protect them and keep our rivers flowing. Water is such a vital resource and yet in this country we just don't seem to see it in that way. We need to change the way we value water if we want future generations to enjoy our beautiful rivers and the wildlife depending on them."

Water Ambassadors is a free online



programme which you can complete at home in stages and learn about river wildlife and the changes we can all make to help ease demand on our water supplies.

You can save money and water helping your local rivers.

- Did you know that by turning the tap off when you brush your teeth, on average you will save 6,500 litres a year?
- You could save money and water helping your local rivers. Did you know that our house roofs can collect an average of 85,000 litres a year if we have garden water butts to collect free water to use on the garden or for washing the car?

You can find out more facts, take fun quizzes and games to extend your knowledge, as well as create tools to share and explain how we can all make positive changes to help. Go to - www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/water-ambassadors/

Nicky, from near Rickmansworth has taken part in the Water Ambassador online programme



Nicky and Robert with their children Anna and Harry.

and told us: "After the last year, we decided as a family we wanted to try and make some changes to ensure we are doing our bit to help the environment. Nothing too dramatic, but enough to understand what we can do at home to make a difference and to create good habits for our children. Water Ambassadors is a great interactive online programme, it's fun, informative, easy to use, it only takes an hour or so and our children really enjoyed learning more."

Save water – save money – save your local rivers and wildlife.

Grundon lends a helping hand to the Colne Valley Park

The Colne Valley Park greatly values sponsorship and practical support provided by local companies allowing us to enhance many areas of the Park for the good of both wildlife and people.

One of our long term supporters is the local family run business, Grundon Waste Management, who have helped with funding for numerous projects, including the development of the playground and improvements to the natural habitat at Priory Meadow at Denham Country Park, enhancement works on the Horton Brook at Crown Meadow in Colnbrook, and support with transport and equipment for our conservation projects in two ancient woodlands in Denham.

Grundon are one of our corporate



supporters, providing crucial 'core' funding to enable the Colne Valley Regional Park to continue to protect and enhance your local countryside.

Anthony Foxlee-Brown, Head of Marketing & Communications at Grundon said: "Our recycling, recovery and Energy

from Waste facilities at Colnbrook are located right in the heart of the Colne Valley Park, and many of our employees live within its boundaries. As a socially responsible company, we are passionate about making a positive contribution to the further development of the Colne Valley Park, as a place in which to live, work and enjoy our recreational time."

We are very grateful for the support from our corporate sponsors and are always keen to hear from new companies who are looking to help benefit their local environment, communities and employees. There are several flexible options for supporting our work and you can learn more about them here:

www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/become-a-champion/corporate-supporter/

PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COLNE VALLEY PARK

It has been wonderful to see so many people enjoying their local walks and countryside, as well as helping and caring for our green spaces.

Sadly, a big clear-up has been needed across the region, and we would like to say a huge 'thank you' to all those who have collected litter, kept our rivers healthy, looked after wildlife and done an amazing job to **keep the Colne Valley Park looking beautiful**. Taking rubbish home is an essential part of following the Countryside Code, –not only is litter unpleasant, it can also be very harmful to wildlife. Read more on the importance of the Code on the back page and under our 'news' section on the website.

Here are a few of the many people making a real difference in the Park to benefit the environment, people and wildlife.



Meet Andy Thomas from The Ivers- Volunteers at Work group. Its members have completed more than 155 local clear-up sessions, and Andy tells us more about why he enjoys looking after his local environment: *"Aside from connecting with others, being out in the fresh air and getting some exercise, seeing the tangible, visible improvements in the community where I live is very rewarding. Observing others getting involved, whether with our group, other volunteer groups, or just making a difference on their own, however big or small, is great to see. I also enjoy creating the group's social media blog, putting together the images and then reading the feedback messages from residents.*

There are so many benefits from volunteering – like making new friends, building your confidence and improving your physical and mental health.

I often hear it said: "It's someone else's responsibility to do this stuff". I guess my view is that **it's the responsibility of all of us**. Today, if something is spotted that needs improving and it's safe to tackle, then volunteers in the Ivers just get on with it. Less talk, more action! It's true what they say: every little improvement makes a huge difference."

Andy also helps to run 'Walking the Ivers', a fantastic online video playlist of wonderful walks



in the local countryside. Go to 'walks' on our website to learn more, or search on social media for their links, along with other local walking groups, including the new 'Ambling Around Uxbridge', Facebook group.

You can read more on the interview on our 'news' page on the website, and if you feel inspired contact your local group with social media to get involved.

We would like to thank all the committed groups caring for the countryside, such as Hillingdon Litter pickers and Spelthorne litter pickers, to name just two.



Meet Mirza Ryon Rashid, our conservation trainee. Mirza is an enthusiastic addition to the Colne Valley Park team and he is adding real value to our projects, helping communities to connect with their local countryside and rivers.

He tells us more about his role and his hopes to inspire more young people to connect with nature...

"With my passion for wildlife and being surrounded by such enthusiastic people (from an acceptable distance, of course), it's hard not

to really enjoy my role from balsam bashing and river fly surveys to writing articles and making fun, wacky educational videos. Working in Colne Valley has not only given me a lot more practical experience, but the freedom to express my creative ideas. I hope to gain project management skills, lead a volunteer day and tune my nature ID skills.

My advice to young people is to find a nature reserve on a sunny day and just walk around. You'll love Nature almost immediately, and you'll be surprised at how much there is to offer. There's nothing more rewarding than getting out there and immersing yourself in what Mother Nature has in store for us – especially in London. It's great for you mentally, socially and physically – and your eyes will thank you for taking a break from the iPad."

If you know anyone passionate about wildlife and the environment, please tell them about our [website](#) and social media pages, so they can learn more about what we do and get involved too.

Springtime with the Colne Valley Park

Enjoying the passing of the seasons is a great way to really appreciate nature and look after your well-being.

With Spring in the air it's a great time to get outside and explore. The Colne Valley will reveal carpets of bluebells among the trees, wood anemones, lambs gambolling in the farm fields, and cattle will be heading back to graze in Denham, Stanwell Moor and Stockers in late May. The blackthorn is already turning some hedgerows white, and soon they will all be green and alive with birdsong.

It is time for a rejuvenating springtime bluebell walk in one of the wonderful woodlands in the Park. Be warned, though – they don't last for long. Typically, bluebells appear from mid-April to late May, depending on the weather, so don't miss your chance to see them in all their glory.

Local woods with bluebells include Northmoor Hill and Caps Wood in Denham, Old Park Wood in Harefield, and Bayhurst Wood in Ruislip. Details of these and more wonderful Country Parks and Nature Reserves with woodlands can be found on our



Bluebell glory in Old Park Wood, Harefield.

website under our 'Visit' and 'Places to go' pages. Please remember that you must stick to designated paths – straying off course risks damaging the land where wildflowers and bluebells grow, and it can take them years to recover from trampling. Do not pick any wildflowers on your walk – some are rare and can be poisonous, so it's best to look but not touch.

Did you know that almost half the world's bluebells are found in the UK? They're relatively rare in the rest of the world.

The Colne Valley Park

To make the most of the Park this season you could try one of our 18 circular walks on our ['walks'](#) website page.



Protecting the Park for the future

The Colne Valley Park was founded in 1965. The foresight shown in appreciating the importance and potential of this precious and beautiful landscape for future generations is the reason there is so much to enjoy today. Protecting and enhancing the region is at the heart of everything we do.

Stewart Pomeroy, Colne Valley Partnership Manager, tells us more: "Creeping urbanisation is one of the biggest threats of the 21st century. There is a real risk of a 'death by a thousand cuts' here: HS2 has already had a significant impact; Heathrow expansion would wipe out 900 acres of the southern end of the Park; we're losing pockets of precious Green Belt right across the area; and there are plans for not only two Motorway Service Areas, but a colossal 'screen hub' theme park at Pinewood Studios, right next to Black Park."

We are determinedly pro-countryside. That means we will always make the strongest possible case for its protection. We are not anti-development, but fiercely champion the best interests of local communities wherever they face developments 'in the national interest' that rob them of green space that is so vital to health and well-being.

To learn more about the work we do and some examples of our responses, go to www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/library/

While we do our best with the resources we have, when big proposals are approved, we do all we can to ensure their impact is reduced as much as possible. This involves making sure public access is preserved where feasible, and



Stewart Pomeroy



leading and advising on projects to improve the natural environment. We hold developers to account, ensuring they meet their legal and environmental obligations.

The Government must recognise and address the need for better protection of our natural environment. Where development goes ahead, we believe the authorities should ensure those carrying it out pay more to mitigate and compensate for the enormous impact their plans have on communities and the environment that are already compelled to host so much. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the enormous benefits of the countryside, with thousands of people discovering the environmental riches on their doorstep. That is just one reason why the Colne Valley should be one of the best looked-after and protected landscapes in the country.

We are a small organisation and do not have public funding for putting our case to developers and planning committees, or to pay

for representation at inquiries or Parliamentary Select Committees.

However, we do have rapidly growing local support, which is much needed and warmly welcomed. You can help in several ways from volunteering to joining the Friends group or donating to support your local countryside.

We urge you to get involved – your input, opinions and support are all highly valued, and they make a very real difference. With your help we can continue our work and be stronger in our battle to protect and improve your local countryside.

Please go to our website page '[get involved](#)' to find out more, and thank you for your continued support in our endeavours.



The Alderbourne valley in Iver Heath at the site of a proposed Motorway Service Area, shown here after prolonged rainfall. This severe flooding is a classic illustration of why you should never build on the floodplain.

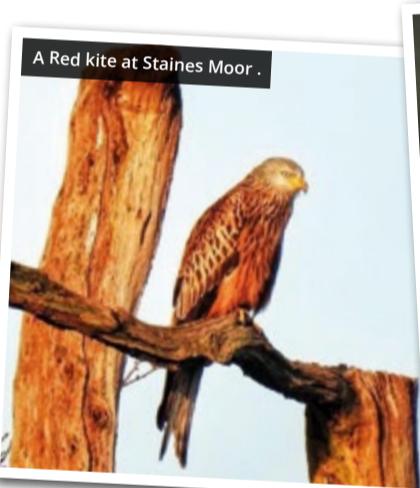
Nature snaps

Here are a few of the recent sightings around the Park.

Colne Valley Birding
@CVBirding



Our last art competition winning entry sent in by Anya Lee aged 9.



Volunteer with us



Are you interested in helping to make a difference for nature and the countryside?

We have lots of river, woodland and nature reserve projects where help is really needed.

Come along and get outdoor active, closer to nature meet new people, learn new skills and help your local environment. For more details follow our social media pages, check our [website](#) or sign up to our newsletter via the website.

Donate to the Colne Valley Park

This is your local countryside – support important work to protect and enhance this precious yet threatened landscape. Your gift could help:

- Weekly conservation tasks in parks, meadows and wetlands
- Maintain woods and wetland for the benefit of people and wildlife
- Respond to development proposals including Heathrow, motorway services etc.

Please see www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/donate

Follow the Countryside Code

When visiting the countryside, please **ALWAYS follow the countryside code:**

- Take all your rubbish home, leaving it next to bins causes harm to wildlife and rivers
- Stick to the public footpaths
- Keep dogs under control at all times
- Follow all government advice for social distancing
- Follow any guideline signs

For more details see our "[news](#)" page on the website and help us to share the code.

With thanks to our corporate supporters for their continued commitment to us: Lakeside Energy from Waster, Mad Squirrel Brewing Co. and



Could you become one of our latest [Corporate Supporters](#)? Please consider us as part of your environmental and community support.

The Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company represents over 70 member organisations. Each of these organisations and our financial contributors support our six objectives for the Colne Valley Regional Park which revolve around improving and protecting the local;

- Landscape
- Countryside
- Biodiversity
- Countryside recreation
- Rural economy
- Community participation

With thanks to: Buckinghamshire County Council, Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council, Denham Parish Council, Friends of the Colne Valley Park, Iver & District Countryside Association, Iver Parish Council, London Borough of Hillingdon, Slough Borough Council and Wexham Parish Council, for their financial contributions.

Newsletter sponsors



HS2 Mitigation Funds

Some readers have told us they were surprised to see we have received some funding from HS2, despite our opposition to the project. HS2 is legally obliged to provide funding to compensate for its considerable impact on the local countryside, and we make no apology for applying for those funds where applicable. You can find our position statement on HS2 on our website, in the Safeguarding the Countryside section. If you have any further questions, please email us at colnevalley@groundwork.org.uk