

BISHOPS COURT FARM, KINGSTON LACY – STOUR VALLEY PARK WORKSHOP TRANSCRIPT

This workshop took place on the 25th of September 2021, with a focus on the Bishops Court Farm area of the Kingston Lacy Estate. The intent for this workshop was to specifically look at Bishops Court Farm and what opportunities are local to this place, and to consider how these opportunities relate to the wider aims of the Stour Valley Park project.

Thanks go to the National Trust at Kingston Lacy for hosting us, granting us use of their facilities, and leading us on a guided tour with detailed commentary.

Why are you here? What do you want to do?

What has brought you here today, and what do you want to achieve by attending today's workshop?

Admirable aims but wonder how apparent direction of any benefit.

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Curiosity about balance between various competing interests - wild-life / sports / nature.

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Butterfly and pollinator conservation - landscape size. Interested in the land rather than water!

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Promotion of wildlife welfare and survival in conjunction with in-

creased public access.

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Use land for improving flora/fauna
Access? Number of people?

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Art and nature trails along River Stour - circular route.

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As a neighbouring landowner - other side of the Stour - we are interested in how the project will change the area.

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Dreamboats public hire of rowing boats for access on the river for mental and physical health and wellbeing.
The charity is in the process of enabling a wheelchair accessible boat to allow disabled people to get out on the water.

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How the farms on Kingston Lacy will be impacted (both challenges and opportunities).

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Concern and motivation about alternative farming methods to change the agricultural regime adjacent to the Stour with benefits for

both soils and therefore CO2 sinks and also can be integrated with a wildlife corridor.

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Walking. Off road cycling. Water activities - canoe, paddle board etc. All in conjuncture with wildlife.

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Including leisure activities on the river for use of paddlers (kayakers, canoeists, paddle boats).

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I am here to understand the potential of what can be achieved... Restoring the natural world.

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Sustainable access for all...

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To gain feedback from local people on our vision for Bishops Court Farm and how this project links to the Stour Valley Park project.

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This section of the park is different from the others in that it is only accessible on foot by able bodied persons.
We strongly believe that the difficult stiles should be removed and

replaced with easy access gates for cyclists, wheelchairs etc.

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Position of Kingston Lacy within the context of the project.
Scope for landscape scale connectivity and restoration of habitat.
How this all fits with people for maximum benefit.

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What are the priorities of the Stour Valley Park. People/wildlife balance?

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Improved access to the countryside.
With care for wildlife i.e. litter management.

Review

Considering our overall aims for the Stour Valley Park, how should we assess previous actions in relation to this site and what lessons should we learn for the future?

What should we do more of / What should there be more of in this landscape?

- Visitors centres (hubs) – educational facilities
- Signage – maps/paths/circuits/nature
- Engagement e.g. pond dipping
- Historical info/photos
- Apps for sites/routes
- Cycle/walking access to sites
- Car parking

- Wheelchair accessibility
- Designated footpaths – cyclists/horse riders/walkers
- Financial business plan – funding of maintenance
- More leisure activities for people to come to (problem of conflict)
- Trees
- Grazing animals and link to food
- Controlled access
- Bike hire and link to other routes
- Adventure trail with subtle signing?
- More car parks?
- Cycle ways – cycle friendly
- Information boards – pictorial e.g. Roman links/soldiers etc?
- More disabled access
- Artisan food outlets
- Rare breeds
- Web apps
- School visits
- Trees
- Activities directly linked to natural events in life cycles e.g. butterfly counts/making sloe gin
- Regenerative agriculture
- Access – control disturbance/minimise conflict over use of park
- Effective wildlife improvements
- Vehicle access – planned car parks including overflow
- Circular walks with downloadable maps
- Specific mountain bike routes (circular)
- Face to face welcome and engagement
- Publicity – community connection and other organisations
- Accessibility – facilities (cafe/toilet)
- Activities – interact with schools/scouts – farm visits/talks and walks/girl guides
- Education – promote wildlife

What should we do less of / What should there be less of in this landscape?

- Less 'set' routes (hard landscaped)
- Less intensive agriculture
- Less litter
- Less pollution

- Less dog wandering and litter
- Less barriers (weirs and gates)
- Less stuff – redundant buildings – repurpose for wildlife
- More zoning of sites leading to less uncontrolled access
- Universal access
- Ready at start, so all used to it
- Nutrient inputs
- Uncontrolled access
- Litter
- Disturbance

Planning

Picking a goal, what steps need to take place in order to achieve that goal?

Plan #1

Goal: Create access to guided nature tours to see animals in their habitats, including on the river

Step 1

Biodiverse study – experts and volunteer and financing

Step 2

Vision statement with photos

Step 3

Data collection and archiving

Step 4

Funding – governmental/private donations/ELMs?

Step 5

Management – from beginning to end – who, when, where and staff?

Step 6

Target audience? Who? Where?

Step 7

Hub for education – children etc.

Step 8

Identify and train staff e.g. National Trust

Step 9

Permissions? Who – planning. Roles and responsibilities

Step 10

Visitor centre – At Bishops Court Farm

Step 11

Licensing – rare birds etc. so you don't get too close

Step 12

Public science

Step 13

Walk to discover – where?

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Plan #2

Goal: More trees planted

Step 1

Conduct a survey (led by experts)

Step 2

A) Tree planting (link – ‘keeping rivers cool’ Environment Agency). Tree ‘crop’ – willow. Route – Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission. B) Planting – community engagement. Fundraising. Memorial tree planting and donations.

Step 3

Management

Step 4

A) Woodland B) Woodland grazing C) Woodland on river

Step 5

A) Extensive grazing zones. Riverside planting (shade). Surveys to optimise benefits (species/mixture). Limitations – archaeological limitations B) Alongside river to benefit fish. Woodland to benefit wildlife. Archaeological survey to prevent damage. Environment agency to assess impact

Step 6

Leading to increased biodiversity. Carbon capture by woodland

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Plan #3

Goal: Creating visitor hubs (because people only care about something if they can visit/see/understand it)

Step 1

Locations – access, services (gas, electric, sewerage), car parking, public transport, additional consultation

Step 2

Business case – insight into audience, funding, stakeholders, grants, offsetting emissions (future funding streams)

Step 3

Stakeholders – national trust, local council authorities, environment agency, ramblers, Dorset cycle network, RSPB, angling clubs, landowners, highways agency, public transport, education, school academies, Dorset wildlife trust

Step 4

Planning permissions – local consultations