

## **HENGISTBURY HEAD AREA – STOUR VALLEY PARK WORKSHOP TRANSCRIPT**

This workshop took place on the 9th of October 2021, with a focus on the Hengistbury Head area. The workshop was hosted at Hengistbury Head visitor centre. The aim for the workshop was to focus on the area surrounding Hengistbury Head 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 Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre staff for hosting us on the day.

### **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?*

Here to represent Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG) and to understand the implications of the proposed Stour Valley Park for wildlife both in the harbour and the wider area. The aim is to work with BCP and other partners to ensure that wildlife interests are maintained and enhanced as part of the Stour Valley Park proposal.

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Improve nature.  
Manage the Stour Valley to maintain and increase biodiversity. Not over managing - allowing nature to do its thing. Accessible - but not totally.

...

I'm here to learn more about the local green space, its significance to the local community, potential for improvement and consideration for future generations.

Understanding the process for developing a long term management plan for a historic setting and significant part of local heritage.

...

Find out more about this project.

Make improvements to existing habitats within the Stour Valley.

Allow managed access, but protect the existing habitats.

Safeguard the green belt.

Allow funding to make improvements.

Allow health and wellbeing opportunities.

...

Protect the environment from urbanisation.

Provide and protect natural environment for local people.

Stour Valley Park would help with this.

...

Local born here.

Flood prevention success.

Volunteer locally.

Meanders (Monday) - know the area.

...

Fully understand the goal and objective of the park.

I would like to come away with an idea of actions and how we both protect and allow access.

...

To see things 'connected up' more, prevent fragmentation.  
To help us all understand all the direct and indirect benefits of nature.

...

To listen and learn about plans for the future and conservation.  
How to involve the community and young people.

...

Looking for a way to make a meaningful contribution to improving the environment.

...

To understand more about SVP plans.  
Try to understand how we are going to do this.  
Balance between environment/humans.  
How to engage all ages - to gain ownership.

...

Here because it's important to protect the local environment.  
Here to promote better access for active travel to get people out of their cars!

...

The Stour is BCP's last chance to improve nature and wellbeing at

scale.

Listen and share ideas for action.

...

Learn more about connecting spaces for nature restoration (allowing human land use).

How to gain insights from community engagement.

...

Access for all leads to:

Better health

Improved understanding

Education

Green economy

Sustainability

...

Increase biodiversity. Protect space for nature. Get involved in local project.

...

Care for environment. Work-related. Personal connection. Want to have an impact. Interest in other people's thoughts about the natural area.

...

Represent public, so cascade discussions and share ideas. Help balance the strategic needs of nature against development.

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## **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?**

- Boat crossing/ferry crossings to get across/back
- Safe routes and a way across Tuckton Bridge/from Iford
- Designed paths/way through landscape
- Buses/public transport including in Winter
- Discounts for cafe and shops if access proof of coming by public transport
- Circular walks
- Create circular trail (waymarked with fence posts)
- Access point at either Hengistbury Head or Stanpit
- Circular walk to include Hengistbury and Stanpit (via Mudeford ferry or Wick ferry)
- Information boards for particular interest spots
- No-fence-collars for dogs?
- Interactive routes – e.g. scan QR codes on a circular route, if completed, parking fee returned/discounted (encouraging day trips/local business support)
- Appropriate and safe places to launch e.g. kayak/stand up paddleboarding
- Parking nearby (safe, secure)
- Education of the public
- Volunteers to explain/educate
- Information signs
- Virtual navigation system – less invasive on the landscape versus physical signs
- Promote ease of access for all, educate
- Clear signage at car parks or other entry points to the Stour Valley, showing routes for walks, activities and features of interest including wildlife
- Information should be available online, maybe with QR codes and the ability to download information
- Events to engage younger people, such as Easter egg hunts

- More fencing to protect ground nesting birds on Hengistbury Head, such as skylarks
- Waymarking/signage for a circular walk around Christchurch Harbour crossing over the river at Mudeford Quay
- More generally, circular walks in the Stour Valley with bridges
- Alternative means of forming circular walk, such as stepping stones, paddle boards etc. for river crossing areas
- Environmental education for all ages – more funding of staff
- Fencing off existing habitats
- Clear signage of the Stour Valley Way
- Signage off of main roads to find the routes
- Events – environmental themed – families
- More improvements for existing habitats
- More rangers to maintain greenspace
- Better interpretation and site information
- More dog exercise areas (signed and managed)
- More volunteers – both groups and individuals
- Better info on what is allowed – watercraft on tidal river stretch and the harbour
- More dog controls on existing sites – advice, on leads, fencing, training
- More people on the ground – volunteers and staff – to guide/interpret
- Support for current volunteers
- Circular walk more obvious from Hengistbury car park up stream around Wick
- Shared pathways – keeping everyone safe, dogs on leads, high speed cyclists, awareness of walkers
- Long straight stretches can create vulnerability
- Access for water sports at Iford
- Signage in general – highlight route, information (wildlife etc), signage off the main roads to get on path
- Bridge closed off – Tuckton Bridge – Iford Bridge – opened up
- Access around Tuckton – non vehicle – linked cycle route
- Tuckton to Iford playing field/Iford bridge (signposting route)
- Increased education/engagement in Iford/Tuckton area engaging local residents, schools and more volunteer groups (linked up along whole path)
- Information for all site users about other site users and where they can do certain activities – respect other people and site users
- Local businesses signing up to commit to not selling single use items

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

- Cars! (So more ways to get here without)
- Less need to drive
- Social media aggressiveness
- Litter
- Single-use items especially items that are potentially dangerous e.g. disposable BBQs
- Uncontrolled dogs
- Pollution of water, but also air, noise, light
- Wildlife disturbance
- Less antisocial behaviour
- Pollution e.g. storm run off etc. related to parking/paving over front gardens etc
- Buckets/spades/cheap stuff available
- Single use items in cafes
- Uncontrolled access
- Dog fouling
- Nitrates in rivers
- Unengaged visitors
- Litter at Hengistbury Head, especially the beach
- Nitrates in river causing algal growth in the harbour
- Less access by car and more access by non-motorised transport, such as buses, bikes and electric scooters
- Pressure from visitor numbers
- Reliance on cars

## **What should we learn for the future?**

The vision should be to create an area at the landscape scale which provides good access to the countryside and nature, whilst also ensuring that the special characteristics and features of the area (including wildlife and heritage) are maintained and enhanced.

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Creating a park that works with the natural environment to provide

an accessible area, education and enjoyment, whilst protecting habitats.

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Investing in education, an education centre that teaches site history/land management/ecology. Heritage methods/techniques and practices. Gives people an opportunity to connect and understand the location. Volunteers, apprenticeships. Early learning, mix of ages, alternative careers.

...

Capturing the importance of the area adjacent to and connected by the River Stour - a blue belt.

...

Sustainability at the heart of the project.

...

Preservation of the nature and conservation of Hengistbury Head which is mindful of the heritage of the area. Stour Valley Park is an exciting project linking Kingston Lacy at one end and HH at the estuary. The aim is to enthuse the public and demonstrate the possibilities open to all ages abilities for leisure.

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We want to turn the Stour Valley into nation park allowing you to walk from the coast to Kingston Lacy. It's a protected area rich in wildlife but with lots of outdoor activities.

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...

To provide recreational space, using the Stour Valley as a basis. Giving access to the countryside for all users including walkers, cyclists, water sports and other activities.

Access at intervals with parking, secure bike parks, entry points to the river.

Good signage and information boards.

For agencies and volunteers to work together to get the necessary work done and not just talk about it.

...

The Stour Valley Park will be a place where people physically engage with nature in a curious and respectful way.

...

A safe, welcoming and accessible place that helps people to experience nature, learn more about wildlife and use the space responsibly to improve health and wellbeing.

...

Create a wildlife corridor the full length of the Stour Valley Way.

...

To create a connected, diverse natural landscape which provides access for all to reap the benefits of exposure to nature (physical, mental, educational) and to subsequently reduce negative behaviours/impacts on our natural world and to bring communities together.

...

A place that educates and inspires people about the natural world in a social/meaningful way that brings people into the world rather than through tv/phones.

...

Everyone understands what the Stour Valley Park is.  
How each part integrates into the whole.  
What/how the park delivers/benefits everyone.  
But start tomorrow!

...

A landscape full of opportunities and facilities for young people to get out and enjoy the natural world.  
Safe, welcoming physical destination.

...

Greater education coupled with greater tolerance.  
To create an environment that recognises and enhances nature and the ecology in a way that is attractive to anyone wishing to access it.

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In a time of declining human mental health and disappearing wildlife, this place is vital for your future wellbeing and for our wildlife to thrive.  
Let's all get involved from tomorrow.

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The Stour Valley Park is a walking and cycling route through a landscape shaped by history and shared with wildlife. People are invited to journey through time and appreciate their relationship with the natural world.

## **Planning**

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

### **Plan #1**

**Goal:** A safe route from Iford to Hengistbury Head to lessen transport by cars – reduce need for them. “Making it easy to get to Hengistbury Head without cars”

### **Step 1**

Consult BCP Council over incorporating Solent Meads golf course into SVP.

### **Step 2a**

Consult residents over how a bridge from Iford Meadows to Tuckton back across river to tea gardens.

### **Step 2b**

Tuckton Bridge needs to be made safer for cyclists and pedestrians possibly add a ‘bolt-on’ bridge Consult council, residents, pub.

### **Step 3a**

Bridge/boardwalk feasibility study.

### **Step 3b**

Maybe get the local street bike hirer company involved.

**Step 3c**

Consult public transport companies on new routes.

Add signs publicising SVP on the bus stops and train station (Christchurch).

**Step 4**

Consult disability groups as to needs for access.

**Step 5**

Signposting of existing routes and new routes.

**Step 6a**

Pave and upgrade path from HH to Wick to Tuckton.

**Step 6b**

Connect end of promenade to new path to HH with sealed surface and signage.

**Step 7**

Reopen access to River Stour on Iford Lane – walking route next to ‘Russian’ print works towards Tuckton.

**Step 8a**

More facilities at Iford Meadows – parking.

**Step 8b**

Put cafe in at Iford Meadows and improve parking.

**Step 9a**

Improve cycling and walking access on north side of River Stour from Iford to Tuckton.

### **Step 9b**

Christchurch Station – improve link for cycle and walking straight down to Tuckton.

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### **Plan #2**

**Goal:** Create interactive signage to inform and educate visitors to the Stour Valley Park.

Elements would include:

- A park-wide website with all info
- Signage with summarised info at locations in the park
- QR codes on the signs which would provide extra information

The QR codes would give access to:

- Information on topics like wildlife, heritage, walking routes etc.
- Special offers to incentivise their use perhaps for things like using public transport

(Strands A, B, C)

### **Step A1**

Work out who is responsible for the project

### **Step A2**

Funding – apply for:

- Philanthropy
- Heritage Fund

- Local government

### **Step A3**

Find out who owns current signs

### **Step A4**

Determine sign locations (high traffic points/viewpoints)

### **Step A5**

GIS initiating mapping

Surveying landscape, services, character assessment

### **Step A6**

Run surveys

### **Step A7**

Produce the signs

### **Step A8**

Keep site updated – ongoing funding

### **Step B1**

Produce website for Stour Valley Park

### **Step B2**

Generation of information to populate the website and signs within the park

### **Step B3**

Community involvement in media content

#### **Step B4**

Ongoing funding of website

#### **Step C1**

Discuss potential discounts/local sponsorship of scheme (businesses) e.g. contact parking authorities – local outlets/services in area

#### **Step C2**

Sculpture trail as framework for QR codes

#### **Step C3**

Create branding

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#### **Plan #3**

**Goal:** Increased/improved knowledge about SVP (and value) i.e. 8/10 people surveyed are knowledgeable about the project

#### **Step 1a**

Create aims and objectives

#### **Step 1b**

Conduct survey – What does Stour Valley Park mean to me?

What benefit does it/should it have for me?

#### **Step 2**

Establish exactly who needs to be included in discussion and decision making about establishing the park

**Step 3**

Research stakeholders and sites

**Step 4a**

Using research to create and engage with stakeholder groups

**Step 4b**

Outline benefits to stakeholders

**Step 5a**

Staff/volunteer work parties recruited

**Step 5b**

Find local champions

**Step 6**

Create questionnaire / survey

**Step 7**

People: staff/volunteers – out and about with visitors – collect data

**Step 8**

Create marketing plan (physical, social media, online)

**Step 9a**

Execute marketing plans – ongoing

**Step 9b**

Raise awareness of visitors of local ecology and impact of people/dogs behaviour on wildlife e.g. nesting birds (signage and volunteer rangers)

**Step 9c**

Politicians on board (leaders)

**Step 9d**

Schools education programme, publicity – local authority newsletters, water board newsletters

**Step 10a**

Get local media on board

Quick response to consultation

**Step 10b**

Accessible information points to explain the Stour Valley Park to visitors

**Step 11**

Information on car park boards/ticketing on ecology – impact people and dogs

Ambition of Stour Valley Park

**Step 12**

Mitigate any effects on local landowners

**Step 13**

Analyse survey results

**Step 14a**

Create financial plan

**Step 14b**

Finance – local national (Abbey Life / Chase Manhattan)

**Step 14c**

Apply to relevant bodies for funding of survey – BCP, National Trust, Natural England, Wessex Water, SW Lakes

**Step 15**

What are we going to do with the results?

A) publish

B) create specific action plans

**Step 16**

Apply for funding

**Step 17**

Share results with public

**Step 18**

Celebrate success!