



# EXTENT OF POTENTIAL NATURE PARK

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# “ACCESS TO GOOD QUALITY GREEN SPACES RESULTS IN IMPROVEMENTS IN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SUCH AS DEPRESSION, STRESS AND DEMENTIA”



MAKING THE MOST OF OUR  
LOCAL LANDSCAPE

# STOUR VALLEY PARK

## INTRODUCTION

The Stour Valley Park is a concept to improve recreational opportunities, wildlife and landscape in the river corridor between Kingstons Lacy and Hengistbury Head. See map overleaf.

Without the need to seek formal designation, we can work with partners and landowners to create a more distinctive and vibrant landscape that is enjoyable, financially stable, biodiverse, educational and useful.

The Stour Valley Park will be delivered through a partnership approach with public, private and third sector organisations, residents and landowners. It's designed to bring out the best in future development projects, whether that be for nature and health, economy and tourism (both rural and urban), education or heritage.

We don't propose any legislation: reference to the concept in local plans will suffice to help secure delivery of the Park. We believe that by working together pro-actively, we can bring a sense of certainty to the area, where carefully planned and complementary new projects create multiple benefits for all.

With a growing population of around 400,000 people and the best use of our space, The Lower Stour Valley corridor provides continued demand for new homes, it's essential we plan ahead for too good an opportunity to miss.

## “LIVING CLOSE TO A GREEN SPACE CAN ADD 5 YEARS TO YOUR LIFE”

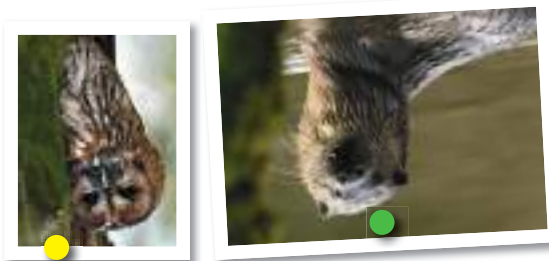
Urban green spaces and health, Copenhagen:  
WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2016



## ENVIRONMENT

By being bold, learning from international best practice and harnessing opportunities (such as mineral extraction), we can improve flood alleviation, water quality, carbon capture and habitat creation.

We can recreate lost habitats, develop new ones, link fragmented habitats and populations, and work to allow species to recolonise or be reintroduced. We can achieve this on a landscape scale, where we can make a real difference. Along the way, we can help improve water quality, reduce flooding and increase carbon capture.



## THE LOWER STOUR TRAIL

We'll develop a trail that follows the river throughout the Stour Valley, running from Hengistbury Head to Kingstons Lacy, to be used by walkers, cyclists, and buggy and wheelchair users.

This trail is for leisure, tourism, school trips, community and linking communities along and across the river. We'll create a clear and high-quality route that brings people closer to nature, art, culture and heritage, and is a way to find cafes, places to visit, hire a bike, go horse riding or angling, stop at a B&B or simply stay active.

The Stour Trail will become a 'must do' for visitors to South East Dorset and a top choice for a weekend activity.

## VOLUNTARY & CHARITABLE SECTOR

To achieve great things we need to harness the good will and generosity of people locally through an imaginative partnership between the public and private sectors.

Both volunteering and partnership working have key roles in supporting a modern and diverse economy, often making the difference between sustainable business opportunity and a non-viable one. Demographically, the skillset of the retired and semi-retired is second-to-none in this region – a resource that could support all of the proposed activities/themes, as well as bring quantifiable benefits (and savings) in terms of the health and well-being agenda. On the same theme, by creating an exemplary 'Regional Park' that improves lives and nature, we can benefit from philanthropy, sponsorship and charitable funds.



## HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

We'll work with planners and developers to provide early advice and guidance in relation to housing and development in the area.

By working with developers from the concept stage we could reduce delay and uncertainty while helping them to deliver enhancements to the local environment that will make their developments both more desirable and sustainable.

## TRANSPORT

By working with landowners, planners and developers we'll maximise everyone's opportunities to create joined-up sustainable travel, whether that's helping employers find easier ways to get staff to work, helping landowners to manage access, or helping planners to design new routes and safe links. By providing off-road routes and greenways, we can do our bit to keep roads running more freely, whilst making the most of opportunities as they arise to improve networks.

## ECONOMY

The Stour Valley Park recognises the need for the farming business to develop alongside the park and will support farmers and landowners in diversification, creating opportunities and custom for cafes, farm shops, bike hire and more.

We'll help with access management and brand identity for local produce. The Lower Stour will gain a sense of place; there will be increased trade and income through tourism, planned development, restoration and mitigation. We'll work to develop pride in belonging to the 'Park' brand and regional identity, and in a wider sense, we'll make the area a great place to come to work, rest and play. The partnership will work to share knowledge and skills to offer free specialist advice, e.g. projects that involve landowners of both private and publicly owned land, facilitating rural and semi-rural regeneration.

## PRESCRIPTION

DR. G. PHYSICIAN  
101 MAIN STREET  
ANYTOWN, ST

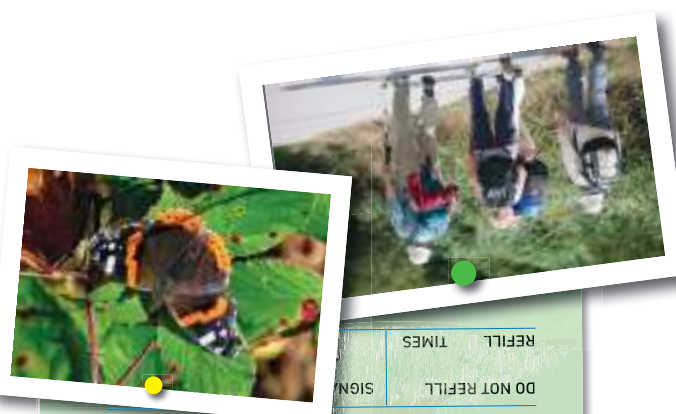
NHS – Nature's Health Service

PATIENT DOB

ADDRESS

DATE

- Visit your local park once daily  
- engage in physical activity once a week  
- take one stroll morning and night  
- finish the course  
- walk the dog and socialise with others  
- 1x dose of sunlight (vitamin D) each day



## FUNDING AND DELIVERY

Financial contributions from housing developers, to mitigate the impact of residential development near protected headlands, are already enhancing our parks and nature reserves. However, as options for creating additional greenspace dwindle, there's a need to offer alternative 'breathing spaces' for residents and wildlife alike.

The Stour Valley Park concept offers a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) status, where residents can escape the hubbub of life and where developers' contributions can be directed to for maximum gain. Importantly, these contributions can be used to lever partnership funding from not only the Big Lottery Fund, Public Health, transport and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), but also from charitable and philanthropic funds and donations.

To make this happen and to attract investment we need a planned approach, a track record of progress and success, and the evidence to demonstrate the value of contributions.

## “IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE NATURAL WORLD IS THE GREATEST SOURCE OF EXCITEMENT; THE GREATEST SOURCE OF VISUAL BEAUTY; THE GREATEST SOURCE OF INTELLECTUAL INTEREST. IT IS MUCH IN LIFE THAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING”

David Attenborough

## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

In 2016, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published a review of evidence around urban green spaces and health.

They concluded that a city of well-connected, attractive green spaces is likely to be more resilient to extreme environmental events and more likely to have healthier citizens, with reduced demands on health services and contributing to a stronger economy.

The Stour Valley already provides space for people to exercise, relax, walk, cycle, play, meet or get socially involved in volunteering, but it has the capacity to do so much more. As a new regional top ten destination with all the desirable attributes to rival sedentary pastimes, it will create a step change in the health and well-being offer and provide a resource (free from medication) to improve mental and physical health, increase social interaction, combat loneliness and offer opportunities for skills development.

## “IF EVERYONE IN THE UK HAD ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE, IT COULD SAVE THE NHS 2.1BN A YEAR!”

Defra, 2010, Defra's climate change plan.  
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, London.



## WHAT NEXT

We believe that by working together in partnership with residents, landowners and private and third sector organisations, we can bring out the best in any future developments whether that be for nature and health, local heritage and education and the economy and tourism (both rural and urban).

To achieve this the Stour Valley Partnership, needs your thoughts and ideas regarding the key themes in this brochure. (See our partners' logos on map overleaf).

Please visit our web page:  
www.dorsetnp.org.uk/stour\_valley\_park

Write to us at:  
stourvalleypark@dorsetnp.org.uk

