



Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust (BVCT)

Business Plan 2017 -2018

(Revised and updated January 2017)

Executive Summary

BVCT is a registered charity working for the conservation, protection and improvement of the Blackwater Valley. It:

- promotes awareness of and public access to the countryside through a programme of events, including walks and talks;
- identifies improvement projects, raising funds to progress them; and
- encourages volunteers to get involved with projects and management.

Activities

BVCT will:

- Identify projects meeting its objectives and raise funds to progress them;
- Provide a variety of educational experiences, mainly through walks and talks, working with partners where opportunities arise;
- Use its website and newsletter, and suitable occasions for outside publicity, to increase its profile locally and acquire a reputation for professional and constructive work.

BVCT Financial strategy

BVCT will raise funds via a variety of routes including (but not exclusively) public subscription, members, local corporate supporters and grant schemes. BVCT does not intend to accumulate large sums without a specific purpose, and will often raise funds with specific projects in mind. Nevertheless, it may also raise funds as opportunities arise pending the identification of suitable projects, or to match-fund grant applications.

Building the Trust – strengthening the organisation

BVCT must respond to current uncertainties, future challenges and risks by maintaining a team of Trustees with the commitment and skills to take the organisation forward and deliver its objectives. The Board of Trustees is always interested in recruiting Trustees with relevant skills.



Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership (BVCP)

BVCP is funded by local authorities along the Blackwater River. The Trust (BVCT) is a registered charity. The two organizations are independent but share similar aims, and frequently work together to improve wildlife habitats and public access to them throughout the Blackwater Valley. Indeed the Partnership is the main body used to deliver Trust projects. The uncertain future of BVCP due to funding pressures is therefore a source of concern, although no change is envisaged for the next year.

Achievements

Since its inception in 2003 BVCT has facilitated projects with a total value over £150,000. The list of current and potential projects is shown on the final page.

Members Walks & Talks – Plan for 2017/8

(see website and newsletters for actual dates and details)

- The Trust will offer a comprehensive range of walks and talks throughout the year that try to ensure that all aspects of flora and fauna in the Blackwater Valley are covered over time.
- As a change from Walk The Path in April we will hold an equally prestigious event in the form of the Big Valley Ramble, over twelve miles, in and around Sandhurst. We plan to maintain the number of our circular walks this year at six.
- Other themed walks may cover birds, bats, dragonflies, butterflies, trees, fungi, or any other flora or fauna.
- We will hold event days that are specifically aimed at the younger generation eg. small mammal trapping.
- We will continue to keep members informed of our activities through the monthly email updates and the website. The Annual General Meeting is held in February, with financial reports up to the end of the previous September.
- Our Trustees are also invited to give talks to various outside groups and institutions which enable the Trust to spread the word and promote our work in the Valley.

Attendance at Local Fairs & Fetes

BVCT actively supports the Partnership's program of local events as well as attending others in its own right. We will work with BVCP to man stands at fairs or fetes during the summer months, distributed along the length of the Valley. The exact number will depend on the available manning resources.



Membership

The Trust will continue to increase public awareness by giving talks to local groups, and attending local fairs and fetes, to increase our membership base. While it is impossible to forecast growth rates, our rate of increase has improved year on year for the last four years.

Our actual figures reflect the number of households on our database but we have no way of knowing how many people are at each address, so the number of individuals may well be considerably higher.

Building on the progress made in recruiting corporate (now termed 'Business') members towards the end of last year, is a priority this year, as their support both financially and numerically raises the profile of the Trust.

Membership non-renewals are an issue, as they are for most organizations like us, but we endeavour to keep them to a minimum and to find out the reasons.

Action Plan 2017 -2018

The Trustees will meet monthly, aim to hold at least one event (walk or talk) each month, and issue monthly email updates to members. BVCT will continue to develop links with local media and develop its website and presence on social media.

The Trust will continue to review and, where necessary, restructure Trust operations to improve efficiency, and to conduct Trustee training in relevant areas. It will continue to review its policies to ensure they remain up-to-date and underpin efficient running and accountability.

Progress against the current project plan (next page) will be monitored at monthly meetings and reported in the monthly updates, on the website and at the Annual General Meeting in February of each year. Progress with these projects is subject to, *inter alia*, the availability of funds, and the list does not preclude other projects being adopted by the Trust.



Current and Proposed Projects *(updated January 2017)*

Project	Cost	Possible funding sources	Progress	Comments
Frimley Hatches reedbed safety	£2.5k	TAG funded	Plan to build boardwalks across wettest parts of reedbed. Expected completion 1Q17.	<i>Owner - CW</i>
Stag beetle habitats	£3.5k	2016 Appeal	Linked to 2016 Appeal – Total of 53 stumperies created across 20 sites. Expected completion 1Q17	<i>Owner - SC</i>
Darby Green Pond restoration	£9.5k	TAG grant Yateley TC County councillor grants	Two work parties cleared some pond weed and surrounding paths. Two more planned Jan/Feb. Expected completion 3Q17.	<i>Owner - MS</i>
Woodland Ground Flora Improvement	£8.3k	2017 Appeal	Focus is on Wellesley Woodland for Flora Improvement. Expected completion 4Q17	<i>Owner - AT</i>
BV Path Signage	TBD		Review and renew signage along Path	<i>Owner - KB</i>
Yateley Bridleway 502	TBD		Phase 2 – further work required on bad areas	<i>Owner - CW</i>
Aldershot Park north – resurfacing of path	TBD		Path eroding behind school	<i>Owner - CW</i>
Otter & fishery protection	TBD		Feasibility study	
Hawley Meadows wetlands	TBD		Allow to flood naturally	<i>Owner - BB</i>
Hedgehog protection	TBD		Gather data and run education campaign	
Homes for Swifts	TBD		Building and installing swift boxes	<i>Owner - CW</i>
Wildlife garden	TBD		Possible purchase of land near Farnborough North to convert into wildlife garden	<i>Owner - CW</i>

All cost figures are approximate