



**Business Plan  
2020 - 1**



**Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust**  
Ash Lock Cottage, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2PS  
Company registered in England No. 04898996 Registered Charity No. 1109424

# About the Blackwater Valley

**The Blackwater Valley** stretches from Rowhill on the Hampshire and Surrey border, to Swallowfield in Berkshire. After rising at Rowhill Copse, the river joins the Whitewater 23 miles later, becoming the Broadwater.

It has a surprisingly varied landscape rich in wildlife, and the shallow floodplain along the river, set amidst extensive heathlands and woodlands, contains many lakes and wet meadows created by many years of gravel and sand extraction.



**River Blackwater**



**The Blackwater / Cove water catchment area covers 16,000ha.** The upper (southern) end of the Valley has been heavily influenced by urbanisation, with the settlements of Yateley, Blackwater, Farnborough, Aldershot, Weybourne, Badshot Lea, Ash, Mytchett, Frimley, Camberley, and Sandhurst creating a nearly continuous built area surrounding the River Blackwater covering 5,500 ha.

According to the 2011 census, almost 800,000 people were living within easy reach of this area. In addition, there are numerous businesses, military, educational establishments and leisure facilities that people travel to from within and outside of the Valley. **We estimate that approximately 1 million people have a connection to the Valley.**

# Our History and Objectives



## History

Volunteers with the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership set up the Trust to enhance the lives of the people and wildlife in the Valley in ways denied to the Partnership because of its legal status. It was incorporated as a company in 2003 and as a charity in 2005.

In its first 15 years of operation, it has enabled wildlife friendly projects with a value over £200,000 to be completed in the Blackwater Valley.

The Trust is private company limited by guarantee without shares. It is registered in England and Wales under company number 04898996.

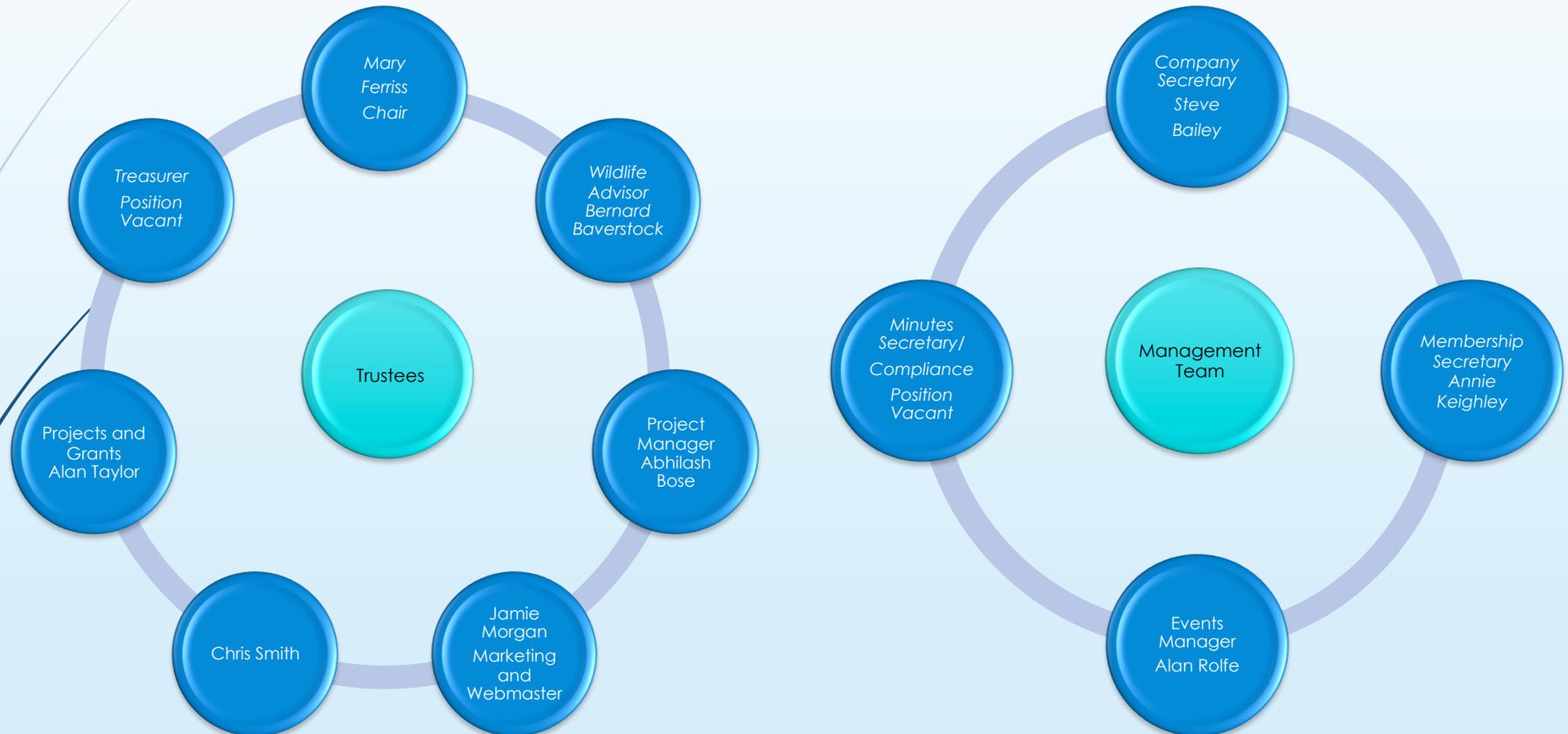
It is also a registered charity number 1109424.

## Our Charitable Objectives

- to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment and promote the management of the countryside, biodiversity and wildlife habits and characteristic landscapes of the Blackwater valley by supporting conservation projects and programmes within and around the boroughs of Rushmoor, Bracknell Forest, Guildford, Waverley and Surrey Heath; the districts of Hart and Wokingham and such other areas as the charity may from time to time decide ('the area of benefit') and
- to advance the education of the public on matters connected with the countryside management by supporting, promoting and improving public access to countryside, and promoting the participation of the public in countryside management within the area of benefit.

# Our Trustees and Management Team

Our trustees and management team use their wide range of backgrounds and specialist skills to help conserve and improve the natural environment of the Blackwater Valley.



# Our Values, Vision and Mission

## Our values

We believe in equality, respect, caring and sharing, always remembering wildlife has an equal right to live on Earth as we do.

## Our Vision

Our vision is a Blackwater Valley rich in native wildlife where inhabitants and visitors share the Valley harmoniously and respectfully with other species which live in it.



## Our Mission

Our mission is to **use our skills and resources** to make the Blackwater Valley a special place, full of life and accessible to all, where the countryside is valued and the people and wildlife thrive together. We will do this by **engaging local people and businesses** in nature and conservation activities and show them the purpose and benefits of our work.



# Our Aims



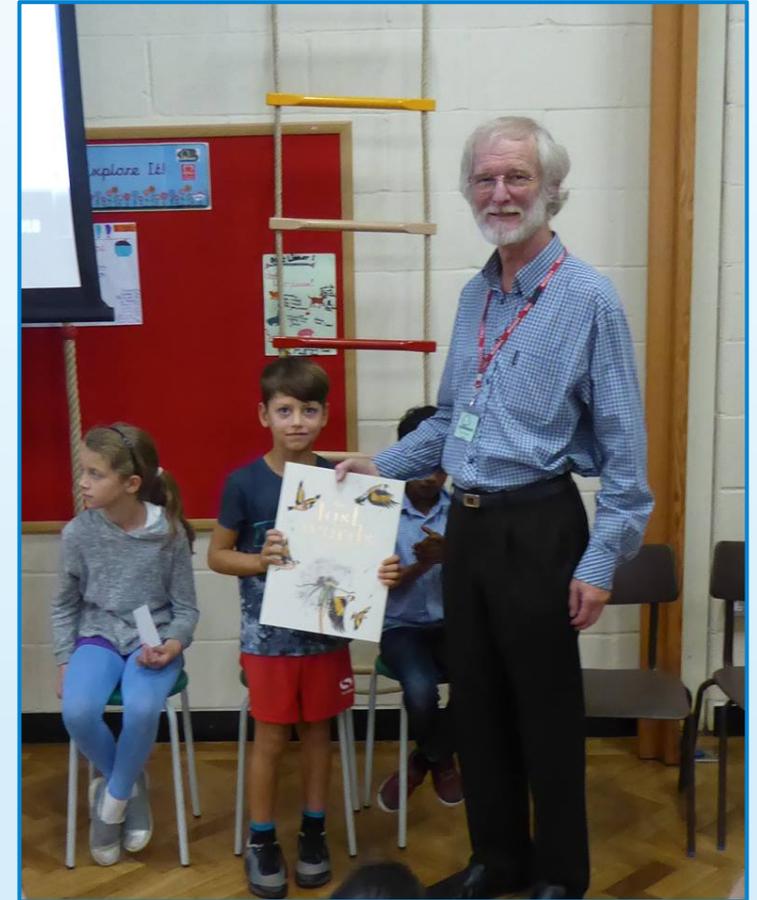
## We aim to:

**Enhance the environment** for both people and wildlife by:

- ▶ **promoting public access** to the countryside by means of a programme of events, including walks and talks
- ▶ **Help inform people about their Valley** and the wildlife on their doorstep
- ▶ **identifying improvement ideas, creating projects and raising funds** to progress them
- ▶ **encouraging a sharing of knowledge** and a sense of belonging in the Blackwater Valley.

# Our Activities

- We offer **membership** to households, businesses and associate groups with similar aims. This provides an opportunity to support or contribute to the Trust's work, the option to attend our events such as walks and talks offered by the Trust and regular newsletters.
- We help **manage** pockets of the Valley's countryside and preserve its wildlife habitats by making conservation projects happen.
- We **provide consultancy and advice** and deliver projects to benefit wildlife and are constantly looking for opportunities to create more in the Blackwater Valley.
- We **provide grants to third parties** for projects consistent with the aims of the Trust.
- We **seek to enhance our relationships with businesses** to assist them with environmental aspects of their corporate social responsibility plans and aims to develop these over time.
- We **educate** the public about the natural world and the local environment.



# Our Beneficiaries and Customers

- ▶ **Beneficiaries:** Beneficiaries of our work are at the heart of everything we do and are all the wild things that grow, or could grow, in the Valley. The Trust provides provide services to them by conserving them and encouraging them to grow here. To do this, the Trust attracts members and gains their support for its objectives. Other beneficiaries are users and inhabitants of the Blackwater Valley
- ▶ **Customers:** Our members are our customers and we provide services which our members value. These people and businesses are the Trust's donors and supporters, alongside grant-making bodies and sources of funds approached by the Trust from time to time.



# Our Members, Donors and Supporters

- ▶ These are individual and corporate members and donors at events, together with grant-making bodies and sources of funds approached by the Trust from time to time.
- ▶ We recognise that our members and supporters are essential and appreciate that they are key to our continued success. We inspire and enable everyone to do their bit – because the challenge of conserving our natural environment in the valley is too big to overcome alone.
- ▶ The membership figures as at 30th September 2020 were:
  - ▶ 311 Households\*
  - ▶ 8 Affiliated Groups
  - ▶ 5 Corporate and Associate members
  - ▶ 3 Honorary and Life members

Total 327.

\*As each individual membership is assigned to an address or household which may have more than one person living there, the number of actual individuals covered by membership is materially higher.

- ▶ We will work to attract more corporate members and sponsorship and donations this year. In 2019-20, we attracted sponsorship from Kebur, Farnborough Airport and Touchstone Energy.



*Farnborough  
Airport*





# Our Compliance, Insurance and Ethics



## Compliance

- ▶ We comply with the requirements of relevant legislation.
- ▶ We ensure our activities and spending are in line with our governing document and are undertaken in accordance with the public benefit requirement for charities.
- ▶ We comply with our contractual obligations to suppliers and others, including insurers, our bank, etc.
- ▶ We maintain accurate and secure financial records and information to ensure compliance with its fiscal and accounting obligations.

## Insurance

We maintain adequate **public liability insurance** to cover our activities and our officers and members. This is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains adequate and relevant.

## Ethical Principles

We are members of The National Council for Voluntary Organisations and uphold their Ethical Principles which aim to support charities, their governing bodies, and those who work and volunteer in and with them in recognising and resolving ethical issues and conflicts, and make charities a safer place.

# Planning our Year- Strengthening the Trust

Our programme for 2020-21 includes a series of measures to strengthen the Trust and make it a more effective instrument to improve the Valley environment:

- recruiting trustees or other volunteers with accounting, compliance, fundraising, minute-taking and other relevant skills;
- considering how best to use our financial and personnel resources to Make a Difference in the Valley;
- revising and simplifying our Small Grants Scheme to attract a wider range of applicants; and
- developing templates for the development of wildlife-friendly community gardens and eco-churches to help more successful initiatives within our resources.



# Planning our Year- Projects and Activities



We need to undertake and support our own and other projects to meet our objectives.

Our priority plan for 2021 includes the following projects or activities:

- Developing and launching a project to educate children about nature - NatureHunt
- continuing Woodland Flowers project
- continuing to install bird, bat and other boxes to provide nesting and roosting spaces
- Launching our Rail to Trail partnership with Community Rail Partnership
- Small Grants Scheme
- complete policies and procedures review
- increase household and business Memberships
- Review funding options with BVCP

# Planning our Year- Fundraising

Our programme for 2020-1 involves costs amounting to approximately £20,834.

We will raise funds to pay for these by:

- ▶ household membership, subscriptions, donations and Gift Aid
- ▶ business (corporate) membership and donations
- ▶ donations from various sources, for talks, events such as Big Valley Ramble
- ▶ grants from Businesses and Funding bodies (many already received)
- ▶ fundraising e.g. lottery participation, recycling inkjet cartridges, selling bird, dormouse boxes, etc.



# Planning our Year- Activities Programme

We cannot succeed without our Members. In past years we have provided programmes of activities in return for their support. Covid has meant our activities have been significantly reduced during 2020-21.

We will hold our AGM online on 29 April and are delighted to have engaged Pat Morris as our speaker on riparian mammals.

Looking ahead, we hope to develop a fuller programme as covid restrictions are removed and will publish details at [www.bvct.org.uk/events](http://www.bvct.org.uk/events) and on our Facebook page.

