



## **1 Organisational Objectives**

The BVCP works to improve the countryside environment throughout the Blackwater Valley. We work with local authorities, private landowners and local communities to identify projects that will improve the landscape and wildlife value of the area and increase public access to enjoy it.

Initially concentrating on improving degraded land along the River Blackwater our successes have led to long term management of these areas and also being asked to help on sites in the wider Blackwater Valley.

The BVCP is a Local Authority Partnership with a small number of staff, we work closely with the local charity Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust to maximise the synergy that the two different organisations provide e.g. the charity's fund raising ability supporting staff and volunteers to carry out projects.

## **2 Work in Surrey Heath**

Each year Partnership staff carry out projects to support the Surrey Heath BC Ranger service, this year has included mowing and tree clearance at Blackwater Park, and mowing at Diamond Ridge.

We support two volunteer groups in the Borough, the Surrey Heath Tree Wardens, and Friends of Frimley Allotments with advice, tool loan and joint conservation tasks.

We are currently working on a project to install a footbridge to link the new Watersedge SANG to the Blackwater Valley Path, and are in contact with Network Rail to ensure their bridge project at Frimley Hatches causes no damage to the river or surrounds.

## **3 Valley-wide Projects**

The creation and maintenance of a footpath linking the various greenspaces along the river is ongoing, use of this path is estimated at 500,000 visits p.a. and is increasing at 5% each year. At least 100,000 will be from residents of Surrey Heath.

Another ongoing long-term project is improvements to the River Blackwater itself. Liaison with the Environment Agency, landowners and anglers has enabled annual projects to improve habitat including sections at Frimley.

The Partnership manages 25 sites, totalling 475 ha, two of these are SANGS that were used to enable development in Surrey Heath.



We support 10 volunteer site-based groups as well running a midweek volunteer group. Last year this involved 1,200 volunteer days, worth over £100,000. In Surrey Heath we organised 15 projects involving 105 people.

The need for SANG has opened up many new sites for public access and we have helped set many of these up, with a new one of 14ha due to open shortly. On all these sites we look to create attractive countryside landscapes that integrate access with increased ecological value.

We are currently working on four meadow enrichment projects and three for tree planting, These projects are typical of the many that we have undertaken over the years. Continuing this work will help our local authority partners meet their new statutory duties to improve the environment.

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30<sup>th</sup> August 2023

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