

Circular Walks Green Enhancement by Groundwork South

As we have previously, raised, we focused delivery on the aspects of the project that prioritised improving the environment and the accessibility of the circular walks for the community. We were unable to deliver the Green Team element of the project due to the difficulties of recruiting staff during this post Covid time frame. In discussing this with yourselves we did offer (reluctantly) to hand the funding back, so that it could be spent on other projects but was informed that if this happens the funding would be lost to Wexham and Iver. We most definitely did not want this to happen!

Therefore it was agreed to focus on the big picture of the project of improving the environment in the area, engaging the community and improving the access to the countryside for residents.

Aims:

1 Improve the Environment and Protect Buckinghamshire’s Green Space

To improve the two Colne Valley Circular Walks (Iver and Langley) we have designed and commissioned two new information boards for Iver, one will be sited outside the Iver Parish Council Offices and one on Swan Meadow.



Drafts of the new information boards; These are with the professional designers.

Work is also scheduled this month to improve the walks on the ground with a walk round by contractor and Groundwork staff, litter picking, cutting back overgrowth and making improvements as necessary for walkers.

Four free sessions at Iver Environment Centre have been offered to Iver Primary Schools and they are all booked in to enjoy a day learning about biodiversity and all things environmental as well as having some fun whilst they learn.

We are seeking permission to plant wildflower strips along the circular walk routes, slightly hampered, at the moment, in getting permission from Carta Jonas on the Langley farmland and by rabbits which mean we can't plant in the area we first chose along the route near the Ridgeway

Trading Estate. We are talking with the farmer to see if there is another strip on his land where we could plant which would be less accessible to the rabbits.

2. Contribute to Buckinghamshire's post -covid economic regeneration efforts.

As mentioned in our introduction sadly the post covid affect also hampered our recruitment and despite going to market three times we failed to recruit a manager and leader to run a green team.

What we were able to do was to ensure that another project within Groundwork that happened late last year and involved trainees was directed to delivering improvements to the Langley Circular Walk and in particular the Slough Arm of the canal. Our ambitions for the Green Team element of the project continue and we are happy to say that we have now recruited our management team and whilst they will not start in time for this project they will be following up with other teams of trainees in the area and have agreements with contractors that those trainees will get guaranteed interviews following their courses.

3. We will carry out key green infrastructural improvement of walkways across the target area

We have also made directional roundels for the walks which will be put up on the routes. The QR codes link to the Short Circular Walks page on the Colne Valley Park website which means that as well as providing the map and notes online if there is a need to communicate a change in route, diversion or similar we will be able to flag this up.



The two Colne Valley Circular walks leaflets are re-printed and will be delivered to the Parish Council offices for giving out to the public and will be available in the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre as well as at the other Country Parks. These walks are also available on the website.

Contractors are repairing the small bridge over a ditch near the River Colne at Little Britain and the bench on that stretch. They will also be doing a walk and repair along the length of each walk.

4. We will Map put Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancement

A local led initiative is underway to map the Ivers using GIS and producing maps that incorporate layers of information taken from a range of sources such as historic OS maps, Magic Maps, local knowledge and biological records. This will provide a comprehensive resource to both record the current position and designation of current green space in the Ivers and inform, based on historic records and community input, the ambitions for improvement and restoration of the green space.

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