

GOODWORTH CLATFORD'S RIVERSIDE PROJECT

The Full Story

Introduction

Early in 2003 it was suggested that the ground between the Royal Oak and the carrier of the River Anton, owned by the Parish Council, should receive some attention. The area had been closed to the public as some trees were in a poor condition. Expenditure on relatively expensive tree work to make the site safe was difficult to justify.

From that thought, Kate Savage then investigated the possibilities and started to involve other interested people. The end result was that a steering committee was formed and, under the umbrella of the Parish Council, the Goodworth Clatford Environmental Group was born.

Eventually after consultations with numerous environment agencies the germ of the project took shape. There seemed to be many village residents who wanted the area to be restored and so the cost of the work was then estimated. The application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was submitted in May 2005 and the positive outcome was confirmed four months later.



Thursday 25th August, 2005 - Lottery Win for Goodworth Clatford's Riverside Project



Goodworth Clatford's Riverside Project has been awarded a grant of over £23,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to build a footpath, boardwalk and educational viewing platform by the River Anton in the centre of the village. These new facilities will ensure that everyone will be able to get really close to this important natural habitat without disturbing the natural fauna and flora that thrives here.

Interpretation boards will be placed close to the educational viewing platform to help people really appreciate and understand the natural habitat that surrounds them, illustrating the natural and industrial heritage of the area.

"Few people realise that every lottery ticket has the potential to save the UK's landscapes, countryside and creatures," commented Tessa Hilder, Regional Manager for the Heritage Lottery Fund. "In the last 10 years HLF has invested nearly £123 million in environmental projects, of which £26 million has been in South East England. This project is a great example of one of these projects, and illustrates how the environment around us is such an important part of our local heritage and community."

The land, which is a site of interest for nature conservation (SINC), is overgrown at the moment but the funding will enable essential tree work to be completed this autumn. The route of the path and boardwalk will be cleared during the winter before the construction work starts next spring and will be completed over the summer. The shallow ramp will allow good access for everyone to visit the site quite safely.

The land is behind The Royal Oak and the river is, from a nature and heritage point of view, very interesting. It is unusual to have a wooded area by a river where the bank and riverside has been relatively undisturbed and well colonised by a wide range of plants and animals. The path will be on the route of the disused railway and canal, and the boardwalk and platform will be constructed in sections off site and assembled on site to minimise disturbing the fragile nature of the soil. Practical help over the next few months will be vital to clear vegetation selected parts of the site.

Sheepwash Carrier Environment Project

Proposed ten-year management plan

Initial work

- a) make safe the dead and dangerous trees and/branches by pollarding the mature trees in the interest of public safety. This to be completed so as to have as little impact on the surrounding area as possible.
- b) remove only the large pieces, which either block the pathways or are on the site of the proposed platform or boardwalk. Leave as much of the dead wood as is practicable for habitat reasons.

Second phase

- a) installation of the footpaths, boardwalks and platform, complying with all necessary regulations. These will provide a set route to protect the fauna and flora in low-lying areas enabling them to flourish.
- b) control selected sites of bramble and overgrown ground cover but maintaining as much natural ground cover as possible.
- c) erection of Interpretation boards and have available suitable literature.

Third phase

- a) replanting of trees as necessary in autumn/winter of suitable species like alder and willow.
- b) appropriate management of the vegetation and maintenance of footpaths, boardwalks and platform.

Fourth phase

- a) appraise the management plan, review the project and amend the action plan as appropriate.

Please note:

- 1) The natural beauty of the site is to be maintained essentially for the benefit of wildlife especially the riverbank.
- 2) Access to the site is to be encouraged by all of the village residents but respect for the environment by everyone is essential if the fauna and flora is to be relatively undisturbed. The site has a high potential for being a good educational resource for the village school and local youth groups as well as the village clubs and societies.
- 3) Phase one to be completed in a time period that is recommended by professional arborists. This is anticipated to be three to four years.
- 4) During the tree work the minimum of ground damage is to be sought and all tree work should be carried out under the British Standard 3998.89 Recommendation of Tree Works.
- 5) The construction work will follow immediately the tree work is completed and should be completed twelve months later.
- 6) By erecting a variety of nest boxes, insect boxes etc. we aim to show how these items, as well as the management of the site, can be a guide to be used by residents to encourage wildlife into local gardens.

Final Review

Thirty years ago Graham Roberts surveyed the River Anton at Goodworth Clatford and loved what he saw. He couldn't have imagined it getting any better, but it just has.

With the help of a £23,000 Heritage Lottery grant, other donations and agencies, the parish council, countless villagers, and over 1000 hours of voluntary labour, a new public amenity has been created. It opens up a previously hidden and overgrown area beside the river at the back of the Royal Oak pub.



In his role as South East Otter and River Project Officer for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust Graham was proud to cut the tape and declare the site open.

"I am terribly impressed not only by the project itself but by the breadth of interest in it and the age range of the volunteers who have worked on it," he said.

Bird and bat boxes have been made by the Scouts, insect boxes by the Beavers, and 28 identification cards for plants and animals by Class 5 of Clatford School. Residents and friends of the village donated a memorial bench, the entrance gate and six alder trees.

The project had support from the Clatfords Store, the Village Club and the WI as well as more than 50 volunteers who helped to clear the site, create a footpath, boardwalk and educational viewing platform so that people can enjoy the wealth of wildlife in the area.

"Please nurture and treasure this space - it is very special," Graham added. "There are so few places in the Test Valley where people have access to chalk streams like this because they are so fragile.

"The success of this environmental project is that it will introduce people to the diversity chalk streams offer without causing any damage to it."

Test Valley Mayor and Mayoress Cllr and Mrs Jim Neal added their congratulations to the project team which was spearheaded by Richard Ryder, Kate Savage and Jenny Rundle with secretarial support from Renie Scott.

"It is important that we have safeguarded this area for the village," commented parish councillor Jenny Rundle.

Richard had special praise for Kate Savage who organised various working parties and kept the project running smoothly. She was presented with a gift to mark the occasion and a photo album containing before and after shots of area.

"Looking through the album what we have achieved is unbelievable," she said. "It is a fantastic community effort. But if it wasn't for all the volunteers it wouldn't have happened."

"I am delighted some many people have come today, been involved and are pleased with it."

Richard also recognised the tremendous help received from the consultants engaged on the project.

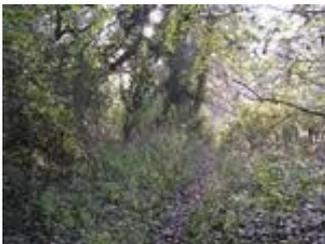
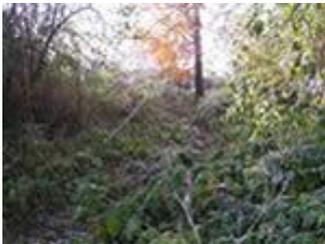
"We would particularly like to thank Tony Ponting of AJP Construction who has made himself readily available at busy times and has donated the furniture on the education platform," he said.

The Environment Agency, represented at the opening ceremony by Leanne Bird, donated £2,000 for two interpretation boards which describe what visitors can expect from a chalk stream and a woodland site. Two volunteers have undertaken regular plant and animal surveys, there is a full photographic record of the work and a scrapbook made by Constance Potter.

If you would like to receive information about this project then contact us on 01264-363228, richardryder7@btinternet.com or directly from Jenny Rundle, Kate Savage or Richard Ryder.

Photo Gallery

20th November 2005 - In the beginning there was just jungle!



January 2006 – Things are looking clearer



**18th February 2006
Opening Ceremony**



**26th March 2006
Path Work**

1st August 2006 – Decking Work Begins



10th March 2006 – Ramping Up..!



April 2007 – Tout Ensemble



28th April 2007 – The Grand Opening..!

