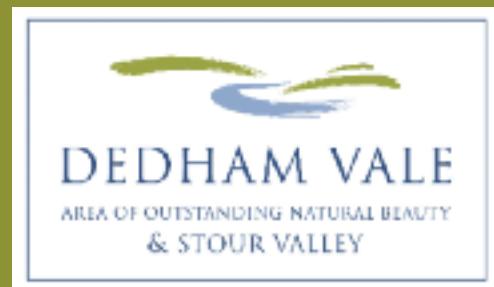


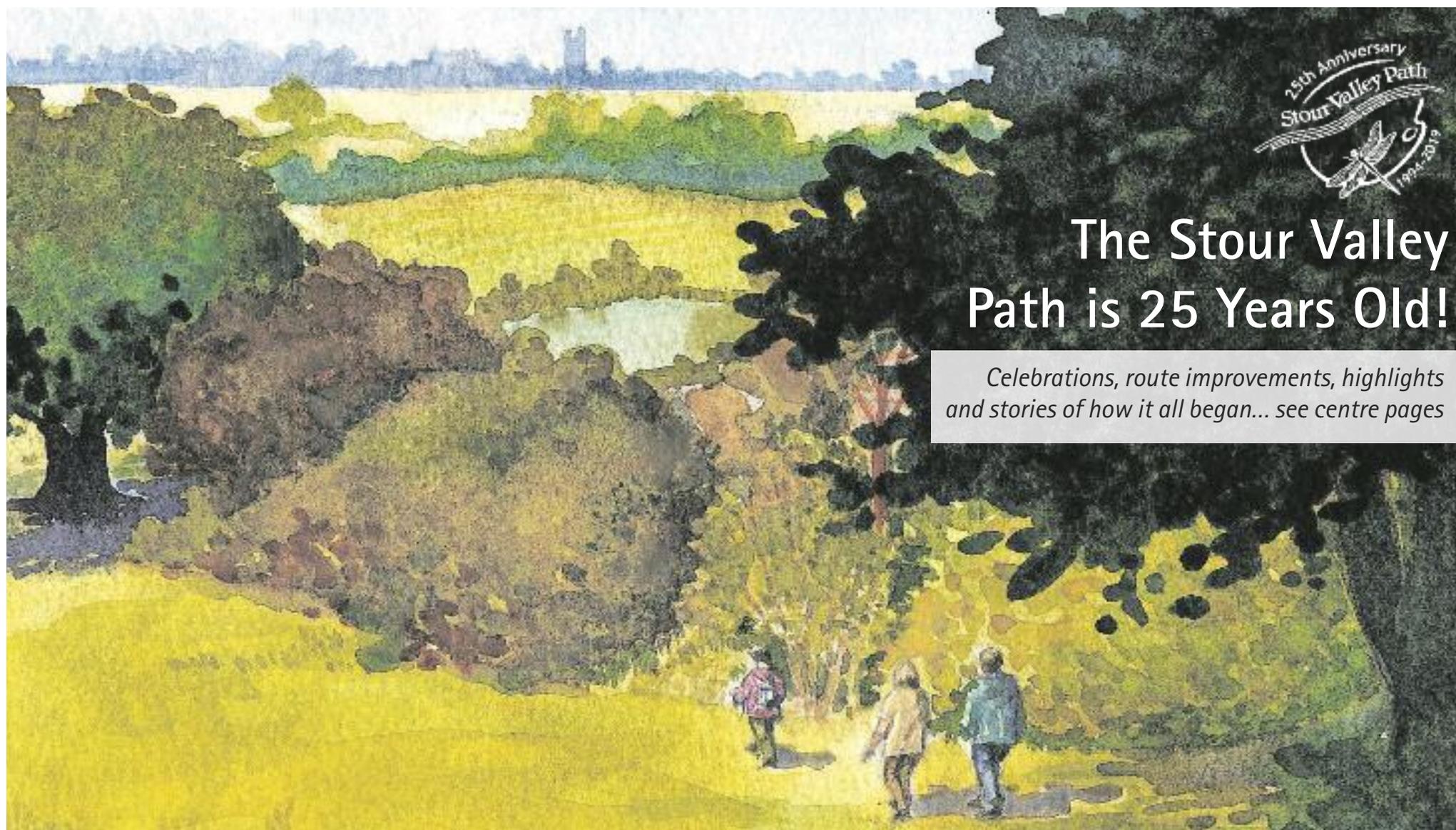
# DEDHAM VALE & STOUR VALLEY NEWS



News and Visitor Information for the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley

Free

Spring/Summer 2019



## The Stour Valley Path is 25 Years Old!

*Celebrations, route improvements, highlights and stories of how it all began... see centre pages*



**In this edition:**

Wild in the Stour Valley event page 3  
Funding Success pages 4 and 17  
Cricket bats, farmers markets,  
photo competition and a poem!



Planning in a Designated Landscape:  
our review of the event is on page 7



Art at the Heart of the Valley  
Munnings Art Museum hosts "Behind  
The Lines" Exhibition page 16

## Messages from the Chairmen



**Cllr Nigel Chapman**  
Chairman,  
Dedham Vale  
AONB and  
Stour Valley  
Joint Advisory  
Committee  
(JAC)

It is a great thrill to be able to tell you about some of the things that the AONB team is planning over the coming months - a wonderful array of events and projects to celebrate and enhance the area.

Working in partnership with visitor businesses a bid to LEADER, the EU funded scheme, has been successful and over £140,000 will be available to enhance the visitor experience in the form

of events, guides, art workshops, information boards and access improvements (page 17). We are also planning to support Defra's Year of Green Action in a number of ways including 'Plastic Action' tasks; which will include removing redundant tree and shrub shelters, guards and mulch mats throughout the valley.

This is the 25th anniversary of the launch of the Stour Valley Path and we aim to increase awareness of the path, improve access and interpretation and refresh walk information (see special centre section).

Over the years we have been very successful in promoting the undergrounding of some of the low voltage power cables in the valley. This success continues with the earmarking of £1m for a scheme in the Box Valley. The preliminary work will now begin to formalise agreements with landowners and undertake the vital ecological and archaeological assessments (page 8).

Robert Erith mentions the Designated Landscapes Review and, from the Joint Advisory Committee's perspective, we are

hoping that their findings will enable AONBs to have, for example, a committed Government funding stream, enhanced involvement in the planning process and strengthen our involvement in the enhancement of natural capital.

We are looking forward to welcoming the 'State of the AONB' Report that will offer us invaluable guidance as we go into a rather challenging future. Our much talked about 'Guide on the Use of Colour', which will help deliver appropriate development in the Vale, was presented at our remarkably successful seminar on 'Planning in a Designated Landscape'. This event attended by 150 delegates also heard speakers on AONB Legislation, Natural Beauty and Tranquillity (page 7).

Finally, I must mention our Volunteers. I was privileged to be able to thank them at a celebratory evening recently.

Exciting times lie ahead in the Valley as we endeavour to conserve and enhance this wonderful landscape. So do enjoy it over the coming spring and summer.



**Robert Erith TD DL**  
Chairman,  
Dedham Vale  
AONB and  
Stour Valley  
Partnership

In the last edition of this newspaper I wrote about the review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty chaired by the writer and journalist Julian Glover. A member of his Panel, Dame Fiona Reynolds, who has been head of both the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the

National Trust, visited us on 5th November 2018 and as well as listening to a range of matters involving the Dedham Vale & Stour Valley, also undertook a brief tour of the area. Simon Amstutz has also submitted a paper with our management's suggestions on ways in which AONBs can better serve the nation on behalf of both Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths, as have almost all other AONB management teams and many other bodies. One of the most influential will be the submission from Natural England which amongst other recommendations urges that boundary reviews should be speeded up and simplified. This is encouraging for our own Dedham Vale AONB extension hopes. The Review is expected to issue its report this Autumn with expectations for Government action to implement its recommendations early in 2020.

Other matters to concern us include how the UK leaves the European Union which is likely to have a major impact on all types of farming and land use. There is probability that the

Bramford to Twinstead 400kV power line, increasing the National Grid capacity, will again become an issue as the new range of off-shore windfarms come into production, as well as the increased likelihood that Sizewell C atomic power station will be built. This means Suffolk will truly be the *National Energy Coast* with massive infrastructure development proposed in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB.

All this and more will be discussed at the National Association for AONBs Annual Conference at Essex University from Tues 9 - Thur 11 July when Lord Gardiner, the Minister for protected Landscapes at DEFRA, Julian Glover and other distinguished environmental champions are due to speak.

Our own Forum is once again to be at Shrubs Farm barn, Lamarsh on Friday 21 June and will include eminent speakers who will cover all aspects of our theme this year (see below).

## Dedham Vale Forum 2019

Join us on Friday 21 June at Lamarsh for the highly popular Dedham Vale Forum, with the theme this year of "The Special Qualities of the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley". Topics covered will include archaeology, farming, education, swifts and 'What is Natural Beauty and Special Qualities and why are they so important?' The event is open to all, and the afternoon includes the opportunity to particulate in field trips.

Reports from the last two Forum are available on our website, as are full details of this year's programme. Please book via Eventbrite.



Identifying plants at Tiger Hill reserve on a 2018 field trip

## Planting Footsteps Across Constable Country

Tree guards, plastic tubes, and mulch mats can be invaluable in helping to get plants established, but once they've done their job all too often they end up as plastic litter, often splitting off as unsightly fragments. The AONBs believe it is time to remove and collect these redundant items from our landscape, returning it to its best.



Do you own a piece of land with old tree guards which need removing?

Are you involved with community-owned land that could benefit from the clearing of these plastics?

We would love to hear from you to discuss if your land is suitable for this or other conservation projects.

## Stour / Stower with apologies to Rudyard Kipling

*If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you but make allowance for their doubting too  
If you can see the wood from the trees on this special County border  
And not be hidebound in an ivory tower  
You cannot make the accent any broader.  
The only way to call it is the STOWER.*

*If you can dream and not make dreams your master.  
If you can think, yes as an independent viewer  
With all the work the vista does get vaster, we know then that it opens up the STOUR.  
So, which one is the truth we've spoken?  
The Trusts and EA will then impose their power  
Would a referendum be nought but a token?  
As some will always say not STOUR but STOWER.*

*If we can talk with crowds and glean their feelings.  
Rudyard doesn't do daffodils, that's not his flower  
I say let the poets and philologists do the dealings, but then they might end up choosing STOWER  
So, if you can forgive an unbiased (Ha ha) Scientist's and poet's opinion  
For no other reasons than we can take more words like brewer, newer, fewer, sewer, tour  
As I'm not biased, an historic river flowing and so this, from a minion  
I recommend not STOWER but yes!! the mighty STOUR!!!!*

Dave Dignum, originally produced July 2013  
Editor note: see also AONB newspaper Autumn-Winter edition 2014-15 (download from website) for another poem on the pronunciation by Howard Leader.

## 'Wild in the Stour Valley' Back by Popular Demand

Last June SVEN (Stour Valley Education Network) ran a very successful free family fun day. Over 300 people attended throughout the day enjoying a range of outdoor activities that brought families together to learn about nature and the outdoors.



There will be many of the same fantastic activities being provided by 16 outdoor learning providers such as pond dipping, minibeast hunts, kayaking, foraging, wildlife walks, natural arts and crafts, sand pit digging for treasures, goat petting, leaf and rock identification plus much more. A quiz on the book 'The Lost Words' by Roger MacFarland will once again link all the stands together, encouraging everyone to see all the activities on offer and have a go. The winner of the quiz will win a copy of the book.

Join us on Friday 31 May, 11am – 4pm, for a bigger and better event with activities showcasing many of the organisations who offer outdoor learning opportunities for schools and families in the Stour Valley. The event is at Mill Acre Boating Lake at the bottom of Croft Road in Sudbury CO10 1HR.

This event is part of the 2019 programme of family activities which the SVEN organisations are running. SVEN has also produced a new Discovery Fact Sheet on River Management, with the support of Essex & Suffolk Water. Look out for the activity flyer or download the programme and fact sheet from our website.

Emma Black

# SVEN



## Dedham Vale Youth Rangers

Throughout the year the Dedham Vale Youth Rangers work on a range of tasks to help the organisations around Flatford and Dedham. During the autumn they were busy helping us at the RSPB Wildlife garden in Flatford.

We had a session in autumn where we focused on looking after the small things; the insects and invertebrates that are so important to the ecosystem of a garden. The rangers built a stag beetle log pile, which involved digging a large hole and placing logs into the ground. The logs will then rot and provide a perfect habitat for stag beetles. We also tidied up the bug hotels in the garden with new sticks, cones and teasels for the winter.

Later into the winter, we spent a morning in the meadows at the back of the wildlife garden. We got stuck in, cutting back the scrub from the edge of the hedgerows and raking it up into

piles for burning. This is a critical part of our habitat management, as it prevents the scrub from taking over the meadow and allows wildflowers to flourish in the spring. We also found some time to enjoy the Green Christmas Weekend in the wildlife garden and enjoyed toasting marshmallows and making bird feeders to take home.

Thank you to all the youth rangers for your help and enthusiasm – it's great working with you all!

Clare Westley



## IDLE WATERS

**STAY IN THE EXCLUSIVE LUXURY RIVERSIDE COTTAGE AT LE TALBOOTH**

'Idle Waters' is a timber-framed 16th century self-catering cottage in Dedham, Essex.

This secluded cottage boasts a gorgeous view of the river Stour, two fabulous bedrooms for up to four people, and its own fully equipped kitchen. Alternatively you can pop across the bridge to riverside restaurant Le Talbooth for lunch or dinner, or it's just a short walk to Milsom's brasserie which is open all day for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

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## Young People Benefit from Outdoor Activities

The Field Studies Council at Flatford Mill are again running our very successful holiday activities throughout the year from Easter to autumn. These activities allow young people from a variety of age groups and backgrounds to involve themselves in the environment and learn the history of the very special area of Flatford Mill and the Dedham Vale. The activities are a mix of smaller drop in sessions to a week full of activities. All events offer a range of interesting topics from scientific skills, outdoor craft, navigation and social skills, pond dipping, bush craft and shelter building.

These outreach activities help us get young people outside and enjoying the environment around them in the hopes of as they



understand more about it, they will appreciate it and help conserve it, create a more sustainable future and gain an appreciation for the natural world while also improving their own wellbeing. Recent studies have shown benefits on mental health and other studies show how development is improved from engaging in the natural world. Further information from the FSC at Flatford Mill, telephone 01206 297110 or email [enquiries.fm@field-studies-council.org](mailto:enquiries.fm@field-studies-council.org).

Simon Ward

## Essex and Suffolk Stour Valley Ten Rivers Project

The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project is delighted to announce the securing of £71,600 of Water Environment Grant (WEG) funding. This is a hugely welcome boost for the longevity of the River Stour Enhancement Project. The WEG scheme provides funding to improve the water environment in rural England. The funding comes from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). The funding will help to fund river projects in the Stour Valley up until the end of March 2021.



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas

The Essex and Suffolk Stour Valley Ten Rivers Project will help to address problems in 10 rivers (13 water bodies) identified in the Water Framework Directive assessment of the River Stour and its tributaries. The problems include rising water temperatures (due to climate change, lack of riparian trees and low flows); sedimentation; a lack of habitats for fish, invertebrates and flora; surface runoff and the spread of two non-native invasive plant species (Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam). These problems will be addressed through the wide-scale planting of riparian trees at multiple locations; the formation of new river habitats through the creation of backwaters, berms, flow deflectors and floodplain reconnections, along with awareness raising on how to tackle these problems amongst the riparian landowner community.

The three main objectives of the project are:

- To plant 5,000 riverside trees on 11 waterbodies, totalling 7,627m of riverbank in the River Stour Catchment by March 2021.
- To enhance 2,333m of in-channel and riparian habitats

on two waterbodies through the creation of 57 features (backwaters, berms, flow deflectors and floodplain reconnections) by March 2021.

- To carry out monitoring and control of Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam on 17,533m of riverbank on 9 waterbodies annually until March 2021.

The Essex and Suffolk Stour Valley Ten Rivers Project will lead to significant improvements for numerous ecosystem functions.

The insertion of woody debris will help to increase local flow velocities, thereby helping to keep areas of gravel bed clean of sediment and suitable for fish spawning. It will also provide cover and habitat for invertebrates and fish, including areas of slack water during times of high flows.

The creation of berms will help the river channel return to a more appropriate dimension, narrowing the river and increasing sinuosity, thereby encouraging a more varied and natural flow regime. The berms will also provide a "trap" for sediment moving through the river system and provide habitat for plant species that rely on the damp margins of watercourses.

The creation of backwaters will provide sheltered conditions away from the main flow of water in the river. This is important for many fish populations during flood conditions as they provide shelter from the full force of water. In summer, the shallow depth of backwaters allows the water to warm and provides ideal conditions for the rapid development of fish fry.

The planting of riparian trees will help provide physical habitat diversity that in turn supports a diverse range of animal and plant species. Trees will provide underwater root systems of value to fish and invertebrates. They will help to stabilise river banks, create habitat and protect them from erosion, and will also help to shade and moderate extremes in water temperature.

Parts of the floodplain will be "wettered up" through reconnections with the river. This will help to improve their biodiversity value, for example, by increasing their attractiveness to wintering wildfowl. Increasing the ability of the floodplain to store floodwaters can also have benefits in terms of reducing flood risk to downstream communities.

Alex Moore da Luz



## Hedge Laying and Dead Hedging



This winter the Stour Valley Volunteers have been busy doing lots of woodland work such as coppicing, hedge pruning, hedge laying and scrub clearance. The cut material isn't burnt as it's used to create a dead hedge.

Dead hedging is where a barrier is constructed from cut branches. Dead hedges or wind-rows, as they are known in the coppice trade, are useful at keeping compartments of the coppice tidy, keeping the public from certain areas, being an excellent habitat and corridor for wildlife, as they offer shelter for small animals, especially birds. By creating dead hedges we are also helping the recycling of nutrients into the ground and by not burning, we are reducing our carbon footprint.

Hedgelaying is a country skill practised mainly in the United Kingdom and Ireland, with many regional variations in style and technique, though in Suffolk there is no particular style. It involves bending and partially cutting (pleaching) through the stems of a line of shrubs

or small trees near ground level and arching the stems without breaking them, so they can grow horizontally and be intertwined. Hedgelaying originally developed as a way of containing livestock in fields after the acts of Enclosure which in England began in the 16th century. Today hedges are laid to maintain habitat, promote traditional skills and because of the pleasing visual effect of a laid hedge.

Both processes involve volunteers using a variety of tools and techniques which they really enjoy but most of all they like to look back, with great satisfaction at the end of the day, at what they have achieved.

Emma Black



**DEDHAM VALE**  
Historical & Cultural Society

**Landscapes for life**  
2018-20

DEDHAM VALE  
One of the  
AONB Family

The Stour Valley Path is 60-miles long and was launched as a long distance path in 1994. There are over 20 miles of navigable rivers

AONBs provide excellent value. Every public £1 invested is turned into **£10** by the AONB Partnership

There are **2** Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the AONB plus **5** others in the Valley

The AONB has advised on many planning proposals and in detail to **38** planning applications (2017-2018)

Over **1.7m** people visited the Stour Valley in 2017, supporting a visitor economy of **£108.8m** (up 14% since 2015)

**9,341** non-native invasive Giant Hogweed plants were manually removed in 2018

Designated in 1970, the AONB totals 34sq miles plus 117sq miles of Project Area, and has a population of around **15,000**

Volunteers worked **990** days doing practical conservation work, warden work and tree planting, valued at **£49,500** (2018)

Grants totalling **£50,136** were awarded to 25 community groups, supporting **£215,004** worth of conservation and activity (2017-19)

**5,000** riverside trees were planted between 2015-2018

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## State of the AONBs



It's an exciting time to be working in the AONB world. The Government has recently closed its consultation on a Designated Landscape Review, the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB boundary review process is nearing an end, the AONB team has secured some significant funds to develop our work and the AONB Partnerships are considering consultations relating to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects relating to the 'Suffolk's Energy Coast'.

The AONB's advisory committee has recently commissioned a

'State of AONB' report. This report will help us further understand the qualities of the AONB and the condition of its landscape. It is a timely piece of work with the imminent changes to Agri-Environment support that will change land management decisions as the United Kingdom leaves the EU. The work will help us develop future management plans and identify key areas to develop work to ensure that the AONB's Natural Beauty is conserved and enhanced for future generations.

The AONBs are as always indebted to its volunteers. In the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley, volunteers contributed nearly 1,000 days on habitat management, access and wardening work. In the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB the outstanding Beachwatch programme produced some superb results. There were 24 events; 664 volunteers took part; 2,540m of beach was surveyed; 68.5 bin bags were filled; 184.1 kg of rubbish was collected; 7,804 items in total were cleared off the beach. An average of 325.6 items were found and removed for every 100m of beach surveyed.

The AONB staff team have been working hard to secure funds for projects that will enable us to conserve and enhance the AONBs. Over £1m has been secured as part of a 'stage 1' pass for undergrounding low voltage power cables, £142,000 for a project to enhance the tourism offer and £71,000 for environmental enhancements for the River Stour.

Applications have also been submitted for a grant of £250,000 for landscape enhancements such as creation of scrapes, access improvements and wildlife watching facilities.

The AONB team was delighted that we attracted over 150 delegates to our planning event: Planning in a Designated Landscape: Guides, Rules and Tools. The buzz after each speaker was really encouraging. The fact that so many people from local authorities, Non-Government Organisations and community groups found the time to come and learn about AONB planning issues can only support improved decision making in the future.

The AONB team is really looking forward to the next few months. The Suffolk Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale AONBs will be hosting the national Landscapes for Life conference in July. The Designated Landscapes Review will report. The AONB team will deliver projects around 25 years of the Stour Valley Path, 50 years of AONB designation and a plastics project. Perhaps most eagerly awaited is whether the Secretary of State for the environment will confirm the outcome of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths boundary variation project.

**A personal view from manager of the AONB staff team, Simon Amstutz**



## Bringing Down the Wires



Thanks to local land owners our work with UK Power Networks to remove visually intrusive overhead electricity infrastructure from the landscape in both Dedham Vale AONB and Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is making great progress.

In Dedham Vale AONB a proposal to remove 6.5 km of overhead wires and almost 100 poles between Stoke by Nayland and Polstead has taken a significant step forward. At the end of 2018 a Regional Steering Group, set up by UK Power Networks to agree priority areas for investment, pledged just over £1 million for this project. The proposal is dependent on land owner permissions, so we are now contacting all those involved seeking their views and arranging site visits where needed. Only when all land owner permissions are in place can the proposal go back to the Regional Undergrounding Steering Group to decide if the pledged funding is secured. This is potentially a tremendous investment in our beautiful Box Valley and Dedham Vale landscape.

In Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB long-awaited ground works started on the £400,000 Shingle Street undergrounding project. Before the 3.2 km of overhead lines and their poles can be removed from this stunning location, cabling and ground-level structures first need to be put in place. Ground works started winter 2018/2019 and will continue later this autumn 2019. The final stage will be the lines and poles coming down shortly after that.

This spring our AONB Student Placement, Steph Poole, is working with volunteers to take part in a comprehensive survey of overhead lines in Dedham Vale AONB to help determine priority areas for future undergrounding. Wires will be assessed according to their impact on landscape character, visual amenity, setting of historic features and impact on wildlife.

Proposals to underground overhead power lines can originate from parish councils, community groups or private individuals. We're always keen to hear about any lines which you feel could be considered for any future funding that becomes available.

**Claire Cadman**



Overhead wires in the picturesque Box Valley



We work with land owners and UK Power Networks to achieve landscape improvements

## Planning in a Designated Landscape: Guides, Rules and Tools



The AONB team hosted an informative planning event at the University of Suffolk on 25 January 2019. 160 delegates including architects, landscape architects, Councillors and planners attended. The key purpose was to raise awareness about key planning issues within designated landscapes in Essex and Suffolk.

The half day event focused on four themes; Duty of Regard, Natural Beauty and Special Qualities, Tranquillity and Use of Colour in Development.

Nigel Chapman, Chairman of the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Joint Advisory Committee opened proceedings with an introduction on why AONB designation is so important.

### Duty of Regard

Richard Bate, from Green Balance Consultancy, explained the legislative framework governing AONBs. Richard clarified legal responsibilities on public bodies under the Duty of Regard as required by Section 85 of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. He highlighted how public bodies can demonstrate compliance with the Duty for example by ensuring that planning decisions affecting AONBs are properly considered, explained and recorded in committee reports, and using AONB Management Plans to help inform decision making.

Richard also explained the planning tests to be met in paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework to conserve AONBs and discussed the importance of properly applying the tests to avoid the risk of Judicial Review.

### Natural Beauty and Special Qualities

Alison Framer's presentation focused on how to deliver appropriate change in AONBs and referenced several documents to help improve understanding about Natural Beauty and Special Qualities. These included Natural England's 2011 Guidance Assessing Designated Landscapes, AONB Management Plans and Landscape Character Assessments.

Alison explored using the above information to deliver appropriate change. For her, good design, fit in the landscape, scale, mass, colour and materials are important issues to consider when proposing change not only in AONBs but in all landscapes.

### Tranquillity

Peter Cosgrove's presentation covered various Tranquillity Modelling examples completed nationally and locally on the River Deben. He explored factors that define tranquillity such as presence of semi-natural habitat, a general absence of development and apparent lack of human activity.

Peter's presentation highlighted the limitations of current tranquillity modelling and the measures employed to improve the models' value to aid decision making.

### Use of Colour in Development

The last presentation by Jem Waygood explored the Use of Colour in Development in AONBs. Jem has produced two fabulous Use of Colour Guides for the Dedham Vale and the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONBs which were formally launched at the planning event.

Jem talked delegates through his methodology for the developed colour palettes in the guides which are based on colours recorded across the landscape character areas making up the AONBs. He also discussed a project in the Malvern Hills AONB that he was involved with where he applied the colour guide principles to the design and delivery of a new secondary school.

Delegates also took part in lively Q & A sessions which were brilliantly chaired by Councillor Susan Harvey.

A record of proceedings and the presentations from the event are available from the Planning pages of [www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org) and [www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org](http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org).

**Beverley McClean**

"There is a subtlety of character that we need to be tuning into and understanding to make decisions; where things are positioned in relation to other things; when you add something to the landscape how the balance of patterns might be affected."

**Alison Farmer**

"Beautiful landscapes like the AONBs are not wonderful places by chance. Lots of people have worked hard to keep them like that,"

**Richard Bate**

"We're not replicating nature but trying to find colours that will work with the landscape so they feel grounded. When you've established the existing palette and start to develop new colours that work with it you can integrate it so that it feels like it belongs in that location." might be affected."

**Jem Waygood**

"Whether we reside, visit or work in the AONB we benefit from them. They provide recreation and relaxation (like a Natural Health Service), sustain a quality environment, and complement a thriving business sector."

**Nigel Chapman**

"An eye-opening morning, interesting and useful in different ways: the colour works were inspiring and I loved the idea of being paid to go out with a colour fan!"

**Edward Jackson, freelance environment consultant**

"Tranquillity. Wow! What a subject, one I hadn't even considered in the planning sense, enhanced by listing the factors (other than noise) that affect it."

**John Norman, The Ipswich Society**



L-R Nigel Chapman, Susan Harvey, Richard Bate, Alison Farmer, Peter Cosgrove, Jem Waygood



Sample colour chart for Suffolk Coast & Heaths



Sample colour chart for Dedham Vale

## Stour Valley Path Celebrations

2019 is a special year for the Stour Valley Path as we mark 25 years since it was officially launched as a Long Distance Path. It took about 27 years from when Roger Wolfe, a keen walker and advocate of the area, had the initial idea for a Stour Valley Path, to the launch on 12 May 1994.

News coverage at the time described the Stour Valley Path: "The walk goes through more than 25 villages, stretching from the Stour's source, and covers some of the most beautiful areas of East Anglian countryside".

I talked to Roger about his recollections from the early days (page 12), especially his first ever walk in the area and how the AONB team and numerous other organisations made the Stour Valley Path happen. I also spoke to three other AONB staff involved in the 1990s, undertaking detailed preparatory work to have the Path adopted (page 13). For someone newer to the team (ten years!) it has been fascinating for me to learn about the impetus for getting this kind of project off, or rather, on the ground!

So what is happening this year to celebrate?

The AONB team, the councils and numerous volunteers work hard to maintain and improve the route. You can read the highlights selected by the volunteer Stour Valley Path Wardens and about what a Warden does on pages 10 to 11. Plus hear how a Rights of Way Officer first started work on the SVP (page 13).

To mark this anniversary the AONB is undertaking a range of improvements and enhancements. The biggest project is to replace as many stiles as possible with gates, along the whole length of the Path. This is part-funded by the Wool Towns LEADER visitor development project (see page 17 and below) and also by the AONB, as we want to establish a lasting legacy for this wonderful and varied route.

We will also be installing some information boards at strategic locations and starting a 'P3' – Parish Paths Partnership – volunteer group who will respond to footpath reports, so any issues to do with signage and access along the Stour Valley Path are dealt with as soon as possible, and walkers can enjoy the

path and the outstanding countryside it passes through.

Copies of the Stour Valley Path Guide can be downloaded for FREE from the AONB website or posted for a charge.

**We'd really like to hear from everyone who has a memory of their walk of or involvement in the Stour Valley Path in the last 25 years, and we'll include more stories and photos in the Autumn-Winter edition of this newspaper, please get in touch.**

Cathy Smith



© Sally Bartrum

## NEW! Stour Valley Path Passport

From May 2019 you will be able to enhance your experience of walking the Stour Valley Path by using our new Passport. Walkers will be able to get stamps at numerous locations along the 60 mile route, encouraging them to meet their own challenge of walking the full route, either on consecutive days or over days or months, getting a great sense of achievement when they see the Passport filled with stamps! For people who do the full walk in 2019 we will be offering a completion certificate and a surprise gift!

Please join us for our Passport launch as part of the Suffolk Walking Festival. We start the special Passport Walk with an Upper Stour walk on Sunday 12 May and then walk the final Lower Stour section on Wednesday 29 May - you are expected to walk the in-between sections and complete your Passport between those two dates to become our SVP 2019 Champion Walkers! There will be special commemorative goodies for all those that complete the walk between those dates. Booking at [www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk).

## Staying Grounded

The Stour Valley Path was launched 25 years ago when the whole route from Newmarket to Brantham was signed or 'waymarked'. As a major project to mark the 25th anniversary we are undertaking improvements to the Path.

We are facilitating removal of stiles along the route, to leave a gap (where no stock control is required) or replace the stiles with a gate where stock need to be controlled. Some of the funding for this work is coming from the LEADER project grant (see page 17), and we also received a donation from the SVP100 ultra race organisers.

The Equalities Act of 2010 requires that Highway Authorities make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disadvantaged people can enjoy using public rights of way. To this end any new structures installed will be as unrestrictive as possible.

During 2018 I approached all owners of land where a stile is present to seek support for removal of stiles and installation of a gate where required. Happy days! Only one landowner did not support removal of all the stiles on their land and only three stiles will remain in place on the length of the

Stour Valley Path. All stiles being removed bar one currently control livestock, so 29 new gates will be erected, plus one derelict gate will be replaced.

By the time you read this, work to install the new gates should be underway. What a bumper 25th birthday present for the Stour Valley Path!

Neil Lister



## Being a Stour Valley Path Warden

As a Stour Valley Path (SVP) Warden I 'look after' six miles of the path between Bures and Nayland. I live in Nayland where my family moved to when I was five; I spent a happy childhood roaming the meadows and swimming, fishing and playing beside the river, activities my children, and now my grandchildren love.

My love of the outdoors and walking resulted in me becoming a Public Rights of Way Officer in Essex, a career I enjoyed until my retirement in 2011. Soon after, when Emma was looking for voluntary SVP Wardens, I leapt at the chance to look after what must be the most beautiful and interesting section of the path! As a Warden I'm expected to walk my section of the path twice a year, replacing missing waymarker discs and reporting what few problems I find to Suffolk or Essex County Councils, depending what side of the river they are. Recent problems include a hole in the surface of a culvert, a broken kissing gate and a stile that's difficult to use.

Weekly circular walks with friends mean I walk parts of my sections much more than twice a year. I also volunteer with the River Stour Enhancement Project, carrying out Tree Planting and River Restoration Projects which also takes me close to the SVP.

The path passes through truly beautiful countryside with amazing views; and next to fascinating buildings, like Bures and Wiston water mills, and the churches of Wiston and Wormingford both with dragon images recalling dragon myths of the area. The SVP passes close to Wormingford Mere where according to legend one dragon took refuge... and maybe still does! The path crosses Lodge Hills at Wormingford very close to where, as a member of Colchester Archaeological Group (CAG), I helped to excavate a Tudor Hunting Lodge. It's believed Queen Elizabeth I feasted there while watching a deer hunt during her stay at Smallbridge Hall.

Being a member of CAG has added to my love of my section of the SVP. Aerial photographs of the valley floor between Bures and Nayland reveal many prehistoric features that show up as cropmarks, some dating back to the Mesolithic. These include ring ditches, round barrows, and cursuses. Many are clustered close to the SVP between Lodge Hills and Bures. I'm one of a CAG group carrying out a study of this prehistoric landscape and, with the landowner's permission, have spent many hours in a field next to the Mere that contains many cropmarks. It's crossed by two parallel lines which appear to align with the sunrise over Lodge Hill at the Winter Solstice. CAG considers the parallel lines mark the route of a cursus, a processional way, used in Neolithic times to process from the river to Lodge Hills at sunrise on the shortest day. The SVP (FP 1 Wormingford) follows these parallel lines meaning that people, like you and I, may have walked this route for 6000 years!

Sally Bartrum

## Baythorne End to Clare

An interesting start to the walk is the view of the entrance gates and drive up to Baythorne Park Mansion, then there is a very pleasant riverside section along the back of Stoke College, an independent school. On strolling through Stoke by Clare look out for ridge roofs of two thatched cottages adorned by the thatcher's signature of sparring hares and a fox family. The main highlight for me however is the view north-east (just after Claret Hall) towards Clare, with the church and castle poking above the town. The final riverside few hundred metres has masses of snowdrops and daffodils early in the year.

Stephen Pritchard

## Clare to Cavendish

My highlight is Clare Castle Country Park (CCCP), where Harp Lane is lined by banks and trees like a tunnel. Towards Cavendish there are views over the valley from high ground, emerging from the secluded path by the cemetery on to the picturesque green at Cavendish with a choice of good pubs for refreshment. The landscape is mostly arable farmland, with CCCP being the best section for wildlife.

David L Taylor

## Cavendish to Long Melford

Leaving Cavendish it is a pleasant journey through undulating countryside to reach Glemsford, high on the hill. From there descend to the pretty Glem Valley, looking to the left, see the village of Stanstead nestled in the valley, before crossing the River Glem on the 'swaying' bridge. Further along you pass through the grounds of Kentwell Hall with its long drive, the churchyard of the imposing Long Melford Church and finally see Melford Hall across the extensive Green. Both Kentwell and Melford Halls are Tudor houses and are open to the public. On this six mile journey you don't actually see the River Stour!

Judith Portway

## Glem Valley Circular Walk

The River Glem is a major tributary off the River Stour. The nine mile walk around Glemsford gives good views of Glemsford Church from several different aspects.

Peter Fulcher



## Sudbury Croft to Great Henny Church

Leaving Sudbury's unique Water Meadows and negotiating your way through a housing estate you soon climb to reveal views of the Stour Valley open out and, along with Henny Church, showcase the beauty of this area. With numerous paths off the SVP there is plenty which never fail to delight and dispel the myth Suffolk is flat.

Ann Smith

## Great Henny to Bures Mill

This five mile part of the Stour Valley Path is beautiful, consisting of undulating open countryside, railway and river. When you take the footpath uphill from Lamarsh Church (very pretty small church) to the top you turn around and take in the fabulous view across the valley. It's an ideal place to sit, enjoy the view and maybe a coffee, before continuing on towards Great Henny Church, another lovely little church in a beautiful setting.

Christine Ford

## Brett Valley Circular Walk

On telling a neighbour that I'd been appointed the volunteer Warden of the 12 mile Brett Valley Walk she said that it's a wonderful, undulating walk. She is so right.

At Withermarsh Green you should spot two unusual C18th thatched cottages with old farmhouses to the west. After Stoke By Nayland the SVP goes south east toward Stratford St Mary, through tree & hedge tunnels of slightly sunken winding tracks.

Alternatively, from Withermarsh Green head along the gravel track diagonally across the green, pass through gates and along a very long drive toward the Listed Building of Gifford Hall which dates to the early C16th. The walk continues up a steep road, easterly across fields and hedgerows, and on to Shelley Hall, another Listed Building. Even more remarkable than the house and lying a hundred metres to the front of it (on a short permissive path), is a very rare early C16th Ancient Monument, which corresponds to the age of the present hall. It is unusual because it has a 50 metre square island and moat, up to 14 metres wide and three metres deep, probably constructed as a status symbol rather than a defensive measure as many other moats were.

South east of Lower Raydon the path passes along streams and through wooded areas, one named Sodom & Gomarrah. There are exceptional long distance views over the very rural, undulating countryside. The presence of foxes can be smelt, many badger setts are to be seen and most of the houses are worth a long look.

Steve White

Our Volunteer Wardens choose their section highlights of the Stour Valley Path and Walks Off the Stour Valley Path, all of which can be downloaded FREE from the AONB website.



## Flatford to Cattawade

My favourite part is the stretch between Flatford and the White Bridge at Cattawade. The valley widens out here as the River Stour reaches the estuary and the openness and light are truly special. As I walk the path I get different views of the river and love to see the different birds that gather there. A special treat is when large flocks of avocets visit to feed at low tide and when lapwings are wheeling in the air before deciding which part of the bank and water's edge they will feed on. There are always Canada geese and greylag geese to be seen and in the winter there are flocks of godwit, widgeon and colourful little teal.

I love the peace and solitude of this stretch of the river but I often meet people walking it for the first time and I can share my knowledge built up over many years and show them things they may have missed. Several people have thanked me for picking up litter and helping to keep a special place special, for all to enjoy. I consider it a privilege to know this beautiful place so intimately and when a busy life crowds in on me I know I will always feel restored by doing my walk. And there are always surprises: my one and only spotting of a Chinese water deer happened near the White Bridge!

Judith Barford

## Bures to Nayland

Like me I'm sure walkers of the SVP won't be at all surprised that prehistoric man, some 10,000 years ago, found this section of the Stour Valley to be a very special place, and I like knowing that people who share my love of the river and the beautiful landscape it passes through lived in the valley over 6,000 years ago!

Sally Bartrum

## Nayland to Withermarsh Green

This section proves without a doubt that the Essex/Suffolk border area is NOT flat! You will walk up, down, up & down, and up again to arrive in Stoke by Nayland. Take note, when after having crossed the first 'hill' and arrived by a farm gate in a hedge, a herd of cattle either greet you there or at the opposite end of the grazing meadow by the other gate. They are quite a determined lot and not easily persuaded to make way for walkers to pass through.

The other hillocks are good for increasing heart rate and respiratory circulation. The section between Stoke and Nayland has gentler ups and downs. Enjoy.

Lotte Sherman

# STOUR VALLEY PATH BEGINNINGS



Roger Wolfe leading walkers on the 20th Anniversary walkthrough, near Dedham



Roger and Stella Wolfe attaching new waymark discs on their 2018 walk through

## Stour Valley Path Beginnings: Roger Wolfe

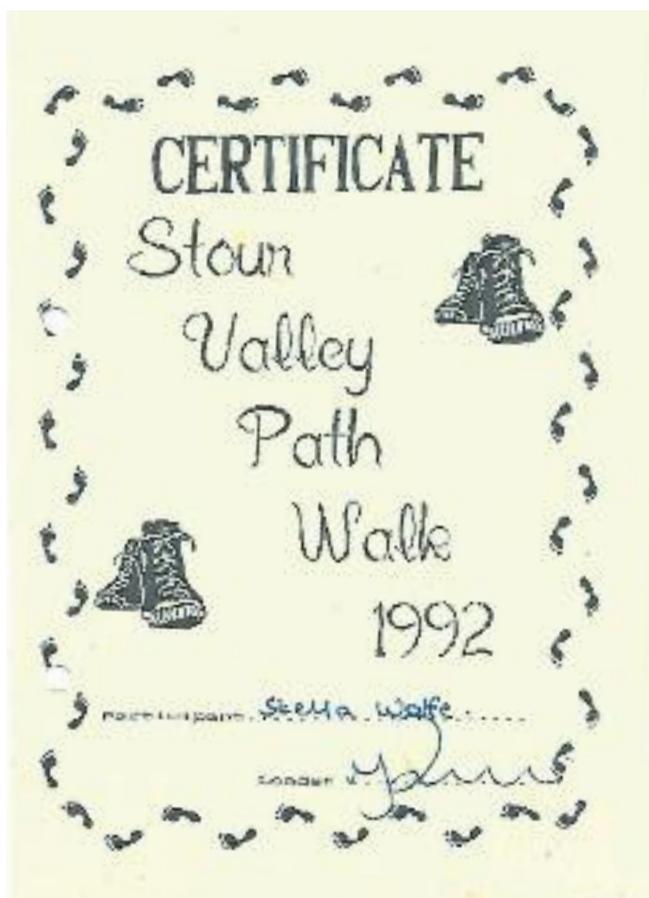
I still enjoy the SVP and last did the full walk in May 2018 with my wife Stella because I hadn't done it all for a few years. I thoroughly enjoyed it, it really is a very nice route, with no 'dead' patches at all.

The first area I ever walked was the Upper Stour in 1957, when there were so few well established footpaths. It was a memorable day. I had failed a National Service medical, so I suddenly found myself with two years of unexpected freedom. We lived in Cambridge so I joined the local Ramblers group who put on a walk from Dullingham to Haverhill, with public transport. Our walk leader was an off duty policeman, and at Dullingham station he couldn't open the carriage door, and the steam train (as it was then), blew its whistle and our 11 miles walk suddenly became 15 or 16 miles because we had to walk from Newmarket! It was that day that made me want to become a walker. When the Stour Valley line closed in 1967 I arranged a final walk with the Ramblers on the last ever train.

I did a few other walks in the Valley in the 1950s and tried to let 'officials' know about improvements to the network, but they were not interested. I was told if I wanted to go walking I couldn't do it in dull and flat East Anglia and to take myself off to the Lake or Peak Districts. So in 1967 I had the idea of joining up paths to make an interesting Stour Valley route to help save some of the path network, and the Ramblers Association was very supportive, but it wasn't really until the AONB Project started in the early 1980s that there was an organisation who could help progress my ideas. The first manager, Sandra Tricker, worked to get the plan through stage after stage after stage, and referral after referral from committee to committee. There was lots of initial opposition, mostly people concerned about maintenance because this was a new idea.

When we were doing the route marking, the AONB team used to pick me up in a van every Tuesday morning. I think my neighbours thought I was being picked up to do Community Service! We did all the waymarking ourselves and we did a test group walk in 1992 offering a certificate to people.

It rained a lot at the official opening, and we had two groups of walkers set off from each end two days before, meeting at Clare. I walked from Cattawade with some school children to Dedham, then continued on my own.



Copy of SVP certificate 1992

I always liked walking, but developing routes is a hobby. I retired more than 20 years ago, and found after commuting to London it was nice to get out into the countryside at the weekends – I'd rather walk than garden. More recently I've been developing the East Suffolk Line Walks – being featured in the 2019 Suffolk Walking Festival – and I did the six Walks Off the Stour Valley Path a few years ago too.

I am still in a good physical condition and keeping active, but longevity is a lottery as people half my age may have health

issues. If I had my time over again I'd be a landscape historian; that really interests me. There is no better way of seeing the landscape than walking it.



The Stour Valley has changed gratifyingly little. The people have changed, it's no longer inhabited only by agricultural workers, the population is bigger and footpaths have improved in my lifetime.

What I like about the Stour Valley is the quality of the built environment, the village vernacular and churches. The 'Villagescape' is superb and marks it out from other 'Stour Valleys' in other parts of the country. Many of the churches have high rating, according to Simon Jenkins in 'England's Thousand Best Churches': noted are Kedington, Clare, Long Melford and Stoke by Nayland.

I've walked the route many, many times, mostly on day trips because I live locally. Emma organised a five day walkthrough for the 20th anniversary celebration, using a minibus transfer and train/bus when we could, as we can still get the train between Sudbury and Bures.

Many walkers 'collect' Long Distance Paths, and many people like the challenges. As a promoted route you know it has signs to follow and it will be maintained. People walk for many different reasons, some walk in groups and some hate that, some with their dog, and there are now so many books you can buy on long walks, short walks, difficult walks, pub walks. We all have different expectations. And now we have people interested in the Stour Valley Path as an 'ultra run', seeing it as a quality route with varied terrain, and interesting villages.

My favourite section is whichever one I'm walking in the moment! The Thurlows and Devils Dyke in the upper Stour are the least obvious, and it was really lovely when I walked there in May last year. I think that the section through Nayland, Stoke by Nayland to Langham might have more instant appeal to anyone visiting East Anglia for the first time, especially in bluebell season.

Roger Wolfe, in conversation with Cathy Smith

## Stour Valley Path Beginnings: Celia Richardson

I was the project manager of the AONB in the early 1990s and oversaw the work of the assistant project officers (Jane and Katherine) in developing the route and its promotion. The team included the estate workers Ally and Les who did much of the practical work alongside volunteers and the other staff, plus of course there was loads of local support, particularly of landowners.



It was an exciting process and it was really Roger Wolfe's enthusiasm and persistence that brought it to the point where funding was raised and the work started. It involved a lot of hard work liaising with Suffolk and Essex Rights of Ways sections. There was a point when we decided not to go into Cambridge, where the actual source of the Stour is, as it would have involved yet another County Council! I remember a great sense of achievement for the Project at the launch at Clare Country Park. We had fun running a series of walks to promote the route over a several weekends and it was great to reach Cattawade!

My favourite bit of the SVP is between Nayland and Bures. I love the area around Wiston Church – with its early painting of St Francis of Assisi – and I remember a magical walk when the Mayflies were emerging and 'dancing' along the river by the bridge near there.

Towards Wormingford you pass near Bottengoms where the artist John Nash lived and you can see the rolling hills that he depicted in his paintings. Wormingford is also famous for the writing of Ronald Blythe and he was one of many who helped us in the early days by joining us on guided walks. There are great views as you go over the hill and down passed the old mill into Bures.

On a long-distance route people get to appreciate the bigger picture as they walk through a variety of landscapes, that together make up Stour Valley.

**Celia Richardson**

## Stour Valley Path Beginnings: Jane Draper

I was the Assistant Project Officer with the AONB when we started working on the Stour Valley Path. I had to walk all the proposed and alternative route options to help decide on the final path, as part of what was also Suffolk County Council's Countryside Access Project.

So many people were involved in the many development years, but I do remember Adrian Walters being very helpful with the Sudbury section.

The Countryside Access Project plan was to signpost promoted routes all around Suffolk, to give people confidence to enjoy the countryside by having clear guidance. The Suffolk Coast Path and Stour & Orwell Walk were also developed around this time.

I loved the walking and being involved in such a significant project, and I found it very exciting going to places I hadn't been to before, especially in the lesser known Upper Stour.

**Jane Draper**



## Stour Valley Path Beginnings: Katherine Potts

I joined the team on 1 Feb 1993, part way through the process, and most of my time was spent finalising the route, working with landowners, and producing the guide. The project had started with a vengeance in those two years to May 1994.

I did a lot of the leg work with Ally, Les and Roger, and as a smaller team did all the waymarking and putting in the finger posts. Sometimes when we needed to do some larger sections, and when putting in kissing gates, we had volunteers too. Landowners were initially unsure of the idea, but we explained that walkers using agreed paths was better than them getting lost and wandering.

Route selection was partly negotiation with landowners, partly balancing our wish to use both sides of the River Stour, and choosing interesting parts to walk. Different Rights of Ways Officers came and went, so building relationships was important. Having a designated regional path and a status as a Long Distance Path have meant that the local authorities will continue to maintain the



route and keeping it on the grass cutting schedule.

The dragonfly symbol was the original AONB Project logo, and we adopted it as the SVP logo, and kept it when the AONB logo later changed. The guide was written with hand-drawn maps and was lots of work to get ready, but we didn't quite finish it in time for the opening!

The opening was at Clare, and the date in May was selected due to VIP availability – Cllr Ros Scott (now Baroness of Needham Market) and the regional director of the Countryside Commission attended. We had worked with all the schools along the route, and they did some art work we exhibited in the old station building.

I've probably walked the whole SVP three or four times, but now do some occasional days. I've noticed a change in the pubs along the route, and they are much improved!

My favourite parts are Bures to Sudbury and Stoke by Nayland to Higham, because you cannot see these sections from the road, you have to walk it.

**Katherine Potts**

## Improving the Stour Valley Path

My main use of the Stour Valley Path has been through my employment as a Rights of Way officer for Suffolk County Council. My first experience of the Stour Valley itself, aside from occasional visits to Brantham to see my Dad in his workplace, was as part of an away day to the area. It would have been in the mid 90's when Suffolk County Council organised a careers event in the AONB for young people. By that stage I had already decided that a career in countryside management was for me, but little did I know then that I would have a career so closely linked to the Stour Valley.

I joined the Rights of Way team in 2000 and throughout have been involved in the Stour Valley Path, from arranging signpost replacement to grass cutting, and working with the AONB team and volunteers on bigger surfacing projects and structure improvements.

Spending so much time in the area over the years it is clear how popular the area is with walkers, both local and from afar, and I have met some interesting characters and landowners along the way. Being able to do the 2018 Suffolk Walking Festival Challenge Walk of the whole Stour Valley Path was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and it is easy to see why people come from all over the country to walk the SVP.

**Kevin Verlander**

## Understanding Nature's Value: Photography Competition

We've heard a lot about the importance of the natural world in recent months. Blue Planet II shocked people into acting to reduce their plastic waste. We've marvelled at the life history of lions and be drawn into survival stories of baby penguins in David Attenborough's latest BBC documentary 'Dynasties'.

It's so often the case that we view the majesty of the natural world through glass screens. Does it not seem criminal to only appreciate natural beauty through bleary eyes, when we live, work and play in England's most outstanding landscapes? But just what is it about the heathlands, woods, estuaries, seas or fens that connects you with East Anglia's natural beauty? How do you value nature?

This is a difficult question to answer. But one we hope you can answer by submitting entries to our 'Nature's Value' photography competition.



Friday's supper is easily priced but how do you see nature's value

This competition is about more than just pretty pictures. We are looking to convey the value of nature and the importance of the environment through four categories; "Provisions" "Enjoying the Natural World", "Processes" and "Regulating". This is no easy task, so we are asking for all images to be accompanied by a caption to help illustrate values.

The competition is free to enter and runs until Monday 13 May 2019. We have some amazing prizes from: Festival Republic; Adnams; Suffolk Wildlife Trust; Moreton Hall; Banham Zoo; and **PhotographyPrinting.co.uk**. Full details including terms and conditions can be found at [www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/projects-and-partnerships/suffolk-marine-pioneer](http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/projects-and-partnerships/suffolk-marine-pioneer).

Winning entries will be exhibited at Woodbridge Longshed and Ipswich County Library in June, and we will showcase a selection of entries in the Autumn/Winter AONB newspaper.

**Peter Cosgrove**

## Don't Lose Your Way

The Ramblers are seeking help to save our historic Rights of Way. There are well over 140,000 miles of public paths that criss-cross England and Wales. This network has evolved over centuries with many paths dating back to medieval times - or earlier! These paths link villages, hamlets, roads and towns – they describe how generations before us travelled to the pub, field or shops and reflect the changing patterns of human interaction with the landscape. To this day millions of people across our towns, cities and countryside use this fantastic network. However, miles and miles of our public paths are now unrecorded. For many reasons paths failed to appear on maps and people stopped walking on them, they overgrew or were built over and so became invisible. If they are not put on the map by 1 January 2026, they will be lost for ever. Find out more at [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk).

## Get Food Savvy!

Did you know that more than one third of Suffolk's rubbish bins is food waste? Or that six in 10 residents don't plan their meals before shopping, 31% don't store potatoes correctly, meaning they go off quicker and 46% didn't know it's possible to freeze cheese?

The Food Savvy initiative between Suffolk and Norfolk councils and the environmental charity Hubbub is hoping to combat the food waste problem in our region. With the average family wasting around £810 of edible food per year, the food savvy campaign can help you cut down on unnecessary food waste and save money.



All Suffolk residents are invited to take on a 4-week Food Savvy challenge with a focus on planning and storage as well as exciting ways to use up leftovers, with the potential to save £70 a month.

This is the first time Norfolk and Suffolk councils have come together on a food initiative of this scale and aims to work across the community involving businesses, schools, community groups, as well as influencers like chefs, food celebrities, lifestyle bloggers and vloggers.

#Foodsavvy uses entertaining educational initiatives to provide advice about date label confusion and food storage dos and don'ts. 'Lunch Club', is working with major employees in the county, supporting staff to reduce food waste and plastic packaging at lunchtimes, and Bloggers and Vloggers will be looking at ways to cut down food waste.

To get involved visit [www.foodsavvy.org.uk](http://www.foodsavvy.org.uk) and follow #FoodSavvy on social media.

**Caroline Fish, Suffolk Waste Services**

## Uncovering Hidden Treasures

What leaves 24 million footprints, uncovers hidden treasures and touches every corner of Suffolk every May? Now in its 12th year, the Suffolk Walking Festival has established itself as one of Britain's premier walking festivals with over 120 walks and events across the county, from dawn chorus to hidden orchids, from Arthur Ransome to John Constable, and from Anglo-Saxons to naval heritage. There's even murder, myths and a celebration of 25 years of the Stour Valley Path.



Highlights include a walk with Kite, who's day job is being the Orford Ness sheepdog. Kite will be joined by her shepherd owner to explain how sheep help manage the reserve for wildlife. On a Night Safari you'll enter an ancient woodland just after sun down to experience the wood's nocturnal life slowly waken (and get to talk to owls!). There really is something for everyone: short strolls, gentle rambles, long hikes; family walks, history walks, nature walks; story-telling, art lessons, photography courses; walks with boat trips, walks with breakfasts, walks with train rides.

This year also sees the second Fringe Festival, events where walking takes a back seat to allow you to immerse yourself in the very heart of the Suffolk landscape, to capture or experience the countryside in new ways.

The 2019 Suffolk Walking Festival and Fringe is 11 May to 2 June. To find out more and buy tickets visit [www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk).

**David Falk, Discover Suffolk**

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## Sudbury Cricket Bats

As many of you may know this part of the country is the largest producer of Cricket Bat Willows exporting them all over the world.

Some of these willows are grown on the Common Lands of Sudbury and managed by the Common Lands Trust. Two years ago the Trust gave a tree to a local cricket maker based in the town. The business man was so pleased that he could create a bat from locally grown and sourced timber that he came along to one of our meetings, explained how it was done and presented the Trust with a bat.



As the Trust does not have a facility for displaying such items it was suggested that we approach the local Cricket club, who have been East Anglia's champions for the last two years, and donate the bat too them so that it could be awarded on an annual basis for a category of their choosing with the award winner's name being etched on the front of the bat. The cricket club are all for the idea and a formal presentation will be made to them for the next season.

What could be a better advert than this for bringing the beautiful meadows, a successful cricket club and a successful local business man together. The cricket bat maker is Justin Lewis based at Middleton Hall Farm and he would be interested in any willows that people might wish to sell. His email is [justin@infinitybd.co.uk](mailto:justin@infinitybd.co.uk).

Keith Robins

## Behind the Lines: Alfred Munnings, War Artist, 1918

A Special Exhibition at the Munnings Art Museum until 3rd November 2019

In 1918 Alfred Munnings was appointed as a war artist in France for the Canadian Cavalry Brigade and later for the Canadian Forestry Corps. At the war's end his paintings from France were bought by the Canadian government and are now in the collection of the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

In the centenary year of their first exhibition at the Royal Academy, London in 1919, the Munnings Art Museum is privileged to have on loan from Canada forty-one of these war paintings. The vibrant colours and painterly style of these works is a striking contrast to the familiar black and white images of World War I. It is a rare opportunity to see these works,

alongside sketches and paintings from the Munnings Museum's own collection.

Munnings's war works were much admired at the time and proved to be pivotal in the development of his career, helping to transform him from a successful provincial artist to one of international renown.

In his later life Sir Alfred Munnings reflected "I have often wondered had there been no 1914-18 war whether painting people on horseback would have absorbed the greater part of my efforts in the years that followed".

Brenda Parrish & Charles Proudfoot



Colonel Patterson, Fort Garry's, Canadian Cavalry Brigade, March 1918, by Sir Alfred Munnings

© The Munnings Art Museum, Dedham

## How Animals Heal Themselves

I turned to wild animals for answers when my horse was diagnosed with gastric ulcers and I wanted to find a way to help him. My question was, what do wild animals do when they become unwell and what do they do to keep themselves healthy.



My research led me to learn that self-medication is widespread across the animal kingdom, from Chimpanzees selecting anti-parasitic plants to more local animals such as starlings lining their nests to deter mites, even insects selecting plants for therapeutic needs. Through studying how animals heal themselves I am now able to share my knowledge with others and I was privileged to be asked to speak at the Animal Science Conference in South Africa in February 2019.

Zoopharmacognosy is the practice in which wild animals self-medicate using an evolutionary adaptation in which

their innate instinct enables them to communicate and relate with medicinal plants within their environment, and so seek out medicinal plants at the first signs of poor health.

Unfortunately, domestication has restricted the opportunity for animals to use their instinctive knowledge to select nature's medicines by foraging

on a wide variety of medicinal plants, and more challenging health problems often occur. Applied Zoopharmacognosy takes nature's medicine kit to animals in captive and domestic environments, allowing the animal to express its innate ability to self-medicate by offering a wide range of plant extracts. Animals with the same symptoms may choose to select a different remedy which is why this approach highlights the fact that this is individualized medicine, [www.bethchamberlin.co.uk](http://www.bethchamberlin.co.uk).

Beth Chamberlain

## Funding Success: Improving the Stour Valley for Visitors

On behalf of businesses and organisations throughout the Stour Valley the AONB applied for a LEADER grant\* for a project called "Improving the Stour Valley for Visitors". We are very pleased to have been awarded a grant of £142,601, for 20 months of activity in the Wool Towns Local Action Group area, in places from Manningtree to Haverhill, Clare to Halstead, Hadleigh to Nayland.

Throughout 2019 and 2020 this means that we can employ a project team, with skills in visitor development and marketing, to develop a range of activities to highlight our landscape, wonderful buildings and churches, and to tell the story of the artists who have worked in the Valley. They will run events, develop guides and trails, including food trails and podcasts, and support local businesses to increase visitor information in the Stour Valley.



We will be extending the visitor season and encouraging people to stay longer, to enjoy this wonderful, but at times little known, area of Essex and Suffolk and help the economy grow. The project team will be able to work directly with organisations such as the Wool Towns Association (including Visit Hadleigh) and the River Stour Festival, both of whom have been seeking to use key themes of our area to attract interest in culture and heritage. The 20 miles of navigable river of the Stour will be another thread that runs through the activities, as will the 25th anniversary of the Stour Valley Path in 2019 (see pages 9 to 13 for more information), and in 2020 we will have the AONBs' 50th anniversary and the project outputs to celebrate.

\* LEADER grants support improvements to the rural economy and is part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.



Cathy Smith

## Improving the Visitor Experience in Hadleigh



Hadleigh has a lot to offer by way of history and heritage, and visitors tell us they are inspired by the evidence of our community spirit. Hadleigh may be smaller in scale and our story somewhat hidden but we think we are no less important. We are fortunate to still have a busy High Street where the majority of independent traders and some family businesses are a refreshing change for visitors.

We are one of the significant Wool Towns that prospered in C15th and C16th from the Woollen Cloth Trade, and we are looking forward to working with the LEADER project team on developing our ideas of promotion. The Hadleigh Sheep is a life size metal sculpture that marks us as a significant Wool Town while commemorating Our Year of the Sheep in 2015.

We have some notable characters, not least of which is Sir Cedric Morris, artist and plantsman, who was the inspiration for a Gardening and Art Festival in 2017. This established our work in progress,



Cedric Morris Gardens and "Memories of Cedric Morris" exhibition.

The Visit Hadleigh Town Guides offer three different themed tours providing the background to ancient buildings, such as the Guildhall, St Mary's Church and Deanery Tower. They ensure visitors discover so much more, with stories of life in the town over the centuries. Coach parking has been an issue but Morrison's were persuaded to have the occasional visiting coach, after they drop people off at the central Bus Station.

We recognise how important it is for visitors to have access to information via our website [visithadleighsuffolk.co.uk](http://visithadleighsuffolk.co.uk). It is packed with pictures, a Diary of Events and information about where to Shop, Eat and Stay; but we also know visitors value a place for Visitor Information, with face to face local knowledge when they arrive or indeed want to think about where to go next.

Jane Snowdon

## River Stour Festival 2019



The River Stour Festival is now in its second year and is running at various venues throughout the Stour Valley, from Kedington near the source to the sea at Harwich. It has developed a broad programme including exhibitions, walks, talks, workshops, music, food, boating and swimming with associated organisations, enabling people to access a range of culture and landscape based events. Partner organisations include Dedham Vale AONB, the River Stour Trust, the Suffolk Walking Festival, the National Trust, Essex and Suffolk Wildlife Trust, A Taste of Sudbury and the Essex Book Festival.

This year the festival began with a collaboration with the Essex Book Festival on their PLACE weekend at Firstsite, Colchester, in March. It included talks by Ken Worpole, Tim Burrows, Jennifer Lucy Allan and Luke Turner. Matt Gaw talks about his new book "The Pull of the River" at the Quay Theatre, Sudbury in April and Jules Pretty discusses "Nature and Health" in June. To tie in with the celebration of 25 years of the Stour Valley Path there is an exhibition called 'Path' on this theme, at North House Gallery, Manningtree opening on Saturday 6 July.

We are really looking forward to seeing how much more the River Stour Festival can develop in 2019-2020 with the support of the LEADER project and funding. We would like to run more of our own events, building an income for the Festival that can be spent on future activities. For more information please visit [www.riverstourfestival.com](http://www.riverstourfestival.com).

Ruth Philo

## Clare Castle Country Park

Our £1.5 million Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project is now well under way, and the LEADER project will help us develop our information and promotion of the area, especially as Clare is an important Wool Town.

Under the highly professional supervision of Suffolk Archaeology CIC 89 adults and 20 under 18s provided 364 volunteer days of excavations in the Outer Bailey. There were many visitors including 210 from several local schools. Further excavations will take place in September 2019 and 2020.

In October the moat was de-silted and in November major renovation work started on the Clare Park Centre (the Old Goods Shed). This will be completed in spring 2019 and will provide excellent facilities for those who wish to hire the building for a wide range

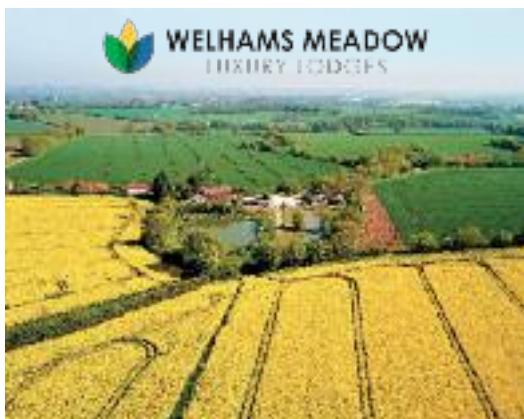
of different purposes. e.g. conferences, exhibitions, educational and learning, social events etc. in an attractive rural and historic setting.

Thanks to grants from Historic England and Dedham Vale AONB we are also in the process of carrying out work on the motte. This will deal with some erosion, replacing steps and resurfacing the paths. Appointments of a part-time Park Manager and Administrator will help the Trust to have a strong structure in place to ensure the long-term future when the HLF funding comes to an end and help run our developing programme of events, such as a weekly parkrun, monthly country walks in the Clare hinterland and the fortnightly 'Health Walks' that are proving to be very popular.

Geoffrey Bray



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## River Stour Trust

The River Stour Trust enjoyed its 50th Anniversary Year in 2018 with the pinnacle event being the opening of the third Constable Lock at Stratford St Mary Lock (renamed Roger Brown Lock).

Another significant event last year was the fire at our Visitor Education Centre. We are hopeful that the repair/rebuild will commence by Easter 2019, but it will be a while before the venue is back in use. On a positive note, the Sudbury to Cornard riverside footpath has opened making the site more accessible to pedestrians and cyclists.

Dedham Lock requires new lock gates and there is an issue with erosion of the lock island. Significant funding and planning are required to bring this lock back into operation and restore through navigation between Stratford St Mary and Cattawade, so we are developing a plan for this improvement.

We are looking forward to our usual annual activities that commence from early spring such as our Granary Tea Room

at Sudbury and boat trips on the stretches at Sudbury, Dedham and Flatford.

All our activities and events are very much dependent on our fantastic volunteers. Would you like to join the team? Crew a boat? Help with events? Maintain our website? Help fund raise? Find out more from [www.riverstourtrust.org](http://www.riverstourtrust.org) or telephone 01787 313199.

**Catherine Burrows**



## Taste of Sudbury Food Festival

The Taste of Sudbury, a fantastic annual event held in the centre of Sudbury, is all about celebrating, promoting and showcasing the very best producers, restaurants and chefs that we are so lucky to have in this part of the Stour Valley.

On Sunday 9 June the Festival welcomes back the fabulous kitchen theatre with an amazing line up of some of Suffolk's very best chefs: forager Carl Shillingford; ICE Development Chef, Lee Cooper; a butchery masterclass from Hollow Trees Farm; award winner Will Wooster making amazing sourdough; and Fiona Murphy of Moo Moo Cakes doing a Gluten Free demo.

We are delighted that headline sponsorship once again comes from The Long Melford Swan. Having financial support and investment from such a successful and well regarded local business really does have a huge impact on



this event. Essentially it means it can remain free for all to attend and we believe that offering a free top quality event to the community is what makes this food festival different to any other.

Almost sixty stalls will be filling Market Hill and St Peters, selling a range of excellent produce including culinary, medicinal and

aromatic fresh herbs, Suffolk and Essex sausages, award winning jams, marinades and preserves, freshly baked bread and cakes, and locally distilled gins and vodkas. There will also be quirky vans and horseboxes selling Mac and Cheese, Cypriot Souvlaki, home made ice creams and local craft beers to name a few!

The event is open 10am to 6pm and is totally free of charge [www.tasteofsudbury.co.uk](http://www.tasteofsudbury.co.uk).

**Justine Paul**



## THERE'S A TIPTREE TEA ROOM NEAR YOU

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\*Opening times at all sites may vary.

## A New Light on the Historic Landscape

Wild-Light explores the historic landscape through walks, talks, workshops and installation. For several years Wild-Light has been developing interest to show aspects of the Stour Valley to reveal what hidden treasures lay within this historic valley.

As an example of what we do, in October 2018, Wild-Light was commissioned to create a workshop at Avebury Church Wiltshire with 30 children from two local schools. The aim was to get them to go around the interior and exterior of this early Medieval Church equipped with Digital Camera Tablets to discover a world they have never been exposed to before and to record their finds. Their pictures ranged from Saxon detail, stained glass angels, plastic flowers on a grave, cobwebs, Georgian calligraphy, stone carvings of dragon's etc. and they were excited to take images of what inspired them.

We worked with the children to select one image each that I would transfer onto acetate, and on the final night they arrived with their parents and saw their work projected outside and inside the Church. This was an incredible project that really worked well. One 10-year old wrote: "Avebury Church is really cool", a comment I never thought I would

hear about an old church.

Wild-Light would like to carry on more such projects in the Stour Valley, and locations don't necessarily have to be Churches. Contact us via [wild-light-design.simdif.com](http://wild-light-design.simdif.com) with your ideas.

**Mitch Mclean**



## Stour Valley Farmers' Markets Flourish!

### Sudbury Farmers' Market

The fantastic Sudbury Farmers' Market is now one of Suffolk's busiest town markets and is held on the last Friday of every month in St Peter's on Market Hill, from 9.30am – 2pm.

Every month around thirty of the very best local producers fill St Peters with a selection of produce ranging from vegetables to venison, brownies to beef, and outside you can fill your bags with freshly cooked Indian snacks, pick up garden plants and even get your secateurs sharpened.



It is a farmers' market that is very much part of the community and is there for the community. Whether it has been brewed, baked, butchered or harvested nothing will have travelled further than 50 miles to be at the market with many of the traders coming from Hadleigh, Boxford and Long Melford. There is a small number of high quality, locally made crafts and a great café run by the Sudbury based charity, The Bridge Project.

[www.suffolkmarketevents.co.uk/sudbury-farmers-market](http://www.suffolkmarketevents.co.uk/sudbury-farmers-market).

### Long Melford Farmers Market Returns!

I am so pleased all our partners on Long Melford High Street – the shops, cafes, pubs, studios and the estate agents – supported the markets' return in February 2019. We all recognise the importance of making our high street fresh and vibrant to ensure there is always a reason to visit Long Melford, and I expect lots of visitors to the farmers market to continue onto the high street to shop, eat and drink.

The market is at Long Melford Village Hall on the second Saturday in every month from 9.30am-1pm. It has a good mix of quality local producers including Maypole Pork who have a great selection of hand reared pork and goat; Brookleyne Farm fruit and vegetables; the delicious Yum Yum Tree Fudge; Wooster's Bakery – a firm favourite at Bury St Edmunds and Hadleigh markets; and Sue Wooster's (mother of Will) plants from her nursery Bellflower. Local honey and cheese are available plus some handmade, non-food stalls.

[www.suffolkmarketevents.co.uk/long-melford-farmers-market](http://www.suffolkmarketevents.co.uk/long-melford-farmers-market)

Justine Paul

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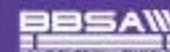
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## Contacting the Team

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 Email: [dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk)  
 Website: [www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org](http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org)  
 Twitter: @DedhamValeSVP

### The AONB team:

Simon Amstutz - AONB Manager  
 Alex Hewitt - River Stour Project Voluntary Officer  
 Alex Moore da Luz - River Stour Project Officer  
 Beverley McClean - Planning Officer  
 Cathy Smith - Communications, Funding and Development Officer  
 Claire Cadman - Projects Officer  
 Deborah Sage - AONB Officer  
 Emma Black - Countryside Project Officer Dedham Vale  
 Lucy Oldham - Partnership Officer  
 Lynn Allen - Countryside Project Officer Suffolk Coast & Heaths  
 Neil Lister - Countryside Project Officer Dedham Vale/  
 Suffolk Coast & Heaths  
 Paula Booth - AONB Officer  
 Pete Cosgrove - Marine Pioneer Manager  
 Stephanie Poole - Voluntary Officer, Student  
 Tim Reid - River Stour Project Voluntary Officer



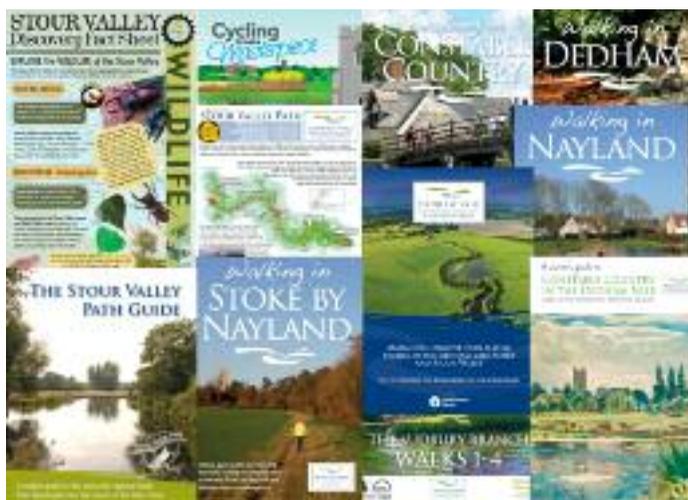
## Exploring Constable Country and the Stour Valley

The Stour Valley is fantastic at all times of year and experiencing the changing seasons and discovering different landscapes and villages are more than enough reasons to return again and again.

The AONB guides are free to download from the AONB website and include four walking guides for exploring Constable Country and all along the Stour Valley!

If cycling is your preferred outdoor experience, then we also have seven Cycling Through a Masterpiece guides exploring the full length of the Stour Valley. They range in distance from 10 to 20 miles, some with short cuts for a more leisurely ride or they can be joined together to take you further.

Make this your year to Explore the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley. You'll feel healthier and you'll open your eyes to our Outstanding Landscape!



Poo and Plastics belong in the BIN and NOT in the environment!

## Be a Responsible Dog Owner

Dogs are a wonderful contribution to our enjoyment of the countryside, they are our companion on a walk and add to the reasons to explore new places. National research shows that between a third and a half of countryside visitors have a dog with them. The UK's 6 million pet dogs provide many social and health benefits.

However, dogs and their irresponsible owners can also adversely affect the quality of the recreational experience in the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley, threaten sensitive wildlife and add to plastic litter.

Please help your dog be a good dog and keep the countryside tidy:

- Please follow information on official signs
- Please bag AND BIN after you dog – NO Plastics in the Environment!
- Please keep your dog(s) under control at all times
- Never let your dog become a nuisance to others
- Please don't let your dog roam unsupervised (especially in Spring/Summer when birds nest)
- Please respect wildlife and farm animals
- Enjoy your walk!

