



# NATURAL BASINGSTOKE

*ACTION FOR NATURE ON  
YOUR DOORSTEP*

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supported by  
**Basingstoke  
and Deane**

2016



# NATURAL BASINGSTOKE

## 01 Conservation

Acts as a champion and a voice for nature. Helps to create, restore, maintain and expand a network of wildlife-rich habitats throughout the Basingstoke and Deane Borough area.

## 02 Community

The 18 member groups are made up of local volunteers who deliver hands-on community-led conservation.

## 03 Consultation

Works with the local authority and builds partnerships with public, private, third sector and other community organisations to raise awareness of biodiversity and sustainability issues in our area.



## WELCOME

Set up in 2013, Natural Basingstoke works with 18 conservation groups, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Hampshire County Council, local companies and other conservation bodies, to enhance the enjoyment and appreciation of the natural environment by communities in Basingstoke and Deane Borough.

I hope you enjoy reading this brochure. Please feel free to get in touch if you would like more information about who we are and what we do.

*Ken MacKenzie. Chair, Natural Basingstoke*

Get in touch at: <http://naturalbasingstoke.org.uk/>

## NATURAL BASINGSTOKE

### **NATURE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT**

There are many green spaces within and on the edge of urban areas which are not devoted to sport or specific leisure activities. For these areas, large scale management tasks are best performed by specialist equipment or large machinery, but there are also many conservation activities, especially in wildlife areas, where the task can only be carried out manually or on a small scale. Natural Basingstoke member groups help to fill that niche by supporting the management of a range of wildlife habitats, from seasonal ponds and streams, water meadows and other grassland to chalk downland and ancient woodland.



That commitment involves more than 110 local volunteers engaged hands-on and over 10,000 volunteer hours over the past 12 months. This represents the equivalent of more than 6 full-time employees of the local authority who would be engaged exclusively in this work

# NATURAL BASINGSTOKE

## 01 Conservation

At the beginning of 2016, Natural Basingstoke has 18 member groups engaged in looking after the public green spaces in their neighbourhoods.

These groups of local volunteers care for community trust, parish, borough or county-owned green spaces, small and large, across the borough.

There have been community based voluntary nature conservation groups in Basingstoke for over 20 years. Oakley Woodlands Group was among the earliest to be formed. While several other groups have been operating for ten years or more, the movement has undoubtedly

gathered momentum and numbers in the last 3 to 4 years.

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# NATURAL BASINGSTOKE

## 02 Community

Community-led conservation projects, working in collaboration with borough officers and services.

Natural Basingstoke and its members have been working since its inception in 2013 with borough departments to manage and enhance public green spaces and to restore and reconnect those spaces into a sustainable network of green corridors for wildlife and people.

The aim is to support and expand grass roots involvement in management and enrichment of the quality of the green spaces that we see today.

The following map indicates the areas where we are currently active, but each year more people become engaged with conserving the wildlife in their neighbourhood. So please look on our website, or the Borough Council's website ( [www.basingstoke.gov.uk/conservationgroups](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/conservationgroups) for up to date details.

At the end of this presentation, on pages 11 and 12, you will find two illustrations of the type of green spaces and activities that Natural Basingstoke groups are undertaking:

Case Study 1 : Old Down Restoration

Case Study 2 : Southview Cemetery Community Garden

# NATURAL BASINGSTOKE



## Natural Basingstoke Member Groups

- 1 Black Dam & Crabtree Conservation Group
- 2 Chineham Conservation Group
- 3 Cliddesden Community Conservation Group
- 4 Dummer Nature Group
- 5 Friends of Loddon Vale Parks
- 6 Friends of Stratton Park
- 7 Fuzzy Drove Conservation Group
- 8 Hatch Warren Nature Group
- 9 Jubiloaks conservation group, Oakley
- 10 Kempshott Conservation Group
- 11 Mill Field Conservation Group
- 12 Oakley Woodlands Group
- 13 Old Down & Beggarwood Wildlife Group
- 14 Overton Biodiversity Society
- 15 Popley Conservation Volunteers
- 16 Silvermead Hedgerow Group
- 17 Southview Conservation Group
- 18 Sherborne St John Biodiversity Group

The area in which each of the Natural Basingstoke member groups operate is indicated on the map, but the sites vary greatly in size and characteristics. More details can be found on our website.

Get in touch at: <http://naturalbasingstoke.org.uk/>



# NATURAL BASINGSTOKE

## 03 Consultation and Support

Working with the local authority and public, private, third sector and other community organisations to raise awareness of biodiversity and sustainability issues in our area.

### **SUPPORT FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES**

One of the aims of Natural Basingstoke is to work with the local authorities and build partnerships with public, private, third sector and community organisations to deliver volunteering and hands-on educational and recreational opportunities in the natural environment.

### **SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER GROUPS**

Natural Basingstoke provides training for local volunteer groups and also supports conservation events and public education or learning opportunities organised by the member groups.

### **WORKING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS AND YOUTH GROUPS**

Most of the local conservation groups encourage families and children, where it is safe to do so. In addition Natural Basingstoke supports activities for local schools and youth groups. Example include:

- A Bug and Butterfly Day with the Old Down and Beggerwood Wildlife Group
- A public Exhibition of Artwork by pupils at the Vyne School
- Working with the Brownies, Cub Scouts and other youth groups.

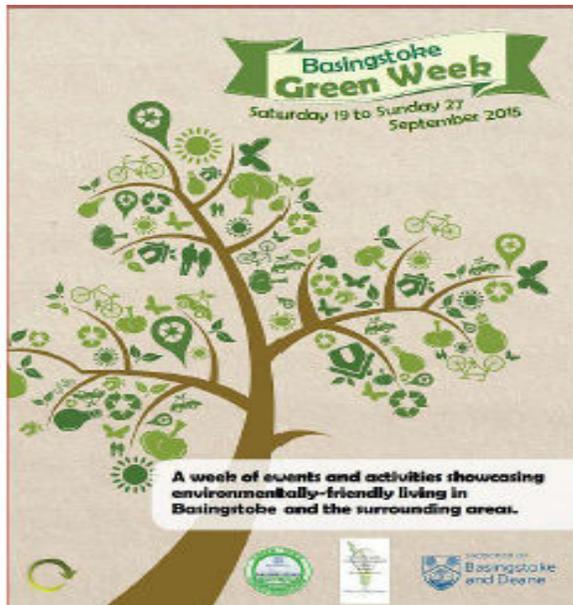
Get in touch at: <http://naturalbasingstoke.org.uk/>

# NATURAL BASINGSTOKE

Natural Basingstoke members support a number of public main events in and around Basingstoke in association with staff from Basingstoke Council.

## ANNUAL LOVE PARKS WEEK

Natural Basingstoke participates in the annual Love parks week in July, during which the group carry out a range of activities aimed at engaging all ages in enjoying and appreciating their local parks and green spaces of every kind – including a **Bio-Blitz** – for young and old exploring a wildlife rich area in detail and encouraging Citizen Science for Nature Conservation.



## BASINGSTOKE GREEN WEEK

Green Week in September is an annual event organised by local community groups and residents and supported by Basingstoke Council where kindred organisations combine to promote environmental, sustainable, fun and innovative ways to interest people in everything 'green'.

Get in touch at: <http://naturalbasingstoke.org.uk/>



## EXPERTISE AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

**The expertise of Natural Basingstoke combines detailed local knowledge with extensive awareness of national policies, standards and best practice.**

**Natural Basingstoke is a key Stakeholder in any policy document created by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council which impacts on the natural environment of our area.**

**Natural Basingstoke was therefore consulted and contributed to core Council policy documents such as the Local Plan, the Green Infrastructure Policy and Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy ( Living Landscapes).**

**Members of Natural Basingstoke volunteer a considerable amount of their time to the review of planning applications for ecological impact. For example, as part of the major redevelopment project for the Leisure Park, consultation is ongoing on the ecological impact on Saunders Field, a water meadow south of the Milestones Museum. Other consultation matters include the long term contribution to the Manydown development project.**

# NATURAL BASINGSTOKE

## REACHING OUT BEYOND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY - Corporate and Employee Volunteering

Natural Basingstoke member groups and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council have welcomed corporate engagement in looking after wildlife sites.

Employee or corporate volunteering is a great way to develop new staff skills and teamwork, improve group morale and company reputation, whilst making a huge difference to the local environment.

**Member groups have had the assistance of major organisations resident in Basingstoke over a number of years, and welcome additional corporate relationship. Our thanks go to Barclays, Eli Lilly and Company, Arjo Wiggins and others who have supported this initiative, learning not only the woodland management skills which have served us well for centuries but taking the opportunity for team building and group motivation.**

**There are several groups who welcome half day or whole day corporate work parties between September and March. These include:**

- **Oakley Woodland Group**
- **Chineham Conservation Group**
- **Popley Conservation Volunteers.**



## CASE STUDY 1: THE OLD DOWN PROJECT

The Old Down and Beggarwood Wildlife Group work in association with the Borough Council Operations Department and Community Design and Regeneration officers.



### RESTORATION OF CHALK GRASSLAND

Old Down was originally seeded as calcareous grassland, but Old Down and Beggarwood wildlife group saw the potential to restore a wildflower- rich downland habitat and improve the entire ecology of Old Down.

### IMPROVED ECOLOGY

By careful management, including changing the mowing regimes and sowing native wildflowers, Old Down now hosts over 300 species of plants and is recognised as the most important site in Hampshire for the Small Blue butterfly.

### THE SMALL BLUE BUTTERFLY

The Small Blue butterfly ( *Cupido minimus*) is our smallest resident butterfly. It can be found throughout Britain and Ireland but is increasingly rare and localised. The sole food plant for the Small Blue butterfly is Kidney Vetch. The number of recorded sightings of the Small Blue butterfly on Old Down has increase every year as a result of this initiative, from 4 sightings in 2011 to 207 recorded sightings in 2015.



## CASE STUDY 2: THE SOUTH VIEW CEMETERY COMMUNITY GARDEN

The South View Conservation Group work in association with Basingstoke & Deane Landscape Architects, who designed the maze garden, the Operations Department and Green Space & Community Development officers.



### A GREEN SPACE IN THE HEART OF BASINGSTOKE

South View Cemetery is a vibrant green space in the centre of Basingstoke, close to the railway station. There is abundant bird life, Spring bulb displays and wild flowers over the Summer, and also a SINC assignment to the grassland area.

### IMPROVED ACCESS

The creation of a new footpath improved access to the listed historical Chapels dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, encouraging the community to use the space more and explore Basingstoke's cultural heritage.

