

Press Release

8th December 2008

The Bourne Conservation Group launches Footpath Warden scheme

The Bourne Conservation Group launched its new scheme of volunteer footpath wardens at a recent meeting held in St Martin's Hall, Lower Bourne. With the full support of Surrey County Council, the meeting was attended both by County Councillor David Munro and by the SCC Senior Countryside Access Officer for the area, James Taylor.



Lisa Malcolm, BCG's co-ordinator, said that the aim of the scheme is to have an informal system of volunteer Footpath Wardens to monitor footpaths and bridleways in The Bourne, enabling any problems to be dealt with locally or reported promptly to SCC. The Bourne area is fortunate in possessing an extensive network of rights-of-way (ROW), many dating back to its rural past. These paths and bridleways offer access to the varied countryside throughout The Bourne and are well used by residents. The ROW also provide green corridors for wildlife, especially where they link with the valley of The Bourne Stream and patches of public open space.

For all of these reasons, it is important to maintain the ROW network in excellent condition and perhaps even improve it. Unfortunately there are problems in achieving this. One issue is the small budget allocated by SCC for ROW maintenance, and the system for spotting and reporting problems is

haphazard so that they may go unnoticed or unreported for long periods. Addressing this aspect will help to improve the overall state of the paths, thus contributing both to their utility and enjoyment by users and their value for wildlife.

Footpath Wardens are all volunteers who have kindly agreed to keep an eye out for any issues and opportunities for improvement on selected Rights of Way in The Bourne. The Footpath Wardens have an interest in maintaining and improving the environment of The Bourne, and regularly walk the area.

We would be pleased to hear from other potential wardens, so if you are a Bourne resident (or live near the Bourne) and you are interested in volunteering to be a Footpath Warden, please visit our website www.bourneconservation.org.uk

About the Bourne Conservation Group: The Bourne Conservation Group is a group of volunteers, who share a concern for the environment and a desire to contribute to keeping our area attractive. Founded in 2003, the Group assists in the maintenance and improvement of local open spaces and rights-of-way for the benefit of both residents and wildlife. We always welcome new members.