

# Designated funds

## Newsletter - October 2019

### A30 Green Ribs

Along the A30 in Cornwall we have developed a flagship programme of work called “Keyn Glas” (Green Ridge in Cornish). Keyn Glas is made up of 17 individual environmental enhancement projects on third party land which will enable us to go above and beyond business as usual, and deliver environmental benefits that are greater than the sum of their parts.

Six of the projects form the Green Rib concept, three of which are the pilot ribs and will be delivered by the end of March 2020, the first rib starting construction in November 2019. These three ribs will deliver £2m of new green infrastructure across 30 km<sup>2</sup> of Central Cornwall's countryside.

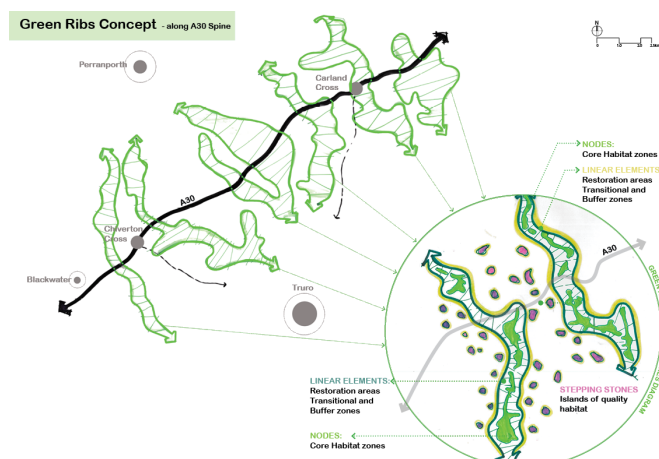
#### Green Rib concept:

A Green Rib project area extends out from the A30 and focuses on connecting core habitat areas to achieve continuous landscape corridors in Central Cornwall. This includes developing strategies to reinforce and connect existing habitat, reinstate historic field patterns, create new habitat areas, improve the extent and quality of existing pollinator zones, and to transition woodland to adapt to climate change conditions.

Along with Arup and Cornwall Wildlife Trust, we are working closely with stakeholders, local farmers and communities to implement landscape works that will:

- enhance the character, productivity and recreational value of the local landscape, including historic landscape areas
- reduce landscape and biodiversity severance by improving the condition and connectivity of woodland, hedgerow and grassland habitats
- reduce the speed and quantity of surface water runoff and improve water quality.

The work will deliver on our vision to protect and enhance the environmental resources of landscape, water, soil, air, biodiversity, and the historic environment. Based on the success of these three pilot ribs, we plan to deliver a further three ribs early in the next Roads Period (2020 to 2025). This will complete a landscape-scale suite of six ribs and will make a significant contribution to better health, wellbeing and resilience of habitats, landscape and local communities in this part of Cornwall.



## M49 Culvert

As part of the construction of the M49 Avonmouth Junction, we had to remove two existing highways surface water drainage ponds. As well as this, the creation of the new junction will also have an impact on peak flood water levels in the area. To help solve these issues we worked with Lower Severn Drainage Board to create a scheme to provide wide rhines surrounding the junction, and a new surface water culvert underneath the M49. We've now completed this flood alleviation scheme and it will provide flood risk benefits to the surrounding villages of Easter Compton, Pilning and Severn Beach.



## Stover Country Park

The sustainable scheme, which has delivered an impressive 3,800 square metres of reeds at the park just off the A38 is the result of a ground-breaking partnership project between Highways England, Stover Country Park and Devon County Council. Natural England also supported the work.



The reeds act as a filter capturing and filtering water run-off from the A38 and Drumbridges roundabout before it enters the lake. Water can carry pollutants such as oil and metal residue into the lake and this has contributed to the poor water quality and reduced diversity of wildlife in the lake. The reeds have been planted upstream of the lake to act as a natural barrier and filter pollutants. They will also provide valuable habitat for a range of wildlife. At the same time, the park, which is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI),

will be improving sustainable drainage at the site. Planting was completed in April and already many areas of reeds have reached a height of 30cm.

It is hoped that by reducing the silt deposits and contamination, white-water lilies, not seen at the lake since 2007, will once again start to cover the lake surface, providing suitable habitat for a variety of dragonflies and damselflies.

The reedbeds themselves will also support a range of birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians and mammals such as water rail, hairy dragonfly, grass snake, Daubenton's bat and otter.

## M49 Circular Walk

We've collaborated with A Forgotten Landscape to create a 9km circular walking route starting at Easter Compton and heading up Spanorium Hill overlooking the Severn Levels. This scheme was funded by both us through our Legacy Designated Fund and A Forgotten Landscape.

Spanorium Hill is part-covered with ancient woodland and its undulating ridge offers excellent views of the levels landscape characterised by flat open fields, low hedgerows, pollarded willow trees, ditches and rhines. The juxtaposition of the motorways and the scenery, rural settlement and open fields along the route provides a glimpse of both the history and the future of the area.





The route will take walkers through a landscape used by a wide array of wildlife. Spaniorum Hill is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) for its combination of species-rich grassland and ancient woodland. The woods oak/ash structure and ground flora including bluebell is complemented by the adjacent grassland fields which include locally scarce species such as common spotted orchid, Dyer's greenweed and grass vetchling. The woodland, fields and hedges support an array of farmland birds, including several, such as skylark and song thrush, which are priority species nationally; and the mosaic of habitats present makes the route ideal for local guided bat walks.

### A303 Sparkford to Ilchester

The A303 project team has successfully secured funding for four feasibility studies looking at projects that could benefit the local area. As a result, we're currently:

- developing a conservation management plan for Hazlegrove House Registered Park and Garden
- understanding the need for improvements to Higher Farm Lane overbridge for equestrian use
- assessing different flood alleviation options in the villages of West Camel and Queen Camel
- assessing traffic calming options for the villages of West Camel and Sparkford.

To support some of this work and help inform our assessment of traffic calming options, we'll be doing some surveys, including a topographical survey of the villages of West Camel and Sparkford, this autumn.

### Electric charging points being installed near the A303

It will soon become that little bit easier to travel through Somerset with an electric vehicle.

Highways England's Safety, Engineering and Standards (SES) team has been working with local authorities up and down the country, including South Somerset District Council, to install electric vehicle charging points in key areas on the major road network.

By the end of this road investment period (which runs from 2015 to 2020) our teams expect to have installed sufficient rapid charging points nationwide with the aim of ensuring that 95% of the strategic road network has a charging point within 20 miles. Wherever possible, these will be rapid charging points that can charge a battery-powered electric vehicle in less than 30 minutes.

To date 11 charge points have been installed through our programme of work with local authorities, and South Somerset District Council confirmed, at its scrutiny committee in Yeovil on 1 October, that three rapid electric car chargers will soon be put in place at strategic points in Wincanton, Ilchester and Ilminster. The precise location of the charging points is still being finalised, but it's expected that the work to install them will be completed by the end of the year.

For more information about our Designated Funds see [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/designated-funds/](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/designated-funds/)

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