



KINGFISHER BARN

VISITOR CENTRE

A fascinating day out for families

CAFÉ | EXHIBITION | EVENTS | NATURE WALKS | WILDLIFE GARDEN

**FREE
ENTRY**



Stour Valley Local Nature Reserve

www.visitstourvalley.co.uk



Stour Valley Local Nature Reserve is owned and managed by BCP Council. It is situated in North Bournemouth just 2 miles from Castlepoint shopping complex. This beautiful 35 hectare reserve follows the River Stour for 3 miles. This includes the Kingfisher Barn Visitor Centre and wildlife garden, meadows, woodlands and magnificent hedgerows.

Meet the neighbours

There are so many animals sharing the Stour Valley with us. Here are our most popular – but come into the Visitor Centre to discover what else you might meet!

Kingfisher

At any time of year, look out for a flash of blue along the river or the distinct ‘chee-kee’ as it flies. They create a burrow in steep banks in which to nest.



Otter

Watch the river all year round for the tell-tale signs of bubbles in the water or spraints (otter poo) on the banks (these are black, tarry and have a surprisingly pleasant smell). Dawn and dusk are the best times to see them.



Rare-Breed Cattle

We have 3 breeds of cattle: the British white, belted Galloway and (horned) Shetland. They are used for conservation grazing on our heathland sites and meadows. These hardy cattle live outside all year round.



Banded Demoiselle

As a species of flowing waters, this is the most common river damselfly in Europe. It prefers small streams and rivers with partial vegetation cover, avoiding both deep shade and open water. These damselflies fly slowly with a distinctive, butterfly-like motion. Males defend small territories near egg-laying sites, such as submerged vegetation, and may hold a single territory for ten days or more.



Find out more in the Visitor Centre, or on our website!

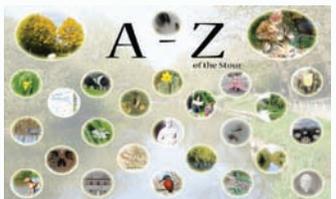
About the A-Z Exhibition

The Stour Valley – a fascinating history

We are working to make 14km of the River Stour Valley (between Christchurch Harbour and Longham) more accessible for you to explore and to help you discover some fascinating local history and amazing wildlife.



Inside the Visitor Centre, we have created an interactive A-Z display, to guide you around this award-winning, riverside nature reserve. Play games, dress up and discover more about the wildlife that lives on your doorstep. You can also add your recent discoveries to our ‘sightseeing board’!



This area has a fascinating history, and was a popular trade route with stories of smugglers, entrepreneurs, and even murder! Pick up replica artefacts and learn how they were used.



Events

Join us at Kingfisher Barn for some amazing times.

We deliver a wide range of events and activities - many of them are free, but we ask you to consider a donation. Take part in pond and river dipping, den building, bug hunts, painting, crafts, sleep outs, health walks and nature walks. Our website and social media have the latest events listings for you to download, or stop by the Visitor Centre to find out what’s on.





Packed with wildlife and steeped in history

The Stour Valley Local Nature Reserve is a delightful surprise- an oasis for wildlife and people. Packed with wildlife and steeped in history, the two mile stretch of riverside footpath, hay meadows, marsh, open water, hedgerows and woodland is home to 50 species of breeding birds.

Otters can be seen throughout the year and in summer dragonflies including the banded demoiselle course their way up and down the river catching insects and laying their eggs on riverside vegetation. But there is more!

Our Stone, Bronze and Iron Age ancestors used and shaped this landscape as did the inhabitants of the original villages of Muscliff, Throop, and Holdenhurst. 18th century farmers grazed their livestock on the river meadows while the lazy rotating paddle of the Throop mill drove the millstone to pound the local grain.

The legacy of our ancestors, the sound of rushing water, the dappled light through the trees, the blue flash of the kingfisher make this a special place to relax, explore, reflect and have fun.

Three walks around Stour Valley Nature Reserve

Pollinator Trail 3.5 miles • 1hr 10mins

The Stour Valley Nature Reserve has over 400 different species of plants, many of which provide essential nectar and pollen for our pollinators. With so many different species flourishing here, stop by the Kingfisher Barn Visitor Centre to find out what's flowering this season- what will you spot?

Follow our Pollinator Trail which starts at the 'Perennial Wildflower Meadow', situated between the Kingfisher Barn and the car park.

The trail meanders through the meadows and ash plantation before looping around to follow the river back to the Kingfisher Barn.

Be sure to stop at Cherry Tree Nursery to see the impressive array of pollinator friendly plants on display and admire the 7-foot-tall 'Mother Earth' sculpture.



Butterfly Trail 4.0 miles • 1hr 20mins

28 species of butterfly have been recorded on the Stour Valley Nature Reserve, all of which feed on nectar so you will find them wherever there are wildflowers and flowering plants.

The Butterfly Trail takes you west along the length of the reserve, through the meadows, ash plantation, woodlands and grazing paddocks before it loops around and follows the path back alongside the river to the Kingfisher Barn. Pick up a guide to the 'butterflies of the Stour' from the Kingfisher Barn.

Here are a few species to look out for:

Speckled wood often seen spiralling in pairs competing for patches of sunlight and the brimstone which is bright yellow and one of the earliest to emerge in spring.

Other common species found here are the peacock and red admiral- two of the largest British butterflies.



Dragonfly Trail 1.2 miles • 30mins

The Stour Valley Nature Reserve is home to 17 species of dragonflies and damselflies. The Dragonfly Trail takes you east along the river bank to the reserve boundary then back along the footpath and through the arboretum before re-joining the path back to Kingfisher Barn.

Dragonflies and damselflies emerge from the water in spring and throughout the summer. They feed on insects, often far from the water's edge and when they are ready they return to the river to lay their eggs.

The eggs hatch into nymphs which live underwater for up to three years before emerging fully grown and ready to fly.

Pick up a guide to the 'dragons and damsels of the Stour' from the Kingfisher Barn. Look out for Britain's largest dragonfly, the emperor, and the impressive banded demoiselle damselfly.



Our Project

A partnership between BCP Council and The Parks Foundation has overseen the development of Kingfisher Barn Visitor Centre as a gateway to the River Stour for local people and visitors alike. Volunteers help to run the Visitor Centre, create and run activities, and to help with practical work on the Nature Reserve.

The Parks Foundation, a registered charity, runs our small café and shop, plus some events, with profits being reinvested at Stour Valley and across our local parks and open spaces.



Support us



Could you lend a hand?

We work with two organisations to deliver volunteer projects both here in the Visitor Centre, and outdoor conservation work along the Stour Valley:



The Parks Foundation

www.parksfoundation.org.uk

is a charity devoted to enhancing our local parks and gardens for everyone to enjoy. As well as helping us by volunteering, you can also celebrate an occasion, remember a loved one or simply mark your support by sponsoring a brick outside the barn. You can also demonstrate your support through an online donation or in person at the Centre.

Profits from our café support the Foundation, so you can enjoy a cup of tea or buy something from

the shop knowing the proceeds will be invested in projects both at the Stour Valley and across our local parks.

Stour Valley Supporters are a local community group, dedicated to promoting and enhancing the beauty of the Stour Valley Local Nature Reserve. Give your support by donating your time to help work on projects along the Stour Valley, or by paying a subscription to fund their work. Find them on Facebook for more information.

Wildlife Gardeners

Help to create and maintain the garden.

Habitat Management

Work with the Rangers on practical conservation tasks.

Visitor Centre

Provide information, refreshments and gifts to our visitors.

Research and monitor

Record the wildlife in and around the Stour.

Learning Guide/Events and Activities Volunteer

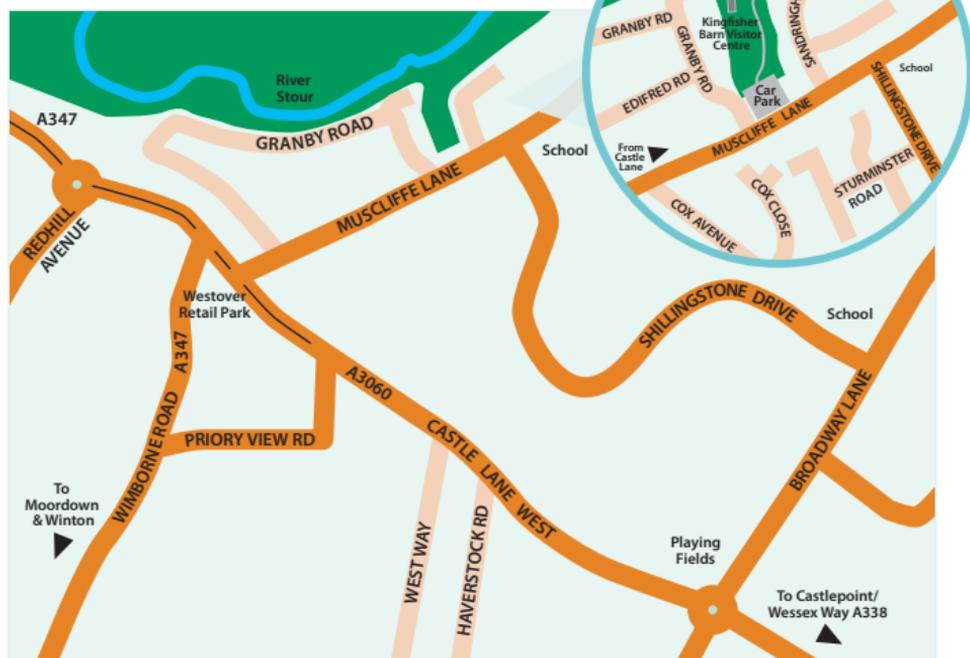
Assist with all kinds of indoor and outdoor events and guided walks.

Find out how

You can get involved by coming into the Visitor Centre, or get in touch (contact details overleaf).



Visitor Information



Kingfisher Barn Visitor Centre

Stour Valley Local Nature Reserve, Granby Road, BH9 3NZ

T 01202 128484

E stourvalley@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

W www.visitstourvalley.co.uk



Getting to Kingfisher Barn Visitor Centre

There are plenty of cycle racks at Kingfisher Barn.

The nearest bus stop is 'Granby Road'.

For the latest information visit www.bybus.co.uk.

We have a small car park at Granby Road (postcode for Sat Nav BH9 3NZ)

Opening Times

The Visitor Centre is open daily from 10am, and is closed on Christmas Day.

For the latest information please visit our website or Facebook page.

Refreshments

Hot and cold drinks, snacks and ice creams are on sale for you to sit back and relax with in our wildlife garden. We also have a small range of local produce and artwork available to buy in our shop.

Dogs

Dogs should be kept under close control on the Nature Reserve.

Only Registered Assistance dogs are allowed in the Visitor Centre.

Toilets

There is a toilet with disabled access inside the Visitor Centre.

The Parks Foundation

Is a registered Charity 1159939. For more information visit

www.parksfoundation.org.uk

Working Together

