

# Kingfisher Trail

Burton upon Trent

Management Plan 2018-2021

**Main contact:**

Michael Hovers

Communities, Open Spaces & Facilities Manager

Tel 01283 508776

[openspacesteam@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk](mailto:openspacesteam@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk)



## **Foreword**

The Kingfisher Trail is a popular linear walk from Eton Park to Shobnall Fields in Burton on Trent and covers the route of an old railway branch line. The trail is part of an important and award winning community project in conjunction with residents, East Staffordshire Borough Council and Trent and Dove Housing and as such is important to the council's commitments to delivering its corporate priority of enhancing lives across the Borough.

This area is a fine example of the desire to improve quality in our most valuable green spaces which I support and commend. In particular, our commitment to continue to achieve Green Flag Award standard at The Kingfisher Trail is one I totally support and wish the officers and local community every success in this endeavour.



Cllr Colin Whitaker

Deputy Leader for the Culture

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## **1. Introduction**

The Kingfisher Trail is a mile and a half surfaced walk and cycle track from Eton to Shobnall in Burton upon Trent, alongside the Trent and Mersey Canal and within The National forest

In 2005, residents and local organisations working together under the banner of the Kingfisher Project began to work together, to help save this local green space. Since inception steady and award-winning progress has been made, acting as community catalyst and giving communities in other areas a blueprint for urban green space restoration. The Channel today has developed into a wildlife haven and semi-natural habitat; the return of kingfishers marks a major achievement.

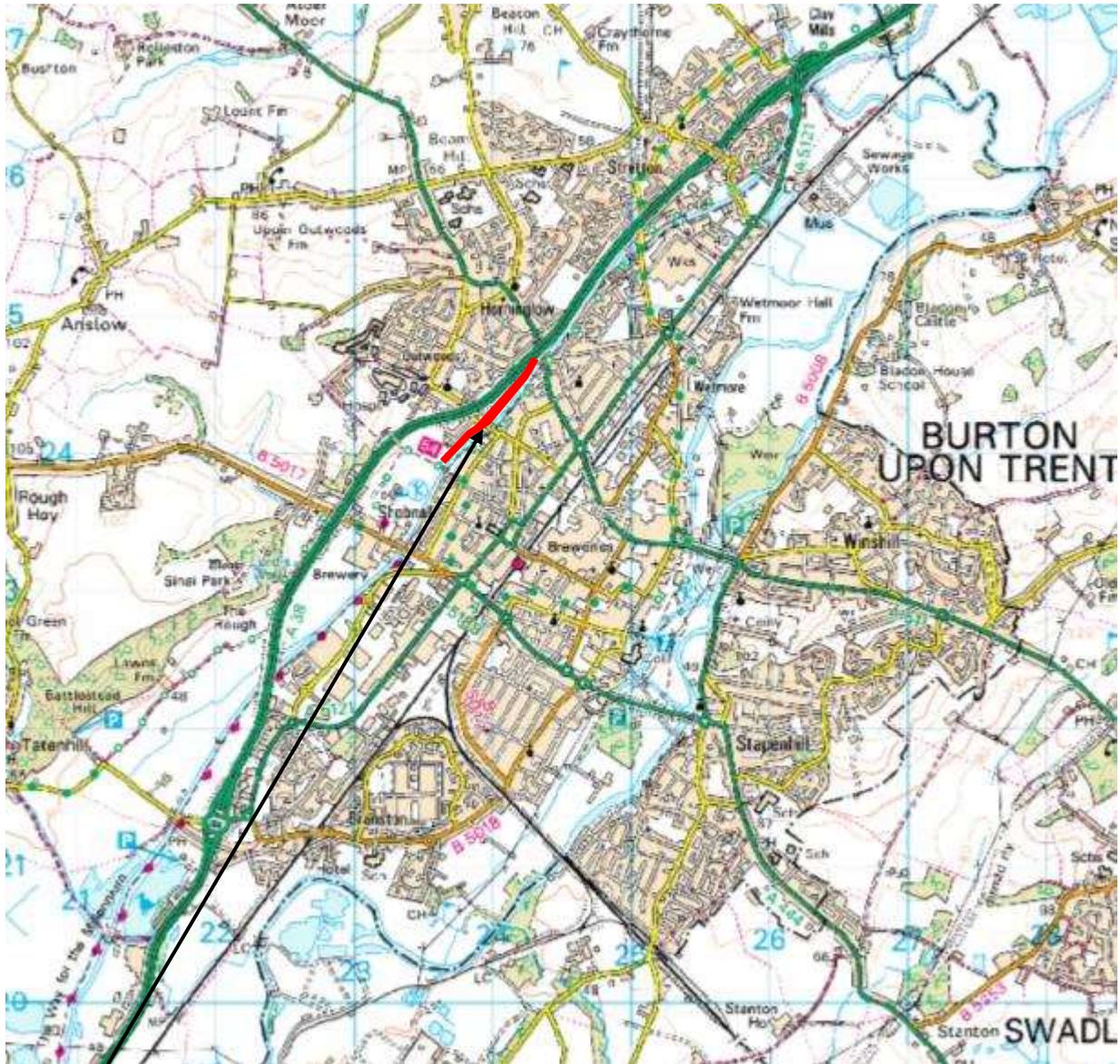
The area is valuable for achieving much more than its original purpose, for it not only acts as flood control for residential and commercial water supply, it offers nature conservation and biodiversity, public amenity and leisure, a historical and educational resource. It acts as a connecting green corridor and gateway – a green space for residents, schools and visitors alike, helping to bring the Forest into urban areas of Burton upon Trent.

The Kingfisher project continues to go from strength to strength and has won several regional and local environmental and community awards. In 2016 the Kingfisher project received national recognition via the Queens Award for Volunteering.



Shobnall entrance to the Kingfisher Trail with sculpture welcome features

## 2. Location plan within Burton



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Kingfisher  
Trail

### 3. Layout of the trail

# The Kingfisher Trail



Local Nature Reserve, a 2 km traffic free path for walkers and cyclists between Eton and Shobnall Leisure Complex.

The Kingfisher Trail is a Green Flag Award winning route that follows an old railway line which ran alongside the Trent and Mersey Canal. Features reflecting the trail's local industrial heritage can be seen along the route.

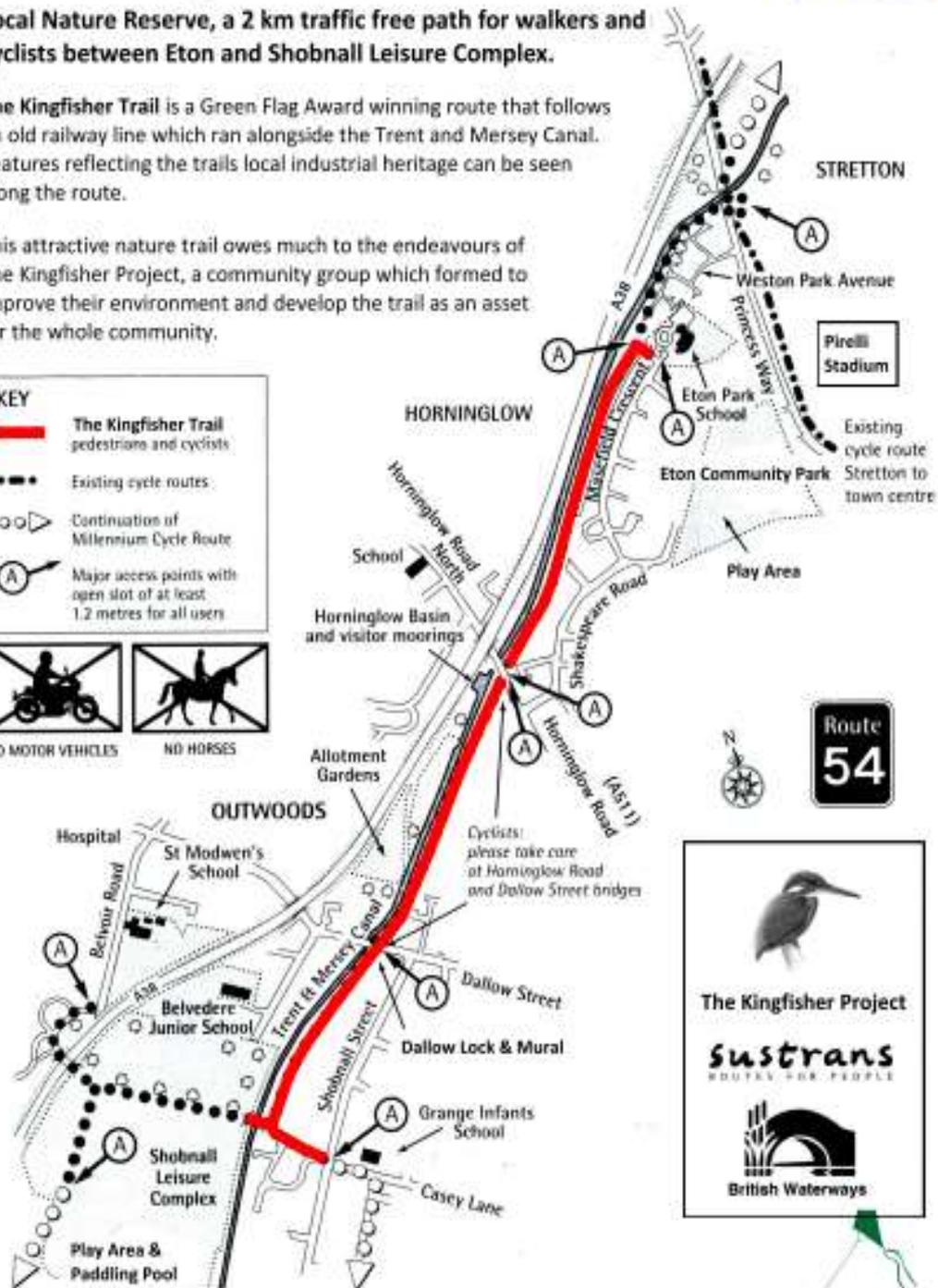
This attractive nature trail owes much to the endeavours of The Kingfisher Project, a community group which formed to improve their environment and develop the trail as an asset for the whole community.

**KEY**

-  The Kingfisher Trail pedestrians and cyclists
-  Existing cycle routes
-  Continuation of Millennium Cycle Route
-  Major access points with open slot of at least 1.2 metres for all users

 NO MOTOR VEHICLES

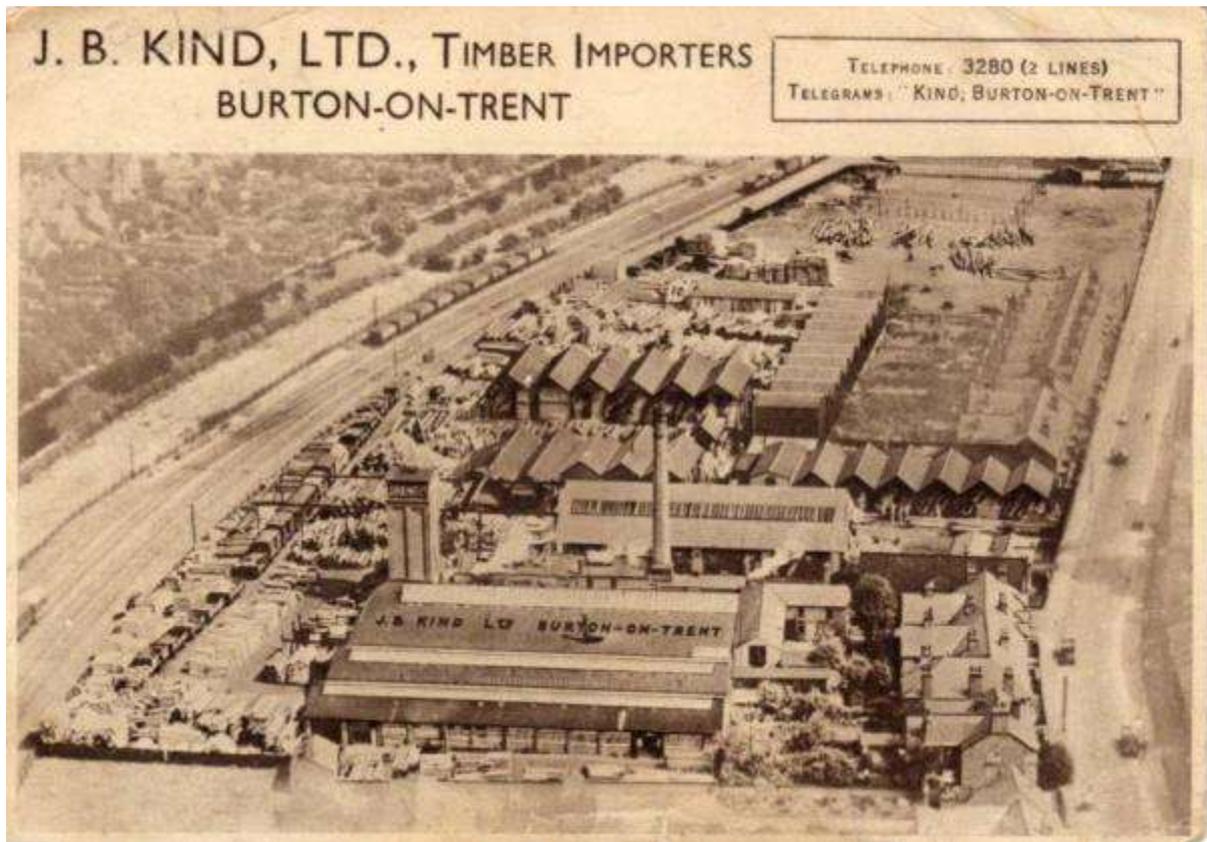
 NO HORSES



#### **4. History and general description**

The Kingfisher Trail now occupies the land that was the route of one of Burton's former railways. In 1886 the North Staffordshire Railway Company was unsuccessful with its application to build a branch line to serve their salt warehouse and other canal property at Horninglow.

However, six years later the London & North Western Railway (L.N.W.R), a larger and more powerful company were successful, and built a line from Stretton Junction to Shobnall. This branch line became known as the 'Dallow Lane Branch'. A goods wharf was built at Dallow Lane, together with a private siding to serve the timber yards of J.B. Kind.



Postcard showing the JB Kind timber yard and the adjacent railway line.

Beyond Dallow Bridge a siding served the cooperage and the Dallow Chemical works. The L.N.W.R. did not have any goods facilities at Horninglow. Here the wharf was served by the Midland Railway who had extended their branch line from Little Burton Bridge to reach and terminate alongside the Trent & Mersey Canal, about two hundred yards south west of Horninglow Basin. This earlier railway opened in 1873 was on a level plain with the canal. Whereas the Dallow branch built later was constructed on a gradual gradient, and by the time reached Horninglow, the railway was elevated on an embankment. It crossed the Midlands tracks on a steel decked viaduct, and then crossed Horninglow Road on a similar bridge.

The Dallow branch continued running alongside the canal on this embankment until reaching the North Staffs line at Stretton Junction. The branch line lasted until the 1960's, although by now it was no longer in full use and tended to be used as a long store siding for redundant wagons awaiting disposal. The tracks were finally lifted and all the earthworks taken away. In the mid 1970's the strip of land was re-worked with a storm drainage ditch created along most of the original route and this remains today. *Historical information kindly given by fine artist and model maker, David Wright.*

Due to the perceived form and character of the drainage channel, to local residents it is known as 'The Brook'. Many formed a connection with it and instead of its original purpose, it was known to locals as a place to spot kingfishers and otters.

Over the next three decades, as with many small pockets of urban green space, the area also witnessed an increase in fly tipping and rubbish – and became in effect a neglected lost space with all significant wildlife driven out.

## **5. Community use**

Since 2005 the Kingfisher project Community group has been active along the site. The group is made up of residents, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Trent and Dove Housing Association, Burton Conservation Volunteers, the National Forest and other partners. The group's remit covers the trail and an area surrounding the site owned by Trent and Dove and includes community allotments and a greenhouse.

The group meet monthly and have been very successful in improving the trail, working with local schoolchildren on environmental work experience, winning several prestigious regional and national awards.

The group sets an excellent example to others of the impact that local people can have in taking responsibility for enhancing and managing their local forest site.

## **Social and economic context**

The Kingfisher Trail straddles two wards in East Staffordshire; Eton Park and Shobnall. Both wards include a lower proportion of people in work than the rest of the borough and a higher proportion of minority groups. The Kingfisher Trail and project group have brought together members of the community from both wards to actively contribute to a healthier and safer environment, increasing community cohesion.

Eton and Shobnall wards both feature within the top 10% of deprived wards in the UK. With low income, physical inactivity, crime and housing all represent difficult social challenges.

The Kingfisher Trail and the community group which went on to run the Kingfisher Project are a legacy project of the Heart of Burton Partnership, a Neighbourhood

Management pathfinder set up to tackle urban deprivation with particular focus on the wards of Eton and Shobnall.

## **Funding**

The Kingfisher Trail is owned and managed by the Borough Council. Council grounds maintenance budgets pay for routine maintenance on the site. This is augmented with additional work from local community volunteers who play an active and healthy role in maintaining the attractiveness of the trail. Furthermore, Section 106 monies, exceeding £20,000, from nearby housing developments have been used to improve the site. This investment has allowed the project members and the Council to fund some significant capital improvements on the site.

## **6. Survey and assessment**

To ensure this plan meets the aspiration of genuinely improving the quality of the park, the following assessments have been designed around the current Green Flag Award criteria.

### **A Welcoming Place**

The linear nature of the trail necessitates that there are several entrance/exit points along the walks. There are two main formal entrances, at the northern end near Eton school and the Southern end near Shobnall fields. Both of these entrances have welcoming art features in the form of two sculptured wooden kingfishers.

Main welcome at north entrance to the trail



Close up of Kingfisher sculpture at Eton end of the trail

In addition to the two main entrances there are several access points, one with a car park from Dallow Bridge and another from Horninglow Basin/Horninglow Road. The towpath of the Trent and Mersey canal runs parallel to the trail and Burton

Conservation Volunteers have constructed three connecting paths so that walkers can swap between both footpaths along the route.



Dallow Lock



Horninglow basin

Adjacent to the Shobnall entrance is via a pedestrian pathway from Shobnall Street to Shobnall Fields, which is a continuation of National Cycle Network route 54.



Notice board

### **Healthy Safe and Secure**

Since the inception of the community group in 2005 the Kingfisher Trail has become a safe and welcoming place to walk, cycle and run along. Vegetation along the trail has been tidied and native trees have been planted to welcome people to the area. The trail has lost its label as a 'no-go' area and now locals and visitors alike use the trail as a safe, traffic free route between Eton and Shobnall.

### **Wild flower meadow**

In 2017 the site of the former Children's play area was replaced by a Wild flower meadow to highlight the importance pollinators. Some of the old play equipment has been incorporated into the wild flower scene.

### **Toilets**

There are no public toilets long the route but toilets can be found at the Leisure Centre on Shobnall Fields and in public houses near the route. Tourist information signs signpost visitors to local attractions and toilets near to the canal.

### **Seating areas**

There are seats along the trail of varying style. The standard ESBC black metal bench is the main style plus there are benches at Shobnall basin and Horninglow basin. In addition there is a large carved wooden memorial bench on the trail near Horninglow Street.

ESBC grounds maintenance contractors keep areas around the benches clear of debris but they can occasionally attract pockets of excess litter. Volunteers working on the trail litter pick around benches and clear vegetation in the vicinity to reduce the impact of the litter.



Memorial bench



Cycle barrier

### General Maintenance

Overall maintenance is undertaken by ID Verde. ID Verde staff can be seen regularly working on the Trail carrying out a variety of duties. Operatives wear clear and distinction uniforms with ID badges.

### ID Verde badge and uniform



POLO SHIRT



FLEECE JACKET



### Maintenance schedule

Action	Frequency
Grass cutting	10 per year
Leaf clearance	2 per year
Shrub bed spot treatment	3 per year
Shrub bed borders	5 per year
ESBC Officer whole site inspections	12 per year

Hedge maintenance	1 per year
Bin emptying and litter picking	2 per week
Painting metalwork	Every 5 years

Maintenance of the grass is 10 occasions per year starting from March to beginning of November of each year. This is done every three weeks using rotary bladed mowers.

Shrub beds are spot treated with chemical to reduce weeds, this take place in April, July and September in line growing season. Shrubs and are maintained by long handled sheared 5 occasions per year, June, July, August , September and October. Pruning of all shrub beds are completed from November to March with hand tools and all arising's are taken to the contractors recycle tip and is recycled as green waste. At the same time shrub beds are pruned they will be half mooned. All of these contribute towards the visual appearance of the public open space. Bins are emptied at least twice a week due to the high level of footfall. 8 bins in the Kingfisher Trail help to reduce the incidents of littering and dog fouling.

Sweeping of the site is carried out by the Borough Council Waste Services Department and this is done weekly after the mowing has been completed. These synchronised operations ensure the user experience is kept at the highest level. All repairs and damage to Kingfisher Trail are reported within 24 hours by the contractor and actioned appropriately by the Council.

Hedges are maintained with tractor and flail once per year and usually take place at the end of August once the bird nesting season has finished. This helps to keep the paths clear so the public can access the whole park but also leaves the park looking tidy and inviting.

The Kingfisher Trail is a haven for bird's, insects, ducks and swans. This beautiful walk takes in the view of the canal which runs alongside the footpath. Fruit trees have also been planted along the trail, so you can even pick your own fruit.

The Kingfisher Trail is kept to a high standard with the grounds maintenance schedule, and is very popular for residents and visitors for the public to enjoy but also to work and live in.

### **Dog Fouling**

In the past Dog Fouling has been a problem on the Kingfisher Trail. ESBC and the Kingfisher Project have made great progress in increasing the use of the trail over the past few years for legitimate users and responsible dog owners. It remains a popular dog walking route and regular dog fouling initiatives are carried out

throughout the year. The Council has an established Community and Civil Enforcement team who work to educate trail users on responsible dog ownership and can issue fixed penalty notices to offenders if necessary. There are numerous bins along the trail and signage encouraging owners to tidy up after their dogs. From 2017 the trail has been under a Dog Control Order (DCO)

### **Anti-social behaviour and vandalism**

Several partners work together to tackle issues of crime and anti social behaviour along the trail. Most of the trail has been designated an alcohol free zone and as such the Police have powers to move offenders away from the area and confiscate alcohol.

Anti-social behaviour issues are treated seriously, as perceived or actual ASB can affect enjoyment and feelings of safety on a site. All serious incidents of crime, personal safety and anti-social behaviour are dealt with through the Community Safety HUB (HUB). This group meets weekly and includes all the emergency services, enforcement, youth service, neighbourhood coordinators, schools reps, trading standards, and any other specialists as required. The Enforcement team at ESBC has a team of officers, who are able to call on multiple agencies and tactics to identify and deal with ASB issues. Open Spaces Officers, Civil Enforcement Officers, and Police Support Officers also monitor the site on regularly basis and this can include evening and weekend work if necessary.

The Communities and Open Spaces team also monitor the maintenance contract and any reports of damage, excess littering etc are fed into the HUB meetings for partner's information.

The community notice boards provide information on current campaigns and contact numbers for members of the public wishing to get in touch with the Council or emergency services.

### **Conservation and Heritage**

The Kingfisher Trail is steeped in history. It formed part of a branch line for the railway, which mainly serviced the JB Kind timber yard on Shobnall Road. More details on the rail history of Burton upon Trent are on page 7. The trail also runs alongside the Trent and Mersey Canal, constructed in the late 1700's and is now an important and vibrant tourist route.

For the casual user or visitor this history is not apparent as many of the buildings are no longer present. Under the bridge at Dallow lock are a series of murals that depict the heritage of the local area and these were restored by the Parish Council, working with the Neighbourhood Development team in 2013

Habitats present along the Horninglow Channel/Kingfisher Trail are predominantly:

- Species poor grassland
- Open Water
- Hedgerow
- Trees

Different habitats require different management regimes. Hedgerows are laid were possible and then regularly cut, usually by volunteers. More mature hedges are cut twice a year. The Borough Council has a comprehensive tree assessment and maintenance schedule. Trees are inspected according to their risk factor to the public and maintained accordingly. The trail was designated a Local Nature Reserve in 2010, the designation can be found in the appendix.

Volunteers from the Kingfisher Project have planted daffodil bulbs along much of the trail and these plantings are added to every year, giving a blaze of colour at the start of the year.

### **Community Involvement**

The Kingfisher Trail benefits from the active involvement of the Kingfisher Project, which has made the trail a well-used and vibrant open space over the past few years. Members of the group and staff from Trent and Dove housing regularly use the trail for work experience days with local school children and it provides an important and varied resource for local schools.

The continued community involvement is a key element of the trails success and it has been awarded Green Flag status since 2008 and has won several local, regional and national regeneration and environmental awards including a National Housing Federation's Community Impact Award and the Trent and Dove Impact on the Community Award and the prestigious Queens Award for Volunteering.



Volunteer work along Kingfisher trail

A series of allotment plots complement the community garden. These are situated along the embankment of part of the Kingfisher Trail. The area required clearing of overgrowth and rubbish to make it suitable to lay out the plot beds. The project team enlisted the help of young people who were involved at that time with voluntary work through the Princes Trust. They provided the physical labour in this community project and succeeded in clearing the embankment in record time. The plots are now fully commissioned and were officially opened during the summer of 2010. A small contribution is requested from residents who wish to have one of the plots to help with upkeep.

In addition, pupils from Fountains School have constructed plastic bottle greenhouses. In order to maintain the interest of pupils from Fountains School, with whom the project has built a very strong partnership over recent years, it was important to consider a project that would be new, innovative and fun to do. The idea of constructing a plastic bottle greenhouse was met enthusiastically by the pupils and the collection of 1400 bottles.

Communication between the Kingfisher Project group and all of its stakeholders has been the key driver to ensuring that the projects aims are achieved and that partnerships are developed and maintained.

The Kingfisher Project has been recognised nationally as a model of resident led participation with the chair of the group delivering presentations to other representative group. The area has been awarded environmental Green Flag status and has been designated as a 'Local Nature Reserve'.

Residents have been encouraged by the partnership working that has taken place and continue to carry out further activities along the project area as a result.

Natural habitats are enhanced through bird boxes, bat boxes, tree and flower planting. Residents have built a good working relationship with a local conservation volunteer group who regularly use the area for displays and in laying hedging, building wildlife hides and re-establishing natural flora and fauna.

Volunteer days and events ensure that residents feel valued for their participation and contributions to the aims of the project. By making sure that children have a strong input, they bring a powerful force for change by helping identify needs and involving their families. A sense of community and pride now exists amongst tenants in the rejuvenated area.

Levels of fly tipping, littering and low level anti-social behaviour are noticeably diminished. Many years ago, the area was a dumping ground for rubbish and was seen by residents and other agencies as a problem without a solution. Since the area was adopted by a resident management group in 2006, a sense of ownership and pride has been established amongst all stakeholders. The residents' hard work and acceptance of the challenges that have arisen along the way has created an environmental and educational project that brings together communities and agencies and provides a sustainable area of beauty for all to enjoy.

There is a website that has details of news and activities as well as a short history. It can be found at <http://www.kingfisherproject.co.uk>

### Market Appraisal

Parks and the long term vision for open spaces centre on their role in helping to improve residents physical and mental wellbeing. This is part of wider health improvement plan strategy adopted by the Borough Council.

These commitments and the impact for different groups are set out in the market segmentation below.

Segment	Needs	Core Activities	Are these met?
The Great Outdoors	Fresh air and exercise	Dog walking, jogging, walking & cycling	The trail is a safe, flat, traffic free route through part of Burton upon Trent for joggers and walkers. It is also part of the National Cycle Network as route 54. There are plenty of
The Sanctuary	To feel calm, peaceful and relaxed.	Sitting, walking and fishing.	There are several places to sit and relax along the trail and it is a perfect place to talk a traffic free route through part of Burton. Being adjacent to the Trent and Mersey canal there is ample opportunity fish along the canal with the required rod licence from the Environment Agency.
The Playground	Excitement & fun	Playing, feeding ducks, informal games	Although the trail does not have ample space for recreation there are recreation grounds at the two ends of the trail. The adjacent canal offers opportunities to get back to nature and feed the birds.
Team Spirit	Connecting with adults and socialising	Team sports, barbeques and picnics.	The linear nature of the site does not lend itself to areas for team sports or picnics but there are several seating areas along the trail and at each end of the trail there are larger open spaces for sport and recreation
The Disengaged	All of the above	Events	Volunteer work days regularly occur on the site with relatively

			small groups. Pupils on school work experience programmes also use the trail for education and training purposes.
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### Action Plan 2018-2021

The Action Plan for the Kingfisher is derived from the SWOT analysis below.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well used and regarded by the public/community</li> <li>Queens Award for Volunteering recipient</li> <li>Cycle route (54) and commuter route</li> <li>Variety of plants and wildlife</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numerous land owners</li> <li>Dog Fouling</li> <li>Linear design</li> <li>Limited opportunity for sponsorship</li> <li>Survey data is too new longer timeframe is needed to make sense of the data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S106 money from developments</li> <li>Nearby school</li> <li>Links Eton Park and Shobnall</li> <li>Wildlife corridor</li> <li>Use of new technology to engage the public</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management costs and budget pressures</li> </ul>

#### 2018/19

Conduct site surveys	n/a	All staff	A welcoming place	1 per quarter
Conduct visible education and enforcement campaigns to address dog fouling	n/a	Carol Flannery	Safe and secure	Ongoing (3 per year)

#### 2019/20

Conduct site surveys	n/a	All staff	A welcoming place	1 per quarter
Conduct visible education and enforcement campaigns to address dog fouling	n/a	Carol Flannery	Safe and secure	Ongoing (3 per year)

#### 2020/21

Conduct site surveys	n/a	All staff	A welcoming place	1 per quarter
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Conduct visible education and enforcement campaigns to address dog fouling

n/a

Carol  
Flannery

Safe and  
secure

Ongoing  
(3 per  
year)

### **Policies in other service areas**

As well policies that directly affect Parks and Open Spaces there are a number of other service area policies that impact indirectly. These are listed below

- i) **Climate change**  
Available on request
  
- ii) **Communications & Marketing**  
The Borough Council have a specific Marketing Officer that works with Open Spaces teams to effectively market and promote parks and open spaces, this done through a variety of mediums such as social media and other more traditional approaches like local newspapers.
  
- iii) **Enforcement Policy**  
Available on request
  
- iv) **Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy**  
The current Council ASB strategy takes into account recent changes in legislation that has seen changes to the types and ranges of powers available to agencies tackling ASB.

**LOCAL NATURE RESERVE DECLARATION  
EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL  
NATIONAL PARKS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1949  
THE KING FISHER TRAIL LOCAL NATURE RESERVE  
NO. 2 DECLARATION 2010**

In pursuance of Sections 19 and 21 of the above-mentioned Act (as amended by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) and all other powers enabling them in that behalf, East Staffordshire Borough Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Council") hereby declares that the land containing 4.17 hectares or thereabouts situated in the Borough of East Staffordshire and shown edged in red on the attached plan is owned by the Council,

AND in pursuance of Section 19 (2) of the above-mentioned Act and all other powers aforesaid the Council hereby further declare that the said land is being managed as a Local Nature Reserve.

This declaration may be referred to as The King Fisher Trail Nature Reserve No 2

Declaration 2/2010



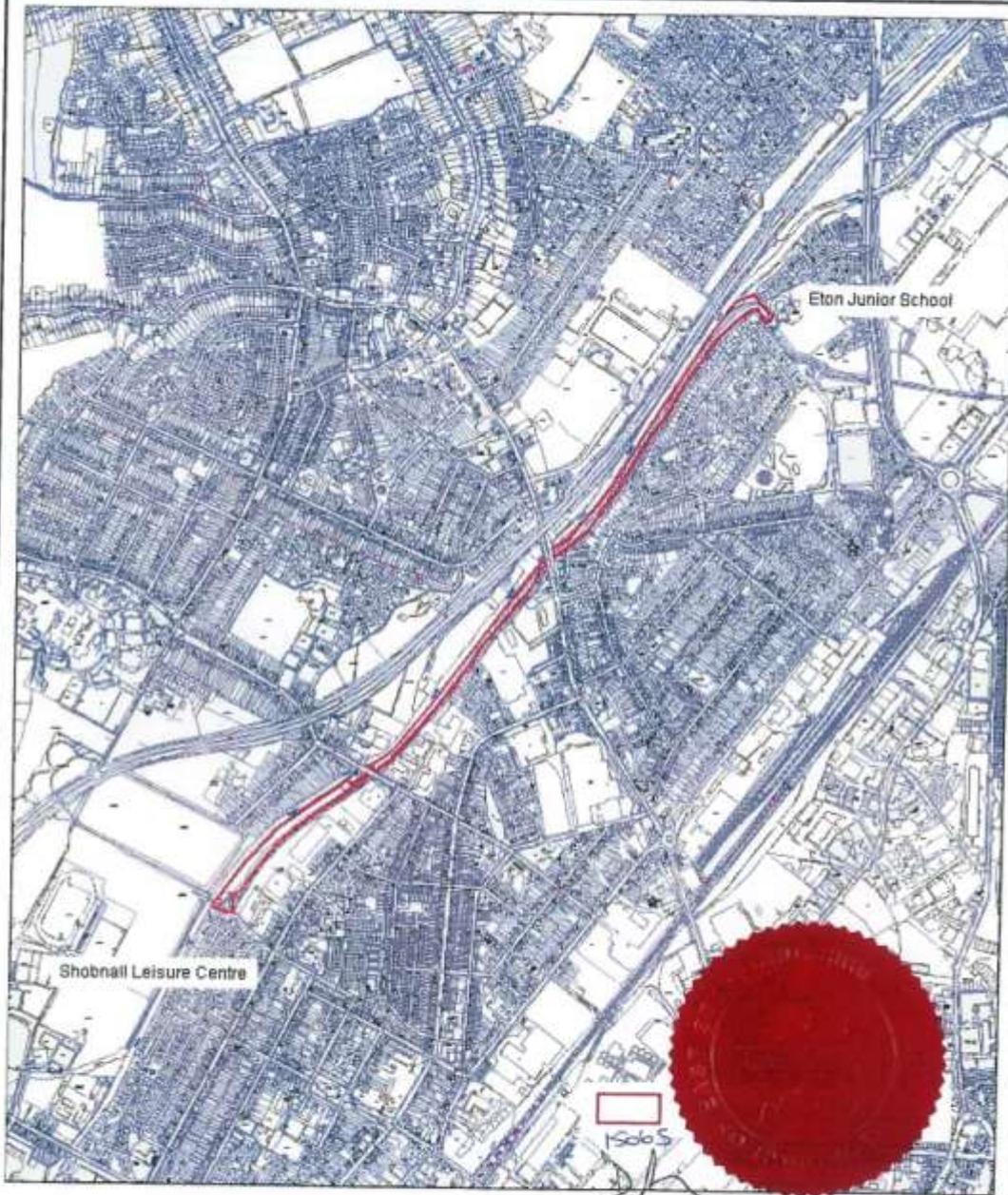
Given under the Common Seal of  
the East Staffordshire Borough Council  
this *6<sup>th</sup>* day of *July* two thousand and ten

(Signed) .....

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
Authorised Signatory

East Staffordshire Borough Council  
Town Hall,  
Burton on Trent,  
Staffordshire,  
DE14 2EB

## Plan B. The Kingfisher Trail LNR Boundary



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Green Spaces  
Millers Lane, off Derby Street  
Buton upon Trent  
Staffordshire  
DE14 2NS

Tel: 01283 508724  
Fax: 01283 593408  
greenspaces@eaststaffsbo.gov.uk  
www.eaststaffsbo.gov.uk

Scale: Not to scale  
Date: 22nd Sept 2009  
Ref: KFT 01

