

# Bourne Stream Partnership

## The Alderney Recreation Ground Project

2006/2007



## BUSINESS PLAN

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## INTRODUCTION

### Bourne Stream Partnership

Based on the south coast of England, the Bourne Stream creates an important green valley corridor for local people and wildlife in a highly developed area. The Bourne Stream Partnership was formed in 2000, its main objective being to address issues of poor water quality that had been highlighted in various studies during the 1990s. Secondary partnership aims include improved public access to the stream and promotion of sustainable development in the catchment.

The Bourne Stream Partnership has achieved a great deal since its formation. The sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) created in the Bourne Valley have not only been a success in terms of water quality and wildlife habitat improvements they have been the subject of study and interest from academics and practitioners at a national level.

It has very significantly raised the profile of the stream and the issues of local water quality at all levels of the local community, from Councillors and public bodies through to individual members of the public.

### Alderney Recreation Ground

Alderney Recreation Ground (the Rec) is a large urban open space owned by Borough of Poole and managed by the council's Leisure Services unit. It occupies 15 hectares of low-lying land and comprises a variety of habitats including areas of grassland, heathland, woodland, ditches and a pond.

Alderney Recreation Ground is the main open space serving a total population of 22,250, 9,250 of which live within a 1.2km<sup>1</sup> walk of the site. Three schools fall within that same threshold distance (one borders the Rec) attended by more than 1,500 pupils.

The site lies immediately south east of the Bourne Valley Local Nature Reserve, an important heathland site afforded national and international protection (SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar site).

Alderney is Poole's second most densely populated area with 31 people to one hectare of land (the Poole average is 21 people/hectare) and has recently been recognised as one of three local hotspots in terms of poverty, health, literacy, crime and anti-social behaviour. In the last three years a number of residents, agencies and other groups have joined together to improve the quality of life in Alderney.

The Bourne Stream Partnership is one of those groups; since April 2003 the Project Officer has been developing trust relationships with a wide range of users and potential users of the Rec, and with the council, schools, churches and other agencies working in the area.

### Heritage Value

Until recent years the Rec was a popular and well-used public open space enjoyed by successive generations. Older residents remember it as the wet heathland valley that it was prior to 1972 when it was infilled with inert material from a local development site. The Bourne Stream was buried in a culvert 2m below the existing ground level and a Recreation Ground created with a children's play area, a number of football and rugby pitches and, later, a Sports Pavilion. An annual fair was a feature of the 1970s, visiting for a week each May. In 1982 a very popular BMX track was created, with professionally run

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<sup>1</sup> 1.2km is the 'access threshold distance' applied for District Parks; the ultimate aim of the project is to create a new Alderney District Park

meetings at weekends. The council's archive files from 1960 to the late '80s portray a successful and well-loved open space, confirmed by the reminiscences of local residents.

Today the site is unsuitable for sport owing to poor drainage. The play area fell into disrepair and has never been replaced, the pitches are gone and the Pavilion is boarded up, a target for vandals and graffiti. The BMX track is no longer maintained due to issues surrounding insurance. Residents now speak of concerns regarding a lack of personal safety and misuse by young motorcyclists, illegal horse grazing and arson. The site's main legitimate use is by dog walkers, but school groups continue to visit for its natural interest - the site is renowned locally for its newt and dragonfly/damselfly populations, and the adjoining SSSI heathland is home to all six of Britain's reptile species, two of which are endangered. Bird watchers visit to spot the rare Dartford warbler, stonechat and nightjar.

## THE PROJECT

### Introduction

The Alderney Recreation Ground project has been prompted by a combination of local flood problems, water quality issues and public concern for misuse of the site.

The project was conceptualised in 2003 and is led by the Bourne Stream Partnership, the Borough of Poole Leisure Services and the Alderney Rec Project Working Group<sup>2</sup>. It has strong public and political support that has been established through various stages and forms of public consultation, a process that is ongoing at the time of writing. Evidence is available in the form of a report and letters of support.

The proposals are planned in four distinct phases (*Table 1*).

The project is designed so that individual phases can represent improvements in their own right, and that the success of the project does not rely on all phases being achieved at one time.

*Table 1: Four-phase proposal*

Phase I	Earthworks	Creation of stream channel, detention pond and fishing lake; installation of a bridge, regrading of access points and other areas; grass seeding & planting.
Phase II	Amenities	Installation of footpaths/cycleways, seating, lighting, litter bins and interpretation
Phase III	Disabled & Vehicular access	Provision of at least one suitable access point for users of wheelchairs & mobility scooters; a vehicular access road to existing Pavilion car park
Phase IV	Pavilion & Play	Refurbishment or demolition of the Pavilion; provision of play facilities

### Objectives

1. To work closely with the local community to recreate an attractive, varied and well-managed open space that residents can be proud of and engage with on a regular basis
2. To increase use of the space by residents and visitors, and for events

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<sup>2</sup> Formed in December 2005, members include 14 residents, council officers, youth & community workers and representatives of the local schools and Police beat team.

3. To improve Bourne Stream water quality, wildlife habitat and reduce incidences of inundation of property during heavy rainfall

### Anticipated Outcomes

1. Increased use by groups that currently have little to do with the space (families, the elderly, cyclists) and those all but excluded (the disabled);
2. A space that meets the cultural needs and expectation of all residents, including those of the Roma and settled traveller communities;
3. Increased use of the space for community events, fairs, guided walks, school visits;
4. A sense of community ownership leading to more responsible attitudes and behaviour in existing users and a reduction in incidences of arson and other misuse of the site and adjoining heathland SSSI;
5. Improved water quality in the Bourne Stream whilst reducing local flood risk, improving drainage, and increasing the potential for improved wildlife habitat and biodiversity;
6. Residents and visitors educated by a good range of signage, interpretation boards and volunteer activities at the Rec.

This Business Plan covers the detail of Phases I & II which are deliverable in 2006.

## PHASES I & II

### Phase I - description

Phase I addresses water quality and habitat issues.

To a very large extent the poor quality of water, and the problem of localised flash flooding during heavy rainfall, is a result of the stream having been culverted to allow extensive development of the valley area which has led to an ever increasing amount of polluted run-off from impermeable surfaces (roads, roofs, driveways and car parks, etc) reaching the stream through the surface water drainage system.

The stream at Alderney first appears from beneath the busy Herbert Avenue and flows in two small tributaries for some 500 metres through woodland to a pond before it enters the culvert below the Rec. Analysis of water samples from the tributaries (2003-2005) shows contamination from diffuse sources, in particular high levels of petrochemicals, and evidence of domestic 'misconnections' (washing machines and bathrooms) from the urbanised drainage catchment.

Evidence is provided from the Partnership's work at Bourne Bottom in Alderney, and from numerous examples worldwide, that effective treatment of diffuse pollution is possible through natural methods where space is available. The treatment is known as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, or SUDS. SUDS are created to detain rainfall and reduce the velocity of it travelling downstream to provide time for oxidation of organic material or sedimentation of heavy metals. They take several forms, but most effective are naturalised (meandering) stream channels, detention basins and wetlands.

With this in mind, Phase I will deliver the following benefits:

1. It has been designed with Wessex Water, the regional water provider, to create a wide, two-stage, 2m deep stream form for the flow that currently travels through the culvert, with a detention basin (pond) and control structure, which will help contain the flash flood potential of a 20 year event. This will significantly reduce the likelihood that homes downstream of the Rec will flood during the sort of heavy rainfall that is forecast once in every 20 years. Specialised marginal planting of the stream and basin will increase biodiversity at the site.
2. We will also be intercepting the two surface water discharges to the (culvert) stream and installing what is known as 'end of pipe solutions', in the form of a wetland, and potentially a reedbed; this will cleanse run-off from the drainage catchment to the north of the site. We have obtained the agreement of residents whose private access to the Rec will be affected by these works.
3. At the same time, the creation of a stream channel, bridge and informal bankside walkways will significantly enhance the enjoyment of the space for residents and visitors and its educational value.
4. For economic reasons, none of the spoil resulting from the excavation works will leave the site. It will be used to create a viewpoint at the lowest point of the field beside the existing pond, and to regrade other areas of the Rec, including the steeply sloping southern access point from Herbert Avenue. The latter work will allow ease of access for users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
5. Phase I includes the creation of a small fishing lake. Research via a national 'Get Hooked on Fishing' scheme by the Police and the Environment Agency provides evidence that "angling can contribute to social inclusion, particularly to disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups, promote environmental awareness and deliver sustained reductions in crime and antisocial behaviour among young people"<sup>3</sup>. These are all problems that are of considerable concern to residents and agencies alike; addressing them in this way also meets Partnership objectives in that young people become involved in and informal 'stewards' of the natural environment. We have the interest of local youths who have been consulted, and the promise of funding and training from the Environment Agency. The lake will be created offline, that is, the stream will run through it only during very high rainfall events due to its potential to contaminate the fishery and vice versa.

## Phase II - description

Phase II complements Phase I and develops its amenity value because:

1. It is clear that one reason for residents failing to visit or to linger in the Rec is the lack of simple facilities such as seating and footpaths.
2. There is also a lack of awareness of the site, which has been most apparent during the promotion of recent events; many parents outside local schools have had to ask or clarify where we mean by 'Alderney Rec', so there is a clear need for appropriate signage.
3. Very few of those spoken to in the past two years have had an appreciation of the intrinsic value of the Rec or the adjoining heathland in terms of its flora and fauna, so good interpretation will provide lasting and important benefits.
4. Many people have spoken of issues surrounding personal safety, especially during dark winter mornings and evenings, and have suggested that lighting would help alleviate that. We are working with English Nature to design an appropriate lighting scheme that will avoid any detrimental impact on the nocturnal habits of wildlife on the adjoining SSSI. We also need to consider the several stargazers that

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<sup>3</sup> For more detail see the Bourne Stream Partnership website:  
[http://www.bournestreampartnership.org.uk/urban\\_fisheries.htm](http://www.bournestreampartnership.org.uk/urban_fisheries.htm)

have made their concerns known through the consultation process. For sustainability, we hope to install photovoltaic (solar powered) lighting.

5. The creation of an improved landscape (Phase I) and installation of footpaths and other amenities (Phase II) will provide an attractive and safe environment in which to promote health initiatives such as formal, organised (and educational) walks which can take in the adjoining SSSI, cycling, informal jogging and other recreational activities.

The anticipated benefits and tangible outputs of each element of Phases I & II are summarised in Table 2, together with outline budget & funding information.

### Further Phases

Phases III & IV are the subject of further public consultation<sup>4</sup> and unlikely to be delivered before 2007; they will be the subject of a second Business Plan at a more appropriate time.

Phase III will deliver benefits whether or not a use can be found for the Pavilion building. If it is not then it is proposed that the building be demolished and the car park increased in size. The area of hard standing has proved useful on a day-to-day basis for visiting Rangers and maintenance contractors, especially during wet weather, and a good surface for a range of activities, such as the climbing wall and the street dancing that are planned for fun days during 2006 and in the future.

Phase IV will depend on the outcome of ongoing public consultation. The unused Pavilion has been vandalised inside and out; if a "sustainable and appropriate" use can be found then it would require complete renovation. If not then it is proposed to demolish the building as soon as possible. As it stands it is a potentially dangerous eyesore and attracts a variety of anti-social behaviour.

Phase IV also allows for the provision of play equipment, also the subject of ongoing consultation. During the initial consultations in the summer of 2005, a children's play area was a clear favourite with residents, but funding has recently been secured to install a play park and ball court in the grounds of the local Bourne Valley Youth Centre. In light of this the provision of play facilities at Alderney Recreation Ground has become less urgent.

### Access Issues

A number of options are being considered to secure the Rec as far as is possible against illegal access while opening it up to legitimate use.

High on the list of the project's target audience are:

- Users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Very close to the Rec is the Smithers Respite Home for disabled children, and the Barnabas day centre for adults who currently have no easy access at all to the space;
- Parents/guardians using pushchairs. New footpaths will provide a good off-road route to nearby schools & nurseries, the library, leisure centre, shops and community centres, but access must be improved to maximise their success.

At the same time, project managers have to consider:

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<sup>4</sup> During spring term 2006 students from Rossmore Community College, other 'pyramid' schools and the extended schools parliaments, will work on a 10-week project to identify a sustainable and appropriate use for a refurbished Pavilion at the Rec; students will invite public opinion through use of the "Planning for Real" concept which takes into account residents with literacy problems.

*Table 2: Phases I & II - benefits, tangible outputs & costs*

Phase	Work	Benefits	Tangible Outputs	Estimated Cost <sup>5</sup> / Funded by
1.1	Deculverting the stream	Opportunity to improve water quality & enhance wildlife habitat; Amenity benefit.	Open stream channel	£34,000 / Wessex Water
1.2	Provision of a detention basin & control structure	Detention of flood water for natural cleansing; Reduction in the risk of flooding to property downstream of the site during heavy rainfall events; Wildlife habitat/biodiversity benefit; Education/awareness opportunity.	Pond-like basin Concrete/stone bridge structure	£19,000 / Wessex Water
1.3	Creation of wetland/reedbed at sws discharges	To naturally cleanse surface water discharge from the drainage catchment; Wildlife habitat/biodiversity benefit; Education/awareness opportunity.	Wetland areas	£1,000 / Wessex Water
1.4	Construction of bridge mid-stream	Ease of access to all areas of the Rec is maintained; Opportunity to involve the local community in its construction.	Wooden bridge	£12,000 / Wessex Water
1.5	Recycling spoil for regrading	Cost benefit (spoil stays on site); Provision of a viewpoint, with views from existing pond, along stream course to SSSI heathland beyond; Regrading of steep access track and other landscaping makes provision for users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters.	Improved landscaping Improved access for wheelchair & mobility scooter users, pushchairs, etc.	£14,500 / Borough of Poole
1.6	Creating a fishing lake	Recreational & social benefits; Opportunity to include young people in stocking, training & management/stewardship.	Fishpond with swims	£11,000 / Environment Agency & Borough of Poole

<sup>5</sup> Estimates indicated on this table include pre-project costs, but exclude salaries/project management costs

Phase	Work	Benefits	Tangible Outputs	Estimated Cost /Funded by
2.1	Provision of footpaths/cycleways, seating, lighting & litter/dog waste bins	Everday amenity benefits; Improved facilities for visitors to events; Safer off-road route to schools, library, leisure centre, shops; Opportunity to promote health initiatives - walking & cycling, jogging.	1000m of footpath/cycleway 8 x park seats 4 x lighting columns 8 x litter / dog waste bins	£70,000 / part funded by existing awards. Further funding sought
2.2	Planting	Landscape benefits; Opportunity to involve local community in choice & planting of species.	Woodland areas	£6,000 / Borough of Poole
2.3	Installation of street signage & interpretation boards	Education & awareness.	4 (min) x interpretation boards 3 (min) x street signs	£4,200 / Funding sought

- Good vehicular access must be maintained and possibly improved for emergency vehicles - fire, police & ambulance;
- Past and current issues of illegitimate access, such as trespass by traveller groups (last occasion June 2003), motorcyclists and young users of monkey bikes (mini-motos).

One element of the wider consideration of access issues is the regrading of land using the spoil from excavation of the stream channel and ponds during Phase I. This includes areas around the Pavilion and car park, and at the southerly woodland walk leading from Herbert Avenue. The access track at the latter is currently unmade-up and steep, but will be promoted as the key access point from the busy main road and new housing estate opposite, with a footpath/cycleway leading from it. During Phase III (or as a sub-project should funding be available earlier) a disabled access gate will be installed at Herbert Avenue. Another is planned for the vehicular access point at Turbary Close, and a third is being considered, subject to funding and the results of a feasibility study.

### MARKETING

A programme of community events and ongoing public consultation is having the effect of bringing the site, and the impending improvement works, to the attention of the wider community. This alone is likely to increase usage.

A community Fun Day will accompany the completion of Phase I, which has been locally funded, and encourage more people to the area. A high-profile Open Day is planned to celebrate the completion of Phase II. Both of these events will be designed to raise awareness and further increase usage.

The Bourne Stream Partnership Project Officer maintains a regularly updated project website at [www.bournestreampartnership.org.uk](http://www.bournestreampartnership.org.uk) which attracts approximately 4,000 visitors each month. The Alderney Recreation Ground project is described in full with a progress report and other relevant news and information.

The Partnership enjoys good relations with the local media and intends to take full advantage of every opportunity to publicise its work, and the contributions of funding partners, during and after the project's lifetime.

### EVALUATION

The project will be evaluated on its success in meeting its three main objectives:

*Table 3: Evaluation Process*

Period	Measure	Evaluation Indicator Question	Measured against/by
Short term	Objective 1	Has the local community been closely involved in delivery of the project?	Experience & observation
Medium term (3 months)	Objective 2	Has usage of the site increased significantly?	Comparison of pre- & post-project surveys; observation
Long term (1 year)	Objective 2 & 3	If medium term result positive - Has the increased usage been sustained?	Comparison of pre- & further post-project surveys; observation
		If medium term result negative - Has usage increased since medium term measurement	Comparison of pre- & further post-project surveys; observation

Period	Measure	Evaluation Indicator Question	Measured against/by
Long term (1 year)	Objective 2 & 3	Has user behaviour improved?	Comparison of Police & Fire records, resident satisfaction survey & observation
		How many events have been held at the site?	Previously none, observation & record
		Has water quality improved?	Sampling & data analysis; comparison with 2001-2005 data
Longer term (2 years+)	Objective 3	Has habitat improved?	Comparison of baseline & follow-up survey 2005
		Has biodiversity increased?	Comparison of baseline & follow-up survey 2005
		Have instances of flooding decreased?	Comparison of Wessex Water records; observation

### TIMESCALE

A start date for Phase I (excavation work) is weather-dependent; costs have been estimated on the basis of excavating dry earth. Working with wet ground conditions would increase project costs and cannot be considered.

Originally it was hoped to make a start at the end of April or early May, however a delay resulted from uncertainties over a requirement for Planning Permission.

Borough of Poole planning department have now confirmed that the project can proceed under the Town and County Planning Act, General Permitted Development Order 1995 Part 14, and that as a Land Drainage Authority the Borough of Poole does not require Planning Permission to undertake the works at Alderney Recreation Ground.

It is anticipated that Phase I is now more likely to commence mid-May. A recently revised project timescale is described in Table 4.

*Table 4: Phases I & II - Proposed Timings*

2006

Activity	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Tender period						
Phase I - Earthworks - stream, pond, control structure, viewpoint, regrading & fishing lake						
Phase I - Bridge construction, seeding & planting						
Phase II - Footpaths, seating, lighting & litter bins						

### COSTS

The overall cost of the wider four-phase project is likely to be between £350,000 and £500,000. This Business Plan addresses Phases I & II, the costs for which have been estimated at £189,000.

Phase I costs have been estimated through consultation with Dean & Dyball, a locally-based international construction and engineering company with previous experience of working in Alderney, and in environmentally sensitive areas.

Both Borough of Poole (landowners) and Wessex Water (majority funding partner Phase I) let contracts to Dean & Dyball on a regular basis, and it will be included in the tender list. The company is also known to be one of the more expensive contractors on that list, so we can be confident that we are unlikely to exceed the figures presented.

Phase II costs have been estimated in consultation with Borough of Poole engineers and landscape architects. The current costs of various types of footpaths/cycleways and a wide range of public amenities are well known to them.

### BUDGET

Table 5 describes a £46,000 shortfall in funding to deliver Phases I & II.

*Table 5: Phases I & II - Budget Costs*

	Estimated Costs	Funding available	Balance
Total estimated cost Phases 1 & II	£189,000		
Funding currently available to deliver Phases I & II		£143,000	
	<b>£189,000</b>	<b>£143,000</b>	<b>-£ 46,000</b>

The steps being taken to secure further contributions and manage funding risks are outlined in the Funding section below.

### FUNDING

The £46,000 shortfall in funding for Phases I & II is being addressed through various applications to grant making bodies; applications for larger amounts (more than £50,000) will include those elements of Phase II which require funding, and make some provision for Phases III & IV.

#### Addressing the Shortfall & Future Applications

A funding application for £50,000 was submitted to Biffaward (Landfill Tax Credit Scheme) in March 2006.

The Bourne Stream Partnership is discussing a potential Heritage Grant of more than £50,000 with the Heritage Lottery that considers the natural heritage and nature conservation value of the site.

Looking forward to Phases III & IV, an outline bid has been submitted to the Big Lottery Fund Changing Spaces programme for up to £200,000; there will be an opportunity to include an allowance for the items that come within the Phase II shortfall in a detailed application should the outline bid be accepted.

Borough of Poole will be encouraged to apply for funding for Phase IV from the recently launched Big Lottery Children's Play programme which is open only to Local Authorities. At the same time, the Bourne Stream Partnership will seek to develop a "creative and novel approach to addressing an identified need within the field of children's play" via the ongoing public consultation for the Pavilion building, thereby meeting the requirements of the Big Lottery Playful Ideas programme (£10,000 - £250,000).

Other funding opportunities are actively investigated on an ongoing basis.

## Funding Secured

Partial funding for Phases I & II has been secured from several sources:

*Table 6: Phases I & II - Funding Secured to Date*

Funding Partner	Project Element	Amount
Wessex Water	Earthworks, wetlands & bridge	£67,000
Borough of Poole	Pre-project surveys; on-site recycling of spoil & woodland planting	£50,000
English Nature	Pre- & post-project ecological survey work	£2,000
Environment Agency	Contribution to public consultation costs	£2,000
Environment Agency	Fishing lake & swims	£10,000
Bourne Stream Partnership	Contribution to Project Officer salary during project planning & delivery (6 months)	£12,000
<b>Total:</b>		<b>£143,000</b>

## Managing Funding Risks

Two risks have been identified:

1. No further funding is secured before July 2006
2. There is a shortfall in available funding

There is a risk that the current application for Landfill Tax Credit funding will fail. Should this be the case Phase I is capable of standing alone as a sub-project with its own targets and outcomes, until such time as further funding is secured for Phase II. The greatest risk is the disappointment of local residents, but this can be managed; local expectations are high, but realistic, in most part due to the high level of consultation and communication between project planners and beneficiaries.

It is generally felt (and public consultation supports this) that aspects of Phase II such as seating & lighting delivers highest amenity value if a choice has to be made. It is therefore probable that the element of Phase II to be affected by any shortfall will be footpaths /cycleways. Some 1,000m of footpath is proposed at a cost of £40/m. There are three separate elements to the footpath network, and it will be quite feasible that one, or even two elements of it can be delayed until further funding is found.

There is also the possibility that Borough of Poole will contribute an additional amount to cover any reasonable shortfall due to level of public interest and political support for the project.

## POST-PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The management of Alderney Recreation Ground has been an issue for residents for some years. Since the conception of this project, and the recruitment of a council-employed Bourne Valley Ranger, there has been a measurable and sustained improvement in the maintenance regime, and a hands-on approach to management. Communications from residents are now far more likely to be complementary than complaining, and there is now a good level of informal 'stewardship', suggestions and problem reporting by an increasing proportion of the community.

The Borough of Poole's latest Open Spaces Strategy (2005-2015) identifies Alderney Rec as an important but neglected component of Poole's network of open spaces, and suggests that its status be upgraded from Recreation Ground to District Park. This suggests a long-term commitment to the regeneration of the space, and consequently to the management of it.

The Bourne Stream Partnership has been assured of the Council's full support of all elements of the project described in this document, and have supplied a good range of resources to ensure its success. The Council will:

- Adopt and maintain the footpaths/cycleways and all public amenities (seating, lighting, bins, interpretation boards) installed by the project
- The Bourne Valley Ranger and Community Liaison Officer will ensure the continued involvement of the community through a programme of events and volunteer tasks that has already been introduced
- In negotiation with Wessex Water, will adopt and maintain the deculverted watercourse
- The Leisure Services Coastal & Capital Works team will take particular responsibility for the maintenance of the stream channel and ponds and their ongoing effectiveness as a SUDS (sustainable urban drainage system).

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April 2006*