

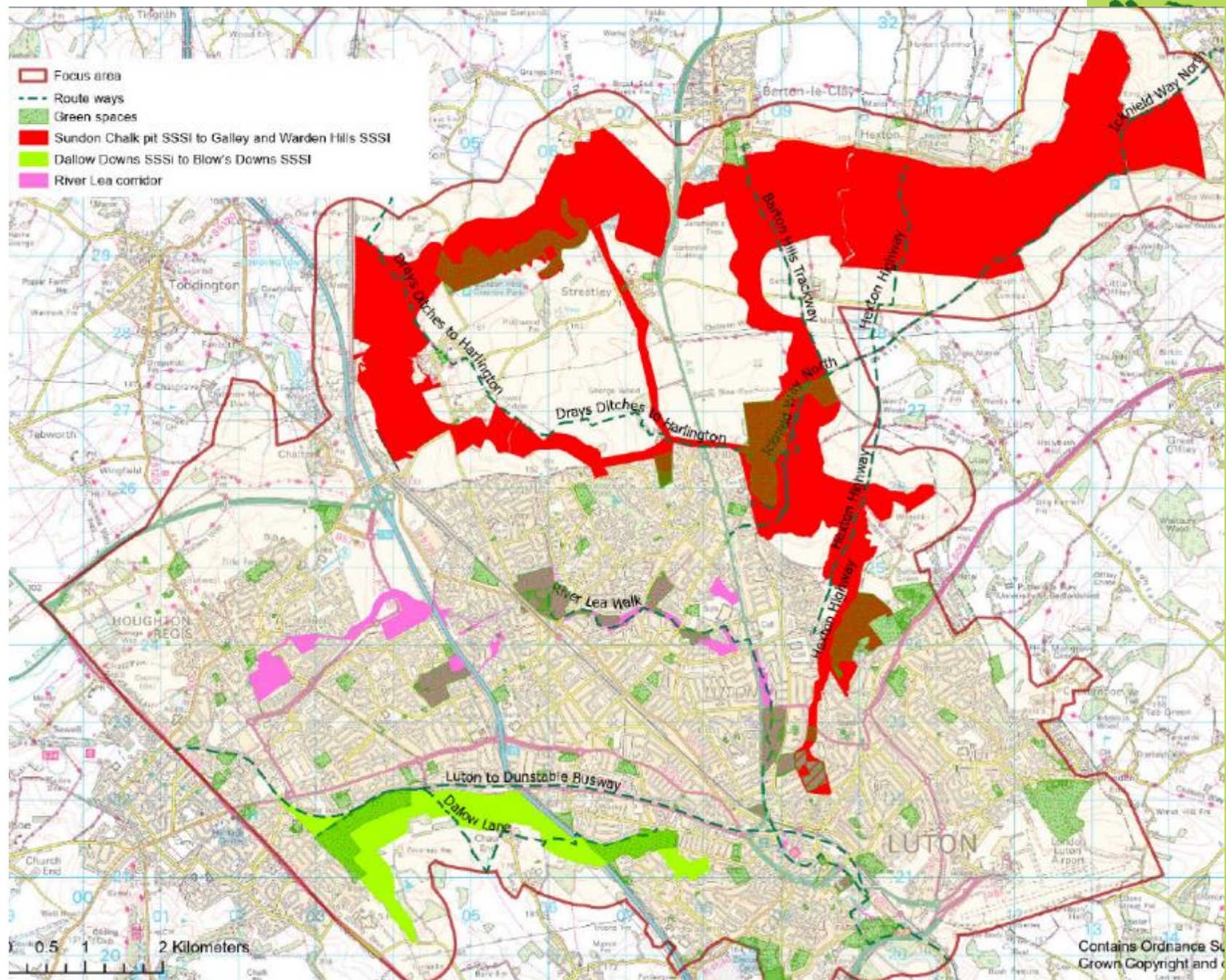
Annette Weiss, Head of Engagement & Partnerships Chilterns National Landscape

Improving access to Luton's
greenspaces and wider Chilterns



Berkshire Vision countryside walks





Co-creating spaces for supporting diverse communities to use greenspaces and the countryside

Nasreen Ali, Isabella Kabasinguzi, Erica Cook, Gurch Randhawa



INSTITUTE FOR
HEALTH RESEARCH

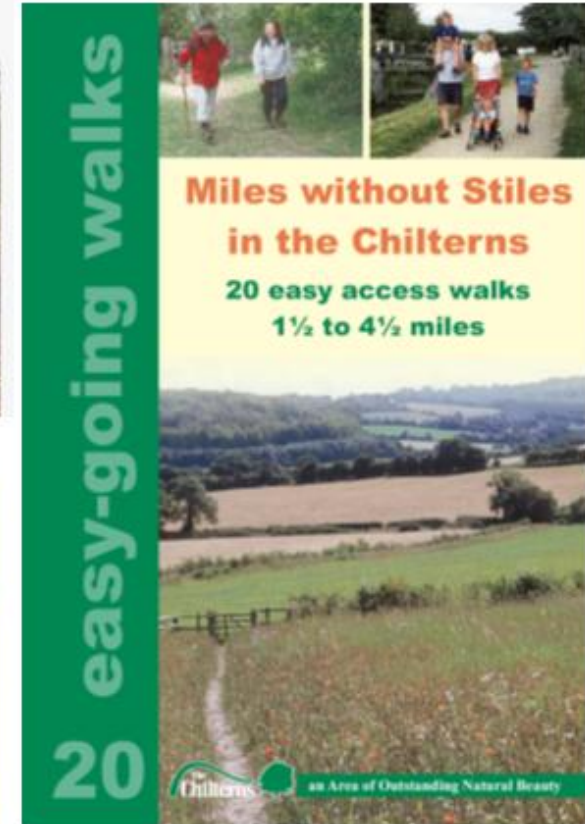


Improving accessibility to greenspaces & countryside

- Physical access improvements – removing barriers, path surfaces
- Increasing focus on people with visual impairments and wider needs

Chilterns AONB @ChilternsAONB · Apr 12
The fab @BuDs UK team, carrying out 'Fair4all' #accessibility & inclusion surveys for Whitelack Hill & Brush Hill #nature reserves.

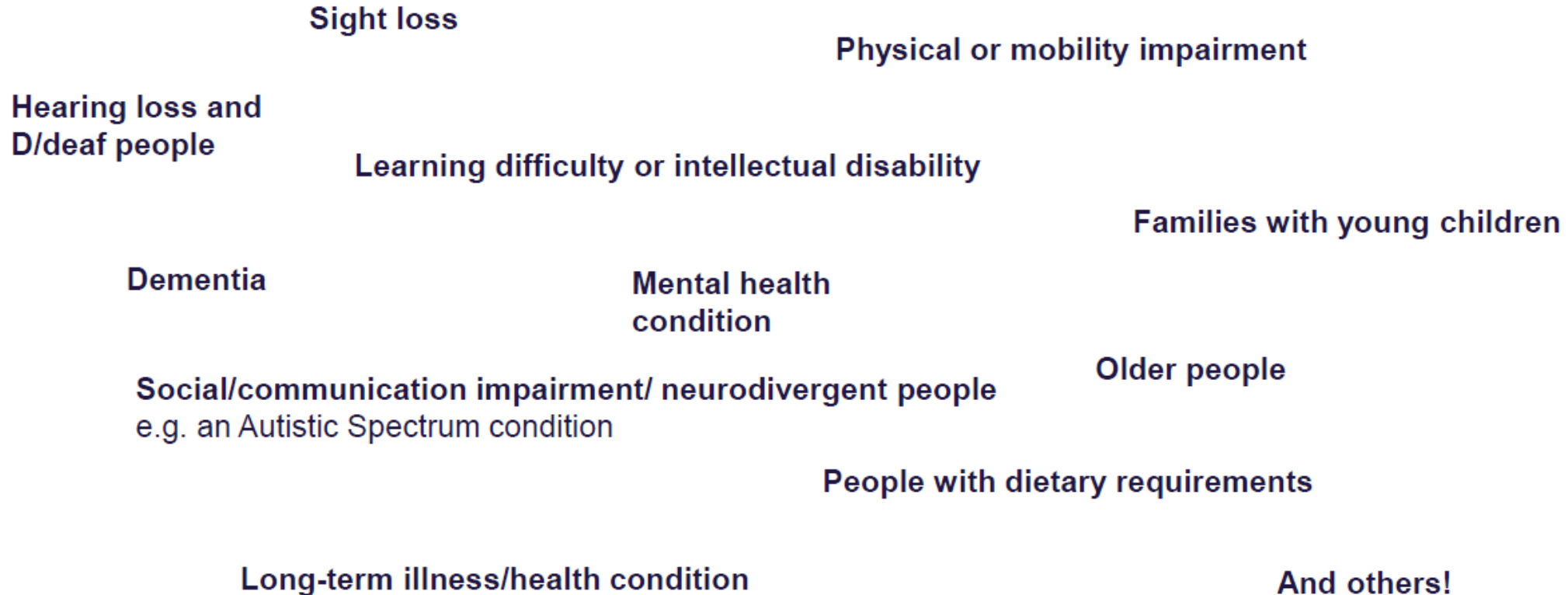
This will help improve online information & identify future improvements for those with mobility needs, #visualimpairment & #neurodiversity.



1 in 4 of UK population is disabled. Only 7% of disabled people are wheelchair users

Who else has accessibility requirements?

People with:



Making information more accessible and engaging for different audiences



QR code links to information in 4 different languages

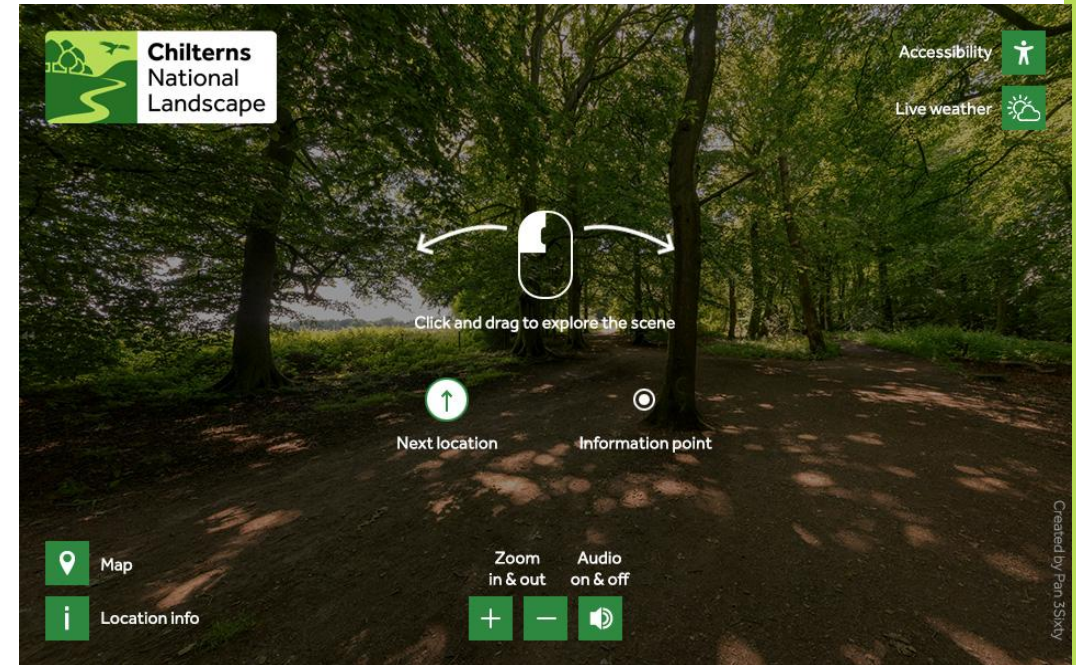


Blows Down virtual heritage trail - Co-creation project with local schools

Making information more accessible and engaging for different audiences



Augmented Reality tour, Seven Ways Plain



Grims Ditch virtual tour



Videos **co-created** with school groups

Discover the Chilterns National Landscape

Explore some of the Chilterns' most beautiful and accessible countryside – free to visit, with level, step-free paths and breathtaking views for everyone to enjoy.

Countryside site facilities and features

- Accessible and regular parking available
- Regular parking only
- Tramp and wheelchair hire (must be pre-booked)
- Information/Visitor Centre
- Café
- Hilltop viewpoint
- Accessible and standard toilets on site

1 Sharpnose Clappers

Ancient woodland and chalk grassland site with traces of an Iron Age hillfort and medieval rabbit warrens that once provided meat and skins.

2 Sundon Hills Country Park

One of the highest points in Bedfordshire with stunning views over Sharpnose Clappers. Waymarked trails, picnic areas, and lots of nature to see and explore.

3 Galley and Warden Hills Nature Reserve

A chalk grassland common with Bronze Age barrows (burial mounds) and orchards. Choose from three routes, including a level one, and look for wildflowers and butterflies.

4 Chiltern Gateway Centre at Dunstable Downs

On the Chiltern ridge, Dunstable Downs is the highest point in the east of England. Enjoy miles of open grassland, fly a kite or have a picnic.

5 Whipsnade Tree Cathedral

Created after WWII to remember those who died. Wander peaceful grassy paths lined with trees planted to form the shape of a medieval cathedral.

6 Tottenham Knolls

Tottenham Knolls is a historic site. Once a castle and later a quarry, it is now a flower-rich chalk grassland nature reserve where large orchids are visited by hungry green woodpeckers.

7 Ivinghoe Beacon

This chalk grassland site is home to a Late Bronze Age hillfort, and stunning views. As part of the Ashridge Estate, it offers walks for all ages and abilities.

8 Ashridge Estate

Ancient woodland, rolling chalk hills and lush meadows are just some of the highlights of the Ashridge Estate. Visitor facilities and easy routes make this a popular spot.

9 College Lake Nature Reserve

A former chalk quarry transformed into a haven for both wildlife and people. Accessible walks and bird hides help everyone to enjoy the lakeside views and visiting birds. Dogs are not allowed at the reserve (other than Guide Dogs).

10 Tring Reservoirs

Built to serve the canal system, these four reservoirs – all close together – are some of the best birdwatching spots in southern England. There are easy access walks along the reservoirs and Grand Union Canal towpath.



11 Wendover Woods (& Go Ape)

Beautiful woodlands with family-friendly trails, a café and adventure playground. For those who fancy a challenge, try Go Ape – a treetop forest adventure.



Aston Rowant Nature Reserve

Ivinghoe Beacon

12 Coombe Hill

With stunning panoramic views at one of the highest points in the Chilterns, it is a great place for picnics and spotting red kites. There's also a fun play trail.

13 Lindengate Charity and Open Garden

Based in Wendover, Lindengate is a mental health charity that has an award-winning garden and nature reserve. Open all year-round for quiet reflection, wellbeing courses and volunteering.

14 Whitelof Hill Nature Reserve

Rising above the market town of Princes Risborough, Whitelof Hill is full of historic features, including a huge chalk cross, a Neolithic barrow and WWII training trenches.

15 West Wycombe Hill and Estate

West Wycombe Hill, the site of an Iron Age hillfort, offers stunning countryside views over the village's historic cottages, pubs, cafés, and shops. Below the hill, West Wycombe Park has several wheelchair-friendly walking routes, and there is accessible parking at the nearby Walled Garden Café.

16 Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve

Perched high in the Chilterns, the reserve contains flower-rich chalk grassland, woodland and juniper scrub. There are fantastic views with red kites soaring overhead.

17 Cowleaze Wood

This woodland site offers lovely vistas and pretty bluebells in May. There are lots of paths to explore, and areas for picnics and children to play.

18 Watlington Hill

A chalk grassland site with panoramic views over Watlington. There's short turf, scrub and yew woodland. Look out for butterflies and red kites while you picnic.

19 Warburg Reserve

Warburg is a remote spot, full of exciting plants and animals all year round. The orchid-filled grasslands in the valley give way to woodlands on the slopes.

20 Black Park Country Park (& Go Ape)

A large site with woodland, heathland and open spaces. Enjoy family-friendly attractions, such as Go Ape, miles of woodland tracks and trails, and wildlife spotting.

Free to explore, with regular events. Accessible parking and toilets available by booking or prior arrangement.

Box Moor Trust

Free to explore, with regular events. Accessible parking and toilets available by booking or prior arrangement.



What is a Chalk Stream?

There are eight major chalk streams that have their source within the Chilterns National Landscape and flow south-southwards down the gentle slope of the chalk escarpment. In addition, there are many small chalk streams that rise from springs along the base of the steeper north-west-facing slopes – from the Davine Brook near Watlington in the south, to the Barton and Bunwell springs north of Luton. Together, they form around 150 km of chalk stream habitat, supporting diverse wildlife such as water voles, otters, kingfishers, and banded demisseals (damselflies). These streams also have a rich heritage, supporting the development of important local industries including watercress farming and milling.



- Map key**
- Countryside sites
 - Paid-for attractions
 - National Trust
 - Hillforts
 - Rivers and chalk streams
 - Railway stations
 - Underground stations
 - Ridgeway National Trail
 - Thames Path National Trail
 - Market towns
 - Woodland
 - Hills

Front cover images: Bottom: Woodoaks Farm © Sue Lacey
Top left: Children enjoying the countryside trail near the Road Dash Museum
© The Road Dash Museum
Top right: River Thames view to Pangbourne Handmill Estate © Mend the Gap
Designed by: @thehandmilldesign.co.uk Printed on FSC uncoated paper.



What is a hillfort?

A hillfort is a prehistoric site enclosed by earthenworks, such as ditches and banks. In the Chilterns, hillforts were built between the Late Bronze Age and the Middle Iron Age (c.1000 – c.500 years ago) by local farming communities. Hillforts served many purposes, including protecting livestock and defending places for people to live.

There are 20 hillforts in the Chilterns National Landscape, many of which are still visible today as raised earth structures. We've highlighted the most accessible sites so everyone can explore these fascinating remnants of the past.

22 Burnham Beeches

Large countryside site with wonderful ancient woodland and plenty of wildlife. Lots of waymarked paths and visitor facilities, including a café and sensory trail.

23 Rickmansworth Aquadrome

A beautiful site with two lakes that are home to lots of waterbirds. There are accessible pathways, an exciting play area and a welcoming café.

24 Woodoaks Farm

This Soil Association organic farm has a café and walks around the countryside offering sweeping views. Look out for nature walks and family-friendly events. Accessible toilets available if you've booked a Tramp or contacted Woodoaks Farm in advance.



Visit our website for more details on the featured sites and to access an audio description of the map and guide.

Crucial to have good accessibility information to help plan visits

“If I don’t know I won’t go”

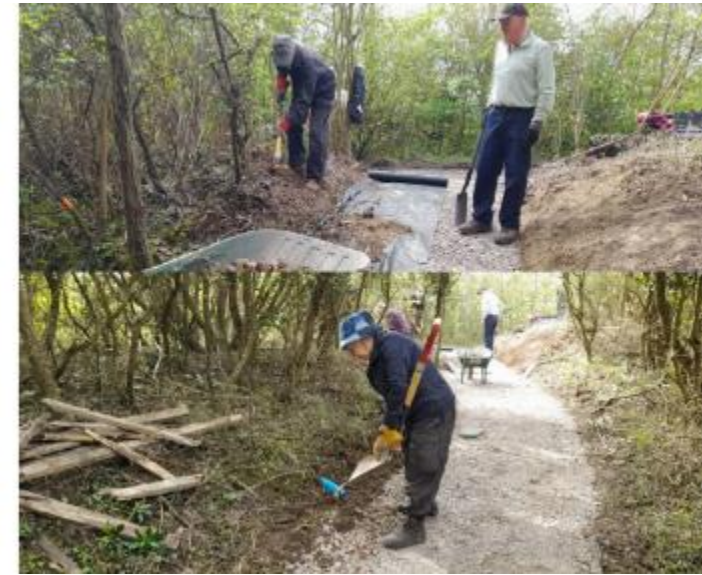
- Images and videos so you know what to expect
- AccessAble – opportunity to add more Luton sites?
- We have commissioned PHAB to produce 8 videos of the most accessible countryside sites in the Chilterns – more to follow
- 8 countryside access guides – detailed access info
- Ridgeway National Trail using 360 degree cameras to record Ridgeway route and upload to Google Street View

The screenshot shows the AccessAble website interface. At the top, the logo reads 'AccessAble The new name for DisabledGo Your Accessibility Guide'. Navigation links include 'About', 'Get Involved', 'Blog', and 'Contact'. Search fields are provided for 'I'm looking for...' (with a hint to search for restaurants, hotels, hospitals, universities) and 'Near to...' (with a hint to enter a place, town, or postcode). The main content area features the National Trust logo and the title 'Sundon Hills Country Park - National Trust'. Below the title is the address: '63 Watlington Rd, Sundon, Luton, Bedfordshire LU13 3DE'. To the right, there are two small images of the park. At the bottom, a detailed map of the park is shown, highlighting various accessible routes and facilities. A legend on the right side of the map lists the following features: Viewpoint, Parking, Disabled parking, Stile-free paths, Toilets, Accessible toilets, Tramper hire, Wheelchair hire, Visitor Centre, Café, Dogs allowed on leads, No dogs allowed, and Ridgeway National Trail. The map also labels specific locations like 'Victory Cross', 'Upper Pond', 'The Mire', and 'Sir Henry Peck Drive'.

2025/26 Defra Access funding

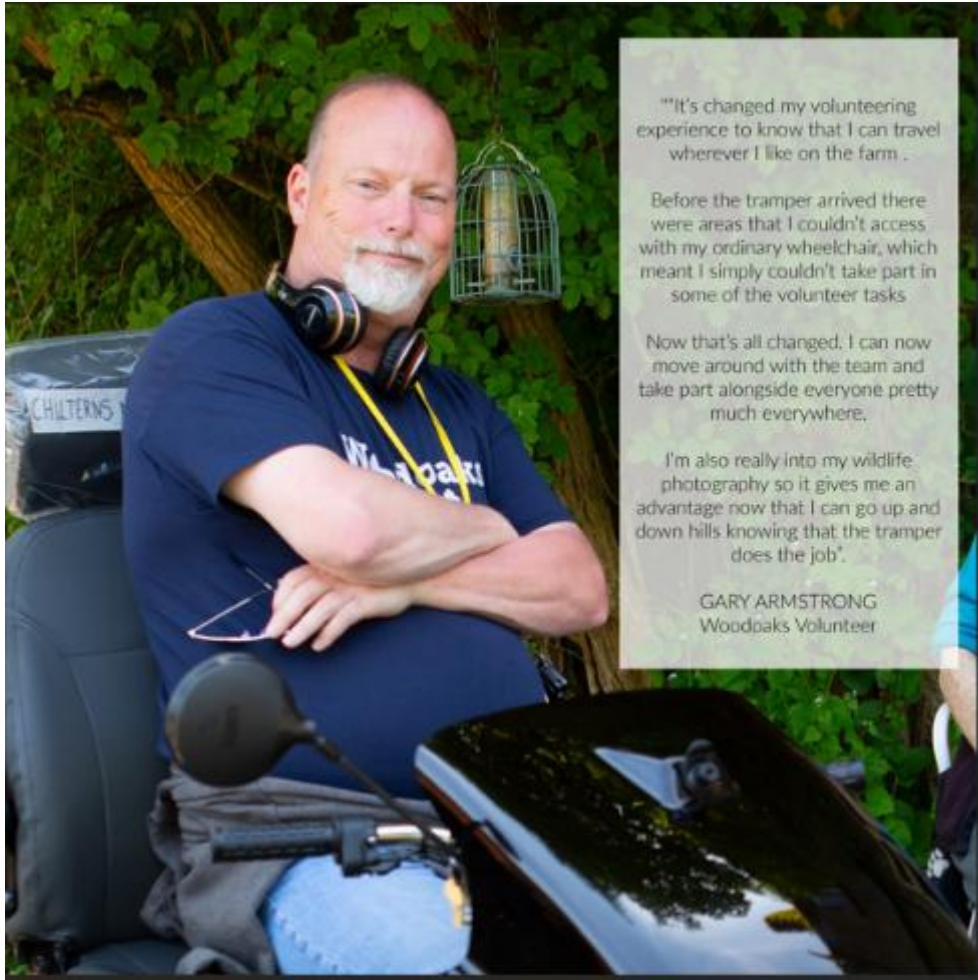
Examples of eligible expenditure:

- Disabled toilet facilities
- Replacement of gates
- Additional seating areas
- Improved access to waterways for the mobility-impaired
- Widening & resurfacing of paths for multi-user use
- Trampers, mobility scooters, electric bikes, and storage/charging facilities
- Specially adapted tools & PPE for volunteers
- Accessible signage and visitor information, physical and digital
- Access infrastructure
- Access audits



College Lake near Tring

Examples of projects funded



Mobility vehicle at Woodoaks Farm



Chiltern Open Air Museum @ChilternOAM · Jan 9

Thanks to a Chilterns Access Grant from the Chiltern Conservation Board, we will be installing a new accessible toilet onsite.

@ChilternsAONB



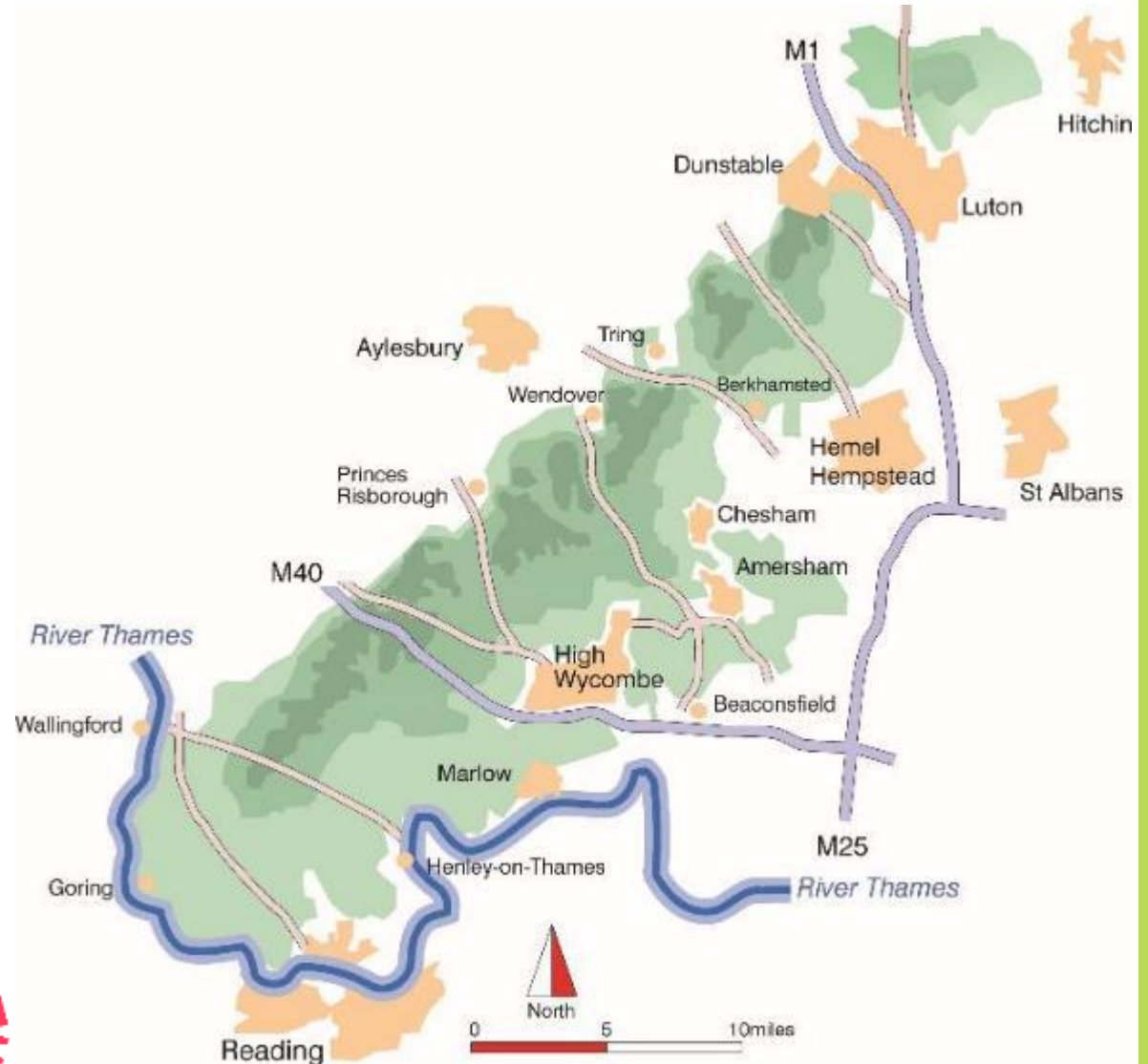
New accessible toilet facility at the Chiltern Open Air Museum

Luton projects...

- Access and interpretation improvements at Luton County Wildlife sites- Riverside Walk, Fallowfield, Stony Hill and Cowslip Meadow.
- Accessible chalk path and seating at Luton Henge
- Volunteering tools for Parks volunteers
- Videos: Luton's Chalk Hills by Abi Spendlove, Luton Youth Network

Why Nature Calling, why Luton?

- We have been trying to do more in Luton for many years - Chalkscapes
- Nature Calling was an ideal opportunity. Chilterns hub within Luton to help connect with diverse communities
- Luton super-diverse (55% population non-white), over 100 languages spoken Many barriers to accessing greenspaces.
- Engaging Luton communities is part of our EDI vision
- Working with creative producers Revolution Arts.
- 2-year programme, co-creation approach



Location of Nature Calling "Luton Henge" - Leagrave



Leagrave - Source of the River Lea



Wauluds Bank



- Marsh House Community Centre – home of Revoluton Arts.
- This is the focal point for the project – at the heart of the communities we want to reach.
- A history of engagement including source of the River Lea, a history of local activism based upon the socio-economic background of Luton, the development of the residential sites.
- Luton2040 policy in action – NetZero, Arts and Heritage Strategy, Social Justice Unit

Writer and Artist Commision - led to programme of community events from Sep 2024



Hilltop and Holywell Guided Walk

Wednesday 4 September 2024



Waulud's Bank: Through Time Guided Walk

Wednesday 6 November 2024



Chalk Walk Guided Walk

Thursday 14 November 2024



Into the Woods

A Guided Walk and Coppicing Demonstration

Thursday 21 November 2024



Weaving Willow

Monday 25 November 2024



Waulud's Bank Story Circle

Wednesday 11 September 2024



Totternhoe Chalk

Thursday 5 December 2024



What is a Luton Henge?

A Nature Calling Initiative

Wednesday 11 December 2024



The vision and community interest grew! Aspirations for a permanent monument



8 stones in total, sourced from the
Totternhoe Quarry managed by
Wildlife Trust BCN
Sunrise and sunset solstice
North, South, East and West facing

Benches designed by the
community sourced from partners at
Natural England and National Trust



Solstice celebrations at Luton Henge



“As the longest day ends, something new begins”.



Further community workshops culminating in the Luton Henge Festival 26 July



LUTON HENG FESTIVAL

Saturday 26 July 2025

[INFO →](#)



Chalk stones in place ahead of opening of new henge



MATTHEW ROKER

The chalk stones came from the Tottenhoe quarry on the Dunstable Downs

Next steps...

- Stewardship agreement and the formation of the Luton Henge Collective
- Legacy planning, a 3-year plan with succession based upon local interest of nature-based activities, art, culture and communitarianism
- Link to wider initiatives: Nature Towns & Cities, Not Bourne Yesterday, Defra Access funded work
- New partnerships including those local Luton community groups, education sector, Friends of Leagrave Park, Be Active Partnership
- Secure ongoing funding – Heritage Lottery Fund, BLCF – role for North Chilterns Partnership? BIG CHALK
- Share learning – case studies

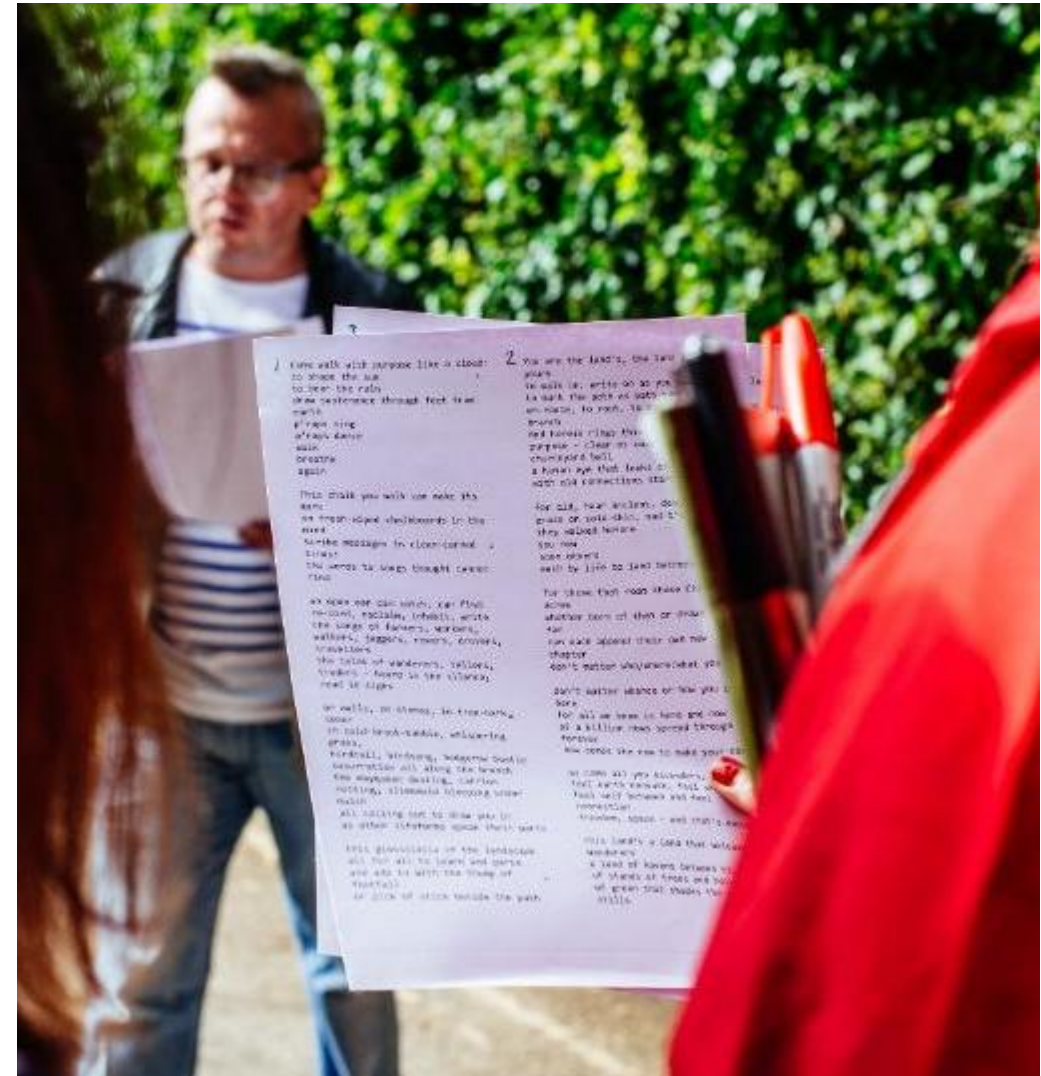


Photo credit: Aleksandra Warchol



**National
Landscapes
Association**



**Nature
Calling**

