

Mersey Valley Way: Defra Demonstration River Walk

Newsletter – March 2026

Funded by Defra, the Mersey Valley Way is part of the government's ambition to deliver 9 river walks in each region of England by 2030 to engage more people with their local river environment for health, recreation and well-being.



Mersey Valley Way route marked in red



Delivery commenced in October 2025 and includes path upgrades along the Stockport section of the walk and nature recovery work along the whole river valley. New interpretation assets, wayfinding and benches are being installed. Walking guides, a refreshed Mersey Paddle Trail and online digital information are also being provided. Much of the work has been completed, supported by volunteers. The remaining work is underway, ready for a formal launch of the Mersey Valley Way on 21 May.

Explore the Mersey Valley Way

Welcome to Stenner Woods

The Mersey Valley snakes through the south of Greater Manchester, with meadows, woodlands and wetlands flanking its river banks.

Legend

- Surfaced path
- Open path, mostly or heavily in places
- Grass path or rough surface, wet in places
- Woodland
- Openland
- Water
- Marshy area

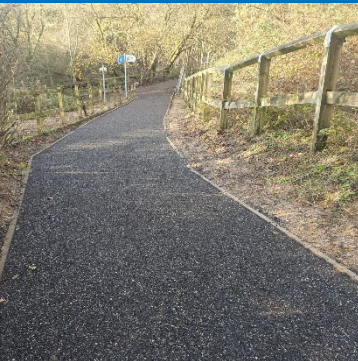
Stenner Woods Wildlife

Stenner Woods is an area of wet woodland including willow scrub. With the embankment and control of flows such as the Mersey, natural action can be seen in places. The area of Stenner Woods is a designated site of Biological Importance due to its priority wet woodland areas.

Without access to wet soils, the brown fungus dieback can be seen parcelling woodland edges and other low-lying vegetation.

Please help to the benefits as we do to benefit the wildlife. Please do not feed the birds. Please do not feed the birds. Please do not feed the birds. Please do not feed the birds.

This walk is a priority wet woodland area. Please see this in case of flooding the emergency services on 999.



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Completed Work



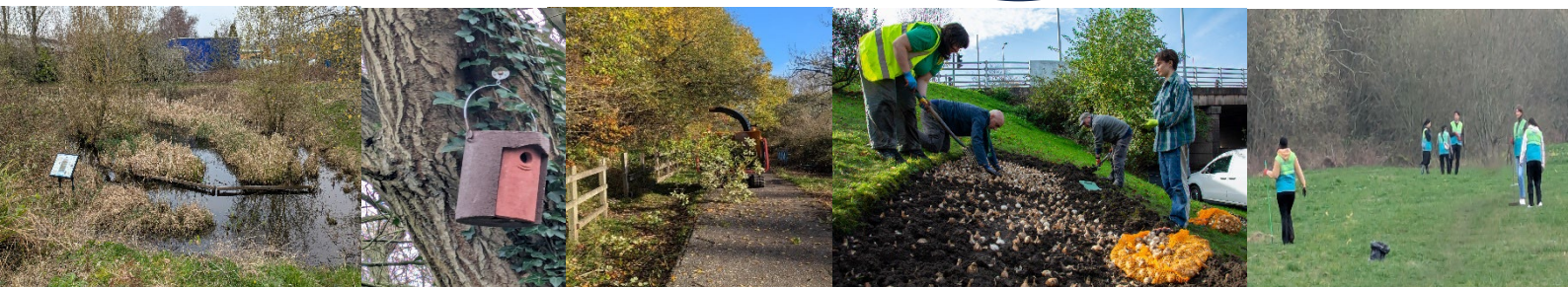
45 bird, bat, insect boxes installed

6 new riverside benches

4000 bulbs planted in Stockport town centre

Upgraded footpath surface, steps & barrier removal

Pond, tree & vegetation management, wildflower meadow



Barlow Eye

Fen, wet grassland & woodland restoration, improved willow tit habitat

New interpretation boards & benches

Hardy Farm, Parkway Playing Fields

Woodland management

Fletcher Moss Gardens

Restored wet grassland, fen, pond & reedbeds. Removed invasive species & encroaching trees to enhance wetland

Chorlton Ees Local Nature Reserve

Wetland creation & restoration, restored reedbed & pond

Kenworthy Woods Local Nature Reserve

Wet woodland & pond enhanced, improved willow tit habitat



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Completed Work



**TRAFFORD
COUNCIL**

Sale Water Park

Woodland & Willow Tit habitat enhancement, hedge laying & wet meadow creation

Kickety Brook

Wetland creation, woodland & Willow Tit habitat enhancement

Pennington

Woodland & Willow Tit habitat enhancement

Stretford Meadows

Woodland & Willow Tit habitat enhancement, meadow creation & invasive plant species removal

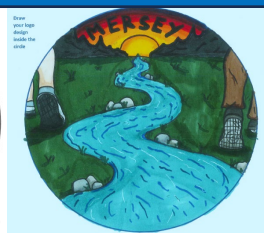
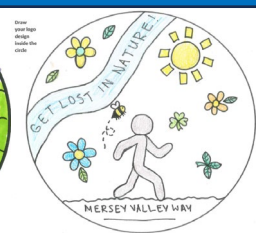
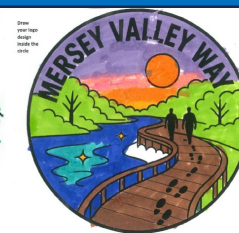
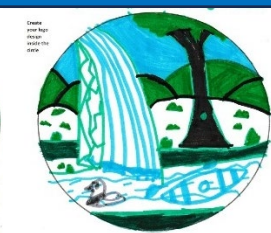
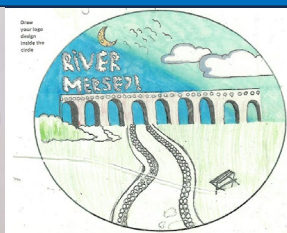
New interpretation boards, walk signage and 2 new riverside benches

Priory Gardens

Woodland & Willow Tit habitat enhancement, meadow creation, invasive plant species removal



Children's logo competition held in January 2026 for the Mersey Valley Way with over 90 entries



Finalists: 4 to 10 year olds

Finalists: 11 to 14 year olds

Finalists chosen by Baroness Hayman, the Government's Access Minister

Prizes to be awarded in April to winners plus certificates for all participants

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Coming Very Soon...

- Installation of Mersey Valley Way waymarking signs
- Installation of a swift tower at Mersey Vale, Burnage
- Installation of nature trail with brass rubbings & braille signs in Stockport
- New Mersey Valley Way website with walking routes, guides and information about the River Mersey
- More guided walks along the Mersey Valley Way, both short and longer walks
- Public engagement events along the river to promote the Mersey Valley Way during spring and summer 2026
- Litter pick events for the public and voluntary groups
- Free River Mersey visits for local schools and youth groups
- New Mersey Paddle Trail signage, access improvements and guide (with Paddle UK)
- Formal launch of the Mersey Valley Way: 21 May 2026
- Mid-summers day walk of the full Mersey Valley Way from Stockport to Ashton-on-Mersey

