

The Kingfisher Project Shobnall Brook and Horninglow Channel Burton upon Trent

Report on initial meeting with schools Enterprise Centre, Waterloo Street 23rd September, 2005

Introduction to Report

Previous reports (2nd July and 11th August, 2005) have provided background to the Kingfisher Project, a resident-led initiative focussing on opportunities and concerns around the Horninglow Channel area between Shobnall Fields and Eton Park.

This report presents ideas and suggested actions from teachers from local schools who met on 23rd September. It follows several meetings with local people and other stakeholders, and workshops with residents.

Meeting Activities

After introductions, the background to the Kingfisher Project was presented and teachers discussed their own interests in relation to the Project. Several people noted what they already do in the area. For example Grange school regularly visit a section of the channel / canal that they call a "Nature Watch Area." Links with history, citizenship and geography as well as natural history also were discussed.

A number of opportunities were identified for linking Kingfisher Project ideas with the curriculum and other school activities. These included:

- Use the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) survey and education work with Jo Perry to undertake nature surveys year-on-year, perhaps at different seasons. Link this with an insect survey. Develop a pictorial record - what is there now? Schools could contribute to wider interests by building and maintain records of changes over the years.
- Write an Education Pack "from source to sea" using 'our own back yard' as the inspiration - anchoring learning to local contexts that children see every day.

- Building an art trail - for example with signposts, painted animals, plaques, pillars or sculptures - perhaps linking this art work with local issues and/or international connections. Schools could make the plaques and other art work, or decide on the designs and paint bigger structures if these were laid out along the trail.
- Making sure that children have a strong input - they would be a very powerful force for change. They would also help identify information needs - and involve their families!
- Enhancing habitats e.g. through bird boxes, bat boxes, flower planting.
- Using signposts - building on survey work and follow up observations with boards, e.g. "at this point you might see kingfisher (photo), willow, ...etc)." Also, more geographical information on signposts linking the walk with the area beyond, especially with Parish Council ideas for directions for canal users. Perhaps maps of the area?
- Creating a trail - could be called "*Kingfisher Trail*" instead of "*Horninglow Linear Trail*" - make the name more attractive and positive. Kingfisher trail also links with the old name for Kingfisher "Halcyon" Way at the Shobnall Fields end.
- Perhaps a link from the natural environment from Shobnall Fields to Dallow Bridge, then into Shobnall Street and along the road to Halcyon way. This urban stretch could take advantage of the upcoming developments on the JB Kinds and RE Cook sites - the Miller Homes development. Signposting, street sculpture and street art may link the loop - perhaps "Kingfisher Loop?"
- Develop wider links with areas beyond. The brook arises in Henhurst Wood area and the low hills either side of Shobnall Road and enters the Trent near Wetmoor Hall farm. The symbolic value of the water flowing through our community is powerful and could inspire poetry and other writing, also within the curriculum.

Next Steps

Actions to take things forward were agreed:

1. Secure dates with Jo Perry (SWT) to meet with schools and Scott Jones (Heart of Burton) to agree timetable and costings for survey.
2. Confirm names of staff from schools who would provide their school link with the Kingfisher Project.
3. Circulate this report to residents and agencies after agreeing the draft.
4. Work toward a mid-November date for next residents' meeting and late November/early December for workshop with residents, schools and agencies.
5. Take forward ideas presented in the Agencies' Workshop Report (11th August) regarding governance, initially through something like a "Project Committee" but eventually working toward some form of Trust.

Scott Jones
Heart of Burton Partnership