

Greensand Country Landscape Partnership Annual Report

2024 has been an exceptionally busy year for the GCLP, we have been working in a number of areas to raise the profile of the Greensand Ridge and surrounding countryside, and engage those living, working, and enjoying the beautiful landscape.



Greensand Country Festival

Our annual Festival in May included 41 events all across Greensand Country. We led three guided walks along the Greensand Ridge Walk, with 30 walkers getting to explore the woodland, heathland, and historic parkland along the route that runs from Leighton Buzzard, dips into Buckinghamshire, up through Central Bedfordshire to

Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire.

Putting Peat on the Map

We have been working with the Wildlife Trust Beds, Cambs & Northants on a project to better understand the quality and extent of peat deposits in the Flit Valley. Working closely with farmers and landowners to allow survey access, we now have a much better understanding of where peat is found. We are hoping to secure additional funding to develop the initial report into Water Level Management Plans and some pilot projects on the ground.



Oh Deer!

Deer are a major threat to the woodlands of the Greensand Ridge. We have been working with local artist Rachael Presky to produce an animation to raise awareness about the impact of deer on Greensand Country's woodland, and how they need to be managed to allow biodiversity to flourish.

Local Landscape Designation

Raising the profile of Greensand Country in local policy is massively important. Discussions are ongoing about new Central Bedfordshire local plan, and we will be advocating for strong recognition of the Greensand Ridge in this. In Milton Keynes, we worked closely with Land Use Consultants to advocate for local landscape designation for sections of the Greensand Ridge within the MK boundary.

Supporting the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Get involved: www.greensandcountry.com

The GCLP continues to support the LNRS process wherever we can. We held a successful event for parkland owners in autumn, linking them into the LNRS. Discussions from this session have resulted in some additional areas of parkland being mapped and included in the LNRS. It is so encouraging to see these distinctive habitats of Greensand Country being incorporated.



Heathland Awareness

Working with the Greensand Trust and the Wildlife Trust we ran an summer programme raising awareness of our heathlands. Activities included guided walks, talks, and Bug Lab events.

Woodland Craft Day

From heathland to woodland, we supported the Greensand Trust's Working Woodlands Project to celebrate woodlands and green woodworking, with a Woodland Craft Day in October. It was great to see so many tenants and exhibitors coming together, with over 400 people visiting throughout the day.



Supporting local businesses

Our Greensand Country Charter which now has 180 businesses signed up. support for businesses has included guidance on EV charging installation, 1:1 sessions on uploading events, and a series of 'Netwalks' with Soul PR to link businesses together whilst focusing on the local environment. We also held our annual Charter Forum, and it was great to hear organisations such as Wooden Hill Coffee talk so passionately about their business and the environment.

Looking ahead to 2025

We are indebted to all of our volunteers who have worked throughout the year, supporting with the Festival, walks, events, and project work. It's wonderful to see the care they have to protect and celebrate Greensand Country.

As we look ahead to what 2025 has in store for the Partnership, despite reduced capacity due to limited funding, key features, such as the Greensand Country Festival and Charter Scheme will keep going, and we will continue to keep a presence on our website and communications channels. We will also remain active in discussions about the Greensand Ridge Walk, particularly given the 40th anniversary is rapidly approaching next year, and will continue to advocate for further protection for Greensand Country in local policy.

We hope you will continue to support us throughout the year in whatever way you can: adding events to the Festival, supporting projects, and playing a role in shaping the GCLP through our Collaboration Board.