

2.3.7 Key sites in the Landscape

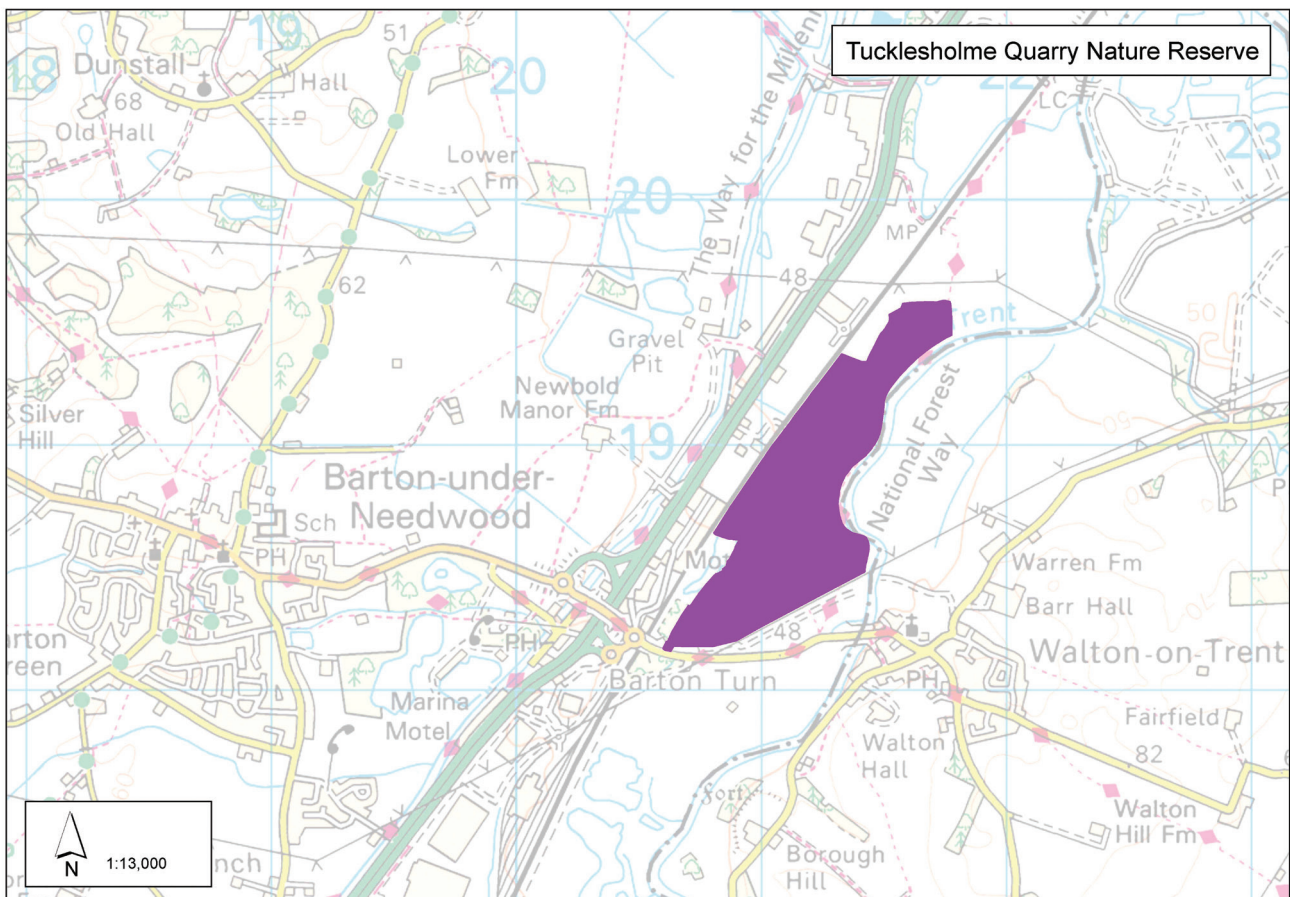
Our landscape offers a wealth of opportunity through its variety of land uses. It is a mosaic of urban, meadow, farmland and water which is under mixed and diverse ownership and as such has varied management. Our Landscape Partnership is working across an assortment of sites and locations to deliver on a series of short-term aspirations to improve natural habitat, access and historic features. These projects enable us to have influence and positive impact in the short-term and provide a crucial starting point for long-term aspirations that will enable us to realise our vision for this landscape. We recognise a number of sites across our landscape that are important due to the diverse range of opportunities they represent.



Wychnor Washland looking towards Alrewas and Lichfield (Nick Mott)

Tucklesholme Quarry Nature Reserve

Map 16 Location map of Tucklesholme Quarry Nature Reserve



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Tucklesholme, just outside Burton, was a vast agricultural monoculture that will soon be transformed into the county's biggest reed bed, with aspirations to attract species that have not bred in the area for almost 100 years. Partnership working by the quarry company, developers, economists, public sector and the wildlife trust has led to a unique situation where the working quarry is actually owned by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. Rather than simply extracting as much gravel as possible and leaving a big hole to be filled with water, the restoration approach is based on purposefully removing material in a way that will leave features that are essential for biodiversity. There is just as much focus on creating a nature reserve as there is on minerals extraction.

When the site opens to the public in spring 2019 it will arguably be the largest purpose built nature reserve in the UK at over 50 hectares. Not only will this be important for wildlife, it will also provide greenspace for one of the fastest growing populations outside London with over 11,000 houses planned in the coming years. The site is already linked to new housing developments by a new 82-acre woodland that has been planted up with over 21,000 trees through a partnership between developers St Modwen, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and the National Forest Company.

Our partnership will build on this work by uniting the wildlife with the local community through a number of well-considered access and interpretation improvements. Understanding where the most sensitive natural areas lie, we can channel visitor footfall to locations where people can appreciate and engage directly with nature and can enjoy peaceful reflection without a detrimental impact on those habitats and species we most wish to conserve.

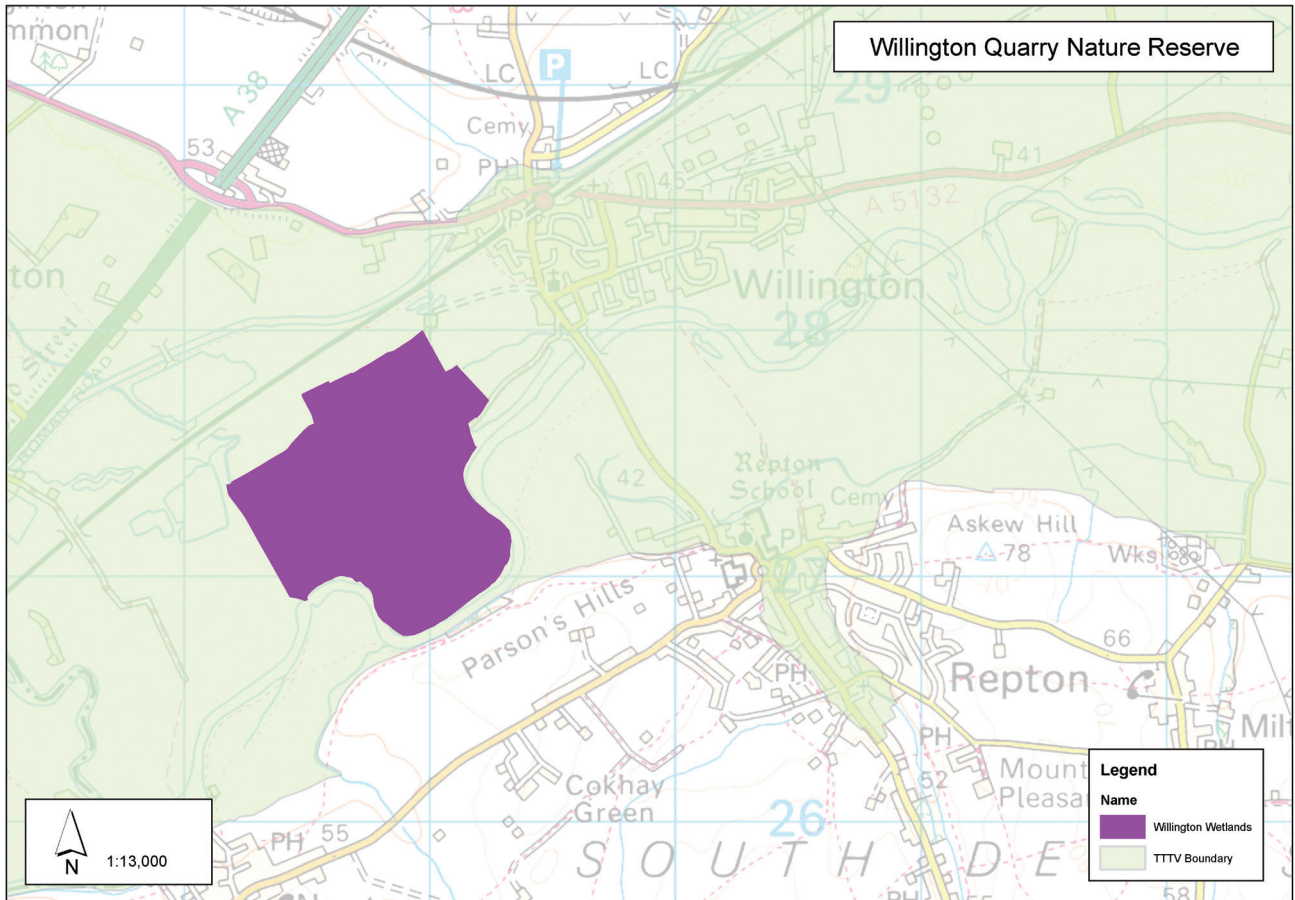
As well as being a site of important natural heritage value, a number of finds of archaeological significance were found during the excavation of the site. Here, a scatter of flints were uncovered demonstrating toolmaking activities on low-lying land between braided river channels. The rarity of this site makes it very significant for studies of the Palaeolithic in the region (ArcHeritage, 2017). Other finds that have emerged on this site thanks to mineral excavation include evidence of Roman temporary settlements for stock rearing, a small-scale kiln from the late 2nd Century, and evidence of Anglo-Saxon pottery (ArcHeritage, 2017). Its proximity to the water course and its prime location in the valley means that Tucklesholme has seen various degrees of settlement since early history.



View across Tucklesholme Quarry Nature Reserve
(Staffordshire Wildlife Trust)

Willington Quarry Nature Reserve

Map 17 Location map of Willington Quarry Nature Reserve.



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View across Willington gravel pits (George Bird)

Willington Quarry Nature Reserve is a former sand and gravel quarry that has been transformed as a haven for wildlife in the Trent Valley. The gravel pits have been flooded to provide important wetland habitat that attracts many rare birds in addition to a variety of more common species.

The site presents an assortment of habitats from open water to reed beds, from sheltered islands to open grassland. The shingle and grass islands provide a refuge for birds and are ideal for breeding waders. There are a number of pools, a silt lagoon and marshland that provide rich feeding for many species.

In early spring, curlew gather on the wet grassland before they head north to their breeding grounds. During spring and autumn up to 20 species of wader pass through with large flocks of wildfowl gathering in the winter including wigeon, teal, pochard and shoveler. In recent winters, bittern has been seen at the reserve. Among the birds that breed at Willington are sand martins, lapwings and common tern. Birds of prey also visit

the reserve including peregrine, kestrel, hobby and sparrowhawk, as well as the very occasional marsh harrier.

Birds are not the only species that benefit from the reserve, the wetland also attracts several species of dragonfly and damselfly as well as otters. The conditions suit water plants such as short-leaved water starwort (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, 2017).

The site is open to the public but access is currently limited to the lane and the viewing platforms provided. The site is hidden and so known only to local residents as there is no indication of a reserve to passing traffic. The short term aspiration is to provide a balance between nature conservation and visitor access so that people are able to appreciate and learn about nature without having a negative impact on the species that feed, breed and pass through the reserve.

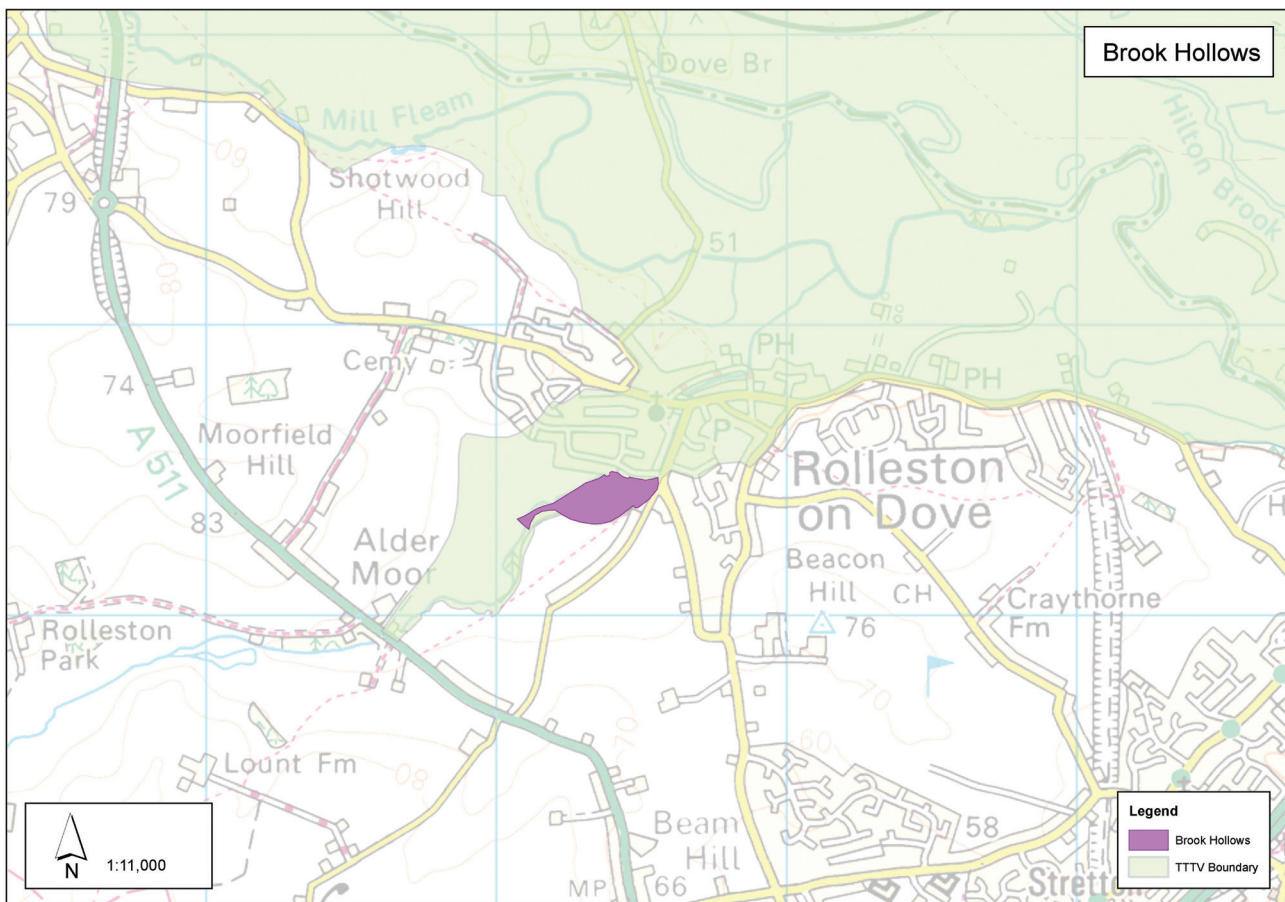
A longer term aspiration is to look into options for rewilding and have large natural spaces that benefit from a hands-off management approach.



Bittern (David Tipling/2020VISION)

Brook Hollows Spinney (Rolleston-on-Dove)

Map 18 Location map of Rolleston Brook Hollows



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Brook Hollows is a site of important cultural heritage at the heart of the village of Rolleston-on-Dove. Once part of a large estate, the site now comprises a formerly ornamental woodland edging a series of lakes with a formal waterfall above a lower pool which flows into the Alderbrook, a tributary of the River Dove.

The site is well-loved by the local inhabitants with a passionate and active community group which has championed the maintenance and preservation of the site and which holds a number of historical records, including photographs and the 1920s brochure from when the site was sold in lots at auction. It is now managed as a community asset by East Staffordshire Borough Council.

Brook Hollows represents valuable local green space and a link in the local footpath network that connects the



Views across the lake and the waterfall in Brook Hollows (East Staffordshire Borough Council)

landscape with the valley sides and local settlements, from Tutbury to the Burton suburbs. It has become a magical woodland dell for local people, much used by dog-walkers and anglers (The Landscape Partnership, 2018).

Over recent years the lake has become silted up to the point where something

must be done to prevent losing these assets for the future. Previous excavations of the lakes in the 1970s removed a large volume of silt and created extensive islands but has proven to be insufficient as a long-term solution.

An engineering solution is required to prevent further silting up of the lakes and the short-term aspiration is to dredge part of the lake to reinstate some of the original depth, but to create a by-pass channel to direct the majority of flow, and therefore the silt, to the Alderbrook. Reed bed creation at the inflow of the lakes will filter water and help to reduce sediment accumulation, as well as providing new habitat. The longer term aspiration will be to work with landowners upstream along the Alderbrook and the Dove to address the issue of sediment wash from adjacent fields. This aspiration will take time as relationships need to be built and solutions need to be agreed and the first

steps will be taken through the Living Floodplains project.

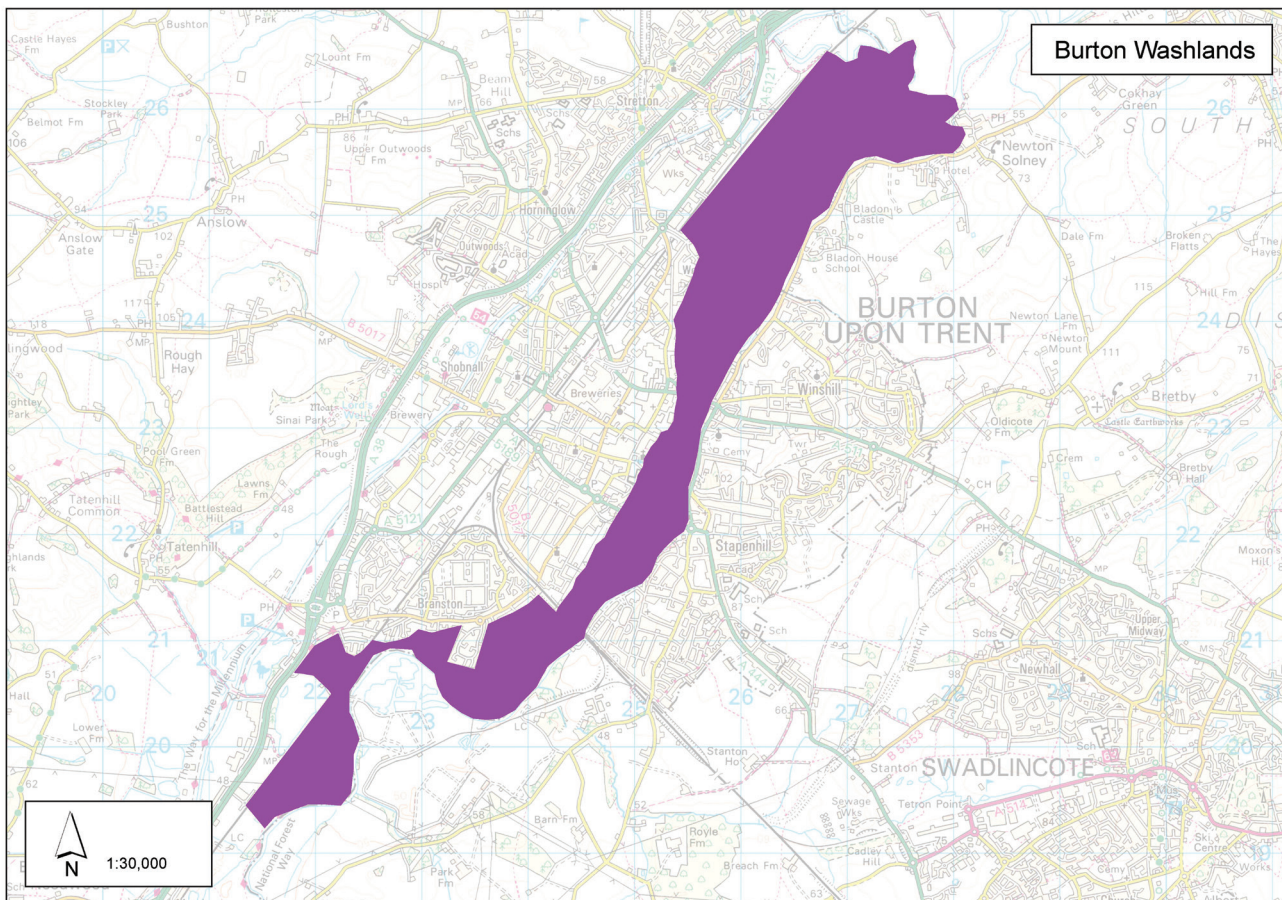
As Brook Hollows is a small, local site it would not easily accommodate significantly increased visiting. Similarly, the ambience would be damaged by increased visitor facilities beyond the benches and walks already present (The Landscape Partnership, 2018). This location is therefore viewed as a local asset and activities and interpretation on the site will cater for a local audience. The water quality improvements will be wider-reaching and will have impact downstream of the village. The project is an excellent example of what can be achieved by a passionate community driven to improve their local asset and preserve their cultural heritage. It is due to the petitioning of this community that the site has been recognised for its need of immediate attention by the local authority. It will be a case study of how change can be brought about by individuals using their voices.



Views across the lake and the waterfall in Brook Hollows
(East Staffordshire Borough Council)

Burton Washlands

Map 19 Location map of the Burton Washlands



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Burton Washlands (Aimee L. Booth)

The Washlands is a large area on the floodplain of the River Trent which separates Burton-upon-Trent from its eastern suburbs of Stapenhill and Winshill. They were a key resource for Burton's Medieval Benedictine Abbey and a significant pilgrimage destination, with a shrine dedicated to the seventh-century St. Modwen. The Washlands are today partially designated as a Local Wildlife Site and are managed in by East Staffordshire Borough Council as a recreational open space, including sports facilities (The Landscape Partnership, 2018).

The Washlands offer significant potential for change to offer better benefits for people and wildlife. The flood defences of Burton are due to be upgraded by the Environment Agency in 2019 and as part of these works the Agency has worked with East Staffordshire Borough Council to develop a visioning plan for the wider Washlands area. Known as the Burton Washlands Landscape Vision, the vision has identified a number of practical solutions that aim to connect people with the river, wildlife, heritage, land and water. The scheme has been developed in partnership with Transforming the Trent Valley and has developed many of the proposals from community feedback provided by our Community Conversations.

Proposals include high-quality entrance gateways to the Washlands, a flagship play area including natural play principals,

a boardwalk to improve accessibility during flooding and allow people to get close to wetland habitats, and new river crossings to connect new communities. Proposals have been developed to link with the aspirations and vision of Transforming the Trent Valley, enabling our partnership to expand on our own anticipated outputs. Examples of how the two schemes will work together include:

Creation of the Trent Valley Way:

provision will be made for the route within the earthworks for the flood defences with the Trent Rivers Trust consulting on the route.

Spaces for wildlife: a number of opportunities have been identified for habitat restoration and the Environment Agency is providing match funding to the Living Floodplains project to deliver a set of agreed schemes based on detailed opportunity mapping.

Heritage information: our scheme has collated a wealth of information about the natural and cultural heritage of the area and the two schemes will coordinate an approach to providing information to visitors.

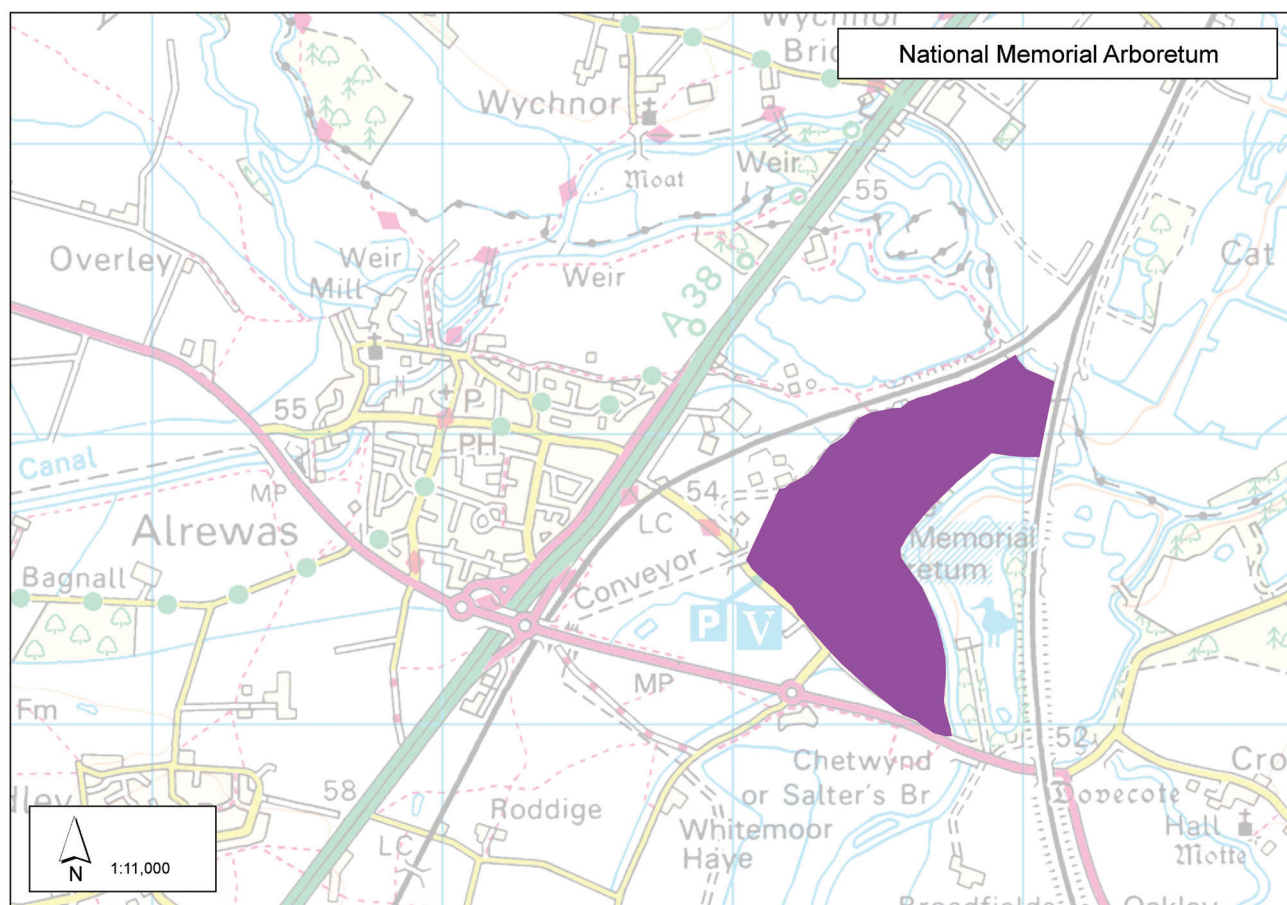
River habitats: together the two schemes will naturalise channel edges, undertake marginal planting, create backwaters and introduce woody material to provide shelter for fish and invertebrates.



View across the Washlands in Burton during high water (Aimee L. Booth)

The National Memorial Arboretum (NMA)

Map 20 Location map of the National Memorial Arboretum



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The NMA is major remembrance installation, opened by the Royal British Legion in 2001, with nearly 300 memorials and 30,000 trees. It is a multinational and multi-faith space attracting visitors from across the country and overseas to a location close to the confluences of the Trent, Tame and Mease that was of ceremonial significance from the Neolithic until the Anglo-Saxon period (Buteux and Chapman, 2009) as attributed by the round barrows found near the River Tame, today designated as a scheduled monument.

Although the scheme is not working directly with the NMA, the memorial is an important visitor destination on our doorstep. There is scope to work with them throughout the scheme and an aspiration to engage with them over the longer term. A number of the projects intersect with the NMA including the

Gateway to the Trent Valley cycleway, the Trent Valley Way and it is close to our plans for waymarked cycle routes and community circular walks. There is scope to link with the NMA through our interpretation plans and incorporating it in with waymarking and signage across the valley.

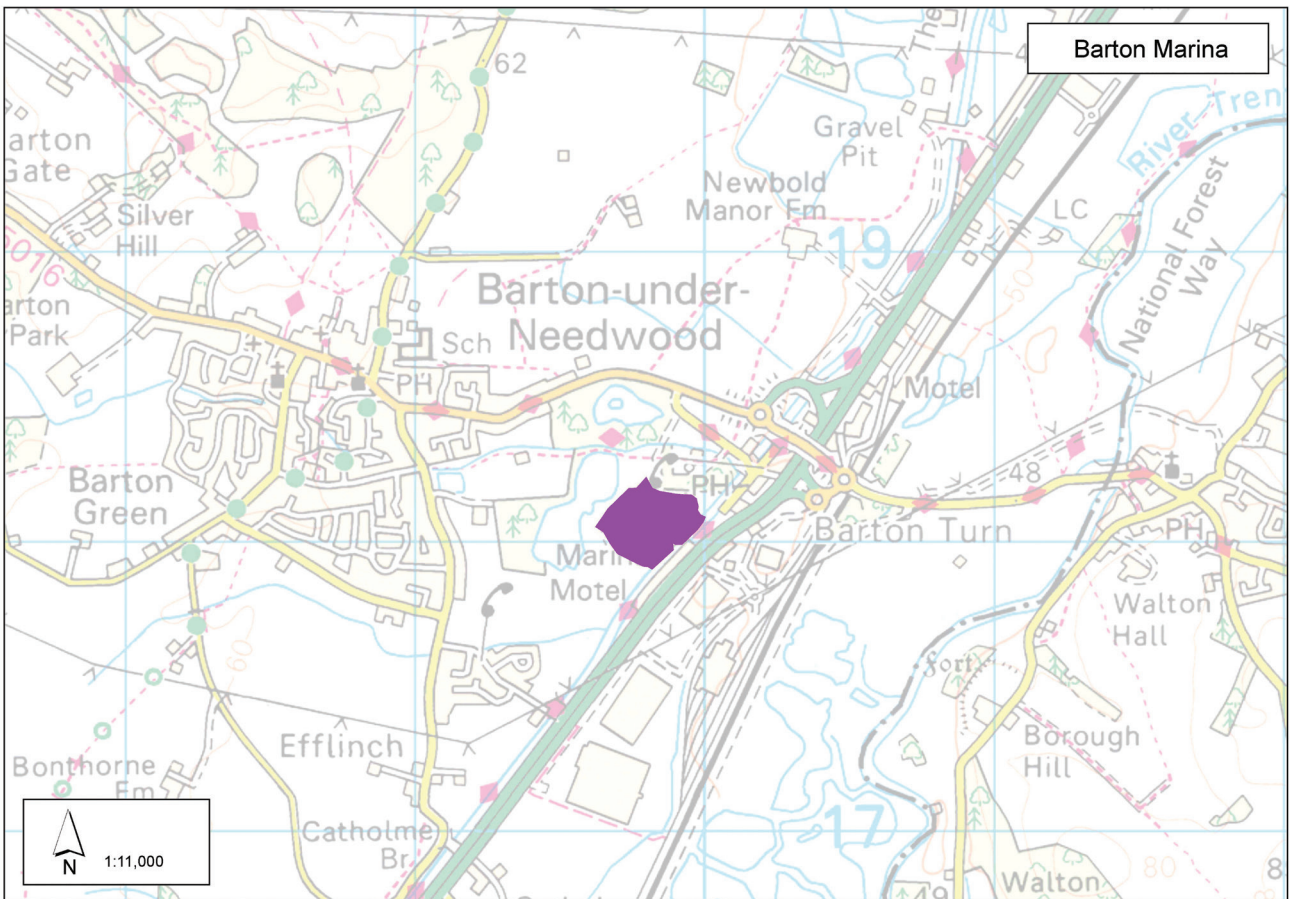
There are future opportunities that may be afforded by proposed developments in the area. Off-road paths on 'green bridges' over the A38 and A513 could link Fradley, Brookhay Garden Village, the National Memorial Arboretum, Brookhay Waterside and Alrewas. This would help to solve what is currently a significant east-west divide created by the A38 (The Landscape Partnership, 2018).



The National Memorial Arboretum memorial (*Nick Mott*)

Barton Marina

Map 21 Location map of Barton Marina



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Barton Marina is a popular marina off the Trent and Mersey Canal. It is surrounded by a cluster of cafes, restaurants, bars and shops, and also has some attractive walks around three small lakes (The Landscape Partnership, 2018). Although the marina is not directly involved in the scheme at present, there are aspirations

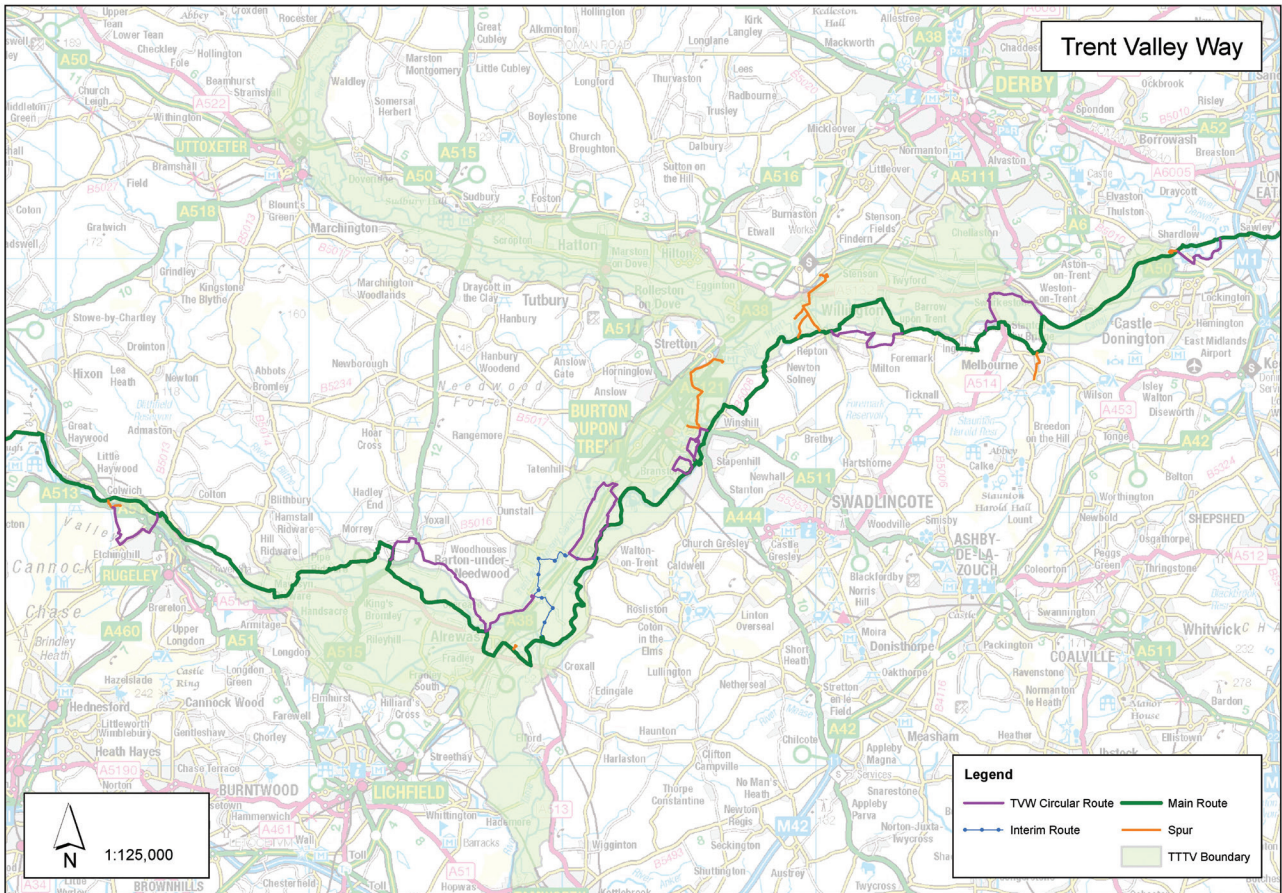
to engage with this visitor destination through the life of the scheme. It will be important to include information about the marina in literature and waymarking and there may be scope in the future to liaise with regards to improving pedestrian access to the marina from the towpath.



Barton Marina (Staffordshire Wildlife Trust)

The Trent Valley Way

Map 22 Trent Valley Way and the associated circular walks and spurs crossing the Trent Valley.



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Walking along the Trent Valley Way where the canal and river meet (Aimee L. Booth)

The Trent Valley Way (TVW) is a developing long-distance footpath, already established on the ground in its eastern section, from Long Eaton to the Humber. Work is in progress to realise the western part, from the river's source on Biddulph Moor, through the TTTV Landscape to Long Eaton (The Landscape Partnership, 2018).

The section of the TVW that runs through our landscape is conceptual: there is no way marking or infrastructure on the ground. The route predominantly follows rights of way, although this is not possible for its complete length, but relies in places on permissive access. There is also an interim path whilst restoration works are completed at Barton Quarry and the right of way is reinstated. The Trent Valley Way project will formalise the route on the ground, providing waymarkers and a new leaflet, as well as improving and upgrading some of the infrastructure

(such as bridges, gates and stiles) and providing information and interpretation as part of the wider landscape vision. The project will link in with the cultural heritage projects to utilise existing structures and points of interest. For example, part of the preservation of pillboxes will include the creation of walkers' refuges. Two suitable pillboxes have been identified close to the confluence of the River Tame with the River Trent.

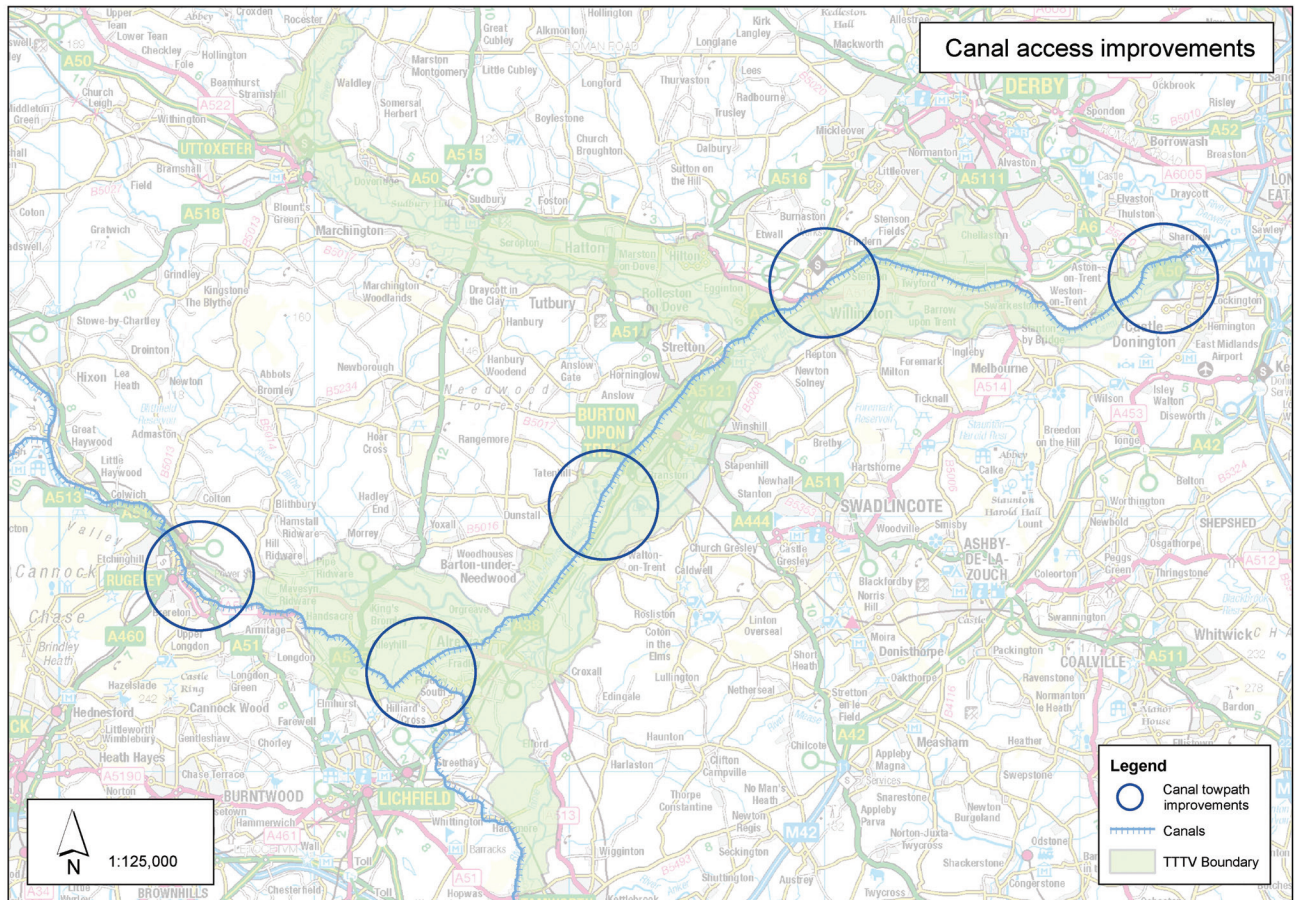
The short term aspirations are to create, alongside the main route, a number of spurs and circular walks to connect communities to the river and provide accessible routes to encourage short walks and visits. The A38 remains a difficult barrier across the landscape and long term aspirations are to create new bridging points to ease the transit of pedestrians and cyclists across this barrier.



Walks along the River Trent (Aimee L. Booth)

The Canal Network

Map 23. Canals crossing the Trent Valley landscape with the five key improvement locations.



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Boats on the canal (Canal and River Trust)

The canal network local to our landscape consists of the Trent and Mersey Canal, Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, Coventry Canal, Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, Erewash Canal, and the River Soar Navigation.

The canals represent an important means of access to the landscape by boat-owners and those on boating holidays. There is an extensive network of moorings and towpath access points along the canals, allowing ready access to most attractions and to the Public Rights of Way network.

The canal network remains a hidden gem in the landscape, appearing briefly under a bridge or as a line of narrow boats across the valley. To come upon a ramp or steps down to the towpath on a busy road in Burton or Rugeley, or even at Wolseley Bridge, is like catching a glimpse into another world. This 'magical' aspect of the canals is a key part of their charm and will be built on by careful marketing and signage, without ruining the effect.

Many of the historic villages in our landscape have attractive buildings and settings that would appeal to visitors. Wychnor, the site of a deserted medieval

village, and Alrewas, a village with interesting medieval to post medieval buildings (ArcHeritage, 2017) are both easily accessible from the canal towpath and offering pleasant walks. The canal itself is steeped in a rich industrial past. A walk along the towpath introduces the visitor to waterways built in the late 18th Century by rich landowners and manufacturers and the associated bridges, warehouses and mills that can still be found along its length.

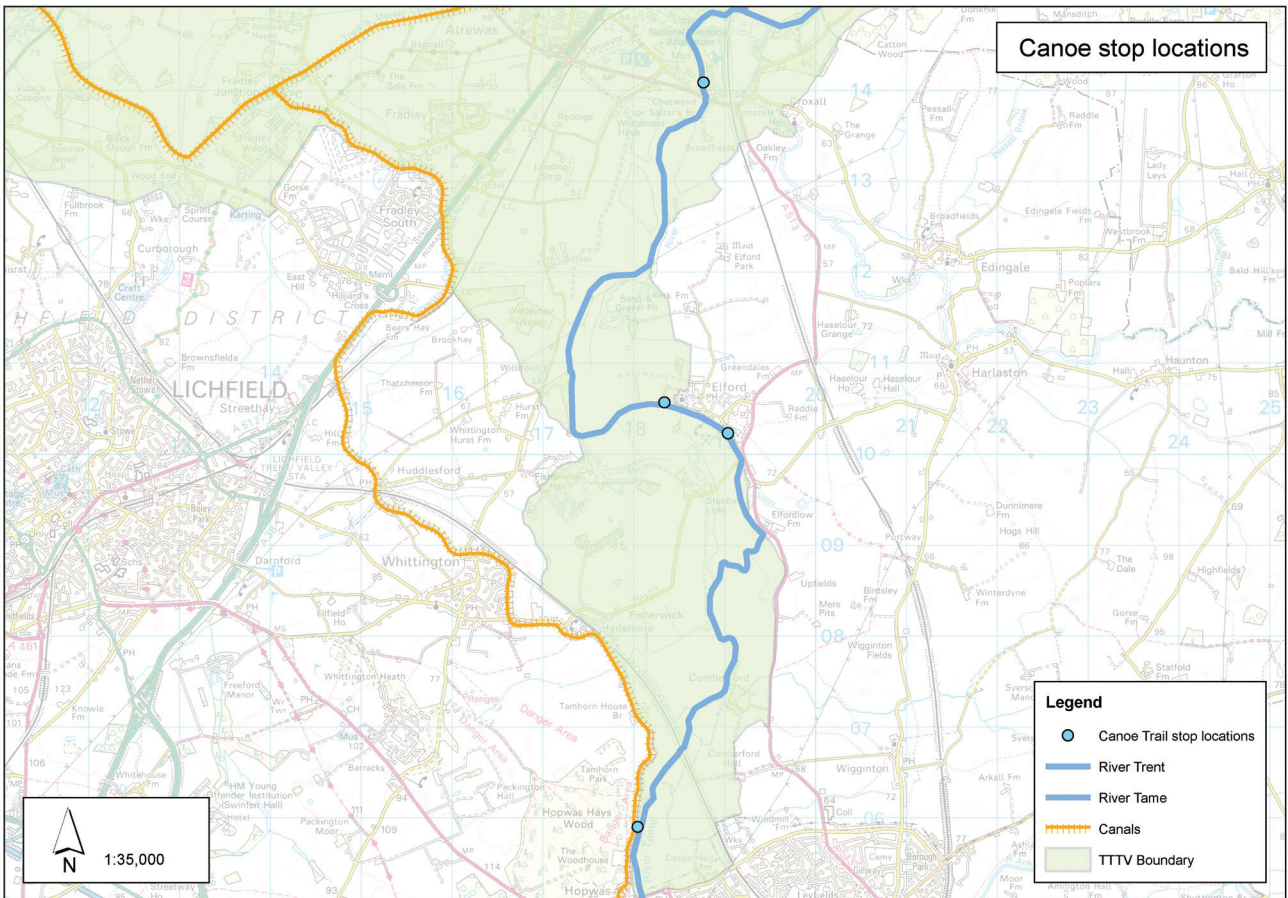
On the other hand, there are increasing uses of the towpath. Boat moorings, angling, walking and cycling do not always mix well in a narrow space. Angling in particular can cause trip hazards and obstructions for walkers and cyclists. Several currently non-navigable sections of canal are proposed for restoration (The Landscape Partnership, 2018). This restoration will take place in five key locations where the towpath is identified as insufficient for multi-purpose use, being too narrow or poorly surfaced. The aspiration is to improve the towpath at sections that are most in need of upgrade with a long term aspiration of improving the entire towpath network.



Boats on the canal (Canal and River Trust)

The Canoe Access Network

Map 24. Portage and access points for canoeists on the River Tame.



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Canoeing along the river (British Canoeing)

Canoeing is not well developed in the landscape and even the facilities not requiring the canoeist to bring their own canoe are poorly located in relation to public transport (The Landscape Partnership, 2018). On the river, it is not always clear what routes are available and where the portage points are located. The Canoe Discovery project aspires to formalise a route on the River Tame connecting canoeists from Tamworth with the River Trent and the wider landscape. This will connect with a trail currently being formalised by our sister Landscape Partnership Scheme 'Tame Valley Wetlands'. This will provide connectivity to the Trent Valley from a large landscape area. As well as improved canoe portage,

information will be provided about the landscape, conscientious canoeing and respecting the heritage. Additional canoe trails will be created in partnership with Canal River Trust, providing alternative routes along the historical canals.

In the long-term, there are a number of points where canoe access could be developed in partnership with others, linking in with campsites and pubs along the river (The Landscape Partnership, 2018). There are a number of proactive and supportive canoe clubs within the landscape who are willing to offer support and advice to secure a long-term use of the river network for canoeists.



Families enjoying the water (British Canoeing)