



News release

25th September 2019

Gillingham Royal Forest project secures National Lottery support

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) and partners are delighted to receive £61,900 of funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, for the Gillingham Royal Forest project. The project will run for three years and aims to engage the local community with the natural history of this historic landscape.

In June 1204 King John arrived in Gillingham to stay at a hunting lodge which was set within a royal deer park, surrounded by extensive forest known as the 'Royal Forest of Gillingham'. Later, the lodge was to become known as 'Kings Court'. The remains can still be seen today and are now scheduled ancient monuments.

The natural heritage of the Gillingham Royal Forest includes ancient hedgerows and woodlands, with a high density of veteran trees, ponds and chalk stream head lands. Protected species include Bechstein's and Daubenton's bats, great crested newts, otters and water voles. The natural and cultural features of this land form a living landscape of great importance and value to the local community, providing opportunities for learning, recreation and participation in conserving its heritage.

Nicki Brunt, Dorset Wildlife Trust Living Landscape Manager said, "Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we will be able to improve access along two walking routes, with leaflets and interpretation about the heritage. The funding will also enable us to work with partners to run a series of events such as walks and talks and to provide opportunities to learn rural skills and take part in practical conservation work."

Stuart Hobley, Area Director London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund said, "It's the National Lottery's 25th birthday this year and during that time, money raised by players has been used to protect so much of our natural heritage, enabling people to enjoy it and play their



Part of a
nationwide network
of Wildlife Trusts

Dorset Wildlife Trust
Brooklands Farm, Forston
Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 7AA
T: 01305 264620 Email: enquiries@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk
www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

own vital roles in the futures of the landscapes and wildlife around them. As someone who grew up in this corner of Dorset, I'm delighted that Gillingham Royal Forest is now part of that story."

The Mayor, Cllr Barry Von Clemens, said: "Gillingham Town Council is highly supportive of this project and is looking forward to working with others to promote the heritage of the area and to deliver exciting opportunities for everyone to get involved.

The Gillingham Royal Forest is a partnership project led by Dorset Wildlife and includes: Gillingham Town Council, Gillingham Local History Society, Gillingham Walkers, North Dorset Health Walks, Gillingham Action for Nature Group, Motcombe Parish Council, Dorset Council, Natural England, Blackmore Vale Line Community Partnership, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West, Wessex Water, U3A, White Hart Link, Stour Catchment Partnership, Riverfly Group, and NFU.

For more information about the project, please contact the project officer, Nicky Hoar on 01202 692033 or nhoar@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Photos to be credited and used only with this press release:

I. Gillingham Royal Forest project launch © Nicola Hopkins

-ENDS-

Notes to Editor

For more information please contact Sally Welbourn at Dorset Wildlife Trust on 01305 264620.
For all our latest news visit www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/news

About Dorset Wildlife Trust www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk
Working for a secure future for Dorset's wildlife enriching the quality of life
Follow us on Twitter @dorsetwildlife and facebook.com/dorsetwildlife

Dorset Wildlife Trust works to champion wildlife and natural places, to engage and inspire people and to promote sustainable living. Founded in 1961, DWT is now the largest voluntary nature conservation organisation in Dorset, with over 27,000 members and 44 nature reserves. Most are open daily and there are visitor centres providing a wealth of wildlife information at Brooklands Farm, The Fine Foundation Chesil Beach Centre, Lorton Meadows, Kingcombe Meadows nature reserve and the Kingcombe Centre, Brownsea Island Nature Reserve, The Fine Foundation Wild Seas Centre and the Urban Wildlife Centre at Upton Heath Nature Reserve. DWT plays a key role in dealing with local environmental issues and leads the way in establishing the practices of sustainable development and engaging new audiences in conservation, particularly in the urban areas. Dorset Wildlife Trust registered charity number: 200222.

About the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we **inspire, lead** and **resource** the UK's heritage to create **positive and lasting change** for people and communities, now and in the future.
Follow @HeritageFundUK on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund



Part of a
nationwide network
of Wildlife Trusts

Dorset Wildlife Trust
Brooklands Farm, Forston
Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 7AA
T: 01305 264620 Email: enquiries@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk
www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future