



Cinderford

Basic Goal

The ERDF Wild Towns project will allow the local community of Cinderford greater access to nature and create and improve habitats for some of the rare species which reside in Ruspidge Halt and surrounding area.

Vision Statement

The ERDF Wild Towns Project will create new and improve existing habitats in and around Cinderford, in particular Ruspidge Halt (Linear Park). Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is working with the local landowners, Forestry England, Forest of Dean District Council and Severn Trent Water to deliver this project. The project will allow the local community better access to Ruspidge Halt through the installation of a new bridge providing easy access to the centre of the site and will bring people closer to the nature that lives in and around the town.

The habitat creation and restoration will be targeting rare and threatened species such as Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary Butterflies, Great Crested Newts and reptile species. Church Bank above Valley road offers a great location for butterflies, one which local residents have spoken about, this bank has been left unmanaged for years and as such it has become largely overgrown and unsuitable. The project will be carrying out scrub management to restore the grassland and hopefully encourage a greater number of butterfly species back. Elsewhere in Forestry England's Ruspidge Halt, a Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary colony is one of only two in the Forest of Dean. Work has already been carried out here by Foresters' Forest and Forestry England to help secure this colonies location and ERDF Wild Towns will further extend and improve the areas where these butterflies are found in the hope that their numbers will increase and ensure that this species isn't lost from the Forest of Dean. Work will consist of scrub management, plug planting and conservation grazing. Grazing will form an important part of maintaining and improving grasslands by keeping vegetation levels down and allowing low growing flowering plants to flourish. This will create a mosaic habitat, allowing this species and other threatened species such as Dingy and Grizzled Skipper be expand their territories.

The project will be carrying out improvements along the Cinderford Brook, which is found flowing through Ruspidge Halt. The brook has been straightened and, in the process, had many of its natural features removed. The project will aim to restore the stream by recreating features such as meanders and diversifying the flow types. This aims to accommodate a greater number of invertebrate species which will provide food for fish and birds within and along the brook. Cinderford Brook also suffers from low oxygen levels, to improve this the project is looking for a solution to filter the outflow from the sewage works at Bilson Green through natural systems before entering the brook. The likely solution will be the creation of a wetland habitat located in the field to the north of the sewage works where the outflow flows to down to the brook. This



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newly created reedbed will natural filter the water and increase the oxygen levels within the stream. In anticipation to these improvements being made, three weirs downstream of Cinderford will have fish passes installed so that fish will be able to migrate upstream into the newly restored waters within Ruspidge Halt. We hope through improving the water quality and creating a greater diversity of features within the brook will result in invertebrates, fish, birds and mammals using the Brook on an increasingly regular basis.