Routes to the River Tone project launches in



Project will protect Taunton's natural heritage for the future Diane Jones

Routes to the River Tone is a three-year partnership project, funded with £483,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and led by Somerset Wildlife Trust. It aims to inspire the residents of Taunton to see their town in a new light, encouraging them to explore the green spaces, re-connect with nature and, through collective action, protect the town’s natural wealth for the future.

A mix of councillors, project partners and trust staff attended the event, along with representatives from schools, churches, businesses and local community groups. Welcoming everyone to the event, Taunton’s Deputy Mayor Marcia Hill said: “I would like to thank Somerset Wildlife Trust for putting on a most enjoyable evening. Once I learnt more about this exciting project, the more I wanted to help make a difference, and encourage others to help too.”

The trust’s CEO, Simon Nash, highlighted the importance of wildlife to our lives, and some of the risks it faces, before Simon Timms, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund South West Committee, explained why they had chosen Taunton for the project. Simon Timms went on to say: “Taunton has a richly diverse and, in many cases rare, wildlife population, and the River Tone is fundamental to its survival. It’s fantastic to see the support and enthusiasm the community has for this project which provides a huge opportunity for us to discover more about the nature on our doorstep and work together to conserve it for the future.”

Routes to the River Tone Project Manager, Nick Tomlinson from Somerset Wildlife Trust, said: “Taunton is such an amazing place, with a wide range of green spaces, including thousands of gardens and a huge variety of wildlife, some of it really rather rare, all rubbing shoulders with car parks, supermarkets and offices.

“Because we all feel better when we have access to green spaces, we hope, with everyone’s help, to improve Taunton’s green spaces and waterways, both for wildlife and for people. As it turns out what’s good for nature is good for us!”

As well as encouraging people to explore their local green spaces, the project is seeking help with a whole range of activities, from helping look after those green spaces, to surveys and looking for wonderful, charismatic creatures such as bats and watervoles. More information about the project can be found on the Somerset Wildlife website.

Routes to the River Tone is a partnership project, led by Somerset Wildlife Trust, with partners including Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council, Environment Agency, Natural England, The Canal and Rivers Trust and the Taunton Deane Area Group of Somerset Wildlife Trust.

Notes to editors

About Somerset Wildlife Trust

Supported by its members, Somerset Wildlife Trust has been protecting vulnerable wildlife and preserving wild places for 50 years. It manages 72 nature reserves, provide wildlife-friendly land management advice, campaign and educate to make sure Somerset remains one most wildlife-rich places in the UK. Its vision for the county is ‘an environment rich in wildlife for everyone.’ The Trust is one of 47 in the UK which together make up the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT). Visit the Somerset Wildlife Trust website for more information.

About the Routes to the River Tone project

In September 2013 Somerset Wildlife Trust received a grant of £494,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Routes to the River Tone project. The project aims to engage local people with the wildlife on their doorstep and, with their help, to improve the town’s green spaces and waterways protecting rare species like water vole and four species of bat including brown long-eared and lesser horseshoe bats.

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Further information

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