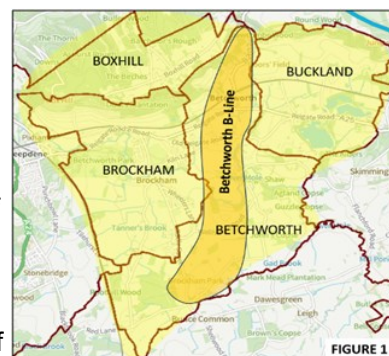


# Proposal to Develop a 4B's Community Biodiversity Park

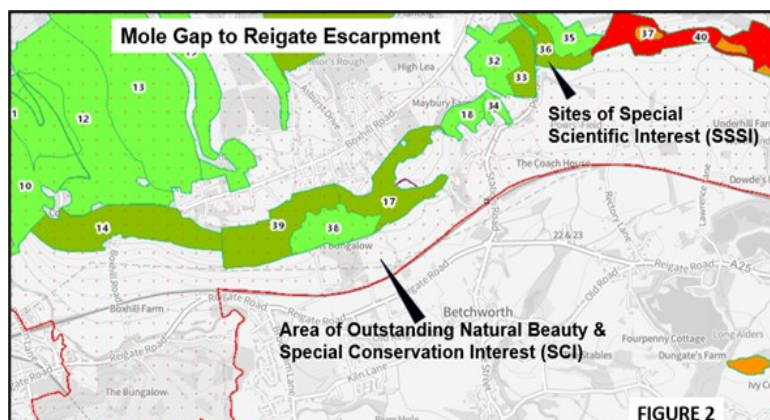
**Vision:** A Biodiversity Park co-created with nature by the communities of 4 parishes and partner organisations, within which nature-based responses to climate change and biodiversity loss can be encouraged to help nature and people flourish, now and in the future.

**Policy Contexts:** We need a healthy, thriving natural environment to meet Net Zero goals and build resilience to climate change says the UK Government's Green Finance Strategy to support Nature-Based Solutions (NbS), to achieve greater biodiversity and environment targets. The Environment Act 2021, requires every county in England to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Wildlife Trusts have responded with their own strategy to restore, create and connect habitats and respond to the challenge of a significant decline in wildlife. Parish, District and County Councils are also expected to develop their own strategies to support a healthy, thriving natural environment and meet the challenge of climate change. The proposal for a 4B's Biodiversity Park, offers a community-led, landscape-scale, contribution to these important strategic aims.

**Background:** The foundation for this proposal is the initiation of a 5km<sup>2</sup> Betchworth B (biodiversity)-Line in 2023 (Figure 1): a contribution to the UK wide network of B-Lines being created by Buglife. With financial support from the Parish Council and Buglife, the Betchworth B-Line is demonstrating the benefits of coordinated community action to bring about biodiversity net gains, through the cultivation of over 2000 sq m of wildflowers to help insect pollinators flourish. The proposal aims to expand the concept of a B-Line to enhance and connect wildlife habitats through the creation of a 27 km<sup>2</sup> Biodiversity Park across the Parishes of Betchworth, Buckland, Brockham and Boxhill – the 4B's (Figure 1).



**Natural Environment:** The northern part of the area is formed by the Surrey Hills, Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Within the area are numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and Special Conservation Interest (SCI) Figure 2. The Surrey Hills B-Line also runs through the area. The central and southern part of the area is occupied by the valley of the River Mole and its network of tributaries. These constitute an important Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) where improved habitat management and regeneration will be most effective in enhancing connectivity to aid nature recovery.



**The goal of the development project** is to facilitate a process involving residents of the 4 parishes, Parish Councils, partner organisations and interest groups to explore and develop the idea of a Community Biodiversity Park and consider the value, purpose, cost and feasibility of establishing a Biodiversity Park. Within this overarching goal we aim to:

- Achieve the vision of a Biodiversity Park through a productive partnership of communities and organisations working for and with nature
- Study the natural environment and habitats for wildlife and with the help of residents and experts, discover, identify and record the plants and animals living within the park.
- Encourage people to experience, enjoy and learn about nature within the park both physically and virtually by providing attractive, informative, multi-media resources through a website and magazine
- Undertake, small-scale projects and activities that protect and help regenerate the natural environment, increase biodiversity and contribute to the health & wellbeing of our communities through interactions with nature.
- Make a positive contribution to Surrey's Nature Recovery Network Strategy and other relevant strategic objectives of partner organisations.

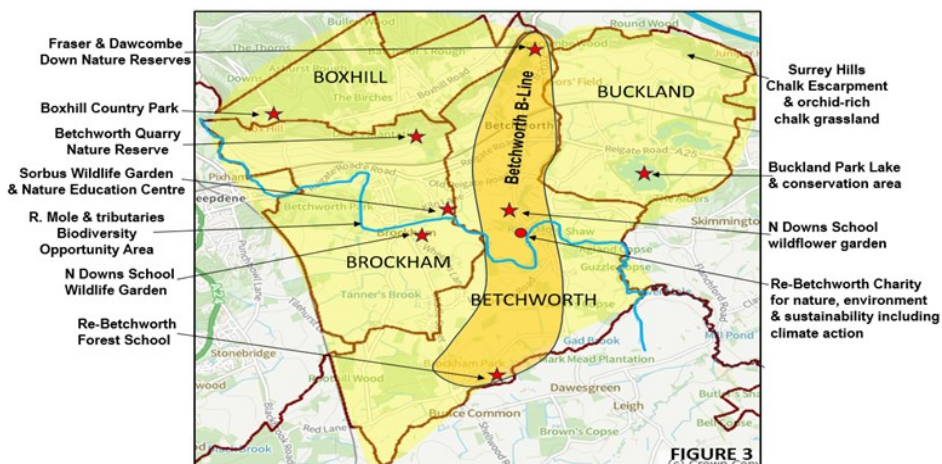
**Landscape-scale biodiversity project:** A Biodiversity Park provides a landscape-scale framework within which Nature-Based Solutions and other nature-based activities can be stimulated, visualised, designed, implemented and evaluated. Initiatives at this scale are more likely to attract funding within the Nature Recovery / Biodiversity Net Gain Framework. A number of existing nature-based initiatives can be integrated into a Biodiversity Park (Figure 3) including:

- Two nature reserves managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust
- Boxhill Country Park managed by the National Trust
- Betchworth B-Line with a number of biodiversity projects
- Buckland Park Lake and biodiversity initiatives
- Sorbus Learning CIC - a not-for-profit community interest company providing inspirational learning activities & sharing innovative ideas with local communities to improve the lives of people & wildlife
- Three primary schools two with wildlife garden initiatives and a Forest School
- Brockham PC's – Environmental Strategy & Betchworth PC's Biodiversity Strategy
- Buglife's Surrey Hills B-Line

Individual parishes would continue to undertake their own nature projects, but there would also be co-ordinated activities undertaken by community volunteers, on behalf of the Biodiversity Park.

Some examples of activities that might be undertaken in the Biodiversity Park, are shown below.

- 1 Studies and surveys to map and understand the natural environment to identify and record the plants, animals and habitats.
- 2 Undertaking, with volunteer members of the community and partners, specific projects and experiments to enhance biodiversity and create better conditions for plants and animals to thrive
- 3 Conducted walks led by local people with knowledge of the flora and fauna
- 4 Recognising the contributions that people make to protecting and regenerating the natural environment e.g. farmers, estate managers, gardeners, allotment holders and bee keepers.
- 5 Creating resources – e.g. maps, leaflets, photographs, movies, signage to inform local residents and visitors about biodiversity in the park.
- 6 Educational activities within and for the communities – e.g. practical workshops, zoom and face to face talks, walkabouts, contributions to school curriculum and adult self-education
- 7 Opportunities for school and university students and local people to undertake volunteering and projects
- 8 Opportunities for activities relating to health and mental/spiritual wellbeing through nature
- 9 Creative activities using nature for inspiration – e.g. art, photography, making wildlife movies and more



**Re-Betchworth Charity is seeking the support and endorsement of Parish Councils, Surrey County Council, Surrey Wildlife Trust & National Trust, Surrey Hills Soc. and Buglife for this proposal with a view to submitting a bid in January 2024, for £5000 seed funding from the UK Transition Network. The grant will enable the development work necessary to explore and develop the idea of a Community Biodiversity Park and**



**understand the feasibility of establishing such a park. If the bid is successful, a delivery team will be formed to nurture and facilitate the discussion together with a Community & Partners Group to oversee and contribute to the discussion and evaluate the outcomes.**