

# Largest Ever Conservation Project In The Chilterns Is *Awarded National Lottery Funding*

**A project to restore and enhance habitats, landscapes and the heritage of the Central Chilterns has been awarded a National Lottery grant of £2 million. The Chalk, Cherries & Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme, spearheaded by the Chilterns Conservation Board will also work to educate communities to become protectors of their heritage and landscapes.**

The five-year scheme will encourage people to connect to the wildlife and cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns through a number of interconnecting projects across three themes: Wildlife & Landscape, Heritage & Landscape and People, Communities & Landscape.

## **Key aims of the scheme:**

- *Protecting declining wildlife* – Wildlife within the Central Chilterns has declined severely over the last 20 years. Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will support habitat management to protect the areas that species rely on.
- *Reinvigorating Chilterns Orchards* – Our once common cherry orchards have all but disappeared, but will be rejuvenated and revived through the scheme.
- *Solving the Mystery of Grim's Ditch* – Presumed to be an ancient routeway, Grim's Ditch is a real mystery, which further research will help resolve.
- *Uncovering the biodiversity in the headwaters of the Chilterns* – The Central Chilterns features a number of important small streams and ponds and the scheme will identify and map their biodiversity.
- *Revealing the history of the Chilterns' chair Bodgers* – The scheme will uncover the lives of historic woodland wood-turners known as 'Bodgers', and allow people to reconnect with their craft heritage through events and demonstrations.

Supported through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), High Speed Two Ltd through the Community Environment Fund (CEF) and



Wycombe District Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) the project will leave a legacy of improved conservation and land management, partnerships, skills, volunteers, and engaged communities caring for the future of wildlife and their heritage.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of HLF said: "The Central Chilterns has a wealth of heritage stories dating as far back as the Neanderthal hunter-gatherers of the Paleolithic era. . . We are thrilled that with money from the National Lottery we are able to fund Chalk, Cherries and Chairs to preserve this important natural heritage for future generations."

Commenting on the award, Kath Daly, Countryside Officer said: "Over the last two years a strong partnership of organisations, ranging from UK-wide charities to local community groups, has united to help plan Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. . . This major partnership will provide opportunities for people to get involved and volunteer; to increase and improve wildlife spaces; and for communities to learn, create and take action for heritage."

Recruitment of project staff has now started and work will commence in early summer. To find out more about the roles available and to apply please visit the Chilterns AONB website at <https://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/vacancies.html>

