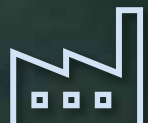


Tame Valley Wetlands

*Developing our vision
for the future*

Consultation document

July 2017





Foreword

Welcome to the Tame Valley Wetlands – a wonderful, watery landscape, located in the heart of the country between Birmingham and Tamworth. These vital wetlands clean up our water, provide us with resources, help to reduce flooding, and give us and wildlife a space to use and enjoy.

Wildlife and humans alike have been drawn to the life-giving properties of this area for centuries. The plentiful resources of fresh water, fertile soils and rich mineral deposits have all played a role in shaping the landscape we see today. But past human activity has had a detrimental effect on our wildlife; and, today, major development pressures from new housing, industrial and infrastructure projects are continuing to have an impact, while the unpredictable weather patterns associated with climate change are affecting people, sensitive habitats and species.

To reverse these trends, we need to recognise that our ‘natural capital’ – nature’s assets from which we gain benefits such as clean air, fresh water, materials and goods – must be well-managed in order to prevent it becoming degraded and lost. Such loss is not only bad for biodiversity, but also affects our own social and economic well-being, and health.

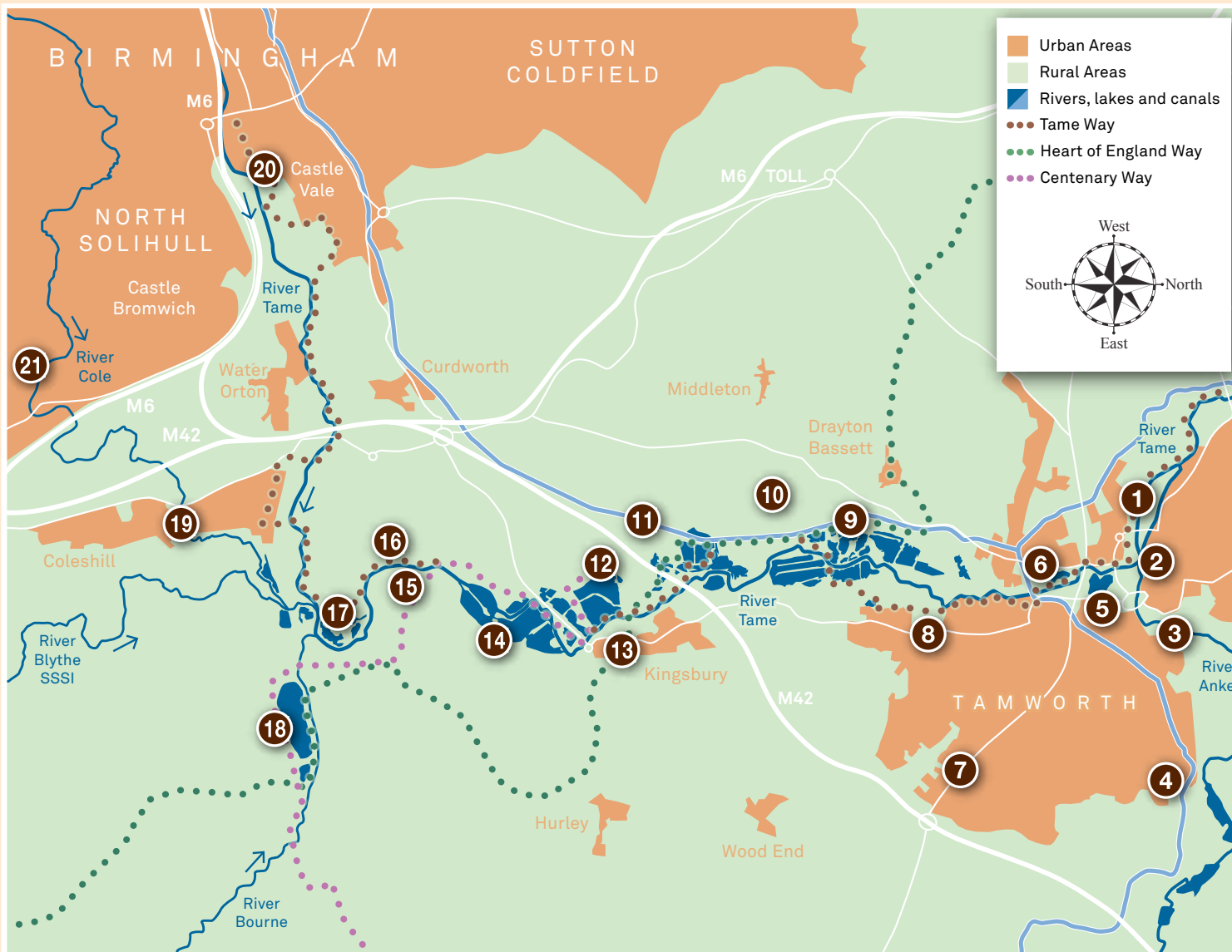
The Tame Valley Wetlands has the capacity to help the region face the challenges of industrial growth, climate change, food and water security, and threats to biodiversity. It has the potential to provide vital natural resources and services to supply our ever-growing demands and populations. It can play a key role in improving the quality of life, health and well-being of local people, which will boost the economy, attract new business and tourism, and improve culture and heritage. With careful restoration and conservation, it can continue to benefit both wildlife and people, now and into the future.

“ *Living in the Tame Valley, I’m still discovering new and beautiful places, right in the busy heart of the Midlands. I’ve seen the great things that working together can achieve, but there’s still lots to do as the region continues to change. I hope you’ll work with us to realise our vision.* ”

George Day, Chair, Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership



A rich and diverse landscape



- 1 Broad Meadow LNR
- 2 Tamworth Castle
- 3 Warwickshire Moor LNR
- 4 Hodge Lane LNR
- 5 Borrowpit Lakes
- 6 Tameside LNR
- 7 Kettle Brook LNR
- 8 Dosthill Park LNR
- 9 RSPB Middleton Lakes
- 10 Middleton Hall
- 11 Birmingham & Fazeley Canal
- 12 Kingsbury Water Park
- 13 Kingsbury Meadow LNR
- 14 Lea Marston Lakes
- 15 Whitacre Heath SSSI
- 16 Hams Hall Environmental Centre
- 17 Ladywalk Nature Reserve
- 18 Shustoke Reservoir
- 19 Cole End Park LNR
- 20 Castle Vale Conservation Area
- 21 Meriden Park LNR

“ I am very encouraged to see the positive impact the Partnership is having on the Tame Valley Wetlands. It's vital we work together on a landscape-scale to secure a sound future for people and wildlife. ”

Dr Ed Green, CEO,
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

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Working together

The Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership (TVWLP) was set up in 2005. We promote the area and look for ways to restore and enhance this unique landscape of surprise and beauty in the heart of the Midlands.

Partnership members include local, regional and national bodies. The Board consists of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (Lead Partner), Canal & River Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England, North Warwickshire Borough Council, RSPB, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Warwickshire County Council. The Partnership has a wealth of expertise covering a wide range of disciplines, such as conservation, planning, development, community engagement, regeneration and heritage.

Our values are:

- **INCLUSIVITY.** We are open and welcoming, accessible to all.
- **SUSTAINABILITY.** We invest in conservation and regeneration for long-term benefits.
- **ENTHUSIASM.** We are dedicated, creative and knowledgeable.
- **COOPERATION.** We work together, sharing ideas and skills.
- **TRANSPARENCY.** We are clear and accountable in all our operations.
- **RESPECT.** We treat each other and our environment well.

Due to the area's existing value, and the potential to further improve this through wetland conservation, the Tame Valley Wetlands has been identified as a key place for landscape-scale conservation and partnership working and has been awarded Nature Improvement Area (NIA) status.

To enhance the resilience of our landscapes to environmental pressures, we need to create more places for nature that are bigger, better and joined up.

In this booklet, we provide opportunities for everyone with a stake in the area to help achieve this vision. These are not set in stone, but are a starting point for a wider consultation on what is needed if we are to provide a landscape that is rich in wildlife and accessible to all. We hope that you will join us on our journey in bringing this vision to life.

“ I'm delighted that the Environment Agency are working hand in hand with the TVWLP to help its vision become a reality. ”

Richard Macdonald CBE, Deputy
Chairman, Environment Agency



A proven track record

The TVWLP has been working in the Tame Valley Wetlands since 2005, achieving much for nature conservation, engagement and regeneration. In 2014, the Partnership was awarded funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources to run the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme until 2018. This £2.5 million Scheme is restoring built and natural heritage, and reconnecting local people with their landscape across the Tame Valley Wetlands. Here are a few of our accomplishments over a three year period.

HEALTHY HABITATS

1,196 metres of hedgerow restored and created

660 metres of river re-naturalised

16 hectares of wetland habitat restored and created

HERITAGE RESTORATION



ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

5,362 participants engaged in events and training

3,190 school children and young people engaged

221,398 Facebook and Twitter total reach

ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS



WETLAND CREATION



“ Fantastic people making outdoors so much more fun. ”

Ms Willetts, local resident via Facebook

TRAINING AND SKILLS



GETTING INVOLVED

15,000 hours of volunteer time donated

£145,000 of work achieved through volunteer activities

110 work parties run



About the area

TAME VALLEY WETLANDS: Between Birmingham and Tamworth, following 29 km of the River Tame

55 Designated sites: Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, Local Geological Sites and Local Wildlife Sites

 **2 million people on the doorstep**

Provides multiple **ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**, such as:

- Water provision, improved water quality and flood management
- Carbon storage in grassland, wetlands and woodland
- Recreational opportunities and health improvements
- Cultural opportunities, increased learning and skills



 **OTTERS** back on the River Tame after many years due to

BETTER WATER QUALITY

hectares of wetland habitat

1,000

Designated a **NATURE IMPROVEMENT AREA (NIA)** by the Local Nature Partnership to create a joined-up and resilient ecological network. The first NIA in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.



Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework include

- Barn owl
- Lapwing
- Bittern
- Hedgehog
- Bats
- Otter
- Water vole
- Black poplar



“ I am thrilled that the Tame Valley Wetlands' designation by the Local Nature Partnership as Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull's first Nature Improvement Area is helping to fulfil the Government's Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020 Strategy. It is also close to my constituency and will make this valuable green space more accessible.

”

Dame Caroline Spelman MP

500,000+ annual visitors to the area's largest green spaces

9,632,591 total visitor market (local people and tourist availability)

Providing vital connectivity and functioning floodplain



Regionally and nationally important **MIGRATION ROUTE** for hundreds of birds; nationally important for species like **shoveler**, **tufted duck** and **little egret**

Heritage and nature intertwined



INDUSTRY

Through the extraction of coal, clay, sand and gravel, industry has played a crucial role in sculpting the landscape and shaping its communities and economy. This influence continues today.



TRANSPORT

Road, rail and canal routes snake across the Tame Valley Wetlands, shaping it and creating strong connections from north to south. These routes are essential for revitalisation of the area.

NATURE

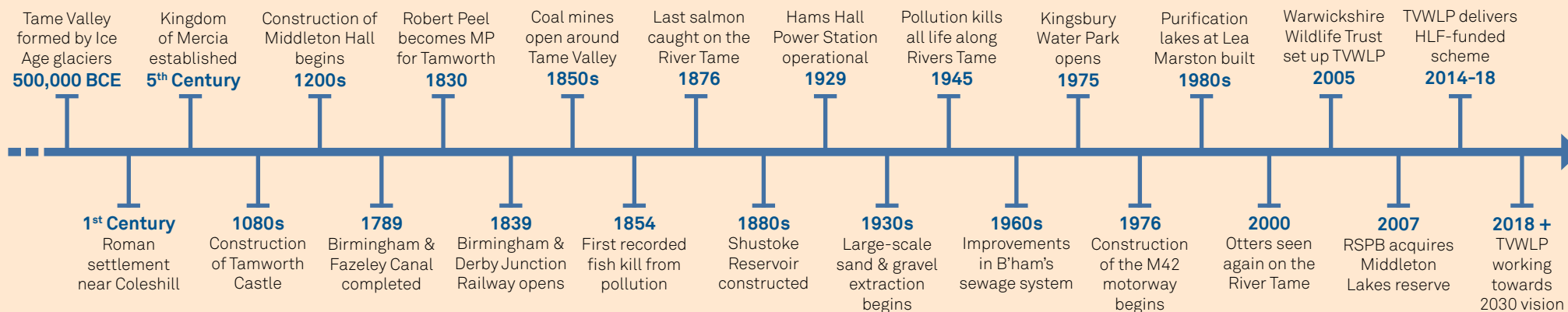
The Tame Valley hosts the largest series of interconnected wetlands in the region. The restoration of these habitats is crucial for the survival of local wildlife, including many threatened species.



COMMUNITY



The Tame Valley Timeline





A vision for the future

By 2030, the Tame Valley Wetlands will be a high quality, well-known and valued landscape, rich in wildlife, beauty and culture for all to enjoy.

This vision is being led and advocated by the TVWLP. We see this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reshape the landscape and rekindle the connection between local people and the countryside. By 2030 we can achieve this by taking a landscape-scale approach to conservation.

- The distinct identity and assets of the Tame Valley Wetlands will be highly valued by local people and visitors. The area will be accessible to all as a key tourist destination, inspiring people to care for and explore its natural, cultural and industrial heritage.
- Local people, landowners and the public, private and third sectors will be working together on a landscape scale, restoring, conserving and reconnecting the physical and cultural landscape of the Tame Valley Wetlands.
- The Tame Valley Wetlands will be an exemplar for habitat restoration and a haven for iconic species, such as otters, water voles and wetland birds.
- The natural environment of the Tame Valley Wetlands will be sustainably managed and maintained to a high quality, with multiple benefits being delivered for society including biodiversity, water quality, flood management and public health.
- Local communities in and around the Tame Valley Wetlands will be fully engaged, well skilled and have ownership of, and understanding and pride in, their environment and its rich heritage.
- The Tame Valley Wetlands will be valued strategically and recognised within national, regional and local plans.



Taking the vision forward

The TVWLP has developed a number of 'themes' under which specific actions will help us to achieve our future vision:

A Delivering landscape-scale connectivity and habitat creation and management



B Maximising opportunities from strategic planning and developments



C Community engagement and ownership



D Tourism: marketing and destination development





With a little help

By bringing organisations, businesses, landowners and communities together, we can put the River Tame and its wetlands at the heart of the region, helping to redefine the West Midlands and the role it plays in the UK. Treating this unique area as a functioning, powerful and complex system of waterways, industries and communities will make it both naturally and culturally significant, providing multiple benefits for wildlife and people alike.

The TVWLP intends this document to be a stepping stone in bringing our vision for the Tame Valley Wetlands to life. With input, help, information, funding and expertise from a wide range of sectors, organisations, groups and local people we can take the actions suggested under each theme forward over the coming years.

Taking the time to consult and involve people at every stage ensures that the vision and actions are reviewed and relevant. Everyone has a part to play in the transformation of the area, from businesses to farmers, schools to volunteer groups. Participation will bring us together into a collective community that is responsible for the future of our landscape.

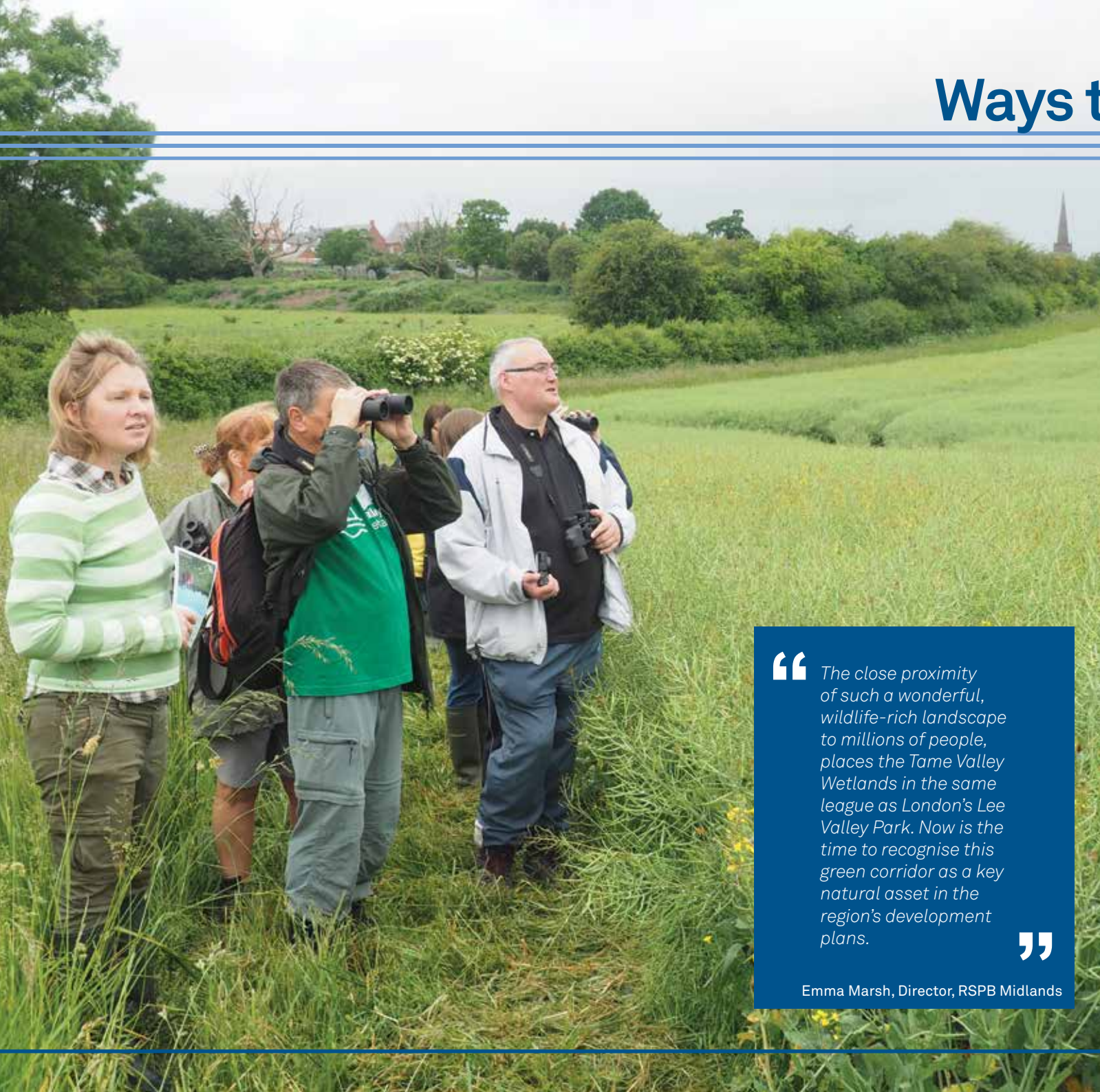
PARTICIPATION

OWNERSHIP

INVOLVEMENT



Ways to get involved



“ The close proximity of such a wonderful, wildlife-rich landscape to millions of people, places the Tame Valley Wetlands in the same league as London’s Lee Valley Park. Now is the time to recognise this green corridor as a key natural asset in the region’s development plans. ”

Emma Marsh, Director, RSPB Midlands

Share and promote our vision

Work with us to help turn our vision into reality

Join the Partnership – we’re open to all organisations that share our vision



**Tame
Valley
Wetlands**

The Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership comprises a wide variety of organisations including charities, local groups, statutory bodies and councils, all working collaboratively to create a wetland landscape, rich in wildlife and accessible to all.

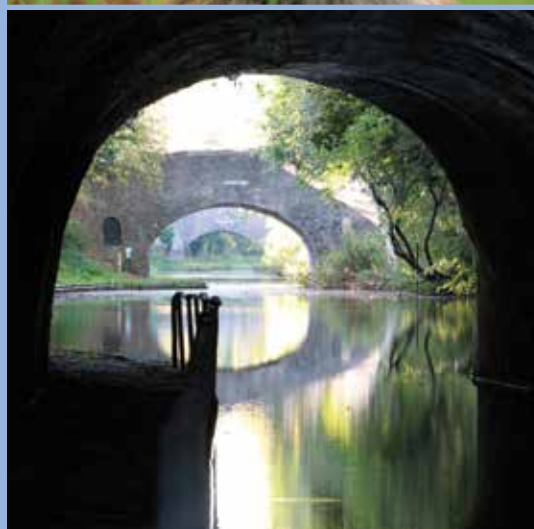
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■ enquiries@tamevalleywetlands.co.uk

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■ @thetamevalley

www.tamevalleywetlands.co.uk



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