

## What is The Watercress Way?

This 27 mile trail links the **communities** of Alresford, Kings Worthy, South Wonston and Sutton Scotney, partly in the South Downs National Park.



The **Watercress Way** was named after the **watercress farming**, which boomed after the 19<sup>th</sup> C. Mid-Hants (Watercress Line) and Didcot–Newbury – Southampton **Railway lines** were built. Their Closure (1963-1973) led to

abandoned or destroyed tracks. The **Watercress Line** was opened fully for heritage trains in 1985. The Watercress Way **charity**, aims to increase access to more of the 14 miles of closed railway track. By 2020 almost 6 miles was opened to walkers. Most may be cycled and ridden. The railway sections are linked together by footpaths, bridleways, and minor roads; many of which are historic livestock **droves**. The trail intersects or follows St Swithun's Way, Itchen Way, Three Castles Path, Arle Valley and Millennium Trails.

## Heritage and Conservation

The trail goes across beautiful rolling downland, through woods and along the rare chalk rivers of the Arle, Itchen, Candover and Dever, all **SSSI's**. Look for brown trout, otters, and damselflies. The old railways and droves are also important **wildlife habitats** and **corridors**, with beech, ash, wild garlic, and bluebells.

You may see buzzards, red kites, deer, and signs of badgers and dormice. **Worthy Down Halt platforms** are designated a **SINC** for its rare assemblage of flora.

Look out for **artefacts**: bridges, sleepers, telegraph poles & wire

stanchions. **Active management** by **trustees** and **volunteers**, working with Hampshire County Council, includes regular cutting, building log piles, planting, and clearing sites e.g. Wonston Bridge at Sutton Scotney.



## Support The Watercress Way

We rely on **grants** and **sponsorship** from **individuals** and **businesses** to fund opening the disused railways for public use, improving trail facilities, and maintaining and enhancing local wildlife and heritage.

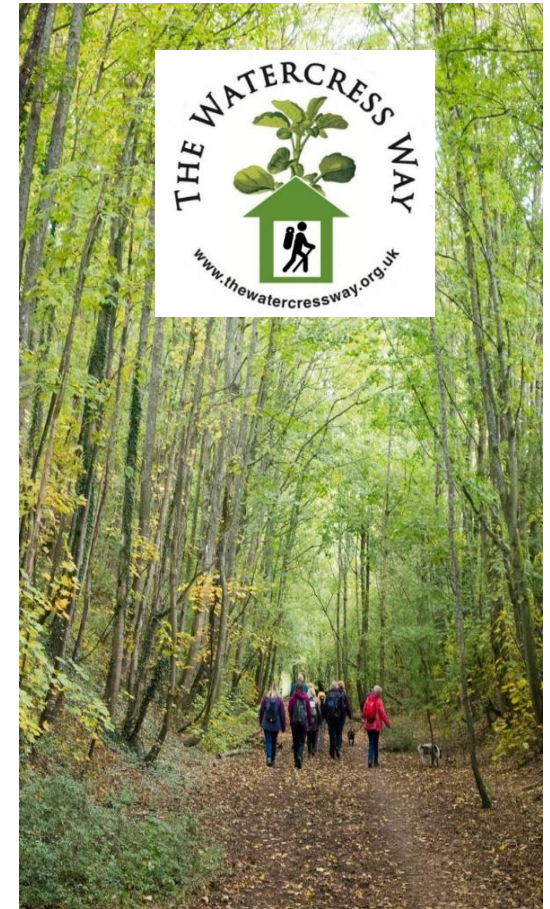
- 👤 **Friends of the Watercress Way** receive regular email updates.
- 👤 **Volunteers** are needed to help keep the paths open, litter clearance, help fund raising and run events: either ad hoc or more regularly.
- 👤 **Sponsorship helps** pay for way marking, leaflets, improved surfaces, disabled access ramps, benches, interpretation boards etc.
- 👤 **Donate**, using Gift Aid, via our website.
- 👤 **Fundraise for free** when shopping online from, John Lewis, M & S etc.



- 👤 Look out for our **special events**: guided heritage and ecology walks, cycle rides, children's competitions and quizzes held at sponsor pubs. Try our new **geocaching trail** [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com).
- 👤 **Meet the trustees** at our AGM, local fetes, Alresford's May Watercress Festival and September Agricultural Show.

### Sponsors + Supporters include :

- 👤 **The Councils** of Winchester, Kings Worthy, Wonston, South Wonston, Headbourne Worthy, Itchen Valley & New Alresford councils, Hampshire County.
- 👤 **Charities & organisations**: South Downs National Park, The Gratton Trust, Winchester Ramblers, Worthys Conservation Volunteers, Rotary Club, Alresford & Worthy's Community Sheds.
- 👤 **Local businesses**: The Watercress Line, Hellards, The Swan, Bell, Globe, Caricoli and Courtyard Tearoom, The Bush, The Chestnut Horse Winchester Coffee School, The Plough, Wonston Arms, King Charles, Boomtown, Jude's.



**A long distance circular trail, waymarked for walkers, near Winchester. It follows two disused railways, linked by historic droves. For shorter options, and alternative routes for cyclists & horse riders see**

[www.thewatercressway.org.uk](http://www.thewatercressway.org.uk)



[info@thewatercressway.org.uk](mailto:info@thewatercressway.org.uk)

## The Watercress Way Access

There are **multiple access** points to the trail. Printable guides are on our website: clockwise, and anticlockwise, and **shorter circular walks** from the main **gateways** of New Alresford, South Wonston, Kings Worthy and Sutton Scotney. All have **bus services** and public **carparks**. The trail passes the heritage train station of Alresford, where the **Watercress Line** links to Alton and its mainline trains to London.

## Facilities

- Apart from nearby Winchester, there are over 12 pubs and hotels on or near the trail, many offering **accommodation, especially in Alresford**.
- The trail's slight gradient makes it attractive for all. The charity is working to improve access for those with **reduced mobility**.

## The Watercress Way users code:

**Respect** other users of the trail and its neighbours and keep to the trail.

**Protect** the environment. Please take your litter home. Dogs under control are welcome. Leave any artefacts found.

**Enjoy** The Watercress Way!

