

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 19th 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.



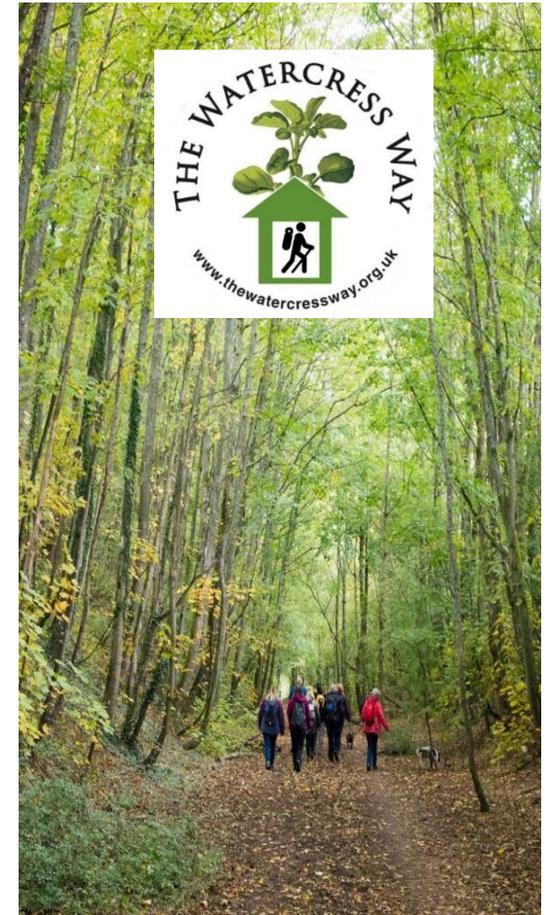
Support The Watercress Way

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.
-  **Give as you Live**  **amazonSmile**
You shop. Amazon gives.
-  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.
 -  **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



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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!

