

What is The Watercress Way?

This 27 mile, 44 kms trail links the **communities** of Alresford, Kings Worthy, South Wonston & Sutton Scotney, partly in the South Downs National Park.



The **Watercress Way** was named after **watercress farming**, which boomed after the Victorian Mid-Hants (Watercress Line) & Didcot–Newbury– Southampton **railway lines** were opened. After closure (1963-1973) they were built on, farmed, or abandoned.

The **Watercress Line charity** rebuilt part of the original track for heritage trains from Alresford-Alton. The **Watercress Way charity** campaigns to increase access to the 14 miles of abandoned track beds of the two railway lines. By 2020 almost 6 miles (9.7 kms) was walkable, & most may be cycled and ridden too. The trail links the railway sections by following existing footpaths, bridleways, & minor roads. Many are historic livestock **droves**. The trail intersects or follows parts of St Swithun's Way, Itchen Way, Three Castles Path, Millennium Trail & others.

Heritage and Conservation

The trail goes across beautiful rolling downland, through woods & along the rare chalk rivers of the Arle, Itchen, & Dever, all **SSSI's**. Look for brown trout, otters, & damselflies. The old rail tracks & droves are also important **wildlife habitats & corridors**, with beech, ash, wild garlic, and bluebells. You may see buzzards, red kites, deer, & signs of badgers & dormice. **Worthy Down Halt platforms** are designated a **SINC** for a rare assemblage of flora.



Look out for artefacts: bridges, sleepers & telegraph poles.

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

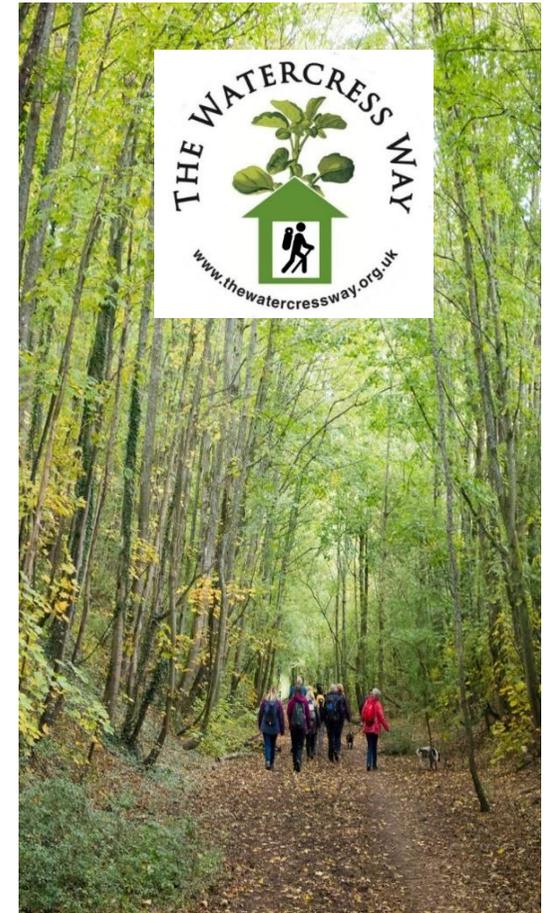
Support The Watercress Way

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

-  **Friends of the Watercress Way** receive regular email updates.
-  **Volunteers** are needed to help keep the paths open, litter clearance, help fund raising & 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**  Give as you Live® 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 & quizzes held at sponsor pubs.
-  Try our **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 County, City & Parish Councils** of Winchester, Kings Worthy, Wonston, South Wonston, Headbourne Worthy, Itchen Valley, New Alresford & 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 Bush, Chestnut Horse, Swan, Bell, Globe, Plough, King Charles, Wonston Arms, Caricoli, Courtyard Tearoom, Jude's, Winchester Coffee School & Boomtown.



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 and horse riders see www.thewatercressway.org.uk

Charity registration No. 1167675



info@thewatercressway.org.uk

Where to start & Parking

- There are **multiple access** points to the trail. Printable guides are on our website: clockwise & anticlockwise, and **shorter circular walks** from the main **gateways** of New Alresford, South Wonston, Kings Worthy & 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 & its mainline trains to London.

Access & 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**. Alresford & Sutton Scotney have scenic, paved circular sections.

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!

