

Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI

A Vision
2022





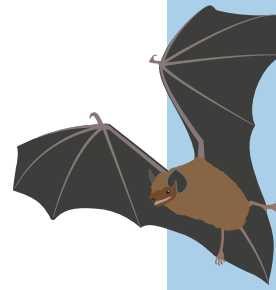
Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI

A future for the Swanscombe Peninsula

Swanscombe Peninsula is a wildlife haven that has been shaped by its complex industrial past. Its resilient habitats have been subject to landfill, cement waste, water treatment works - even the UK's tallest electricity pylon. But nature thrives here. It is a nationally important site, home to amazing wildlife such as the critically endangered Distinguished Jumping Spider, Nightingales, Otters, Water Voles and the Man Orchid. It is also a much-loved tranquil green space in the heart of Kent - space to breathe in an increasingly congested area.

We want to see a future for Swanscombe that includes the Peninsula secured for both its precious wildlife and the local community that has grown around it. This requires action - nature has reclaimed Swanscombe, but it still needs our help to safeguard its future.

The Save Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI (SSP) community group has been gathering local opinions to find out what people want to see at Swanscombe Peninsula.



© Richard Bayfield



Grass snake © Sam Whittingham

© Daniel Greenwood





87% identified it as either 'very important' or 'somewhat important' to their physical or mental wellbeing

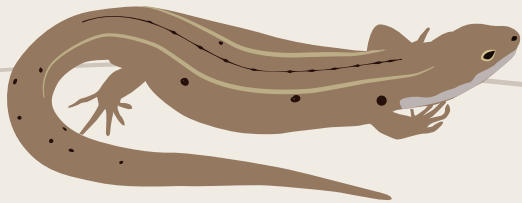
52% would like to see a bird hide

32% would like a visitor centre

Black Duck Marsh © Donna Zimmer

What did people say?

The Swanscombe Peninsula is clearly popular, with over 90% of people saying that they had visited before. 64% of people said that they visit the site for walking, 50% to observe its amazing wildlife, 28% to photograph its wildlife, 14% walk their dog and 6% go there running. This clearly shows the Peninsula's valuable role as somewhere to enjoy open space, connect with nature and to exercise outdoors - explaining why 87% of respondents identified it as either 'very important' or 'somewhat important' to their physical or mental wellbeing. Research shows that time in nature-rich landscapes helps people to be happier and healthier.



A Peninsula for Swanscombe

The survey sought to find out what people want to see for the future of the Swanscombe Peninsula. It revealed a widespread desire for it to be easier to access and enjoy. 52% of respondents would like to see a bird hide to help them watch wildlife and 29% would like a pond dipping/boardwalk area to help them connect with nature. Alongside this, 32% would like a visitor centre, 31% an information centre and 23% a café - proposals which would need to be carefully considered to not upset the important nature of the site. Other respondents wanted to see some other formalising of access/presence on the site, with 48% wanting dog waste bins, and 19% wanting to see a warden on site.



Supporting nature and people



Only 15% of people said that no new facilities were needed at Swanscombe Peninsula— suggesting that a majority of people would like to see positive changes to the site that is so close to their hearts. It is important that any future for Swanscombe Peninsula not only accommodates the needs of the community but does so while safeguarding the nationally important wildlife that makes it so special.

Our vision for Swanscombe is for improved access and educational opportunities for all, that benefits people without negatively impacting on wildlife. Within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) boundary, it is important that conservation management is put into place that looks after its incredible wildlife. There is the space and opportunity outside the SSSI to consider more ambitious plans such as visitor centre facilities.

It is clear that Swanscombe Peninsula should remain as a publicly accessible green space, managed with and for wildlife, with visitor and local community enjoyment and wellbeing at its heart. Giving people the simple but important chance to be immersed in nature on their doorstep.

Bearded Tit © Barry Wright



Orchids © Donna Zimmer



Wall Butterfly © Donna Zimmer



© Donna Zimmer

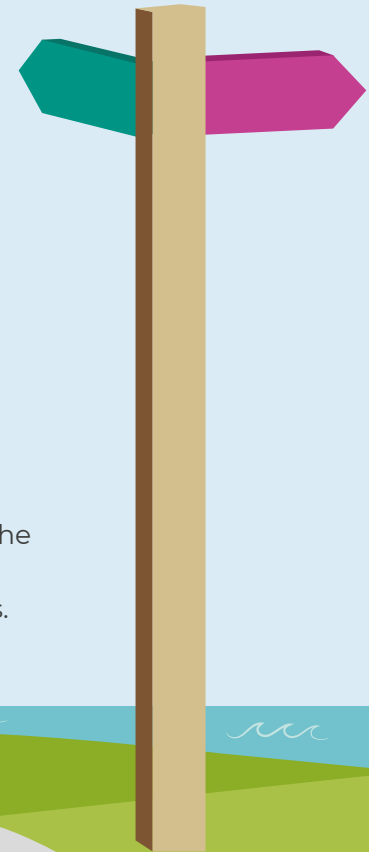


Improved access

Considering how many people visit the site to walk and enjoy its open space, it is unsurprising that respondents were also keen to see information and signage across the site to help them navigate and understand the Peninsula. 41% of respondents would like to see directional footpath signs to guide walkers and visitors. The existing extensive path network gives visitors the opportunity to explore the Peninsula, but adding simple coloured routes, signage with distances and way markers to formalise access would open it up to even more of the community. For many, Swanscombe Peninsula is where they go to not just enjoy nature, but to learn about it. 47% of survey respondents would like to see educational boards installed for wildlife and 40% for the site's history. This could be easily integrated into entrances/exits to the Peninsula and form an interpreted journey across the site at key points. One that would open it up to more people.

47%
would like to
see educational
boards

41%
would like to see directional footpath
signs to guide walkers and visitors





© Save Swanscombe Peninsula



Newly fledged Cuckoo © Ben Andrews



© MW pinset/www.imagepod.space

How can I help?

Our vision is just that - a vision. To keep the Swanscombe Peninsula safe for people and nature we need to work with local partners and decision makers.

Will you show your support and call for Swanscombe Peninsula to be saved for people and for nature?

The local community can support our campaign by contacting their local councillors and MPs and asking them to discuss a future nature park on the Swanscombe Peninsula. Why not share this vision with others in your community who will stand up for the future of this precious green space and ensure it is still there for future generations to enjoy?

To find our more visit www.saveswanscombepeninsula.org.uk













Thick-legged Flower Beetle © Liam Olds



Six-spot Burnet © Liam Olds



- KEY -

-  Marsh land
-  Tidal mudflats
-  Escarpments
-  Open mosaic habitat
-  Woodland
-  Scrub
-  Open water
-  Walks & trails
-  Reedbed
-  View points
-  Picnic area & information point

This vision has been created by a partnership of Buglife, CPRE Kent, Kent Wildlife Trust, RSPB and Save Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI. This follows a campaign to protect the site supported by 77 current and former senior staff from nature organisations and public bodies.

