



## Media Release 11 September 2022

### INCREASING BIODIVERSITY AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES IN THE GREAT OUSE VALLEY – A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

*Graham Campbell, Chair of the Great Ouse Valley Trust, explains how a recent workshop attended by Dr Nik Johnson, the Combined Authority Mayor, explored community climate change initiatives to ‘double nature’.*

We all recognise the unique qualities of the Great Ouse Valley landscape but could it become more responsive to climate change? Could we find ways to increase biodiversity and still make the Valley accessible to everyone? The Great Ouse Valley Trust is trying to answer these questions.

On Thursday 8th September Dr Nik Johnson, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, joined Great Ouse Valley Trust Partner Members and other enthusiasts in a Community Engagement Workshop in Hemingford Abbots Village Hall. Attendees included landowners, conservationists, District Council officers, farmers, Parish Councillors, boaters, fishermen, cyclists, runners, walkers, and others that love our precious landscapes. The workshop was designed to develop six practical projects that would make a real difference.

It was organised by the Trust with the benefit of funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, following seed corn funding from Natural England and Natural Cambridgeshire.

Dr Jade Gunnell, local ecologist and expert on community engagement, ran the event with great skill and enthusiasm. Mayor Johnson gave an introduction and confirmed the support of the Combined Authority to the aims of the Trust. The tasks of assessment and visioning then proceeded throughout the day until the six projects to take forward were agreed.

Graham Campbell, Chairman of the Trust, said:

*'The workshop was an experiment. Having concentrated on the green corridor between St Ives and Godmanchester, the Trust will now hold similar workshops for other areas of the Great Ouse Valley within Cambridgeshire from St Neots down to Earith. Jade ran the event with great professionalism and there was no slacking. The day required hard work from all of us but it was ultimately very rewarding. I feel confident that we can use what we have learnt to make a real difference to our precious landscape in the coming months and years. With the commitment we have from our Partner Members, and the great support provided by both Mayor Johnson and Huntingdonshire District Council, I am convinced we will soon see real practical solutions to both accommodate climate change and increase biodiversity.'*



Dr Nik Johnson and participants at the Great Ouse Valley Trust workshop in the garden of Hemingford Abbots Village Hall. Photograph by Emily Dalziel



Delegates addressed by Dr Jade Gunnell and in action! Photographs by Emily Dalziel

**Editors:** please contact Graham Campbell for interview on 07952 754763

**What is the Great Ouse Valley Trust?**

The Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT) is a charity formed in October 2018 with the charitable objective ‘To promote for public benefit the conservation, restoration, and enjoyment of the landscape, wildlife and heritage of the Great Ouse Valley and environs in the county of Cambridgeshire.’ Members include local councils, the local Wildlife Trust, individuals and environmental groups. The Trust’s Vision recognises the Great Ouse Valley is a fantastic place to live and visit, with off-the-beaten track areas to explore by foot, cycle or horse. The area is nationally recognised and valued for its wildlife, leisure, natural and heritage attractions which contribute to the county’s natural green spaces. Our vision is achieved by GOVT being the catalyst which brings national organisations, local communities and individual people together for the common good.

GOVT’s mission covers:

- **Enhancement of landscape** – increased biodiversity
- **Promotion** - sense of place, tourism and local economy, health benefits
  - **Protection** – active conservation and campaigning
  - **Access** for all – residents and visitors, disabled
- **Partnerships** and alliances: groups working together
- **Increased engagement** – education, volunteering