

PRESS RELEASE



Dawn Chorus at Dunstable Downs

Dunstable Downs, 11 May 2008 –‘Early birds’ are in for a treat on Sunday 11 May with the Luton and South Bedfordshire RSPB group leading a dawn chorus walk around the Dunstable Downs. Supported by Groundwork Luton and South Bedfordshire, the walk will start at 4.30am and will take approximately 2 hours, along the way visitors will have the chance to listen to, learn about and view the other ‘early birds’ at the site under the guidance of an expert ear. The walk will finish at the Chilterns Gateway Centre where breakfast will be served by the National Trust.

The event, including breakfast, is free but places are limited, they can be booked by contacting Debbie Vidler at Groundwork Luton and South Bedfordshire on 01582 345313 or email deborah.vidler@groundwork.org.uk. The dawn chorus walk and breakfast is one of a variety of activities on offer on Dunstable Downs as part of an activity programme based around the new multi-user route on the site. The activity programme is supported by Bedfordshire County Council with funding from Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund’s joint ‘Active England’ programme. Other events in the programme include health walks on the third Wednesday of each month, family events and guided walks.

The walk takes place a week after International Dawn Chorus Day on May 4th, an event organised by the Wildlife Trust to encourage people around the globe to rise early and enjoy the birdsong which is at its peak at this time of year.

Jonathan Woods from Bedfordshire County Council said:

“This is a great opportunity for people to learn more about the wildlife at Dunstable Downs and experience the site with just a few fellow walkers and the birds for company! Thanks must go to Mick Price from the Luton and South Bedfordshire RSPB group for leading the walk.”

- ENDS -

Press Enquiries

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Notes to Editor

Groundwork Luton and South Bedfordshire

Groundwork Luton and South Bedfordshire is a member of a federation of over 50 Groundwork trusts across the UK. Groundwork works with all sectors of the community to improve the environment and create sustainable communities that are vibrant, healthy and safe.

For more information, please visit our web site at www.groundwork.org.uk/lutonandsouthbedfordshire

Dunstable Downs (including Whipsnade Downs owned by the National Trust) is a sinuous chalk escarpment stretching from the very edge of Dunstable south-westwards. It includes common land managed on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council by the National Trust. It is some 119 ha in size and includes part of a larger Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (61 ha) and two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The SSSI is acknowledged to be a key site for nature conservation in the Bedfordshire Chilterns. Adjacent to the downs is the National Trust owned Chute Farm, an additional 70 ha.

The Chilterns AONB

In 1965, 833 square kilometres of the Chilterns were designated by the government as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This recognises that the Chilterns countryside is amongst the finest in the country, on a par with National Parks. The main aim of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, which means that the Chilterns is protected for future generations to enjoy. There are 40 other AONBs across England and Wales.

Bedfordshire County Council: Countryside Access Service

Helping people enjoy the Bedfordshire countryside is the main role of the Countryside Access Service. Thousands of kilometres of footpaths and bridleways are maintained so that people can walk to unwind, cycle to work or exercise the dog - and the family. BCC manages large country parks and many more small woodlands and nature reserves close to where people live so that they have access to attractive countryside, on their doorstep.

The National Trust is the largest conservation organisation in Europe. With the support of our 3.4 million members and 43,000 volunteers, we manage over 600,000 acres of countryside, more than 700 miles of coastline and more than 200 buildings and gardens of outstanding interest and importance.