

Kingsbridge Town Council – Press Release – 8 July 2016

Kingsbridge Tranquillity Trail – an oasis of calm amidst the hustle & bustle

Question: What do Bradford, San Francisco and (yes, you've guessed it) Kingsbridge have in common? They are the first communities in the world to introduce Tranquillity Trails.

Tranquillity Trails are walking routes that have been designed to allow space for residents and visitors alike to reflect and recover from the stresses of everyday life while receiving the benefits of healthy exercise. Professor Greg Watts, a noise scientist at the University of Bradford's Centre for Sustainable Environments, in liaison with Kingsbridge Town Council, has created a circular trail which takes advantage of the "maximum tranquillity" that can be experienced within walking distance of Kingsbridge town centre.

Studies have concluded that spaces rated as tranquil are more likely to produce higher levels of relaxation and less anxiety. Other studies have shown a link between such environments and longevity, pain relief, recovery from surgery and even how the brain processes auditory signals in a positive manner. Tranquil spaces are characterised by a soundscape dominated by natural sounds and low levels of man-made noise. In addition, the presence of vegetation and wild life has been shown to be an important contributory factor while litter and graffiti have a negative impact. In the town centre dense vehicle and pedestrian traffic create largely non-tranquil environments. However, our green spaces, quayside, backways and leats can be a refuge from the din of town life and these environments provide shelter for wildlife, also bird song and water sounds can be heard.

The trail takes between one and 2 hours. Starting at the Information Centre, the trail moves through the Quayside, on to the Western Backway, into St Edmunds Churchyard, via the Community Garden, to the Eastern Backway, moving to the Recreation Ground, and then returning to the Town Square. This intriguing trail identifies many points of natural and historic interest, with stop-offs along the way, and opens up a tranquil hidden side of Kingsbridge that probably escapes most of us in our daily existence.

Kingsbridge Tranquillity Trail leaflets are available free-of-charge from the Council Offices at Quay House, Kingsbridge Information Centre, Kingsbridge Library and Norton Brook Medical Centre. An insert titled "linking positive soundscapes" provides the academic background and understanding for the concept. They can also be downloaded from www.kingsbridge.gov.uk.

Anyone for a pot of chamomile tea?