



Countryside Jobs Service

Focus on Urban Greenspace

17 August 2009

In association with

Healthy Wealthy and Wise

The Land Restoration Trust is proving that it's not 'early to bed and early to rise' that makes you 'healthy wealthy and wise' but green space.



Health has always been a massive issue but our increasingly sedentary lifestyles are creating a ticking time bomb for the future. Some of the headline statistics make depressing reading.

- Obesity will cost the UK £45 billion by 2050
- School children are 8 – 10cm fatter than a generation ago
- In 2002 heart disease cost the UK over £7bn

Yet the key to maintaining a healthy lifestyle is 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week. The key factor in achieving this doesn't have to be an expensive gym membership, but can instead be safe, well maintained outdoor spaces where people can go to exercise and somewhere that they interact with as part of their everyday life. Thousands of people take part in organised health activities such as green gyms, buggy fit and health walks on the Land Restoration Trust's sites every year. However that is only a small part of the story; informal use of the spaces which also delivers intrinsic health benefits is much higher.

The economic value of open space is often overlooked. There is always a heavy focus on buildings and jobs without considering what really makes an area desirable and sustainable. Open space is a valuable economic asset, it not only attracts businesses and key workers to the area but also ensures that they stay long term, therefore delivering both economic uplift and sustainability. Our own experience backs this up. At one of our South Yorkshire sites before the community woodland was created the adjoining land was estimated to have a negative value and had no prospect of development. Recently this land was sold to a developer for a seven figure sum.

The Trust's spaces also provide vital educational resources. Every year thousands of children enjoy structured fun educational activities, such as mini beast hunts, pond dipping and habitat building. The hope is that these activities will create a passion for the outdoors that will last a lifetime.

Community Rangers also work with learning support units at local schools. The hands-on, practical conservation skills based approach is designed to teach anger management, self control and teambuilding skills. Rangers are able to engage the children in an understanding of what the woodland can offer them, the right way to treat it and how they can use its facilities. These are all children that have been suspended from school up to 13 times for physical and verbal abuse. Yet out in the woodland this behaviour is not witnessed and good habits are transferred back to the school.

Perhaps even more importantly than making us healthy, wealthy and wise, green space is helping save the planet. Evidence now suggests that open space within towns and cities can be a major factor in mitigating climate change. A recent study demonstrated that green spaces can help control the temperature in urban areas, for example adding 10% green cover in towns and cities would keep the maximum surface temperatures on the hottest summer days at/or below what it was between the 1961-1990 level. Whereas removing 10% green cover from these areas could increase temperature by 8.2%.

So all in all, well maintained open space is much better for us than an early night.

By Euan Hall, Chief Executive

More information about the Trust is available from: www.landrestorationtrust.org.uk 01925 644733



photo
online

Flora locale, the wild-plant restoration charity, provides free on-line information on creating and restoring habitats and wild-plant communities for landscape, biodiversity and public enjoyment. It also offers an annual programme of training and other events for park managers, ecologists and other land managers. See www.floralocale.org and www.wildmeadows.org.uk

The London Parks & Gardens Trust has launched a fascinating and unique website www.londongardensonline.org.uk that gives a magnificent insight into Greater London's historic parks, gardens and many other open spaces. The website, which will list more than 2,500 spaces, is believed to be the largest of its kind in Britain.

Groundwork South Tyneside & Newcastle is a Regenerational Charitable Trust with a focus on renewable energy, employment programmes, neighbourhood renewal, engaging local young people and providing environmental education. We are dedicated to working closely with local residents to make environmental improvements that meet their needs now and in the future. stan@groundwork.org.uk 0191 4281144



Managing and maintaining the value of urban 'blue-space'



The University of Sheffield is engaged in two research projects; URSULA* and MP4 ** that are both investigating the 'value' of urban green and blue spaces in developing sustainable cities. Both projects are working in partnership with local authorities and other land managers and using 'real' sites for the research. URSULA asks the question, 'How can we improve the redevelopment of urban river corridors to maximise social, environmental and economic benefits'. 'Blue spaces' in cities have the potential to provide opportunities for recreation, enhance economic development and have great wildlife value however they can also cause problems, most noticeably flooding. Maximising the benefits and balancing the needs and aspirations of the many stakeholders concerned with river corridor development is challenging and URSULA is working with stakeholders to provide solutions. MP4, a collaboration of European partners, focuses on the long term management of places – 'place-keeping'. Much funding has been made available to improve places however, managing these spaces once completed remains a major challenge. The resources are often not available and the social, environmental and economic 'value' of these improved places can decline.

Part of the research is focussed on the Lower Don Valley, Sheffield's traditional industrial heartland. The decline in heavy industries resulted in over 40% of the Valley being classified as brownfield land. The River Don that flows through the valley was severely polluted and the riverside environment degraded. The area became a focus for economic regeneration and since then there has been much improvement – large scale economic development, improvements in water quality and riverside access through the development of the 5 Weirs Walk <http://www.fiveweirs.co.uk/>. The management of the riverside environment however, remained a problem due to multiple land ownership, multiple management issues and no overall responsibility. Some of the problems faced were common to urban spaces such as fly-tipping, unmanaged vegetation, discarded needles and some river specific such as refuse and debris left after flooding, repair of historic waterpower structures and invasive species. There was frequent public criticism and the value of high quality environments along the river to support economic growth was recognised. The severe flooding of Sheffield in June 2007 leant an added urgency for co-ordinated management in order to deal with the debris and damage caused.

In response to these issues the Riverside Stewardship Company was set up by a partnership of organisations, Sheffield City Council, Groundwork Sheffield and Sheffield Wildlife Trust supported by a wide range of other organisations with an interest in the river. The remit of the Company is to 'protect and improve the waterside environment in Sheffield for people and wildlife' <http://www.the-rsc.co.uk/aboutus.html>. The company employs a part time development worker who generates income from sales and grant funding and River Stewards who manage the day to day organisation and delivery of the company's services. The Company offers a range of management services to riverside businesses, co-ordinates and liaise with other agencies involved in maintaining the river, organises volunteering and educational activities, and works to raise awareness of the rivers value. The Riverside Stewardship Company offers an example of partnership working between Local Authority and the Third sector to deal with management issues that one organisation alone cannot tackle, working to maximise the 'value' of the river to the regeneration of the Lower Don Valley.

*URSULA - Urban River Corridors and Sustainable Living Agendas is funded by the EPSRC. www.ursula.ac.uk

**MP4 - Making Places Profitable - public and private open spaces is a Interreg IVB North Sea Region funded project.

Mel Burton, Research Fellow, University of Sheffield, Department of Landscape.
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We know that high quality, multi-functional and accessible greenspace can make a real difference to the quality of life and sustainability of urban communities. However, whilst local authorities and national agencies have found it relatively easy to map and quantify greenspace, understanding and assessing the quality of greenspace has been a real challenge.

Greenspace quality – a guide to assessment, planning and strategic development was published in 2008 by greenspace scotland and the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership. The document provides practical guidance on the assessment of greenspace quality and the ways in which quality standards can be developed and delivered.

The guide's primary function is to support local authorities in producing open space audits and strategies, as required by Scottish Planning Policy 11 Open Space and Physical Activity. It is, however, designed to be used more flexibly to meet local needs.

A number of local authorities (such as Aberdeenshire, East Lothian and Midlothian) have used the guide to design their open space audits and subsequent strategy development.

In other cases, the suggested quality criteria and systems have been adapted to meet a more specific local need. For example, the City of Edinburgh Council's open space audit combines the greenspace scotland guidance and elements of Green Flag – which was already being used to assess parks and other designated spaces in the city. In Dumfries and Galloway – the quality guidance was used to design a study looking at community priorities for greenspaces in North West Dumfries. Here, the quality scoring system was adapted to give greater weight to

community priorities. The Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership also adapted the criteria to look specifically at the quality of common areas and back courts in residential areas.

The guidance provides a much needed, clear and flexible approach to the complex task of assessing the quality of greenspace. Nic Coombey, Solway Heritage

More information on the Guide is available on the greenspace scotland website: www.greenspacescotland.org.uk
Article by Deryck Irving, greenspace scotland.

Consultancy Services:



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Pleydell Smithyman Limited has extensive experience in greenspace management, consultation, urban design and landscape architecture. We are committed to offering strategic thinking and creative solutions to produce sustainable projects that respect and respond to the environment, enriching quality of life. To find out more call 01952 433211 or visit www.pleydellsmithyman.co.uk



A fantastic new campaign has been launched in London, aimed at supporting 2,012 new community food growing spaces by the end of 2012.

Capital Growth was launched in November, 2008 by London Food Link, part of Sustain, with the support of the Mayor Boris Johnson, the Mayor's food advisor Rosie Boycott and many partner organisations. Nine months in to the campaign and Capital Growth is already supporting over 100 new projects and has received a certificate of commendation from the RHS. The projects being supported include spaces on housing estates and roof-tops, and in Doctors surgeries, a floating allotment and a prison. All of these projects will benefit people in London, enabling access to locally grown, nutritious food,

increasing social cohesion and training a whole new generation of Londoners in food growing skills.

The campaign also helps to cater for the large number of people who are on allotment waiting lists in London that are sometimes decades long.

In the first phase of Capital Growth (up to March 2009), supported by the London Development Agency, small grants were offered to new projects. It is planned that more grants will be offered across London later in the year. In the meantime projects can apply to take advantage of all types of in-kind support, to assist people in setting up a project and to support them in the long run. For example a soil contamination expert has offered to visit any projects that need advice on soil testing. The team at Capital Growth are working to develop further support with horticultural and enterprise training, as well as donations of equipment and services from a number of organisations.

Capital Growth has also teamed up with Islington Council, who have launched their Edible Islington programme, focused on supporting new food growing projects in the borough. The small grants part of the programme is being managed by Capital Growth and Islington residents are now able to apply for money to assist them in setting up their own projects: http://www.capitalgrowth.org/grow_food/edible_islington/.

Capital Growth also continues to work with other local authorities to encourage them to commit to supporting growing projects in their boroughs. Other major landowners are being encouraged to offer their land to community groups.

If you live in London, want to set up a food growing project and have access to some land go to www.capitalgrowth.org/apply to download an application form and accompanying guidance notes.

Article by: Seb Mayfield, Capital Growth

Green Roof specialists:



Livingroofs.org Ltd is the UK independent green roof organisation that promotes green roofs throughout the UK. www.livingroofs.org It provides advocacy, training in the form of seminars and workshops and detailed advise on green roofs and water, energy and biodiversity.

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Grot Spots and Troubled Kids: How to make them shine!

Community Space Challenge (CSC) is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, managed by Catch22 and supported by Keep Britain Tidy, The Princes Trust, Changemakers and the Youth Justice Board. It is based in 70 youth crime prevention projects across England, 5 of which run here in Bradford, 3 coordinated through the YMCA. CSC is about young people taking over rundown, forgotten spaces in their local community and changing them into fresh, green places for everyone to enjoy. It is a 5 year project running until 2012. Our CSC projects work with 50 young people, aged 8-13 years, who attend the YMCA programme Palz (Play And Learning Zone) in 3 local areas. We believe in the benefits of CSC and that you too can experience these in your community. Here's some ideas how.



Our projects are young person led; they choose what to improve where they live giving the projects personal meaning. This contributes to their sense of community ownership and pride and of the community's pride in them. Their ideas blossom when a site is visited and their enthusiasm for litter-picks and digging is outstanding!

To identify a project, firstly, we talk with our young people about their community, their likes and dislikes and ways they would like to see it improved. Secondly, we walk around the area. We do this with 'Keep Britain Tidy' but you can do it yourself: plan a route, walk it with your group and take photos under titles such as untidy, dangerous, attractive, etc. Take notes and explore ideas during the trip – it is easier to imagine improvements when you are actually there! The project can be chosen and planned over following sessions.

Contact landowners (etc) early to get an idea of project feasibility. This helps prevent disappointment and highlights issues you may not be aware of. Involve as many community members and organizations as possible, be it for hands-on work, finances, partnership or advice.

Be SMART. Keep your project Specific, Manageable, Achievable, Realistic and to a Timetable. Few things run smoothly first time and you can learn a lot that will help the success of future projects.

Communication is the key to success. Letting a landowner know where you have planted your wildlife flowers can save the disappointment of finding them mown to the ground. Build in an exit strategy and maintenance plan from the start to reduce the potential for all your hard work being covered by weeds after you leave.

Consider environmental factors such as soil type, location, light, use of the area and risks to plants: it is demoralising to find your expensive sensory garden has disappeared or been ridden over. It will rain when you want to work! Plan time for cancelled sessions and have wet-weather activities to hand. The work can be physical and sometimes tedious so plan in breaks, treats, fun and rewards.

Finally, be proud of your project and enjoy it! Celebrate it throughout and with an opening event to which all and sundry are invited.

Jenny Sherriff (CSC Project Worker) and Rachel Deadman (CSC Project Coordinator)
For further details visit www.communityspacechallenge.org



Voluntary opportunities to get involved:

BTCV's "Inspiring People, Improving Places", is an exciting new project enabling local people to reconnect with their landscape across the Weald Forest Ridge. Join our weekly group - learn new skills, get fit, train for an accredited qualification, or simply enjoy being outdoors. For up-to-date information – www.btcv.org/wealdforest

Hollybush run projects with volunteers maintaining green spaces in Leeds. If you want to make a difference, meet people or learn new skills, come along! All you need is lunch and enthusiasm! Hollybush Conservation Centre, Broad Lane, Kirkstall, Leeds, LS5 3BP. Info: www.hollybushleeds.org.uk, or call us 0113 274 2335.

Skelton Grange Environment Centre is an environmental education resource based in urban greenspace in South Leeds. We have lots of volunteering opportunities coming up, and our eco-friendly centre is also available for hire for events. Come to our Open Day on 12th September - visit www.skeltongrange.org.uk for details.

WWT's Wetlands in my backyard
Complete our survey and help the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust build a picture of the UK's ponds and backyard wetlands. Wherever you live, and whether or not you have your own pond, please tell us about the watery places in your neighbourhood. Take the survey at www.wwt.org.uk/wimby

Waterscape (British Waterways) National Wildlife Survey 2009. Visit your local canal or river and record (online) all the species you see. The information gathered will be used by British Waterways to help plan the management of our waterways and to protect wildlife. www.waterscape.com/wildlife-survey-2009 or Tel: 01923 201120.

GARNETT NETHERWOOD ARCHITECTS

URBAN TAKEBACK

The brief for the Holbeck Urban Village Wildlife Design competition was simple 'What can we do to bring wildlife back into the urban environment'. The aim of the competition was to provide sustainable habitats that will encourage wildlife back into the urban realm.

Garnett Netherwood Architects winning design was a tower of recycled building material which is to house many different species of animal. The idea behind the scheme was to create a multi levelled structure which complimented the existing Italianate towers of Holbeck. These iconic structures which are part of Holbeck's Tower Works were the initial inspiration but the design evolved into a structure which will recycle the building materials of demolished buildings. Due to the expanding nature of our urban areas new replaces old and rather than remove the demolished building waste, which can be a costly process and bad for the environment, these materials can be reused to create a place for wildlife to flourish. In essence we are allowing the animals to 'take back' the 'urban' fabric so that they can thrive within it. The tower is to be an urban beacon for wildlife, providing a home for them whilst creating a greener and natural environment for the human residents of our urban spaces.

Neil Oxlee, Garnett Netherwood Architects

www.garnettnetherwood.com



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Wildlife & Countryside Services

Suppliers of everything from pond liners and plants to wildflower turf, garden bridges, nestboxes, wildflowers, trees, seeds and much more besides. Also ecological advice and habitat creation/management. Check out the website at www.wildlifeservices.co.uk or call 0845 2300 927 or 0 70 90 80 9453.

The Acorn Workshop specializes in bespoke outdoor noticeboards, interpretation boards stands and literature dispensers made from oak. All products are made in our West Sussex workshop from PEFC oak and can be made to suit your sizes and requirements. See www.theacornworkshop.co.uk or call 07989 223 634 for more information.

British Recycled Products supply a wide range of 100% recycled products, including tables, ground reinforcement, lumber, boardwalks, fishing platforms, fencing and pallets. The recycled material is durable and maintenance free, and is great value. Visit www.britishrecycledproducts.co.uk for more information, or call 0845 0508415

Wildcare continues to establish itself as the leading supplier of wildlife and countryside products in the UK. With a diverse product base, fast delivery times and competitive prices, we are simply answering all the supply requirements of the countryside professional. See it at www.envisage-wildcare.co.uk or call us on 01793 724848.

Muddyfaces provides a one stop shop for forest school and outdoor play resources enabling organisations to source a range of items including health and safety equipment, tools, ropes and bags, outdoor play kits and outdoor clothing on one purchase order saving administration time. www.muddyfaces.co.uk

AditForm enables you to design your own recording form on your PC and then transfer it to your handheld computer for gathering data in the field. Data from several different users can be brought together on your desktop for reporting, graphing, mapping etc. www.aditsite.co.uk

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Fiskars Orange Thumb are donating funds, tools & materials to UK gardeners who want to improve neglected parks, play areas & gardens in their community. Nominate a green space for renovation at www.orangethumb.co.uk. Everyone who registers will be entered into our prize draw to win £250 of garden tools

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WildGuides

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Learning through LANDSCAPES

Grounds for improvement

...Learning through Landscapes, the national school grounds charity, has been working with schools to improve their outdoor environments for over 20 years...

School grounds are vital learning spaces. Too often they are an underused and overlooked asset. 63% of the whole school estate

is external space rather than buildings, but the potential of this huge resource is seldom fully considered or developed.

Good school grounds must support the learning and development needs of children. A whole campus approach suggests that grounds should not be considered in isolation - internal and external learning spaces must be integrated and accessible - to ensure that every inch of the site delivers a positive transformation of young people's experience of education.

Case Study- Lathom Junior School

Lathom Junior School is an urban school in Newham, London, with an outdoor space that was once grey, uninspired and entirely concrete, without any green space or trees for the children. Despite the grounds' great potential, certain unused areas behind the school were closed off and out of bounds to the children. It was clear to both teachers and children that the school grounds lacked a connection with nature and the outdoors.

From grey to green

Once the decision had been made to improve the grounds, the staff joined forces with the children and parents to develop a plan. A survey took place for children and staff to vote for what they would like to be able to do in the new grounds and it was finally agreed by all that a 'green zone', to grow vegetables, herbs fruit and flowers would be the best and most popular option. The pupils worked with teachers to map out the new area, positioning, designing and suggesting ways in which the grounds could become greener.

The school grounds was transformed from a drab grey concrete space to a green zone with trees, flower beds, a compost recycling zone and an area for the children to grow their own food. The out of bounds area was also made available to the children with the addition of raised beds for more vegetables and plants. The popularity of the school's new improved outdoor space inspired the pupils and staff to form a gardening club.

Mr Hughes adds, "Learning through Landscapes provided all the support and consultation we needed. Without LTL, we would never have known which plants to grow, how and where to plant them. They were also able to provide answers to all of our questions from the height of our flower beds to how often plants should be watered. They offered us great ideas about how the school can get pupils involved and fully benefit from the green zone, and most importantly, different ways in which all of this could be tied into the curriculum."

The benefits of being green

The new green zone had an immediate positive effect on the children. Mr Hughes continues, "The planting process alone had proved to be hugely beneficial to the children, as they were encouraged to consider important issues such as positioning plants to absorb sunlight, watering and ways of monitoring growth. The process taught the children to be passionate about plant life and to understand more about healthy eating- in fact, we saw an immediate increase in the lunchtime salad bar queue!"

As well as reinforcing the curriculum, the project offered the children responsibility, teaching them valuable life skills through the necessity to feed and maintain their vegetables. Brian Hughes explains, "This project has

allowed the children to develop the understanding that they are stakeholders in the school. They now feel that they are looking after their *own* space, and are making it better for each other.”

Article from: Learning through Landscapes



photo online

Professional membership with Learning through Landscapes enables you to promote your business, develop your skills, raise your profile and enhance your reputation as a company that supports the core business of schools – delivering a good education to their students.

For further information on professional membership, visit LTL's website www.ltl.org.uk or contact 01962 845811.

The BTCV Green Gym is a proven approach to encouraging healthy people and healthy places. The Green Gym provides physical activity and mental health benefits through environmental volunteering. Taking place throughout the year once a week, in both rural and urban neighbourhoods, activities focus on improving or creating local green spaces to the benefit of both individual and local community.

Work is tailored to the individual utilising their talents and capabilities whilst working as part of team. Green Gym projects can restore and then run community allotments; build community gardens; manage woodlands, build footpath, organise litter picks. It is quite likely that whatever project you think your local environment requires, a Green Gym somewhere has already done something similar.

Run in partnership with the health service and others, BTCV Green Gyms follow quality standards, which ensure safety and sustainability. Participants have access to nutritional advice, and opportunities to participate in other forms of physical activity. Green Gyms are networked across Wales and the UK. Working with your organisation BTCV employs an officer to coordinate the scheme, devise the programme of environmental activity and to run regular sessions. Depending upon the target audience, we aim to develop a community group within 2 or 3 years, this is where volunteers take on the long-term running of the programme. The precise way in which Green Gyms are established varies, depending upon the target audience and local priorities. Typically, our costs range from £17,000 to £30,000 per year for the establishment of one Green Gym group. If a community group is established, the costs are greatly reduced after the 2 year set-up phase. If your organisation is interested in setting up a Green Gym BTCV would discuss your objectives and may be able to advise you on sources of funding, and in some cases, we can work with you in developing funding proposals.

Many Green Gym participants have gone on into further training, into work, or have become regular volunteers in other aspects of community life.

At any one time across the UK BTCV are running around 90 Green with many more related community projects.

Aberfan Green Gym - The Aberfan Green Gym has gone from strength to strength, with 7 or 8 people participating regularly to maintain and improve a community allotment.. Every member of the group enjoys working there and gets involved with various tasks each week. Discussions have been held with the Chair of the allotment society to see if the Green Gym can help other allotment holders, and create some communal facilities at the site.

We moved a shed to create more space to build a large raised bed to grow vegetables. The first crop of potatoes has been harvested at the site and other crops are growing well. Aberfan youth project are now joining in as well. Two participants with serious mental health issues are now travelling to the site on their own from Merthyr town centre, which is something they would not have done 6 months ago. The success of the Green Gym at Aberfan, both for individuals and for green spaces, has become a welcome part of every day life in this Valleys village.

For further info contact: Calum MacIntosh c.macintosh@bctv.org.uk



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YGampfa Werdd



Green Gym



Cymru

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Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University is one of the largest and most dynamic schools of its kind in Europe. Amongst others we offer a fully RTP1 accredited MSc in Town Planning and an MA in Urban Design. To find out more about us please visit our website www.apl.ncl.ac.uk

8 – 10/9/09 An introduction to statistics in R.

Offered by the Centre for Conservation Ecology and Environmental Change at Bournemouth University. Aimed at helping new users of R (a very popular, freely available, open source system for statistical computation) move quickly up the steep learning gradient. Visit [www.bournemouth.ac.uk/conservationcsshortcourses@bournemouth.ac.uk](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/conservation/csshortcourses@bournemouth.ac.uk)

Lantra manages two funding programmes providing continuous, diverse and innovative training for greenspace businesses, which can make a huge difference to staff, customers and profitability. Women and Work is available across England and Business Forward offers 100% funded support in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Visit www.lantra.co.uk/Businesses

FREE training in environmental conservation through BTCV. BTCV Yorkshire and East Midlands offering 40 week courses for anyone to partake in nationally recognised qualifications to Level 1 and Level 2. Two days a week practical training, guided by trained assessors. Sites in Yorkshire, Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. Contact Gill Wilde, 0115 9313316 for more details.

Helping with the problems of Greenspace Management

Managing any area of openspace, be it urban greenspace, open countryside, small managed reserve or large expansive park is fraught with difficulties. Some problems recur on many sites and even on the same site time and again. The CMA yahoo group is a good place to ask for help or advice on your problem; it's quite likely that some of the members will have faced something similar are they are very generous in offering the benefit of their experiences and sharing their knowledge.



One regular problem seen in virtually all open spaces is dealing with the tricky issue of barbeques. Earlier this year Malcolm asked: "So its BBQ time again and we are thinking of taking a slightly brave approach that some of you might have already done. We are thinking of putting in a small number of slabbed areas. Now then if you have already trod this path before, How big did you make the slabbed areas, or concrete slabs whatever just not brick built things with grills on? Did you put any signage up re hot surfaces etc, if so what do your signs say? Have you used a booking system for them and did it work or do they just turn up? Did putting in slabbed areas cut down on BBQ's elsewhere? Do you still get illegal BBQ's and if so what action do you take when you find one in full BBQ mode (polite answers)? We have a no BBQ byelaw but they don't bother reading it so thinking about trying this." Quite an extensive query! But the fellow forum members rose to the challenge with many different points of view and differing solutions.

Tanya said, "We've installed permanent wooden benches on a lot of our picnic sites, as they kept pulling the anchors out of the portable ones and floating them off down the Avon. When we put these in we got black metal BBQ plates made up. They're basically flat metal plates screwed onto the surface of the benches. We've made them just a bit bigger than the disposable BBQs, and even though there's no sign up saying what they are for, people use them and we've got no holes burnt in our lovely wooden benches. This seems to be a cheap effective way of lessening the seasonal summer BBQ problem!"

Keeping with the slabs proposal Karl posted the following advice, "At our sites, with one in particular, we have set large paving slabs into the grass of our designated BBQ/picnic field. These do work well, can be mown over with ease and are not visually obtrusive. We have found just the one slab (large pedestrian street slab approx 60cm x 90cm) is adequate for a BBQ, disposable or not. These are around a field that also contain larger BBQ's (for bigger groups) that we hire out but the slabs allow people to bring their own for free. We have found if you try to have a no BBQ policy you have to be on site 24/7 and decline those people who have the courtesy to come and ask, however finding those who don't just go for it anyway and anywhere. The best way for us seems to have a designated area/field and inform people that is where they can BBQ. We have no booking system but just inform that if you bring your own you must set up on a slab and it is on a first come first serve basis. I think there are 8 to 10 slabs in all and that seems to be enough. Of course we still have the minority of people who BBQ outside of this area but we just inform them of where to go next time. It is often difficult to get someone to move once the BBQ is alight and pouring water on it or instructing them to pick it up and move it would probably cause an accident. We still get people who set up in the field on picnic benches or the grass scorching a rectangular shape into them. Also, if you have recycled plastic picnic benches you probably have already found the mess a 99p disposable BBQ can cause, as we have! Overly though, I think it is best to control BBQs rather than try to stop them as you can manage the inevitability on a day when the mere glimpse of sunshine causes people to drive to the nearest supermarket buy all they need, including the BBQ, for a under a tenner and head for their local park. p.s. When people set up with a disposable BBQ we ask them to leave it on the slab to cool down at the end and we collect it in the morning and recycle. This is far easier than scraping up and replacing a burnt out bin, which is an issue all in itself! However having just a wire cage bin near to ones for litter may be a safer and less costly depositing option and you can recycle them too."

After listening to everyone's advice Malcolm says, "We are going to go with slabs in the ground possibly with notices beside them, these will probably be free to use."

Other examples of postings on the group include vandalism of picnic benches and suggestions of how to try and prevent it. The issue of litter, a common one for all of us and what to do about lasting memorials, where and if they are appropriate, this is an issue that affects every area from large inner city councils down to something as small as Goathland parish council (the council local for CJS).

Countryside Management Association, www.countrysidemanagement.org.uk

Events:

Technical seminar - New development and urban greenspace: Wild plants for biodiversity enhancement
Ref N2 Thursday 19 November incl. Lunch.
Location: Manchester Facilitator: Penny Anderson Fee £100 concessions £75 For bookings and further information see training and events pages at www.floralocale.org or email info@floralocale.org

'Summer LEEFnet'

A free art and nature event for LEEF members, Bring your own picnic Centre for Wildlife Gardening, 28 Marsden Road, London, SE15 4EE Tuesday 25th August, 11:00 am till 2:00 pm Booking essential Children welcome You can join LEEF and find out more online at; www.leef.org.uk info@leef.org.uk

8th October: Facilitation Training. 9th October: Climate Change - Effective Communication. Both day long courses will be hosted at the Carmichael Centre, Dublin, by Talk Action's experienced training team. For more information see www.talkaction.org, email matt@talkaction.org, or phone 0207 324 4774.

'Autumn LEEFnet'

A free plant and gardening activities ideas swap and tour where you can meet other LEEF members Chelsea Physic Garden. 66 Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, SW3 4HS Thursday 17th September 5:00 till 8:00pm Booking essential You can join LEEF and find out more online at: www.leef.org.uk info@leef.org.uk



ENVIRONMENT 09

HOSTED BY THE MERSEY BASIN CAMPAIGN

22/9/09 The Mersey Basin Campaign is organising a big environment conference in Liverpool to celebrate our 25th and final year.

Speakers include: The Secretary Of

State for the Environment, Hilary Benn (via a live video link from London), the government's former Chief Scientific Advisor Professor Sir David King, former Environment Minister Michael Heseltine & Bishop James Jones of Liverpool. As the Campaign reaches the end of its planned lifespan, the conference will celebrate a quarter of a century of successful environmental action and mark a decade since the Campaign was honoured globally as inaugural winner of the World Riverprize. To book: f.bhatti@merseybasin.org.uk 0161 242 8200 www.merseybasin.org.uk Please ensure that you book by Friday 4th September.

30/9/09 "Green Networks: Potential for Central Scotland"

This one-day conference in Bathgate, will hear from speakers involved in delivering major regeneration and landscaping projects in the UK and Europe, and will examine how this experience can be applied to shaping the Central Scotland Green Network. www.csft.org.uk



Five suggestions for successfully managing urban greenspace

1. Involve. Get involved yourself in the community round the site, if you can. This may mean approaching bodies not directly involved

with the greenspace, such as a housing association, church or social club. Go to committee meetings. Get yourself on the agenda. Then see if the opposite also holds true - see if people want to become involved with your site and what it does. Can they attract a small lottery grant, or run an event?

2. React. Things move quickly in urban situations. People use the site and the way they do so may change. If some kids start doing things - either undesirable or otherwise - you need to respond, for example if kids build a camp where you don't want them too, you need to get it out very soon or they'll get accustomed to doing it. Better to intervene early and suggest a better place for it, or some other activity.

3. Anticipate. There are patterns to the way people behave, just as in the natural world. On the first hot weekend for months, you will have lots of visitors. Be ready for them. When half-term comes, the kids will be looking for something to do in the evening. Perhaps that's the time to put on an event. When were all the grassfires last year? They'll be the same time next year. Take appropriate precautions.

4. Value. Have faith in the local distinctiveness and history that all sites have. Every site has a story, every place has something special about it. Find those things, listen to what people say about them.

5. Respect. It's often easy to think of the value of urban greenspace in fairly negative terms, especially if it's a site that's suffered a lot of abuse. Don't fall into this trap - to the people and the wildlife that use it, this is the most important space around. Treat it with respect, and you may in time teach others to do the same.

From Matthew Chatfield, the Virtual Ranger, find him at: www.naturenet.net

More Training:

Environmental Trainers Network (BTCV) run many courses some of which are relevant for Urban Greenspace Managers.

13/10/09 **School Grounds as Resources for Play & Learning** running in Birmingham

21/10/09 **People Power - Encouraging Participation** course held in Bristol

23/11/09 **Facilitating Discussions, Events & Workshops** based in Birmingham

4/2/10 **Getting Local People Active & Involved** and 17/2 **Working with 'Friends of..' Groups** both courses held in Manchester

2/3/10 **Involving Communities Through Consultation** running in Birmingham

To book and for more information call: 0121 3592113 email: etn@btcv.org.uk or look online at: www.btcv.org/etn

Other suitable courses include: 5/10/09 **Inspiring Communities** at Balallan House, Stirling run by BTCV Scotland contact them on 01786 479697 or visit: www.btcv.org/shop

21/10/09 **Finding Our Place - Reconnecting with Nature in a Time of Uncertainty** run by Sharing Good

Practice(SNH) at Battleby. To book call: 01738 458555 email: sgp@snh.gov.uk For info visit: www.snh.org.uk/sgp

24/10/09 **Community Involvement Skills** at Cambourne, Cambridgeshire organised by BCNP Wildlife Trust for information contact: 01604 405285 or trainingworkshops@wildlifebcnp.org

These courses are all one day events except for Inspiring Communities (5/10/09) which is for one evening.

For more please have a look at the Training Section of countryside-jobs.com

The CJS team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this CJS Focus publication. Next edition will feature Trees & Hedges, published 23/11/09.