



# Countryside Jobs Service

Focus on Greenspace

In association with Fields in Trust



21 May 2018

## Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces

- Parks and Green Spaces contribute £34.2 Billion per year to UK community health and wellbeing
- The Total Economic Value to an individual is £30.24 per year
- Using parks and green spaces equates to better general health which translates into a £111 Million saving to the NHS per year due to fewer visits to the GP

New research, published by charity Fields in Trust, reveals that regular parks and green space use makes a significant economic contribution of £34.2 Billion to the UK's health and wellbeing.

The new report "*Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces - measuring their economic and wellbeing value to individuals*" is conducted in line with HM Treasury best practice on valuing non-market goods. The average Total Economic Value of parks and green spaces to an individual is £30.24 per year, this captures benefits gained from using local parks as well as their preservation for future generations.

Further analysis shows that being a frequent park user is associated with a reduction in GP-related medical costs which is estimated to save the NHS around £111 million per year, that figure does not account for other savings from reduced prescribing, referrals or social care costs.

The new data clearly shows that local parks and green spaces are democratic spaces and can play an important role in providing social cohesion and integration.

Fields in Trust Chief Executive, Helen Griffiths, said "Parks and green spaces are not simply nice to have; they are a necessity for healthy, happy communities positively impacting on a range of key wellbeing issues from physical and mental health, childhood obesity to social cohesion.

These substantial and quantifiable health and wellbeing benefits make a robust, evidence-led business case



**Haringey Alexandra Park - Urban and suburban respondents value parks and green spaces more highly than rural residents (Fields in Trust)**

for parks and green spaces to be considered in terms of their contribution to society rather than being assessed simply in terms of their cost. We have also been able to partially quantify the contribution that parks and green spaces make to the preventative health agenda supporting the idea that access to good quality green spaces across the social gradient will help reduce health inequalities.

We believe this new research will help to support more informed judgements when difficult choices must be made about how best to use land."

Applying welfare weighting to individual values for the first time represents a considerable advance on previous studies of parks and green spaces in the UK and

internationally. One of the most significant findings of this research is the clear demonstration that when welfare weighting is applied, lower socio-economic groups and Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups ascribe a much higher value to parks and green spaces than the national average. Lower socio-economic

groups report a welfare-weighted value of £51.84 per year and BAME groups value parks and green spaces more than double the UK average at £70.08 per year. It is the view of Fields in Trust that, in a difficult economic climate, the provision of parks and green spaces should be prioritised in areas with lower-socio-economic groups and a higher representation of BAME communities given the disproportionately high levels of benefits that these groups derive from parks and green spaces

Fields in Trust will be developing the research into a Local Valuation Model by applying the value to individual parks and green spaces. As part of the application of a robust, data-driven and strategic approach to protecting parks and green spaces, Fields in Trust are reviewing and mapping the quantity and distribution of green space in line with their long-standing "Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard". They also monitor the loss of parks and green spaces across the country to help us build a better picture of the trends and how we can stem these losses.



**Barnet Oakhill Park - A higher proportion of rural residents use their parks and green spaces for team sports (8% compared to 5% of urban groups)**

(Fields in Trust)

The Research is launched alongside a new Corporate Strategy for the Fields in Trust Charity which sees the organisation commit to an ambitious aim of protecting a park or green space within a ten-minute walk of 75% of the

UK population, as well as supporting landowners, community groups and individuals to maintain and improve their sites, whilst championing their value at local and national levels. Parks and green spaces impact on a range of key wellbeing issues from physical and mental health to community cohesion but they are an undervalued resource.

The full report *Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces: Measuring their Economic and Wellbeing Value to Individuals* and a summary paper are available on the Fields in Trust website [www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org)

**ialeUK is the main forum** for landscape ecology in the UK and part of a global community with a wide range of interests in natural and cultural aspects of landscape and seascape. They include people working in research, policy and practice. Contact Dr Christopher Young on [secretary@iale.org.uk](mailto:secretary@iale.org.uk) or visit <https://iale.uk/>

**Through the Natural Environment Research Council** the Universities of Glasgow and Oxford have developed an Integrated Green Grey Infrastructure Framework - a way to assess the value of adoption of a range of innovative methods for greening grey, heavily engineered projects - to create habitat, aesthetic value for planning mitigation etc  
Full report <https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/150672/>

**Natural Capital Accounting for Urban Greenspace Management** 28th June 2018, Birmingham This unique training opportunity will provide you with an in-depth knowledge of what natural capital accounts are and how they are produced in the specific context of urban greenspace. No prior knowledge of natural capital assessment or economics is required. More information here <https://ecosystemsknowledge.net/events>

**TCPA & Green Infrastructure Partnership Conference.** (London 12 July)

Will it be possible to attract funding from health budgets to help maintain green infrastructure? How can we maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of green infrastructure? What can we do right now to create and enhance green infrastructure to enhance people's wellbeing? <https://c-js.co.uk/2GcO7A5>

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**What has green infrastructure ever done for us?**  
Working as a Knowledge Exchange Fellow for the Natural Environment Research Council I am charged with improving how Green Infrastructure is mainstreamed into policy and decision-making. Help me by filling in my call for evidence here <https://mainstreaminggreeninfrastructure.com/call-for-evidence.php> Professor Alister Scott

## Urban Greening

By Philippa Reece, Environment Manager

As a social housing provider in Manchester, we are lucky to own 180 green spaces within our urban setting. These spaces have become an urban oasis for our tenants and residents of Manchester as a whole.

For our 10th anniversary as an organisation, we wanted to leave a lasting legacy and what better way of doing this than utilising our green spaces within this process.



Southway Trail Map

We decided to create a walking / running / cycling trail around one of our neighbourhoods and as part of this work involve the local community in enhancing their surroundings as well.

We have worked with local schools to create a wooden sculpture, locally known as 'Mother Nature' with the artist, Phil Bews working alongside the children to teach them how to carve details into this amazing feature.

Two other local artists with the support of young people who live within this area helped to design and create colourful junction boxes and an urban nature scene for the back drop of mother nature.

We made links with local coffee mornings and visitor centres to start an epic knitathon that has enabled us to have a variety of tree socks on multiple locations within this neighbourhood, this also created a knitathon within our organisation with people knitting for months to create all these tree socks.

We have a fairy trail, with lights in the trees and a variety of doors to hunt and find, as well as some very strange creatures leaving footprints along some of our passageways. A sensory garden and multiple orchards on route round where you can harvest and eat free fruit. We have introduced wild garlic to some areas that once established can be used for cooking. Seasonal bulb displays with additional areas created under the canopies of our urban forest adding depth, colour and beauty to these areas.

It's proved to be a great way to connect people together within their local neighbourhoods, connect people back to nature, create physical activity as a long term goal and most of all improve our green spaces for humans and animals alike.

The project has created interest at the University of Manchester and as a result, there is a connected academic research project being delivered;



Tree socks (Southway Housing)

Researchers at the University of Manchester are currently collaborating with Southway Housing Trust to carry out a study evaluating the impact of the tree trail on older adults' wellbeing (as part of the Green Infrastructure and the Health and Wellbeing Influences on an Ageing Population (GHIA) project). The researchers are measuring older adults' physical activity and two other behavioural indicators of wellbeing (connecting with other people and taking notice of the environment), collected using a new observation tool that they recently developed. These outcomes are also being measured in older adults across several other similar comparison neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester where no such improvements are planned. The study is due to be completed in September 2018. Further research is also planned for later in the year using interviews with local residents.



**Mother Nature** (Southway Housing)

The researchers hope that this body of work will generate useful evidence on the potential positive impact of small-scale improvements in urban green space on the health and wellbeing of older adults. This type of evidence is crucial for strengthening the case for planning and investment in urban green space.

For those interested in keeping up to date with the latest findings from these studies, please contact Jack Benton who is the PhD student leading this research (email: [jack.benton@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:jack.benton@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk), Twitter: @JackSBenton).

To find out more about the Green Infrastructure and the Health and Wellbeing Influences on an Ageing Population (GHIA) project go to [www.valuing-nature.net/ghia](http://www.valuing-nature.net/ghia)

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**The National Allotment Society (NSALG)** is the leading organisation upholding the interests and rights of the allotment community across the UK. We offer member benefits, including legal support and advice and work with all stake-holders to promote allotment gardening and manage, protect and develop allotment provision. [natsoc@nsalg.org.uk](mailto:natsoc@nsalg.org.uk), [www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk) 01536 266576

**Good quality greenspace helps us** tackle many of the environmental, social and economic issues faced by disadvantaged urban communities. SNH, supported by the European Regional Development Fund, is leading a £38m programme of projects to show what can be achieved and encourage greater future investment. See [www.greeninfrastructurescotland.scot](http://www.greeninfrastructurescotland.scot) for more detail.

**Biodiversity? What biodiversity?** There is no biodiversity left in the UK! Our countryside and public places need more than rye-grass and rose bushes. With a little thought, we can save our vanishing butterflies and birds by managing our countryside in a more holistic manner, for everyone's benefit. Why not start with a wildflower meadow, almost instantly and with low maintenance? Reduce the mowing you do and save time and money by laying our amazing wildflower meadow turf. Check it out at <http://wildlifeservices.co.uk/meadowturf2.html> or call Martin at Wildlife & Countryside Services on 0333 9000 927.

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## Wood Pasture & Parkland Network

Wood pasture is an important habitat, positively teeming with life and vital to preserve. If you can't picture what this habitat looks like, you're



**Ancient Oaks in Wood Pasture** (Megan Gimber)

not alone! It's an understudied, historically

overlooked part of

our landscape, so there's little awareness of its existence let alone its value. At their core, both wood pasture and parkland consist of big old trees with full crowns growing in grazed pasture. They are what ecologists like to call a 'mosaic habitat' which means a particular mixture of other habitats within it; the value of which is greater than the sum of its parts. The Wood Pasture and Parkland Network are attempting to raise the profile of this incredible habitat with a series of 5 videos. The videos introduce the ecological, biological, historical, cultural and landscape aspects of Wood Pasture and Parkland, describing best management techniques. [www.ptes.org/wppn](http://www.ptes.org/wppn)



**Wood Pasture & Parkland Network**

## Valuing the benefits of urban trees for better greenspace management

By Kathryn Hand, Kieron Doick, Liz O'Brien, and Clare Hall from Forest Research, and Susanne Raum from Imperial College London



### Urban trees as greenspace and their benefits

When we think of greenspace, we usually think of parcels of green land: parks, sports fields, maybe gardens. While trees are important features within these landscapes, they can also be seen as small patches of greenspace in their own right – offering an area of green in an otherwise grey urban realm and ranging from single trees in gardens, parks and streets, to small clusters of trees and those that make up urban woodlands. Together all of the trees across an entire urban area are known as the 'urban forest'<sup>1</sup>.

Urban forests can provide many benefits, also known as 'ecosystem services', to society<sup>2</sup>. These benefits help make our towns and cities healthier, more sustainable and liveable. Urban trees can contribute to public health by removing harmful pollutants from the air, encouraging active lifestyles and helping to reduce the stress of those who live near them. Tree canopies help to provide shade to cool urban areas, and also intercept rainfall to reduce runoff, thereby reducing the risks from flooding. Finally, trees make places special – they can provide a link to local history, support local nature, and create a source of cultural and spiritual value.

### Valuing the benefits of urban trees using i-Tree Eco

While people value and appreciate trees for many reasons, often the benefits they provide are not considered when decisions that govern their future are being made. When the benefits of trees go unvalued, their maintenance costs can appear to be an unjustifiable expense. In recent years, tree officers have seen their budgets shrink<sup>3</sup>. These changes are also common to other areas of greenspace such as parks<sup>4</sup>. In an attempt to address these trends, urban authorities have begun to assess and value their urban forest resources to account for the benefits that trees provide society. By putting a £-value on urban trees it is hoped their benefits can be formally recognised and their management improved, to the benefit of both the urban forest and those who live, work and visit urban areas.



Figure 1. In 2015 Edinburgh's urban forest was assessed using i-Tree Eco which estimated for a total of 712,000 trees an annual benefit value of £1.82 million<sup>6</sup> © Kathryn Hand/Forest Research.

i-Tree Eco ([www.itreetools.org](http://www.itreetools.org)) is a tool that provides information on the state of the urban forest, including the species composition, age structure and condition. It then calculates the quantity and value of the benefits provided by those urban trees for four ecosystem services: carbon storage, carbon sequestration, avoided stormwater runoff, and removal of air pollution.

i-Tree Eco was first used in the UK in 2011; Torbay's urban forest was estimated to provide a total annual benefit of over £345,000<sup>5</sup>. Since

then, i-Tree Eco has been used in over 20 UK projects, ranging from assessment of a small park to whole cities, such as Edinburgh (figure 1).

### Evaluating the impact of i-Tree Eco in the UK

With the use of i-Tree Eco growing in the UK, an evaluation study was conducted by Forest Research to review the impact that these projects have had on the management of urban forests, and to evaluate the role of i-Tree Eco in protecting and expanding the urban forest.

The study found that the impact delivered by i-Tree Eco projects varied. The results from some projects had fed into changes in policy and local funding, while others have had less impact so far. In most of the i-Tree Eco projects there had been improvements in understanding the benefits of urban trees, and greater connectivity and collaboration between local authority departments. Overall, the evaluation study found that i-Tree Eco had two key roles in protecting and expanding the urban forest:

**1. Providing the evidence base to inform management decisions:** Key information on the health and composition of urban forests can help tree officers and policy-makers to better understand the state of the urban forest and its benefits. Often the i-Tree Eco assessments helped to identify emerging vulnerabilities in the urban forest, such as an aging tree population, or over-reliance on a limited number of tree species. For

example, a predominance of ash trees, which is a concern given the threat from chalara ash dieback. Having detailed information from i-Tree Eco on the current state of the urban forest and its vulnerabilities provided the opportunity to inform the development of detailed urban forestry management plans and a strategy for the long-term continuation of its benefits.

**2. Putting a £-value on benefits to make them explicit and help raise awareness:** While many people may be able to recognise the benefits of trees, calculating how much these benefits are worth can help others to understand and appreciate this benefit. This can help to balance the argument against the costs of tree maintenance and provide a rationale for investment in the urban forest. One of the evaluated projects was able to use their i-Tree Eco results to help secure an additional tree officer, while another received an increase to its tree maintenance budget. In many other cases, the values produced by the i-Tree Eco projects - often millions of pounds - helped to improve awareness of the importance of urban trees and counter negative perceptions of trees. Further, understanding how trees contributed to different benefits, for example mitigating the effects of a changing climate, enhanced conversations between council departments and led to the inclusion of urban trees in broader policies, such as local development plans and green infrastructure strategies.

### Lessons learned for valuing urban greenspace

In summary, valuing trees using tools such as i-Tree Eco, can be useful in providing the evidence to support our urban trees, as well as motivating change and investment. The impact of i-Tree Eco did vary between the projects that were evaluated. On the other hand, opportunities to overcome barriers that limited the impact of the valuation projects were also identified (see the full evaluation report for further details:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/itree-evaluation](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/itree-evaluation)). Hopefully many more UK towns and cities will follow this lead and evaluate their urban forest using i-Tree Eco, or a similar tool (to learn more visit: [www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/itree](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/itree) or [www.treeconomics.co.uk/](http://www.treeconomics.co.uk/)).

For more information, contact: Kieron Doick at Forest Research ([www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/infid-6gwemq](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/infid-6gwemq))

### References

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- 4 Heritage Lottery Fund. (2016). State of UK public parks 2016. Heritage Lottery Fund, 124 pp.
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## Building for people and wildlife



As the demand for land for agriculture, housing and development has increased, so the space for wildlife and nature has decreased. Growing recreational pressures that come with development, particularly in more densely populated areas, have also created challenges, including the loss of garden and community greenspace.



**Exeter urban meadow** © Emily Stallworthy, Devon Wildlife Trust

But new developments don't have to squeeze out wildlife and greenspace. In fact, they can enhance it – and benefit people at the same time.

The Wildlife Trusts are calling on developers, local authorities and Government to embrace a new, more holistic way of building: one that avoids damage to protected sites and works with the natural surroundings to create gains for nature, and better health and well-being for residents.

The next decade is likely to see hundreds of thousands of new homes built. In the past, housing developments have mostly destroyed habitats rather than created them. But done in the right way, on the right site, they can lead to a net gain for wildlife – and offer their incoming residents a healthier, happier place to live. And that's because good housing and a healthy natural world are intrinsically linked.

The Wildlife Trusts have pioneered the integration of wildlife into new developments for many decades, using our expertise and relationships with developers we have ensured that existing meadows, wetlands, hedgerows, trees and woods are retained. We also aim for wildlife-rich gardens, verges, amenity greenspace, cycle paths and walkways. The result is natural

corridors weaving through the development and reaching out beyond. These features add natural resilience: they reduce surface water flooding and improve air quality, for example. We also work with social landlords and residents to create natural places that encourage wildlife and benefit people.

The best new houses are energy and water efficient; have built-in roosting and nesting features; and provide easy access to safe, attractive green space for exercise, play and social interaction. And they deliver the priceless treasure of wildlife on your doorstep.

The cost implications of doing this are a tiny proportion of the outlay of a housing development, it's about choosing the right sort of greening rather than about radically different costs. The benefits are considerable for business, nature, residents and communities alike.

The Wildlife Trusts believe that all new housing developments could and should be places where people and wildlife flourish with

- Access to wildlife whether in town or country
- High quality natural green space
- A genuine, measurable net overall gain for wildlife
- Connectivity to the wider ecological network.



**Housing vision illustration** © The Wildlife Trusts

With the urgent need to build so many new homes, the Government has a perfect opportunity to reset the approach to housing. We believe it should refocus to help wildlife, and to create healthy, cohesive and thriving communities, where residents can connect with nature and each other.

All the necessary knowledge, evidence and expertise to do this already exists, and so our vision is simple: it should become normal for all housing developments – whether new or established – to contribute to nature's recovery.

More at The Wildlife Trusts new guide 'Homes for People and Wildlife – how to build housing in a nature friendly way' [www.wildlifetrusts.org/housing](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/housing)

### Case studies

- **Cambourne:** The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire

The new settlement of Cambourne is a series of three interlinked villages designed to use existing landscape and habitat features as building blocks for a network of green spaces.

The project was conceived in the 1990s and comprises of 4,200 dwellings. The green spaces frame, join and permeate each of the three villages - giving residents and wildlife easy access to the whole network. This consideration to design has made Cambourne a safe and attractive place where people want to live and engage with their local environment and where wildlife can thrive.

Green space makes up 60% of the settlement. This includes pre-existing and new woodlands, meadows, lakes, amenity grasslands, playing fields, allotments and formal play areas. There are 12 miles of new footpaths, cycleways and bridleways and 10 miles of new hedgerows. The new grassland areas are rich in ground nesting birds such as skylarks and meadow pipits which have had great breeding success over the years. The lakes and ponds that serve to prevent flooding also provide great habitat for wildfowl and dragonflies.



Cambourne © Brian Eversham

Management of the green spaces is undertaken by the new Cambourne Parish Council and The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire. The land will eventually be transferred to each of these organisations.

Quote: "We like living here we have attractive, varied open spaces with no need to get in the car. The area feels safe and the kids can play within walking distance of our home." Rachel Mortimer, wild development resident at Cambourne, Cambs

- **Trumpington Meadows:** The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire

Trumpington Meadows is a development of 1,200 homes and forms part of a string of developments on the southern fringe of Cambridge. Respecting Cambridge's character as a compact city with networks of green space connecting the city to surrounding rural areas, the new developments link into, and continue, these green corridors.



Trumpington Meadows © Sarah Lambert

Trumpington Meadows Land Company wanted to create a high-quality development with its own character and sense of place and viewed a new country park as integral to this. It carried out extensive consultation with local communities and stakeholders prior to submitting the planning application.

The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire was selected as the land managing organisation and engaged with the landscape architect on design and creation of the development's green infrastructure to help secure better outcomes for wildlife and limit future management problems.

Local play areas, swales and tree avenues are included throughout the development. The 58 hectare country park is designed to be both a space for people and a 'nature reserve'. Its staged creation, which includes over 40 hectares of new species-rich meadows, hedgerows, woodlands and restored floodplain meadows, began prior to the building of the first houses to allow the landscaping and habitats time to mature.



The country park was designed to follow the River Cam and include its floodplain. A river restoration scheme was developed by the local authority ecologist to improve the river habitat and re-connect the river with its floodplain meadows, providing a small reduction in flood-risk downstream. New houses were built away from the flood plain to reduce flood risk and the drainage system is engineered to include a balancing pond with overflow area and open ditch features, to keep runoff to the River Cam at pre-development levels.

**RSPB: Managing for nature in parks and green spaces** - Date: 25 September 2018 at Beeche Centre, Bromley, London. Interactive workshop for contract managers and operative team leaders. Reviewing the value of public open space for people and wildlife. Describing management requirements for wildlife, introducing delegates to basic ecological requirements of some key urban species. Site visit included. Contact: Conservation-Advice@rspb.org.uk

## Much more than just a run in a park

Every weekend at more than 700 public open spaces across the UK, around 14,000 volunteers dressed in high-vis bibs are busily preparing to welcome walkers, runners and spectators to parkrun and junior parkrun events.



It might be a small p, but parkrun is a big idea that has grown from 13 runners and five volunteers at the first event in London in 2004, to a global movement that has seen three million people take part across 20 countries. The idea was developed by Paul Sinton-Hewitt, a keen amateur runner who suffered a long-term injury and wanted to find a way to maintain a link with his running club friends. Paul proposed they gather for a 5k run in the local park each Saturday, which he would time: his condition being that they gather in the park cafe afterwards for a coffee and a chat.



Pre-run welcome (Bruce Li)

14 years later and the concept itself hasn't changed: parkrun is still a free 5k on a Saturday morning for walkers and runners of all ages and abilities coordinated entirely by volunteers, with 2k junior parkruns for 4-14 year-olds on Sundays, followed by a get together in a local cafe.

Participants sign up for free on the parkrun website and print out a unique registration barcode that is then valid at any parkrun around the world every weekend.

The success of parkrun is a combination of many factors: it's free to take part in, doesn't require any special clothing or

equipment, walkers are welcomed as warmly as runners, families participate together, parents can push their baby in a buggy, at many courses you can run with a dog on a short lead, and every event takes place in an area of open space.

These open spaces take a variety of forms, such as city parks, promenades, beaches, canal towpaths, sporting fields and country parks, while around 40 events are held on land that is managed by the National Trust, Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust. Crucially, every parkrun is a collaboration with the landowners and/or land managers where the event takes place. Each parkrun must obtain written permission to use the course at the same time each week (9am in England and Wales and 9:30am in Scotland and Northern Ireland).

Most parkruns are conceived by individuals in a community who approach the organisation for support in establishing a new event. Once the initial volunteer team have been assembled, they are required to identify



Volunteers at Southwark parkrun in London (Bruce Li)

a suitable course (normally 1, 2 or 3 laps or out and back). Since 2017, new parkruns and junior parkruns must ensure that there is a defibrillator within five minutes of the finish line. If there isn't, the prospective volunteer team will work with local stakeholders to source one before the event launches. 98% of 5k parkruns in the UK currently meet the criteria and the aim is to achieve 100% coverage across all of our events by the end of 2018.

Once an event team satisfies the criteria to start their event, a local parkrun ambassador provides them with training, and one or two unofficial test events are held. The launch event is often a low-key affair with no publicity beyond word of mouth.

### Case study – Rushmere parkrun

Rushmere Country Park, which lies on the boundary of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, has hosted Rushmere parkrun since November 2015. The park is managed by the Greensand Trust, an independent environmental charity that works with local communities and landowners to conserve the Greensand Ridge, and is jointly owned by the Trust and Central Bedfordshire Council.

The course is two laps on hard packed dirt trails, which starts and finishes by a large meadow adjacent to the cafe, car park and toilets. The one-off startup fund was provided jointly by Central Bedfordshire Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council. It averages 144 walkers and runners and 20 volunteers each Saturday.

Jon Balaam, Director of Development at the Greensand Trust, explains more:

“This particular site is incredibly popular with visitors but also contains rare and fragile heathland and acid grassland habitats. So the main focus at first was identifying a route that gave people a real experience of the Country Park and its varied landscape, but also ensured that important habitats were not harmed and visitor experience was not affected. The route was developed with the parkrun volunteer team, with input from site managers and ecologists.



Rushmere parkrun (Bruce Li)

“It was critically important that we had two test events in the summer of 2015, not just to ensure that the route worked, but to see how it would potentially impact other users. It also showed how important volunteers (and having enough of them in the right places) is. It also gave advance notice that something regular was coming to the existing park users and gave them the opportunity to feed back.

“On the whole everyone gets along well – the quality of the Pre-Event Welcome means that participants are always reminded that there are other users, including horse riders, dog walkers and cyclists, and everyone respects each other out on the course. It helps that 9am on a Saturday is a relatively quiet time at the park – or it was!



Jon dressed as a duck

“The park café didn't open until 10am before parkrun but it now opens earlier and parkrun definitely fills it up. parkrun has definitely increased parking income, both on the pay-on-exit basis and the number of people who buy an annual parking pass, which helps sustain the Park for everyone.

“My advice to other landowners is to be flexible about routes – have alternatives for when the main route gets too muddy, for example. Give good advance notice of things happening that might affect parkrun – for example, if we have a big event on or are doing significant management works and it's necessary to cancel a parkrun on a certain date. And don't just focus on the money

through the tills – for us this has been about engaging new audiences and building local support. Leighton-Linslade has some amazing countryside right on its doorstep but we still get local people saying they didn't realise Rushmere existed. Sometimes it takes something such as parkrun to help raise this awareness.

"I've also worked with the parkrun team to help support our fundraising appeals – one of which saw me run dressed as a duck! We also had a 'purple parkrun' to support our most recent heathland restoration appeal. Rushmere is not local for me – I have to drive 45 minutes – but I think of it as my local parkrun.

"I did hear something that tickled me recently that sums up the Rushmere parkrun spirit. We obtained funding to improve the surfacing of parts of the route – now we are getting 'complaints' that the course is no longer muddy enough!"

Follow [www.parkrun.org.uk](http://www.parkrun.org.uk) to register and find your local event

**Brillianto in collaboration with the TCPA / UK Green Infrastructure Partnership** provide a searchable database of close to 1000 publications on green space, parks, green infrastructure, urban woodland etc. Includes tools, websites, case studies, videos and many other documents. Direct links to the source of information are provided.  
<https://www.brillianto.biz/en/GIRL/>

## Scotland's Park Managers Forum

Are you an expert juggler? Do you have superb plate-spinning skills? Are you a budding alchemist, with a passion for people and parks? If yes, a career in parks and greenspace management could be for you!



We're all familiar with the soundbites of 'parks feeling the pinch' and 'greenspace under pressure'. The same is true for the people and services managing our parks and greenspaces. The Heritage Lottery Fund's State of UK Public Parks reports have charted budget cuts to parks services and the corresponding reduction in staffing.

Across Scotland there has been a marked reduction in greenspace staff and particularly a loss of specialist skills and apprentice programmes. Some Councils report their workforce has reduced by a third in the last 5 years, with larger cuts to come over the next year.



Not surprisingly, greenspace and parks officers are feeling increasingly stretched. When you're trying to juggle too many competing priorities and demands on your time, personal and professional development too often takes a back-seat. It's hard to find time to lift your head from the grindstone and see how others are tackling similar challenges and opportunities. The result can be people sitting in geographical isolation, individually and collectively, reinventing the wheel.

### **Making connections – sharing practice** © greenspace scotland

they met colleagues outside of their council and how this limited opportunities to share experience and practice, and to develop new approaches to the challenges of managing and sustaining Scotland's parks with fewer resources and staff.

In a greenspace scotland survey in 2015, park managers told us how infrequently

Our answer was to establish the Scottish Park Managers' Forum to support the professional and operational development of park managers. The Forum enables them to share practice across council areas, develop skills and explore challenges so that they can more effectively and efficiently manage Scotland's parks. This in turn supports and enhances the local provision of sustainable greenspace services.

The Forum is one of Scotland's responses to the 'Call to Action' in the first HLF State of Parks report. We were delighted to receive support from the HLF through a 'Start-up' Grant to support the early development of the Forum. Last year we were grateful for funding support from idverde for Forum meetings and Scottish Natural Heritage for the study tour. This funding support means there is no charge for attending Forum events and this makes it easier for local authority colleagues to attend.

The Forum involves all 32 Scottish Councils, with over 160 park managers and officers currently subscribing. Quarterly meetings are generally attended by around 40 colleagues, typically with representation from 18-20 Councils – that's two-thirds of Scotland's Councils.

Each forum meeting focuses on a different topic – drawing on key issues and challenges identified by members. Meetings have covered: new approaches to park strategies; changing management practices; benchmarking; working with communities; Community Empowerment Act; lessons from Rethinking Parks; parks advocacy; asset management and valuation.



Park Managers Forum in action © greenspace scotland

Each meeting involves guest speakers and case studies presented by colleagues from within the Scottish parks sector and external speakers from other sectors and/or outwith Scotland. Workshop and participatory sessions encourage sharing of practice and learning. Presentations and workshop notes are shared with all colleagues via a password protected micro-site. Topic based working groups engage officers in discussions and sharing practice between meetings and there is more frequent ad hoc communication between park managers building on networking connections made through Forum meetings.



#### Greenspace delivering on Scottish Government priorities © greenspace scotland

Collectively, the Forum is now looking at opportunities to develop a common approach to asset management systems and natural capital accounting across Scotland's councils; developing a park advocacy strategy and working on plans for the Scottish Parks Endowment. Topics for the future include skills development, apprenticeships and CPD; income generation and diversification; community management and asset transfers; realising our natural health service.

A key strand of greenspace scotland's activity is pioneering new approaches to resourcing and managing greenspace. This includes climate change parks, local food growing strategies, ParkPower, young placechangers and MyParkScotland – which provides Scotland's only crowdfunding platform specifically for parks and greenspaces – and the Parks Endowment Fund. For each of these programmes, we work closely with colleagues in pioneer Councils to develop and test new ways of working and share learning with colleagues.

In 2017, the Parks Manager Forum was Highly Commended in the Horticulture Week Awards in the 'Best Park Partnership' category. We were hugely encouraged to see the Forum highlighted in the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Parks Inquiry report and recommended as a model for developing Park Manager Forum(s) in England. Our experience in Scotland, indicates that national or regional Forums for park managers would be hugely beneficial for colleagues in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We would be delighted to be able to share experience and assist in their establishment.

If you're reading this as a parks manager or officer in Scotland and you're not already in touch with the Forum, please drop us an email [info@greenspacescotland.org.uk](mailto:info@greenspacescotland.org.uk) If you're not in Scotland, we may be able to offer 'visiting visas' to extend invitations to specific events – and we've already benefited significantly from hearing about practice and learning from colleagues in England.



© greenspace scotland

#### About greenspace scotland

greenspace scotland is Scotland's parks and greenspace charity; an independent charitable company and social enterprise. Since 2002, we have provided a national lead on greenspace working with national and local partners to shape policy and promote good practice. Our goal is that everyone has easy access to quality greenspaces that meet local needs and improve quality of life.

[www.greenspacescotland.org.uk](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk) @greenspacescot

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## Managing an Urban National Nature Reserve - Community Involvement

By Ian Beech, Senior Warden

Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve is 100 acres of Urban Geological and Ecological importance situated in the north of Dudley and surrounded by housing estates. The site is made up of an uplifted Limestone hill dating back some 428 million years to the Silurian period. The site is council owned and managed by three wardens, a Friends group and committed volunteers.



**View of 428 million year old reef mound from Ripple Beds (Ian Beech)**

The site was unkempt and used for fly tipping, criminal activity, off road motorcycles, shooting, firewood and the local children used it as their playground.

The site was unkempt and used for fly tipping, criminal activity, off road motorcycles, shooting, firewood and the local children used it as their playground.

Walking through the site it is clear to see evidence of fallen large beech and ash trees which have been burnt once they reached ground level; these charred remains are a common sight in many urban woods.

Community involvement is one of the processes that has been used to help improve the site, for example children from local schools taking part in tree planting sessions and in the process learning about the biology and structure of the trees they plant. These sessions have built relations with teachers and the local children and as a result of these education days we have seen return visits of children bringing family members to see how 'their tree' is getting on. This has given them a feeling of ownership, that they have been able to have an input and ultimately pride in their local area. Not only that, but the children often end up educating family members in the importance of these trees.

Fly tipping and litter has always been a big problem on urban reserves and I know that rural areas suffer as well. Even if everything else looks amazing people notice litter and this is one of the easiest ways to give

**Dudley**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

visitors a negative impression and reduce their enjoyment of their visit to the site. The same goes for graffiti; we deal with these issues ASAP and find this works well in reducing recurrence.

Despite our efforts we clean up between 12 to 16 tons of litter every year; personally it makes me furious that the minority think it is acceptable to drop litter.

We work closely with a team of Enforcement Officers employed by Dudley Council. Any fly tipping or large litter dump found is inspected, photographed and logged before removal. The Enforcement team investigate and usually get a prosecution. We have put a lot of time and effort into reducing fly tipping. With areas used more frequently we modify the access making it difficult and more visible to passing traffic or houses which deters the dumping; in some cases we've used mobile CCTV as well. Working with local schools we have looked at recycling rubbish and litter, a good tactic that I use quite often is to drop litter on purpose in front of school groups to see what reaction I get, creating an opportunity for them to tell me off and correct me and if they don't - then I have an excellent example to use!



**Friends Group monthly two hour litter pick**  
(Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council)

One of my first jobs when I started on site was to introduce myself to the local Police and Fire crews. I recommend all rangers and site wardens whether urban or rural do this, it helps build a working relationship before you actually need either service. We work with the local fire brigade running familiarisation sessions which is a huge help if we have any problems on site and has saved us a lot of time and money repairing gates and chains cut by crews needing access. Some of the more important access points now have fire brigade locks to create easy access for the crews; unfortunately from our point of view the locks are quite flimsy quality so we fabricate a lock box to stop unwanted tampering. The relationship works so well that the fire service now carry out training courses on site for recovering injured people on slopes using stretchers and ropes. This has made me realise how difficult it could be to remove a member of staff with perhaps a chainsaw injury or broken leg, so I created an in case of emergency (ICE) pack for the site looking at access

points post codes of gates and helicopter landing areas. Many of the services use postcodes but other services use OS grid references, so the ICE maps have all the details marked making it easier to be located in an accident situation. I also added important contact numbers for the site and local hospital details.



**Ripple Beds at night featuring Rob Earnshaw, Warden, 26 years on site** (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council)

The wardens are more often than not out on site and as a result we often miss local police officers using the site to access the surrounding housing estates. To keep in touch and up to date I came up with the idea of putting a site map in the office

window. If we are having problems in an area, we mark the map and as the police pass by the area they will have a look. This means whatever shift patterns day or night they have up to date information about problems on the site. This encourages officers to pass by the warden's base to check the map which is a massive help to us with a higher more visible police presence

You may notice that I have not mentioned ecology, conservation, woodland and grassland management and all the other wonderful parts of the job (and the reason I chose this career). All of the subjects listed happen as well, but many of the issues in the article take priority.



Urban sites are challenging it's true, but all site and land management is challenging and has its problems along with its merits. Community involvement and education are key to reducing problems but some days it still feels like you are fighting a losing battle. However, it's only a minority who cause us problems and we have more good local people really appreciating the effort and work put into the site. The more people use the site the fewer problems occur, long may it continue.

### TCV's Community Network

We support hundreds of groups across the UK who are passionate about protecting their local environment. If you're a community group, club, school or local organisation why not join TCV's Community Network? Annual membership is just £38.00 to find out more contact us at [local-groups@tcv.org.uk](mailto:local-groups@tcv.org.uk)



**Raise funds for free with the KindLink** online platform. As a registered charity, we do not take any commission on online donations and also provide a free CRM database service. Contact Adriano Mancinelli at [adriano.mancinelli@kindlink.com](mailto:adriano.mancinelli@kindlink.com), 07746 386 459, or check out our website: [kindlink.org](http://kindlink.org)

**The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society** (SC015460) has recently launched a small grants scheme. Member organisations can apply for grants of between £500 and £1,500 to enable a community-based and access-related project which might otherwise not proceed. For more information and an application form please visit: <https://www.scotways.com/downloads>

**Denmark Farm Conservation Centre** hosts a wide range of courses and workshops including; Roundwood Timber Framing, Stone and Soil Banking, Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Habitat Restoration and many other conservation, ecology and countryside crafts. Please see our website [www.denmarkfarm.org.uk/events/](http://www.denmarkfarm.org.uk/events/) or e-mail [info@denmarkfarm.org.uk](mailto:info@denmarkfarm.org.uk) for more information.

**Enovert Community Trust** (formerly Cory Environmental Trust in Britain) is an environmental body which supports community and environmental projects in the vicinity of Enovert's landfill sites through the Landfill Communities Fund. If you have an idea for a project, please contact Angela Haymonds on 01753 582513 or [ahaymonds@enovertct.org](mailto:ahaymonds@enovertct.org).

**The British Mole Catchers Register** promotes traditional mole catching skills. We help people find a mole catcher in their area and help mole catchers get work. Our next Lantra approved traditional mole catching training course will be on 22 September 2018. Call 07876 141153 or email [info@britishmolecatchers.co.uk](mailto:info@britishmolecatchers.co.uk)

**Caring for God's Acre**  
The national charity for the conservation of burial grounds. Protecting and rejuvenating these beautiful havens of heritage and wildlife. [info@cfga.org.uk](mailto:info@cfga.org.uk)  
[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

## The Parks Action Group

Parks are an essential part of the fabric of all our communities. Whether for health and wellbeing, exercise, relaxation, places to volunteer and socialise, for children to play, encountering nature, adapting to climate change or just providing a place to gather



**Parks are a great place to exercise**  
(Rugby Borough Council)

your thoughts. Let alone all the environmental and biodiversity benefits.



With national research showing that parks and green spaces are the most used local public facilities with over 37 million visits annually, and a growing problem of obesity and inactivity in young people, they have never been more important to the future of our nation.

However, over many years, local authorities have reduced budgets through successive financial challenges. Some parks budgets have now been cut by 100% with other authorities now proposing to sell off parks.

Where once our Victorian ancestors led the world in public parks for public benefit we now enviously look on as other countries invest and maintain parks to a much higher degree as they place parks at the centre of the long-term health, wellbeing and community cohesion strategies.

The need for quality parks and green spaces has never been greater; and neither has the communities' expectations and desire to see their local green space maintained and improved. So what is the future for our nation's parks?

The Communities and Local Government select committee report on public parks in 2017 declared that our nation's parks are at a tipping point, and since this report things have started to worsen further.

The Government responded to the CLG report by establishing the Parks Action Group in late 2017 to consider a sustainable future for the nation's parks and green spaces. The Government recognise both the need for this and the many and varied benefits parks bring to our communities. Rishi Sunak MP was appointed as Parks Minister in January 2018 and is committed to reporting back to Parliament on the progress of the Group later in the year.

The group is made up of some of the most passionate advocates for the parks and green spaces sector and aims to communicate with other representatives from across the industry to listen to both their concerns and to learn from any novel and innovative ideas that may be useful to share with others.

After establishing the terms of reference for the group a number of work streams have now been established to look at all the priority issues, these are:

- Explore the funding landscape and propose solutions
- To set parks and green spaces standards
- Share a national vision for parks and green spaces
- Empower local communities
- Increase knowledge and build skills
- Increase usage by all

To address any previous silo thinking, and acknowledging the cross cutting benefit of parks, the group consists of external partners, and representatives from across government departments including The Department of Health and Social Care, Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Education, Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.



**Quality parks bring communities together**  
(Rugby Borough Council)

politicians. The Mayor of New York famously once said "where there is a park there is a vote!" Who would not want our residents to live in safe inclusive, accessible communities that provide local opportunities to live healthy lifestyles in a quality environment?

There are also clear links to the Governments 25 Year Environment Plan and the commitment to leave our environment (parks and green spaces) in a better condition. A lot of the outcomes can be delivered on our nations green spaces and is an area to be explored further.

The Government also owns The Green Flag Award scheme, which is the international quality standard for parks and green spaces and delivered via Keep Britain Tidy. This promotes quality management and maintenance of all green spaces and is a way of acknowledging and supporting all those involved in green spaces.



**I can only hazard a guess what sort of bin used to be here** (Chris Worman)

The challenge is to identify a sustainable future that can halt the decline and reconnect parks with people and places so everyone understands the positive role quality green spaces can play in all our communities.

Some might say this will not be easy. However, there are now over 6000 friends groups across the country that help champion our green spaces who have made a real difference in galvanising public opinion. The CLG Inquiry gained a huge public response, and a petition to halt the decline in HLF funding for parks has topped over 200K signatories. This large scale public support for quality parks and green spaces has started to reach



**Graffiti covered furniture**

(Chris Worman)



There is no doubt that there is a lot of work to do within a very short timescale to avert a major crisis. The challenge for the Parks Action Group is to reassure all those involved in the green space sector that we are taking this matter seriously and will make suggestions to government on how we can safeguard and enhance our parks and green spaces in the future.

Chris Worman MBE Parks Practitioner member of the Parks Action Group. [chris.worman@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:chris.worman@rugby.gov.uk)

Chris has over 34 years' experience in the parks industry and is currently Rugby Borough Council's Parks and Grounds Manager. He has been a vice chair of the West Midlands Parks forum for 5 years. He has also been a Green Flag Award judge from the start of the awards and over the past 22 years of volunteering has had the opportunity to judge many 100s of parks both around the UK and beyond. He has undertaken a number of international judging tours including Spain and the Middle East. For his service to the Green Flag Awards and public parks he was awarded an MBE in the Queens 90th Birthday honours in 2016.

**The Aldersgate Group is an alliance** of leaders from business, politics and civil society that drives action for a sustainable economy, to address environmental challenges effectively and to secure economic benefits for the UK in doing so. The Group recently published a report Towards the new normal: increasing investment in the UK's green infrastructure, which sets out key recommendations for government, businesses and investors to unlock greater volumes of private investment to meet the objectives of the Clean Growth Strategy, Industrial Strategy and 25 Year Environment Plan, including building a green infrastructure pipeline and supporting issuance of municipal green bonds. The report can be read here: <https://c-js.co.uk/2G7LqV8>



**I am a trained Ecologist** and have experience in Green Infrastructure & Green Spaces, Ecology, Biodiversity & Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture. I have previously worked as the national Green Infrastructure lead for Natural England and Wild Oxfordshire, a local Nature Conservation charity. Ingo Schüder <https://www.brillianto.biz> - great twitter feed @Brillianto\_biz

**TCV, the community volunteering charity**, provide conservation volunteering opportunities nationally. Working in urban and rural greenspace, our aim is to connect people with nature in the form of practical conservation, gardening, woodwork and other hands-on activities. Our practical teams also provide an affordable conservation solution for land managers and organisations. Contact Jess Kandola on 0113 274 2335 <https://www.tcv.org.uk/hollybush>

**PERFECT is a five-year INTERREG Europe** funded project seeking to influence the policy-making process by raising awareness of the social, environmental and economic potential of green infrastructure. Partners are sharing good practice and evidence to secure more investment in green infrastructure across Europe. To learn more visit <https://www.interregeurope.eu/perfect/>

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**Calling all community groups:** Groundwork's #InclusiveSpaces campaign needs you! The Groundwork Youth Inclusive Spaces campaign will take place this July with a Week of Action from 23rd-29th. We aim to connect our 100 Young Green Ambassadors with community groups across the UK and support them to collaborate on local events, with the aim of raising the profile of our local parks and green spaces.

The campaign was developed through our Groundwork Youth programme, empowering young people and community groups to collaborate and work together intergenerationally to tackle the issues that affect them the most. We've worked closely with a dedicated group of young people who sit on our youth advisory board and our network of Young Green Ambassadors, based all over the country, will roll out our campaign locally.

To find out more and sign up your community group visit: [www.groundwork.org.uk/support-youth-campaign-uk](http://www.groundwork.org.uk/support-youth-campaign-uk)



The CJS Team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this CJS Focus publication.

Next edition will feature Volunteering published on 17 September 2018