



Greenwood

Nottinghamshire's Community Forest bringing Sherwood Forest to your doorstep

GREENWOOD COMMUNITY FOREST IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2012 – 2013

1) Greenwood Community Forest

Since 1991, Greenwood Community Forest has played a major role in revitalizing Nottinghamshire's landscape and communities, as expressed by its shared mission:

"To work in partnership to enable Nottinghamshire's communities to create, care for and to use woodlands and other high quality accessible green spaces in a sustainable way that benefits the environment, landscape and the local economy."

A small team is employed by Nottinghamshire County Council to work with partner organisations to deliver benefits in areas including health, education and community cohesion as well as biodiversity.

This report has been produced for the County Council to outline achievements of the past year. The report focuses on activities in the 2012/13 financial year but also refers to more recent events where this helps to provide a current position.

2) Addressing strategic need and community opportunities

Greenwood's activities support a number of the priorities set out within Nottinghamshire County Council's Strategic Plan:

Our active network of "Friends" groups contributes towards *Supporting Safe and Thriving Communities* by encouraging partnership working and helping people to feel safer within their local parks. It also supports *Protecting the Environment*, by encouraging more people from local communities to become involved in improving their environment and by improving the quality of country parks and open spaces and so increasing public satisfaction.

A more attractive environment represents good quality "green infrastructure" that makes Nottinghamshire more attractive for investment and so indirectly helps to *Support Economic Growth*. Greenwood's organisation of public events can also provide new attractions for the visitor economy.

Good quality green spaces also help in *Promoting Health*. Many studies have now confirmed their value in encouraging recreational activity that benefits mental well-being as well as better physical health. Greenwood has also promoted walking for health and carried out audits to ensure sites are accessible to everyone.



Hedge planting at Newstead

3) Landscape regeneration

We supported Newstead and Annesley Country Park by attending its environment sub-group, assisting with ecological surveys, providing further advice and data to inform the site management plan and to assist with the group's interpretation project.

We gave further practical support to Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire to allow them to deliver their Local Improvement Scheme project and to draw down the associated funds.



Maun grasslands

The Greenwood team also supported development and implementation of 11 of NCC's Local Improvement Schemes, working together with Notts County Council and other local authorities, volunteer groups and other organisations.

In Ashfield:

- Ecological enhancement work on the River Maun
- Control of non-native invasive species (Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed) on the River Maun and Meden
- Picnic area and access improvements at Teversal Trails Visitor Centre
- Picnic area and access improvements at NCC's Nunn Brook Park



Himalayan Balsam control

In Mansfield:

- Control of non-native invasive species (Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed) on the River Maun
- Tree planting at three urban sites on the Brick Kiln Lane / Ladybrook Lane

In Newark & Sherwood:

- Improving access and security at Barnby Road Allotments.



New picnic area at Nunn Brook Park

3.1 Community Tree Planting

Since 2000, our Community Tree Planting Grants have encouraged everyone to play a part in creating the Community Forest. Our simple application process is backed up with guidance to make it easy to get involved.

The scheme has proved an excellent way to engage with schools and community groups. Since its establishment, the scheme has provided grants totalling over £50,000 and supported over 180 projects. Over 15,600 trees have been planted, involving around 6,500 participants.



Tree planting at Fisher Lane

Our 2012/13 season shifted emphasis to encourage planting of 'Trees for Shade'. We piloted the idea of counteracting the warming effects of climate change by placing trees to provide shade to site users and adjacent buildings. The scheme supported a higher proportion of larger and more expensive trees, including extra heavy standards. 11 projects were assisted with funding totalling £2,570, resulting in 165 trees being planted by 142 participants.

The table overleaf summarises last year's schemes. In addition, two of Greenwood's groups planted 60 saplings provided by the Woodland Trust. InStep Walking for Health group received the trees, which were planted at Oakham Nature Reserve, with support from the Maun Conservation Group.

3.2 Landowner Forum

We helped partners to deliver a Broxtowe Landowners Forum, providing landowners and farmers with an overview of environmental initiatives and funding opportunities. The event was attended 30 participants, representing a cross section of individuals from farming and rural businesses.

4) Access for all



Developing the access audit at Arnot Hill Park

Green space sites should be accessible to all. Unfortunately, a number of barriers can prevent individuals from making use of a site, ranging from physical barriers associated with choices in countryside furniture, to issues around the provision of information both on and off-site.

Greenwood has championed access audits to provide a consistent approach in assessing problems. This year, we completed audits for two sites:

Arnot Hill Park, Arnold. Results were used to support a £10k grant bid, which led to practical works to improve signage and interpretation in 2013.

Brierley Forest Park, Sutton-in-Ashfield. The audit was used to inform the management plan update and to support a Green Flag submission.

Community Tree Planting Grants: 2012/13 season				
		No. of trees	No. of people	Outline
Broxtowe	George Spencer Academy	12	10	► Trees for Shade – planting in school grounds, on south side of classroom
	Stapleford Community Group	2	19	► Trees for Shade – planting on public greenspace
Gedling	Pinewood Infant and Nursery School	5	15	► Trees for Shade, wind break – planting in school grounds
	Woodborough Parish	2	3	► Trees for Shade – planting on parish greenspace
Mansfield	Clipstone Welfare Cricket Club	12	4	► Trees for Shade and screening on perimeter of publicly accessible cricket ground.
	Friends of Fisher Lane Park	2	14	► Trees for Shade – planting on public greenspace ► Publicity – article in local paper
	Friends of Yeoman Hill Park	2	9	► Trees for Shade – planting on public greenspace ► Publicity – article in local paper
	Holly Primary School	3	6	► Trees for Shade – planting in school grounds
	Maun Conservation Group	12	10	► Biodiversity enhancements and Trees for Shade – planting on public greenspace ► Publicity – local press attended
	Oak Tree Primary School	6	26	► Healthy Living - planting in school grounds ► Publicity – article in local paper
	Wyndale Primary School	7	16	► Healthy Living and Landscape - planting in school grounds ► Publicity - Local press attended

5) The Friends of Greenwood Community Forum

“Friends” groups help to improve, care for and promote the use of green spaces, carrying out works on site and linking to the general public. In 2000, we established the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum to encourage such groups, and the Forum has since provided a platform for discussion and support. Newly formed groups have gained confidence from the experience of others whilst even longer-standing groups welcome new ideas. The Greenwood team has facilitated the Forum, by organising meetings, by “sign posting” sources of advice, giving information and solving problems. We also produce a Directory of groups for volunteer bureaux and for potential volunteers.

The Chair of the Forum sits on Greenwood’s Partnership Board, ensuring a strong link between Greenwood’s governance and its community support. In return, Friends groups have supported Greenwood partners, helping several sites to gain Green Flag status thanks to their links to the local community.

In 2010, *Forum* members agreed that it should become more self-supporting. We have helped the group to move towards a greater level of independence, by establishing its own committee, constitution and bank account. This groundwork is now beginning to show promise: in 2013, the *Forum*’s growing confidence enabled it to recruit secretarial support and to work with the Greenwood team to submit a bid for external funding. Greenwood provides seed corn funding to allow the Forum to organise meetings and to cover administrative costs. The Greenwood team also continues to provide ideas, advice and support to the committee.

Over the year, the Forum met three times, when discussion topics included:



The Forum visits Tippings Wood

- Artwork on green spaces. A presentation from a sculptor and discussion about funding, consultation with communities and art workshops.
- Control of invasive non-native species. Updates from the county biodiversity officer, leading to the organisation of practical task days with member groups.
- Fundraising. A speaker from Focus on Funding to discuss opportunities through the Local Giving website.



The Forum at Moor Pond Wood

Two of the *Forum*’s meetings visited sites supported by the County Council’s Countryside Officers. In May, a meeting at **Tippings Wood** included a guided walk led by Mark Guy, and supported by the Friends of Tippings Wood. In summer, the Forum travelled to **Moor Pond Wood**, Papplewick, and discussed site management with Lee Scudder alongside representatives of the Friends of Moor Pond Wood.

Other NCC officers have also found that attending Forum meetings can help in delivering their activities. Chris Jackson, Biodiversity Officer, has been able to recruit help for work days to control invasive plant species like Himalayan Balsam. Sue McDonald, the Community Liaison Officer from Country Parks and Green Spaces, attended the Forum's autumn meeting.

6) Awards

To ensure that the contributions of local groups and their individual members are not taken for granted, Greenwood organises an annual Awards Ceremony to recognise their efforts.

Since 2001, Greenwood has made 104 awards, whilst recognising even more nominations. In 2012, there were 23 nominations (the highest response ever) for the 12 awards. It was also noticeable that those making the nominations, whether fellow volunteers or officers, put in great effort to write about their nominees.

This year's event was attended by 140 people, who gathered at the Newstead Centre on the evening of 29 August. Colin Barson, Chair of the *Forum* hosted the event and ensured that all nominees were recognised, both during his presentation and by receiving a commemorative certificate.



Greenwood Award nominees

Feedback after the event included a comment from Ian Major (Sherwood Forest Trust) who noticed the positive impact of an Award for one Mansfield group:

“ The group were on top of the world on receiving their award last Wednesday evening, when we got together on Thursday morning for our task the mood was one of real elation, and the work rate was even more than usual :-). I thought the evening was very inspiring, and testament to all the great work that you guys do with the groups. ”



Oliver Humphrey (5th from right) with others from Rufford Conservation Volunteers

Award winners and nominees came from around the county, including a number from groups looking after NCC country parks and green spaces. Bestwood Country Park Conservation Volunteers (award winners in 2011) were nominated for Best Team effort. Roger Williams, a member of the Friends of Bestwood Country Park, was nominated for Long Serving Volunteer. Oliver Humphrey (Rufford Conservation Volunteers) won the award for Young Volunteer.

7) Supporting local groups

The Greenwood team helps to set up new groups where partners or the local communities have identified opportunities, and continues to support established groups by offering guidance and support on a range of matters. This can range from common concerns like recruitment and fund-raising, to new opportunities, like the use of social media. Even with issues of a more specific nature, it is often possible to “signpost” enquiries to another group that has dealt with similar concerns.

We currently support 39 local groups throughout the county, including “Friends” groups, walking and health groups:

Ashfield	Friends of Brierley Forest Park	Friends of Rookery Park
	Friends of Kings Mill Reservoir	Hucknall Taking Steps
	Friends of Kingsway Park	Kirkby & District Conservation Society
	Friends of Portland Park	
Broxtowe	Walk & Talk	The Friends of Bramcote Ridge
	The Friends of Brinsley Headstocks	Brinsley Parish Council
	The Friends of Colliers Wood	
Gedling	Friends of Bestwood Country Park	Get Going Gedling, Sports Development
	Friends of Gedling House Woods	Golden Amblers
	Friends of the Hobbucks	Leen Valley Conservation Volunteers
	Friends of Moor Pond Wood	
Mansfield	Forest Town Nature Group	Maun Conservation Group
	Friends of Quarry Lane	Oak Tree SAFE
	Friends of the Hermitage	Peafield Community Association
	Friends of Yeoman Hill Park	Friends of Fisher Lane
	Friends of Thynghowe	RSPB Mansfield
	Mansfield Instep	Warsop Footpaths & Countryside Group
	Mansfield Woodhouse Society	Mansfield Woodhouse Millennium Green Trust
Newark & Sherwood	Rufford Conservation Volunteers	Friends of Vicar Water Country Park
	Friends of Thynghowe	Rufford Country Park Health Walks
	Friends of Tippings Wood	Sherwood Foragers

Over the last year, Greenwood provided practical support to Friends groups in a variety of ways, according to need and opportunity:



Promoting local groups at “Make a Difference” event

We helped to promote volunteering and the efforts of all Friends groups, including by supporting a promotional event at the Idlewells Centre, Sutton-in-Ashfield as part of “**Make a Difference**” Day aimed at encouraging people to volunteer. Volunteering opportunities at Bestwood Country Park and Bestwood Winding Engine House were included at this promotional event.

In Gedling, we worked with the borough council to support the launch of **Burton Road Jubilee Park** and to encourage the formation of a new Friends group. We then supported the new group in organising a family fun day.

We also worked closely with the **Friends of Bestwood Country Park** to support communication between the Friends and Nottinghamshire County Council.



Litter-picking at Mansfield Woodhouse Millennium Green

We helped the **Mansfield Woodhouse Society** and **Mansfield Woodhouse Millennium Green Trust** to address organisational and site-based problems. The team carried out a site survey and produced a report to set out management options and costs, before supporting the group with a £18.6k funding application for access and biodiversity improvements. We co-ordinated tree surgery works for a large ash tree and organised a litter-picking day that resulted in around 30 people collecting over 40

large sacks of debris. At the same time, we supported members of the community in unravelling issues relating to an earlier trust that had been set up to manage the Green.

Support to other groups included:

- Advising the **Friends of Kingsway Park** about production of promotional roller banners.
- Lending the Greenwood marquee to the **Friends of Colliers Wood**, for use at events organised on their site.
- Site management advice about engaging a contractor and spraying for weeds provided to the **Friends of Gedling House Woods**.
- A presentation about the use of social media for the **Friends of Moor Pond Wood**
- **The Friends of Fisher Lane** were given advice and equipment for their community planting day.
- A site visit with **the Friends of Forest Road Park** to offer suggestions about options and opportunities for projects.
- Help to **Instep Mansfield** in producing their new website, including both suggestions and photographs from the group's early development.

8) Events and activities

Greenwood's events deliver activities that are carefully designed with partners to add value to their ongoing projects. We help to develop community involvement on sites, often building relationships with harder-to-reach groups that have not previously been involved. Whilst each event varies, all involve our working closely with people to embed a strong environmental message, using themes that can be linked in to the school curriculum or can range from health, arts, map making or even mathematics!

Over the last year, this work included support to two community-based initiatives that also delivered significant public events:



Time Travel Trent Vale *attracts record visitors*

The Greenwood team once again supported NCC's Community Archaeology Team and the Trent Vale Landscape Partnership to deliver the third "**Time Travel Trent Vale**". This major event promotes the Trent Vale and Newark Castle and takes place in July to coincide with the Festival of British Archaeology. Dungeon tours, re-enactors and children's activities were all on offer and estimated visitor numbers were 6,000 over the day, twice the number that had attended the first event in 2010.

In 2011, Greenwood supported the Friends of Thynghowe in a successful application for £50,000 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The group's project – **Thynghowe and the Forgotten Heritage of Sherwood** – then ran from March 2012 to May 2013.

The group wanted to protect historical features of Birklands Forest, following discovery of what could be a rare “Thyng” or Viking meeting place. Their ambitious ideas included the use of LIDAR (light detection and ranging) technology to discover features within the forest, which would then be verified on the ground by volunteers trained in surveying, map analysis and archiving.

The Greenwood team played a key role in supporting the Friends to deliver their project. We helped to administer workshops and events, and promoted the project to under-represented and hard to reach groups by working with organisations including NCC Adult Services.

We also worked with four schools to raise awareness of Birklands Forest in very different ways. **Birkland's Primary School** took part in an “inspiring imagination” workshop with a professional storyteller, which led to schoolwork producing mystical stories and artwork.



Survey training for Thynghowe and the Forgotten Heritage of Sherwood



Samuel Barlow School tries a new way to look at the forest

Samuel Barlow Primary School used a “maths in the forest” day to find angles, studying area, co-ordinates, volume and symmetry. This was followed up by work with an artist to produce artwork based on symmetry.

Church Vale Primary School opted for a “heritage of wildlife” project, which combined a forest walk with practical activities to make bird boxes and bird feeders. The children also worked with an artist to create wildlife-themed bunting for the school's wildlife area.

Eastlands Junior School took part in an innovative video project, visiting the forest to collect video images. Back at school, pupils worked with a video artist to manipulate the data, whilst also working with stories, poetry, artwork and photographic images. On the third day, pupils performed their video “set” live for parents, invited guests, teachers and pupils.

The project culminated in a celebration at Sherwood Pines - the “**Spring Thing**” - which included a re-enactment of a Viking encampment at Sherwood Pines and also showcased the work created by each of the school events. The event provided a new public attraction and was successful in attracting a good deal of media attention.



*Pupils from Church Vale Primary
show off their bunting
(Thynghowe and the Forgotten
Heritage of Sherwood)*

9) Working in partnership

All of Greenwood's activities are achieved by effective partnership working between different organisations. The Greenwood team also takes part in local, regional and national networks to promote our experience and to learn from others.

Greenwood is one of **England's Community Forests** (ECF) and so shares experience with other initiatives set up to enhance urban fringe landscapes. ECF's conference discussed topics including the Government response to the Independent Panel on Forestry, implications of tree pests and a report on the experience of different Community Forests in gaining support from the planning process. Through the year, involvement in ECF has also allowed us to share information on Defra's "Big Tree Plant" funding; links to the Forestry Commission and Natural England; responses to *Chalara fraxinea* (ash tree dieback).

Greenwood has supported the concept of a **Regional Park** for Sherwood Forest, to co-ordinate conservation efforts whilst seeking added benefits to the local economy and communities. To help in taking forward implementation, we have been an active member of the Regional Park Board, helping to formalise its terms of reference and taking responsibility for chairing the Funding Working Group. This group brings together a wide range of organisations to work co-operatively in developing shared bids for external funding.

Greenwood has also supported proposals to establish a **Local Nature Partnership** for Nottinghamshire and Lowland Derbyshire, to make links between the biodiversity agenda and other sectors: business, community, farming, education and health. We attended a meeting of community sector representatives in April, to provide a case study of the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum. We also participated in a wider workshop in July, which agreed a statement of purpose, reviewed key issues and discussed top priorities for action in each sector.

Other initiatives and networks that we liaise with include:

- Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group
- Sherwood Habitats Strategy Group and Sherwood Habitats Forum
- RSPB "Futurescapes"

10)Sustaining the partnership

Greenwood's core funding levers in additional funding to cover further project costs:

LIS projects over the year represented around £13k of additional funding to Greenwood. The team was also itself successful with an LIS application to widen Greenwood's "Trees for Shade" project: this will provide an extra £10k in 2013/14, to support further tree planting throughout the county.

Our support to the Friends of Thynghowe brought in £50k for their community heritage project, which included funding to the Greenwood team.

A major initiative was to lead a £3.9m bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Landscape Partnership Scheme in Sherwood. This brought together a number of organisations under the banner of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park. The time invested has already led to some valuable outcomes:

- Natural England provided £18k for preparatory mapping of landscape and biodiversity opportunity. This piloted an approach that in 2013, is now being applied to Broxtowe Borough.
- 12 partners have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to confirm their commitment to work together on a Stage 2 bid.
- A wider number of partners have worked together to agree a broad vision and to ensure linkages between over 60 different project ideas.
- All have improved their understanding of links between natural, built and cultural heritage.
- Two community engagement events have confirmed interest of local people in local heritage projects.

Unfortunately, October 2013 brought news that our initial bid was unsuccessful but HLF were impressed with our work and are encouraging us to re-apply.

We are currently supporting the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum in making a £10k bid to support further development and promotion of local groups.

11)Promoting the partnership

The Greenwood website was updated to include a month-by-month programme of partners' events. The team also issued a number of media releases to promote a range of initiatives, including:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ▪ Community Tree Planting Grants | ▪ Presentation of awards at All Saints School, Mansfield |
| ▪ Greenwood Awards. | ▪ Oakham LNR tree planting event, Mansfield |
| ▪ Tree-planting event at Bramcote Hills Park, Broxtowe | ▪ Thynghowe project, Sherwood |
| ▪ Robert Mellors School visit to Arnot Hill Park, Arnold | ▪ Time Travel Trent Vale, Newark |
| ▪ Instep and Maun Conservation Tree Planting at Oakham. | |

Greenwood Community Forest Partnership

c/o Nottinghamshire County Council, Conservation Team, Trent Bridge House
Fox Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6BJ
Tel: 0115 9696530

www.greenwoodforest.org.uk