



## GREENWOOD COMMUNITY FOREST IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

### ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - 14

#### 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 on behalf of the partnership. The team works closely with partner organisations to deliver benefits in areas including health, education and community cohesion as well as biodiversity.

This report has been produced for Nottinghamshire County Council to outline achievements of the Greenwood Partnership over the past year. The report focuses on activities in the 2013/14 financial year but also makes reference to more recent events where this helps to provide a current position.

#### 2) Meeting strategic needs and community opportunities

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

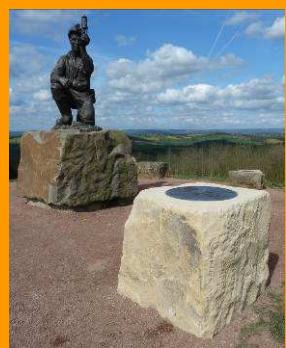
Our active network of "Friends" groups contributes towards *Supporting Safe and Thriving Communities* by encouraging partnership working and helping people to feel safer within their local parks. Our tree planting and other activities support *Protecting the Environment*, by encouraging communities to become involved in improving their local area, 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.

## 3) Improving green spaces

The Local Improvement Scheme (LIS), funded by Notts County Council, helped community groups to carry out a wide range of local conservation, heritage and amenity projects. Over 2013/14, the Greenwood team supported 18 LIS projects within the Community Forest area, thanks to a total grant value of £172,000:



### **Silverhill Pit Wood** – access and interpretation project, £17,000.

We supported the Silverhill Wood Active Network (SWAN) community group to carry out access improvements and to create on-site interpretation. Working with Nottinghamshire County Council's Green Estates Team and the Forestry Commission.

### **Brierley Forest Pond Angling Club** – fishing equipment and storage facility, £5,000.

We organised a site survey and planning permission to enable a new storage container to be installed next to the lake. This provides an activity base, allowing the club to develop its work promoting responsible angling and working with excluded pupils from local schools.

Working with Ashfield District Council and Brierley Forest Park Trust.



**Kimberley** - £2,500. A specialist contractor was engaged to improve neglected grassland to create a species-rich wildflower meadow, contributing to Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) targets and providing a patchwork of attractive wildlife habitats. Public access was also improved. Partners: Kimberley Town Council and NCC Green Estate team.

### **Brinsley Headstocks** – £7,700. Timber preservation works were organised to conserve the last remaining timber tandem headstocks in the country; also hedge-laying along the main access route to this Local Nature Reserve.

Partners: the Friends of Brinsley Headstocks and Broxtowe Borough Council.



### **Trough Road Spinney, Watnall** – £9,300. Two ponds were restored by trimming overhanging trees to increase light, removing rubbish and silt and repairing the clay lining. Local schools helped by planting pond plants and woodland bulbs. Working with Broxtowe Borough Council.

# Local projects - local spaces



**Bramcote Hills Park** – £33,000. Our earlier Access Audit led to this work to improve access for all. The surface of a key route was widened and improved, and seating and fencing installed. Large trees were planted to further enhance the parkland setting and local schools were involved. Partners: Groundwork Greater Nottingham and Broxtowe Borough Council.

## **Rock Houses, Mansfield** – structural survey and archaeological work. £5,000.

Little is known about the history of these former cave dwellings, but the Friends of Fisher Lane Park aspire to re-open the site for education and interpretation. Following advice from NCC's Archaeology Team, LIS supported an inspection to assess the structural condition of the caves.



## **Quarry Lane Viaduct** – restoration works. £15,000

Vegetation growing out of the stonework and mortar joints was damaging the structure of this Grade II listed building. Tree and Conservation officers from the County Council and Mansfield District Council advised the Friends of Quarry Lane about a programme of works. Local residents were consulted, a bat survey undertaken and specialist contractors employed to undertake major tree works and aerial vegetation removal.

## **Bramcote Ridge** – £2,500. The Friends of Bramcote Ridge received funds to undertake habitat restoration and management works on this important acid grassland site. New areas of grassland and heathland were created and a section of hedge was layed. We ensured that the group received good ecological advice; Broxtowe Borough Council organised the works and provided additional funding.



## **Mansfield Woodhouse Millennium Green** – access and biodiversity improvements. £18,000

LIS supported the site's trustees in carrying out an ecological survey of the site and to go on to develop a management plan. This has led to path improvements, refurbished seating and habitat management.

## **Rainworth Bypass** – £5,000.

These roadside verges were originally seeded to create a heathland, supporting the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan targets. When invasive pine saplings started to shade out the heather, LIS funded pine clearance and heather cutting to diversify the height and age structure. The heather trimmings were used for further heathland recreation on nearby Ransom Heath.



# Local spaces local projects



## Balderton Lake, Newark – access improvements, £10,000.

Popularity has led to erosion of the site's main pathways. We helped the parish council to draw up specifications and plans, which enabled works to refurbish some of the main pathways whilst also creating new access links and steps.

## Warsop Vale – grassland restoration. £3,000.

The Warsop Vale disused railway is now a multi-user route running through species-rich calcareous grassland. LIS funded scrub removal and vegetation management to improve conditions for grassland plants and invertebrates.



## Bilsthorpe PC – memorial clock, £3,500.

In 1953, Bilsthorpe Parish commissioned the installation of a clock to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Unfortunately, this clock was lost after it was later removed for repair. In 2013, LIS funded a new clock, commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the coronation, providing Bilsthorpe with a new timepiece and retaining a historical link with the original clock.

## St Mary's Church, Newark – restoration of weathervane, £16,000.

With the third-highest spire in England, St Mary's is visible for miles around. Unfortunately, its weather vane was removed after storm damage and repair costs came to £100k. After years of fund raising, local volunteers secured £16k from LIS to enable the project to go ahead. The Newark skyline now once again features the iconic gilded cockerel weather vane.



## Caythorpe Village – tree planting, £3,000.

Many of Caythorpe's roadside areas were lacking hedgerow trees or had only an ageing tree stock. We worked with the parish council to organise utility checks, liaise with landowners and the county's forestry team to identify areas suitable for planting. Appropriate tree species were selected and contractors engaged to undertake the work. Twelve new trees are now enhancing the village entrance.

## Flemming Drive Allotments, Newark – security fencing, £8,000.

This allotment site has previously suffered from vandalism, arson and theft, so LIS funded new fencing and a vehicular entrance gate.



## Farnsfield – local history interpretation. £3,000

Farnsfield Local History Society produced a new panel celebrating local heritage. We worked with an artist to produce illustrations, helped to edit text, liaised with the designers and arranged for manufacture and installation. The work has been so well received that the group is now seeking funding for an additional panel to be located elsewhere in the village.

#### 4) Extra trees for many benefits



*Brookhill Leys Primary get to plant their trees*

Since 2000, Greenwood's Community Tree Planting Grants have encouraged schools and community groups to play their part in creating the Community Forest. We provide a simple application process to receive funding and back it up with advice and guidance to make it easy for groups to get involved. Since its establishment, the scheme has provided grants totalling over £64,000 to support over 205 projects across the Greenwood area. Over 17,400 trees have been planted, involving around 7,400 participants.

For the 2013/14 season, Greenwood was able to extend its programme thanks to our successful application to NCC's Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) for additional funding. This provided a further £10k of grant and enabled us to offer the scheme on a countywide basis for the first time.

The scheme was promoted to all local authority partners and parish councils and schools. We supported tree planting that delivered a range of community benefits:



**Trees for Shade** - carefully placed trees to counteract the warming effects of climate change



**Memorial** – commemoration of former colleagues and friends



**Landscape** – providing screening and attractive feature



**Education** – cover and interest for outdoor classrooms



**Healthy living** – fruit trees to encourage a better diet



**Biodiversity** – enhancing local wildlife

**Over the last year, we helped 40 of Nottinghamshire's community groups to plant 2,684 trees, with over 1,300 people joining in!**

The tables overleaf give a summary of all schemes.



# Community tree planting schemes 2013/14

District	Location	Trees	Participants	Aims	Summary
Ashfield	Quarrydale Academy	16	10		Creating outdoor classroom in school grounds and supporting vocational training programme for pupils.
	Brierley Forest Country Park	4	30		Celebrating the contribution made by four former members of the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum.
	Mapplewells Primary School	14	67		Creating wooded area for Forest School activities.
	Hillocks Primary School	34	27		Creating outdoor area suitable for Forest School activities.
Bassetlaw	Clarborough Primary School	14	3		School shade planting
	Elkesley Parish Council	3	8		Shade planting
	Holy Farmer RC Primary	7	11		Fruit trees for shade and study
	N Leverton w Hablesthorpe Parish Council	14	30		Shade planting
	Ranskill Parish Council	5	15	 	Replacing dead trees to benefit landscape and shade
	Old Willow Works	755	61		Landscaping of community building
	Brookhill Leys Primary and Nursery School	4	110		Planting fruit trees to support healthy living initiative.
Broxtowe	Alderman White School	9	8		Memorial garden for former member of staff.
	Kimberley Town Council	8	50		Providing shade in town council green space and new play area.

# Community tree planting schemes 2013/14

District	Location	Trees	Participants	Aims	Summary
Gedling	Calverton Parish Council	500	60		New boundary hedge to improve site security and create a windbreak on sports playing field.
	Hucknall Academy	8	14		Creating an orchard and contributing to vocational training programme for pupils.
	Burton Joyce Parish Council	20	3		Planting to enhance parish playing field and provide windbreak.
	Friends of Burton Road (Jubilee Park)	3	30		Shade planting on public green space.
	Newstead Allotment Association	8	6		Orchard planting on community allotment site.
	Linby Parish Council	16	5		Planting to screen new storage container.
Mansfield	Forest Town Community Council	4	4		Shade planting on public green space.
	King Edward Primary School	8	29		Maun Conservation Group planting fruit trees on school grounds.
	Friends of Fisher Lane Park	4	12		Shade planting on public green space.
	Friends of Yeoman Hill Park	2	4		Shade planting on public green space.
	Oak Tree Primary School	12	38		Fruit tree planting on school grounds.
	Friends of Quarry Lane	3	11		Memorial planting and Trees for Shade – planting on public green space.
	Friends of King George V Park	17	120		Shade planting on public green space, also involving pupils from Bury Hill Primary and St. Peter's Primary schools

# Community tree planting schemes 2013/14

District	Location	Trees	Participants	Aims	Summary
Newark & Sherwood	Friends of Barnby Road Community Park	17	20	 	Community orchard planting on public green space.
	Feel Good Foods project (ODEF)	40	53		Fruit tree planting as part of a community food-growing project.
	Friends of Sconce and Devon Park	23	22	 	Planting fruit trees as part of ongoing food-awareness project.
	Harby Playing Field	15	77		Shade planting on public greenspace.
	Girton and Meering Parish Council	15	20	 	Planting on public green space to benefit biodiversity and improve landscape.
	John Blow Primary School	15	24		Shade planting on school grounds.
	Thurgarton Parish Council	6	20	 	Planting on public greenspace to provide shade and improve landscape.
Rushcliffe	Norwell Sports Association	1000	26	 	Planting a new boundary hedge to improve site security and create a wind break.
	E Bridgford Parish Council	2	28	 	Shade planting
	Granby cum Sutton Parish Council	12	10		Landscape improvements
	Langar cum Barnstone Parish Council	12	30		
	Normanton on Soar PC	10	3		
	Radcliffe on Trent Parish Council	8	2		Replacing dead trees to improve landscape
	Sustainable Sutton Bonington	10	22		

## 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 acting as a link to the general public. In 2000, we established the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum, which continues to provide a valuable platform for discussion, supporting and encouraging local groups. Newly formed groups have gained confidence from hearing about the experience of others whilst even longer-standing groups welcome new ideas.

Greenwood supports the Forum, by “sign posting” sources of advice, giving information and solving problems, also by providing some funding to cover the cost of meetings and administration. We also produce a Directory of groups for volunteer bureaux and for potential volunteers.



**Forum members get to grips with identification software**

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 by virtue of demonstrable links to the local community.

Since 2010, the Greenwood team has helped *Forum* members to move towards a greater level of independence. The *Forum* now has its own committee, constitution and bank account; in 2013 it engaged a part time secretary to carry out essential administration.

Over the last year, we helped the Forum to continue this process, by working with the committee to develop project proposals to help member groups with training and joint promotion. Unfortunately, the associated funding bid proved unsuccessful, but the process still helped the *Forum* to clarify its aspirations and to draft policies regarding equality and child protection. We expect to refine and resubmit the bid in 2015.

Last year, the *Forum* met four times at different venues, allowing members to see sites at different stages of development and managed for varying purposes. Topics for discussion included:

- Surveying tree health
- Biodiversity and invasive species
- iSpot - identification website and smart phone application.
- Involvement in Sherwood Forest Local Partnership Scheme
- Updates on Sherwood Forest Regional Park

## 6) Greenwood Community Awards

Volunteers' efforts should not be taken for granted. Since 2001, Greenwood has highlighted the contribution of individual volunteers and local groups through an annual celebration with the provision of awards for outstanding effort. Nominations are drawn from partner organizations and from fellow volunteers and the ceremony is always a highlight of the Greenwood year. We aim to provide an uplifting evening for the audience and some recognition and further motivation for all nominees.



**Linda Bontoft receives her Award from Cllr John Knight, chair of the Greenwood Partnership, and Leanne Wombwell of Rufford Country Park**

116 people attended our 2013 Awards ceremony in Papplewick. 24 different community groups were represented, spanning "Friends" and conservation groups, Walking for Health, school and youth groups.

Nominations came from all parts of the Community Forest and resulted in 12 awards being presented. Amongst those recognised were Linda Bontoft of the Friends of Rufford Country Park (Long Standing Volunteer), NCC's Adventure Service (Young Team), Eastlands Junior School and Samworth Academy (School Involvement awards)

*"The presentation of photographs and speech about Sharon was excellent. Thank you to the Greenwood Community Forest. The award meant a great deal to her and to the Friends of Fisher Lane Park." - Jill Duckmantion, Friends of Fisher Lane*

*"We had a lovely night at the awards and were honoured to win, the children were thrilled when I took the award into school for them" - Ann Alcock, teacher, Eastlands Junior School*



## 7) Supporting local groups

The Greenwood team helps to set up new groups where partners or the local communities have identified opportunities. We continue 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. We often supplement professional advice with “signposting” to other groups that have already dealt with similar concerns.

Last year, we supported over 50 such groups, encompassing “Friends”, walking and health groups:

Ashfield	Brierley Forest Park Trust	Hucknall Taking Steps
	Friends of Kings Mill Reservoir	Kirkby & District Conservation Society
	Friends of Kingsway Park	The Ranges
	Friends of Portland Park	SWAN
	Friends of Rookery Park	Walk On
Broxtowe	Best Foot Forward	The Friends of Colliers Wood
	The Friends of Bramcote Ridge	Toton Fields
	The Friends of Brinsley Headstocks	Walk & Talk
	Brinsley Parish Council	
Gedling	Friends of Bestwood Country Park	Friends of the Hobbucks
	Gedling Conservation Trust	Burton Road Jubilee Park
	Friends of Gedling House Woods	Friends of Moor Pond Wood
	Get Going Gedling	Bestwood Conservation Volunteers
Mansfield	RSPB Mansfield	Oak Tree SAFE
	Friends of the Carrs	Old Mansfield Woodhouse Society
	Friends of Fisher Lane	Peafield Community Association
	King George V Park	Friends of Quarry Lane
	Mansfield In Step	Warsop Footpaths & Countryside Group
	Mansfield Woodhouse Millennium Green Trust	Friends of Yeoman Hill Park
	Maun Conservation Group	Forest Town Nature Group
Newark & Sherwood	Blidworth Walking Group	Rufford Country Park Health Walks
	Barnaby Road Community Park	Friends of Southwell Trail
	Sconce & Devon Park	Support Sherwood
	Kings Clipstone	Friends of Tippings Wood
	Sherwood Foragers	Friends of Thynghowe
	Rufford Conservation Volunteers	The Wharf

Our support included extra help to groups associated with NCC's Green Estates:

- **Friends of The Ranges** – a site meeting, which led to practical task days and the Friends agreeing to report back to NCC on a regular basis.
- The **Friends of Tippings Wood** – helped to adjust to the retirement of key members, with remaining members encouraged to become more active.
- The **Friends of Rookery Park** - a site visit and follow-up meeting to develop a better working relationship between the Friends and NCC green estate staff. Also establishment of an events programme.
- User groups on the **Southwell Trail** - improving promotion and strengthening relationships, including training on social media leading to the establishment of a new Facebook page.
- The **Friends of Quarry Lane** were encouraged to attend the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum.

## 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.

In 2011, Greenwood supported the Friends of Thynghowe to submit a successful application for £50,000 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The group's project, **Thynghowe and the Forgotten Heritage of Sherwood**, went on to investigate the heritage of Birklands Forest from March 2012 to May 2013.

The Greenwood team played a key role in supporting the Friends to deliver their project. We helped to administer workshops and events, organised activities with four local schools and chaired a closing workshop for participants and stakeholders.

Church Warsop's Church Vale Primary School enjoyed their wildlife workshop so much that they requested an extra visit for another class. We organised a further visit for Year 5 children, which linked into their study of the Second World War.

We also supported the Friends of Thynghowe in organising their final celebration, a "Spring Thing" to re-enact a Viking encampment, at Sherwood Pines over one weekend in May. The team attended and were based in the classroom to welcome many of the pupils and teachers who had taken part in the school workshops and their families.



Thynghowe and the Forgotten Heritage of Sherwood enabled four schools to look at the Forest in new ways

## **9) Working in partnership**

Greenwood is one of **England's Community Forests** and so shares experience with other initiatives set up to enhance urban fringe landscapes. We use teleconferences and an annual forum to discuss common areas of interest, which have ranged from launch of the Planning and Forestry Network to responding to calls for a "wood culture".

One particular issue that is likely to affect a number of the Community Forests is the proposed creation of the HS2 second phase railway line, so the Forests have aimed to provide a shared response about common issues. The Forests are neutral about the creation of the line, but are keen to support tree planting and other mitigation should the scheme go ahead. We met jointly with HS2 to promote this standpoint, and Greenwood also provided a presentation to the Department for Transport's Environment Round Table in January 2014.

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 and chaired the Funding Working Group until July 2013, paving the way for the Sherwood LPS bid. We have also produced a Position Statement, to outline the positive roles that Greenwood could play to support the Regional Park with regard to strategic tree planting, community engagement and support of local groups.

The Greenwood team also supports a number of other partnership initiatives and fora, including etc.

- 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 facilitated by Greenwood represented over £172,000 of additional funding to local communities. The team was also successful with its own LIS application to widen Greenwood's "Trees for Shade" project: this provided an extra £10,000, to support further tree planting throughout the county. By working in partnership with Sherwood Forest Trust, we were able to extend community tree planting further thanks to £1,600 from Defra's Big Tree Plant.

Completion of the project *Thynghowe and the Forgotten Heritage of Sherwood* had been made possible by our earlier support to the Friends of Thynghowe in 2011, which brought in £50k for their community heritage project.

A major initiative was to support a £3.7m bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Landscape Partnership Scheme in Sherwood. Greenwood has co-ordinated the effort of a number of organisations that came together under the banner of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park. Our 2013 bid was unsuccessful but partners agreed to refine proposals for resubmission in 2014. This second bid has been successful, which will release £150k of funding to enable further development work to start in 2015.

## 11)Promoting the partnership

The Greenwood team issued media releases to advertise and promote our initiatives, including:

- Community tree planting – advance promotion of the grant scheme and coverage of its individual projects.
- Greenwood Community Awards - coverage in the Chad, Nottingham Evening Post and Hucknall Dispatch, amongst others.
- Volunteering “case studies” - to showcase volunteering on parks and open spaces, focusing on some of the year’s Award winners.
- School visits to Birklands Forest.

The Friends of Thynghowe's *Spring Thing* was also successful in attracting a good deal of media attention, including on the BBC website.

We also promoted Greenwood's activities using a variety of other media:

- Greenwood Community Forest website was updated.
- The *Forum* Facebook page was used to promote events organised by Greenwood and local groups.
- The directory of Friends of Greenwood was updated. This promotes the *Forum* as well as individual Friends groups, volunteer organisations and Walking Groups. The directory is distributed widely, including to local voluntary bureaux.



- Three roller banners were produced to promote Greenwood's mission and achievements and its support of community tree planting, events and education.
- We displayed information at a volunteer event for unemployed people aged 18-21 years at Bassetlaw CVS. This gave an opportunity to promote volunteering in Bassetlaw as well as highlighting opportunities within the Greenwood area.

### Greenwood Community Forest Partnership

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