



Greenwood

Nottinghamshire's Community Forest bringing Sherwood Forest to your doorstep

GREENWOOD COMMUNITY FOREST IN BROXTOWE 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 Broxtowe Borough 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) Strategic need and community opportunities

Greenwood's activities support a number of the aims set out in Broxtowe's strategies. Our vision aligns with Corporate Plan desires to protect and enhance the environment and to create a community where people feel that they belong. Our activities support a number of the council's commitments, including the aim of planting 100,000 extra trees (Corporate Plan); provision of healthy activities for young people and tackling climate change issues (Sustainable Communities Strategy); improving the quality of green spaces (Green Spaces Strategy); encouraging "local ownership" and the sharing of information and good practice (Nature Conservation Strategy).

Because Greenwood works closely with its local communities, we also respond to local interests and opportunities. We introduce new audiences to the environment and encourage everyone to enjoy and appreciate green space. Individuals and groups are helped and supported to play an active role in caring for the green spaces on their doorstep.

3) Improving green spaces

The Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) funded by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC), helped communities to carry out a wide range of local conservation, heritage and amenity projects. Over 2013/14, the Greenwood team provided essential support to enable 18 LIS projects to go ahead within the Community Forest area, including these in Broxtowe:



Kimberley - £2,500. A specialist contractor was engaged to improve several areas of 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 around the site 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.



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 LBAP priority grassland and heathland were created and a section of hedge was laid. We ensured that the group received good ecological advice; Broxtowe Borough Council organised the works and provided additional funding.

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 were involved in planting pond plants and woodland bulbs. Working in partnership with Broxtowe Borough Council.

Bramcote Hills Park – £33,000. Greenwood's 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. Some large trees were planted to further enhance the parkland setting and local schools were involved. Partners: Groundwork Greater Nottingham and Broxtowe Borough Council.





Brookhill Leys Primary get to plant their trees

4) Extra trees, many benefits

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. The scheme has now provided over £64,000 to support more than 205 projects across the Greenwood area. Over 17,400 trees have been planted, involving around 7,400 participants.

The 2013/14 season 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

Community Tree Planting Schemes in Broxtowe

Broxtowe Scheme	Trees	Participants	Aims	Summary
Brookhill Leys Primary and Nursery School	4	110		Planting fruit trees to support healthy living initiative.
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.
Overall	21	168		Total grants of £867

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 August 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.



Volunteers from Broxtowe join other Forum members in a visit to Pleasley Pit Country Park

Greenwood supports the Forum, by “sign posting” sources of advice, giving information and solving problems, and 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.

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 formulate policies regarding equality and child protection. We expect to refine and resubmit the bid in 2014/15.

The *Forum* met four times last year, with an AGM in July. In addition to essential business, this meeting received updates on Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group and the Sherwood Forest Regional Park as well as details of a tree health survey being organised by OPAL. Members then toured Pleasley Pit Country Park.

Sadly, Greenwood’s Friends groups had lost four of their most active and respected individual members over 2011 and 2012. Last year, the *Forum* used a Greenwood Community Tree Planting Grant to mark their passing with a memorial planting of four large rowans at Brierley Forest Country Park. The Friends of Brinsley Headstocks were one of the groups present, paying their respects to their former chairman Wlady Wildhardt.



Friends of Brinsley Headstocks planting a memorial tree

6) Greenwood Community Awards



Andrew Porter and George Reynolds - Broxtowe "Walk & Talk" group

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.

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 districts within the Community Forest. Amongst those recognised were Andrew Porter and George Reynolds of Broxtowe Walk and Talk group.



Anne and Margaret - Friends of Colliers Wood - organised a raffle to raise extra funds

"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 Duckmanton, 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 45 such groups, encompassing “Friends”, walking and health groups, including seven from Broxtowe:

- Best Foot Forward
- Bramcote Ridge
- Brinsley Headstocks
- Brinsley Parish Council
- Colliers Wood
- Toton Fields
- Walk & Talk

Practical support was given to the **Friends of Colliers Wood**, who borrowed the Greenwood marquee for their Christmas event, also to the **Friends of Brinsley Headstocks**.

8) Events and activities



Sculpture design

Greenwood worked with Broxtowe Borough Council to organise a range of events at **Bramcote Hills Park**. A bulb and tree-planting event was organised with three local schools. Two of these - Bramcote Hills Primary and Bramcote Church of England Primary - then helped a local artist to design elements for a sculpture which was to be created from the site’s fallen beech. Children walked to the site and spent two separate afternoons sketching using different media. To mark the completion of the sculpture, Greenwood later organised two storytelling sessions.



Meeting the sculptor



Celebrating with storytelling

9) Working in partnership

Greenwood is one of **England's Community Forests** (ECF) and so shares experience with other initiatives set up to enhance urban fringe landscapes. We use teleconferences and an annual conference to discuss common areas of interest, which have ranged from launch of the Planning and Forestry Network to developing 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 expect to be 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 Landscape Partnership bid mentioned below. We 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, including Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, RSPB "Futurescapes" and Broxtowe's Partnership and Wildlife forums.

10) Sustaining the partnership

Greenwood's core funding levers in additional funding to enable further project delivery:

LIS projects facilitated by Greenwood represented over £172,000 of additional funding to local communities. The team had also been 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, £6,000 of which was spent in the Greenwood area. 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 turned down, 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 a number of media releases to advertise and promote a range of our initiatives, including:

- Community tree planting – advance promotion of the grant scheme and coverage of its individual projects.
- Greenwood Community Awards - which led to 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.

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

- Three roller banners were produced to promote Greenwood’s mission and achievements and its support of community tree planting, events and education.
- Greenwood Community Forest website was updated.
- 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.



- The *Forum* Facebook page was used to promote events organised by Greenwood and local groups.



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