



Greenwood

Nottinghamshire's Community Forest bringing Sherwood Forest to your doorstep

GREENWOOD COMMUNITY FOREST AND GEDLING ANNUAL REPORT 2011 – 2012

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 the woodland economy as well as biodiversity. Greenwood also works closely with its local communities, introducing new audiences to the environment and encouraging 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.

This report has been produced for Gedling Borough Council to outline achievements of the Greenwood Partnership over the past year. The report focuses on activities in the 2011/12 financial year but also makes reference to more recent events where this helps to provide a current position.

Overview

At the beginning of the year, the team was settling into changed office space and revised working arrangements as part of Nottinghamshire County Council's new department of Policy, Planning & Corporate Services. Reductions in core funding led to team members dividing their time between Greenwood and other related responsibilities.

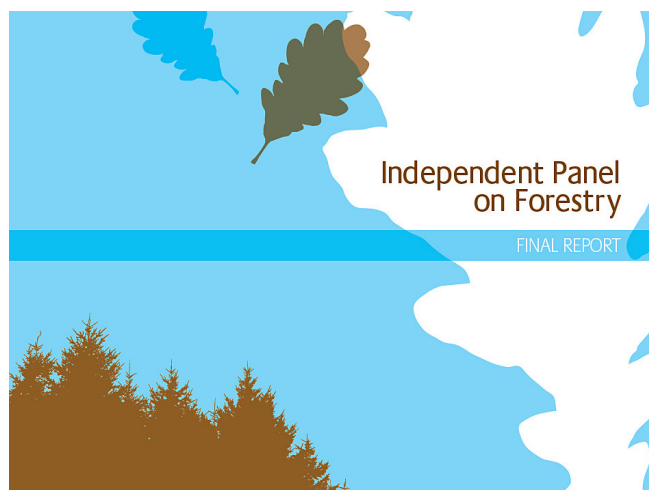
Nonetheless, the year was a productive one for Greenwood, with highlights including:

- A renewed **national recognition** of Community Forests;
- Local work to increase **partnership working** with a range of organisations and in response to a variety of agendas;
- Another **motivational** evening at the Greenwood Awards;
- Delivery of community **tree planting** grants.

National recognition for Community Forestry

The **Independent Panel on Forestry** was established in 2011 to advise government on a new approach to forestry policy in England. In November, four members of the Panel visited Nottinghamshire as part of their fact-finding tour. The panel was particularly keen to hear more about community forestry, so Greenwood joined representatives from other organisations for a meeting at Rufford Country Park. Panel members showed a good understanding of the value and successes of Community Forests such as Greenwood and much of the discussion revolved around how to better make the case for support and recognition at a national level.

The final report of the Independent Panel has since been published and it makes a number of comments supportive of community forestry. It highlights the fact that woodlands provide many public benefits, which added together have a greater value than the cost of their establishment. It re-states the need to see a significant increase in woodland cover in England and notes that community forests show how partnership working can deliver this.



The report also recognises the importance of local communities, saying that the Panel wants people of all ages, to have the opportunity to be more engaged with their local trees, woods and forests.

“There is a significant body of evidence ... that community forestry, where trees and society are brought together, transforms people’s lives.” - Independent Panel on Forestry, Final Report, 2012

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/reports/>



Tree planting on Killisick Allotments

Community Tree Planting

In the decade from 2000, Greenwood’s Community Tree Planting Grant scheme provided grants totalling £44,850 and supported over 150 projects across the Greenwood area. In total, over 15,000 trees were planted involving nearly 6,000 participants.

Over the 2011/12 planting season, the scheme provided a further £3,528 to support 17 more projects. 1,934 trees / hedging shrubs were planted and 716 participants were involved. In Gedling, we provided £338 to support the three projects listed overleaf. For the project with Killisick Allotments Community Association, we also assisted a wider project funded by Notts. County Council’s Local Improvement Scheme.

Community Tree Planting grants in Gedling, 2011/12

	No. of trees	No. of participants	Project Summary
Killisick Allotment Association	3	7	► Fruit trees – Healthy Living project at allotment site
Pinewood Infants	5	9	► Trees for Shade – in school grounds
Woodborough Parish	1	4	► Jubilee planting – Trees for Shade on parish greenspace

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 to support and encourage such groups, and the *Forum* has proved invaluable as a platform for discussion and to provide support to groups. Many newly formed groups have gained confidence from hearing about the experience of others and even longer-standing groups benefit from new ideas. The Greenwood team has supported the *Forum*, by organising meetings and by “sign posting” sources of advice, giving information and solving problems.

The screenshot shows the website for Friends of Greenwood. At the top, it says "Friends of Greenwood" and "The Greenwood Community Forest Team in Nottinghamshire support local Friends groups in many ways. One way the team can help is through the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum. This is a network of Friends groups in the Greenwood area who meet four times a year." Below this is a navigation menu with links for Home, Links To Friends Groups, Links To Funders, Events Diary, and Countryside Links. The main content area features a Facebook link with a photo of a group of people and a text box that says "Visit: The Friends of Greenwood on Facebook". Below the Facebook link is a "facebook" logo. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a white box with the text "The Forum has started a Blog".

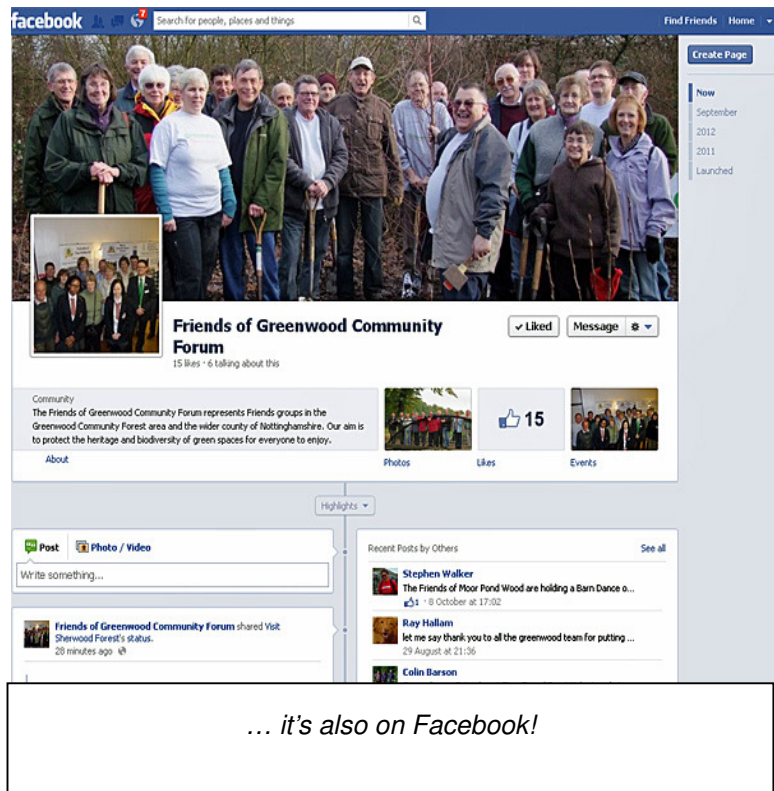
The Chair of the *Forum* sits on Greenwood’s Partnership Board, ensuring a strong link between Greenwood’s governance and its community support. In return, Friends groups have supported Greenwood partners, helping several sites to gain Green Flag status by virtue of demonstrable links to the local community.

In 2010, the *Forum* celebrated its 10th anniversary and recognising its maturity, we helped it to consider its long-term sustainability. Forum members agreed that it should become more self-supporting and we helped the group to move towards a greater level of independence. Initial steps were to agree a new constitution and to elect officers and members of the new committee.

This committee met for the first time in March 2011 and again throughout the year. Members agreed that their first objectives would be to raise funding for start up and publicity, develop the *Forum*’s profile locally and to establish a presence with national bodies like the Woodland Initiatives Network and National Federation of Green Spaces Forum.

Through the year, meetings of the *Forum* included a range of speakers and topics for discussion including:

- First aid and risk assessment;
- Control of invasive non-native species and the work of the Biodiversity Action Group;
- A presentation by Framework about their “Gateway to Nature” project;
- The value of social media and the availability of training to make use of these new promotional techniques;
- A local writer, promoting his perambulation of the ancient boundary of Sherwood Forest;
- A presentation about community involvement in green infrastructure.



The Forum visits Bestwood

A full meeting of the *Forum* took place on 23 May at **Bestwood Country Park**. Speakers included Jon Berry, Framework, to promote their “Gateway to Nature” project and Dave Wood, writer, to promote his perambulation of the ancient boundary of Sherwood Forest.

Greenwood awards



Anticipation builds at the start of the Awards

All local groups rely upon the time and effort of their volunteer members. Since 2001, Greenwood has recognised and encouraged these individuals through the organisation of awards for outstanding effort, as nominated by their peers. 2011's Awards Ceremony was a highlight of the Greenwood year, providing an opportunity to raise the profile of Friends groups whilst rewarding individual volunteers for their contribution.

The Ceremony took place on 24 August at Red Brick House, Mansfield. County Councillor John Cottee, chair of the Greenwood Partnership, welcomed 125 invited guests before Colin Barson, Chair of the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum, presented a review of achievements.

Nominations were received from many groups, organisations and schools, with award winners including:

- Chris Whiting (Friends of Bestwood Country Park) - Long Serving Volunteer
- Gill Costello (Friends of Bestwood Country Park) - Adult Female Volunteer
- Robin Barton (Friends of Moor Pond Wood) - Senior Volunteer
- Friends of the Hobbucks - Team Award



Councillor John Cottee (Chair of Greenwood Partnership) congratulates Chris Whiting and Gill Costello, Robin Barton, and Friends of the Hobbucks

Supporting local groups

The Greenwood team also works with individual groups, helping to set up new groups where partners or the local communities have identified opportunities, and offering guidance and support to established groups on a range of matters.



Friends of Moor Pond Wood celebrate their tenth birthday!

In Gedling, we currently support eight local groups, including “Friends” groups, walking and health groups:

- Friends of Bestwood Country Park
- Friends of Gedling House Woods
- Friends of the Hobbucks
- Friends of Moor Pond Wood
- Gedling Conservation Trust
- Get Going Gedling, Sports Development
- Golden Amblers
- Leen Valley Conservation Volunteers

The **Friends of Moor Pond Wood** celebrated their tenth anniversary in March 2011. In the summer, they celebrated the occasion by unveiling a three-dimensional model of the site built by one of their members and by organising a tour of the site’s archaeological features.

Examples of support given by the Greenwood team were:

- The **Friends of Gedling House Woods** – guidance about applying for Green Flag status.
- The **Friends of the Hobbucks** – advice about pond-dipping equipment for the site’s new pond.
- The **Friends of Bestwood Country Park** – meetings to the group’s aspirations following the cessation of outdoor education workshops at the Country Park.

Greenspace improvements

Newstead & Annesley Country Park is owned by Rural Community Action (RCAN) and managed by Newstead Enterprise. Greenwood has joined other conservation organisations at meetings of the site’s Environmental Advisory Group, to offer advice about site management. We promoted the development of a co-ordinated management plan and attended a site meeting to review the placement of bird hides and other works. We have offered to support a potential funding bid through the Local Improvement Scheme.

We also started work on an access audit of **Arnot Hill Park**, to assist with Gedling Borough Council’s ongoing commitment to improving facilities. The audit will check site accessibility in terms of information provision and physical access within the site. The audit document and report should also support the Borough Council’s Green Flag submission.

Events and activities

Greenwood facilitated a number of events based at **Arnot Hill Park**. We linked up with Men in Sheds, an Age UK project to support men over 60 in practical activities. They produced 20 bird box kits which were then used for a fun day of bird activities organised by the rangers.

We also invited **Arnold Seely Junior School** to the park to raise awareness about water birds. The children took part in various activities and produced posters that identified the birds and also asked visitors to feed seed to the birds instead of bread.

Schoolchildren from **Robert Mellors School** helped to design a sensory bed in the park. The children made a trip to Rufford Country Park to experience sculpture and went on to local nurseries to see how plants are grown and to select the most suitable plants.

Whilst designing the sensory bed, the children also took the opportunity to support the access audit being carried out. The children used a wheelchair and special goggles to simulate physical and visual impairment, and then helped to assess different parts of the park from their new perspectives. The children were able to comment on issues such as the design of interpretation boards and accessibility of benches, also to consider the potential for a map showing slopes around the site.



Schoolchildren helping with access audit in Arnot Hill Park



Contents of the Hobbucks "Lesson in a Box"

Environmental Education

Greenwood has promoted the concept of "Lesson in a Box" (LIAB), a site-based educational resource pack. LIAB makes it easy for teachers to use a specific site for environmental learning by including ideas for activities linked to the national curriculum, together with guidance and any equipment necessary to run the activities.

This year, we completed work on a new LIAB for the Hobbucks. The new resource was promoted as part of the Killisick Intervention Team's display at the Arnold and Killisick Residents Association's (AKRA) fun day in July.

Funding for this resource came from the Connecting Communities fund through the Gedling Partnership.

Working in partnership

All of Greenwood's activities are achieved by effective partnership working between different organisations. The Greenwood team also takes part in a number of 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 has shared intelligence about initiatives like the Big Tree Plant and sought stronger national support from organisations like the Forestry Commission and Natural England.

We also sit on the steering group for the **Woodland Initiatives Network**, which aims to support initiatives concerned with issues such as maintaining or increasing woodland cover, helping communities and groups to enjoy woodlands, and working to secure the economic and environmental benefits of trees, woods and forests.

Greenwood is an active supporter of the proposed **Sherwood Forest Regional Park** and is now taking a leading role in its future development.

We support the **Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NBAG)**, particularly via the *Forum*. We attended NBAG's annual conference, which included consideration of the requirement for new **Local Nature Partnerships** to make links between biodiversity and other sectors. We took part in workshops to share Greenwood's experience of linking greenspace activities to health and we hope to continue to play a role in development of a local LNP.

Promoting our activities

The Greenwood team regularly issued media releases and updated our own website, to ensure coverage for a range of initiatives, including:

- Friends of Greenwood Community Forum 10th anniversary tree planting event
- The launch of the Greenwood Community Tree Planting Grants.
- Arnold Seely Primary School's visit to Arnot Hill Park

Funding for the future

Greenwood is working with a number of other organisations to make significant shared funding bids. In 2011/12, we supported a bid for Sherwood to be one of the first **Nature Improvement Areas (NIA)**. Unfortunately, competition was very high and the bid was unsuccessful. Nonetheless, the process allowed us to develop a number of outline project ideas and to make stronger links between other organisations.

The organisations that came together to develop the NIA bid have since reorganised as a working group of the Regional Park Board and are working cooperatively to pursue funding for a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme. Greenwood is chairing this working group and if successful, we anticipate support of projects valued to a total of up to £2million.

Greenwood Community Forest Partnership

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