

Woodland for...

WOODLAND FOR LIFE The Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England

...communities



Case Study: Improving health and well-being

Community woodland creation

Achievements

Over the last decade partnership working with stakeholders and community groups has helped to create ten community woodlands across Norfolk.

Background

The contribution of accessible green space to peoples' physical health and mental wellbeing is now well understood. The provision of the ANGST* standard demonstrates the theory. Demonstrating the practice, the need for green space close to even small urban areas has been recognised as an important criterion within all of the Region's green infrastructure plans. However, for such spaces to be truly sustainable over the long-term, it is vital local communities are engaged in this process too.



Initiative description

Norfolk County Council has run a successful community woodland scheme for several years. On the Burlingham Estate, by working in partnership with landowners, tenants, agents, as well as community groups, ten new community woodlands have been established and ten existing woodlands now have management agreements.

Local volunteers, including a number of schools, have planted woodlands. In addition to this woodland activity, many kilometres of hedges have been re-instated. A tactile sculpture trail, a sundial and access for wheelchairs have been put in and pupils from the local high school at Acle have created an annual art exhibition within a wood as part of their GCSE project.

The creation of Kenninghall's woods is another good illustration of this partnership in action. In the spring of 2002, an opportunity arose to purchase 10 acres of arable land adjoining the already established 5-acre Kenninghall Wood. Combined this would create 15 acres of community woodland to bring considerable environmental benefit to this intensely farmed landscape.

Working with Norfolk County Council Kenninghall Lands Trust was set up in April 2002 to oversee fundraising, purchase and future management. It was decided to name the proposed wood Hemp Meadow Wood, after one of the three fields that at one time comprised this site. The necessary funds were raised from the residents and friends of Kenninghall and, with the help of grants the purchase was completed in November 2002.

Planting took place over one weekend in January 2003 when volunteers put in 6000 trees. With the children of Kenninghall Primary School exclusively planting one corner of the wood.

The combined woods, Kenninghall and Hemp Meadow, have become a much-used local amenity as demonstrated by the well-worn paths. The local Scouts and Kenninghall Primary School also use the sites as an educational resource.

Lessons learned

This is a classic example of successful partnership working, combined with effective community engagement.

Future developments

Recently Norfolk County Council has joined forces with the Green Light Trust to help promote the project.

Project contact details

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Green Light Trust
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*ANGST: Acceptable Natural Green Space Standards, developed by English Nature, see Research Report #153.

Further information: www.norfolk.gov.uk www.greenlighttrust.org

www.woodlandforlife.net