

ST NICHOLAS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Stevenage

Living Spaces Grant : £24,800

Ely Dell in Stevenage was a very unwelcoming place before the St Nicholas Community Association decided to take positive action by creating safer access and carrying out a series of renovation works.

The project had been suggested through a neighbourhood survey carried out by the local Council. A derelict 'dell' located on the edge of a large and dense area of housing, it was not only overgrown and uncared for, but was used as a dumping ground by some 'visitors' and as a frequent site for anti-social behaviour by local youths.

Site clearance of undergrowth and litter was the first objective and this was carried out by a group of local volunteers. Following further local consultation, a programme of works was implemented over the next year. Activities included installing attractive railings, building a ramp for disabled access, installing new steps, a colourful mural (by a group of local young people) and novelty seating. When local children made bird and bat boxes for siting on the larger trees they were given a talk by a local bat expert. They have since returned to carry out bulb planting.

The group are certainly proud of what they have achieved. The Council now maintains the site regularly and local residents say that fly tipping has ceased and that the area is now well used, particularly by children, for whom the site was previously 'out of bounds'.



Such is the progress achieved, Stevenage Borough Council included Ely Dell as one of the sites in the 2004 Anglia in Bloom competition - Stevenage winning a Silver Gilt award. As project leader Carol Latif comments "We have successfully revived a sense of pride in the area".

