

Issue: 09
2009

January

Providing a united voice dedicated to promoting, advocating and lobbying for the regeneration and sustainable future of quality green spaces throughout the North West.

Network News –

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

What we did in 2008...

Sub regional meetings were held every quarter where Cumbria's focus is the role of Parks/Green Spaces in Neighbourhood regeneration; Neighbourhood working – delivering parks and green spaces at a local level; and Green Flag – examples of best practice/benefits to communities. Lancashire continues to debate a wide range of topics from maintenance policies, to Lancashire's Green Infrastructure action plan and with so many HLF regenerated parks in the sub region site visits have played a key role. Cheshire despite the Local Government review held a very successful event to celebrate the enormous value community and friends of groups add to the sub-region's countryside and urban parks and green spaces. Greater Manchester continues its excellent work in identifying and reviewing performance measures. The AGMA group is focussing on Green Flag's wider benefits on performance and assessment. Merseyside have held workshops on Crime and Disorder management across Merseyside's parks and green spaces; and the role of Community Forums and how officers and community representatives can work in partnership more.

Working groups held a workshop open to all to deliver against their action plans for Funding, Community, and Training. The open workshop style meetings are very much a part of GSNW's skill development role and will continue throughout 2009 delivering written guidance and outcomes from each meeting.

GSNW's Open Forum in September was a resounding success and the overwhelming commitment from all those involved in green spaces and the physical environment demonstrates the strength of GSNW and the support it has from across the region.

And for 2009...

Preston and Lancashire will pilot the GreenSpace Fund. An exciting new fund for businesses to pledge funding for their local environment and community via the web.

Diary Dates For Meetings

January – all welcome to attend:

6th – Training Group workshop – confirm NVQ level 1 and 2 skills for apprentices and methods of entry into employment in the sector. Identify supporting evidence for the Skills to Grow Strategy and commence level 3 and 4 training needs.

14th – Community workshop – continue the guidance report for officers and community groups to seek and secure grant funding – now at he application stage.

28th – Funding Workshop – safeguarding against revenue cuts and seeking external investment.

February –

4th – GreenSpace National Forum

12th GSNW Steering Group.

17th – Cheshire group meeting will look at the merits of developing a community forum for each new local authority area.

Conferences and Calendar Events

Parks in the Credit Crunch

17.02.2009, London

A conference focusing on how to secure and make the most of funding for parks and green space in an uncertain financial climate.

To find out more or book [click here](#)

10th to 13th February 2009 – Leeds-Bradford CAFE Leadership Programme

Don't miss out – it will be the best training event you have been to! [click here](#) for more information.

For 2009 –

Love Parks Week is mid to late July.

The UK's first internationally supported WORLD PARKS DAY! will be celebrated with a three day conference here in the North West.

WORLD PARKS DAY! September 22nd 2009

Network Questions

Elizabeth Wilson at Macclesfield is surveying park maintenance, please help her by completing the attached short questionnaire.

Steve Ward at Reading BC wants to know if there is any data which shows trends in GM Contract letting i.e. what percentage are in house, percentage shared, percentage fully external etc. Does anyone have any ideas if this information is collected?

It's time for those Green Flag Applications – if you want some help send a question out to the network...

Contact Kirsty – krhind@gsnw.org.uk

Network Answers...

Please would everyone who has asked network questions send your compiled answers to Kirsty so she can put them up on the GSNW website please.

Network Notice of Consultation...

Calling all Park Rangers... GSNW is working with Lantra the sector's skills council to identify the education and training needs for parks officers and park rangers. There are so many different types of park and countryside Ranger jobs that we are seeking as many job descriptions and personal specifications for rangers in order to identify the skills for a ranger based training course and qualification. If you'd like to help to make a case for Ranger specific training please contact Kirsty to receive the short survey. A similar survey is also available for parks officers: krhind@gsnw.org.uk

News from the web...

1. CABE releases a new publication **Improving park performance: Public space lessons** Download it for free [here](#)
2. Another worthy read from CABE is **Adapting public space to climate change: public space lessons** also just a click away [here](#).
3. A new web site on careers in horticulture is [here!](#)
4. Do you want to know what diffuse pollution is or water efficiency facts? Check out the fact sheets from the Mersey Basin Campaign [here](#)
5. "Lancashire first to receive cash boost from **Community Spaces**" is the strap headline on Groundwork's web site find out more [here](#)
6. Finally for information on Natural England's **Access to Nature** funding rants click [here](#)

This issue

Well its 2009!

What does that mean for parks and green spaces and all those working and volunteering in and for them? **Please tell us what you think and need.**

On a personal note – many tell me it's going to get tough! As debts increase council tax levy's this year will undoubtedly mean more budget cuts for discretionary services like ours. However, so many people have also said they believe parks and green spaces are never going to be more needed as invaluable free leisure resources for thousands of families, communities and local services. Our challenge will be to ensure mass awareness and access to parks and green spaces and their facilities. We will need to promote the many benefits we all understand that they offer to new audiences and decision makers. As the health drive increases, healthy activities and events will become more in demand and I believe we are well equipped to meet this. As we all know and understand that parks and green spaces are vital for communities, families and quality of life and as public demand and support will undoubtedly increase we have a great opportunity to be listened to and for parks and green spaces to be taken seriously in meeting socio and economic needs. Our role will be to ensure that these green spaces are not under threat from development for debt recovery and neglect due to excessive budget reductions. We will need parks and green spaces to show case all the benefits they can offer and engender feelings of pride and hope by being well cared for; aesthetically pleasing to relax in and busy with activity to exercise, enjoy and feel safe in. As individuals I think we all need to be better at selling our parks and green spaces; making sure local people know they are there and use them. We need to be better equipped to challenge the reasoning behind further resource reductions and be savvier about the legislation, standards and agendas that support and protect them. Every challenge presents and opportunity and I, like others believe that in 2009 parks and green spaces will play their greatest role ever. GSNW needs to be able to help everyone involved in parks and green spaces face the challenges and we need to help you be fully equipped with the necessary skills and evidence. Support for colleagues across the region will play a vital role in sharing information and successful practices. I feel certain that all those working in and for parks and green spaces will want to help and support each other through this following year. My hope for 2009 is that we all work together to share our knowledge and support so that this really is the year of parks and green spaces. (Kirsty)

GSNW as set three key aims for 2009 –

To sustain itself so it can provide the things Kirsty talks about above and support all those working in and for the regions parks and green spaces.
To meet the needs of its members and write these into;
A 2009 to 2012 GSNW Strategy and Business Plan.

This issue's events from the Mersey Basin Campaign:

Batty about Bats

14 January 2009

Join the rangers for an illustrated talk about these much feared nocturnal mammals.

Starry Starry night!

06 February 2009

Membership News

A huge THANK YOU! to all those authorities who have supported GSNW by paying membership fees. This currently is our only source of income – without your valued contributions GSNW would not exist so again, thank you from every one at GSNW! 2008 Members are: Allerdale BC; Blackpool BC; Bolton MBC; Burnley BC; Bury MBC; Carlisle CC; Cheshire County Council; Copeland BC; Ellesmere Port & Neston BC; Halton BC; Hyndburn BC; Knowsley MBC; Liverpool CC; Macclesfield BC; Oldham MBC; Pendle BC; Preston CC; Rochdale MBC; Salford CC; Sefton Council; St Helens BC; Stockport MBC; Tameside MBC; Vale Royal; Warrington BC; West Lancashire; Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust; Wirral MBC; and Wyre BC.

We already have some 2009 members so if you'd like to join or renew now please just get in touch or send a purchase order number to Kirsty. GSNW budgets carry over annually.