

Summary Report 12th October 2010

GreenSpace South East Open Meeting 2010

Meridian Hall, East Grinstead

GreenSpace South East (GSSE) is a charitable organisation dedicated to the improved of green infrastructure across the area. We work with all 74 local authorities (LA's) plus partner organisations and community and voluntary groups to offer advice, guidance, training whilst advocating the benefits of parks and green spaces nationally.

GSSE update

Rupert Browning, Principal Landscape Manager, Mid-Sussex District Council and GSSE Chair

GSSE continues to employ a manager part-time (3-day) per week. This has been enabled through a strategic grant from Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG), however this is due to finish 2010/11. We currently have membership from 25 of 74 LA's plus one other supporter; to remain solvent we need to attract a further 12-15 members.

Achievements this year include:

- Two Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 'Surgery' days for LA's to discuss the 'Parks for People' funding; these will be repeated in May 2011.
- Online discussion forum which is becoming more useful as members can now upload documents.
- Production of regular newsletter with information from across our area.
- Green Flag Award demonstration day in Kent which was really successful and these are to be repeated spring 2011.
- Ongoing sub-regional forums in most areas to discuss projects, issues and ideas.
- Quarterly regional forum meetings which report back to and raise points at the quarterly national forum.
- Development of partnerships with other organisations.

Managing parks and green spaces in a tough economic climate

Nicole Collomb MLI, CABE

A very useful presentation discussing in-depth the evidence base for benefits of public open spaces as researched by CABE over the last year. There are opportunities in the Coalition's localism agenda: measures to protect wildlife and the environment, a national tree planting scheme are a couple of examples from their manifesto.

Evidence includes:

- Urban Green Nation: building the evidence base
- Community Green: using local green space to tackle inequality and health
- Open Space Strategies
- Making the Invisible Visible: the real value of park assets

Her four main points to the audience were: build the evidence base, get your community on board, share knowledge and skills and consider alternative models. Our parks and cultural services are seen

as the most vulnerable to cuts; however local surveys continually show huge satisfaction and need for these services.

Community involvement case study: Burgess Hill Green Circle Project

Roy Ticehurst

A tale to inspire. Initially starting with 10 people wanting to clear an important area of green space next to the railway line, this group now helps to manage a strategically important area of green infrastructure around the whole town. They worked closely with the local authority and with the idea of expanding their site to include an arc, this finally grew to a whole circle.

They have developed links with many organisations and regularly have meetings with developers and planners regarding proposed housing developments. They have linked with other local groups, such as Ramblers Association, charities who work with people with disabilities or learning difficulties, schools. In future they are looking to develop links to local businesses plus develop a visitor centre.

Changes within our industry

John Godden, LANTRA

Technology is moving quickly within the industry from GPS remote-controlled tractors and agricultural machinery to battery-powered mowers reducing CO₂ emissions. Training to ensure competence is essential to ensure staff can understand new developments and maintain health and safety (H&S) standards. Big gaps are still seen when skills are surveyed throughout the industry. LANTRA continues to work to fill these gaps from apprentices to managers.

Future skills for our industry

David Winn, LANTRA

New training frameworks are being developed through government and LANTRA has responded to these, offering greater flexibility for manager's development of their staff in specific areas. H&S still is a concern and a new workshop has been carried out cross-sector to address the issue (further information following the links below).

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/aiac/030210/amenity-landscaping.pdf>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/aiac/210610/aiac100601.pdf>

They also have launched a new website with continued news, training information and research published there.

Green Flag Award – Business Plan 2010/11

Paul Bramhill, GreenSpace and GFA Plus Partnership

GFA continues to be seen as the national standard for parks and open spaces; growing during 2009/10 despite the economic climate. Paul explained about the new pilots regarding whole service awards, although general feedback is there is a preference for the site award only, with a potentially separate award for management. The mystery shopping works well and allows the judging of sites to be extended throughout the year. Judges training continues with refresher training and a possible move to include community judges.