

New Regional Manager

Karen Hughes has taken up this post on a part time basis working approximately 10am-3pm Monday to Thursday each week based at home near Taunton.

Karen joins us after a career in leisure spanning over 20 years. After graduating with a degree in Regional Economic Development and Social Biology, she was employed in the market research industry in London before joining local government where she has worked in housing benefits, finance and planning. But it is her time in the leisure sector that means that she brings a good understanding of the issues facing Greenspace and its members in the south west: she has been responsible for marketing, events, policy, fundraising and more latterly partnership working , community empowerment and capital investments.

Said Karen:

“I am really pleased to have been offered this post and am looking forward to taking the Forum forward over the next year in what are going to be very challenging times for us all”

You can contact Karen on karenh@green-space.org.uk

Training in the new parks environment 14 June 2011

It is intended to do some work on a skills assessment process for GSSW members at the next Open meeting. [Click here](#) for more information. If you would like to attend the meeting, please contact Karen Hughes by [email](#) . The meeting will be held on 14 June at the Sedgemoor Auction Centre on junction 24 of the M5.

A questionnaire was sent around at the end of April to collect information to help plan this workshop. If you haven't returned it or didn't receive it you can access a copy [here](#). Please return it to Karen by 30 May.

Natural England moves on

One of the supporters of GSSW, Natural England, has been through a major restructure over the last few months. One outcome is that Naomi Wright will be leaving her post. Naomi has been a member of the GSSW Steering Group and actively supported a number of initiatives including last autumn's successful Communities Conference held by GSSW in Exeter. Said Peter Wilkins chairman of GSSW:

"Naomi has shown fantastic support for the regional forum on behalf of Natural England, for the past few years and we all would like to wish her well along which ever path she now chooses to follow"

Planting Places Awards Ceremony held in Taunton

The winners of Sustainability South West's fourth annual Planting Places Awards have been announced. The awards celebrate top examples of greenspace from across the region the huge array of benefits that these spaces provide in supporting healthy, sustainable communities and show how much can be achieved when local people get involved in their local greenspaces.

This year's ten winners are: Ashton Gate Triangle, Brunswick Cemetery Gardens and Greens Community Garden in Bristol; BTCV Tree Life Centre in Kingswood and Springfields Park in Cheltenham; South Milton Sands, Yeo Valley Community Woodland in Barnstaple, Guys & Hylton

Allotments in Exeter, and Forches Community Garden in Barnstaple and King George V Memorial Walk in Hayle, Cornwall. **For details about each winner click [this link](#).**

Community Groups conference 2012

Plans are in hand to run a second conference to support community groups who are or want to be involved in managing green spaces. The topics requested by the Planting Places award winners are:

1. Setting up town-wide forums to exchange ideas and resources
2. How to move on after the initial set-up
3. Options for formalising groups (social enterprise, charity etc.)
4. Practical learning and displays of how to do things
5. How to find revenue funding not just grants for one-offs
6. How to change things and how to protect things – advocacy and influencing
7. How to get more people joining to volunteer – Volunteer Councils, Community Councils?
8. How to find out the key decision makers in the local area
9. Big Society or Our Society.

Do you have contact with any groups that might be interested in attending or thoughts on the agenda? If so please let Karen know by [email](#)

Wiltshire County Council has worked with the Friend of Southwick Country Park to put on its first Dawn Chorus Walk. It was a real Big Society moment with the pupils of Southwick Park Primary School creating artwork for the posters; these were judged by the chair of the Parish Council. The walk was led by members of Wiltshire Ornithological Society and Wiltshire Council's Countryside team. The tea rooms in the park opened early to provide breakfasts for walkers and leaders.

Sedgemoor District Council has appointed a new community gardener who lives close to the newly restored Marine Cove Gardens in Burnham on Sea (Heritage Lottery Fund, Viridor and District Council funding). Her role will be to maintain the garden with the assistance of local people. Jackie is looking at ways to encourage volunteers to assist with the project in a number of different areas and organising and overseeing events held there.

Punch and Judy

Did you know that 2012 is the 350th anniversary of Punch and Judy? There's a planned bid to Arts Council England for funding to put on shows across the south west in the week before the Olympics which will coincide nicely with Love Parks Week. So if you know of any parks groups who would welcome a performance of Punch and Judy next year, please [contact Karen Hughes](#) by 31 May who is compiling a (hopefully) long list for Mr Punch.

London 2012 breezes into the South West

"Battle of the Winds" will be a major outdoor community interaction event taking place in every county of the region from May-July next year and culminating in a performance in Weymouth and Portland. At selected sites each county ensemble will bring their large scale wind gathering wagons and animate them as interactive installations to gather the winds/voices/breath of the people. The performing 'wind gatherers' will attempt to capture and bottle each stop's unique air qualities and stories using bags, horns, vacuums etc. They will be hugely engaging and great fun for the public. To find out more or to secure a visit for your park [click here](#). To contact the organisers [click here](#)

Bandstand Marathon

Superact, based in Somerset, is aiming to get as many bands performing on as many bandstands as possible all at the same time on the same day throughout the UK. Do you know of a bandstand that they could use or a group that would like to perform in one? This year's Bandstand Marathon is on Sunday **25th September 2011** and next year is Sunday 9th September 2012. The event celebrates local amateur musical talent and makes use of the many historic bandstands that adorn our local parks and town centres to help revitalise and reinvigorate them.

The music played by the bands can be anything from current popular music, rock classics, music from films and shows, jazz and swing, as well as more traditional tunes. The website for the event is www.bandstandmarathon.org.uk

Cuts review still time to respond

Thank you those of you who have already responded to this important national review of how the cuts are impacting on green spaces budgets.

If you didn't respond, maybe this year the cuts haven't been too bad for you, but after the recent elections for district councils will the incoming councillors feel more able to wield the axe now they have 4 years in power? Click [here](#) for more information, to complete the survey and see the interim report.

GreenSpace is stepping up social media activity

GreenSpace has now launched a Twitter account to spread information and respond to enquiries as quickly as possible. This feed will be particularly useful for sharing daily news and events. To stay up-to-date with sector news, or to ask a question, see www.twitter.com/GreenSpaceUK. A blog follows later this year where we will be able to be in daily contact about what's going on in our region.

Love Parks Week 23 – 31 July 2011

The annual national campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the importance of Britain's parks and green spaces, is now well underway. Here in the south west, we are doing some reciprocal marketing with the Eden Project's Big Lunch (see below) which has moved from the end of July to 5th June this year. The 'Love Parks Week' website provides further information and events can be registered there. [More](#) You will be getting regular email updates on how many events are planned in our region so please make sure you log any in your area to make sure that we do well in the regional comparisons.

Big Lunch

The Big Lunch, a very simple idea from the Eden Project, is great for Friends groups or just park users. The aim is to get as many people in the UK as possible to have lunch with their neighbours once a year. Since starting in 2009, thousands of Big Lunches have taken place in all kinds of communities and the best part of a million people have taken part each year.

A Big Lunch can be anything from a few neighbours getting together in a park to a full blown party with food, music and decoration. More information and an event pack is on the website www.thebiglunch.com or alternatively call **0845 850 8181** to speak to one of the team. The pack contains a step-by-step guide to help get an event off the ground, plus invitations, posters, 'crowd cooking' recipe ideas, stickers and much more.

Inspiration in Challenging times

Look out for your copy of this great new report for GreenSpace landing in your in-tray. You can use to help you and your managers to find new ways of funding and delivering good quality green spaces in the future.

2011-12 Membership

Membership packs and letters were sent out in February to encourage continued membership and support for GSSW in 2011-12. Your contributions help GSSW to further develop and thus provide our green spaces in the South West, with a united voice. Please [click here for](#) details of how to join and membership benefits.

To showcase your activities

Newsletters will be coming out 4 times a year in between the quarterly Forum meetings. If you want your activities shared with the rest of the region please email Karen with brief details and photographs.

Dates of Forum Meetings

June 14th; September 13th; December 6th 2011

Contact Us

Peter Wilkinson: Chair of the GSSW Steering Group, email: peter@thenextfield.co.uk
Karen Hughes: Manager of the regional forum, email karenh@green-space.org.uk
Simon Chapman: Co-ordinates the activities of the regions, email simonc@green-space.org.uk

If you would like help or require further information, relating to the management of parks and greens spaces and/or the services related to them, please get in touch.

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