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“I was pleasantly surprised by the number of people who joined us in Taunton for the last quarterly meeting and by the great reception our subject matter, management models for green spaces and engaging volunteers, received. For those of you who didn’t make it the notes are on the **website** where members can access the speakers’ presentations too.

We are planning the December meeting now which will focus on jointly developing a message to our colleagues in the health sector and effective ways of delivering it. You’ll not only learn about the health sector changes, but get a flavour of some of the skills for influencing people that will be useful in your private and professional life. See the item in the Events section of this newsletter.

Having secured support from Natural England once again, we are planning the next networking event for community groups in the South West. This will take place in late February at Cannington College near Bridgwater. See the item in the Events section.

And I have just completed my mystery judging for the **Green Flag Award**. Over 40 sites that have held the award for two years and get scores exceeding 70 will have a visit from one of the mystery judges this year. For those of you planning to submit an application for the award for 2012, you can send your application in any time from 1st November until the closing date of 31st January.”

- Karen Hughes, Regional Forum Manager

Events

December meeting of Green Space South West

Tuesday 6 December 2011

11.30-4pm,

The Deane House, Taunton

Have you heard that changes in the Health sector may be an opportunity for green spaces to show their value? Are you unsure how to make sure your service doesn't miss out? The next Green Space South West Forum meeting will help you to get to grips with what the health sector will be looking and find out who to influence and how to make sure your organisation maximises its impact and gets noticed.

Presentations from Duncan MacKay, Natural England's Principal Advisor on the Natural Health Service and from leading experts in the public health field. Workshops will enable you to identify the outcomes that your service can deliver and to develop key messages that will ensure that you are set up to succeed.

The meeting is FREE TO GREENSPACE MEMBERS and just £40 + vat FOR NON MEMBERS.

Community Groups Networking Event

Saturday 25 February 2012

Cannington campus, Bridgwater College

A great opportunity for "Friends of" groups to get together to share ideas and information and to learn from some of the regions' experts and from local success stories.

Based on feedback from delegates at the 2010 conference and the 2011 Planting Places Awards, this free networking event for community groups funded by Natural England will address the issues of:

- finding money to improve your green space:
- how to show the value of your project;
- who to influence and
- how to keep your group moving forward

Keep the date in your diary and more details will be published shortly

News

Successes around the South West

Devon

Plants have been micro-chipped at random locations across East Devon to discourage theft from parks and open spaces. The chips can be scanned to indicate the plants belong to the authority. The chips, also used for woodland burial sites, cost around £4 each and are used for higher value or rarer plantings and where there is a history of plant theft. Mark Pollard Parks Development Officer at East Devon District Council said:

“The publicity which the newspaper and radio articles generated seems to have had a positive effect as plant theft of all types has been minimal this summer”

He also pointed out that the campaign has saved a considerable amount of staff time in dealing with theft from planning schemes.

Gloucestershire

Outdoor projects are being sought in South Gloucestershire to help mark the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee next year as the council begins to spend £600,000 of Section 106 funding on improving green spaces in the district. The council is hoping to access some additional funding from the SITA Trust as part of the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge (see item later) which is making £1 million available for projects on sites dedicated as part of Fields in Trusts jubilee campaign.

Dorset

£1million has been secured from HLF, developer and landfill contributions to enable a new visitor centre for Hengistbury Head coastal nature reserve near Bournemouth.



The centre, in an existing thatched barn, will be run by more than 50 trained volunteers and 10 apprentices and include a shop, exhibition and community space. It is expected to open in spring 2013 and will feature displays showing the nature reserve's plants and animals and their habitats. The centre will also have archaeology exhibitions about Hengistbury Head, chronicling its history from 60 million years ago when it was beneath a tropical sea, through to the Stone Age when humans hunted and camped there, to the Iron Age when it was an important trading port.

Wiltshire



A low cost fun event for Love Parks Week produced over 100 hand-made kites which were then flown by children over Southwick Country Park. The event was a collaboration between

Wiltshire Council's countryside service, Friends of Southwick Park and white Horse Kiteflyers and Hope Nature Centre.

Somerset

Apex Leisure and Wildlife Park in Burnham on Sea has been voted 7th most popular park in the whole country. It has had the Green Flag Award for five years. All Green Flag Award-winning parks and green spaces were entered into the annual poll which saw thousands of people voting for their favourite green space. Perhaps the award isn't so surprising when considering that the free, national play day event held in the park in August attracted over 6,000 children making it one of the biggest play days in the country.



The Friends of Apex Park have now been active for more than nine years improving the park for the benefit of local people and visitors to the area. They hold events throughout the year including bulb and tree planting, ragwort pulling and nature awareness days.

The park attracts thousands of visitors each year for activities such as model boating, dog walking, angling and ornithology. Sedgemoor District Council has recently refurbished the children's play area and there is also a skate/BMX park and a seasonal café. Most areas are accessible to the public, with good pathways for viewing the lake and car parking facilities including wheel chair access, picnic tables, secure bike points, toilets and bins.

Cornwall

The £2.4million pound Gyllyngdune Gardens restoration project in Falmouth is now complete. The scheme has restored a unique historic garden within Falmouth, creating a step-free route from the sea front to the Pavilion Theatre.

Cornwall Council's parks and gardens team have played a key role during the restoration of the site, undertaking clearance and tree felling of self-seeded vegetation to open up historic views before extensive preparation and replanting. The Parks and Gardens team have planted the site in the spirit of the era, piecing together information from historical photographs and other documents, creating areas such as the rose walk; succulent beds; camellia walk and quarry fernery.



Volunteers restoring the shell seats at Gyllyngdune Gardens

The project has conserved numerous heritage features including shell grottos, seats, terracotta urns, original benches, a glasshouse, rose arches, fountain and original tunnels and planted a quarry garden. Improved pedestrian access and a beautiful new café/ education room and lobby for the Princess Pavilion were also part of the project. The fascinating social and horticultural history of the site will also be interpreted in innovative ways, including new interpretive signage and interactive displays.

It has been supported throughout by the local community with initiatives such as 'memory mornings', volunteering days and feedback surveys giving local people the opportunity to be involved in the shaping of future activities at the gardens. Volunteers were also involved in some of the restoration work such as the iconic shell grotto and shell seats dating from the 1840's.

The initial plan to restore the gardens started in the 1990's when the site faced threat of closure. A bid to the Heritage Lottery Funds 'Parks for People' initiative, instigated by Carrick District Council at the time, and supported by the newly created Friends group kick started a project which has been taken forward by Cornwall Council's Environment Service team since 2009. Almost £1 million was awarded to the project by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the balance coming from Cornwall Council, Carrick Leisure Trust, Play Builder, Cory Environmental Trust and the Friends of Princess Pavilion.

Information

Link outdoor events to BBC websites

“**Things To Do**” is the BBC’s website of free learning or participation events being run by not for profit organisations that are related to its programmes such as Springwatch / Autumnwatch, Countryfile, Live ‘n’ Deadly and Hands on History or to a seasonal promotion such as Christmas.

The BBC is keen for as many organisations as possible to join it in promoting free outdoor events in green spaces. The sign up process for access to the posting pages is via the vehicle called Activitymaker and more information is available on [this link](#).

Share this link with your friends groups and colleagues who organise events of any scale that may be relevant.



Skills/training progress

Following on from the training needs assessment work we did at the June meeting, the December meeting of GreenSpace in Taunton will start to address two of the training needs we identified: “*the skills to understand the priorities of important people/organisations and to be able to communicate the value of green space effectively to them*”. We will following up the information about the health sector’s needs with some work on how to advocate and

influence key people at the meeting and early next year with some training days from an expert in the field of how to get your message across effectively.

Case studies of GreenSpace members' good ideas

So far this year we have published 3 case studies including a new one on [Bournemouth](#) Borough Council's approach to accessing Highways funding for infrastructure improvements in parks.

Others are [Christchurch](#) Borough Council's experience of achieving funding for play services from the health sector and The Borough of [Poole](#)'s innovative idea for using the Community Green Flag Award as a quality measure of a community managed space. This one has generated interest from the Department of Communities and Local Government and from BTCV.

Case study candidates needed

If you have had a great idea however small please contact [Karen](#) so that we can share it more widely.

Neighbourhoods Green housing case studies

This exciting project to get housing providers to give more importance to their open spaces has published some great case studies in the South West.

Sanctuary Housing -Growing Communities

The project involves the creation of raised beds and high planters and fruit trees in communal garden areas of Sanctuary's sheltered housing schemes. [Read more](#)
Seeds for Change, North Devon Homes

North Devon Homes Community Agriculture and Social Enterprise

In October 2009, North Devon Homes Ltd (NDH) in response to consultation made a commitment to its customers to develop a number of gardens for the use of the wider community in Forches and Gorwell. Accordingly, stakeholders from Health and Education were invited to join a project to create a community agriculture enterprise and develop an effective means of working in partnership. [Read more](#)

Bristol Community Housing Foundation - Upper Horfield Regeneration

BCHF redeveloped an estate in Upper Horfield, North Bristol with a view to tackling large expanses of underused green space and improving the quality of life of 600 households [Read more](#)

'Save a space for me'

Still time to vote to show support for sites nominated for QE11 status

With less than 100 days to go to the start of the Queen's Jubilee Year, getting on for a hundred sites in the region are now nominated to Fields in Trust (FIT) to be recognised and permanently marked as QEII Fields.

The QEII Fields initiative not only protects the land but the sites can be improved using the grants only available to QEII Fields towards the capital cost of improvement.

QEII also provides a way to engage local communities in volunteering and supporting their local open spaces: 'Save A Space For Me' – will focus on getting the public engaged and excited about the sites that are being nominated for protection in their areas. For 4 weeks from 18 October, visitors to the website (www.qe2fields.com) can show their support for the sites nominated, by clicking on a button.

There is still time to nominate your green spaces as potential QEII Fields. The programme is running through to the end of 2012. If you have a site you think may be suitable or would like to find out more about the programme, contact John Chapman, Regional Manager SW on 01308 420600 or by email at john.chapman@fieldsintrust.org.

Requests

Do you know someone who could be featured in *Green Places*?

GreenSpace is looking for women working in horticulture for an article linking to International Women's Day (8 March 2012) and up and coming young talent in the sector.

If you know someone suitable please let **Kelly Caulfield** at GreenSpace know.

Call for apprentices

We would like to profile some of the apprentices who are working for GreenSpace SW members or other organisations across the region over the next few issues of this newsletter.

At a time when there are concerns about the loss of skills at a senior level within parks and green space services, it is really important that we retain a focus on developing new talent through apprenticeships and encouraging school leavers that parks management is a positive career choice.

The profiles for the newsletter would aim to find out more about the hopes and fears of the apprentices for the green spaces sector in the future, what they like about their position and why they think more young people should think about going into parks management.

The GreenSpace South West Steering Group will consider the response to this initiative and how we can support apprentices perhaps by setting up an apprentices network via the web site so people can keep in touch, some joint training projects or a job-swap scheme where trainees spend some time working on each other's sites.

So, if you are an apprentice or perhaps a manager of the organisation's apprenticeship scheme and would be willing to get involved in this initiative, please contact **Karen** by email or telephone.

NHS Forest seeks non health authority sites for planting trees

The **NHS Forest** is an exciting national project coordinated by the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare. The project's central aims are:

- Improving health of staff, patients and communities through increasing access to green space on or near to NHS land.
- Greening the NHS Estates and with a target of 1 tree per employee amounting to 1.3 million trees.

- Encouraging greater social cohesion between NHS sites and the local community.
- Bringing together a range of professionals and volunteers to produce woodland that includes the use of art, food crops, woodfuel and biodiversity

Sarah Dandy NHS Forest Co-ordinator says:

“We are really keen on the idea of twinning healthcare estates to nearby greenspaces. As yet there hasn't been a site which has created an NHS Forest which includes external green space to the hospital grounds”

If you have an idea for joining in with this project please email
sarah.dandy@sustainablehealthcare.org.uk

Share your success in the newsletter

Please send your successes or stories for the next newsletter. It would be great to share with others ideas you are trying out perhaps in response to reducing budgets or staff losses too.

It could be a press release used with your local press or just the facts that can be put into a short article. Photographs make the story more eye-catching. Send your story to [Karen Hughes](#) by the 6th January if possible.

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

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