

environmental
partnership
in
action

The Greensand Trust

December 2010 - March 2011

Greensand Highlights

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Local artist, Anne Ratnarajah, ran a drop-in workshop for families to help make an adder out of willow to celebrate the end of the Heathlands of the Greensand Ridge project. The adder is still in Stockgrove Country Park so next time you are visiting, why not take a look!



Heathlands of the Greensand Ridge celebration!
www.greensandtrust.org

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The Greensand Trust's Heathlands of the Greensand Ridge project, funded by Natural England's Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund, has come to an end after 3 years of working in partnership with RSPB, BRCC, BCNP Wildlife Trust, FWAG, Forestry Commission and Lafarge.

The project has been a success and a great example of partnership working together to restore heathland across a large area.



Readshill Grassland

This County Wildlife Site, in Clophill, has had small oaks felled and bramble cleared over the last 3 years to restore it back to acid grassland. The work has been carried out by Greensand Trust staff, regular Tuesday volunteers and local people. The parish Nature Group plan to maintain and look after the site from now on.

Celebration event

The end of the Countdown 2010 project was celebrated on Sunday 27th March with an event held at Stockgrove Country Park.

The beautiful spring weather brought out visitors who were able to learn about the special heathland habitat with displays, meet the ponies who graze our heathland and help create our very own willow snake sculpture.



Experts were also on hand to explain more about the reptiles which are part of this unique habitat.

Heathlands of the Greensand Ridge project finishes



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Natural England praises work of Greensand Trust and volunteers

Justin Tilley, Lead Advisor - Conservation and Land Management (Bedfordshire) for Natural England commended the work the Greensand Trust staff and volunteers have been doing to restore Maulden Heath and Maulden Church Meadows SSSI.



Mr Tilley said 'I believe that the work carried out by the Trust volunteer teams has played an essential part in keeping these sites on a steadily improving path, most notably by reducing the cover of undesirable species, thus encouraging the special grassland habitats to thrive again.'

Working together in Rowney Warren



25 volunteers from the Greensand Trust, Beds Rural Communities Charity and the Forestry Commission joined forces on a task recently to clear back birch scrub that was invading a heathland restoration area at Rowney Warren.

The area was not replanted after conifers were clearfelled a number of years ago and instead heather seed was scattered over the area. In the years since the heather has flourished but was in danger of becoming completely shaded out by young birch.

It is hoped that the clearance will allow the heather to thrive and spread, and benefit the invertebrates and reptiles of open heathland habitats.

19 heathland and acid grassland sites have been improved across the Greensand Ridge

Stanbridge Meadows County Wildlife Site

We are delighted to announce the successful purchase of the Stanbridge Meadows County Wildlife Site from the MoD. We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your donation to the Appeal – every single donation made a difference and demonstrated the desire of local people to secure this 10 acre species-rich lowland meadow, an increasingly rare habitat.

Thanks also go out to everyone who helped with the appeal on many different tasks including; raising awareness, delivering letters and flyers, displaying posters, donating items for the auction and helping out at various events.

As well as the public appeal the Greensand Trust were awarded grants for the purchase of the meadows;

£7000 from Chalk Arc Initiative
 £7500 from Defra's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund
 £3000 from Natwest Community Fund

Leighton Linlade Town Council have agreed to give £20,000 to the Greensand Trust to provide public access to the site after its purchase.



Local singing group Octad performed at the charity auction



Stephen Hearn of Tring Market Auctions gave a very interesting presentation about artefacts brought in by visitors and auctioned the donated lots to raise over £500 for the appeal.



The Greensand Trust is helping the Leighton Linlade in Bloom campaign and kicked it all off with an open tree planting session. It was a really enjoyable morning and we were lucky with the weather and had a great turn out of volunteers.



Stanbridge Meadows SOS heard!



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Youth Ranger

Over the past 10 weeks, a group of young people aged between 13 and 17 years old have participated in the first ever Greensand Trust Youth Ranger Scheme. In that time they have come together as a team to achieve some fantastic goals, including:

- Clearing birch scrub from an area the size of a tennis court in the Conservation Zone at Rushmere Park
- Creating 20 metres of deadhedging and habitat piles
- Constructing 10 bat boxes
- Planting approximately 150 trees at Avery's Meadow, including blackthorns, hawthorns and willows
- Clearing a 150 metre stretch of a route which will be used to create a family cycling trail
- Clearing a 10 metre long stretch of rhododendron scrub and felled a number of birch trees to create a view of the lake and bungalow and into the Conservation Zone

The 15 participants completing the scheme were also awarded a Discovery level John Muir Award for their achievements.



For their efforts in running the scheme and supporting the Youth Rangers, John Muir Awards were also awarded to Greensand Trust staff Erika Pratt, Brian Sherry and Vicky Inglis, and volunteer Carol Curd.

The scheme was developed by the Trust to give young people the chance to gain experience in practical conservation work, as well as offering opportunities for developing skills and confidence, and having fun. Several members of the group also used the experience to count towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Youth Ranger scheme

Public has their say on Rushmere framework

The Greensand Trust and Central Bedfordshire Council asked local people to get involved and help shape the future of Rushmere, near Leighton-Linslade.

A range of research work and surveys have been carried out over the last year, which has been used to form the basis of an 'Interim Framework' document that sets out the vision for the future development of the Estate. This strategic document went out to consultation with both stakeholder groups/organizations and the wider public.



Rushmere in the snow

The Greensand Trust had a display and were able to answer queries at three Central Bedfordshire Council 'Let's Talk Roadshows' and displays in Stockgrove Country Park visitor centre and the libraries in Leighton-Linslade, Houghton Regis and Dunstable.

The responses will now be collated and fed into the development of the plan for the future.

Green Infrastructure Consortium

The Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium (GIC) is an informal partnership which promotes and supports the planning and delivery of green infrastructure. The GIC met in Rushmere to learn about the site and the interim framework which was out to consultation at the time.

The Greensand Trust will be providing the secretariat for the Green Infrastructure Consortium over the next 12 months.

Grove Lock

Permission has been secured for a new bridge over the lock gates south of Leighton Buzzard. The Greensand Trust are working with partners to investigate the feasibility of a return route on the west side of the canal to Tiddenfoot Waterside Park.

New section of National Cycle Route 6 in Leighton Buzzard

Sustrans and the Greensand Trust have been working together to complete the new section of National Route 6 from Twelve Arches to Vimy Road as a first step in linking to the main road through Leighton Buzzard.



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Volunteers help Harlington pond

A community task at the village pond was run by the Greensand Trust with the financial support of the Prosperous Ponds project, funded by Grantscape, and Harlington Parish Council.

We had a good mixture of volunteers of all ages, including some of the local Beaver group.

The long term aim for the village pond, which is a County Wildlife Site, is to try and restore the open water by gradually reducing the reedmace. If left this plant will continue to be invasive and gradually reduce the amount of open water and prevent other important plant species such as greater spearwort and cyperus sedge that are rare in the county from growing and thriving.

The reduction of some of the trees and scrub by the pond will allow better views and prevent over shading of the pond.

Heath and Reach cemetery

Greensand Trust volunteers helped to tidy some of the overgrown areas of Heath & Reach cemetery as well as replanting part of a hedgerow to create a good habitat for small birds and mammals.

Cemeteries are often filled with a variety of wildlife because they are relatively undisturbed.

Sandy Smith Nature Reserve

Volunteer woodsman, Jon Clarke, has been helping the Greensand Trust with some conservation in Sandy Smith Nature Reserve. A large glade has been cleared in Upper Alders, which included coppicing some of the older hazel.



Snow drops
in Upper
Alders

Creating a low carbon future for the Bedfordshire area

The Greensand Trust participated in a workshop on the 20th January 2011 which identified a range of actions that could significantly contribute to reducing the carbon footprints of the Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire areas.

The partnership is now looking at how and when to take forward suggestions, some are more dependent on investment than others.

News from the Greensand Trust

P3 conference



A glorious day greeted all of those who attended the P3 conference at the Nottingham Rooms in Ampthill on Saturday 19th March.

The conference was organised by Central Bedfordshire Council, the Greensand Trust and BRCC. It aimed to bring together all of the P3 groups in the county to provide a forum for discussion, and sharing of ideas. Mike Fayers from BRCC gave a talk on Health Walks.

Leighton Linlade in Bloom



The Greensand Trust are helping the Leighton Linlade in Bloom group go for gold in 2011!

Last year Leighton Linlade Town Council and the volunteers won a silver award for their colourful displays. This year the group is looking at more biodiversity and conservation projects as well as attractive planting around the town.

If any school in Leighton Linlade is interested in taking part please contact Gill Miller gill.miller@leightonlinlade-tc.gov.uk

Totternhoe P3

The Greensand Trust were invited to attend a consultation event in Totternhoe to engage the local community in the proposed master planning for Totternhoe green spaces.

The event was organised by Groundwork Luton and Bedfordshire in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council. The Greensand Trust attended to promote the P3 network within the county and encourage local people to find out more about how they could become involved in it. The event was well attended and we hope that some of the people we spoke to will become involved in P3 in the future.

If you are interested in getting involved in the environment of Totternhoe parish to help establish a voluntary P3 group please contact Alexe.Rose@greensandtrust.org or tel: 01525 378101

Central Bedfordshire Access Group

The Greensand Trust has been re-elected on the Central Bedfordshire Access group for 2011/12. The group had their AGM and heard detailed and informative presentations from Martin Usher and Steve Nash on the challenges that are being faced by both public and private organisations in terms of access issues across the county.



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Friends of Ampthill Park

Thursday 24th February saw the inaugural meeting of The Friends of Ampthill Park chaired by Gary Quilter, parks Development Manager for Ampthill Town Council.



Ampthill Park,
view over the
resevoir

Ampthill Town Council and the Greensand Trust have been keen to set up a Friends group for the Park. The Trust worked with the Town Council to develop this idea and get the group started.

Over 30 people from the local area attended the meeting which was advertised in the local newspaper as well as on the Ampthill Town Council notice boards and website.

Hannah Firth, Archaeologist with Central Bedfordshire Council, gave a talk on the rich history of Ampthill Great Park.

Run Wild!

A Run Wild leaflet was produced in partnership by the Greensand Trust, BRCC and Central Bedfordshire Council and funded by the Big Lottery.



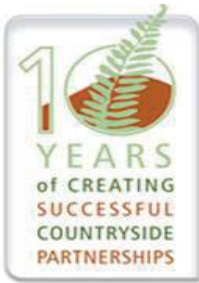
This inspirational leaflet gives play and activity ideas, advice on planning visits, suggestions of where to play and where to find out more.

The work supports the natural play element of the former Mid Beds lottery bid and follows up on Run Wild events hosted across the Mid Beds area encouraging natural play and inspiring people to get outdoors and play.

Bedfordshire Walking Festival

The 2011 festival will run from 3rd to 11th September offering a variety of different walks for different abilities. There is plenty to choose from! The Greensand Trust will be running two of the Passport walks during the festival, so sign up now! For more information please visit <http://www.bedswalkfest.co.uk>

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GoCycle Challenge

The Greensand Trust signed up to the Leighton Linlade GoCycle Challenge.

The Challenge was a fun, free competition to encourage people living or working in Leighton Linlade to remember the joys and benefits of riding a bike.

Five members of staff participated during the challenge period of 14th March to 4th April and logged 30 trips, travelled 210 miles and saved 10kg of carbon through using bikes to commute to work instead of vehicles.



Recycling to raise cash

So far we have raised over £30 by recycling old ink cartridges. The money raised goes directly to the Trust and is put back into conserving the environment. So we are not only reducing the pressure on landfill sites but helping to conserve the countryside sites we already have!



Please visit <http://greensandtrust.ink2cash.co.uk/> to check if your cartridges can be recycled and how to post them.

Passport 2011!

The sun is out and spring has finally arrived so why not fulfil your New Year's resolutions and get out and enjoy the countryside more!

Passport 2011 is the perfect way to explore new sites and learn about the local environment with an experienced leader.

There is still time to purchase a Passport which offers a discount of £11 if you book onto the remaining 9 walks between now and December.

The Passport entitles holders to attend walks (booking essential) and make a saving of half the cost of booking separately!

Costs per walk if booked separately will be £4 per adult and £2 per child for half day walks, £5 per adult for full day walks.

Adult Passport £25

Child Passport £12

Email: info@greensandtrust.org

Tel: 01525 237760

www.greensandtrust.org

Please support us, think of it as an investment with a guaranteed return: a richer, more diverse, more natural environment for everyone and everything living in the Greensand Ridge area, for now and for decades to come.