



Trees for Cities



MARNHAM FIELDS COMMUNITY EDIBLE WOODLAND

End of Project Report



Trees for Cities

Trees for Cities has over 23 years experience of delivering successful urban greening and tree planting projects, community-led design, education and training initiatives, to grow stronger communities, enhance urban spaces and improve health and happiness in deprived urban areas. We bring together local residents, community groups, government authorities and businesses to work on practical greening projects in parks, housing estates, streets and schools to ensure people have access to functional, high-quality green space.

Project Background

A historic landfill site, Marnham Fields is part of the Northolt and Greenford Countryside Park, which links 110 hectares of open space in the northwest of Ealing, London. Lying next to the Grand Union Canal, the field predominantly comprised 9 hectares of open meadow and scrub, lacking visual interest and biodiversity. Previously, the site was only used for walking, meaning it was a community asset completely underused with little activity taking place on site.

Greenford Broadway Ward, where Marnham Fields is situated, is in the top 5 most deprived wards in Ealing and local residents are within the top 5% most deprived in England (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010). Through the delivery of this project, we brought together hundreds of people to collectively enhance the urban environment for the benefit of local communities and the natural world.

The local community in Ealing was involved in this project from start to finish, taking part in consultation and planting activities throughout. The involvement from local people has not only enabled the creation of this woodland, but has helped instil a sense of ownership over the new trees to the local residents and community groups, meaning the space will be well used, cared for and loved for years to come.

The Nineveh Charitable Trust kindly supported the creation of this woodland with a generous grant of £5,000. This report outlines the creation of the Marnham Fields Community Edible Woodland.

What we did



Community Woodland Creation

We hosted 3 community-planting events, including our high-profile Plant to the Beat festival, in total engaging 471 volunteers to help create the new woodland of 20,000 trees. Our events brought together hundreds of people, many of whom live locally to the woodland and will be able to visit their newly planted trees for years to come. The planting events were a fun day out for the whole family; there was free food and refreshments, arts and crafts activities for the children and plenty of communal spirit!



Our Plant to the Beat festival was the largest community event we hosted as part of the project. On 11th February 2017 a total 283 volunteers, braved the snow and came out to celebrate their local park by planting a remarkable 7,000 trees. Volunteers learnt all the necessary steps to plant the whips, including the correct ways of digging, planting, caring for the fragile roots and mulching. The DJ kept the moods high and played people's favourite, requested songs. Shah Satnam Ji Green Welfare Force community group kept people toasty and full by serving delicious, vegetarian curry to everyone. The arts and crafts area and the face painter were huge hits amongst our youngest volunteers, whereas our 'Eco Photobooth' was much loved by the young and old alike (the photos on our Facebook page are definitely worth a look!).



We asked all our volunteers to help name the friendly stag beetle sculpture, which will soon be installed on the stag beetle loggery at the woodland. Contenders included 'Steve the Stag' and 'Beats by Dr Stag', however the final winner was 'Bertie the Beetle'. The importance of stag beetles and stag beetle loggeries will be outlined on the Interpretation Board installed at the woodland.

A number of special guests joined in the tree planting fun, including Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy, Julian Bell, Leader of Ealing Council, Craig Harrison, Forestry Commission London Manager and several Ealing Councillors, including Councillor Harbhajan Kaur-Dheer, Councillor Karam Mohan and Councillor Ranjit Dheer.

With two additional community events and a number of tree planting workshops with local schools, the new woodland came to life. The previously underused, historic landfill site has been completely transformed into a beautiful community edible woodland, which includes a mixed variety of interesting species such as Juneberry, Turkish Hazel, Fig and Pennsylvania Hawthorn. Local residents and visitors will be able to forage for fruits and nuts in as little as 1-2 years time.

Community Engagement



Throughout the project, 664 people of all ages and backgrounds were able to build community cohesion through meeting new people, forming friendships and learning new skills whilst working together to improve the environment. Volunteers had the chance to get outside, take part in physical exercise and contribute directly towards enhancing Marnham Fields, thus in turn going away with a boosted confidence and a sense of accomplishment. After the community planting activities we received overwhelmingly positive feedback about their experiences:

- “What a great day, thank you for all the warm hospitality”.
- “I wanted to thank you all for this incredible day, it was amazing, thanks a lot.”
- “Creating new sustainable places for the benefits of others’
- “Knowing that I made a difference. I love trees and feel fab knowing that I planted a few!
- “Community spirit in action.”
- “Helps secure the environment and also good exercise”
- “Helping the environment and loved the community spirit :) “
- “Just how relaxed and accomplished you feel after planting the tree”
- “Woodlands are great environments to explore with family, friends or on your own.”
- “You could enjoy shade and fruits for free!”
- “We are planning ahead for our future. We will reap the rewards in years to come. We are carbon neutralising the A40 – or at least it’s progress! Great stuff!”

Community Woodland Creation in Numbers



471 volunteers involved in planting activities



193 school children involved in planting



9 community, faith and education groups involved



20,000 trees planted



34 different species of trees planted



840 m3 of mulch used



Thank you!

We acknowledged the generous support from The Nineveh Charitable Trust by thanking the Trust where possible on publicity related to the project, including on the project design, marketing materials for the community planting days, on our website, as well as via a press release sent to local press.

Please see the below list of media coverage produced by Trees for Cities, our partners as well as our volunteers:

Trees for Cities' Blog: <http://www.treesforcities.org/marnham-woodland/>

Trees for Cities' Project Page: <http://www.treesforcities.org/projects/marnham-fields-ealing/>

Trees for Cities' Pres Release: <http://www.treesforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Trees-for-Cities-Marnham-Fields-Press-Release.pdf>

Islamic Unity Society: <https://www.ius.org.uk/event/2017/02/tree-planting-day-marnham-fields-ealing/>

Dedicated volunteers wrote blogs and even made first hand videos about their planting experiences:

Chevening Scholars: <http://www.chevening.org/scholars/blog/2017/marnham-fields-tree-planting-getting-our-hands-a-bit-dirty-for-a-good-cause>

AMYA (Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK): <https://twitter.com/UKMuslimYouth/status/831897466014425090>



Future Plans and Maintenance Activities



Trees for Cities will undergo a programme of maintenance visits from April to September 2017. We will visit the site at bud break to establish failure rates and where planted stock failure rate is over 10%, we will discuss with Ealing Council the need to 'beat up' (replant to fill the gaps). Following completion of the maintenance programme, we will meet with Ealing Council to handover maintenance and sign off the project. At this point Ealing Council becomes responsible for ongoing maintenance.

Throughout the project, we have had a lot of interest from volunteers to get involved in maintenance activities, including 9 particularly devoted volunteers who have signed up to take part in regular maintenance activities. We are still engaging all the community volunteers in follow up consultation, and will be signing up further volunteers who are interested in looking after their local woodland. For example, the Greenford Scouts and Beavers have shown a great interest in helping maintain the woodland in the future. In addition, we have helped to publicise the Marnham Fields Woodland Group (who had previously planted 2,000 trees on site), encouraging local Ealing residents to get engaged with the group and take part in maintenance activities such as weeding, pruning and watering to promote a healthy and fruitful woodland.

The woodland interpretation board and stag beetle loggery will inspire people to fully enjoy their woodland, helping to increase local ownership, promote educational and foraging activities on site, and instil a sense of curiosity about all the wonders that the woodland holds. The provision of a new, beautiful woodland at Marnham Fields has enhanced the space for future activities on site, helping engage people informally through simply walking, relaxing and socialising as well as through more formal community events. This ensures that activities on site do not end with this project – in fact, it's just the beginning of a new, green community hub.

Thank you!



On behalf of everyone at Trees for Cities and the local community in Ealing, thank you to The Nineveh Charitable Trust for your generous support of this project!