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14 August 2019

Dear Trustees of Ninevah Charitable Trust

Further to your kind grant of £5,000 toward our Denton Dene Woodland Warriors project I am pleased to give you a report on the outcomes of the project.

1. *By 31 May 2019 the woodland in Denton Dene will be cleaner and better managed*

We have seen significant improvements in the appearance of the woodland. Sustained litter picks have reduced the amount of rubbish in the Dene. Children have been involved in litter picks, helping to reduce the 'surface' litter that has blown around the area, and educating on them on importance of disposing of rubbish correctly. Adult volunteers took advantage of the undergrowth dying back over the winter to get in to hard to reach areas and remove larger and older items that had become lodged on the forest floor. We have collected over 100 bags of rubbish plus larger items. Our regular attendance in the Dene means that we have been able to identify and report occurrences of fly-tipping and vandalism more quickly and encouraged the local council to remove burned out bins and mopeds more quickly.

At a community volunteering day, and the Autumn Community Fun Day children and volunteers planted 160 saplings of native woodland and hedgerow species to improve cover and variety in identified areas.

To reduce the impact of school visits on the environment we worked with volunteers to prepare a 2nd forest school area to spread the footfall and reduce soil compaction and adverse effects on wildlife. This means that there are now 2 prepared and risk assessed areas in the Dene that schools and youth groups can use to deliver environmental education activities for children.

In a survey we asked local residents if they thought there had been a reduction in litter in the Dene over the last year: 44 % believed that there had been, 22% said they couldn't comment as they hadn't visited before and 34% hadn't noticed.



2. *320 school children and 150 family members will improve their knowledge of native trees and wildlife by participating in woodland sessions.*

486 children, aged 4-11 years old, took part in school visits. They were accompanied by 82 adults including teachers, teaching assistants and parents. We were delighted that so many children took part, however, we were also disappointed that we did not have more parents involved in the school visits. The schools seemed reluctant to encourage too many parents to come along on the trips, and of course many parents are not available during the school day.

Additionally, 299 children and 254 adults attended the community fun days we organised in Denton Dene. Some of these were children who had already come to the Dene with their school or youth group, but they brought with them many adults who had never been to the Dene before. We had a total of 1112 visitors, although some of those will have been counted twice as they may have attended with their school as well as attending a community event.

During school visits children learned about the importance of trees and took part in a tree ID quiz. At our Fun Days families took part in a native tree trail to help them identify and learn more about key species in the Dene. Visitors also had opportunities to take part in outdoor art, den-building, bug hunts & ID, tree planting and litter picking.

In a survey at the final community fun day we asked local residents if they, or their family members, had learned more about trees and wildlife in the Dene as a result of the project; 72% believed that they had.



3. *By 31st May Denton Dene will be better used and local people will have a greater sense of ownership through participation in local environmental action and establishing a 'Friends of Denton Dene' group.*

Establishing a Friends of Denton Dene group has taken longer than expected, not because of a lack of interest, but because Newcastle City Council recently transferred management of all parks and open spaces in the city to a newly formed Newcastle Parks Trust. This has been a huge undertaking for all involved and means that parks staff have not have the capacity to support in the way they would have wished. They also asked us to refrain from forming a new Friends Group until after 1 April 2019 so that the group could sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the new legally formed Newcastle Parks Trust.

The Friends of Denton Dene group have now met 3 times, and have appointed Officers, although there are still a few outstanding queries that are stopping them from signing the Constitution and Memorandum of Understanding in partnership with the Parks Trust. We hope that this will be achieved in September 2019. In addition to the members who attend meetings, there is also a healthy mailing list of individuals and families who have expressed an interest in taking part in further events and litter picks in the Dene.

In a survey at the final community fun day we asked local residents if they thought the project had encouraged them and their family to use the Dene more often; 88% responded that it had.

When we asked local people what they would like a new Friends of Denton Dene group to do 61% wanted more community fun day events, 55% wanted regular litter picks, 55% wanted to see improved habitats for wildlife, 44% wanted events and information to learn more about native wildlife and 22% wanted to see leisure activities such as Park Run in the Dene. The new Friends Group are already hard at work planning future activities!



Budget:

Staffing	£4,493.86
Event costs	£370.00
Resources & equipment	<u>£120.39</u>

Total	£4,984.25
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The underspend of £15.75 will be used to support the future activities of the Friends of Denton Dene group.

I hope that this has been an interesting insight in to what your grant has helped us to achieve. We are grateful for your support in making this such a successful project. If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Nicola Sargeant

Youth Work and Denton Dene Woodland Warriors Project Manager
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Company No. 7523792

Charity No. 1144976

