

Green Infrastructure South West Web Portal: Delivery Case Study



Young's Park Conservation Area

Location

Goodrington, Paignton, Devon.



Lead organisation

The Young's Park People (YPP) maintain the site (contact: yyp_goodrington@hotmail.co.uk) but work in partnership with Torbay Council (connections@torbay.gov.uk)

Main issues raised and highlighted:

The area suffered from poor drainage resulting in reoccurring flooding. With many failed efforts to prevent the problem it was decided that the area should be left to return to its natural state: marshland. Eventually, due to budget constraints, the area was left unmanaged. In 2007 the voluntary community group 'Young's Park People' formed and were granted permission by the council to take on management of the conservation area.

Main Partners

The 'Young's Park People' manage the conservation site but work in partnership with Torbay Council who are the actual land owners.

Funding Streams

In 2008 the Young's Park People applied for funding from The Big Lottery, Breathing Spaces and were successful in their application receiving £10,000. Other sources of funding come from grants, donations and fund-raising events as organised by the YPP.

Aims of Project

- Improve access to the conservation area
- Clear overgrown areas
- Provision of interpretation tools such as information boards and Geocache
- Clear some of the area from invasive species
- Extend the board walk

Description of project



Young's Park Conservation Area is situated wholly within Young's Park and was originally a marshland, with a freshwater stream running down from Clennon Valley and saltwater from the bay. The area was reclaimed and eventually became part of the park when Young's Park was formed in May 1936. In 2004 the Council decided to allow the land that was affected by flooding to be returned back into marshland.

The park is very popular with local people, many of whom visit the park on a daily basis. There are a number of nurseries and primary schools within walking distance who enjoy visiting the conservation area since the YPP have taken over management. Many elderly people in Torbay live in flats, without gardens. They now have somewhere close by where

they can feel close to nature; no need to drive or get on public transport.

Young's park conservation area was overgrown and untidy when YPP took on the management of the site. The pathways flooded during wet periods and it was inaccessible at these times. Now that the water ways have been re-dug and re-routed, the walkway no longer floods and people can walk through all year round. The boardwalk was extended using recycled wood composite decking which is slip resistant and fully recyclable when it reaches the end of its use at the park. People are now able to see much more of the area.

The conservation area is accessed directly from Young's Park which has seven entrances without steps. There is a car park on the southwest side of the park with designated disabled parking bays and there is also an entrance from this car park directly to the conservation area. There is also another entrance from the northwest side of the park. Both these entrances have wide gates to allow access for wheelchair and push chair users, as do the two entrances to the walkway around the wildfowl pond. These gates are necessary to keep the area dog-free and protect the wildfowl.

The YPP volunteers were supported by various other groups from the local community, one in particular from South Devon college. The Land Based Studies Department worked one morning a week for over two months clearing willow in all weathers.

Various styles of bird and bat boxes have been provided to encourage different species to nest in the area. The conservation supports local wildlife and biodiversity through clearing and reducing the invasive plant species each year and is creating a level playing field as well as allowing larger plant diversity.

Delivery mechanism/long-term adoption of project:

- Continual discussion with local councils pertaining to development of local business.
- Flowing and standing water chemical testing
- Communication and education of local authorities
- Monitoring of water levels
- Species nest monitoring surveys
- Invasive species control – beginning if/when surveys reveal their presence
- Maintenance of muddy banks

Outputs/outcomes/benefits

The path at the end of the board walk used to flood every year during very wet periods. This resulted in the area being inaccessible. The work is on going to keep the pathways clear of water and the area accessible all year round. Although vandalism wasn't a huge problem, there were a few instances where the interpretation boards were broken and thrown in the water. CCTV cameras placed around the conservation area have deterred this antisocial behaviour. The cameras have also been beneficial in helping to protect the swans' eggs, which in the past kept disappearing.