



Case Study

Wellesley Woodlands

Location: **Aldershot**

Size: **110 hectares**
Client: **Grainger PLC**
the Land Trust's Role: **Planning & funding solutions**
From: **Former MOD land**
To: **Community woodlands**

Wellesley Woodlands is a 110 hectare community woodland at the heart of Grainger's Aldershot Urban Extension project. As part of this development, Grainger is creating 3,850 new homes, two new primary schools and additional leisure and community facilities.

"Building houses is not just about providing new homes; a good quality built environment can make a contribution towards economic development as well as improving well-being, social cohesion and skill levels."

John Beresford, Development Director, Grainger

Due to challenging planning conditions, Grainger sought the expertise of the Land Trust to help identify solutions for long term management of the green open space.

The Land Trust was able to help Grainger achieve planning consent by identifying a long-term investment plan for the suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS).

We secured the long-term funding required for the SANGS through an endowment and service charge model, enabling us to sustainably manage this green space (SANGS) associated with the nearly 4,000 new home scheme.

By undertaking minor civils works to open up the former MOD land, we have created networks of paths and trails and visitor parking areas to make this woodland accessible. By working with the appointed local partner, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership (BVCP) we are creating a thriving space for the local communities to benefit from and enjoy.



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Challenges

A key challenge for Grainger was the planning conditions for the new development, which stipulated a requirement for an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to offset any negative impact that the development may have on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

Land Trust solutions

Grainger involved the Land Trust, to help them secure planning consent for the whole development, due to our expertise in providing sustainable solutions for land management and our reputation as a trusted organisation.

The Land Trust is delivering all SANGS related obligations linked to the Section 106 agreement, allowing Grainger to focus on the built environment that is due to have first occupation in September 2015.

The Land Trust has also enabled local partners, that cannot, or do not wish to take liability of ownership, to still have an active role in managing the site.

Result

By working in partnership with Grainger, and having a shared vision for long term investment and sustainable place making, our involvement has enabled the project to achieve planning consent and secured the long term funding for the SANGS area. We have now taken a 999 year lease of the SANGS, and are delivering the Section 106 obligations required by the habitat regulatory assessment.

We have been able to secure long term funding for the SANG through a mixture of models, including:

- Section 106 payment
- 20 year (index linked) payment scheme
- £1.5m endowment (index linked) on completion from Grainger PLC
- Service Charge contributions from the new housing development.

This is enabling us to manage the site in perpetuity, create jobs for onsite rangers, develop and maintain the green spaces, including new pathways, trails and car parks, engage with local residents, provide new skills, training and volunteer opportunities and ensure the site becomes a focal point for the wider community, contributing to improved health, economic, educational, environmental and social benefits.

