



## Case Study

### Countess of Chester Country Park

Location:	<b>Chester</b>
Size:	<b>19 hectares</b>
Client:	<b>Homes &amp; Communities Agency</b>
the Land Trust's Role:	<b>Sustainable exit strategy</b>
From:	<b>Landfill and agricultural</b>
To:	<b>Nature reserve</b>

**The Countess of Chester Country Park, adjacent to Chester's main hospital, was mostly former landfill, left derelict from the 1970s.**

*"The Countess of Chester Country Park is now a thriving part of the hospital grounds. The Land Trust helped expand our vision and make the country park a reality. Their knowledge and experiences of opening up green spaces has been invaluable. By joining NHS and Land Trust resources, we have provided a great country park for health care staff, patients and the community. Knowing the benefits to health and wellbeing, it thrills me to see people enjoying natural areas that were previously inaccessible."*

**Kevin Eccles, Head of Development Programme, Countess of Chester Hospital, NHS Foundation Trust**

In 2005, the site came under the ownership of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) as part of their Hospital Sites Programme. In March 2012, after investigating the best uses for the land, the HCA handed over 19 hectare of restored landfill and the adjoining wet meadow to the Land Trust.

This was part of a wider regeneration scheme that included a new housing development of 200 homes, to be developed by Morris Homes. The Land Trust was identified as the most suitable organisation to take ownership of the land, and it was transferred along with a £650,000 endowment for management costs and to secure the park's long term future.

With additional funding from grant giving bodies, this has enabled a network of over 2,000m of paths for cycling, walking and horse riding, along with fencing gates, way markers, signage and sculptures to be installed.

The park was opened by the Duchess of Cornwall in August 2014 and is now well used by a variety of people.

The Conservation Volunteers have been appointed to maintain the park and engage with communities, with the Land Trust working with NHS partners to identify funding for a health ranger to maximise the opportunities of this unique partnership.



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