

The Land Trust

Placekeeping: Our vision

Turning the ordinary into the extraordinary





A word from our Chief Executive – Euan Hall



Since the Land Trust was established in 2004 we have had a positive impact on so many areas of society.

Initially established as a pilot for English Partnerships, we've grown into an independent charity with responsibility for over 70 green spaces across England and Scotland, and from our humble beginnings we are now positively impacting thousands of people's lives every year.

Our five charitable objectives of health, education, economy, environment and biodiversity and community cohesion are the pillars that drive our work and looking ahead to the next 15 years we recognise that we have an opportunity – and a responsibility – to help tackle some of the biggest issues facing our country.

Quite simply our work – and our green spaces – changes lives. Whether it's through improving people's physical and mental wellbeing, providing people with educational opportunities and training, or reducing social isolation by bringing the communities we work with together, all of our work is making a positive impact.

We want to work with you to ensure we continue to deliver this, and so much more, in the future.

Turning the ordinary into the extraordinary



What makes the Land Trust so unique is our ability to transform previously derelict, unused or unwanted pieces of land into places that are good for nature and biodiversity and enjoyed by thousands of people every year.

There are so many amazing examples of these kind of transformations throughout our portfolio of sites and is undoubtedly the Land Trust's unique selling point.

At a time when green space is at a premium the ability to use our green spaces to deliver real and lasting Social Value is transformational.



Case study:

Port Sunlight



Before

- Biffa Waste **landfill** site.
- It was a **37 metre high mound of industrial and household waste** and had become a community eyesore.
- The site had created **a mental and physical barrier** between neighbourhoods and restricted access to the waterfront and stunning views across the River Mersey.

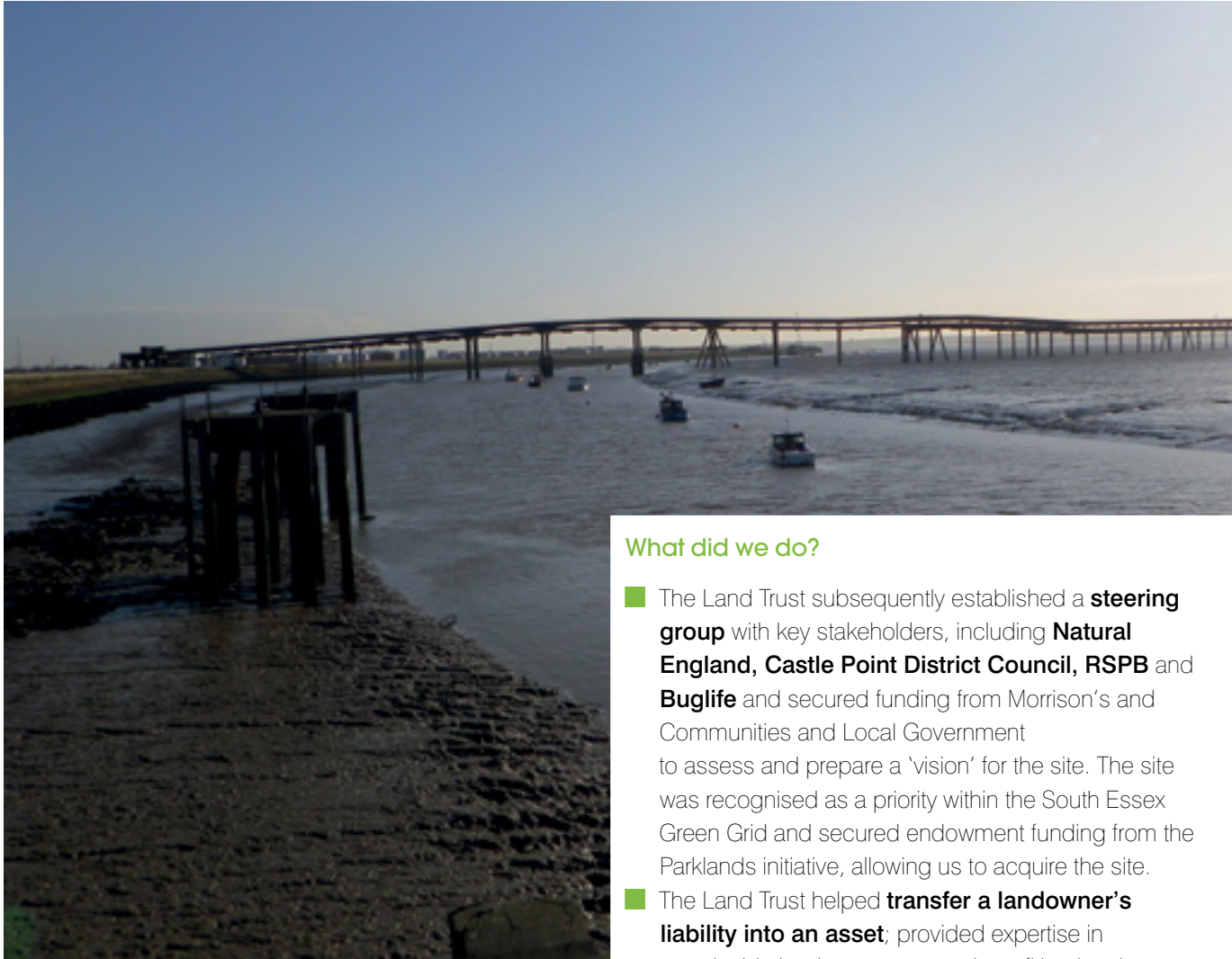
What did we do?

- We were approached by Biffa due to **our significant experience in taking over brownfield sites** and converting them to public open spaces.
- The project was supported by a number of partners and once funding had been secured the Land Trust were invited to carry out the **restoration of the site and take over the long term management.**



The results

- **£7.8 million** – estimated total value that the country park adds to houses located within 500 metres.
- Recently opened **heritage centre and café** on site will provide increased opportunities for events and educational activities.
- An important site for large populations of water birds and is a site of special protection.



What did we do?

- The Land Trust subsequently established a **steering group** with key stakeholders, including **Natural England, Castle Point District Council, RSPB** and **Buglife** and secured funding from Morrison’s and Communities and Local Government to assess and prepare a ‘vision’ for the site. The site was recognised as a priority within the South Essex Green Grid and secured endowment funding from the Parklands initiative, allowing us to acquire the site.
- The Land Trust helped **transfer a landowner’s liability into an asset**; provided expertise in sustainable land management, benefiting local communities and conservation and securely invested and protected the endowment, removing risk of continued dereliction.

Case study:

Canvey Wick



Before

- Canvey Wick was a **landfill site and proposed oil refinery**, which closed in the 1980s and then lay derelict.
- This brownfield site was a liability for landowners Morrison’s and East of England Development Agency (EEDA), (now the HCA). Along with Natural England, they approached the Land Trust to help find a sustainable exit strategy for the SSSI land to provide high quality open space next to land identified for commercial development.

The results

- It was designated as a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** and with the Land Trust’s intervention and a strong team of partners; this space was transformed into a nature reserve. It has been hailed as a **‘brownfield rainforest’** by Natural England and was officially opened to the public in 2014.
- The RSPB is the appointed Managing Partner, with significant involvement from Buglife, to advise on enhancing the habitats for the rare and endangered invertebrates, such as the Shrill Carder bee. It is now a **successful public amenity**, used by the local community for walking, wildlife watching, horse riding and dog walking.



Building new communities – From Placemaking to Placekeeping

One area where we are making a real difference – and one which is a key focus for us now and will continue to be in the future – is in building new communities. With an expanding population the need for new housing has never been more acute. However what often gets forgotten or neglected is how we turn these new properties into a community and turn houses into homes.

At the Land Trust we recognise that creating a new community doesn’t end when the houses are built. We see this as just the beginning in helping to build a new, healthy, thriving and inclusive community.

Our belief is that the success of a place should be judged on how the green space within a development looks in five, 10 or 20 years’ time and the impact that it has had on the people who call it home.

Similarly we see that the creation of the green spaces – the parks, play areas, green corridors and nature areas – is just the start of a much bigger challenge which is how to ensure they remain fit for purpose in the long term while also fulfilling all the other expectations placed upon them in relation to health and wellbeing, education and learning, jobs and prosperity and more.

These benefits don’t happen by accident – they are created by how the green spaces are used and managed. It requires the right vision, management, governance and funding structures.

We like to be involved from the planning stages, and work in partnership with strategic developers to help them deliver a place where people want to live, work and play.

This transition from ‘Placemaking’ to ‘Placekeeping’ is at the heart of all successful green spaces. Ensuring that management of the green space is sustainable, accountable and community based is at the heart of what we do.



Case study:

Upton



After ten years of managing green spaces such as country parks and nature reserves, in 2015 the Land Trust started exploring a new area of business in the form of residential green space management, paid for by the residents in the form of a service charge.

We identified a real need for an organisation such as ourselves to take on the public open space within a development, add real value and manage it with fairness and the best interests of the residents at heart.



We now have a number of these sites in various locations across the country and we are delivering real social change with our communities, whether that be delivering seasonal events with residents of Countryside’s flagship development at Beaulieu in Chelmsford or TCV’s Big Green Weekend events on our site at Cardowan just outside Glasgow.

The first of these sites we took on was in Upton, Northampton, in 2016 and since then we have learned a lot of lessons along the way.

Taking on a site like Upton is never easy, particularly when you don’t always know what customers have been told or which other management companies they may be dealing with.

On this particular estate many of the residents were not happy with the performance of the incumbent contractor.

However our community based approach has turned this situation around. Our Estates team worked very hard to get a thriving residents group up and running, to give them a voice and allow them to play a key role in the future direction of the site’s management.

After a thorough consultation process a joint decision was made between the Land Trust and the residents

group to remove the contractor and tender for a replacement. The chair of the working group was part of the tender panel and represented the views of the residents when it came to making the decision about which contractor to choose for the future management of the public open space within their development.

Perhaps surprisingly the residents, in collaboration with our team, chose to appoint a more expensive contractor as the most important desire of all involved was to provide a service that met the expectations of the community. The estate is now in a much better place with our management contributing significantly to the social cohesion of the area.

What turned this situation around was our willingness to engage with people, implement our learnings and come up with a solution that worked best for all parties involved.

Why our model works

Management of green spaces, particularly within residential property developments, is something of a controversial issue. A quick search on Google (or the search engine provider of your choice!) reveals numerous examples of where stewardship arrangements have gone wrong. These issues can be caused by any number of factors but common factors often include poor legal set up, excessive service charges or poor management.

When it does go wrong it has a detrimental impact on these new communities, the mental health and wellbeing of residents and property values.

We don't claim to be perfect and we've learned a lot of lessons from our management of these kind of sites over the last few years.



So how do we make it work? How do we deliver against wider policy aims, treat residents fairly and transparently and deliver added value?

What is the key to our success?

We establish partnerships. With communities. With landowners, developers and local authorities. Working with these stakeholders we identify appropriate solutions for managing our green spaces for the long term and in a way that delivers maximum community impact.

Working with the community and our passionate and hard working managing partners encourages emotional ownership and a sense of pride in the place where they live.

There are three elements to getting this right:

- **Funding**
- **A plan to add value**
- **Expertise**

Funding can come from a range of different sources. The key for us is to have a long term secure funding stream so that we can have a sustainable plan for how we look after our sites.

- On multi-phase developments the legal framework should be established before the first land or property sales, otherwise the set up could be unfair to some residents and may not provide adequate funding for all management costs.
- Long term management should be priced at the design stage so that you know it is going to be affordable for the residents of the new community.
- Think about the interim build out phase – looking after this space while homes are being developed attracts potential buyers and also helps to build community ownership and deliver wellbeing benefits from the very outset of the project.

You must have a **plan to create added value**. Delivering the public open spaces is not the end game – the real benefits come from how the spaces are used. We pro-actively deliver activities on all our sites. Examples of these include parkrun, health walks, Forest Schools, volunteering activities and seasonal events. Our spaces encourage biodiversity net gain and support local understanding of the environment. There can be financial benefit too with our green spaces raising the value of property prices. Our communities also enjoy improvements in their wellbeing.

Getting the right expertise in place is the final piece of the puzzle. Involving communities is at the very heart of what we do and we believe is the quickest way to encourage people to care for and take pride in their local open spaces. However it is crucial that this is married with the skills and expertise of our excellent managing partners. Many of these public open spaces have varied and complex requirements such as SuDS, contaminated land or areas set aside for environmental enhancement or biodiversity. It is unrealistic to expect a community to take ownership and liabilities for these issues which is why the work of our Managing Partners is so valued and important.

SANG

A growing area of business and a key part of our future strategy and direction is the management of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which is the name given to greenspace that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation to offset the impact of new residential development.

The Land Trust has experience managing SANG on a number of our sites including Wellesley Woodlands, the largest SANG in the country at 110 hectares. The SANG forms part of Grainger PLC's development Wellesley, an urban extension of 3,850 new homes being delivered on former Garrison land in Aldershot.

The challenge at Wellesley Woodlands was the planning conditions for the developer, Grainger PLC, 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.

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 SANG area. This enables the Land Trust to manage the site in perpetuity, and has allowed us to create jobs for onsite rangers and develop and maintain the green spaces, ensuring the site has become a focal point and asset for the community.



Delivering added value

The long term success of these spaces is important to the reputation of the Land Trust, our managing partners and the developers and landowners that we work with. We believe that our role goes beyond simply managing green space but about creating places where people want to live, work and play.

Being able to demonstrate our added value to the residents and communities that we work with not only helps them feel positive about the communities they live in but is also of significant reputational benefit to the Land Trust and our partners going forward.

Working with AMION Consulting we developed an economic and social value model that allows us to measure our impact by assessing the benefits of our green space management against our five key charitable objectives of:

- Environment and biodiversity
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and learning
- Economic vitality
- Community cohesion and volunteering

Contributions to this economic and social value come from:

- Reduced energy consumptions
- Reduced carbon emissions
- Carbon storage
- Health care cost savings
- Health and wellbeing value
- Educational engagement
- Land management and use
- Tourism
- Volunteering
- Community Engagement




Perhaps this, more than anything, is what the Land Trust is all about. Delivering this added value is what makes a real difference to the people we work with and allows communities to truly thrive.

Economic and social value delivered on our green spaces in 2018-19

	Environment and biodiversity	
	£167,779	Carbon storage
	Health and wellbeing	
	£182,139	Health care cost savings
	£231,637	Health and wellbeing value
	£728,503	Mental health
	£55,566	Labour productivity
	Education	
	£335,936	Educational engagement - children
	£48,220	Educational engagement - young people
	£136,926	Adults engaged in training
	Economic	
	£6,609,600	Land management and use
	£311,979	Supply chain expenditure
	£921,250	Tourism
	£1,293,973	Workforce development
	Community and place	
	£829,889	Volunteering
	£7,072,902	Recreational and cultural value
	£1,468,822	Community engagement
	£771,856	ASB incidents
	£13,855,323	Quality of place
	Overall economic value	
	£9,382,639	GVA
	£1,682,498	Cost saving
	£9,412,813	Economic value
	£20,477,950	Overall economic value

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