

Issue 1: end of 2010 - a summary of the project so far



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This striking photo was taken in Chantry Park by Darren Mann on one of our guided photography walks

Welcome to our new Access to Nature Ipswich project newsletter! When the weather gets really cold, we are often hesitant to venture outside. Those who are brave enough to wrap up, however, are rewarded with so many great things to see and do in winter.

This issue is packed with ideas for things to make, games to play outdoors, wildlife photography pointers, volunteering opportunities and ways to care for garden wildlife. And for when you retreat back inside to the warmth, there is lots to read about, like work carried out by the project so far, information on exciting upcoming events and ways in which you can get involved with making your local greenspaces better for wildlife and better for you.



Access to Nature Ipswich

What is the project all about?

The Access to Nature project started in June 2010 through a partnership of CSV Media Clubhouse and Greenways Countryside Project. It is a three-year project funded by the Big Lottery, through Natural England, and will work at a number of sites across Ipswich.

The project is about connecting people with their local natural environment and, although the project is open to all, it specifically aims to introduce the benefits of the natural world to people who have not had the opportunity or the interest to experience it before.

We are doing this in a number of ways:

- through consultation - so people can provide input to decisions about greenspaces near to them.
- by creating ways for people who have previously not had an interest in the environment to get involved - such as using photography, film and other media, and through fun leisure activities such as night walks and bug hunts.
- through getting involved in the hands-on management of the space by doing practical conservation volunteering.
- providing opportunities for volunteers to access training in conservation and media subjects.

We are introducing people to the beautiful areas that Greenways and their volunteers already care for, as well as working to improve some of the small, neglected green spaces in other areas.

The ultimate aim is that by the end of the project we will have created a legacy of motivated people across communities who realise the value of their local natural environment and have the tools and training to continue caring for it.



Two 'nut bugs' created at the Stoke Park half term event in October



Project Work and Events

Practical conservation work and events from this year

As well as working with the Greenways Countryside Project on their already established sites, the Access to Nature Ipswich project is focusing on a few specific sites that have been neglected before or just need some extra attention. Since the start of the project earlier this year, these main sites have been the subject of much planning and some sites have received practical conservation work and hosted fun public events. So far we have started working with people in the Alderman Canal area, the Triangle estate and around Stoke Park - in the future we hope to add more sites to our list.

Alderman Canal

Our launch event at Alderman Canal in July 2010 was a great success. Local residents joined existing volunteers to enjoy bug hunts, wildlife photography, wild art sessions, guided walks, and film making – and a free barbecue! Although we were almost blown away by the wind, the sun shone on us and up to 100 people took part over the evening.

The Alderman Canal area has had several conservation work parties this year attended by local volunteers and Access to Nature project workers. Work has included construction of a wooden boardwalk, grass cutting and raking, path clearing and general work to tidy the area and make it more welcoming. We also held an October half term event here with a storyteller, natural crafts and lots of yummy food!

Stoke Park

The meadow area next to Stoke Park Wood was cut and raked earlier in the year and there are plans for woodland management work such as coppicing and general clearing.

We held one of our half term events here which was a great success. We enjoyed a storywalk, collected natural materials for crafts, had soup and hot chocolate to warm up and made crafty things, like nut bugs and bracelets, for the rest of the afternoon.



Triangle Estate

There is a small, fenced area on Kelly Road that was completely neglected and overgrown. We spent a day with volunteers from our partner organisations and cleared all the prickly bushes and overgrown plants. Amongst other things we found an old TV, a crutch, lots of broken glass, a toy doll and a garden gnome! We are in the process of planning what will happen to this area and there will be some more work done there to clear the bigger trees in the future.

We held one of our October half term events in the 'Our Space' shop on Dickens Road. Lots of families attended, the children loved the stories and collecting huge bags of natural things to make into crafts!



Above right: film making at our launch, Alderman Canal
Above: clearing Kelly Road, the Triangle Estate



More Event News

So far this year the Access to Nature Ipswich project has put on loads of events. We've already told you about some of our activities - but there's much more!

The annual Ipswich River Cleanup took place in August this year. A team of divers cleared junk from the River Gipping, whilst other volunteers raked up long grass from wild flower meadows, collected litter from along the river path and fished out rubbish floating on Alderman Canal.

Our Nature's Harvest event was a beautiful walk through Spring Wood sampling blackberries and hazelnuts and discovering all the fruits of nature, finishing the walk with freshly pressed apple juice from the Greenways Orchard.

We have held three photography walks this year at Alderman, Chantry Park and Stoke Park Wood, all led by the very talented Darren Mann. The photos that were taken were absolutely brilliant, we look forward to more walks like this next year.

We had our Belstead Brook Park Mega Bash in November. In Millennium Wood volunteers helped with coppicing willow, making dead hedging to protect fragile areas and in Spring wood volunteers helped with coppicing hazel for bean poles. There was a bonfire, hot drinks and soup to warm up the chilly workers!



We also held a fantastic bonfire event in November, with a lantern procession, games, jacket potatoes and chocolate bananas cooked on the fire, hot soup and stories told by John Row, our favourite storyteller. We all had great fun playing in the dark and toasting marshmallows.

In early December we held a festive crafts event where we made door wreaths, hanging and table decorations, all from natural products collected from the local area. Lots of glitter and glue amongst the holly and the ivy!

Listen in to the "Access to Nature" radio show on Ipswich Community Radio (105.7fm) every Monday evening, 7pm - 8.30pm, to hear the latest project news, find out about forthcoming events and learn about nature in the Ipswich area. You can either listen on your radio (in the Ipswich area) or on the Internet; and if you miss the show, it's available for a couple of days via "Listen Again" (top right-hand corner of the ICR home page).

If you're interested in being involved in the radio show, please get in touch - contact details on the back page.



Above right: Trolley pulled from River Gipping

Above left: Making natural festive crafts

Right: Trying to clear weed at Alderman Canal



Interview with Becky Marley, Project Manager

Why did you feel there was a need for a project like this in Ipswich?

Ipswich is rich in green spaces but there are many areas that don't have natural green spaces close by, and many people who don't access the green spaces that are near them. There are lots of reasons for this, and we aim to address some of them by offering a really wide and varied array of ways to get involved. We hope that by having a selection of fun and interesting activities we can appeal to lots of different people and spark off an interest they didn't know they had!

Are there certain areas in Ipswich that the project will focus on?

While our partner, The Greenways Countryside Project, manage 50 sites in and around Ipswich, which we can feed people into, we are mainly focusing on a few specific areas. So far we have started working with people in the Alderman Canal area, the Triangle estate, and Stoke Park. In the future we hope to add more places to that list. It's a slow process but we're starting to get to know people and spread the word already and this will snowball over time!

How is everything going so far?

So far the project has gone really well; we are on track to deliver our targets and, more to the point, we are meeting lots of lovely people and having a great time!

What have been your highlights during the first stages of the project?

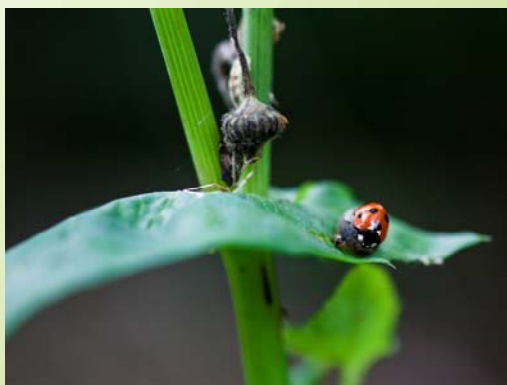
That's a tough one! There have been so many brilliant events and activities that it's hard to pick one out. I think perhaps, personally it's more about the way that being involved in this project has made me rediscover so many wonderful things, especially by sharing them with other people who have got involved in the project; things like the way that photography makes you really slow down and see the beauty in your surroundings, the joy of simple pleasures like toasting a marshmallow on a bonfire or watching a beetle going about its day, the satisfaction of a job well done like cleaning the litter out of the rivers or creating a wildlife habitat. Being able to offer experiences like this to people, maybe for the first time, and seeing them enjoy them is a great feeling!



Above: Becky at our bonfire event toasting marshmallows

Below left: Ladybird on a leaf, taken by Darren Mann

Wildlife Photography Tips



If you have an interest in photography but don't know where to start, your own garden or local greenspace is a great place to capture interesting shots. Photographing urban wildlife is not only easy, it is really rewarding too.

Top 5 tips for urban photography:

Be prepared - make sure you have something hot to drink and some food; always make sure you have warm clothing.

Don't forget about plants – this time of year they have really different silhouettes and shapes.

Follow an individual – find an animal, e.g. a robin in the park, and try to follow it, it may allow you to set up for a more interesting photo.

Think about the environment your subject is in – urban subjects are great as they often appear in areas that don't look very wildlife-friendly.

Don't be afraid to take lots of photos – if you have a digital camera, it's good practice to snap away at lots of different subjects.



Feed the Birds

How to make a recycled bird feeder

Fat cakes are perfect to feed garden birds this time of year. Natural food sources, such as insects and berries, are scarce or covered in snow and ice. Foods rich in fat give our garden birds lots of energy and help them to keep warm.

To make a recycled bird feeder you will need:

- Empty yoghurt pot, pie tin or other small tub
 - Bird seed
 - Lard or vegetable fat/suet
 - String
1. Tie a knot in one end of the string. Poke a small hole in bottom of your container and thread the string through from the inside.
 2. Melt some lard or vegetable fat in a saucepan. Stir in 3 times the amount of seed to fat. Leave somewhere cool to begin to set.
 3. Once the fat and seed mixture is partially set, spoon it into the empty container, squashing the mix right into the corners. Leave the full container somewhere cold until set hard.
 4. Hang the bird feeder in your greenspace and wait for the birds to feast!



Above: Fat feeders for garden birds made from a pie tin, a chocolate pudding pot and a pine cone.

Below left: Hanging ice art made in empty yoghurt pots using holly berries and leaves and bits of tinsel!



Did you know...? You can feed garden birds with some leftover scraps from your kitchen table!

- Mild grated cheese
- Cold cooked potatoes; baked or roasted, even mashed!
- Dried fruits like raisins, sultanas and currants
- Cooked rice and pasta
- Fruit, like apples and pears - great news if you have any bruised or rotten ones!
- Oats and cereal - not sugary ones though!

Crafty Ideas: Use freezing night-time temperatures to create beautiful and individual art!

Why not liven up the bare trees and bushes by decorating them? Collect yourself some interesting things from your garden or local green space. Think small leaves, berries or bits of twig (even glitter and bits of tinsel for a festive feel!). Put a few of your finds in small containers - e.g. empty plastic food pots, ice cube trays - and fill up with water. Take a length of string or cotton, submerging a couple of centimetres of one end in the water, leaving a long piece hanging out. Leave outside on a freezing night. In the morning, pop your ice art out of the moulds, they should hang securely from the string. You can now tie your decorative pieces from bare branches or even washing lines, window sills, fences, anywhere!

Nature Games: Set up a 'tracker trail' using natural signs.

This game works well in a small group on a walk or just around the garden or park! Collect natural objects and use them to make a trail that can be followed by others in your group. Agree on what some signs might mean, then set off ahead of the group, leaving signs as you go. You can use twigs on the ground in an arrow shape to point in one direction, or a pile of stones to the left of a sign post can mean 'this way'. See how well your signs are followed, then let the other group have a go!

Events in the New Year

We've all loved the events that we have held this year and next year we hope to have loads more fun activities for individuals and families of all ages to enjoy!

January 30th 2011 marks the first of our new year events! We will be holding a willow weaving workshop with local artist and expert, Jo Hammond. Jo is well known for her willow work and will be showing us how to make some amazing natural creations.

In **February** we will be hosting a great event where you will be guided through making wooden wild animal homes, such as dormouse boxes and bat boxes.

March will hopefully bring you a 'rustic woodcraft' event, where we will learn to create things from wood collected in local areas.

In **April** we will hopefully be putting on another exciting outdoor activity, we are trying to organise a pony trekking trip in the local area! Watch this space for developments - you can find contact information on the back page if you wish to contact us about events and a list of places you can get regular updates from the a2nipswich project.

Other regular activities that you can get involved with in Ipswich include:

Saturday Jan 15th 10:00am - 3:30pm Greenways Alderman Canal, Work Party. Work could include coppicing, reedbed management work and/or pathway/bridge/boardwalk construction. Details from Greenways 01473 433995 (Mon - Fri).

Sunday Jan 16th 10:30am IWG & FoBBP Spring Wood, Work Party. Join Ipswich Wildlife Group and the Friends of Belstead Brook Park in coppicing and processing beanpoles and peasticks in the wood. Details from Gerry Donlon 01473 726082.

Saturday 12th Feb 10:00am - 1:00pm FoBBP Belstead Brook Park, Work Party. Conservation and access tasks somewhere in the park. Details from James Baker 01473 433995.

Saturday 19th Feb 10:00am - 3:00pm Martlesham Mega Bash. Join the Martlesham Conservation Group, Ipswich Wildlife Group, Greenways and many other groups and individuals for a day of scrub clearing on the heath. Details from James Baker 01473 433995.

Sunday 20th Feb 10:30am IWG & FoBBP Spring Wood, Work Party. Coppicing hazel and processing the material into beanpoles and peasticks. Details from Gerry Donlon 01473 726082.

Sunday 20th March 10:30am IWG & FoBBP Spring Wood, Work Party. Coppicing hazel and processing the material into beanpoles and peasticks. Details from Gerry Donlon 01473 726082.



Above right: Off to collect natural objects for crafts at Alderman Canal
Left: Yummy food and roaring bonfire at Millennium Wood



Getting Involved

There are loads of great ways to get involved with a2nipswich!

All our events and activities are free of charge and open to everyone – just keep an eye on our events listing and let us know when you want to come along to anything.



There are regular conservation sessions at various locations and anyone can come and join in; they're a brilliant way to get outdoors, get some fresh air and exercise, help improve your local natural environment – and have fun!

For anyone who wants to do a little bit more, we will soon be advertising some specific volunteer roles, to do tasks as varied as radio presenter, regular conservation work, events officer, website contributor, film editor, photographer, and much more. There will be free training attached to all these roles and the chance to really make a difference whilst learning new skills and having a great time! If you're interested in this idea, or would just like to know more, contact Becky for a chat!

Contact Information

If you would like to know more about the project, or would like to get involved, please contact:

Becky Marley, Project Manager on 07717 507348 or bmarley@csv.org.uk

or **Steve Pritchard, Project Officer** on 07834 750970 or sritchard@csv.org.uk

We'd love to hear what you think about our newsletter; you can write to us with your news, opinions, ideas, stories and questions.

To write to us: Becky Marley, CSV Media Clubhouse, 120 Princes Street, Ipswich, IP1 1RS

or email: Vicky Eyles, Project Assistant on veyles@csvfjf.org.uk

Keep up to date

The latest news can be found on our Facebook page, together with photos from some of our sites and events <http://www.facebook.com/a2nipswich>

Follow us on Twitter **@a2nipswich**

Keep an eye on our new website-in-progress - soon it will be full of Access to Nature info! <http://www.a2nipswich.org.uk>



Above right: Very active storytelling in Chantry Park!

Above left: 'Nut bug' made at Alderman Canal

Right: Natural headband made at Triangle Estate

