

The National *community forest* Partnership

PARK LIFE

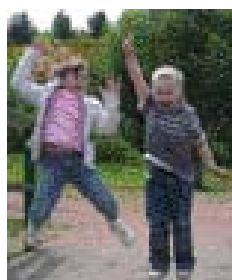
Location	Greenwood Community Forest	
Partners	Nottinghamshire County Council Newark and Sherwood District Council Broxtowe Borough Council Natural England	The Forestry Commission Mansfield District Council Ashfield District Council Sport England



Background	<p>Park Life is an innovative scheme to encourage people to use their local parks and green spaces for physical activity. The Greenwood Community Forest team has worked with officers in parks, sports and health organisations as well as volunteers to deliver over 120 events on seven sites. From football and cycling to tai chi and environmental activities, there really has been something for everyone.</p> <p>There is increasing evidence that access to green space can benefit people's health and well being. In 2004, Greenwood Community Forest commissioned its own research, which found that significant parts of the local population were worryingly inactive. The study recommended developing new activity opportunities and better promotion of local parks, particularly in deprived areas.</p>
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Objectives	<p>To encourage more people to make use of their local parks to increase their activity levels and improve their health.</p> <p>To bring opportunities to hard-to-reach groups, especially those within the top 25% deprivation wards.</p> <p>To ensure that the activities on offer appeal to all groups in the community.</p>
Actions	<p>An extensive programme of activities was on offer, including Nordic walking, cycling, street dancing, environmental activities, girls' football taster sessions and tai chi.</p> <p>Two annual festivals – one for walking and one for cycling.</p> <p>Volunteers help with the organisation and delivery of events. A number of these have gained qualifications as a result of their work.</p> <p>Production of an education pack showing the activities that are available at each site.</p>
Achievements	<p>In the first two years;</p> <p>122 events organised</p> <p>8,224 participants, including 2,415 students from schools within the top 25% deprivation wards</p> <p>138 volunteers</p> <p>27 people gained qualifications</p> <p>Under-represented groups were targeted successfully:</p> <p>44.7% of 2006/07 participants were female</p> <p>8.75% were from non-white ethnic groups</p>
Lessons Learnt	<p>Park Life has demonstrated the benefits of partnership working to learn from the skills and knowledge of others and to deliver new opportunities for the local community.</p> <p>Schools in deprived areas are often unable to participate in activities in local parks due to transport costs. Park Life has overcome this by offering a schools' travel fund.</p> <p>Park Life has offered the support and funding needed for park rangers and sports officers to try new things that otherwise would not have been possible. For example, the 'Dri-Triathlon' brought together 300 children from 13 schools in a new sporting event with running, cycling and rowing.</p>
Quotes	<p>"Bull Farm Park has suffered much vandalism in the past. Since the Park Life project started, stronger links with the community have been formed. Kids that used to hang around are now coming along to take part in activities that give them new life skills." Shaun Hill, Sport Development Officer, Mansfield District Council</p> <p>"It was a wonderful day. All staff and volunteer helpers commented on the excitement and the awe and wonder on the children's faces. Many of our children had never travelled on a coach before, let alone been for a walk in the forest." Lesley Holland, Kirkby Nursery Centre</p>



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