CASE STUDY

CASTLEMILK
South East Glasgow

LOCATION
The woodlands of Castlemilk are located to the south east of Glasgow, adjacent to Rutherglen, Croftfoot, Simshill and Carmunnock.

SITE DESCRIPTION
Made up of around 40 hectares of mature woodlands, open spaces and a network of paths, the site is owned by Glasgow City Council.

Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT) is Forestry Commission Scotland’s programme to improve the quality of life for people living and working in urban Scotland.
OVERVIEW

This local wood was not used very much by local people due to fears about anti-social behaviour, the poor quality of the footpaths and neglected feel of the woodland. Today there is a visible increase in people using the woods as a place to visit rather than just a cut through, and there is a noticeable drop in the amount of litter and fly-tipping.

The local community now has a sense of ownership of the woodland and it is a place for recreation, education and health activities, where over 800 events have taken place attended by over 15,000 people.

Part of the legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Castlemilk Woodlands is one of 14 Commonwealth Woods that provide outdoor spaces where people can enjoy free events or just go for a walk in the fresh air.

The Castlemilk Partnership Steering Group is made up of members from Cassilhouse Housing Association, Forestry Commission Scotland, Glasgow Housing Association, Glasgow City Council and the Jeely Piece Club.

UP ‘TIL NOW

The woods were part of the Stuart estate and are situated around the ruins of Castlemilk House. During the 1950s Castlemilk was developed as a housing scheme to accommodate thousands of people from inner city areas such as the Gorbals.

Over time the woodlands became associated with anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping.

In the 1980s a regeneration strategy was produced. Since then a number of organisations have worked together with local people on environmental improvement projects. This effort has culminated in the establishment of the Castlemilk Partnership Steering Group in 2010.

TIMELINE

2005

WIAT funding of £74,000 helped support the preparation of a woodland management plan and management activities.

2007

£72,000 from Forestry Commission Scotland, Entrust and Paths for All funded projects and a Development Officer post.

2010

• An action plan was developed. The Jeely Piece Club secured nearly £200,000 to encourage natural play in the woodlands.
• Castlemilk Park Partnership formed and feasibility study undertaken.
WHAT WIAT DID

Countless hours of volunteers’ time and external funding has helped to improve the woods. Key to this has been the employment of a Community Woodland Officer, funded in partnership with Cassilhouse Housing Association, to take the lead on coordinating community focused activity and later an Employability Programme. This, along with the WIAT programme and volunteers has delivered physical improvements to both the woodlands and the local community.

The Community Woodland Officer has delivered a range of community activities including:

- events such as teddy bears picnic, tai chi and early evening health walks and photo club;
- a volunteer group and corporate volunteering with Barclays, Scottish Government and local housing associations;
- guided walks/talks for local school and community groups;
- creating a map/leaflet;
- archaeological digs;
- community museum displays in the Castlemilk area; and
- creating a ‘Friends of Castlemilk’ Facebook page to keep the community up-to-date.

The Castlemilk Community Woodland project won the 2015 community woodland category of Scotland’s Finest Woods award.

EMPLOYABILITY PROJECT

In 2012 the Cassilhouse Housing Association successfully applied to the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund (CSGN) to deliver an employability project. This gives local unemployed people opportunities to gain environmental management skills whilst making improvements to the local area. 89 trainees have completed the programme with a third of these coming from workless households. In 2014/2015 the programme expanded and created three paid posts to run additional training courses. Over 50% of people completing the programme have gone onto paid employment.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Over the past five years, the woodland has become a vibrant venue for a range of community events. These have ranged from large public events like Halloween Pumpkin Parades and Fairy Festivals to smaller activities such as Bat Walks. The woodlands are a key part of the social fabric of the Castlemilk Community and the events also encourage people from outside of the immediate area to visit, breaking the perception that Castlemilk is simply a housing scheme with little to offer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Woodland Officer employed.</td>
<td>Employability project began.</td>
<td>Forest Kindergarten started and photo walk group created. Received ‘Highly Commended’ at Scotland Finest Woods Awards.</td>
<td>Events linked to Commonwealth Games.</td>
<td>Winning Scotland Finest Woods Award (in the community section for promoting healthy lifestyles).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LOOKING AHEAD

Partners are looking at the long term management of the woodland and the potential for community ownership. Other activities include working towards a Heritage Lottery Fund bid and securing further funding for both the Community Woodland Officer Post and Employability Project.

Forestry Commission Scotland serves as part of the Scottish Government’s Environment and Forestry Directorate and is responsible to Scottish Ministers.

Contact
Forestry Commission Scotland
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh
EH112 7AT

Tel: 0300 067 5000
Fax: 0300 067 3003
E-mail: fcscotland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Web: www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland

If you need this publication in an alternative format, for example, in large print or in another language, please contact:
The Diversity Team
Tel: 0300 067 5046
E-mail: diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Published by: Forestry Commission Scotland, October 2015
© Crown Copyright
Designed by SRP Creative for Design and Interpretation Services, Forestry Commission Scotland, Edinburgh