CASE STUDY

CUNINGAR LOOP

An ambitious and exciting project, providing a green retreat in this important urban regeneration area.

LOCATION

Situated at a distinctive bend in the river, Cuningar Loop sits within South Lanarkshire close to the ancient burgh of Rutherglen and directly across the Clyde from the historical communities of Parkhead and Dalmarnock in the East End of Glasgow.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The 15 hectare site is made up of vacant and scrub land, owned by South Lanarkshire 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 £5.7 million project has transformed 15 hectares of derelict land on the banks of the River Clyde into an attractive woodland park for nearby residents. It features an extensive path network; an activity zone, which includes a bike skills park, bouldering park, adventure play facility, seating areas and a large meadow; and an outdoor classroom.

The new woodland is a recreational resource that will encourage local people to get outdoors, resulting in better physical and mental health and wellbeing.

It is part of the legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

This is a partnership project between Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES), Clyde Gateway and South Lanarkshire Council.

UP ‘TIL NOW
Over the last 200 years, the site was used for a number of purposes, including: the location of several reservoirs that provided water to the whole of Glasgow (1810 to 1860); then quarrying and mining; and in the 1950s a landfill site for rubble from the demolition of the Gorbals. It was then neglected and became covered with domestic rubbish and regenerated scrub woodland.

Although the site is close to the communities of Parkhead, Dalmarnock and Rutherglen, it was difficult to access and so had very little use.

TIMELINE
2006
FES and Council staff began to explore the potential of the site.

2009
FES staff undertake preliminary site visits to determine the scope of the greening project and initiate feasibility studies.

2011
Initial project and planning phase with funding of £400,000.
WHAT WIAT DID

The project has benefited from having two artists in residence, Rob Mulholland and James Winnett. Rob worked with local community groups and schools to develop ideas for site sculptures, and with young men from Dalmarnock who helped weld the sculpture for the site. James worked with a number of community groups to link the history of the site and local area and has worked with the local Boy’s Brigade and seniors groups to develop ideas for carved stones depicting the local history.

The project also worked with Action for Children, to train groups in skills such as site health and safety and landscaping.

Over 400 pupils and students have visited the site.

CONSULTATION

Three consultations were carried out in the local community to help decide on the equipment to be included in the play area, with local children deciding on the central play feature.

PEEK, a local play charity that work with families to encourage children to play outside, helped to promote the ‘Come and try’ days and delivered play activities at some of the events.

WIAT ACHIEVEMENTS

The whole site has been transformed into a mosaic of woodland habitats with open grassland and meadows where local people can relax and play.

Key achievements include:

- around 10,000 trees, 30,000 shrubs, 40,000 bulbs and 500kg of meadow grass have been planted;
- 2km of new paths and 400m of boardwalk have been constructed to encourage local people to stretch their legs in the woodland;
- an adventure playground with a zip slide and den making area;
- four tracks for the bike skills park have been built – from a balance track for small children, a beginners and improvers track and an advanced pump track;
- the construction of Scotland’s first outdoor bouldering facility, with nine boulders that cater for beginners and experienced climbers.

2013

- Secured artist in residence funding through Creative Scotland to work with community to create art that helps build a connection between the local people and the site.
- Work started on site.

2014

Sport Scotland funding secured to develop additional activity areas on site, including bike skills area, adventure play and Scotland first outdoor bouldering area.

2015

Phase 1 works completed. 3 ‘come and try’ events attracted over 3,300 people.
LOOKING AHEAD

The adjacent Athletes Village is being converted into a mix of social and private housing and the project will fully open in the spring of 2016. The next big piece of work to take place is the building of Cuningar footbridge. Clyde Gateway is working with Glasgow City Council to deliver the development of the 100 meter steel and timber footbridge which will connect the new woodland park to the former games village, as well as Dalmarnock and Bridgeton communities.

There are plans to hold events, work with the community on volunteering activities to make sure the site is used by local people. It is hoped that a ‘Friends of Cuningar’ group can be set up to help with the maintenance and management of the site.

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

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