

## Prudential Grass Roots

Supporting communities to improve their local environment



*Young people in the neighbourhood have always had Highfield Park on their doorstep, but it is only now, through Prudential Youth Roots, that they think of it as somewhere they can enjoy and actually care about.*

Prudential Grass Roots was launched in 2001. It is run by BTCV, the UK's leading practical conservation charity, and funded by Prudential plc.

The programme is helping to drive regeneration for people and wildlife in communities around shopping centres and business parks throughout the UK, invested in by Prudential plc and managed by PRUIM.

### CASE STUDY

## Highfield Country Park, Manchester

Following in the footsteps of the highly acclaimed and multi-award winning Prudential Grass Roots project at Highfield Country Park, Prudential Youth Roots continued to transform this 70 acre green space, through engagement specifically with young people from the area.

Supported by Manchester Arndale, which is owned jointly by Prudential plc and Capital Shopping Centres, over 200 young people aged between 7 and 24 joined environmental charity BTCV in a year-long programme of activities from pond dipping and habitat creation for butterflies to hedge planting and making bird boxes.

The partners set high targets for Youth Roots – some of which were exceeded – and the common thread across all strands of the project was to encourage young people to enjoy and respect the green space by bringing them into the park through a programme of fun, interesting activities.



**PRUDENTIAL**

# Building healthy and sustainable communities

## Highfield Country Park, Manchester

Highfield Country Park was transformed during the year-long Prudential Grass Roots project in 2005. BTCV, Prudential and Manchester Arndale, the project partners, recognised significant potential to build on the success of this initial Grass Roots project. Through having a specific focus on young people and engaging them in activities in the park, the project partners aimed to limit anti-social behaviour and to increase a sense of ownership and respect for the space.

BTCV and Prudential believe that long-term sustainable environmental benefits are best achieved when people take practical action to improve their own community spaces. Working alongside the Friends of Highfield Country Park again meant that BTCV was able to continue to connect with the local community and to ensure a sustainable legacy for the future.

## Government backing

The vision of engagement with young people in Highfield Park attracted support from the Department for Communities and Local Government through its Special Grants Programme. With match funding from government, BTCV and Prudential were able to independently evaluate the success of Youth Roots, through Salford University, and to increase the level of activity during the course of the project.



## Key Statistics

Manchester is the second most deprived district in England and does not fall below fourth across all indices of deprivation.

The Gorton South Ward, which is on the boundary of Highfield Country Park, is ranked in the 1% most deprived wards in England.

Parts of Levenshulme ward are in:

- The top 5% of most deprived areas in England
- The 10% of income deprivation affecting children index
- The top 10% of income deprivation affecting older people index

Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004, produced by ODPM and published by Manchester City Council

*"The team at Manchester Arndale was delighted to have the opportunity to build on the success of our work at Highfield Country Park. Encouraging youngsters to respect and value the natural environment is vital to safeguard the future of this urban oasis"*

GLEN BARKWORTH,  
GENERAL MANAGER, MANCHESTER ARNDALE

# Connecting people with place

Highfield Country Park,  
Manchester



*"BTCV was delighted that Prudential funded further investment at Highfield Park, through the Youth Roots programme. We have been able to continue the positive transformations in the park, but also within the community. Involving young people in this way has helped to ensure that the legacy of the projects will be sustainable"*

KATIE LOWRY, BTCV SOUTH MANCHESTER PROJECT OFFICER

## Taking practical action

A busy programme of activities was rolled out between April 2006 and January 2007 and the project included the following elements:

- Pond dipping and maintenance
- Litter picking and cleaning up
- Habitat creation for butterflies
- Family picnics
- Diwali & Eid celebrations
- Circus skills event, attended by more than 200 people

## Evaluation Results

The evaluation which was carried out by Salford University indicated the following results:

- Attendance at the events was mainly from people who were very largely local to Highfield Country Park
- When asked people thought that they would visit the park more frequently in the future than they had in the past
- Visitors' perceptions of Highfield Country Park is that it is safe and clean.

# Revitalising greenspaces

Highfield Country Park,  
Manchester

## Achievements

- Total Events 23 (including 18 individual events and 5 group/larger events)
- £21,500 worth of volunteer days
- In total 430 people attended the events
- 15 promotional events (radio interviews, attendance at shows and fairs in the surrounding areas)
- Each and every event was promoted on local radio stations
- BTCV and Salford University Staff attended Friends of Highfield Park meetings to plan and review progress



## Project Costs

Prudential Grass Roots funding contributed £10,000 towards capital costs, staff, labour and community engagement. Manchester Arndale contributed a further £2,500.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister further funded the project to the value £13,500 which included a proportion of funding for the evaluation report.

The Lloyds TSB Foundation funded the evaluation report, undertaken by the University of Salford. This funding was an additional £2500 to the project funding outlined above.

Total project funding – £28,500

## Project partners

BTCV • Prudential • Manchester Arndale • Friends of Highfield Park, ODPM  
Evaluation carried out by Salford University and funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation

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