

CASE STUDIES

Broadening the Funds Base

Community forestry organisations:

HEYwoods - Building lasting partnerships with the private sector
Forest of Marston Vale – The Marston Vale Trust, Social Enterprise

These two case studies are from organisations who have found different opportunities to fund their work. Both engage and work with a wide range of partners, HEYwoods is run as a not-for-profit partnership with support from the private sector as well as local, and national funding bodies.

Responsibility for the creation of The Forest of Marston Vale, is being taken forward by the Marston Vale Trust. A much more commercial approach has been adopted by the Trust to compensate for the loss of core government funding but still with social aims and outcomes as a registered charity and social enterprise. The Trust still works with a wide variety of private and public sector partners in creating the Forest but has grown new business activities to fund its core costs, providing sustainability, greater operational freedom and a major asset in the Forest Centre as a focal point for the community.

CASE STUDY ONE

Location: HEYwoods, Private Sector Partnership : Throughout Kingston upon Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire

Partners: KC (formerly Kingston Communications), 2B Landscape Consultancy Ltd, BP Chemicals, Bransholme Enterprises, BTCV, City of Hull & Humber Environment Forum, CPRE, CSV Millennium Volunteers, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Biodiversity Partnership, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Friends of the Earth, Hull Biodiversity Partnership, Hull Community Network, Hull City Council, KCFM, Natural England, ONE Hull, Preston Road Neighbourhood Development Company, Vivergo Fuels, Voice International, Woodland Trust, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.



Background: HEYwoods is the tree and woodland initiative for Kingston upon Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire. It is also a partner of The National Community Forest Partnership. In 2008, KC approached HEYwoods to help work on a tree planting project in Kingston upon Hull, aimed at improving the environment for local communities. KC's business is integrated IT and communications services to businesses. During 2009-10, the project saw over 3,000 new native trees established at a range of locations throughout the city and its surrounding areas and over 175 volunteers from the city took part in a series of tree planting events. The success of the project led KC to become a member of HEYwoods, joining the Partnership's Steering Group and supporting activity throughout the project area. HEYwoods also benefits from innovative approaches to securing private sector funding through s.106 agreements and planning agreements, further relieving the burden on its core funding partners.

HEYwoods—Private Sector Partnership

Objectives:

The partnership with KC is based on the following agreed principles:

- Improving the area's urban and rural environments
- Developing and enhancing the appearance and amenity value of the area, helping to create 'pride in our place' amongst communities
- Improving community health by creating a better environment, building on the strong links that are known to exist between the natural environment and feelings of well-being
- Developing an improved image for the area, helping to stimulate economic regeneration by enhancing landscape quality and making both urban and rural areas more attractive to potential inward investors
- Contributing locally to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Actions:

- Tree planting to improve the environment and stimulate economic regeneration.
- Recruiting and working with the local community, community groups, KC staff, and other private sector employees (most notably NPower)
- Organising community events
- KC has supported the development, design and build of HEYwoods new website, free of charge. The website, planned to be launched in 2012, will be interactive and aimed at engaging partners the the wider community
- Steering Group meetings four times a year.

Achievements:

- Over 3,000 native trees planted in 2009-10 at a range of community sites across Kingston upon Hull including Dove House Hospice, Bransholme Community Woodland, Wilberforce Wood and East Park
- Over 175 volunteers involved in the planting work, including the Hull Anatolian Society and the Bransholme Woodland Warriors
- KC are close to launching the new interactive website for HEYwoods.

Lessons Learnt:

- Long-term relationships with private sector partners add credibility to the activities of the woodland initiative and create the potential to engage with other members of the business community
- Successful partnership working with the private sector can go far beyond simple financial donations – the value of 'in-kind' activity can be vital
- Utilising private sector specialisms and expertise (in areas such as IT and communications, promotions and publicity etc) helps to maximise the potential of the initiative and significantly reduce the likely costs of associated services to core funding
- The partnership has demonstrated the 'added-value' benefits partnership working and community engagement can bring to an area. The financial support from Kingston Communications has been used by HEYwoods to maximize benefits, for environmental improvement projects and community participation.

Quotes:

Nick Thompson, Director of Consumer Services at KC *"Our partnership with HEYwoods is an important part of our commitment to the people of Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire in that we are working together to help improve our environment"*.

Critical Success Factors to take forward:

- Create a strong and informed relationship with private partner(s). In the case of HEYwoods the KC relationship grew from an approach from the company who were looking to improve the local environment
- Finding innovative ways to develop links with the private sector makes the initiative more robust to external funding pressures and helps to spread the base of funding sources
- Develop and maintain good community engagement through communication and involvement
- Utilise partnership opportunities to enhance long-term sustainability which will bring the organisation to the attention of other potential private partners.

CASE STUDY TWO

Location: Forest of Marston Vale, - The Marston Vale Trust - a social enterprise: Creating the Forest of Marston Vale between Bedford and Milton Keynes, Bedfordshire.

Partners: Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedford Borough Council, Landfill Communities Fund – Grantscape & WREN, Millennium Commission, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Cranfield Parish Council, Houghton Conquest Parish Council, Bedfordshire County Council, Timberland UK, HSBC, Earthwatch, Ikea, Nissan, The Carbon Neutral Company, Norwich and Peterborough Building Society, The Conservative Party, Berkley Homes, David Wilson Homes, Barclays Bank, Avis Car Rental, Emerald Acorn, F&R Cawley, Pearce Recycling, British Car Auctions, Blue Chip, Guy Salmon Jaguar, RICOH, Blue Energy.



Background: The Forest of Marston Vale is one of England's Community Forests . It was established in 1991 to use trees and woodlands to transform 61 square miles between Bedford and Milton Keynes, repairing a landscape scarred by decades of clay extraction, brickmaking and landfill. The Marston Vale Trust is the independent charitable trust and social enterprise created in 1997 to take forward the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale and secure a long-term future. The Trust works with local communities, government and businesses to deliver the Forest. The Trust removed the delivery of the Forest from its original dependency on public sector core funding and now owns and operates the Forest Centre, a purpose-built visitor centre and conference centre within the Millennium Country Park, the Trust's flagship site, both constructed during 1999. The Forest Centre started to trade in April 2000 and for 2011/12 is forecast to generate a turnover of just under £500,000. Commercial operation of the Forest Centre returns profits to the Trust to support the ongoing creation of the Forest of Marston Vale.

Objectives:

- To lead on the environmental regeneration of the Marston Vale by creating the Forest of Marston Vale
- Engage communities in a common goal of environmental regeneration
- Transform people's perceptions of the area and increase the range of stakeholders
- Facilitate wider economic and social regeneration of the area
- Increase woodland cover from 3% in 1991 to 30% by 2031
- For the Forest Centre to generate revenue for the charity, sufficient to fund both the management of the Millennium Country Park and subsidise the wider creation of the Forest of Marston Vale.

Actions:

- Grow the Forest Centre into a successful and profitable business
- Local and national business community engagement in the creation of the Forest (This brought over 100 business partners from local SME's to global brands and multi-nationals)
- Brokering successful public/private partnerships with extensive local community engagement
- Securing £20m in project funding
- Established a dedicated volunteer corps investing time equivalent to 5 FTE staff each year.

Forest of Marston Vale - The Marston Vale Trust - a social enterprise

- Achievements:**
- Over 1 million trees planted so far and woodland cover increased to 9%
 - £20m secured and invested in projects
 - Average of c.1,000 people actively involved in planting c. 10,000 trees annually
 - The Marston Vale Trust contributes around £1.5m to the local economy per year, through salaries, purchases and third party contracts
 - Successfully moved delivery of landscape-scale project from the public sector to independent charitable trust, yielding increased community engagement, increased project delivery, improved financial sustainability and increased private sector engagement.

- Lessons Learnt:**
- Need genuine commitment to massive and ongoing consultation and responding to community needs through growing volunteer force – such investment yields an excellent ‘return’
 - Social Enterprise model has been pivotal to continued existence, enabled the strong success to date and underpinning future sustainability
 - Entrepreneurial attitude is highly advantageous, allowing both planned and opportunistic approaches
 - Delivery of tangible improvements on the ground, with full community engagement, has increased since becoming a charity, despite core resources having reduced dramatically.

- Critical Success Factors to take forward:**
- An entrepreneurial attitude is advantageous particularly when dealing with private partners
 - Transforming the Trust from being just a “good cause” to being “a good cause and a good business” was fundamental to ongoing success
 - A social enterprise model provides the ability to make and take decisions quickly without multi-layered management involvement, plus a freedom to consider investing (within charity commission rules) surpluses from the good years for an income return and also in income generating projects
 - A tangible asset like the Forest Centre provides an opportunity to create an income but it is necessary to provide a service to and engagement with the community to develop a loyal customer base and engender ownership
 - The community liked and engaged more readily with an independent environmental charity more so than when the funding came totally from national and local government. Or is that a sign of a more determined attitude on the part of the staff? Does ongoing government funding make for complacency?

Quotes: “HSBC have worked with Marston Vale Trust on various environmental projects over some years and it is really good to see how they work with and consult the local community before undertaking any work. It is impressive to see that before starting any new work they put in place the long term plans to ensure its economic viability. The Trust also enables the set up of appropriate small enterprises within the country park.” Fiona Riley, National Community Engagement Manager, HSBC BANK PLC.



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