

## TEES FOREST

# Summerhill

*cleaner, safer, greener*

### Project Summary

The creation of a multi-user recreation facility in a newly planted woodland park on the western edge of Hartlepool.

### Background

Hartlepool Borough Council had been considering creating a recreational facility on agricultural land that forms an important green wedge into the heart of Hartlepool. The Forest proposed that the area be developed as a woodland park providing formal and informal recreational facilities.

### The Project

An immensely popular site was created within a 26 ha woodland with rambling, cycling, horse riding, exercise and fitness, cross country running, orienteering, archery and rock-climbing.

### What has been achieved?

The site has 30,000 – 40,000 visitors every year, with many coming from all over the north east for the large number of special events and group activities such as map reading, bird watching, painting and music. The site has a visitor centre, a boulder park, a BMX course and a bird feeding station.

Over 65,000 trees have been planted. Catcote Village, an Iron Age archaeological site, has been protected and interpreted as part of the development.

The landscape character and biodiversity of the urban-rural fringe of Hartlepool has improved with the restoration of many kilometres of hedgerows, and the creation of small ponds, marshes and meadows.

The engagement of the local community has been high, with voluntary support and financial assistance provided by a 'Friends of Summerhill' Group. The facility provides many health benefits in an area which has traditionally ranked low on health indices.

KEY FACTS	
DATES	1996 - ongoing
Partners	Hartlepool Borough Council, Countryside Agency, Sport England
Costs	
Funder(s)	Sports Lottery Fund, Capital Challenge, European Regional Development Fund, Woodland Grant Scheme, Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Shotton Paper Company
Size/scale	Total site: 45 ha Woodland: 26 ha Recreation and events area: 15 ha Visitors per annum: approx. 30,000 – 40,000