

Our work with Communities

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As the role of 'the community' becomes more important, I have been busy working 'on the ground' with community groups in North Wales to highlight the value of 'local' landscapes in improving many aspects of modern life.

By encouraging young and old alike to 'get out and learn while having fun, links have been made with communities right across North Wales, in the pilot phase of our *Learning through Landscapes* programme. Young people's events during the summer of 2005, have enabled us to build strong partnerships with community groups in Denbighshire, Flintshire and Conwy. In so doing, we have raised awareness about the importance of local landscape and improved people's sense of belonging for their community.

One such group we have been working with is the Ffrith Beach Action Group and their Ffrith Festival Gardens project. The Frith Festival gardens were hugely popular during their hey day (1930's - 50's) when people travelled to North Wales, stopping off first in Prestatyn to visit the Ffrith and walk along the seafront promenade, around the gardens and boating lake. Sadly over time the fabric of the gardens and many of its other attractions, has fallen in neglect.

So...basically the Ffrith Resident's Association, with support from another 18 groups have decided that something should happen to improve the area and make it a better place for the community, the youth of Prestatyn and also for tourists. With our help, a local Primary school has designed a poster for the Association to encourage youngsters to get involved.

CPRW's involvement in a "community clean up" will mean that a newly formed group of local people will do this work. In addition the group will work with local Youth clubs, schools and other organisations such as Keep Wales Tidy John Muir Award scheme to undertake document and promote the successes the Clean-up.



Saltney Ferry

As part of his duties, Flintshire County Council's Social Inclusion Officer assists community organisations build effective partnerships. Commenting on the work carried out with CPRW he said:

"During the summer of 2005, we worked closely with CPRW to carry out a local project in the Saltney Ferry area of Flintshire. The project introduced community members to the idea that their own local environment could be a backdrop to art.

Following a daylong workshop, planned and facilitated by CPRW and with the help of a local artist, Flintshire's Social Inclusion Officer

hoped that further opportunities would arise for the community to work with CPRW

"This community has actively taken part in a number of initiatives involving the recruitment of local people in a voluntary capacity to carry out annual community activities. The Saltney Ferry Tenants & Residents Association, as the key group in the village, would welcome the opportunity to be involved in a project that links both the school and community to its heritage. The area has a lot to offer and any initiatives that encourage communities to identify, look after and celebrate their heritage, is an exciting project to which I would certainly offer my support."



Ffrith Beach Action Group litter picking

Conwy Communities First

Following discussions with Karen Owen, Project Development Worker for Communities First Tudno & Mostyn - Llandudno to explore ways of implementing our "Sense of Place" project Karen commented that:

".... involving local communities in understanding their landscape is a very important part of our work in the Communities First areas - it gives people a sense of belonging and enables them to explore their own heritage.

This project is a great way to help people see what's on their own doorstep, to interpret and celebrate their local landscape and get them involved in making informed decisions about their surroundings".

Cwm Mountain is the focus for developing these opportunities and the scheme will involve planting broadleaved woodland, developing a woodland trail, sensory area and a small activity area and also producing an information/ educational centre. The added bonus is that the project is located in the heart of this community with fantastic views to both Llandudno shores.

The project focuses on children and the youth and reflects our belief that our future depends on the vitality of

our communities as attractive places to live and work. It will demonstrate how inequalities between communities can be reduced whilst retaining their character and distinctiveness.

The initiative provides opportunities for education and training, improving the environment, increasing the involvement of local people in regeneration work, improving community spirit and raising aspirations in terms of the quality of life and opportunities for healthy activity. In addition it will provide diversionary activities for young people at risk of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour.

Our most recent *Sense of Place* project has also caught the attention of communities across North Wales and will try to reconnect people with their landscapes. The programme will be undertaken in one community and school in each of the six North Wales counties using their locality as a learning resource and local museum collections as a means of understanding how the landscape heritage of that area reflects its traditions and activities and the extent that it has changed. The project will specifically encourage individuals from communities or circumstances without a tradition of appreciating the landscape to learn about, enjoy and understand

the benefits that their local landscapes provide. It is hoped this will motivate them to become involved in projects that make a difference and create a sense of place and a feeling of pride for their home surroundings.

By helping young people develop their own Sense of place, the project will enable them to appreciate and understand the nature of change good and bad in their home area and allow different generations to share their feelings about the landscape.

Editor's Note:

Since writing this article, Siân Hughes has left us. CPRW would like to thank Siân for making our project work in North Wales so successful. Recent funding for the North Wales "Sense of Place" project means that this work will continue under the guidance of a new North Wales Officer.