

Little Gerpins Case Study

February 2015



Little Gerpins

Brownfield Land Regeneration in the
Thames Chase Community Forest



When I first visited Little Gerpins it did not look a promising prospect. A former landfill site, this relic of a bygone era was a blight on the local landscape and added little in the way of value to its surroundings. Yet it sat within a growing network of woodlands and natural greenspaces that form the Thames Chase Community Forest.

The challenge was therefore to turn this site into a local asset and connect it to the wider area. That's not an easy task at the best of times but, with today's public spending constraints, all the more difficult.

This is why the project is so important, and thanks to an innovative partnership between Ingrebourne Valley Limited and the Forestry Commission the real potential of Little Gerpins has been unlocked. Using the combined strengths and resources of the public, private and third sectors, a new sustainable community woodland has been created.

This case study outlines the way it was achieved and I very much hope provides a prototype for future greenspace development opportunities.

Foreword

by Simon Hodgson,
Chief Executive,
Forest Enterprise England

1. A new prototype for future community woodlands...

An innovative approach

Little Gerpins is a special project and at its core is the adoption of an innovative approach to funding brownfield projects. It:

- Presents a novel approach to land regeneration using private sector investment to deliver public benefits.
- Addresses the dual challenges of both delivery and long-term stewardship.
- Demonstrates how a public-private partnership can add value and achieve more by combining skills and resources.
- Delivers locally, as well as contributing to wider strategic priorities – such as the All London Green Grid and the Thames Chase Plan.

The Forestry Commission is committed to creating new woodlands where they support wider social, environmental and economic objectives.

The regeneration of brownfield land to new community woodland has long been a priority for the Forestry Commission and it has developed particular expertise in the practical challenges of land regeneration and subsequent woodland establishment and management.

...designed for today's economic climate

However, recent reductions in public spending mean traditional funding methods that rely on Government financing new greenspace creation are no longer sustainable. As a result we need to find innovative ways to bring these projects forward.

This case study outlines a successful new approach to brownfield regeneration through a public-private partnership between Ingrebourne Valley Limited and the Forestry Commission at Little Gerpins near Upminster, Essex.

Forming part of the Thames Chase Community Forest¹ this study illustrates how a former landfill site, known as Little Gerpins, has been transformed into safe, accessible and sustainable community woodland that's primarily financed through private sector investment. It shows how a unique and innovative arrangement has been developed and implemented, along with the results the partnership has achieved so far.



Trucks on the skyline at Little Gerpins

2. The partners



Ingrebourne Valley Limited is a joint venture company between RJD Ltd and P.F. Ahern (London) Ltd and brings together expertise in quarrying and waste management.

Ingrebourne Valley Ltd led the reclamation of Little Gerpins and provided the funding which enabled the site to be transformed into new community woodland.

Ingrebourne Valley Ltd currently has a number of projects on-going throughout the South East of England and has turned hundreds of hectares of damaged land into new greenspace. Primarily this has been achieved by working in partnership with landowners and public organisations.



The Forestry Commission is the Government department responsible for protecting, improving and expanding England's forests and woodlands and increasing their value to society, the environment and the green economy. The Forestry Commission has been an active partner in the Thames Chase Community Forest for over sixteen years and is responsible for the creation and management of 400 hectares of new community woodland within the forest area.

The Forestry Commission provided expertise in the delivery and management of Little Gerpins, including master planning, landscape design, engineering, forest and tree planting and community engagement.



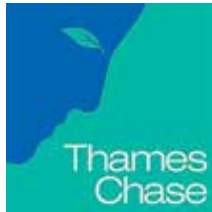
Forest Research is the research arm of the Forestry Commission. Its aim is to provide research services relevant to UK and international forestry interests and inform and support forestry's contribution to UK Governmental policies.

Forest Research provided specialist advice on soil quality, land regeneration, and monitoring and evaluation.



3. The project

Background



The **Thames Chase Community Forest**, part of the National Community Forest Programme, was established in 1990 as a major environmental and social regeneration initiative. Thames Chase is surrounded by a number of large urban centres in South West Essex and East London and covers an area of about 40 square miles. The landscape is diverse, but it contains a significant area of historic

poorly restored brownfield land once used as post-war mineral extraction and latterly, land-filling waste.

For 25 years Thames Chase has demonstrated the effectiveness of partnership working to create and deliver on a common vision for landscape scale regeneration.

Site location

Little Gerpins is located within the Community Forest between Rainham and Upminster and was one of a number of old landfill sites in this area.





The site during regeneration

Site history

Quarrying and tipping operations at the 17 hectare site date back to the late 1950s and early 1960s when it was worked for sand and gravel before being backfilled with a range of waste materials. By 1981 much of the site had become derelict and classed as damaged land owing to differential settlement and lack of soil depth. Its main use for the past 30 years has been as rough pasture.

Little Gerpins lay largely dormant until 2005 when Ingrebourne Valley Ltd acquired it with the intention to regenerate the site. Planning permission was granted by the London Borough of Havering in 2009 and on-site works began in 2010. These were completed in 2012 and, after extensive tree planting the site was formally opened to the public in spring 2013.

Little Gerpins is now managed by the Forestry Commission as community woodland with trails providing access for public amenity and recreation. As such it strengthens the links between the Forestry Commission's other woodland at Ingrebourne Hill to the South West and acts as a natural extension to the existing Bonnetts Wood and a wider network of greenspaces at Parklands to the North and beyond.

Pilot project priorities

Little Gerpins acted as a pilot for a new working arrangement and tested a number of objectives, including:

- How a public-private partnership could redress damaged sites on a landscape scale.
- Addressing disconnections by linking a number of managed greenspaces and opening up land previously inaccessible to the public.
- How to improve the area's landscape value by converting damaged land to positive new uses.
- How to improve quality of place (encouraging people to live and work in the area and business to invest).
- The creation of new opportunities for educational activities and community involvement.
- Addressing health inequalities by extending opportunities for outdoor exercise and activity.
- Securing the site's long-term sustainability as a public resource by establishing a productive landscape able to generate economic returns through woodfuel.

The process & funding

IVL's endowment funds capital works and management costs for 25 years

The project is built on a simple process that Ingrebourne Valley Ltd makes a profit accepting surplus excavated material from the construction industry and uses this to regenerate damaged land.

A proportion of the revenue generated forms an endowment which Ingrebourne Valley Ltd provides to the Forestry Commission on the signing of a 99 year management agreement.

The Forestry Commission uses the endowment to develop and manage the site as community woodland. Around 50% funds the capital works (i.e. access, surfaced trails, fencing, woodland planting, signage and benches) while the remaining endowment is held to fund the management costs for at least 25 years.

In addition to investment from Ingrebourne Valley Ltd, English Woodland Grant Scheme (a Rural Development Programme for England) funding was awarded to help support the creation of new community space. A Woodland Improvement Grant² contributed funding for the construction of accessible trails, site furniture and notice boards. A final Woodland Creation Grant³ enabled the planting of 12 hectares of mixed broadleaf, which will be managed for woodfuel.

Timeline

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Site acquired by Ingrebourne Valley Ltd			Forestry Commission and Ingrebourne Valley Ltd work to develop a masterplan for Little Gerpins	Planning permission granted by London Borough of Havering	Ingrebourne Valley Ltd imports surplus excavated material to regenerate Little Gerpins		Forestry Commission signs 99-year management agreement with Ingrebourne Valley Ltd	Forestry Commission begins woodland creation and the site opens to the public
					Ingrebourne Valley Ltd uses income generated to support development	English Woodland Grant Scheme enables woodland creation and public access	Ingrebourne Valley Ltd provides the Forestry Commission with an endowment for the future management of the site	
2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013

Funding

4. Delivering multiple benefits



Natural greenspaces should not only be safe, clean and attractive, they must also deliver a wide range of other benefits to people, the environment and the economy.

These non-market benefits can be identified as either direct or indirect, i.e.:

Direct - those directly attributable to work on the ground; for example, in the provision of new habitats, new places to walk, connectivity to other areas, and facilities for volunteering and education.

Or

Indirect - those longer term outcomes that may arise as a consequence of the work. These can include better health through the provision of places to exercise or more spending in the local area by creating an attractive area for people to live and visit.

Using values identified by Forestry Commission research on the social and environmental benefits of forests, it is possible to assert that Little Gerpins will generate a range of values for recreation, landscape enhancement, biodiversity and carbon dioxide sequestration⁴. Details of how such values may be determined are available at the non-market values section of the Forestry Commission website⁵.



Community benefits

Converting this former landfill site into safe and accessible community woodland has made a great contribution to the quality of the local area as well as providing a valuable new local resource.

This in turn can help support wider health and wellbeing initiatives and provide a focus for on-site community activity and volunteering opportunities.

Environmental benefits

The transformation through the Forestry Commission's planting that mixes woodland, scrub and grass glades has resulted in significant new habitat creation at Little Gerpins.

This new, diverse landscape was designed to complement the surrounding natural environment and provide green corridors, which are widely seen as an important mechanism for reversing the effects of fragmented habitats.

Carbon benefits

One of the most developed areas of non-market benefits in forestry is greenhouse gas - specifically carbon dioxide abatement. Carbon capture through planting new woodlands is a key policy theme across the UK.

The mixed broadleaf planted at Little Gerpins, managed for woodfuel, is predicted to sequester around 1196 tonnes of carbon dioxide over a 20 year rotation.

5. Conclusions

More than 27,500
new trees and shrubs
have been planted

Little Gerpins is a huge success and highlights how a public-private partnership can bring damaged land back into positive use and create new woodland close to where people live.

In line with identified pilot project priorities, the result of the project has been to:

- Convert 17 hectares of former closed landfill into attractive and accessible new community woodland.
- Work with a private sector partner and utilise private sector investment to deliver long-term conservation and community gain.
- Contribute towards a link for pedestrians and cyclists between Ingrebourne Hill and Bonnetts Wood.
- Plant 12 hectares of new woodland (approx. 27,500 trees and shrubs).
- Create 5 hectares of grass glades and open space.
- Plant 200 metres of new species rich hedgerow.
- Create 2000 linear metres of grass rides for horses and informal recreation.
- Create 1000 linear metres of accessible trails.

The Forestry Commission engaged with local communities throughout the project and held a community tree-planting day for more than 60 local residents.

Ultimately, the full impact of the site can only be assessed over time and set in the context of the area's greenspace network. The Forestry Commission will continue to monitor the site, particularly to measure impacts in terms of:

- Regenerated land, thereby helping improve image and attractiveness as an aide to supporting inward investment.
- Joined-up natural areas, thereby improving the ecological value of the area.
- Expanding safe, accessible greenspace close to where people live in support of health and well-being objectives.

Accurate measurement will be a long-term process and will be based on the ecosystem services approach. We are currently working with Forest Research to put in place the necessary monitoring and evaluation framework to allow all of the above to be monitored.

A full list of 'lessons learnt' is included in Appendix 1.



Site design

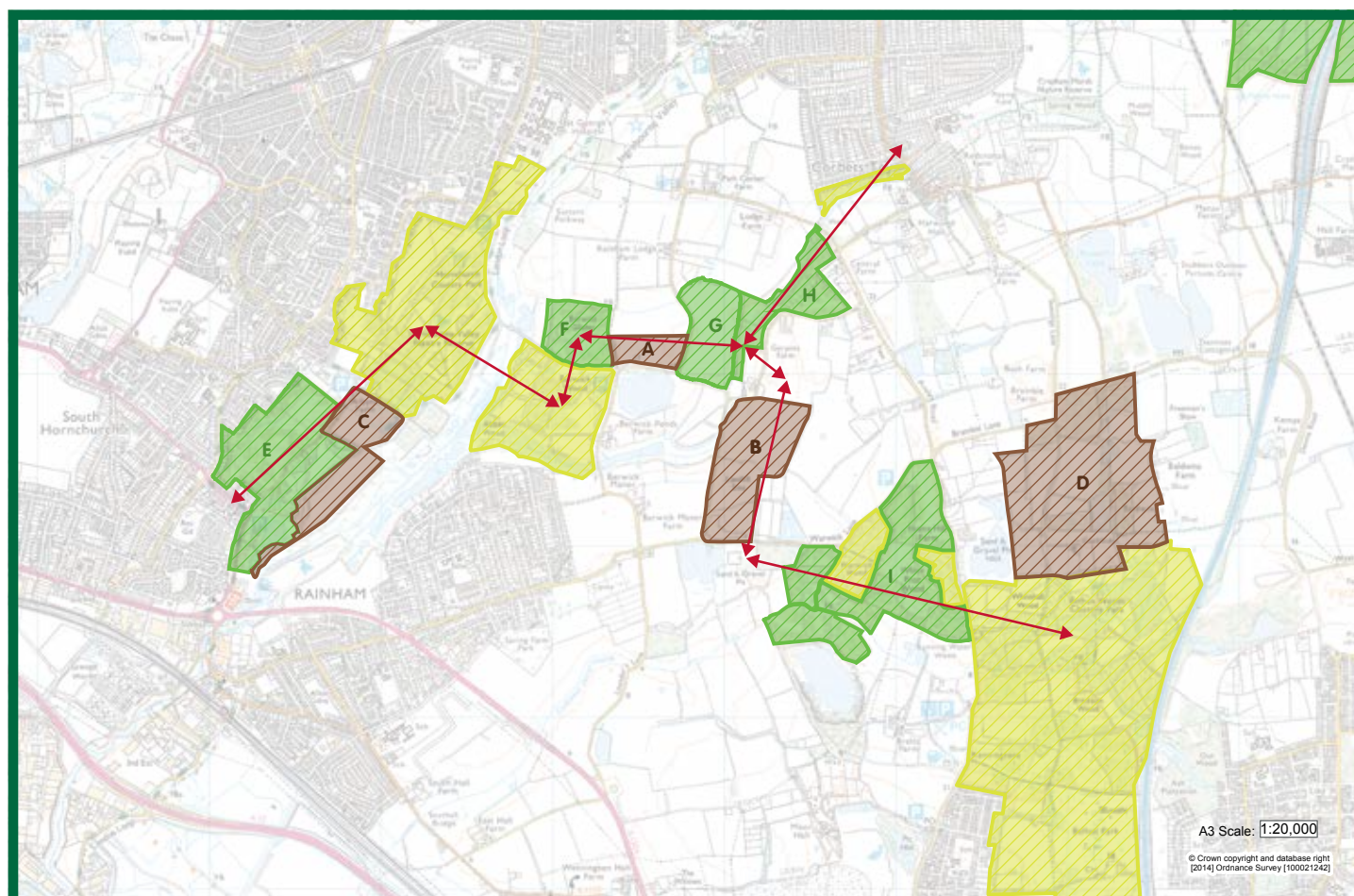


Little Gerpins has been transformed through extensive tree planting

6. The future

Little Gerpins acted as a pilot project and its success has encouraged Ingrebourne Valley Ltd and the Forestry Commission to actively explore further opportunities to work in partnership on the regeneration of other brownfield sites identified in the All London Green Grid Area 3 Framework⁶.

A 129 hectare multi-site programme is being explored. While the final programme may vary depending on commercial opportunities, due diligence and planning permissions, the current possibilities are shown in the map below in brown:



LEGEND

Brownfield Programme Opportunities

A	Little Gerpins 2	7 hectares
B	Pinch & Ahern	18 hectares
C	Ingrebourne Hill (phase 3)	25 hectares
D	Baldwins Farm	79 hectares
Total		129 hectares

Existing Public Forest Estate

E	Ingrebourne Hill (phases 1 & 2)	44 hectares
F	Berwick Glades	12 hectares
G	Little Gerpins	17 hectares
H	Bonnetts Wood	17 hectares
I	Cely Wood	57 hectares
Total		147 hectares

	Other Greenspace
↔	Key Linkages

These four projects represent an opportunity for the Forestry Commission to increase the Public Forest Estate within the Thames Chase Community Forest by over 40% during the next decade, primarily through the use of private sector investment.

The regeneration of these sites to greenspace will also serve to strengthen the links across the Community Forest and create a continuous East–West link – important for both people and wildlife⁷.

Appendix 1: Technical details

Regulatory framework

The remediation works at Little Gerpins conformed to the Environmental Permitting Exemption provisions of the Waste Management Regulations implemented by the Environment Agency.

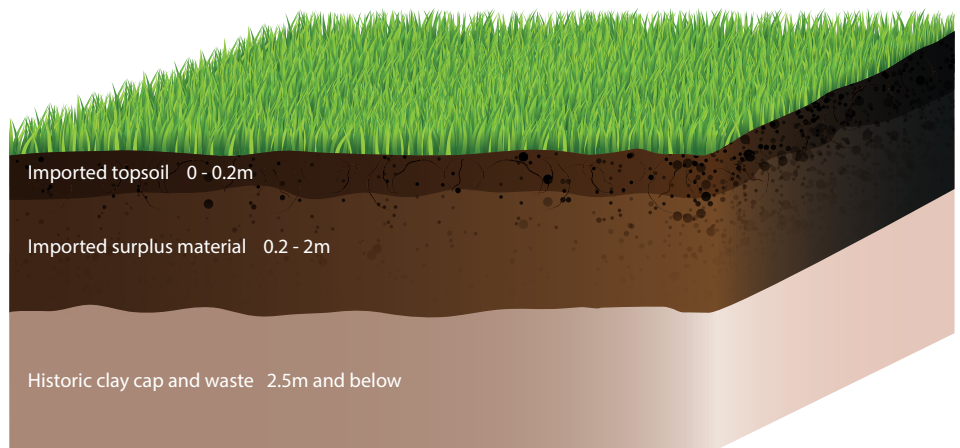
Scheme design

Working collaboratively with Ingrebourne Valley Ltd, the Forestry Commission's Landscape Architect played a key role in developing a masterplan for the site. This included:

- An assessment of the landscape character, and identifying opportunities to create new links across the Thames Chase Community Forest.
- Concept designs for woodland creation.
- Recreation infrastructure standards that allow access for all but also prevented fly-tipping and other forms of anti-social behaviour.
- Investigating different options for the site's end use that will generate revenue to support long-term management.
- Designing the site so it is compatible with cost effective maintenance and future woodland management opportunities (e.g. harvesting routes and timber transfer point).

Key design challenges

- Achieving a landform that accommodated the necessary volume of excavated materials to make the scheme commercially viable but remaining sensitive to the surrounding landscape.
- Meeting accessible trail gradients on a raised landform.
- Reducing the long term management costs whilst maximising the potential for revenue generation.



The design criteria

Ingrebourne Valley Ltd and the Forestry Commission identified:

- Woodland creation to maximise the potential benefits for wildlife and people whilst minimising the long-term maintenance costs and maximising any potential for revenue generation through managing as woodfuel.
- Development of a strategic accessible link between Ingrebourne Hill and Bonnetts Wood.
- Minimising the potential risk of anti-social behaviour (motor bike access and illegal tipping).
- Achieving an acceptable soil depth for establishing woodland. Soil depth is important to ensure sufficient rooting depth and moisture availability for growing trees.

Forest Research highlighted that, while guidelines of 1.2-1.5 metres may be sufficient, on average the dry climate of the Thames Chase Community Forest and the nature of the materials used to form soils would likely lead to on-site drought conditions and therefore it was proposed that a preferred depth of 1.8-2.0 metres be adopted wherever possible.

The importation and use of surplus excavated materials for new land forming creates its own challenges for both tree establishment and public health. Forest Research was responsible for developing a specification for analysis of chemical properties of imported materials, as well as the physical properties of placed soils.

This advice followed **Forest Research Best Practice Guidance Notes for Land Regeneration**⁸, which includes standards for chemical (nutrient status, contamination) and physical (bulk density and stone content, organic matter content) quality during material importation, blending and transportation on site, and placement.

The general synopsis of the soil structure post reclamation was of a 1.8 metre root zone, which was relatively free draining, resulting in dry conditions with a soil moisture deficit that is particularly acute in the summer months. In addition, the soil was alkaline, due to the use of builder's rubble including concrete in the imported screened soils, in which only the most tolerant tree species could survive.



Short Rotation Forestry⁹ was identified as a management objective for Little Gerpins due to the potential to generate long-term income from the woodland. This is a key component in securing the site's financial sustainability. Ten hectares have been planted as Short Rotation Forestry at a density of 2,250 stems per hectare and the key species include Italian Alder (55%), Norway Maple (10%), Sycamore (10%) and Small Leaved Lime (5%) with the final 20% comprised of a number of lesser-known species being trialled at lower densities to assess suitability for use at future regeneration sites. Species (typically Silver Birch and Rowan) were used along block edges to create a more attractive and diverse woodland edge. Final species selection reflected those able to adapt to current and predicted site conditions and anticipated climate change.



Wild Cherry species

Two hectares were planted with low forest/shrub species to provide permanent areas of woodland cover. An intimate mixture at a rate of 1,100 stems per hectare was planted which included species such as Wild Cherry (32%), Field Maple (30%), Rowan (20%), Hawthorn (10%) and Silver Birch (8%). This will be managed for wildlife and aesthetic resource to increase the quality of the overall site.



Rowan species

- This project trialled a new technique to monitor soil quality that involved sampling direct from the lorry as the excavated material was being imported. This proved unnecessarily complicated and expensive. It is better to wait until the material is placed and then survey. However, it is important to have early agreement with the operator to ensure materials are placed according to Best Practice Guidelines, and care must be taken to protect the soils from unnecessary trafficking. Regular on-site visits should be made to ensure compliance.
- It is important to establish a grass sward soon after placement so as to inhibit the germination of species contained within the imported material. The species will compete for water, light and nutrients and this will negatively impact on the establishment of young trees.
- The potential for working collaboratively with other land reclamation specialists to maximise the potential of and realise the benefits to be derived from regenerated sites.
- The benefit of soil organic matter content is well recognised as it improves both the chemical and physical properties in the soil. Opportunities to incorporate organic matter into future materials should be explored between the Forestry Commission, Forest Research and Ingrebourne Valley Ltd.

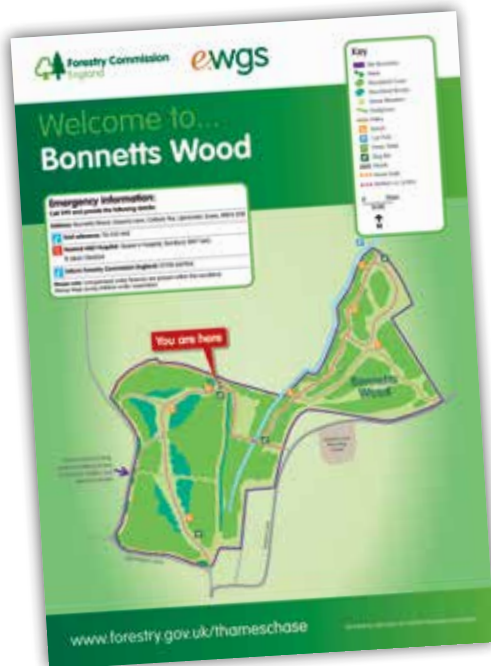
Lessons learnt

- It is important to establish the design masterplan and quality assurance procedures at the earliest opportunity within the site development process.
- The need to take a commercially minded approach to optimising the potential volume of excavated materials, whilst still ensuring compatibility with the existing landscape character and increasing the social and environmental benefits for people and wildlife.

Future research

- Soil biology is still poorly understood in land regeneration and is not fully addressed in brownfield regeneration techniques. Further research and knowledge dissemination is required.
- The value of ecosystem services provided by newly created community woodlands has yet to be determined. Options to increase the ecosystem services provided by altering the site's masterplan should also be considered.

Appendix 2: The wider planning and policy context



Embedded within the Thames Chase Community Forest, Little Gerpins is another important piece of a network of open spaces and nature corridors that help to define this forest area. As such given its position and design, as well as the innovative approach taken to delivery, it can be seen to contribute to both local and national priorities:

Local

- Little Gerpins falls within the “North Thames Terrace” landscape character zone of the All London Green Grid Area 3 “Thames Chase, Beam and Ingrebourne” - an area characterised by open, arable farmland and the impacts of former gravel extraction and landfill - and where the creation of “a mosaic of open spaces and woodland in Thames Chase and improved access to the open countryside” and the regeneration of “a number of completed landfill and mineral extraction sites in this area as new open spaces to increase public access” are specifically called for.
- The All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance¹⁰ objectives highlight the importance of connected greenspaces to well-being and seeks to promote a shift from “grey to green infrastructure to secure environmental, social and economic benefits” and provides guidance on the implementation of London policy.
- The site is also within the Thames Gateway Local Nature Partnership area, which is challenged with “establishing as an agent of positive change in the Thames Gateway, engaging public, private and civil society partners to bring tangible benefits to the area’s economy, its people and wildlife”. The innovative public/private approach to the delivery of Little Gerpins, with its multi-functional objectives, has the potential to provide a valuable model for how Local Nature Partnership delivery might evolve in the future.

National

- The Government’s Forestry and Woodland Policy Statement (2013)¹¹ seeks to increase woodland cover; maximise the social and economic benefits of trees and woods (particularly in and around our towns and cities); support trees and woods as an integral part of green infrastructure and allow for new and better managed woodland in making rural and urban landscapes more resilient to the effects of climate change.
- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)¹² actively promotes the provision of green infrastructure and identifies an approved Community Forest Plan as a material consideration in preparing development plans and considering planning applications.
- “Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services” (2011)¹³ supports a strategic, network approach and highlights the need to empower local communities through the use of volunteers, including a priority action to “develop new and innovative financing towards the achievement of biodiversity outcomes”.
- “The Natural Choice – Securing the Value of Nature” (2011)¹⁴ supports a large scale, strategic, joined up approach creating resilient ecological networks across England; reconnecting people and nature; facilitating greater local action to protect and improve nature; improving the quality of life within and around our towns and cities; green infrastructure and urban greenspace and creating a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other.
- “Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A Strategy for public health in England” (2010)¹⁵ positively promotes healthy behaviours and lifestyles; adapting the environment to make healthy choices easier; protecting greenspaces and launching physical activity initiatives.



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1. Thames Chase Community Forest www.thameschase.org.uk
2. Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d6dce98>
3. Woodland Creation Grant (WCG) <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d6dceg>
4. Woodland Carbon Code <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/carboncode>
5. Non-market values of forests <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d8rck8m>
6. All London Green Grid: Thames Chase, Beam and Ingrebourne Area Framework <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/AF03%20Thames%20Chase,%20Beam,%20Ingrebourne.pdf>
7. This has been identified as a priority within a number of local strategies including the All London Green Grid which supports the London Plan policies on green infrastructure and urban greening.
8. Forest Research: Best Practice Guidance Notes A series of Best Practice Guidance (BPG) Notes on a range of issues affecting the successful establishment of greenspace on contaminated and brownfield land. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/urgc-7edcea>
9. Short Rotation Forestry involves growing high yielding tree species over short rotations (between 10 and 20 years) primarily for the production of biomass. [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/TechguidanceShortRotationForestry.pdf/\\$FILE/TechguidanceShortRotationForestry.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/TechguidanceShortRotationForestry.pdf/$FILE/TechguidanceShortRotationForestry.pdf)
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15. Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England. Dept for Health (November 2010) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-lives-healthy-people-our-strategy-for-public-health-in-england>

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Greenspace Development Document

March 2008

GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTATION

The Jeskyns and Ingrebourne Hill Projects



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INTRODUCTION

Document

The purpose of this document is to summarise all activity undertaken by the Thames Chase Team in connection with the development of two further greenspace sites in the south of the East Anglia Forest District¹ – namely Jeskyn's Farm in Thames Gateway, Kent and the Ingrebourne Valley, within the Thames Chase Community Forest. The document is designed to provide new team members, or senior Forest District executives with a clear record of the Team's thinking and actions at each stage of these greenspace projects' development.

In order to provide a clear summary of these two projects, *Document-doctor* has interviewed the key team participants, revisited the sites and been given access to all of the relevant documentation. The structure of the report following this Document and Project Introduction, consists of Gantt chart overviews, followed by the project's respective chronologies of events/activity associated with them, illustrated photographically and culminating in individual project bibliographies containing abstracts of the key project documentation. It closes with common appendices dealing with the relevant maps, displays of associated marketing materials and relevant stakeholder information. This document is accompanied by a CD containing all of the files for documents featured in each project bibliography.

A project chronology needs to be read in conjunction with its associated bibliography. At appropriate points throughout the chronology are references to relevant documentation. These references consist of a bibliography number and document code in brackets, e.g. (3. JF), this example refers to the flyer issued by the chartered surveyors in early 2005 offering Jeskyn's Farm for tender.

At the time of writing, while the Jeskyns² project is complete, engineering works are still underway on the Ingrebourne Hill³ site. Thus it is intended to issue an addendum to the report on this second project later this year covering the the official opening, results of the community engagement process, and subsequent development of the site's management plan.

1. In 2007 East Anglia Forest District was re-designated Forestry Commission East Anglia East of England.

2. Jeskyn's Farm was re-named Jeskyns in 2007.

3. The original project name Ingrebourne Valley had been proposed, as it was the name of the limited company associated with the development and described the area into which the greenspace was to be created. The more appropriate name of Ingrebourne Hill was subsequently adopted as a result of community input in 2007.

Projects

These two projects were originally triggered by awareness within East Anglia Forest District (EAFD) that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)⁴ were seeking to fund further greenspace projects within their Thames Gateway Growth Area (as part of the Sustainable Communities Plan). The Ingrebourne Valley site, a potential community woodland within the original Thames Chase Community Forest, dated back to the late 90s and had been subject to protracted negotiations. On the other hand the Jeskyns programme did not formally get underway until early on in 2005 – although beforehand, during the course of 2004, there was a good deal of preliminary work to secure funding for both of these projects.

This phase of the District's greenspace development programme began with the East Anglia Forest District team 'creating' their development product (see the Greenspace Handbook), which was first showcased as part of a Thames Chase Community Forest open day for a range of interested parties on 5 March 2004 at the Forest Centre, Cranham. Guests on the day included representative of the ODPM's Thames Gateway team. Later that year (29 October 2004) EAFD hosted the ODPM's Thames Gateway Delivery Unit (TGDU), again at the Forest Centre. At this presentation half a dozen printed copies of the 'Gamma' version of the Greenspace Handbook (created to act as a sales tool demonstrating the FC's capacity to deliver greenspace) were presented to this team.

Following this October 2004 visit, a senior Forest Enterprise (FE) member of staff was invited to meet with the head of the Thames Gateway Delivery Unit (TGDU). At that meeting, an offer was made by TGDU for FE to present any additional greenspace projects they were currently examining/progressing within the Thames Gateway. These would then be assessed directly by the TGDU and either approved or rejected. It was made clear that the TGDU were very keen on rapid delivery of a greenspace project to help demonstrate their commitment to improving the environment in which people live, whilst creating new housing and businesses.

Shortly after, to further bolster the EAFD's greenspace development credentials, the Team attended the Thames Gateway exhibition held in November at the Excel Centre in London's Docklands. For this a special advocacy leaflet had been previously prepared and distributed to, amongst others, the Deputy PM John Prescott. This item was also well received and, given what followed for both Jeskyns and Ingrebourne Hill, indicates the value of this awareness-raising activity first recommended by 'Document-doctor' in November 2003.

4. In due course the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was re-named the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

PROJECT 2

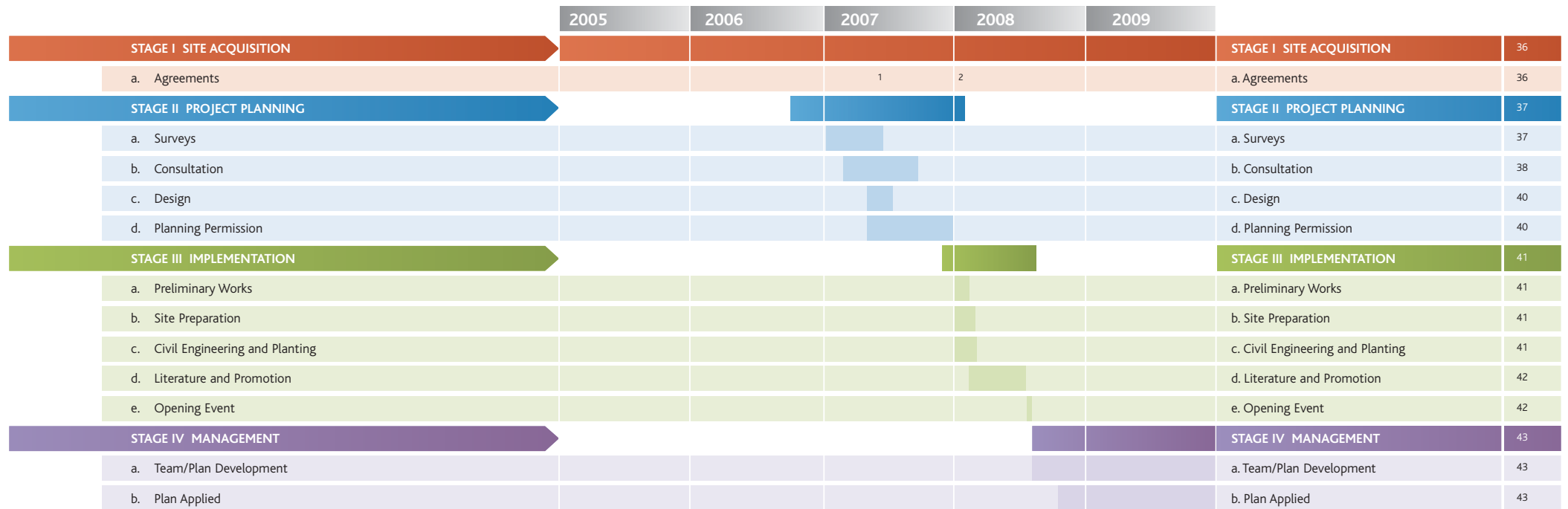
INGREBOURNE HILL



Ingrebourne Hill Gantt chart



Ingrebourne Hill Gantt chart



¹ Phase1 Agreement signed

² Phase2 Agreement signed

Chronology

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Regarded as a joint exercise with the site's owners Ingrebourne Valley Limited (IVL), this brownfield project had been underway for a considerable time. Before 1998 a good deal of site preparation had previously been undertaken by IVL (Phase 1 of this project consisted of landscaping and path installation by IVL and some tree planting by the Forestry Commission). At the time of writing the Phase 2 of this project is underway, with Phase 3 not scheduled until at least 2009. Also the local community have proved to be much less troubled by this development. As a result of works still being underway and a more straightforward community consultation than Jeskyns, the Ingrebourne documentation is neither as complex nor extensive as that for the Jeskyns programme.

Site History

The Ingrebourne Valley site is a former gravel extraction and landfill site that was poorly restored prior to 1998. The current owners, along with a civil engineering firm (Pryors), set up Ingrebourne Valley Company Limited to re-restore the site and convert it into a country park during the 90s. The Forestry Commission, through Thames Chase, became involved with the site towards the end of the decade as these two partners sought a means of utilising it for public benefit.

In 2005 Ingrebourne Valley was a component of the FC approach, along with the Jeskyns project, to the then ODPM (now DCLG) as the Commission sought ODPM funding for sites as part of the Department's sustainable communities programme. Subsequently in 2006 the DCLG Thames Gateway Growth Area offered the Forestry Commission £1m funding to develop the site over and above the existing planning regulations.

The issue of agreements has been central to this project's development. After several setbacks, including concern over the type of long-term site agreement (such as the FC's concerns and then withdrawal from adopting a pie-crust agreement), vegetation cover growth problems arising from some of the placed soil (the pyretic soil problem), plus the release of carbon dioxide and some methane from the site, with these problems resolved a general direction was agreed between IVL and the FC, to which London Borough of Havering (LBH) were privy. The protracted negotiations finally led to the FC signing up to Phase 1 of the 99-year management agreement with IVL in July 2007. This provided the FC with the long-term security over the management rights they required.

This agreement plus the funding package, put together in early 2007, meant the FC were prepared to take on the whole of the Ingrebourne site, allowing it to significantly improve the site's level of facilities and habitats and set up a community consultation and engagement programme prior to embarking on Phases 2 of the project (see section 3.1a. below for a breakdown of the three phases and (1.IVP) and Appendix 1.c for a geographical illustration). The agreement to Phase 2 was duly signed in January 2008.

1998

2005

2006

2007

2008

For Phase 2 of the project, of special interest to the DCLG, was a requirement for the FC to make an effort to involve teenagers and young adults. It was decided at an early stage in the design process that this interest would be secured by installing a 'beginners' mountain bike trail on the site. Teenagers were explicitly targeted during the consultation process and encouraged to participate in the search for exciting design ideas (see leaflet in Appendix 2.b).

2009

The commencement of Phase 3 is pending as it depends upon an agreement between IVL and LBH planners. At the time of writing the start date is thought to be no earlier than 2009 and might possibly be as late as 2012. It should be noted therefore that until Phase 3 is completed, the FC will not have full access to the site.

2. SITE SPEC.

The site is 74 ha, originally farm grazing land, and then used for gravel extraction, which subsequently became landfill. Its gravel works usage lasted until the 1960s and it was then steadily filled during the 70s and 80s. Over this period the site was also intermittently used by travellers for grazing their animals. The site was finally acquired by IVL in the late 90s and inert materials were then placed over the existing waste.

The nature of the site is distinctly different from its hinterland, with the low-lying Hornchurch Country Park to the north, housing estates to the west and south and the Ingrebourne River floodplain to the east. It is by far the highest point in South Hornchurch (some 70 feet), offering commanding views over the Thames to the south, as well as up and down this River's course. Much of the land surrounding the adjacent Ingrebourne River marshes is waterlogged (especially during the winter), presenting the site with some drainage issues. To the south are a small pond and a lake, as the elevation drops to the A134 that constitutes the site's southern boundary.

There is also a significant SSSI to the east and south. Ingrebourne Valley Local Nature Reserve forms part of the Thames Terrace Landscape. This LNR has a rich mosaic of habitats including secondary woodland, rough grassland, acid grassland, river, marshes, wetland grazing, and reedbeds. It is important for a wide range of plants, animals, birds including an active heronry and summer and winter migrants, insects, reptiles and there is an apiary run by the local beekeeping association.

Being adjacent, Ingrebourne Hill is regarded as a potential site for great crested newt, water vole, grass snakes and other reptiles, significant invertebrates such as Red Book bee species, as well as pochard on the lake. Skylark can be found throughout the year.

PHOTO ESSAY #1

General views, before development commenced, 2007



PHOTO ESSAY #1

General views, before development commenced, 2007



3. CHRONOLOGY OF INGREBOURNE HILL PROJECT

The aims of the project were described as being to develop and install the recreational and habitat infrastructure of the site as well as prepare the FC to take on the long-term management of the site

2007

The specific measurable deliverables were specified in (2.PMP) as follows:

Environmental

1. Create environmental gain

- a) Add value to the SSSI through the identification and creation of suitable neighbouring habitats
- b) Meet one or more of the local BAP targets (as appropriate)

Social

2. Create high local demand for this site

- a) Demonstrate an increase in visits between opening and 2 years after the opening

3. Extensive local involvement in site

- a) Plan and undertake an extensive local consultation programme
- b) Increase, to a sustainable level, the use of volunteers to help deliver and manage the site on a regular basis

4. Increase the number of people travelling by sustainable means to the site

- a) Promote access to the site via sustainable transport means
- b) Measure the number of non-car based visits to the site

Economic

5. Minimise costs and maximise any potential revenue without unduly restricting the potential audience or target audience

- a) Create a costed management plan

Other

6. Meet local objectives

- a) Identify and deliver upon established local objectives

7. Compliment other sites and projects (i.e. not to compete, but fill a niche)

- a) Specify the niche in which Ingrebourne Valley will operate

8. Create a flagship site for the FC

- a) Create a site that can be used for formal visits as an exemplar of FC delivery and expertise

Details of the aims for this site and the research and considerations underpinning the plan can be found in the Ingrebourne Valley Project Management Plan dated January 2007 (2.PMP).

The programme that follows, consistent with the Greenspace Handbook, naturally divides into four key phases thus:

■ I. Initiation

■ II. Planning

■ III. Implementation

■ IV. Management

Details of all of the tasks that created this project can be found on the timeline document (5.PT) and for the consultation programme (6.CP) in the accompanying bibliography.

I. SITE ACQUISITION

a. Management Agreement

The management agreement, which was struck in July 2007 was for Phase 1 only. It is intended that the project agreement will ultimately be in three phases (see (1.IVP) for delineation of these areas): Phase 1 – the area surveyed and ready to be opened – in effect the area currently available to the public; Phase 2 – the area in which capping was complete but waiting to be surveyed; Phase 3 – haul road and sorting area. Phase 3 may be used by IVL to access another site for at least 2 years after 2008 (although this has still to be agreed by the LBH planners).

b. Team Creation

Project Based Staff

- Project Champion
- Project Sponsor
- Project Manager

Site Team

- Forester
- Community Ranger
- Administrator

Landscape Architects

A main individual supported by an architect from the national team

Civil Engineers

A team of engineers performing various disciplines

Specialists

- Land Agent
- Forest Research
- Archaeology/Heritage Advisor
- Ecology

I. SITE ACQUISITION

Direct Advisors

- Communications

Note that the site team also retained responsibility for the other 9 Thames Chase sites over the course of this project.

Consultants

A selection of consultants also contributed a range of specialist support services on the project.

These included:

- Environmental and soil
- Communications & design

Contractors

One contractor was appointed to handle both the civil works and the planting.

II. PROJECT PLANNING

Formal planning commenced with the production of the Project Plan (2.PMP) in January 2007. This plan was compiled with knowledge of a number of surveys already completed by IVL. Formal community consultations have been underway since April 2007:

a. Surveys

Only a limited number needed commissioning as IVL were forthcoming with a good deal of the survey work they had separately commissioned (such as topography).

Surveys commissioned included:

- Great Crested Newts study
- Ecological assessment
- Soil surveys to establish suitability for planting

2007

Aug

PHOTO ESSAY #2

Surveys and community consultation, 2007





2007

Feb

b. Consultation

A consultation strategy was requested from an outside consultancy (3.CSB). The brief requested that these proposals actively seek the involvement of the local community (especially teenagers), but whilst also recognising that the team's manpower was stretched. Accordingly a range of remote communication and data gathering exercises were proposed which would rapidly and without undue team input provide the necessary data and guidance. To that end the consultancy suggested the use of 'broadcast' media (48 sheet and 4-sheet poster sites around South Hornchurch, close to the Ingrebourne site) so as to spread the word as dramatically as possible around the immediate hinterland. The 48 sheet posters were also 'officially' fly-posted with event dates. The consultant's resulting proposal (4.CSEP) issued 31 March 2007 was duly accepted.

March

From the outset this consultancy warned that a combination of the nature of the project (improving a site that was already regarded as a recreation asset in an area well endowed in greenspace terms) and the hinterland's demographic character would lead to low levels of response and commitment.

April

The community and stakeholder consultation was undertaken during the spring and summer of 2007. The former being designed to generate ideas from the community and help engender a feeling of ownership of the site. Three separate community research initiatives were undertaken:

- i. Public meetings
- ii. Household questionnaire – 2000 distributed
- iii. Web-based 'exercise' questionnaire

May

i. Community

A range of creative materials was produced to support this community consultation effort (see Appendix 2.b for examples). These included:

- mood boards to evoke a range of site usages
- display panels – pop-up back-drops for meetings/presentations
- selection of posters (A3, 4-sheet, 48-sheet)
- banners ('Watch this greenspace' at site entrance and for meetings)
- leaflet
- customised website

A photography competition was also arranged (to which there was no response).

Oct

Additionally, specifically to involve teenagers/young adults, a Mountain Bike Design Competition was arranged and publicised, largely via local schools. While a modest number of designs were submitted, the entry standard was excellent and two worthy winners found. They received their customised Mountain Bike prizes in December.

Dec

Late in 2007 a newsletter (entitled 'Views') was produced and distributed to 5000 households early in 2008.

2008

Mar

There was also a tree-planting event arranged for early March 2008 directed separately at both adults (100+ attendees) and school children in South Hornchurch and Rainham.

ii. Schools

Although the schools were approached to support the Mountain Bike Competition in autumn 2007 (and later for a series of tree-planting events during March 2008), in addition teachers at 4 local schools were approached late on in the summer term and early autumn of 2007 to encourage their use of the Ingrebourne site as a teaching asset. These approaches utilised a special education pack developed for schools adjacent to the site (8.EP). This pack outlined the benefits of the green classroom and provided a series of lesson plans that could be associated with the site.

To date two schools have definitely agreed to use the site as a green classroom.

iii. Stakeholders

Key stakeholders were also consulted to ensure that major opportunities were sought and delivered upon, such as creating a more appropriate link to the London Loop footpath through the site.

Dialogues were initiated with key stakeholders (see Appendix 3 for the list) in the form of a workshop held on 8 May 2007. A summary of the issues raised is included in the bibliography (7.IHSM).

A small range of materials was also produced to support this dialogue, including a leaflet and pop-up displays (see Appendix 2.b).

iv. Results

The community engagement consultant produced a full report of the stakeholder and community processes (10.CSCP) on 29 June 2007. Results were, as anticipated, light. Just under 100 community replies were eventually received to the various research initiatives and a considerable quantity of useful suggestions were generated.

These replies revealed the overall attitude towards the site was a uniformly favourable one. Ingrebourne was regarded as largely being for relaxation purposes, although the secondary requirement for gentle exercise also needed to be born in mind for the design.

2007

2007

May

2007

Jun

2007

Apr

Jun

Jul

c. Design Process

Work to prepare the initial design began mid April 2007. Following stakeholder and community comments, this original design was revised in mid June (9.MP) and formed the basis for the mid July planning application (11.PA).

2007

Jul

Dec

d. Securing Planning Permission

An application containing the revised design was submitted to the London Borough of Havering on 13 July 2007 (11.PA). Following the standard 8-week process, permission was duly granted in late September, although a number of minor adjustments were requested concerning the car park, play areas and entrances. All proposals were fully accepted by the Borough in late December 2007 (12.PAA).

PHOTO ESSAY #3

Preparing the site and engineering, 2008



PHOTO ESSAY #3

Preparing the site and engineering, 2008



a. Preliminary Works

Phase 1 was begun, following basic and informal community consultations, in 1998 (although the actual agreement for this Phase was not signed until July 2007) with:

- Tree planting
- Path installation
- Resolution of Pyretic soils (pH2) problem that was resulting in vegetation loss

The present project stage (2007 – 08) is dealing with Phase 2 and planning for Phase 3.

As a preliminary to the next phase, additional tree planting is presently being planned for winter 2009.

1998

b. Site Preparation

Starting in January 2008 an extra 1 m of topsoil was added to the areas designated for tree planting, before the works proper got underway in February.

2008

Jan

c. Civil Engineering & Planting

Work commenced in the first week in January 2008 and is due for completion on 31st March.

Snagging will be undertaken over the remaining course of 2008 and on into early 2009.

2008

Jan

Mar

Tree planting

The tender for planting, rabbit fencing, spirals, tree establishment and vegetation management went out in December 2007.

It is planned to plant 28,000 on the site between March 2008 and a further 5000+ trees, possibly early on in spring 2009, should Phase 3 be agreed.

2007

Dec

2008

Mar

d. Site Naming

Feedback from the household questionnaire produced an overwhelming result in favour of the name Ingrebourne Hill.

2007

June

III. IMPLEMENTATION WORKS

2008

Feb

e. Literature and site Promotion

Contracts to provide a range of materials were issued to two design agencies in February. For professional stakeholders a 'high-end' glossy brochure is to be produced. While for the general public a more extensive range of materials, including postcards, flyers, posters and various types of banners for events, are to be produced (13.IHP). A promotional flyer is also to be developed for schools. A 12 page leaflet produced in the style of the rest of the Thames Chase estate literature is also in preparation.

All of the above materials are to be available for the launch event.

As part of the programme to promote the site a tree planting day was held on the 8th March. This was a success, being attended by over 100 residents who planted 900+ trees.

July

f. Opening Event

This event is presently planned to be held on 5th July 2008.

PHOTO ESSAY #4

Installation



PHOTO ESSAY #4

Installation



a. Developing the Management Team & Plan

Work to recruit a team will commence once the site is opened. Currently it is intended to start work on the document during summer 2008.

2008

Jun

b. Management Plan Applied

Not applicable at time of writing.

c. On-going Community Engagement

Work began to recruit volunteers during the original summer 2007 consultation process. The Thames Chase team are currently actively adding to this list in the course of spring 2008 and anticipates the first teams being deployed on-site during the coming summer, following the launch event.

4. COMPLETED SITE

In July 2008 the site will contain 4.1 km of walks, of which 0.9 km will be all-ability. Path connections to the adjacent Hornchurch Country Park to the north and also a connection to the London Loop, which is intended to run through the site. There will be 3 km of cycling trails and for horses 2.1 km of paths as well as access throughout the site's grassed areas.

Additionally there will be two play areas (one formal, close to the car park and the other a 2 m climbing boulder close to the Avelon road entrance), four picnic spots around the small lake, a 2 km 'beginners' Mountain Bike course (with an outer circle blue route and an inner 'chicken-run' red route) plus a central view point on the Hill's 'peak'.

There is a wish by LBH that at some point in the future a bridge is erected across the Ingrebourne River to permit Rainham residents to access the site from the southeast via LBH land.

5. LEARNINGS FROM THE PROJECT

At the outset of this project it should be noted that it is possible to progress a site's development despite an agreement not being in place, so long as there is an understanding between all parties – in this instance IVL, FC and, importantly, the LBH planners.

Fortunately this project did not generate the level of volatility and hostility that Jeskyns did. It would seem the lower middle class of South Hornchurch, when compared with Jeskyns' Cobham residents, are relatively apathetic. This lack of volatility does not appear to be a function of age (although statistically the Borough's population is an aged one) as the youth appeal of the generous Mountain Bike Course competition was also muted.

This overall muted response to the consultation programme may also be suggesting that engagement programmes need to consist of a combination of 'remote' published materials and face-to-face presentations.

6. GLOSSARY

FC Forestry Commission

IVL Ingrebourne Valley Limited

LBH London Borough of Havering

LNR Local Nature Reserve, i.e. of local significance, not nationally important

SSSI Site of Special Scientific Interest

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Ingrebourne Valley Plan, FC (early 2000)

(IVP) The map delineating the project's three phases.

2. Ingrebourne Valley Project Management Plan (10 Jan 07)

(PMP) This report outlines the aims for the site and details every aspect of the project, plus PESTLE & SWOT analyses, detailed risk analysis, costing procedures, reporting, consultation, plus an outline communications plan.

3. Community and Stakeholders Engagement Brief, Team document (8 Feb 07)

(CSB) The original brief requesting a consultation plan.

4. Developing a Community & Stakeholders Engagement Plan for the Ingrebourne Valley site, VA (31 Mar 07)

(CSEP) Outline of a plan for community engagement for this Havering greenspace opportunity. The proposed methodologies for engaging different target audiences were specified.

5. Project Timeline, Team document (Mar 07)

(PT) The original timeline proposed for developing the site, and subsequently amended.

6. Consultation Plan.xls (Apr 07)

(CP) The proposed timeline for the consultation programme scheduled to run from April 2007 until September.

7. Ingrebourne Stakeholder Meeting (8 May 07)

(IHSM) A summary of the issues raised by the professional stakeholders who attended this workshop.

8. School Education Pack (Apr 07)

(EP) A comprehensive pack comprising a series of sheets, including a site introduction plus lesson plans and sample ID sheets; a specification of the benefits of the green classroom; the health dividend arising from green classrooms; background on Forest Schools; curriculum links; a site risk assessment form and the FC's Woodland Discovery disc.

9. Master Plan, prepared (14 June 07)

(MP) A detailed plan of the site detailing public recreation infrastructure including car parks, paths and play areas.

10. Community & stakeholder consultation programme conducted for Ingrebourne Hill May – June, VA (29 June 07)

(CSCP) A review of the results gathered from the first phase of consultation and consideration of their implications for the site design.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

11. Planning application, prepared by the District land agent (13 July 07)

(PA) A copy of the completed standard planning application form.

12. Plan final acceptance, London Borough of Havering, Planning Dept. (24 Dec 2007)

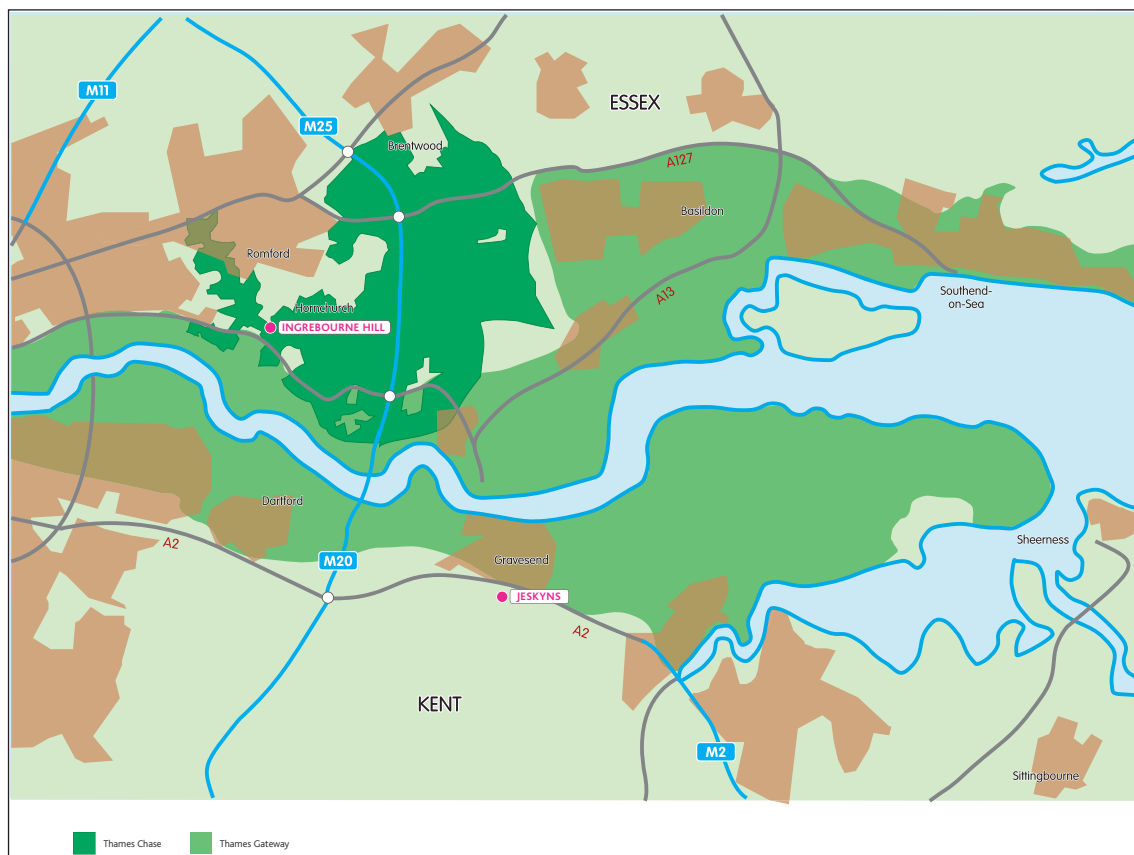
(PAA) Formal notification of approval by the Borough for the play areas, entrances and car park, and approval to proceed with works.

13. Site promotion materials, (March 2008)

(IHP) A selection of flyers and posters to promote the site over the course of spring 2008 prior to the opening event.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1a. Relative locations of Jeskyns and Ingrebourne Hill

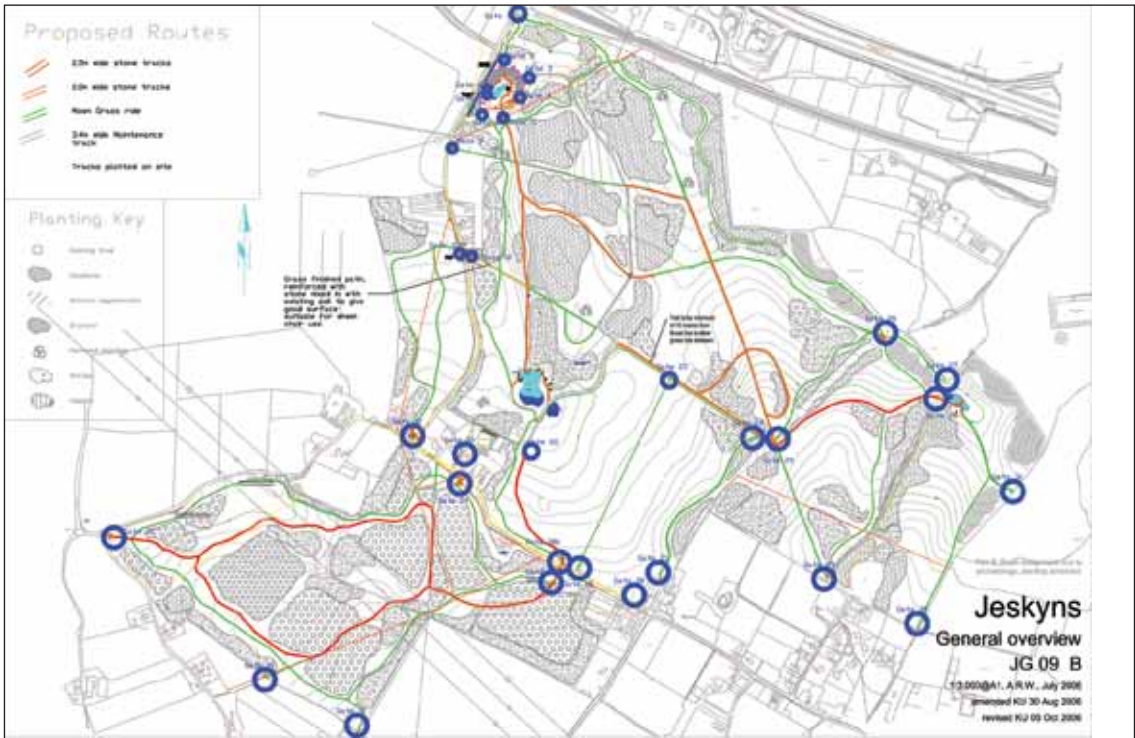


Appendix 1b. Jeskyns

1. The finished site



2. Site plan

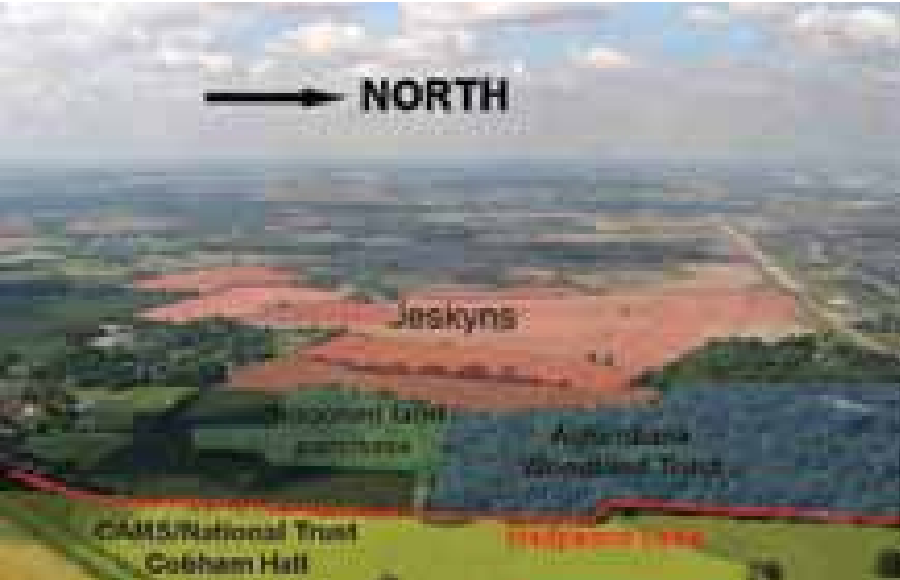


Appendix 1b. Jeskyns

3. The initial design

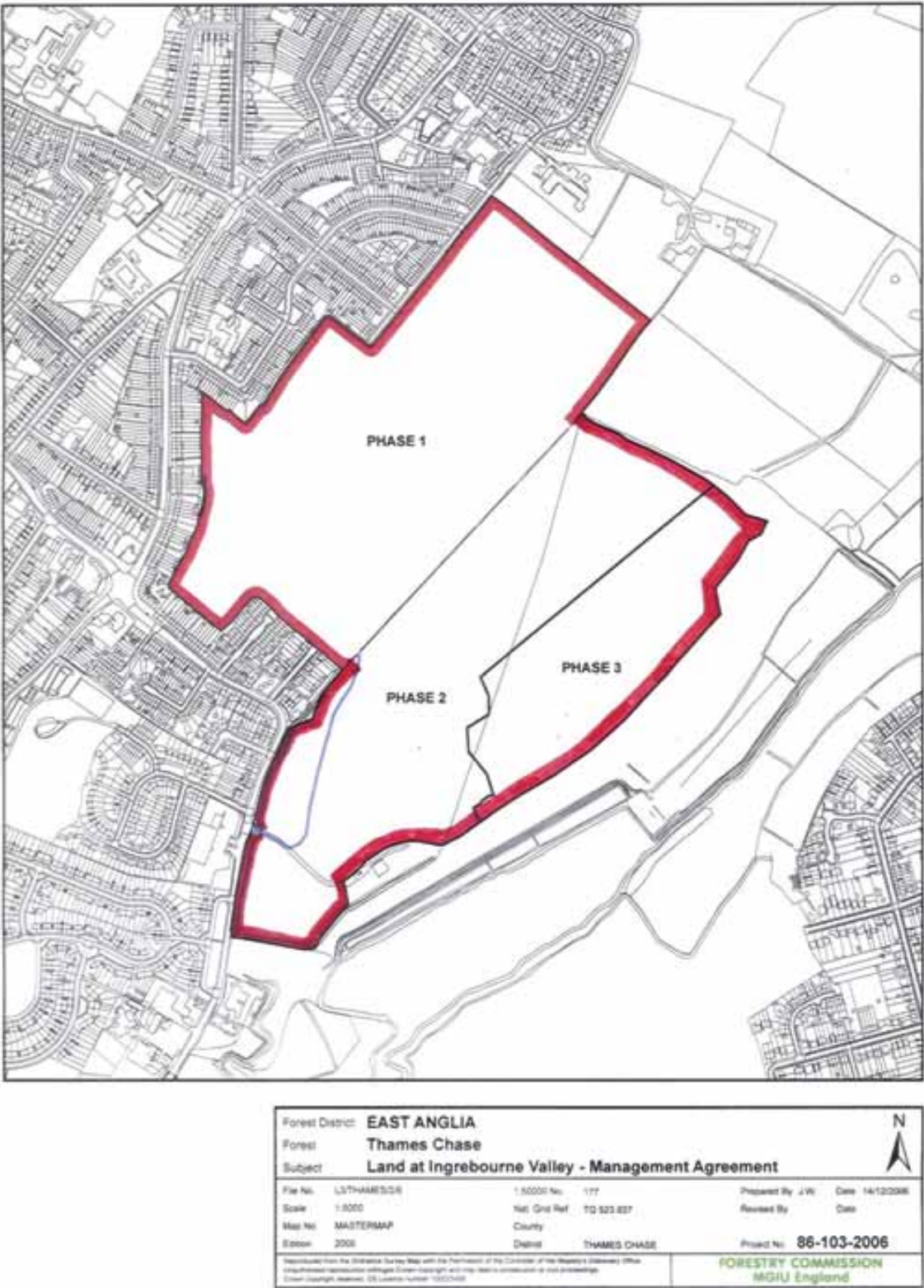


4. Ashenbank additional land



Appendix 1c. Ingrebourne Hill

1. Project phases



Appendix 1c. Ingrebourne Hill

2. Site plan

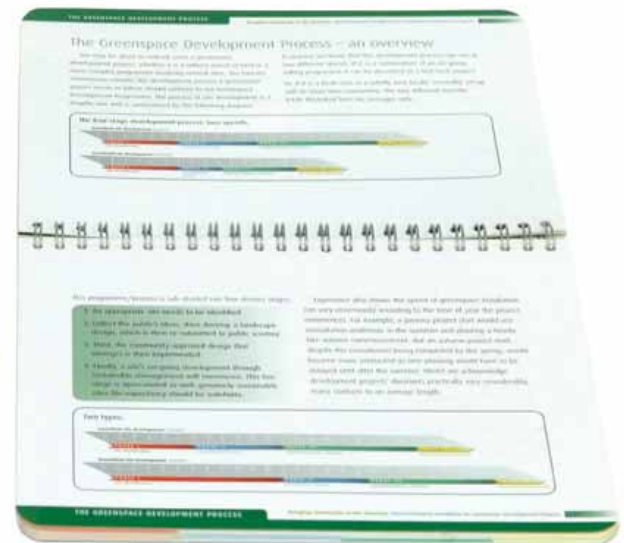


Appendix 2a. General

EAFD 'Capability' advocacy material



Greenspace handbook



Advocacy leaflet

Appendix 2b. Jeskyns

Consultation material



Consultation display panels



Sample questionnaire



Appendix 2b. Jeskyns

Marketing and promotional material



Appendix 2c. Ingrebourne Hill

Consultation material



Appendix 2c. Ingrebourne Hill

Household questionnaire



Appendix 2c. Ingrebourne Hill

Communication material



Appendix 3. Key contacts

Jeskyns

1. Stakeholders approached

CAMS
Cobham Parish Council
Countryside Agency
CPRE
Cycle Touring Club – Gravesend
DEFRA – RDS
Dickens Country Protection Society
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Forestry Commission SE England
Gravesham Borough Council
Gravesham Historical Society
Gravesham Rights of Way Committee
Groundwork Kent – Thameside
Kent Barns AONB Unit
Kent County Council
KCC Rights of Way
Kent Growth & Transport Team
Kent Police
Kent Thameside
Kent Thameside Economic Board
Kent Wildlife Trust
Land Restoration Trust
Luddesdown Parish Council
Medway Council
Meopham & District Footpaths Group
Meopham Parish Council
National Trust
Natural England
North Kent Police
NW Kent Countryside Partnership
Plantlife
RSPB
Rural Revival Programme
Shorne Parish Council
Strategic Planning Directorate
West Kent Downs Countryside Trust
Woodland Trust

2. JAG membership

Brogdale Horticultural Trust
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Cobham & Ashenbank Management Scheme (CAMS)
Cobham Parish Council
Environment Agency
FC East England Public Forest Estate
FC South East England Grant and Regulations
Gravesham Borough Council
Gravesham Rights of Way Committee
Kent County Council
Kent Downs AONB
Kent Police
Kent Wildlife Trust
Natural England
North West Kent Countryside Partnership
Plantlife
RSPB
Skanska
Thameside Green Grid
Woodland Trust

Ingrebourne Hill

1. Stakeholders consulted

DCLG
East of England Conservancy
Environment Agency
Essex Wildlife Trust
Forest Forum – representing the Ramblers, Sustrans and horse riding
GreenArc
Ingrebourne Valley Ltd
Ingrebourne Valley Project
London Borough of Havering – councillors and key officers [health, the elderly and the young]
London Conservancy
LB Havering Hornchurch Country Park
Natural England
Thames Chase Community Forest

March 2008

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