

## **Making Space for Nature – background for Heath & Access Workshop**

Broad wish list of heath, access, connection points raised at previous MS4N workshops, many of these can't directly be included in the LNRS, but are they useful & how can the LNRS support? What would you add in terms of health & access priorities for the LNRS to support?

### **Urban populations:**

- Encourage engagement with nature- subsequent sense of responsibility and behavioural change. This leads to care of the environment and potential for community involvement.
- Education and public awareness of managing areas for biodiversity, giving them a sense of place.
- How to contribute in their own gardens/greenspaces.
- Community and volunteer groups to deliver wildlife benefits and create a sense of place/ share knowledge. Identify native species which will attract wildlife but which are low maintenance and tolerant of drought etc to advise the public and community groups.
- Resources for residents, community groups, schools, town/parish councils to understand what species work for their soil type/habitat etc. Use key landowners and opportunity to involve the public.
- Towns sponsoring a species, year of the\_\_\_, we are working towards improving \_\_\_ in our town. Adopt a tree, verge or planter for a community (e.g. Faversham). Wilder town Kent.
- Targeting underserved hard to reach groups, e.g. commuter groups.
- Look at economically hit areas- recognition of social deprivation, nature won't be a priority for them.
- Ensure that greenspaces are inclusive for everyone- gender equality safety, cultural, wheelchair users

### **Public understanding:**

- o Signage to explain conservation works/management in a friendly manner, positive and simple language. Possibly interactive. Use of pictures or sculptures to encourage conversation. Provide the opportunity for Parish Councils to purchase these.
- o Signs that say "adopt a tree" or " please water me"
- o Provide advice and knowledge on how to care for their own spaces through local councils. Local green heroes and experts
- o Create viewpoints to appreciate the land
- o Information boards sharing notable species in sensitive areas (e.g. QR codes)
- o create connection to heritage, point this out at view points
- o Encourage voluntary groups- allotments, orchards, gardens
- o Teach the value of habitats to encourage care for their local area
- o Share acceptable behaviour

- Local guides for experts in the area so that people don't just go to parks but make use of wider greenspaces and countryside that is accessible
- **Educating children from early years:**
  - Wildlife areas at schools that are more than just playing fields
  - Put in the national curriculum
  - Use of home schooling, forest schools, nature clubs, groups such as brownies and scouts.
- Countrywide campaigns to educate on the environment and appropriate behaviours
- **Improve the access network:**
  - Better signage and joining up of paths would prevent people straying from route.
  - Provide alternative routes away from sensitive areas with dog and litter bins
  - Facilities along PRoW routes would encourage their use and relieve pressure on sensitive sites
  - Taller and wider paths for horse riding
  - Incentives to farmers to improve access across the countryside
  - More PRoW especially where development renders existing PRoW pointless
- Linking all walking and cycling strategies across Kent and Medway
- **Sacrificial sites:**
  - More honey pot sites with facilities to encourage use over sensitive areas.
  - Areas to allow electric bikes, scooters, quadbikes, motorbikes etc, to limit their damage
  - More dog and litter bins
- **Dogs on leads zones:**
  - Create no dog/dog on lead zones near to an area where dog freedom is encouraged e.g. dog park
  - Have blanket dog walking rules across the county- fines, enforcement, no of dogs a person can walk, littering.
  - Education around dog disturbance
  - KCC produced dog walker handbook- educate, walking routes, dog off and on lead zones.
- **Restrict sensitive area access:**
  - Close areas to the public
  - Fence off areas
  - Restrictive buffers
  - Restrict dogs off of leads
  - Restrict access of any type of vehicle (e.g. motorbikes can get through small spaces)
  - Identify space for a restricted access wildlife park from the offset.

- Use dual colour signs to signify when access is allowed and when it is not
- Curfew on access, certain times and max numbers
  
- **Sensitive management:**
  - Hedgerow maintenance sensitive to the sensitive habitat or species
  - Adopt suitable mowing regime sympathetic to habitat/species
- **Regulations:**
  - Stronger regulations for fly tipping, littering, recreational disturbance, antisocial behaviour, trespassing
  - Ban dog collars which leak harmful chemicals into rivers as dog will often enter them
  
- **Altering attitudes:**
  - Signage to explain conservation works/management in a friendly manner, positive and simple language. Possibly interactive. Use of pictures or sculptures to encourage conversation. Provide the opportunity for Parish Councils to purchase these.
  - Signs that say "adopt a tree" or " please water me"
  - Provide advice and knowledge on how to care for their own spaces through local councils. Local green heroes and experts
  - Create viewpoints to appreciate the land
  - create connection to heritage, point this out at view points
  - Information boards sharing notable species, habitats and local characteristics (e.g. QR codes)
  - Teach the value of habitats to encourage care for their local area
  - Share acceptable behaviours
  - Use social media to share real life projects that are relatable to local people
  - Link with Brand Kent to share what is great about Kent and Medway
  - Create a connection to heritage of an area
  
- **Community:**
  - Encourage volunteering through community orchards, gardens and allotments
  - Share knowledge and expertise with their community. Use local experts or a 'local green army' to tend to their local green spaces.
  - Connect with local groups such as fishing, anglers, hunting, magnet fishing groups to clear rivers of dumped metal
  - Guided/led walks
  - Education boards
  - 'nature champions' in local area
  - Citizen science through a volunteer scheme e.g. Thanet coastal wardens,
  - Accessible and easy to navigate nature-based mapping to encourage education for all in the local community
  - Promote environmentally friendly gardening

- Social prescribing resources are finite so setting up community hubs to continue this
  - Local guides for experts in the area so that people don't just go to parks but make use of wider greenspaces and countryside that is accessible
  - Create link up with supermarkets and fast food outlets to give discount vouchers to public who participate in voluntary litter picks
- **Developments:**
    - Plenty of greenspaces and walking routes for adults, children and pets to encourage people to stay local in new developments (parklets)
    - Residents to be 15 minutes from a green/blue space
    - Nature and human connection in new builds, making it relevant to everyone
- **Inclusive community events**
    - Free to attend in their local area, encourages them to come back and make use of the space.
    - Cater for all cultures, and meet their needs (e.g. single sex events for the cultures that would require this)
    - Select a flagship urban species to bring these cultures and communities together
    - Guided walks
    - Community challenges, prizes, social media challenges
    - Regular litter picks- idea of individual responsibility
- **Local councils:**
    - Include engagement in local plans
    - Joined up thinking within local government to support and develop community projects to enhance and build habitats within urban and rural settings
    - Appoint on the ground nature officers
    - More green spaces created in peri urban and urban areas
    - 15 mins form blue/green space
    - Use KLIS/ nature deprivation mapped areas to assess need.