

# Access to Nature

## Annual Report 2010

### Project Manager's Summary

#### Project Outcomes and Targets

Evaluation work carried out by project officers indicates the project is successfully delivering towards the agreed **major** outcomes:

*People experiencing deprivation and exclusion will experience new opportunities to experience the natural environment:*

**Over 1,000 beneficiaries to date,**  
target over three years 3,000

*People experiencing deprivation and exclusion will report learning about wildlife on their own doorstep and volunteers will gain skills in practical conservation work.*

**Over 300 beneficiaries to date,**  
target over three years 800

In total we estimate that **4,000 individuals have benefited from the project so far** through secondary access means; project target over three years 12,000

Further findings indicate that the project is delivering towards the agreed **minor** outcomes:

*People experiencing deprivation and exclusion will report that they value and appreciate their local natural environment more, because they have been involved in the project.*

We have collected evidence to support this target

*The biodiversity of some natural places will be improved.*

A number of community wildlife gardens have been developed as part of the project.

We currently have no evidence to support the project's success in working towards the following outcome:

*People experiencing deprivation and exclusion will report a greater willingness to be involved in local groups that are involved with the natural environment.*

This represents a minor outcome for the project and one which is more likely to be achieved after a longer period of contact with project officers.

\*Note: Figures above represent the combined total of both the Hastings and Brighton & Hove projects.

#### Activity Summaries and Methodology

Throughout the year the project officers have been endlessly creative, finding new ways to introduce the natural world to hard-to-reach groups. They have run events; made wildlife gardens, set up bird feeding projects in old people's homes, schools and community gardens. They have 'hijacked' photography courses, mums and tots groups, difficult teenagers, taking them to some lovely natural places that are right on their doorstep.

With each client group the approach taken has been tailored, however some key elements are common:

1. The project officers work with key community representatives to identify suitable projects and engage local partners.
2. Using a series of 'wow' factor activities they draw the interest of the beneficiary group.
3. The officers work with the group to provide the skills and confidence required to maintain the activity.
4. The project officer maintains a relationship with the group and provides additional skills or support if required.

This methodology has enabled the project to focus on building community capacity and skills to ensure a lasting project legacy.



Church Wood Forest School, Hastings

## Partnerships

The success of Access to Nature has been dependent upon all three project partners. Hastings Borough Council and Brighton & Hove City Council have been consistent in their commitment to the delivery of an integrated project, promoting cross departmental working and facilitating networking opportunities across a number of key council teams. This enhanced dialogue has enabled the A2N officers immediate and effective access to communities across the borough, as well as ensuring a targeted approach to community engagement. Additionally, project officers have established links with a number of independent practitioners and community representatives working with the project localities. This has greatly enhanced the project's delivery.



Church Wood Forest School, Hastings

## Lessons learnt

- Activities offered as part of the project's delivery need to be targeted, specific and relevant for audience. A generic programme of events which were publicly advertised proved unsuccessful in attracting project beneficiaries to take part
- The project has been unsuccessful in developing a partnership with any strategic health body. Initial invitations on behalf of Sussex Wildlife Trust and Hastings Borough Council to the Primary Care Trust were unfruitful. This is not surprising given the recent developments with the PCT. Both arms of the project are however working with 'Active' teams and sports workers within each borough
- Initial project design anticipated a need for ongoing dialogue between HBC & BHCC however to date this has proved to be unnecessary.

## Next Steps

- Project officers have agreed to focus on ways in which we collect and collate evidence to evaluate the project's success against the major and minor outcomes
- Project to invest further in building community capacity by providing training to key community members to enable them to have the skills to deliver green-space activities in the future
- Government spending cuts are likely to have an impact on the project as local authority resources become scarce.

## In Summary

As project partners, we are delighted with the current success of the A2N project. The officers have worked consistently hard to create opportunities for communities to engage with nature conservation. They have done this within budget and have also exceeded project targets and outcomes.

It was noted at the beginning of this project by an experienced community practitioner that working with hard to reach groups is difficult. That said, we are confident that the approach the partnership has taken will leave a legacy for both urban wildlife and the project's target communities that will outlive our funding.

## Hastings Partners

**Hastings Borough Council:** Ranger Service, Community Services, Foreshore, Active Hastings, Play Development

**Ore:** Bridge Community Centre, Princes Trust, Ore Valley Adventure Playground, In2Play

**Hollington:** New Horizons Special Needs School, Churchwood County Primary School, Choice Allotments, Horizons Community Learning Project, Church-in-the-Wood Group, Friends of Churchwood and Robsack Wood, Youth Development Service, Excellence Cluster

**Bohemia:** Summerfields Leisure Centre (Freedom Leisure Group), Friends of Summerfields Wood, Bohemia Walled Garden Association

**Saint Leonards:** Park Beck Care Home (Park Royal Group), Blair House Care Home (Park Royal Group), Leolyn Care Home, Friends of South Saxons

**Others:** Pebsham Countryside Park Project, Amicus Housing Association, Community Payback, Key local individuals, Branching Out Forest Education Initiative, John Muir Award, Pestalozzi Village, Friends of Hastings Country Park, Friends of Alexander Park, Friary Gardeners

## Brighton Partners

**Brighton & Hove City Council:** Active For Life, New Steine Hostel

**Moulsecoomb:** Moulsecoomb Primary School, East Sussex Fire Brigade, YMCA, Bates Estate Tenancy Association, The Bridge Community Centre, Active for Life Health Walks, Four Seasons Art Group

**Stanmer Park:** Community Payback, Brighton Action on Homelessness, Single Parent Group (SPIN), St Mary Magdalen School

**Whitehawk:** New Steine Hostel (B&HCC), Community Payback

**Hollingdean:** Active For Life, St Joseph's Primary School, B&HCC Housing

**Hangleton:** Hangleton and Knoll Project

**Coldean:** Coldean Residents Association, Trust for Developing Communities. Coldean School, Hemsley Orrell Partnership

**Portslade:** Belgrave Centre

**Bevendean:** Trust for Developing Communities

**Patcham/Kempdown:** B&HCC Housing

## Project Officer's report - Hastings by Martin Felstead

During the first year A2N Hastings has delivered a host of activities and events across the borough from Ore Valley in east Hastings, through to Hollington and Summerfields in central St Leonards and Filsham further to the west.

Our success includes work with schools, community and leisure centres, housing and community projects, the Youth Development Service, The Excellence Cluster, Community Payback, In2Play, The Prince's Trust, John Muir Award and special interest groups such as the various 'Friends of' branches and Church-in-the-Wood.

These engagement activities have only been possible through the establishment of effective partnerships with Hastings Borough Council teams: Ranger Service, Community Services, Foreshore, Active Hastings, Play Development, and private practitioners working in the community. Thanks go to everyone who has participated and given support, from elected members to local councillors, and it has been good to see the Mayor, Cllr Kim Forward, coming along to some events.

Notable successes within the project centre on A2N's work involving children and young people in the development of wildlife gardens, woodland visits and Forest School activities. The adventure playground at Ore has helped to bring young people together.

Another mechanism which has proved beneficial is Forest School and our taster sessions have been really popular with local teenagers.

Developing new volunteers to support the project's delivery has been the hardest challenge. However during the latter part of 2010 a small number of volunteers have become involved, but more are always welcome.

It is extremely important that the long-term question of post-project sustainability is addressed at the outset. Initiatives which involve the rehabilitation of old and creation of new wildlife friendly green-spaces plus A2N's support for fledgling groups such as the newly-formed 'Branching Out' Forest Education Group represent project outcomes that should outlive the life of the project.



Meadowview conservation day, Brighton

## Project Officer's report - Brighton By Huw Morgan

I have been working with a number of tenancy associations, community officers and the Housing department and schools planting native wild flowers to create butterfly banks.

I have run open days at a new community allotment site. These are aimed at encouraging local residents to get involved with the site for both growing and conservation purposes. I use the site on a regular basis for bushcraft sessions with a special needs group and will be running an eight week forest school course for Portslade Community College there in the summer.

In order to ensure a legacy for the project I have begun to provide training opportunities to key community representatives, teachers, as well as to keen residents on estates.

I have enjoyed working with a wide variety of groups and have offered a diverse range of activities to engage them with nature including wildlife photography sessions and exhibition; an on-going art project with the Four Seasons women's art club; building a clay oven with a primary school; and a guided mountain bike ride to Devil's Dyke. I have also been involved with the Health Walks programme; led Bugs and Buggies walks; work with the Homeless hostel at the allotment; and working with the foster care programme.

A proposed project to site an underwater camera beneath Brighton pier to send pictures up to an interpretation and education area will hopefully come to fruition this summer, extending Access to Nature into the marine environment. Community growing projects such as the Foredown allotment and the proposed Bevendean Community garden will provide opportunity to run composting workshops for children and offer advice and training on wildlife friendly gardening.

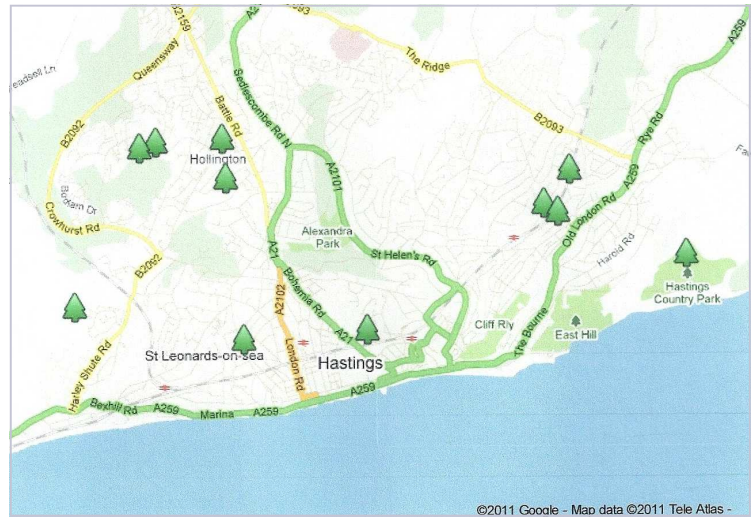
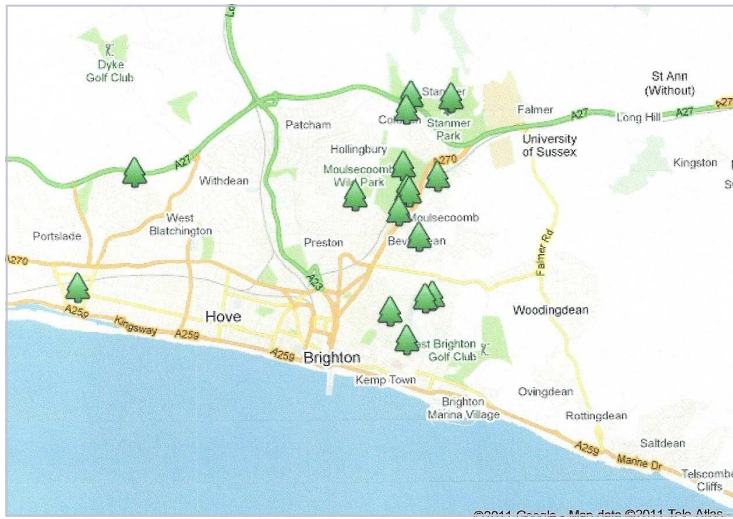
The newly released Brighton & Hove Biodiversity Action Plan looks to offer some exciting possibilities for the Access to Nature project, with the potential to deliver events and training that relate directly to prescriptions of BAP.



Bug hotel at Choice Allotments, Hastings

# Access to Nature Annual Report 2010

## Where Access to Nature is working in Sussex



The markers indicate green spaces where Access to Nature events have taken place

### FEEDBACK BRIGHTON

“This is the best day I've had since starting at the school” - pupil from Longhill High School after coppicing session  
 “I wouldn't mind doing this kind of work” - pupil from Longhill High School after Scrub Bashing

### HASTINGS

“I have enjoyed it all but I'm not a gardener and never will be but I still enjoyed it so thank you very much”

### PRESS PUBLICITY

Positive articles about A2N have appeared in the following publications:

- Hastings Observer, 30 July 2010
- Brighton Argus, 29 July 2010
- Battle Observer, 20 August 2010
- Hastings & St Leonards Seniors' Forum, Winter 2010,
- Hastings & St Leonards About, Summer 2010

## Financial information

	Budget £	Spend £	Underspend £
<b>Training</b>			
SWT Courses	250.00	60.00	190.00
Other SWT Training & Support	1,666.66	1017.00	649.66
<b>Equipment</b>	10,000.00	3,263.62	6,736.38
<b>Travel</b>	10,966.67	6,452.36	4,514.31

Project Manager: Alison Patrick, Project Officer Brighton: Huw Morgan, Project Officer Hastings: Martin Felstead,  
 Project Administrator: Nicola David  
 Based at Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woods Mill, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9SD.  
 Tel: 01273 497517 www.sussexwt.org.uk

