



18 December 2017

Land Trust charity inspires giant leap in community health and well being

The Land Trust charity is fast earning a reputation as one of the UK's most successful ethical land management organisations. Working closely with local communities, the Trust has engaged with a record number of people over the last year.

This was the upbeat message given to trustees and members at the charity's annual general meeting this month by Land Trust chief executive Euan Hall. He also explained that another six sites had been added to the Land Trust portfolio, representing a total of nearly 2,400 hectares of green space under the organisation's management.

Nearly 55,000 people benefited from joining in formal health activities or guided walks across the Trust's 63 country parks and estates, including three designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – a 40 per cent increase on last year. This is in addition to the hundreds of thousands of walkers, joggers and families who visited on an informal basis.

Volunteers delivered 11,500 days of improvement works to key sensitive environmental sites and the next generation were encouraged to explore the big outdoors, with over 7,500 students taking part in 300 separate education visits.

The Land Trust was originally launched in 2004 to ensure that derelict land restored as public open space, for example on former coalfield sites, was not just abandoned but cared for on an on-going basis. The charity has since diversified and is now also taking over the ownership and management of green infrastructure and urban drainage schemes around large residential developments, such as the expanding Beaulieu housing development in Chelmsford, Essex, and East Ketley in Telford, Shropshire.

The charity's high quality maintenance, community-based approach recently won it the prestigious 'Newcomer of the Year' award at the Property Week Residential Awards.

Euan Hall said: "The Trust works to ensure these developments become desirable places people want to live, work and play - providing a secure exit for the developer and protecting their legacy and reputation.

"We have always recognised that good quality, well-managed green spaces have a positive effect on communities, creating an important sense of place. During the year we focused on promoting the benefits of green spaces for health and well-being. I am delighted we have seen an enormous increase in people taking part in organised activities and events on our sites. We are extremely proud of what we've achieved.

“We are also proud of our positive contribution to the natural environment. The decline of bees and other vital pollinators across the country has encouraged us to identify and support declining species by sowing more wild flowers. We’ve also planted hundreds of trees and installed dozens of bird and bat boxes and bug hotels.

“Being kind to the environment makes good economic sense too. Our recent Hidden Values report shows that well-maintained green spaces provide economic value by absorbing air pollution, storing and removing carbon, and reducing and preventing flooding.”

The Green Flag, a kite mark for well-managed green spaces, is already held by three sites at Beam Washlands, near Dagenham, Elba Park in Sunderland and Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park. This year they have been joined by Silverdale Country Park in Staffordshire – a regenerated former colliery site.

For more information about the Land Trust or how to get involved in volunteering or community activities, go to the website www.thelandtrust.org.uk.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

For further enquiries please contact Lynn Pegler, Land Trust press office.
lynn@peglercommunications.co.uk or 07783 686246.

The Land Trust is a national land management charity that provides a cost effective management solution for open space and green infrastructure. We use our spaces to deliver positive interventions that provide significant community benefits, including improving health, social cohesion, providing an educational resource and uplifting the local economy. Further information at www.thelandtrust.org.uk