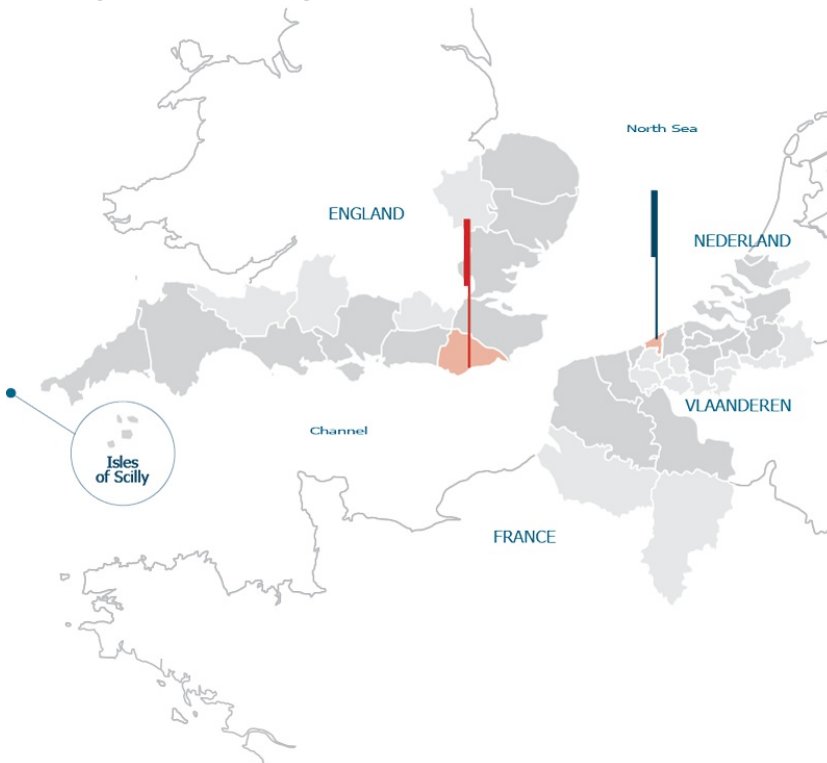


# C21P

## 21st Century Parks



### ■ Project summary



C21P wishes to increase attractiveness and quality of life in towns and cities in the 2 Seas area by exploring and bringing to life the concept of '21st century parks'. Both partners recognise the important contribution made by open spaces and parks to the quality of life in their respective areas. They face similar challenges caused by significant increases in population due to tourist traffic during the summer season and share a common aspiration to create appealing and sustainable open spaces for local communities. The good practices and lessons learned will have direct relevance and transferability to other coastal towns. To achieve their results,

partners will explore ideas of 21st Century parks and open spaces, and the diverse potential for users and uses of these spaces. They will then work on innovative design plans, and involve the users in the process. The pilots will then enable some of the plans to be evaluated in view of producing recommendations and a good practice guide on 21st century open space design.

### ■ Activities

#### What was the project trying to achieve?

The project's aim is to increase the attractiveness & quality of life in towns and cities in the Two Seas area. Its stated objectives were: 1) To explore the concept of 21st century parks & open spaces and jointly create 21st century design plans 2) To test 6 contemporary design plans, jointly evaluate results & draw up recommendations & Good Practice Guidelines 3) To communicate and disseminate the emerging findings across the programme area throughout the project lifetime. Sub-Objectives: 1.1 To reflect on how to design and create sustainable 21st century open spaces, 1.2 To exchange ideas for engaging user-specific groups and attracting new audiences 1.3 To exchange ideas to design and open up new open spaces that are inviting

and secure, 1.4 To engage and consult users on open space design - to inform ideas and encourage ownership, 1.5 To engage landscape architect and planning students in the 2 countries so they can inform the design processes & learn from them 2.1 To test and evaluate models for engaging user-specific groups 2.2 To test and evaluate ways of opening up new open spaces 2.3 To test cross-border multidisciplinary sub-teams to evaluate pilots, 2.4 To collate and summarise lessons learnt through a Good Practice Guide aimed at peer networks, towns & cities across the Two Seas region. 3.1 To disseminate the lessons learnt and good practices across the programme area 3.2 To engage community groups, children & students through a photographic competition, 3.3 To inform future discussions in this field through the production of filmed debates on contemporary open space design with a range of stakeholders (environmental, planners, landscape architects, user groups) 3.4 To raise awareness of the issues and findings surrounding contemporary open spaces through a series of awareness raising events

### **What were the activities implemented?**

The partners organised 6 crossborder workshops to explore ideas on contemporary designs for open public spaces. Various groups were engaged, Ghent, Brighton university and Plumpton College students, children and the elderly, community groups and national agencies. The designs were evaluated and pilots implemented. At Rother Children's Garden & Sensory Garden & Camber Mastepan (SPD) were developed. At Oostende design work & testing of lighting in 'T Eilandje took place. Formerly derelict land was transformed in an environmentally sensitive way and made safe & inviting. The vision of Emerald Necklace, the linking of various open spaces surrounding the City of Ostend and based on 15 different focal points of interest, was developed and promoted among stakeholders (use of innovative interactive communication materials and and created a walking & cycling route to be enjoyed by all). Recommendations from the project were summarised in Best Practice Guide distributed at the Final Conference. Both partners organised photographic competitions to engage the wider community in the design process. The works were displayed on both sides of the English Channel. At Rother groups of local children, Friends of Egerton Park and Camber Parish Council members were involved in pilot evaluations. At Oostende a massive and hugely successful communications campaign was launched to promote the idea of Groen Lint (Emerald Necklace). Various sites belonging to the route have been closely looked at (Duinenkerkje, Nieuwe Koers) and ambitious plans for the sites discussed. Alongside the project some opportunities arose which had not been previously envisaged - community allotments on the outskirts of the city. City of Ostend organised guided tours of the sites, one of which took place as part of the Final Conference in April 2013 when delegates and visitors were able to do site visits by bus or by bicycle.

## **■ Results**

### **What were the key results of the project?**

We delivered 2 x Crossborder Design Workshops (CDW) and 4 Peer review Workshops on design plans with expert speakers in attendance; We developed jointly design plans for the pilots. All those were accompanied by public consultations and /or focus groups with children. RDC: we delivered a beautifully designed, safe, modern, but environmentally & locally sensitive Children's Garden. Party in the Park harnessed the talent & enthusiasm of local artists providing

workshops & attracted thousands of people in celebration of the new facility. The Sensory Garden added to the attractiveness of the whole area by combining sensual stimulation enjoyed by all visitors to the park with locally themed sculptures made from natural wood which had become a focal point for this area of the park. Camber now has a Masterplan for future sustainable development as an attractive destination & a comfortable place to live. Walking & cycling routes have been identified & signage improved. Results for Oostende: the team produced the Groen Lint Masterplan through an open tender. They identified distinct open spaces as sites around the city and designed linkages between them. They conducted a wide ranging communications campaign to engage other local authorities and residents & visitors of all ages. The project opened up some unused or derelict areas just outside of the city with improved access and lighting. An unexpected result was the creation of an urban agriculture project along the Groen Lint route popular with residents growing their own fruit & veg. The 15 sites of the Groen Lint benefit from attractive interactive information panels. The project is very high on the city's agenda & has support from residents & local and national officials alike. Its achievements were recognised as outstanding by various professionals. Oostende organised the Final Conference which attracted 250 registrations. Both partners contributed to the production of the Best Practice Guide.

### **Did all partners and territories benefit from the results?**

1. Staff of the partner organisations directly involved in the project implementation had the opportunity to share ideas and test various approaches as well as learn from one another as workshops attracted their peers, professionals and final users of the open spaces they designed (planners, landscape architects, park development officers, officers from environmental agencies and community groups 2. Students of landscape architecture and planning had a chance to work alongside partner staff in the concept and design of open spaces and use that real life experience in their coursework 3. The Final Beneficiaries are the visitors to the parks and open spaces transformed through this project. The attractive look of the parks and the opening up of the previously underused spaces along with provision of better signage has encouraged more visits to the areas (walking and cycling) and will contribute to improvements in people's health and wellbeing. 4. Specific user groups (younger children, the visually impaired, wheelchair users) will continue to be drawn to the areas thanks to their attractiveness and improved access 5. Best Practice Guide is a comprehensive, well written and attractive tool for professionals undertaking open space design work. It has been widely distributed among attendees at the conference, various professional bodies and agencies as well as local authorities in both countries. They can all draw on the experience of the partners working on the project. 6. Local businesses will benefit both through a higher demand for their products/services from increased numbers of visitors and through projected greater provision of good staff attracted to the area thanks to the improved general quality of life.

### **What were the effects / outcomes for the territories involved?**

In general, it is difficult to capture that data without additional resources spent on it, however: At Ostend we could clearly see the increase in numbers due to the subscription to guided tours and the general buzz that was generated around the Groen Lint project. When doing study visits I saw the public taking part in the urban agriculture project and we heard from the conversation with the project manager on site that they were fully subscribed. At Rother at Egerton Park parks officers have reported a hugely increased use of the children's garden and

Sensory garden areas by children of different ages. We do not hold any hard data on the numbers of visitors however.

### ■ Distinctiveness

#### **What was the real added-value of doing this cross-border project?**

We believe the added value of doing a crossborder project was the increased access to planning and architecture professionals from both countries. The workshops created a good environment for creative ideas and so they have greatly contributed to the quality of designs produced for the pilots. We also capitalised on the experiences of the partners as each of them had different skills to offer and different practices to share with the other party. Oostende's experience in communications activity (production of films, very proactive approach to the visual media) and availability of dedicated staff allowed for the project to be communicated widely and innovatively, something which Rother on its own would possibly struggle with, especially that it underwent a major structural change over the last two years. Neither party would have been able to produce the Best Practice Guide on their own.

#### **Have any synergies been developed with other projects or networks?**

The project developed links with other local authorities and other institutions through this programme. Oostende took part in the conference in Rotterdam to try and identify possible partners. Attempts were made to initiate partnerships for the Clusters Programme: 1) SHRIMP - Sharing Regeneration Improving Places (Shepway District Council - UK, Ville de Boulogne sur Mer (FR), BOSCO (Boulogne and Shepway Cooperation, FR), AGSO, City of Vlissingen (NE), City of Ostend (BE). 2) MAST - Maritime Shared Treasures - City of Ostend (BE), Ville de Boulogne (FR), Creative Foundation (UK), BOSCO (FR), Shepway District Council (informal partner). 3) Cooperation was also initiated with Brugge (BE), Kortryk (BE) and Hardelot (FR).

#### **What are the key messages , key lessons learned you would like to share?**

Be open and establish a good working relationship. Be flexible, friendly and communicate often and well.

## ■ Project Information

<b>Title</b>	21st Century Parks
<b>Total project budget</b>	€ 1 799 042
<b>ERDF</b>	€ 899 521
<b>Priority &amp; objective</b>	Priority 3 d. Promote, enhance and conserve the common heritage and cultural partnerships, including development of creativity and design and joint cooperation between the media
<b>Timeframe</b>	2008-07-01 - 2013-12-31
<b>Lead partner</b>	Rother District Council
<b>Project Coordinator</b>	Kim Christmas(kim.christmas@rother.gov.uk)

