

MaxiGreen
breathing new life into open spaces



Work Packages Case Studies



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Front Page Photographs:

Top left: Belfairs Woodland Centre; Top Right: Rumst Cycle Path, Antwerp

Middle left: Raversyde Tram promotion, West Flanders; Middle Right: Le Ferme des Aigrettes

Bottom Left: Thames Estuary Path; Bottom Right: Water Square, Rotterdam

Work Package 1

Planning Multifunctional Green Heritage

[Lead: Provincie Antwerpen]

WP 1 aims to emphasizing the possibilities and importance of green heritage and finding the rights balance between natural development, heritage and multifunctional use. This is achieved through the creation of clear visions and master-plans to develop strong coherent landscapes and efficiently functioning green spaces.

Case Studies:

- ✚ Landscape Vision for South Essex Marshes and Thames Estuary Path
- ✚ Excavation area Boom – Rumst; Rupelstreek
- ✚ Ferme des Aigrettes, Marck
- ✚ Restyling & revitalisation of the Provincial domain Raversyde
- ✚ The Belfairs and Daws Heath Living Landscape

SUMMARY

Project

In Essex, UK a Landscape Vision for the whole of the South Essex Marshlands has been developed to improve accessibility to numerous green heritages and to highlight the relationship to the London-Southend train line and Thames Estuary path.

Activity

The vision entailed the development of:

- Landscape Vision Plan.
- Gateways Plan.
- Gateway to Greenspaces and Thames Estuary Path plan and the delivery of minor path improvements.
- Community Consultations.
- Interpretation framework – Mobile Application, Printed maps, signage and waymarking.

Impacts

'The overall response to the principle of a South Essex Marshes Vision was positive. Many respondents were simply not aware of the number of facilities already in the area.' MaxiGreen Community Consultation Evaluation Report, Plumb Associates, 2012.

Challenges

Findings from the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening stated the Vision and path usage in the long-term will not have a significant effect on European sites (i.e. Special Pottered Area).

Next Steps

Implementation of the Gateway Plan at the six key train stations through waymarking will enhance accessibility to the marshes.

PROJECT

Landscape Vision for South Essex Marshes and Thames Estuary Path

BACKGROUND

Essex County Council (ECC) has prepared Landscape Vision for the whole of South Essex Marshlands, which has been an ambition for local partners, such as the Greengrid Network (members include Thurrock Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Basildon District Council, RSPB, Essex Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Environment Agency and Veolia).

This project covers three sub areas, Thurrock, Basildon/ Canvey and Hadleigh/ Benfleet, where Thames Estuary Footpath stretches 28.9 mile (46.5km) from Tilbury in the west to Leigh-On-Sea in the East.

Due to physical constraints such as the historic risk of flooding and industrial use (i.e. landfill), the overall character is remote and undeveloped and is often perceived as bleak and unwelcoming. However, over time this large-scale landscape has become an ecologically rich resource. This project is essentially about raising awareness of the sensitivity and appropriate promotion of the resource and qualities of the place to improve quality of life of local communities and visitors.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPE

South Essex Marshes is a flat low-lying landscape, dominated by creeks, mudflats and marshes, bordered to the north by settlements and to the south by the shore of the Thames. It is characterised under the [National Character Area 81 – Greater Thames](#)



“VISIONING THE SOUTH ESSEX MARSHES”

[Estuary](#). It falls within the [Greater Thames Marshes Nature Improvement Area](#). It is an industrial and settled landscape with a wealth of Green Heritage – sense of history, industrialisation and biodiversity offering recreational and educational value.

As such the Thames Estuary and Marshes and Benfleet and Southend Marshes are European sites designated as Special Protected Areas and Ramsar sites.

VISION

Land Use Consults were commissioned in the summer of 2012 to develop this Landscape Vision, as part of a suite of proposals being delivered by the EU Interreg IVA Two Seas Project. The approach consisted of a review of existing studies to set the context, gathering of relevant proposals for recent and future committed spatial projects to ensure the vision plan remains current and relevant in the long-term and a site survey to understand the areas sense of place and issues in respect of access and perception.

The vision maps were built up using a variety of data and aerial photography to provide a clear, simple and user friendly layout.

A series of landmarks and reference points were identified, along with sketches and images representing points of interests, activities, habitats and species in order to aid the interpretation of the plan, helping to show the marshes and green heritage sites as a place with a cohesive identity.



'The idea of the vision was therefore widely welcomed as a positive step in identifying its extent and the opportunities for visitors.'

MaxiGreen Community Consultation
Evaluation Report, Plumb Associates,
December 2012.

For the three sub area maps a series of themes which relate to the marshes and their historic evolution have been devised and used to present assets and aspects of the place. These themes are World, War, Worship, Wild, Water and Waste.

IMPACT

The Vision Plan creates a composite spatial framework, showing and orientating principal assets, attractors and accessibility through the Thames Estuary Footpath and local train network. It identifies recent and future known projects and environmental improvements and initiatives active in the area, such as the Hadleigh Farm Olympic Legacy Mountain Bike Track, restoration schemes (Pitsea Landfill, East Tilbury Quarry) and Thurrock Thameside Nature Park.

The Vision Plan forms a useful framework/starting point to generate more detailed proposals and as a 'hook' on which to hang proposed future environmental and social interventions in the South Essex Marshes.

AWARENESS & PERCEPTION

The Landscape Vision shows how local communities and visitors can access the marshes via numerous "Gateways" and clearly illustrates the key recreation sites, public open spaces, local towns and villages and Thames Estuary Footpath, unifying the South Essex Marshes. High level findings from the public consultation held within the nine local communities in autumn 2012 were reflected in the finalised Vision Plan.

There is an assumption that there was limited public awareness and use of the South Essex Marshes and viewing the Vision Plan at the consultation was the first

time most had seen the extent of the marshes and its opportunities for visitors. The primary purpose of the Vision Plan is to be used as a map to orientate and inform the visitors about the marshes, in the form of a mobile application and interpretation signage. Supported by the 'W' themes potential educational value and facilitate aspects of the school curriculum.

ACCESSING GREENSPACES

As well as the various interpretation models developed from the Vision Plan, accessibility physically to the marshes were improved through enhancements to the Thames Estuary Path. Such as better signage and waymarking, installation of stiles and gates, and minor resurfacing as identified through the development of Gateways to Greenspaces Plan by The Next Field.

The Vision Plan highlights the relationship of six train stations on the London-Southend line and other modes of transport to the close proximity to the footpath and internationally important nature conservation areas and heritage sites. Numerous sites had functioned in isolation, until the Vision unified the area as a single destination. As a result it allows visitor's access to the Marshes through various modes and raise awareness of the ecological value of the Marshes. The Vision for the South Essex Marshes plays an important role in promoting the Greenspaces in the marshland both locally and as a tourist destination.

CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS

The main challenge was the potential effects of increase path usage and minor construction work on European sites. A Habitat Regulation Assessment screening concluded that the project will not have a likely significant effect on any European site.

For the vision to be realised it was important to work in parallel with the Gateways to Greenspaces Plan and for key stakeholders to be involved from the beginning. The public consultation proved to be a valuable tool to help shape the final vision.

The next steps are to work with the rail operator to deliver the proposals within the Gateway Plan to enhance waymarking at the six train stations. Explore opportunities within the Greater Thames Nature Improvement Area.

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SUMMARY

Project

The whole of the Rupel region is marked by its clay excavation history. Around 300 ha of land are waiting to be discovered. The provincial government of Antwerp, in collaboration with the Flemish and municipal governments decided to start with a Spatial Framework Vision for the open space area between the communities of Rumst and Boom.

Activity

Starting from three sectorial plans: nature development plan, accessibility and mobility plan and Heritage inventory to build up the framework vision. Although agreement was not reached on the final vision as yet, it was recognised to implement improvements such as the: redesign of a former watertower into an educational landscape visitor centre, new foot and cycle routes and regional signage.

Impacts

From a very negative perception of these abandoned not accessible clay pits, the project ensured that locals and visitors are now much more aware of the unique region they are living in or enjoying from.

Challenges

To finalise the Framework Vision and its implementation for "Deelgebied II".

Next Steps

Delivery of a second regional strategic project for the whole Rupel area

PROJECT

Excavation area Boom -Rumst; Rupelstreek

BACKGROUND

The Rupel Region covers 5 villages at the northern bank of the Rupel river. The whole of the region is marked by 400 years of clay extraction and brick making. Many of the former clay pits have received a new future: nature areas, fishing ponds, business parks, and a recreational domain. Functions became very diverse and there was no unifying landscape vision for the whole. Around the last active excavation in Rumst-Boom some 300 ha of poor accessible land is still to be discovered and used.

To combine all the different economical, recreational and natural usages, the provincial government of Antwerp, in collaboration with the Flemish and municipal governments, had an ambition to transform these 'lost' spaces into a new multifunctional green heritage zone that would be appealing for users and visitors from the local towns as well as for major adjacent cities.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPE

As open space is very scarce in Flanders, multifunctional use was the main condition for developing this former industrial area into a green heritage landscape.

The clay pits are important for different species and natural habitats but cannot be fully closed to the public,



ARIAL VIEW OF RUPEL REGION

only for their nature values as they are also used as a recreational area for walking, cycling, fishing, mountain biking, horse riding ... by plenty of regional visitors who find the extraordinary, 'accidental' landscape to be of interest.

Expectations are so diverse that the integration of the different functions as conservation and innovation, time and space, people and profit, local and regional, was the ambitious project target.

The abandoned excavation pits, where nature spontaneously sprouted again, were very valuable for nature and recreation because they function as a major green lung in the centre of the so called Flemish heart. They are located in the middle of the region in between major cities as Antwerp, Brussels, Gent and Louvain.

VISION

The provincial government of Antwerp, in

collaboration with the Flemish and municipal governments decided to start with a Spatial Framework Vision for the open space area between the communities of Rumst and Boom, knowing that it would be a very ambitious goal and a long time process. Not only because there are many stakeholders (public and private), expectations and demands involved, but also because all the functions, investments and outputs had to be deeply measured



HISTORIC PICTURE OF CLAY EXCAVATION

out and developed in the right balance.

Starting from three sectorial plans (1.) nature development plan, (2.) accessibility and mobility plan and (3.) Heritage inventory, the basics were laid out to start up the framework vision and the further development.

IMPACT

The Spatial Framework Vision for the whole of the excavated area was a complex dossier to be accepted by all the partners on every detail and is still not fully agreed on. During this difficult process, which is mainly the responsibility of the policymakers, the province decided to focus on an activity plan with smaller and accepted realisations and improvements ('stepping stones') to make the final goal in the meantime visible for the locals and visitors.

A lot of impact was had from the regional narrative and the regional branding which were developed to unify and identify the region through its common history as an underlying framework to structure the future visitor reception.

AWARENESS & PERCEPTION

From a very negative perception of these abandoned not accessible clay pits, the project ensured that locals and visitors are now much more aware of the unique region they are living in or enjoying from.

It is especially visible in the tourism industry. The regional narrative and regional branding is, (thanks to the MaxiGreen funds) implemented in the landscape signage in the 5 local communities for the visitor

'gateways' and centres, for the museums and significant landmarks. The tourism office spontaneously took over part of the branding for their regional tourism products: flyers, brochures etc. . . .

Museums have more bookings, private tourism companies are spontaneously investing in future products (i.e. river cruise), funds can be generated easier for future heritage and tourism purposes (building of a multimodal visitor centre alongside the river in Rupel, giving access to the recreational area in the clay pits and foot and cycle routes.

ACCESSING GREENSPACES

As the spatial Framework Vision for the whole of the excavated area is not fully agreed on every detail part of the plan is not yet developed. But important realisations and improvements are yet accomplished: redesign of a former watertower into an educational landscape visitor centre with panoramic view on the clay pits; a foot and cycle short cut through the clay pits from one village to another (this saves locals a lot of time!); regional signage; a new foot and cycle access route from the river to the provincial recreation domain De Schorre, the redesign of the existing Nautical Visitor centre along the river Rupel into a sensitization centre for sustainable water policy and the nautical history of the region.

CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS

The first challenge will be to finalise the Framework Vision and its implementation for "Deelgebied II", one of the clay pit areas defined for golf but on which there was no consensus by the local policy makers and community.

Next steps: The province of Antwerpen and the Flemish community agreed in 2014 on a second regional strategic project, now not only for the clay extraction area of Rumst and Boom but for the whole Rupel area.

A third project is to finalise the tourism infrastructure of a Nautical multimodal gateway (planned for 2015-2018) and the improvement of the cooperation between the 3 Brick museums.

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SUMMARY

Project

The Farm of the Aigrettes, Marck is a refurbishment of a former farm, surrounding by a small woods, with a number of herons and egret's nests. This farm is part of our local rural heritage and a place for visitors to discover and learn more about the surrounding area.

Activity

A building programme was developed for the various buildings and accessibility via sustainable travel and a natural management plan for the surrounding green area. An urban study and a masterplan to integrate the Farm within its territory at a town scale and a more local scale.

Impacts

Nature is now both more accessible and explained, and more protected through restricted areas and through involvement from key stakeholders and local representatives. After one year, since the opening of the site, over 17,000 visitors have visited the farm.

Challenges

We had to face the hard-to-change habits (i.e. people expecting to park close to the entrance) and property rights issues.

Next Steps

In the process of enlarging the area available to visitors to a neighbouring former large sandpit mainly dedicated to nature.

PROJECT

Ferme des Aigrettes, Marck

BACKGROUND

The Farm of the Aigrettes is a centre for informing surrounding population about the challenge of nature conservation and the complexity of our environment in an accessible and attractive way. The setting up of the farm was decided by the city of Marck en Calais (France – Pas-de-Calais; 10000 inhabitants). It started with the need in refurbish a former farm that is part of the local rural heritage and which is surrounded by a small wood hosting a huge amount of Herons and Egret's nests. It is also linked with farmlands and natural areas that needed to be managed into a whole project.

In the area of Marck, there were at that time no public parks; there was a need for the local population to have a place where to rest, to walk, and to discover/learn more about their surrounding area. This former farm seemed to be the ideal place.

A programme was then developed to figure out what was to be done in the various buildings, and also how to ease access for a wide part of the population through sustainable ways of transport.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPE

Our green heritage space shares multiple uses:

- ✿ Natural use: this is a place where some local species have found their living habitat. We have nesting Herons and Egrets,



ENTRANCE TO THE FARM

onopordum or rare clover was found. The area is designated as naturally important at a national level.

- ✿ Tourist use: we use our place to attract visitors to make them discover our area (eco-museum, observatory, temporary exhibitions...).
- ✿ Recreational use: it is also a place where people come to rest during sunny afternoons.
- ✿ Educational use: We offer schools workshops that they can benefit from; we insist in telling people about the stories related to this place.
- ✿ Economic use: Apart from the surrounding farmland, we include local farmers in making our farm lively hiring their animals. We also have a restaurant offering local dishes.

VISION

Ferme des Aigrettes had our natural management plan done by a Natural Species Conservatory for the surrounding

Green area; and a Building Programme done at the early beginning of the project, detailing specifically on the possible purpose of every building within the Farm. An urban study and a masterplan focussing on the overall close area were designed to integrate the Farm within its territory at a town scale and a more local scale. The urban study was done by a joint consortium of urban, landscape and environmental experts. The masterplan was designed with the contributions of all the services of the local town and with contributions



THE FARM'S
REFURBISHED
COURTYARD

from other urban services partners of the project partners.

This resulted in a global and trans-disciplinary view of all the challenges involved in the area (i.e. social, environmental, economic, urbanism, transport, heritage preservation). In addition to that, participative meetings were held to

involve the local inhabitants as much as possible.

Multifunctional usage was the main target of all those studies and discussion group, namely how to ease the way people with different expectation (sportive, families, naturalists, schools, restaurant customers, cyclists, neighbours, farmers...) can benefit the most from the final realisation. The balance between the multiple usages was achieved through benchmarking between existing local structures helping prioritise the actual needs in-between the various spaces.

IMPACT

We succeeded in involving many key technical and representative partners, having then brainstormed our single project, with targeted questions and efficient working process (one-hour meeting on specific issues that needed consensus, with targeted partners).

As financial partners, we also included local policy makers and institutions as long as their competences could fit in with our goals; firstly to introduce them to our ongoing project and its progress so far, and secondly to make sure we were on the same level of understanding of their policy and to tie in with them.

AWARENESS & PERCEPTION

We tried to involve the local community in the decision process; having discussion with sportive and

environmental organisations, local citizens; and having a daily process of gathering our visitor's points of view and feedbacks so as to improve the level of services we offer to the public.

We also tried to involve them in family workshops every two weeks which are pretty successful. Sensitizing about local heritage can be seen in every aspect of our project; both in our architectural choices, in the choices of our animal species, in the content of our exhibitions, and in the choices of the topics of our animations revolving former habits or emphasising on local facilities, and also in the topics of our educational program where specific local issues are approached from a much more global point of view.

ACCESSING GREENSPACES

From nothing we designed a series of pathways, with specifically dimensioned car parking spaces, cycle stations or motorhome areas. This allowed clearer distinction between the areas and share of the uses. Nature is now both more accessible and explained, and more protected through restricted areas.

The site has opened in the end of March 2013; after one year, it reached over 17,000 visitors, mainly locals, but thanks to word of mouth, it attracts more people from outside (i.e. tourists, people from the whole region). The restaurant and local shops benefited from this new economy.

CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS

We had to face the hard-to-change habits (namely people expecting to park as close as possible to the entrance) and property rights issues. Signage and fences are key tools to work with if you do not want disrespectful visitors to invade your site. We could have been more aware of the risks in disseminating small parking places rather than gathering them into a single one.

We are in the process of enlarging the area available for our visitors to a neighbouring former large sandpit mainly dedicated to nature.

This was due to happen during the European project, but it was not possible due to owner's disagreement to sell the property.

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SUMMARY

Project

The Provincial domain of Raversyde offers a combination of several unique heritage and nature values near the edge of this big coastal city. This made it difficult to communicate and promote the site as a whole whilst it has all the potential to be an attractive domain for visitors and people living in the neighbourhood.

Activity

The Raversyde study consisted of three parts: an overall vision/master plan, two sub studies concerning the museum area (with entrance fee) and a harmonic park management plan.

Impacts

The masterplan created new added value to the overall site without removing individual values, as well as creating a more cohesive site.

Challenges

The challenge was the ability to communicate the site as a whole, which was addressed through the Raversyde masterplan.

Next Steps

The next steps are the establishment of a new entrance through the dunes and the implementation of wastewater treatment for the neighbouring dwellings.

PROJECT

Restyling and revitalisation of the provincial domain Raversyde.

BACKGROUND

The Provincial domain of Raversyde is situated along the coast, close to Ostend. It offers a combination of several unique heritage and nature values near the edge of this big coastal city. The majority of the area is the former royal estate of King Leopold II. In 1914 German troops turned it into a coastal battery and it became part of the Atlantic Wall. The site covers unique world war heritage elements besides buildings referring to the royal estate of King Leopold II and an archaeological site unveiling a 15th century fishermen village. These usages have had a huge influence on the landscape and fortunately they are well preserved. Moreover the domain covers a high valuable protected dune area and there are opportunities to optimise nature values.

Until recently the site had little coherence (several museums, nature values...) through the combination of all those themes on one site. This made it difficult to communicate and promote the site as a whole whilst it has all the potential to be an attractive domain for visitors and people living in the neighbourhood. It is a challenge to combine all the different aspects of the domain and raise the visibility of the domain.

The ambition of the Province of West Flanders was to develop the Provincial domain Raversijde as a public-friendly heritage site in a nature environment and as an important all-weather visitor attraction at the coast allowing recreational use and offering a heritage experience with specific



“WORLD WAR GUN ON ATLANTIC WALL”

attention for nature development. Therefore a coherent masterplan for the site, a vision on green management, a museum study, a promotional plan and implementation of those visions were executed.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPE

Multi-functionality was a main condition and is inherent to the site as the area is a combination of several parts and values: protected dune zone, nature values, 3 museums, protected heritage, cafeteria... This diverse landscape attracts several groups of users to the site: foreign visitors spending one day in Raversyde during a longer stay on the coast, inland visitors only visiting Raversyde and staying for one day, local residents having a walk in the green area, children of the neighbourhood playing in the playground, people enjoying a drink in the cafeteria...

A part of the dune-area is protected (NATURA 2000). There is protected WW heritage and a protected archaeological

Medieval site.

EU-Habitat types which are present in the territory:

- ✿ Migratory dunes (white dunes)
- ✿ Grey dunes
- ✿ afforested dunes of the Atlantic, continental and boreal type
- ✿ Moist dune valleys



RAVERSYDE
PROMOTION
WORKING WITH
LOCAL
TRANSPORT

VISION

The province assigned experts to develop a master plan for Raversyde. The study consisted of three parts. An overall vision/master plan, two sub studies concerning the museum area (with entrance fee) and a harmonic park management plan.

The master plan (overall vision) has brought new insights in the development of the area as a multifunctional, easy to understand and accessible site combining all values present in the area. Two aspects of the plan were further investigated and developed in separate visions: how to deal with all three museums on the site and the nature / green zone management.

Inhabitants were informed and could participate through a public inquiry.

IMPACT

The Masterplan had to deliver a concept for the domain. It has created new added value to the overall site without removing individual values. Through the implementation of the master plan the site is more cohesive and can be communicated as one site. The branding that we created supports this vision by communicating the different aspects of the domain through a unified style. Hence the site is more readable for visitors.

A steering group has been installed to gather the reflections of all actors and partners. Partners involved: City of Ostend, Flemish Agency for Maritime and Coastal Services, several services of the Province of West-Flanders, inhabitants (public inquiry).

AWARENESS & PERCEPTION

In order to engage the local community, two meetings have been organised during the process. Local inhabitants were given the opportunity to make suggestions and reflect on the vision.

Although the domain was not suffering from a negative image, communication and awareness of the domain could be optimised. Therefore a new house-style has been developed and implemented. This house-style enhances the concept of the master plan; creating an overall 'Raversyde-feeling' for each individual strength of the domain. Hence visitors, volunteers, local inhabitants can connect easier with the brand 'Raversyde'.

Several public activities should enhance this awareness.

Taken together the key-message in both organisation and communication of the domain was to sell the different smaller themes of the domain as one large appealing entity.

ACCESSING GREENSPACES

The vision takes into account all aspects of the site and has brought new insights on accessibility through several means of (public) transport and the walk through the domain. The vision aims at increasing the accessibility through the new paths, a new audio-visual guiding will enhance accessibility. Together the new paths and I-walk will also guide visitors to the underused parts of the domain.

Hence, the visitor numbers should rise with the revitalisation of the domain and the improved promotion.

CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS

The vision suggested establishing a new entrance through the dunes. Therefore several meetings have been organised with the Flemish Agency for Maritime and Coastal Services but the process to negotiate is slow. The City of Ostend has not yet installed a wastewater treatment installation for the neighbouring dwellings; this influences water quality in the domain.

The contact and involvement of partners was important to implement the vision as a whole.

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SUMMARY

Project

The project is based in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, and the landscape spreads west towards the town of Hadleigh. A need was identified as the landscape has multiple users and ownership which often come into conflict with each other.

Activity

A vision for the project had a basis in the UK initiative of Living Landscapes. The detailed vision for the site came through the writing of a Conservation Management Plan and Activity Plan. The multifunctional use of the landscape was an important consideration and preserving the natural heritage of the site.

Impacts

Successful creation of a Green Hub enabling visitors to Belfairs Park make informed decisions about sustainable travel. Landowners have been consulted and are working with them to ensure that the wildlife value of the land is not compromised by the industrial value of the land.

Challenges

The barriers to the vision were mainly financial due to the scope of the project and the large number of landowners to reach and engage.

Next Steps

Continue the management of the ancient woodlands, preserving the natural heritage and bringing new areas into active management.

PROJECT

The Belfairs and Daws Heath Living Landscape

BACKGROUND

There are two lead organisations in this partnership project: Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Essex Wildlife Trust. These organisations both work with a number of community groups, schools and volunteers to guide the project. The project is based in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, and the landscape spreads west towards the town of Hadleigh. A need was identified as the landscape has multiple users and ownership which often come into conflict with each other. Whilst Belfairs Park was well used, other sites in the landscape are underutilised and misunderstood.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPE

The site is predominantly important for its biodiversity and natural heritage, but it is linked to the history of Southend as a source of sustainable timber for ship building. It also has a strong recreational use through golf, cycling and walking and also is a farming landscape. The landscape has UK designated sites and UK protected species: Heath Fritillary and Hazel Dormouse.

VISION

A vision for the project had a basis in the UK initiative of Living Landscapes but the detailed vision for the site came through the writing of a Conservation Management Plan and a



BELFAIRS WOODLAND CENTRE

detailed Activity Plan. The vision evolved over a number of years and through the input of a number of groups and interested parties. The multifunctional use of the landscape was an important consideration as success of the plans depended on the integration of the various users.

It was essential to preserve the natural heritage of the site and continue the management of the ancient woodlands along with bringing new areas into active management. Other landowners have been consulted and we are working with them to ensure that the wildlife value of the land is not compromised by the industrial value of the land. Interpretation, information and signage enable visitors to navigate their way across the landscape, understand its value and appreciate the importance of the area.

IMPACT

There has been the successful creation of a Green Hub enabling visitors to Belfairs Park make informed decisions about travelling methods and to leave their vehicle behind and explore the landscape on foot or cycle. This ties in with local policy to make Southend more sustainable as a town. The improvements of rides and access in the site of special scientific



WORK PARTY & YOUNG CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS 'GREEN BUNCH'

interest is undertaken by Essex Wildlife Trust in partnership with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and complements the existing woodland management works that have been carried out for a number of years. This is undertaken following guidance from Natural England.

AWARENESS & PERCEPTION

The vision for the Landscape links schools, communities and local residents with the natural heritage of the site. Public awareness was increased through community consultations, information on the Trust and Council websites, notices, fliers and events and activities led both in the landscape and across the community.

There is a negative perception of the woodland management techniques and this has been focused on through talks and presentations and through information and interpretation across the landscape. There is a strong educational programme encompassing formal and informal education that focuses on the key messages of the project and to breakdown the negative perceptions.

ACCESSING GREENSPACES

The vision has incorporated access across the site and the provision of a Green Hub. This has increased the access options for people visiting the landscape. Nature is now more accessible both physically and intellectually and people are starting to see the value of the landscape and the importance of their roles in its preservation. The vision for the landscape aims to attract the local community as the primary user group but also aims to reach tourists to Southend-on-Sea. The vision for Living Landscape is for wildlife, for people and for the economy; the vision aims to work with landowners and businesses in the area to ensure that the wildlife needs a complemented by the industrial needs.

CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS

The barriers to the vision were mainly financial due to the scope of the project and the large number of landowners to reach and engage. Consultation is key to a project like this and so is visible information. Interpretation should have been installed across the landscape earlier so that it tied in more successfully with the activities. This was delayed principally because of the number of partners involved in decisions. A lesson learnt is to have this key infrastructure in place sooner.



COMPOST CORNER - WORMERY FOR COMPOSTING & EDUCATION ON SUSTAINABILITY

Contact Details:

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Essex Wildlife Trust & Southend
Borough Council

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Website:
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www.southend.gov.uk

Work Package 2

Increasing Public Awareness of Green Heritage

[Lead: Essex Wildlife Trust]

WP 2 objectives are to promote landscape training, education and increase awareness of the:

- ✦ Value of landscape and nature
- ✦ Multi-functions of the green heritage (e.g. history, nature and recreation)

Case Studies:

- ✦ Thames Estuary Path: Interpreting the South Essex Marshes
- ✦ Strategic Project Rupel region
- ✦ La Ferme des Aigrette –Maison de la nature et de l'Environnement de Marck en Calais

PROJECT

Thames Estuary Path: Interpreting the South Essex Marshes

OVERVIEW

The wilderness of the South Essex Marshes, its sense of remoteness and the large scale commercial and industrial activities in and around the area has historically been perceived as bleak, blighted and unwelcoming. Despite the distinct richness of the heritage and biodiversity shaped by natural and human actions since the 13th Century. The aim of this project is to turn the marshes into a more attractive, visitor-friendly and dynamic landscape. Offering a haven for people seeking recreation, and often escape. The creation of a Thames Estuary Path (TEP) stretching from Tilbury to Leigh offers a cohesive identity for the marshes. It enhances visitor's experience through a range of interpretation, raising awareness and sensitive promotion of the resource and qualities of the place.

ENGAGEMENT

Essex County Council commissioned Plumb Associates to undertake a public consultation across South Essex on proposals to improve the Marshes for people and wildlife. A total of 17 events were undertaken between October and December 2012 across nine communities consulting 298 people.

The aim was to engage a wide mix of local people to include existing users and those who currently do not visit the Marshes - providing access for families, community groups, ramblers, commuters and tourists. Building upon this engagement through an extensive community programme for a Mobile Application was the involvement of local residents, societies and organisations to reveal and capture hidden stories and history of the area, told in their voice.

ACTIVITY

Following a route survey of the TEP, a strategy for 'Way finding and interpretation' was produced which assessed the locations for directional signage, waymarking, and interpretation boards. Also, identifying the core messages to be communicated and opportunities to develop and market the 6 railway stations as the gateways to the path and marshes.

The proposals for the TEP were taken forward for public consultation held at different times of the day during the week and at weekends. Which included: 12 public events (i.e. at farmers markets, public libraries, and community halls), 3 School events and 2 Local Access Forums, as well as via Facebook and community newsletters.

This interpretation strategy was

Summary

The aim for the South Essex Marshes is to turn it into a more attractive, visitor-friendly and dynamic landscape.

Activity

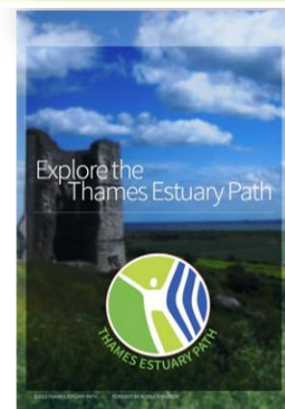
- 'Way Finding and Interpretation' strategy developed.
- A total of 17 events held across nine communities consulting 298 people.
- Further engagement through Facebook, newsletters and the creation of a Mobile App.

Impacts

The creation of a Thames Estuary Path and a range of interpretation materials (i.e. waymarking, signage, printable map and Mobile App) offer a cohesive identity for the marshes. Raising awareness and enhancing visitor's experience of the marshes.

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Organisation: Essex County Council
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www.thamesestuarypath.co.uk



Mobile
App
Front

encompassed within the wider context of the project, and linked in with a printable map and Mobile App for on-site information. Pixelwork designed the mobile app, with offline functionality (no data connection required) breaking the TEP down into 5 smaller tours, starting and ending at railway stations, using GPS triggering to activate audio and visual interpretation.

A series of themes which related to the marshes and their historic evolution were devised as part of this strategy and were used to present points of interest. These 'W' themes are explained further under 'Education'.

EDUCATION



Audio Recording session, Tilbury Riverside Guide

Significant feedback was received, during the consultation process, which involved potential visitors from a wide demographic, providing key information about what will encourage more people to explore the marshes. Using this information, helped to strengthen and implement the initiative by 'The Next Field Ltd' for grouping attractions in the area into themes.

- ✦ *World*; A historic gateway to trade and the role in emigration/immigration.
- ✦ *War*; A strategic military importance exhibited by historic forts and coastal defenses.
- ✦ *Worship*; Landmarks such as medieval church towers and spires.
- ✦ *Wild*; The intrinsic wildness and nature conservation value of the marshes.
- ✦ *Water*; Influencing the landscape and activity on the marshes.
- ✦ *Waste*; The history of extraction, landfill and remediation in the area.

The potential value of these themes for education and to help facilitate aspects of the school curriculum was embraced by the local community, including schools. This resource in the form of a Mobile App is available from smartphone stores, thamesestuarypath.co.uk and 'Visit Essex'. Users will be able to comment via

@thames_estuary (Twitter) promoting the Marshes. While the 6 railway stations and visitor attractions through their social media and newsletters, as well as the new TEP waymarking will signpost people to the Marshes.

OUTCOMES

The overall response and involvement in the South Essex Marshes vision was very positive. The consultation revealed that many people already visit the marshes (walking with family, their dogs and cycling) be it their local patch, but were not aware of the range of facilities on offer across the area. It also helped to understand the barriers that were limiting current use and what would encourage people to explore the marshes (i.e. signage and guided walks).

Approximately, 462 people currently use the TEP per day (less in winter) and this will increase as more people become aware of the TEP, through continued promotion from the gateways, attractions and Mobile App. The use of a Mobile App for on-site information negates the need for lots of costly interpretation boards, ensuring visitors appreciate the landscape and all it contains.

LESSONS LEARNT

The main factor for the lack of awareness of the marshes is the absence of coordinated promotion. Often waymarkers are lacking and sometimes confusing or lots of interpretation boards (wildlife orientated). It was recommended to create an identity and use of icons, similar to that created by the Province of West Flanders and Antwerp. The TEP identity was incorporated in to a range of interpretation materials (i.e. signage and Mobile App). Key stakeholders were engaged, and it was important that interpretation was financially sustainable (i.e. maintenance). Therefore there's potential to work with schools and organisations to explore opportunities for volunteering, to 'adopt a path' and use of local artists.



Tilbury Riverside Project Team, audio recording for Mobile App

PROJECT

Strategic Project Rupel region

OVERVIEW

The province of Antwerp created a master plan for the Rupel region's green heritage sites, the abandoned clay pits, which are strongly embedded in an urban environment. Vision Plans were made for the development and management of the whole (urban & green) area, where some additional studies were delivered to increase the multi functionality of these sites.

Through an international conference "Maximising our green heritage" the importance of well managed landscapes for prosperity, health and wellbeing in our regions were emphasised. As well as learning more about the methods to integrate green spaces in a more multifunctional and more accessible landscape. Therefore different projects were undertaken to deliver the vision plans: i.e. the development of a regional narrative, a cycle and footpath through the clay extraction area, a touristic and educational water tower and a Rupel film.

ENGAGEMENT

The project caters for a wide range of target groups, however the key stakeholders and target audience were:

- Local communities
- Visitors
- Cultural, heritage and nature organisations and partners
- Businesses connected to tourism

The province of Antwerp provided in different methods to inspire and interest the local community in the project through:

- Meeting with a community advisory group on 28th February 2012.
- Conference "Maximising our green heritage" held on 27th March 2012.
- Establishing a strong connection

with the tourist office and with the local policy makers (where the province of Antwerp report on the project at the 3-monthly local mayor meetings).

- Training of guides and volunteers.

ACTIVITY

The Province of Antwerp established a communication strategy and a communication plan with yearly actions. Every minor or major step in the development of the project was communicated through press releases, the chosen method identified in the communication plan, in order to maintain the interest of the local community. In which the local newspapers always published.

Besides press conferences there were also activities and public events to celebrate important achievements

Summary

A master plan was created for the Rupel region's green heritage sites for the development, management and to increase the multi functionality of these sites.

Activity

- Engaged local communities through various methods: meetings, conferences and training.
- Communication strategy and Plan developed
- A variety of inspirational activates and public events
- Production of a Rupel film.

Impacts

Based on the regional narrative a network of orientation, plaques and interpretation signage were installed, increasing awareness. As a result more visitors have been attracted to the region.

Contact Details:

Organisation – Provincie Antwerpen
 Email – Marieke.verreet@admin.prov.ant.be
 Website – www.provincieantwerpen.be



OPENING OF THE EDUCATIONAL WATER TOWER

in the development of the project, which include:

- a. Increasing awareness of the landscape value and nature multi functions of the Green Heritage:
 - ✦ Winter open air event for the opening of the cycle and footpath in the clay excavation area: 15th of January 2012
 - ✦ Open air public opening of the touristic-educational water tower: 22th of September 2012
 - ✦ Public event to celebrate the renewing of an old walking tour: Rupelkleiroute through the nature domain in an old clay pit: 8th of August 2012
 - ✦ Première of the Rupel film in cooperation with the local theatre hall: 31st of January 2013



HISTORIC PICTURES OF CLAY EXCAVATION

- b. Promotion of landscape training and education:
 - ✦ Network events on related themes for policy makers, business partners, landscape developers and institutions etc.
 - Business Parks as ecological bridges to a stronger Biodiversity: 28th of November 2012
 - Green spaces as economical motors in Flanders: 11th of June 2012

EDUCATION

Based on the regional narrative a network of orientation, plaques and interpretation signage were installed, such as:

- ✦ Orientation panels placed on locations where a lot of visitors enter the region.
- ✦ Plaques placed at important monuments and museums
- ✦ Interpretation panels providing information on important relics in the landscape
- ✦ The last phase of this project will be realised in 2014.

OUTCOMES

This project has a clear focus and core story, this being:

‘The local history of the clay extraction and brick making with all related industries (breweries, shipyards, making of slippers...) and its effects on the local community and especially the landscape of today: a prodigious green area with ecological and recreational values.’

There has currently been no research to monitor the outcome of the project yet but the overall impression is that awareness has increased and that the region has attracted more visitors since the beginning of this project. Some of the indicators of the projects success are:

- ✦ The local community of one of the smaller villages have taken over the winter open air event, originally for the opening of the cycle and footpath held on 15th of January 2012 and will continue to arrange annual events after a local winter barbecue at the spot.
- ✦ By the end of March 2014 more bookings for guided tours in some locations via the tourist office has been received compared to 2013.
- ✦ A lot of cyclists have stopped to read the information panels: one cultural partner saw the effect from his office window and asked if he could also receive a plaque for his visitor centre.
- ✦ The tourism office is a major partner in promoting and the marketing the region. Where the board of tourism has decided to pick up the house style of the regional narrative for their own promotional products to show the strong bond between the region and the tourism products.

LESSONS LEARNT

Cooperation, especially with policy makers, business partners and local community is extremely important to be able to embed a regional narrative in the local area. Even if this takes a long time (in the case for Province of Antwerp: where there was a change in policy makers after the local elections), it is necessary and important to take this time to realise and achieve the benefits for the region.

One of the main challenges is how to measure the outcomes: the benefits, the value for money.



Cycling Event

PROJECT

La Ferme des Aigrettes – Maison de la Nature et de l'Environnement de Marck en Calaisis

OVERVIEW

The project consists of a former multi-production farm that has been refurbished into a place where people can find both areas to rest, to discover and learn about their surrounding environment and territory thanks to both temporary and permanent exhibitions, workshops, conferences, outside panels and signs, as well as pieces of art and other ways of raising awareness to visitors; which was made possible by the help of MaxiGreen.

ENGAGEMENT

The target audience of the Ferme des Aigrettes is varied from:

- ✚ school groups,
- ✚ leisure centres,
- ✚ any other organised groups,
- ✚ to families, and
- ✚ any person passing by wishing to discover the site.

The farm caters for a range of groups and public, with a variety of activities that have been specifically developed.

Working sessions with teachers were held to build up the educational program, whilst the local exhibitions were based on many works with key local erudite people and local inhabitants with knowledge of the past and the specialities of their town. Young people were involved in some work camps and voluntary (unemployed) work in the Farm's social vegetable garden.

ACTIVITY

- ✚ An interpretation strategy was developed about the farm's observatories and the eco-museum. It was due to be a multi-thematic interactive permanent exhibition (such as, videos, sounds, and IT applications) based upon a printed aerial view of the whole city territory with a focus on urbanism, landscapes, economic sectors, nature and history.
- ✚ A local artist was commissioned to create a piece of art made of local stone capturing every part of the farm into a single massive piece placed at the entrance. The art piece provides information on what can be found around the farm and relates to the signage on the walls.
- ✚ Panels to describe landscape and heritage were also created; along with the creation of maps to help with orientation (location)

Summary

The refurbishment of the farm has created a place where people can relax, discover and learn about their surrounding environment) and local area.

Activity

- Interpretation strategy developed for the observatory & Eco-museum.
- Local artist created a stone art capturing elements of the farm.
- Creation of landscape and heritage panels and orientation maps.
- Themed exhibitions, workshops, markets and conferences held.
- Development of educational program.

Impacts

In one year approximately 30,000 visitors have visited the farm and attract regular visitors and groups from schools and leisure centres.

Contact Details:

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 Email - fermedesaigrettes@ville-marck.fr
 Website – www.ville-marck.fr/les-equipements/la-ferme-des-aigrettes



Schools Educational Programme

and way-finding.

- ✦ Whilst the exhibitions, workshops and conferences were designed to respond to specific local issues.
- ✦ The educational program was built-up around five main themes (animal biology, botanical biology, ecosystems, impact from human activities, and human culture) which cover the range of topics that can be delivered through these facilities.



Signage Art created by Local artist

EDUCATION

For each of the activities on offer, the animators have developed leaflets and educational packs, which are readily available. The packs are fully adapted to the age of the public, the duration of the activity and the seasons. There are separate activities for schools and for leisure centres.

Thanks to the help of the University of Artois, the main temporary exhibition that was developed has adapted well to various groups, with tactile tools, appealing drawings and colourful panels for children.

The farm's weekend keepers are taught how to welcome the visitors providing a real taste of what was and is the farm. It is very important that every staff (even technical and care-keepers) is well aware of everything that is happening and the messages you want to disseminate about the farm so that they can tell visitors. One to One and good human exchanges are far more important and effective than flyers or posters.

OUTCOMES

La Ferme des Aigrettes main story is both about farming through the ages, and revealing

environment and eco-habitat. The aim is to have both relaxing and cultural activities to bring as many people as possible in and create a place to visit.

This project attracts regular visitors and groups from schools and leisure centres; achieving over 90% during the farm's second spring and summer time (the other seasons remain less attractive to schools even if there are activities for autumn and winter). In one year approximately 30,000 visitors visited the farm.

Workshops are also very attractive to visitors, but it appears that conferences and even exhibitions do not attract as many people as expected; for example a conference and exhibition on a precise topic, requires communication to be broadened to wider audience from further areas to attract more people to attend.

LESSONS LEARNT

Even discovery of simple ideas can come from visits and abroad. You have to be innovative and bring your visitors constant new things to see, as well as experiment to maintain the appeal of your site. The more local residents and visitors are involved in your project and its design, the more they will feel connected with the site and will help spread the message.

As for every new project, the main challenge is to manage, to gather and maintain partnerships with as many local organisations, authorities or individuals as possible to bring together their skills and expertise to your project. You have thus to find out ways of making them to take ownership and to get involved to ensure success.

The translation of the panels and educational tools need to be improved to allow international visitors to enjoy the site.

Local stone panels identifying ferme facilities



Work Package 3

Enabling Access to Green Heritage

[Leads: *Ville Marck & Gemeente Rotterdam*]

WP 3 purpose is to make these projects sites more accessible to everybody by creating new infrastructure such as paths or/and improve the promotion of the sites through signage and use of modern technology (i.e. Mobile Applications). Multi-modal ways of transporting visitors to green heritage assets were explored.

Case Studies:

- ✚ The Belfairs and Daws Heath Living Landscape –Green Hub
- ✚ Gateway to the South Essex Marshes
- ✚ Raversyde - Provincie West-Vlaanderen
- ✚ la Ferme des Aigrettes accessibility

Summary

A Green Hub and connectivity to Southend-on-Sea and the wider landscape was explored to encourage Sustainable travel.

Pre & on Trip Information

Pre-trip information

- Sustainable travel information on a mobile phone App
- Walk information provided in leaflet form
- Visitor information are given on the website EWT

On Trip Information

- Travel information given on our mobile phone App
- Waymarking on a cycle route leading to the site
- Brown tourist signs

On Site Transport Facilities

- Cycle parking
- Electric vehicle parking
- Designated parking
- Information board providing details to inform travel options

Contact Details:

Organisation –
Essex Wildlife Trust & Southend Borough Council
Email – belfairs@essexwt.co.uk
Website -
www.essexwt.org.uk/reserves/belfairs;
www.southend.gov.uk



PROJECT

The Belfairs and Daws Heath Living Landscape – Green Hub

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Belfairs and Daws Heath Living Landscape, a partnership project between Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Essex Wildlife Trust enables sustainable visitor access to the Landscape. As part of Work Package 3 a new Green Hub and connectivity to Southend-on-Sea and the wider landscape was explored.

PRE TRIP INFORMATION

The Green (transport) Hub enables people to consider alternative methods of travel from cycling to the local bus. It also aims to help visitors to understand their impact on the environment. Information on sustainable travel can be found on the new Belfairs mobile phone app and further visitor information, such as location, directions, public transport, opening times and facilities are available on the Essex Wildlife Trust website:

(www.essexwt.org.uk/reserves/belfairs).

Other online information can be found on [Visit Southend](http://www.visit-southend.co.uk) (Tourist Information website).

Walking information is provided in a leaflet form available in the Belfairs Woodland Centre. The nearest train station is Leigh-on-Sea, about 30 minutes' walk via Belton Hills, Salisbury Road and Eastwood Road. Cycle information can be found on the Cycle Southend website www.cyclesouthend.co.uk and the

Woodland Centre is listed as a 'Bike Friendly café' in the Cycle Southend Cycling leaflet.

ON TRIP INFORMATION AND TRAVEL FACILITIES

The Belfairs Woodland Centre and Belfairs Park is a great place to take a break and is enjoyed by local residents and visitors for walking, cycling, horse riding, golf and bowls. As mentioned, travel information is provided on our mobile phone App, which includes the regular bus service running between Basildon and Southend.

Through the Green Hub cycle routes leading to the site are clearly waymarked, whilst brown tourist signs have been installed making it easier to locate the site from the road. The junction leading to the entrance has been widened to allow two-way traffic and the road leading up to the Woodland Centre has been resurfaced to reduce traffic speed and encourage cycling and walking as a preferred method of travel.



ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINT

ON SITE TRANSPORT FACILITIES

There is designated parking on reinforced grass and the track leading up to the site has a hard wearing surface reinforcement to provide a farm track appearance and reduce the impact of tarmac to be in keeping with the landscape. As well as a main car park other modes of travel are encouraged. This includes cycling with the provision of a cycle network through the park, covered cycle parking and links with Cycle Southend providing cycle maps. The Belfairs Woodland Centre is a Bike Friendly Café and so welcomes cyclists and cycling groups with provision for water refills, puncture repairs and electric bike recharging.

Electric vehicles are also welcomed with specially provided bays equipped with an electric vehicle charging unit.

Walking is encouraged and walk leaflets are provided detailing interesting walks across the landscape. Key routes have also been waymarked and artwork and information has been provided in key locations to interpret the landscape and enhance the visitor experience.

To help inform people's travel options, details of all this information is provided on an information board at the site showing a map of the area and the location of paths, cycleways, bus stops, parking, refreshments, toilets and amenities.

LESSONS LEARNT

Sustainable travel is a culture as well as a practise and so activities and incentives need to be given to change hearts and minds.

A Travel Plan was written at the outset to enable understanding of the site, the restrictions and limitations and the potential. It was important to link in with third parties to ensure a coherent approach to sustainable travel.

A community consultation was also undertaken at the start of the project to understand user patterns and different forms of transport that were available on site. From this we were able to prioritise the need and determine the best action in order to ensure that the priorities of the Travel Plan were met. These were demonstrated as objectives and targets within the Travel Plan.

It is clear that a Travel Plan is an evolving document that requires reassessment. Plans can be implemented at the start of the project but need to be reviewed at the end of the first and the third year. Travel patterns need to be reassessed in light of the changes implemented by the project to provide base line data and this should be monitored to ensure that targets are being reached.

Offering opportunities is not enough. Changing visitor travel patterns involves changing hearts and minds. Offering incentives, education, information and assistance in changing a culture of travel is as important as providing the infrastructure.



CYCLE PARKING

Summary

The production of Gateway Plans highlighted the improvements needed to the path and the numerous ways to access the marshes, of which the 6 railway stations were the priority gateway.

Pre & on Trip Information

Information on the path is available on thamesestuarypath.co.uk, which is easily accessible by train. As well as by road, walking and cycling.

On Site Transport Facilities

The Path is predominantly characterised by footpaths, but a number of stretches include cycle and bridle ways. It is clearly signed and waymarked along the length with a new distinctive logo, providing clear directions to attractions and core gateways.

Contact Details:

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Essex County Council

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john.meehan@essex.gov.uk

Website – www.essex.gov.uk;
www.thamesestuarypath.co.uk

PROJECT (20 WORDS MAXIMUM)

Gateway to the South Essex Marshes

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Essex County Council (ECC) prepared a vision for the South Essex Marshes, to improve access to the marshes via numerous “Gateways” which enables visitors to discover the Marshlands and local attractions.

PRE TRIP INFORMATION

The new Thames Estuary Path (TEP) is easily accessible by train linking six railway stations on the London Fenchurch Street and Southend line on one of the most attractive railway lines through the South Essex Marshes. These railway stations were identified as the priority gateways and ECC in collaboration with C2C the local train provider have been working together to promote these gateways. New signage with a distinctive logo, such as fingerposts and pavement stencilling has been installed at each of the six railway stations signposting people from the station to the new Path and local attractions.

Hard copies of the TEP map are available from the railway stations and the train provider will be promoting the new path and South Essex Marshes attractions through their marketing programme, such as posters on their trains, articles in their passenger e-bulletin and newsletter, as well as information on their website.

A mobile phone app is available from iTunes and Play, the android store,

providing information on the history and wildlife encountered along the way. The app breaks the path into 5 short tours starting and ending at train stations, making it perfect for a family day out. Each tour for each station also has a link to the train times making it easier to plan a visit.

Further links to the mobile app and the printable version of the TEP map is available at the following websites: thamesestuarypath.co.uk, Visit Essex (www.visitessex.com - Essex Tourist Information) and the Walk4Life (www.walk4life.info - National health campaign). The path has been promoted through the Talk of the Thames Summer 2014 magazine, Natural England’s National Trail Thames Path website and via local attractions.

ON TRIP INFORMATION AND TRAVEL FACILITIES

As mentioned the mobile app has a link to train times. However access to the Marshes can be made by four transport methods: train, road, walking and cycling. It is the train access that has the greatest potential as a sustainable





Section of Hadleigh's Trails

System with the least impact on the Marshes themselves.

A Gateway Plan produced highlighting the main green heritage sites and their relationship to the local train line, the TEP and the other transport hubs in and around the marshes such as associated car parks and cycling. This plan set out some potential ideas for improved way-marking and legibility, to overcome some of the barriers to accessing the marshes, whether real or perceived. The plans identify considerations for ECC to take account of in future implementation and create links to the proposals for the TEP.

New signage, which include stencilled waymarking on pavements at railway stations and in urban areas and attractive wooden fingerposts in keeping with the landscape. These fingerposts have been erected along the 28.9 mile (46.5km) route from Tilbury Town to Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. Existing signage, such as metal road signs have also been utilised and updated with TEP directional information. The TEP signage is recognisable through the distinctive new TEP logo and provides directional information to the path, train stations and attractions, along with their distances in miles.

ON SITE TRANSPORT FACILITIES

The Thames Estuary Path is predominantly characterised by footpaths, but a number of stretches include cycle and bridle ways. This footpath allows visitors to access all this area has to offer through the various gateways (i.e. railway stations, car parks) offering a hop-on hop-off experience. Several sections of the path are barrier-free and allowing easier access. Whilst at Hadleigh Farm and Country Park various aspects (i.e. bike hire shop, paths have been adapted and enhanced to increase accessibility

for a range of users which will maintain the legacy from the Olympic 2012 Games.

There are many visitor attractions clearly waymarked along the way, including Tilbury Fort, Coal House Fort, Thurrock Thameside Nature Park, and Old Leigh village,

The improvements and development of the TEP was identified through an assessment of the conditions of the paths. 'Next Feld Ltd' produced a 'Gateways to Greenspaces and Thames Estuary Plan', which assessed safety; ease of route-finding and practical accessibility issues such as stiles and gate placement. The assessment identified minor improvement works (mainly signage) and was completed in June 2014. It is the installation of branded signage that provides clear directions to major attractions and to the core gateways. However the creation of a mobile app minimised the need for lots of interpretation boards cluttering the landscape.

LESSONS LEARNT

The headline findings from the creation of the Thames Estuary Path were the importance to engage with the key stakeholders (i.e. landowners, site managers, Local Authorities and Transport) throughout the project. The public consultation proved to be a valuable tool to highlight accessibility issues and identify potential solutions, helping to realise the final vision for the South Essex Marshes.

It was also suggested that there is a need to liaise with the local authorities to compile detailed project schedules, which take appropriate account of future maintenance of the path and gateways. Therefore development of a future management plan/strategy which reviews and makes best use of existing mechanisms is recommend.



Improved access: replacement of gate near Two Tree Island – Before (Left) and After (Right)

Summary

The development of a green management, communication and master plan revitalised, promotes and reorganised the domain into a visitor friendly attraction.

Pre & on Trip Information

Information on Raversyde is available at www.raversyde.be, providing key information on accessibility and travel planning. Leaflets are available at key coastal visitor locations and project progress is communicated via social media. Several information panels and teasers/icons are located around the domain.

On Site Transport Facilities

Visitors are guided through the domain by clear signage on the site, with maps, several walking/cycling routes are available and a new audiovisual walk (app) was developed. There is large parking facility available.

Contact Details:

Organisation – Provincie West - Vlaanderen
Email - info@raversyde.be
Website – www.raversyde.be



PROJECT

Raversyde - Provincie West-Vlaanderen

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The domain Raversyde, near Oostende has been part of the province since 1988. The majority of the area is the former royal estate of Prins Karel (Prince Charles). However in 1914 German troops turned it into a coastal battery. These two uses have had a huge influence on the landscape and are well preserved.

Nearby is Walraversijde, a 15th century fishermen village. Nonetheless, Raversyde was not well known, leading to some parts being underused. At the same time there was no clear brand for visitors to recognise. The MaxiGreen project aimed to change that by developing and executing a plan for communication, green management and a master plan to revitalise, promote and reorganise the domain. The actions include:

- ✚ Nature works
- ✚ Accessibility improvements (to and trough the domain/ multimodality)
- ✚ Installation of teasers which will be placed outside the area to attract visitors
- ✚ The creation of a communications plan to market the domain.

PRE TRIP INFORMATION

Information on Raversyde is available on the West-Flanders Provincial website, which will be replaced during MaxiGreen with a new improved website. The details provided include:

- ✚ museum's opening times,
- ✚ disability access,
- ✚ admission prices,
- ✚ groups and schools admission,
- ✚ guided tours and education programmes,
- ✚ events calendar,
- ✚ public transport and route planning information.

Leaflets are available in some of the key visitors' locations in the coastal

area, promoting and providing information on the domain. Whilst social media and information panels on the domain are used to communicate the progress of the project.

ON TRIP INFORMATION AND TRAVEL FACILITIES

Access to the domain can be made through different modes of transport such as:

- ✚ Car
- ✚ Cycling
- ✚ Walking and
- ✚ Public transport: bus and tram.



COASTAL TRAM IN RAVERSYDE
HOUSESTYLE

However the access to Raversyde by tram could be improved since there is not a nice entrance through the dunes, which during the MaxiGreen project was proposed as a potential important point of access. These barriers such as the dunes or the roads in the domain are included and addressed in the domain's Master plan.

Visitors are guided towards the domain through the installation of signage on crucial roundabouts. Teasers and icons will be placed near the domain to increase the visibility of Raversyde within the neighbourhood. Whilst, the tram offers high visibility, as one of the coastal trams was painted according to the house style to promote the domain and raise the awareness of Raversyde.

ON SITE TRANSPORT FACILITES

Raversyde constitutes one of the best preserved parts of the German Atlantikwall and houses the only preserved German coastal battery from the First World War. The Prince Charles Memorial (1903-1983) shows the life of the Prince Regent and his family and a medieval village (ANNO 1465 (Walraversijde) provides a glimpse into the life of the 15th-century fishing families. These sites are clearly signposted with maps showing the domain. There is a large parking facility, connected to the several walking and cycling routes that circulate the domain.

During the MaxiGreen project a new audiovisual walk with use of a mobile/IPad app will be developed providing information on the history encountered at Raversyde.

The mobile/IPad app will also be used to guide visitors through the underused part of the domain. While a clear path structure will not only allow improved access to, but will also guide visitors through the domain.

LESSONS LEARNT

It is important to have a clear and visible 'brand' in place to raise the visibility of the domain (for example a new communication plan produced a clear brand for the Raversyde domain, replacing 'IJ' within Raversijde with a 'Y', referring to the 3 main assets of the domain).

A strong and clear brand image is a powerful asset that people can recognise and trust. It serves to provide the foundation for all marketing activity and helps to promote the visitor attraction experience more effectively and can engender consumer (especially in local communities) loyalty and long-term commitment, which encourages to repeat visitation. Ultimately, it is the visitors that make a visitor attraction successful, and therefore it is important to consider the visitor proposition and the visitor attraction brand when undertaking strategic planning.

Accessibility to the domain is important, but in a domain like Raversyde, harbouring much and very diverse functions, the accessibility in the domain is at least as important. In order to attract visitors to each corner of the domain a good infrastructure and "readable" walking and cycling routes are vital. These can be shown to the visitors by maps, signposts and new technologies (i.e. tablet directed routes).



NEIGHBOURHOOD TEASER TO RAISE
VISABILITY OF RAVERSYDE

Summary

The Ferme des Aigrettes is an environmental centre and green area where the accessibility to and around the farm has been explored through the various methods from transportation and signage.

Pre & on Trip Information

The pre and on trip information is important providing first impressions of your site. A diverse communication strategy is needed and establishment of a common branding that your partners are willing to include in their plans and on all your communication tools and road signage.

On Site Transport Facilities

Points of interests are clearly marked and a site map is provided to all visitors. Every space available has been made fully accessible to all and local inhabitants have been involved creating ambassadors for the site.

Contact Details:

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PROJECT

La Ferme des Aigrettes -Ville de Marck en Calaisis

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Ferme des Aigrettes is an environmental centre and green area where people can come to discover the richness of their surrounding nature and the complexity of their environment. It is built upon a former existing Farm. The way people access the farm's facilities have been explored through various means of transport and for people to amble simply around the farm without the need for cluttering signage and arrows.

PRE TRIP INFORMATION

There are various ways people can be informed about your site and what this site is offering. It is thus very important to diversify your communication strategy, having a common branding that would be on all your communication tools and also included on your partner's.

For the instance of the farm our partners agreed to feature the farm on their plans and maps, anchoring our structure as a key attraction within our territory. A plan was also designed to show all the different ways people can travel to the farm (i.e. via public transport, cycling and parking facilities).

As a result of this project a new road name for the alley leading to the farm was identified – "Allée de la Découverte". However, this proved challenging to encourage itinerary developers of the internet and for the creation of online maps for the internet to incorporate this new road name.

ON TRIP INFORMATION AND TRAVEL FACILITIES

The on trip information provides the first key impression you make to entice people to choose to visit your site. They have to start feeling your experience on offer even before they arrive; and when they actually arrive.

The best way for people to find you is through branded road signs, but you need to be innovative in the design and style of way-finding marks, such as painted floors/road and personalised tiles etc.

It is also important, that people can get as close to your entrance (by private and public transport). However this is not always easy, especially if you are not responsible for transport. These issues must be addressed both politically and technically.

Last but not least, make sure your neighbouring inhabitants and shops are well aware of your site and could help direct visitors.





ON SITE TRANSPORT FACILITIES

The idea for the farm is that there is not necessarily a single track/path visitors can follow when inside the farm, but rather several marked points of interest (i.e. sensorial labyrinth, temporary exhibition, eco-museum and farm animals etc.).

However, every visitor is provided with a site map, which explains the 45-minute track designed for visitors to discover the area.

Children from our nature club drew a map of the farm which is shown at the entrance of the site.

To provide easy access inside and around the site, every space available has been made fully accessible; with the forethought that the more accessible, the more attractive the place. Screens are now placed on the ground floor to duplicate the broadcast of that on the first floor, which was solely accessible on the first floor only.

Whilst we made sure every visitor can reach the farm animals without difficulty, taking into consideration mud and steps, etc. The farm's exhibition furniture is also adapted to the various accessibility challenges.

Through the help of summer nature camps for teenagers from our city, the pond has been made secure and accessible. This approach also encourages these teenagers to not cause damage to the site and for them to take ownership through pride of their own work.

LESSONS LEARNT

Accessibility is a key aspect in the attractiveness of our site. The farm is in a remote location, therefore we have to be very clear and efficient in the way we help people find their way to farm.

Your site must be easily located on the navigation/location maps regarding the place you are travelling from. It must also be very easy to find directions from your website (with no more than two clicks) and you have to make sure the usual GPS tools can all recognise your address.

Partnership with other facilities and attractions are important so that they can also help to communicate about your site, whether directly (by distributing your leaflets) or indirectly (by including site location on tourist or transport maps); and even communicate to a wide range of networks from accommodation (i.e. hotels, B&Bs and camping...) to even grocers (regarding food produce and markets) and tourist boards.

Make sure your neighbouring population know about you and make them ambassadors of your project by involving them as much as possible, in very enthusiastic ways.

Use (unusually) road signage to direct your visitors, from every part of the territory; do not be afraid to experiment yourself, or ask other people for the best method. Making sure you can also easily reach your site from the various surrounding transport hubs (i.e. the last kilometre issue).

Make every part of your site fully accessible, using colours to distinguish the various sections and to provide clear messages you want to disseminate.



FARM'S ACCESS TRACKS



South Essex
Marshes
Essex County
Council

Case Studies : WP 1, 2
& 3

Living Landscape
Southend Borough
Council & Essex
Wildlife Trust

Case Studies: WP 1
& 3

**Work Package 1:
Planning Multifunctional
Green Heritage**

**Work Package 2: Increasing
Public Awareness of Green
Heritage**

la Ferme des
Aigrettes
Ville de Marck en
Calaisis

Case Studies: WP 1,
2 & 3

Strategisch Project
Rupel
Rupel Province of
Antwerp

Case Studies: WP 1 &
2

Raversyde & West
Flemish Heart
Province of West-
Vlaanderen

Case Studies: WP 1 &
3

Water Square
Benthemplein
City of Rotterdam

**Work Package 3:
Enabling Access to Green
Heritage**