



GREEN BUSINESS NETWORK

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investing in the environment

COMMUNITY GARDENS

making it happen! creating cleaner, safer, accessible greenspaces



Project Summary

The GBN is tangibly improving the quality of life in Calderdale and beyond. Its coherent network of pocket parks ("owned and managed by local people, accessible to all") now extends to four sites. Together they encompass social inclusion, transitional employment, and help protect and conserve local wildlife, heritage and landscape.

Underused and inappropriate spaces have been transformed with full community involvement, assisting with the regeneration of run-down areas, addressing issues of anti-social behaviour and establishing links between diverse communities.

...leisure, education, recycling and best practise at four sister sites :

- **Ferney Lee Wild Garden**
celebrated with BTCV "Peoples Places" and DfES/Scarman Trust "Community Champion" Awards
- **Wadsworth Common**
multicultural improvements acutely sympathetic to the needs of local Residents' Association
- **Ravenscliffe Sound Garden**
special needs/accessibility focus; a model for GBN's major 34 acre regeneration scheme, Wakefield
- **The Heart Project, Sowerby**
'flagship' partnership to improve adjoining areas of derelict woodland and bare grassy slope

Outcomes

Ravenscliffe features sustainable drainage and a performing arts space. At **Ferney Lee**, a surplus tennis court has been transformed into an outdoor classroom. It also provides 'outdoor skills' training and a demonstration site for recycled plastic products. **Sowerby** has been adopted by The Pitstop Project, a diversionary scheme: eight groups of underachieving children (including five High Schools) are undertaking an environmental conservation module, backed by the Learning & Skills Council and West Yorkshire Police. **Wadsworth** is now a regular venue for community arts festivals.

JOB DONE:

RAVENSCLIFFE GARDEN CENTRE AND SOUND GARDEN

Contract: *creation of sensory garden and nursery at Ravenscliffe High School, Halifax, West Yorkshire*

Value: £100,000 **Timescale:** 1 year

Client: *community-wide steering group*

Contractors: *Chris Sherwin Designs, Sureset, Callis Mill, Southdale Homes, school students, staff, volunteers and many local businesses.*

Critical success factor: *early appointment of full-time Garden Manager*

School grounds are usually only for pupils and staff, but the new sensory garden at Ravenscliffe is open to many others. The school itself is for those with special needs, who have limited opportunities to work when they leave. The garden will enable some of them to learn, enjoy and benefit from the basics of horticulture (0.8 ha has been used to house 22 metres of polytunnels and a cold frame area).

Sources of help and funding

Biffaward was the major funder, alongside BTCV (provides liability insurance via a Group Association).

www.biffaward.org, www.btcv.org

www.cleanergreenersafer.gov.uk

Future plans

Ambitious plans for Sowerby centre around a disability-friendly 'fitness' circuit made of recycled materials. This will reflect a 3 km nature trail of recycled plastic groundblocks underway at GBN's "Environmental Resource Centre", Wakefield (*The ABLE Partnership, Calderdale*). A series of exchange visits is 'in hand'



A School Council from Merseyside on a best practise visit to the Biffaward Sound Garden

The garden also has an amphitheatre for amateur dramatics, with seating for 50, a winding tree walk with ramps, steps and bannisters, and a music garden with sound, air and tactile features. Through GBN, it is linked with Ponderosa Rural Therapeutic Centre, Heckmondwike, and was also the catalyst for The Heart Project.

"People from around Calderdale are welcome to visit the garden"