WELCOME TO THE 2ND EDITION OF SPACE

THE RIVER NENE REGIONAL PARK (RNRP) INITIATIVE MAGAZINE AIMED AT INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADING, SHAPING AND DEVELOPING GREEN SPACE ACROSS THE EAST MIDLANDS, MILTON KEYS AND SOUTH MIDLANDS (MKSM) AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The huge success of the Salcey Forest Tree Top Way, partnered with Forest Enterprise can only echo this and is just one of the projects that the RNRP Initiative has completed to date with one of its many partners. An article on the opening of the Tree Top Way can be seen in this edition.

We have also seen the extremely popular launch event for Green Infrastructure held and jointly hosted by the RNRP Initiative and another partner, The Environment Agency. The event attracted over 800 delegates and a broad range of representatives from groups involved in the MKSM growth area.

This event was coordinated by the RNRP team in just under 3 months and ran parallel with the development and launch of the RNRP website. This is now being used as a very visual tool to keep partners and the public up to date with the actions and future intentions of the Initiative. The refreshing innovative graphics and text explain the history behind the RNRP and why it is here and the site provides links to other partnering projects and relative organisations.

The RNRP is now the largest greenspace GAF2 funded project in the UK.

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER BARONESS ANDREWS SAID: “We all know that we need to provide new homes for the next generation. This is, however, not just about bricks and mortar; it’s about building sustainable communities supported by the right infrastructure – transport, education, healthcare and, crucially, green spaces. These are why we have connected investment in the Growth Area Fund exclusively to green space projects.

The River Nene Regional Park is an existing long term project which demonstrates the government’s commitment to everyone having access to good quality green space. Excellent progress has been made by the River Nene Regional Park Partnership towards delivering the vision over the last year in a number of innovative ways; including Stanwick Lakes and Salcey Forest.”

Welcome to the 2nd edition of Space, the magazine aimed at individuals and organisations responsible for leading, shaping and developing green space across the East Midlands, Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) and Northamptonshire.

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In February 2003, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the Sustainable Communities Plan: ‘Building for the Future’. Its purpose was to create sustainable, thriving communities that are a pleasure to live in. To achieve this, it set out a target of an additional 200,000 new homes to be built by 2016 and a commitment to spend £22 billion on improving housing and infrastructure between 2002 and 2006.

One of the four areas identified for this housing provision is the Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) growth area. The concept of the River Nene Regional Park (RNRP) emerged as a result of the recognition that these sustainable communities needed to be accompanied by the delivery of a network of high quality green spaces.

The RNRP secured Growth Area Funding to enable delivery of a series of tangible projects through working with partners. The RNRP is a model of how partnerships can be structured and built by 2016 and a commitment to spend £22 billion on improving housing and infrastructure between 2002 and 2006.

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The RNRP’s vision is a network of green spaces that are accessible to everyone. The RNRP model provides a strategic context for the delivery of new green spaces, linking up existing green corridors and networks. The RNRP is a model of how partnerships can be structured and built by 2016 and a commitment to spend £22 billion on improving housing and infrastructure between 2002 and 2006.

There are three key themes to ensure that the network provides multi-functional, attractive and sustainable outdoor spaces:

- A place for sport, recreation and healthy living
- A place for culture and learning
- A place for environmental research and innovation

WHO GUIDES THE RNRP INITIATIVE?

The RNRP is directed by a Stakeholder Steering Group (SSG) representing key public, private and voluntary sector partners, which sets the strategic direction for activity within the RNRP project. The SSG currently comprises 27 organisations who contribute to the promotion of sustainability and sustainable development.

DEVELOPMENT OF A BRAND

The need for a strong and unified brand is very important in today’s business climate. The RNRP needs a strong identity that is easily recognisable for a wide audience including founders, decision makers and practitioners, delivery organisations and communities.

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HOW DID THE RNRP EVOLVE?

LOUISE JOHNSON FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY EXPLAINS.

The identity has to provide a way to unite the RNRP messages and create a strong platform to attract funding. The SSG has evolved from this vision and carried forward from this stage.

SUMMARY OF WORK ACHIEVED TO DATE

The River Nene Regional Park has successfully delivered £4.2 million worth of green space projects, including £3.4 million from the £22 billion commitment to spend £22 billion on improving housing and infrastructure between 2002 and 2006. The RNRP projects and further direct and match funding that was secured in 2006, in itself, is £12 million, with support from a wide range of organisations, including local authorities, the Environment Agency, and the private sector.

The RNRP meets its goals for 2004, delivering £4.2 million worth of Green Infrastructure projects. It has achieved its aims for the period 2004/2006 of delivering tangible Green Infrastructure projects, developing signature projects, inputting research and developing and testing the RNRP concept as a partnership initiative. This approach has ensured that a further £4.5 million has been secured from central government GAF2 funding to deliver more exciting projects throughout 2006/2008. This is the highest amount of funding to be secured for any Green Infrastructure project in the United Kingdom.

Read about the achievements of the individual GAF1 projects on page 13, whilst pages 5-9 provide information on how the GAF2 funding will be spent.

GROWTH AREA FUNDED PROJECTS

- Growth Infrastructure (North and West Northamptonshire)
- Oak Park
- Northampton
- Market Harborough
- Kettering
- Rising Sun
- Midland Road
- Donnington
- Deeping
- College
- Seniors
- Woodstock
- Oundle
- Corby
- Grand Designs
- Heywood
- Crofton
- Grand Designs
- Newport
- Lincoln
- Grantham
- Bourne
- Lincoln
- Grantham
- Lincoln
- Grantham
- Lincoln
MAKING NEW SPACES

GAF 2 - NORTH NORTHANTS AND WEST NORTHANTS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (GI) RNRP LEADING THE WAY

WHAT ARE THESE TANGIBLE PROJECTS?

AN INTRODUCTION

These projects will provide funding for projects that will deliver measurable environmental outcomes by enhancing opportunities for community groups and individuals.

- BENEFIT URBAN AND URBAN FRINGE HABITATS (WOODLAND, WET GRASSLAND ETC.)
- IMPROVE ACCESS LINKS BETWEEN AND WITHIN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS
- MAINTAIN, ENHANCE AND CREATE TANGLIBLE PROJECTS?
- ACCESS TO AND USE OF THE ENVIRONMENT
- FIELD ECOLOGICAL MONITORING

ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT SCHEME

SIGNIFICANCE

The grant scheme will build on the work of the first phase of outdoor projects that has already delivered a new generation of accessible heritage and learning landscapes. Together these tangible projects will help deliver the RNRP’s key objectives:

- Central, biodiversity-enhancing
- Urban infrastructure
- Natural beauty
- Heritage
- Education
- Communities

CENTRAL, BIODIVERSITY-ENHANCING

An important aspect of the GI scheme will be the integration of biodiversity and environmental monitoring. This will be achieved through a monitoring programme that will help to ensure that all projects meet the environmental objectives of the scheme. The programme will also provide a valuable dataset for future research and monitoring.

AN IMPORTANT CONTEXT

The grant scheme will be funded by the UK government’s green infrastructure plan. It is part of a wider national strategy to promote and deliver green infrastructure across the country. The funding will be used to support projects that enhance the natural environment and provide benefits to communities and individuals.

PROJECT FOCUS

The grant scheme will focus on delivering tangible projects that provide real environmental benefits. These projects will be developed in consultation with local communities and stakeholders to ensure that they meet the needs of the local area. The projects will be monitored and evaluated to assess their impact on the environment and to help inform future projects.

THE GI PROJECTS

These projects will be funded through a competitive bidding process. The projects will be selected based on their potential to deliver measurable environmental outcomes and their ability to engage and benefit local communities.

Supporting the RNRP’s objectives

The RNRP has identified a number of key objectives that it aims to achieve through its projects. These include:

- Enhancing the natural environment
- Improving public access
- Promoting biodiversity
- Enhancing social benefits
- Creating new opportunities for learning and education

The grant scheme will support projects that align with these objectives and will help the RNRP to achieve its overall vision of creating a network of green infrastructure across the region.

This scheme will be open to applications from a diverse range of partners, including local authorities, community groups, and private sector organisations. The scheme will be open for applications from April 2016 to March 2018.

The RNRP is working closely with partners to develop a range of projects that will deliver real environmental benefits. These projects will be supported by a range of funding, including government grant funding and private sector investment.

The RNRP is committed to ensuring that its projects are sustainable and deliver real benefits to the local area. The organisation will work closely with partners to ensure that projects are delivered in a way that minimises their impact on the environment and maximises their benefits to local communities.

The RNRP is excited to be leading the way in delivering green infrastructure projects across the region. The organisation is committed to ensuring that its projects are delivered in a way that meets the needs of the local area and delivers real environmental benefits.

For more information on the RNRP’s projects and how to get involved, please visit our website.
TOP LODGE

FINE SHADE WOODS IS AN EXCITING, INNOVATIVE PROJECT DESIGNED TO CELEBRATE THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF ROCKINGHAM FOREST AND DELIVER A HIGH QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET FOR THE PEOPLE OF CORBY, NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND FURTHER AFIELD.

The project has four overlapping dimensions:

1. Environmental Education and Lifelong Learning: the project will be a centre of excellence for the delivery of environmental education, interpretation and lifelong learning. It will also demonstrate best practice in the sector and enable others to develop the role elsewhere.

2. Rural Crafts and Rural Products: in association with the Northamptonshire Craft Guild, the project will provide a key node in delivering a wider network of green infrastructure in North Northamptonshire. The woods has at its centre the ancient woodbank and coppice system. The coppice will be celebrated with careful restoration of parts of Rockingham Forest, which looks to bring back the majestic Red Kites to the area. These themes will be linked with seasonal wholefood on the menu and will provide a flexible space for craft demonstrations, training events, and community use. It will also set the scene for the demonstration of charcoal making and iron smelting for education and cultural heritage purposes.

3. Access to the countryside and healthy living: a new family cycle route, 2.5 mile all-ability path and open spaces.

4. Conservation and enhancement of archaeological and historical assets. Some of the key themes that local people and organisations identified for the future management and enhancement of the County’s green corridors through the local landscape.

The archaeology of the forest will also be celebrated with careful restoration of parts of Rockingham Forest, which looks to bring back the majestic Red Kites to the area. These themes will be linked with seasonal wholefood on the menu and will provide a flexible space for craft demonstrations, training events, and community use. It will also set the scene for the demonstration of charcoal making and iron smelting for education and cultural heritage purposes.

Connecting People and Place aims to address some of the key themes that local people and organisations identified for the future management and enhancement of the County’s broad range of rural networks including:

- Working towards the creation and development of a more accessible network.
- Engaging and encouraging new audiences to participate in rural priorities and positive ways of reaching the countryside.
- Promoting and creating a diverse network of walking, cycling and horse riding in and around the county.
- Better signage, interpretation for visitors and interpretation panels will be developed with local groups to promote walking, cycling and horse riders, and aim to do just that for selected routes and as good as the destination!
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Connecting People and Place is being delivered by the Rights of Way team at Northamptonshire County Council for the RNRP and aims to be part of that for visitors, local people and organisations.

Some people say that the journey is as important as the destination. This project, Connecting People and Place, is being developed with the help of the RNRP project was hosted from Top Lodge, making productive use of the old cattle stalls for a co-operation rental outlet. Photograph ©RNRP Mike Finn-Kelcey Photograph ©RNRP Elaine Jaggs

The initiative responds to the anticipated infrastructure development of the RNRP project in the summer of 2005. The project will provide a flexible space for craft demonstrations, training events, and community use. It will also set the scene for the demonstration of charcoal making and iron smelting for education and cultural heritage purposes.

TOP LODGE

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HAS IN EXCESS OF 3,000 KILOMETRES OF FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND BYWAYS FORMING A MESH OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE, ALONGSIDE CANALS AND RIVERS, THROUGH WOODLANDS, PARKS AND MEADOWS.
BREATHING SPACES

This is an exciting new project to provide a series of projects [new environmental zones] that form a green corridor following the river Nene and essentially connecting them via robust green links to the urban centres of Northampton and Wellingborough at either end.

Sustainable planning and forestry will also play a vital role in the project that will encourage futurologists to create an edible landscape working towards the same positive benefits seen today. These green spaces will be an example, tackling the many challenges we face as a result of the New Valley.

Forming the green links within the valley itself the corridor will be a linear, natural corridor that will hopefully provide seminal sites and locations of relevance, engaging the public and allowing communities to take ownership of the corridor, encouraging participation in the activities. These are the building blocks for the future of sustainable urban green areas and increasing the opportunities for biodiversity, wildlife and opportunities to open up more green spaces which can then be restored or enhanced towards the same positive beneficial goals.

The visionary landscape redesigns envisaged, with sites potentially being used as parkland, allotments and parks into the urban fabric. The urban regeneration projects look at improving the existing urban green spaces, creating a network that will extend, through cultural events across the country on Saturday and Sunday 2nd/3rd June with the aim of inspiring people to really involve themselves in activities and participate in their growing countryside.

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THE RNRP AT THE BBC SPRINGWATCH EAST EVENT IN THE FOREST OF MARSTON VALE, BEDFORDSHIRE.

Supporting this, the RNRP hosted a closed at the Forest of Marston Vale Event in Bedfordshire. This was a day of fun activity, that featured various activities, including paintballing, dog walking, bike riding, and butterfly watching, story-telling, bug making, face painting, river walks and bug-detecting.

The RNRP had a ‘Design Your Fantastic Outdoor Space’ postcard making competition, and a ‘pool that encouraged people to tell us about the event’.

DO YOU SPRING INTO ACTION THIS MAY WITH THE RNRP SPRINGWATCH SERIES AND SURVEY ON BBC2.

Advancing across the country to bring viewers closer to some of Britain’s favourite wild creatures with their Springwatch series and survey on BBC2.

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BBR BREATHING PLACES CAMPAIGN

These events also raised the launch of the BBC Breathing Places campaign, which aims whole of life leading, whole organisation, to transform 1800000 acres of NHS land into green places.

He drew up a plan to enable everybody to have a green space, which was then put into action by a new group called the ‘Breathing Places’.

The campaign’s aim was to inspire people to create and use green places where they live. They are offering Big Lottery Fund grants for people to create Breathing Places near where they live. They are offering Big Lottery Fund grants for people to create Breathing Places near where they live.

The RNRP has submitted bids for Phase 1 of the Breathing Places Scheme and the successful bids from the RNRP will help in funding the projects onto the BBC Website.

To find out more about getting involved in Breathing Places, whether for funding or to see what’s happening near you contact the RNRP for advice, or visit the RNRP website www.rnrp.org where a copy of the BBC campaign presentation advice, or visit the RNRP website www.rnrp.org where a copy of the BBC campaign presentation can be downloaded.

Winning design by Alex Pym

Runner up by Olivia Blackley
The project will provide advice and share strategies developed in the Wetland Region partnership, understanding their natural, cultural and historic environments. The project will also identify key cross-border challenges and provide advice on the potential for future projects. The project will support the implementation of the SPARC project, helping to develop and support the need for integrated management strategies at all scales.

The project will focus on the following themes:

- To identify and develop strategies for the sustainable management of river corridors and wetlands, including the use of appropriate tools and techniques for monitoring and evaluation.
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DEFINING THE IMPORTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (GI) FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.

A broad range of representatives from the Environment Agency, the Milton Keynes and South Bedfordshire Local Authority, the Milton Keynes Development Corporations and the Milton Keynes Strategic Environments Team, met at the Milton Keynes and South Bedfordshire Strategic Environments Team’s annual Green Infrastructure (GI) workshop on 18th May 2016. The event provided the opportunity for the delivery of representation from the MKSM growth area to discuss the need for green infrastructure and a sustainable approach to the development of positive and proactive links to wider communities, both within the MKSM and to other regional and sub-regional authorities. This was a very positive exercise and highlighted areas of need and a need for GI through structured workshops.

The opportunity for dialogue, to continue the development of GI, and to continue to inform the on-going development of positive and proactive links to wider communities, both within the MKSM and to other regional and sub-regional authorities.

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RIVER NENE REGIONAL PARK

LAND ADVISOR

IN THE LAST YEAR MUCH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED TO ENGAGE FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS IN THE PROGRESS OF THE RNRP AND TO HELP THEM ACCESS FUNDING FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, WITH THE AIM TO ENHANCE THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

The role of the Land Advisor is to link farmers and landowners to schemes and resources available. The Land Advisor is able to identify various schemes that are relevant to the different areas throughout the country. Over the last year, the Land Advisor has supported over 100 farmers and landowners in securing funding under a variety of different schemes. With the aim of increasing access to funding, the Land Advisor is available for applications in the autumn. For further information visit the website at www.rnrp.org.

BARNES MEADOW WETLAND CREATION

FINISHING TOUCHES ARE NOW BEING MADE TO THE WETLAND RESTORATION WORKS AT BARNES MEADOW ON THE EDGE OF NORTHAMPTON.

The Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is managed by the Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust. The project has been funded by the Growth Area Fund (DCLG). The project was awarded £90,000 of funding from the Growth Area Fund (DCLG) for the project and will provide an increased green infrastructure in the Northampton Area. Although this site lies very close to the Town Centre it has previously been underused. The project aimed to provide enhanced access facilities were seen as essential components for creating a valley rich in wildlife for the biodiversity in the Nene Valley. This vision includes helping to support a range of local initiatives; from commercial development, business, business and promotion activities, as part of the development of the site. The project has also been designed to encourage visitors to enjoy the site, through the creation of new habitats and the enhancement of existing ones. The project also included the creation of new habitats and the enhancement of existing ones. The project also included the creation of a wetland complex of permanent pools, ditches, wetland and reedbeds and ponds. The site is already establishing well following the completion of the wetland restoration works which have been managed by the Wildlife Trust in recent years. The site is already establishing well following the completion of the wetland restoration works which have been managed by the Wildlife Trust in recent years.

Although this site will be marginalised in the future, the project has already achieved much in the last year. More work will continue into the next year, and the site will continue to develop into the future.
The idea of employing a design team to create a 'brand' for the RNRP was put forward by the Stakeholder Steering Group (SSG) and consequently, in January this year, a brief was sent out to 12 design studios, from Northampton and further afield, inviting them to tender. In its aim to establish a greater visibility and presence for itself, the main pointers of the brief were:

• ‘CREATE A VISUAL IDENTITY FOR THE RNRP, GIVING THE INITIATIVE A RECOGNISABLE FACE FOR THE GOVERNMENT, PARTNERS, BUSINESS AND THE PUBLIC TO SEE.’
• ‘THIS VISUAL IDENTITY TO BE USED BY THE TEAM, BUT SHOULD ALSO WORK AS A ‘KITEMARK’ THAT SHOULD ACT AS A VISUAL SIGNATURE ON ALL PROJECTS DELIVERED BY THE RNRP AND PARTNERS.’
• ‘THIS SHOULD ENCAPSULATE THE GREEN SPACE AND QUALITY OF LIFE MISSION OF THE INITIATIVE AND REFLECT THE COMMITMENT AND VISION BEHIND THE WORK AND PROJECTS THAT EMBODY THIS MISSION.’

The brief provoked great interest in the project, and a sub-group of representatives from the RNRP team and the SSG had the difficult job of choosing five agencies to invite to a further presentation stage. During this initial stage, marks were awarded on various criteria, including, ‘understanding of brief’, response and analysis’ and ‘design ideas’. Some interesting and vibrant visuals were already emerging at this stage, and it was generally clear that much brainstorming and research had already taken place.

The presentations took place in March, and provoked lively ‘discussions’ throughout the day. Much thought had obviously been devoted to the definition of the RNRP and how this could be best represented visually to appeal to all sectors from the business/private areas to encouraging public interaction with the projects. In certain cases where opinion had been more divided at the early stages, a dramatic development had taken place within the proposals, whereas in other instances a strong, exciting presentation that seemed to understand exactly the aspirations of the exercise, could come crashing down with the final visual.

Eventually, a decision was made to go with Impact, a Northampton-based studio who expressed an extremely business-like approach to the concept, some innovative ideas for the web site, an interesting way of developing the name, some preliminary visual ideas that could be translated into a variety of applications, and a visual that could work effectively in a variety of applications – from carving into a sign in the woods to face-painting on children!!

The concept of Impact’s logo was born from the use of a spiral, indicating the universality of this symbol in nature, and the continuous, unbound concept of the Regional Park, with its spiralling projects that will continue to develop over time.

The need to expel any ambiguity surrounding the Regional Park, in particular the nature and function of this ‘park’ has been continually discussed as the RNRP has developed and grown. The concept of Impact’s logo was born from the use of a spiral, indicating the universality of this symbol in nature, and the continuous, unbound concept of the Regional Park, with its spiralling projects that will continue to develop over time.