

AONB CASE STUDY

Landscapes for People

Project title	Working with Moorswork - volunteering and social integration
AONB Partnership/Conservation Board	Howardian Hills AONB
<p>Overview Please summarise your project being clear about what was achieved</p>	<p>Over the past year the Howardian Hills AONB volunteers have been working alongside Moorswork, a training and employment scheme for mainly young adults with learning difficulties. The group have successfully worked on conservation, access and recreation projects.</p> <p>Moorswork is a Social Enterprise undertaking conservation work in the eastern part of North Yorkshire. The Moorswork team is made up of adults with learning difficulties and their group leaders. The team currently operates two days per week and funding to establish the Social Enterprise came from the North York Moors National Park Innovation Fund in 2013.</p> <p>Moorswork carry out work for the North York Moors National Park, Forestry Commission, the Howardian Hills AONB, Buglife, several churches and a Housing Association. They are available for hire either on a regular contract or for one-off jobs. Alongside conservation work the team also helps out with tasks such as painting in village halls and maintenance of village green spaces.</p> <p>In spring 2015 the Howardian Hills Volunteers and North Yorkshire County Council Countryside Volunteers teamed up with Moorswork to deliver conservation work in the Howardian Hills AONB.</p> <p>The summer months see the combined group clearing Himalayan balsam from Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and cutting and raking botanically rich grassland. In winter the work usually revolves around scrub clearance either from sites important for their geology or flora, or from Scheduled Monuments being managed as part of the Howardian Hills AONB Monument Management Scheme funded by Historic England.</p>
<p>What was done Please describe your project activities in more detail.</p>	<p>The joining of the Howardian Hills AONB volunteers and Moorswork initially came from the need to find a way to continue to be able to operate our volunteer group. Previously the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Rangers, and then their Volunteer Team Leader, led our volunteer group. Unfortunately a re-organisation at NYCC meant that these mechanisms were no longer available and therefore we needed to find a new one if the volunteers were going to be able to continue carrying out tasks.</p> <p>We had already been hiring Moorswork as a contractor to carry out some practical conservation tasks in the AONB. Peter Scott, the Moorswork team leader, indicated that he would be willing to trial taking out our volunteer group alongside his Thursday team (his smaller group). Moorswork were already registered providers with the NYCC Social Services department, which made agreeing this new arrangement relatively simple. With the assistance of the NYCC Volunteer Coordinator, who checked that all the necessary Health and Safety procedures were in place, the first tasks were arranged. After a couple of trial tasks the benefits of this way of working were already becoming apparent and a rolling list of activities started to develop. Over the past twelve months the team have:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cleared Himalayan balsam - Managed rhododendron - Worked on Monuments at Risk, moving brash and felling small trees - Repaired and reinstated steps on a well-used public footpath - Managed conservation churchyards - Cleared bracken from a site containing bee orchids - Coppiced birch in a fen/carr woodland - Cleared scrub from fenland <p>Joining the teams means that we tend to have about 14 people out on site for a task. The two groups have now integrated completely to become one larger team. Our volunteers work alongside the Moorswork group and have got to know them; they recognise which team member likes to be kept busy and help to find him jobs, and who is more outgoing and enjoys having a joke. It is noticeable how much more conversation is going on between all of the group members compared to when they first joined together as a team 12 months ago.</p>
<p>Outputs/Outcomes Please provide some facts and figures, (particularly ones that could be collated with those from other AONBs e.g. no of schools engaged, no of events delivered, landowners advised etc)</p>	<p>15 AONB volunteers and the Moorswork team of up to 10 people. Usually 6-8 volunteers and 6 people from Moorswork on each task. The team generally carries out tasks fortnightly throughout the year.</p> <p>Whilst the partnering of our volunteers with Moorswork initially came from a need to find a way to continue to keep our volunteer group operating, the social integration enabled through this project is at least as important as the work that the team carries out on the ground. The Moorswork team have all become more confident and out-going, whilst the AONB Volunteers (often single men in their 60s/70s) have benefitted not only from the continuation of healthy outdoor physical activity, but also from interacting with less fortunate members of society.</p>
<p>Learning What was key to your project's success?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial idea from the AONB Team of bringing together seemingly disparate groups. • The willingness of the County Council (as our legal Accountable Body) and the Moorswork managers in developing a workable mechanism. • The project would in theory be easily replicable in other areas, dependent upon the existence of groups similar to Moorswork. • We are now looking to extend the coverage of the group, possibly working with the Alzheimer's Society to accommodate some of their clients and carers on the volunteer tasks.
<p>Further information</p>	<p>Liz Bassindale, Howardian Hills AONB Partnership liz.bassindale@northyorks.gov.uk 0845 034 9495</p>
<p>Downloads, videos, images <i>(please add links or attach documents/2-3 images for use on website & wider promotion).</i></p>	
<p>Quote from project manager</p>	<p>Peter Scott, Moorswork Team Leader: "The project delivers beneficial work on the ground and is a valuable opportunity for social interaction for all involved. The way that the groups work together is a positive example of social integration. The Moorswork team members are very much part of the bigger team and have responded well to working alongside the volunteers."</p>

<p>Quote from participant</p>	<p>“Without teaming up with Moorswork all environment work would stop. Having the benefit of an experienced leader is of great value.” AONB Volunteer</p> <p>“I enjoy every minute of the working parties. The workers work with and also for each other. We always get good results, this is satisfying.” AONB Volunteer</p> <p>“I am gaining knowledge about the conservation work that is done. It is a positive and inclusive environment. I can see that the people with Moorswork are benefitting, gaining practical and social skills as am I. I do hope that the people supported by Moorswork might develop sufficiently to move into paid employment in the future.” AONB Volunteer</p>
<p>Key search words</p>	<p>Moorswork Young people Conservation Volunteers Social integration Learning difficulties Social enterprise</p>