



Sustainable Business Awards for the South East 2004

Case Study - Greenham Common Community Trust Ltd

Company Background (Social Enterprise)

The Greenham Common Airbase near Newbury was declared redundant by the Ministry of Defence in 1992, and handed over to the Defence Land Agent for disposal. There was a growing concern that the common would be sold bit-by-bit for development and lost forever to the local community.

However, in 1997 the Greenham Common Trust was formed in partnership with the local council to restore the common and regenerate the former airbase. 900-acres was purchased: 750-acres, including the runways and taxiways, was transferred to the council to be restored as common land with grazing animals; the remaining 150-acres, consisting of aircraft hangers and buildings was transferred to the Trust to be regenerated as 'New Greenham Park'. The Park, a mixed use business campus, aims to produce a flow of income that can be channelled into good causes and social projects through charitable awards.

Summary of Key Achievements

- Since 1997, Greenham Common Trust has invested £13 million in the development of the Park
- Through its programme of annual awards, £660,000 has been distributed to over 240 organisations in the North Hampshire and West Berkshire area
- Over £750,000 has been given to the restoration of the Common
- The Trust has recently donated £450,000 towards the purchase of a digital X-ray machine for the new West Berkshire Community Hospital
- £150,000 is spent annually to fund 'New Greenham Arts', the Park's public arts centre
- The Trust was the first commercial property development to be granted the Queens Award for Enterprise: Sustainable Development in 2003



KEY



ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



BUSINESS BENEFITS



ECONOMIC BENEFITS



SOCIAL BENEFITS

Sustainability Initiatives

- Produce a sustainable income allowing charitable awards that benefit the community
- Encourage innovative industry and commerce with diverse employment opportunities
- Protect and enhance the natural environment
- Support community activity, the arts, and education

Contribution to a Sustainable Economy

Since 1997, the Trust has awarded funds to 224 community, education and health related projects, for example:

- In 2004 the Trust awarded the Living Rainforest, a registered charity promoting sustainable rainforests, £10,000 to purchase renewable energy that uses a sustainable 'carbon neutral' local wood supply
- In 2003 the Trust donated £2,000 to the Newbury Spring Festival to support a programme of music specifically geared towards educating young people

More recently the Trust has been able to fund increasingly large projects, such as a £450,000 donation to purchase a digital X-ray machine for a new local hospital.

The Trust actively seek opportunities to leverage money through funding:

- Since 1999, the Trust has committed to providing £90,000 over six years for the Berkshire Community Foundation towards a range of social projects. This will allow 'match-funding' and enable the release of a further £90,000 of European Social Fund money into the community. Despite initial concerns that the funding opportunities were limited, the commitment has proved 'good value for money'
- In order to apply for specialist college status, and thus receive government funding, schools need to raise £50,000 as part of their bidding process. The Trust granted £15,000 each to four schools, in order that they could then apply for a further £1.5 million government funding. All the school applications were successful

The Newbury Enterprise Hub was established in 2002 in collaboration with SEEDA, to nurture and support young, high growth, technology businesses creating employment and community business opportunities. The Trust provides a programme of seminars and events designed to assist Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as well as subsidised premises in the Park.

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The Trust also subsidise accommodation for charities. For example, Link-Up is a charity providing working skills and employment opportunities for adults with learning difficulties through a sheltered work skills unit. The charity offers basic skills training to the disadvantaged, which can be as simple as catching the bus in the morning or arriving on time, and straightforward tasks such as refurbishing furniture or making bookmarks. A donation of a £3 a day 'salary' enables the adults to feel valued, and the experience is designed to eventually help them gain outside employment. However, the charity struggles to move people from a sheltered environment into the real world, and there is a need for a 'half-way house'. The Trust are investing £1.8 million in the development of a purpose built facility, the Slater Centre. This will bring the charity together with other organisations that offer work opportunities, training and support for adults with learning difficulties (e.g. the Community Furniture Project that recycles furniture), enabling another level of 'light-sheltered' employment and encourage networking. The Trust will also subsidise the rent for the Centre in future years.

A business park Broadband network has been created to encourage networking between businesses on the Park, and to enable working from home. The Trust also contributes to the regular newsletter of the West Berkshire Strategic Partnership that is distributed to local households. Technical support and resources are also provided for local charity and social project websites, such as the 'Pathways to Employment'. This is a website that provides a pool of information on employment advice and links to other charities.

In 2002 the Trust published a report exploring the commonly held perceptions about the voluntary sector and measured these against the reality. The report concluded that contrary to perceptions the sector was a multi-million £ business, led primarily by personal experience rather than clients needs. A key finding was that the sector was disjointed, and that those charities that were 'good at applying for grants' were receiving many different sources of funding. Subsequently, the Trust has encouraged organisations to work together in partnership and share information. However, such collaboration has proved difficult as the organisations are keen to retain their independence.

Enhancing Environmental Quality

The restoration of the common has resulted in the reinstatement of the largest lowland heathland in Berkshire. Heathland is a rare habitat that has declined by more than 80% since 1980 in the UK. Restoration involved the removal of one million tonnes of concrete and tarmac from the runways, the removal of 25 underground aviation-fuel tanks, and a process of bioremediation to remove tank leakage contamination.

The Trust also funded a conservation project within the business park, Handpost Gully. The common forms a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest protecting a variety of endangered plants and animals including the Dartford Warbler, Woodlark, 11 species of orchid and rare grasses.

Through charitable awards the Trust has supported local environmental and nature conservation projects with donations of £46,500.

A Green Transport plan has been in operation since 2000 and involves the following initiatives:

- A local bus service between the town and Park is funded, providing free transport for visitors and employees
- A car-sharing scheme has been launched in collaboration with other organisations on the Park
- Free bicycles are provided for trips within the Park
- The cycle and pedestrian routes within the Park are currently being upgraded

However the uptake of some initiatives has been limited and the Trust is not confident they will achieve their target of a 10% reduction in car movements by 2005.

The Trust has instigated a 'Green Energy' feasibility study, investigating the viability of the business communities switching to 100% renewable supplies. The possibility of a wind turbine is currently being explored, although informal findings suggest local residents would find this undesirable.

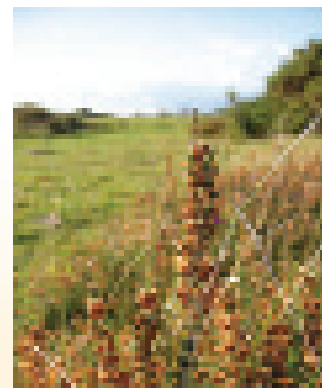
Improving the Social Wellbeing of Stakeholders

The Trust allows employees to commit some of their working hours to voluntary work. Examples of such commitments are:

- The Trust's Chief Executive Officer is the Chairman of the Transport Action Group for the Government Strategic Partnership
- One staff member is highly involved in the Education Business Partnership and Greenham Commission
- Volunteers work in the site's nature reserve



Working with the disabled at Linkup



Regeneration of the common

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Awards supported by:

