The Impact of Well Managed Green Space on Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Alan Carter
Director of Portfolio Management
The Land Trust

The Land Trust

Our Vision

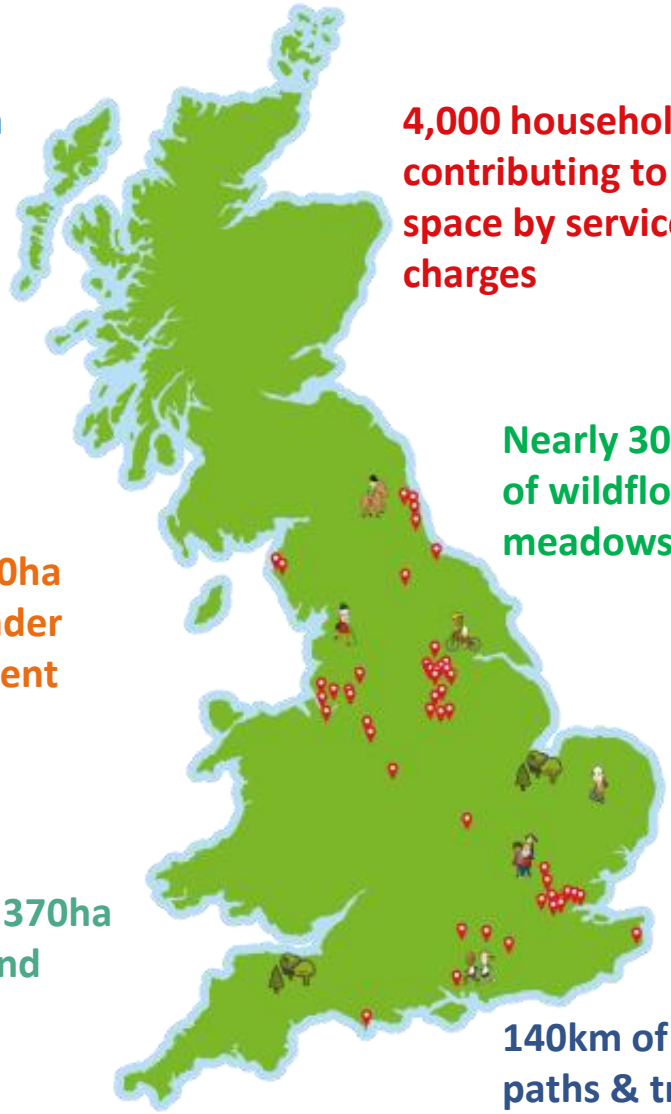
To improve the quality of people's lives by creating, improving and maintaining sustainable, high quality green spaces.

Objectives

Take land into our ownership and manage it in perpetuity to:

- ✓ Improve health and wellbeing
- ✓ Enable social cohesion
- ✓ Create economic uplift
- ✓ Protect & improve the environment
- ✓ Provide educational opportunities

Our Green Spaces



- 70 sustainably managed spaces
- Investment portfolio of circa £150 million and growing.
- Nature reserves, country parks, public realm, urban fringe, play areas, playing fields….
- Marshland, grassland, woodland, wetland, ‘wasteland’…
- Flood defences, SuDS…
- Cycle routes, cut-throughs, dog walking / running routes, bridleways, kick about areas, places for adventure, quality time with family / friends…

Well designed spaces create great places…

…to live, work and play

Being well designed and well managed, they:

- Encourage use
- Deliver wide benefits
- Reduce long term costs

In particular, they deliver significant physical and mental health benefits

Our charitable objectives - Health

We promote the use of our green spaces for the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the communities surrounding our sites.

What is important is not just the design, nor just the maintenance – its about managing the spaces to maximise the social & economic value which can be created from them

A great example of the work that we do was our innovative Health for Life project that we ran over a two year period on our site at Countess of Chester Country Park.

#PlaceKeepingNotJustPlaceMaking

Inactivity

Inactivity carries the same risk for CVD as smoking and twice as deadly as obesity

% of population not meeting recommended physical activity levels

Country	% of population
Austria	
France	
Germany	
UK	
USA	

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Country	% of population
Austria	37.9
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Germany	
UK	
USA	

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Country	% of population
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France	32.9
Germany	
UK	
USA	

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Country	% of population
Austria	37.9
France	32.9
Germany	20.0
UK	
USA	

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Country	% of population
Austria	37.9
France	32.9
Germany	20.0
UK	63.7
USA	

Inactivity

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Country	% of population
Austria	37.9
France	32.9
Germany	20.0
UK	63.7
USA	40.3

Why did we run this project?

- Lots of people and studies say that green space makes a difference
- We wanted to assess the interventions that we run on our sites & the difference they make, analysing the impact of our Health for Life project in more detail.
- Worked with both the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University along with other partners to provide the academic valuation.
- This measured each individuals health and well-being at the start and end of an 8-12 week programme

What did we do?

- The £70,000 programme was funded by the Cheshire Wirral Partnership NHS Trust, The Big Lottery, The Mersey Forest and Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- The programme saw nearly 700 different events and sessions organised at the park for the public and NHS staff from the nearby hospital.
- The activities ranged from Nordic Walking and hedge laying to buggy walks and a popular weekly park run, which regularly attracts more than 300 runners.

The Results

- Physical Health variation was measured using The International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ)
- Mental Health was measured using Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

The results

- **60% increase** in the amount of time participants spend doing vigorous physical activity
- **26% decrease** in the amount of time participants spend sitting down during the week
- **4.7** – the improvement in the rating of people's mental well-being. This was measured using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale which monitors change in mental health over time. An improvement between 3 and 8 points is considered meaningful.

Health for Life

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Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

"*We're so pleased that this programme is running right on the doorstep of our Chester bases. This is not just a great opportunity for local residents, but it's important that staff feel they can take time out to enjoy the green space. As a Trust we recognise that staff are our greatest asset in achieving better outcomes for patients. If staff are feeling fit and well, they'll be able to deliver the best possible experience to our service users and carers.*"
Sheena Cumiskey, Chief Executive

"Even 10 minutes out here between meetings to gather my thoughts makes a big difference."
Nikki Kiyimba, Clinical Psychologist

Healthy Communities

"Doesn't bother me, it's sh!t here anyway!"

Blackburn resident

Why is this research so important?

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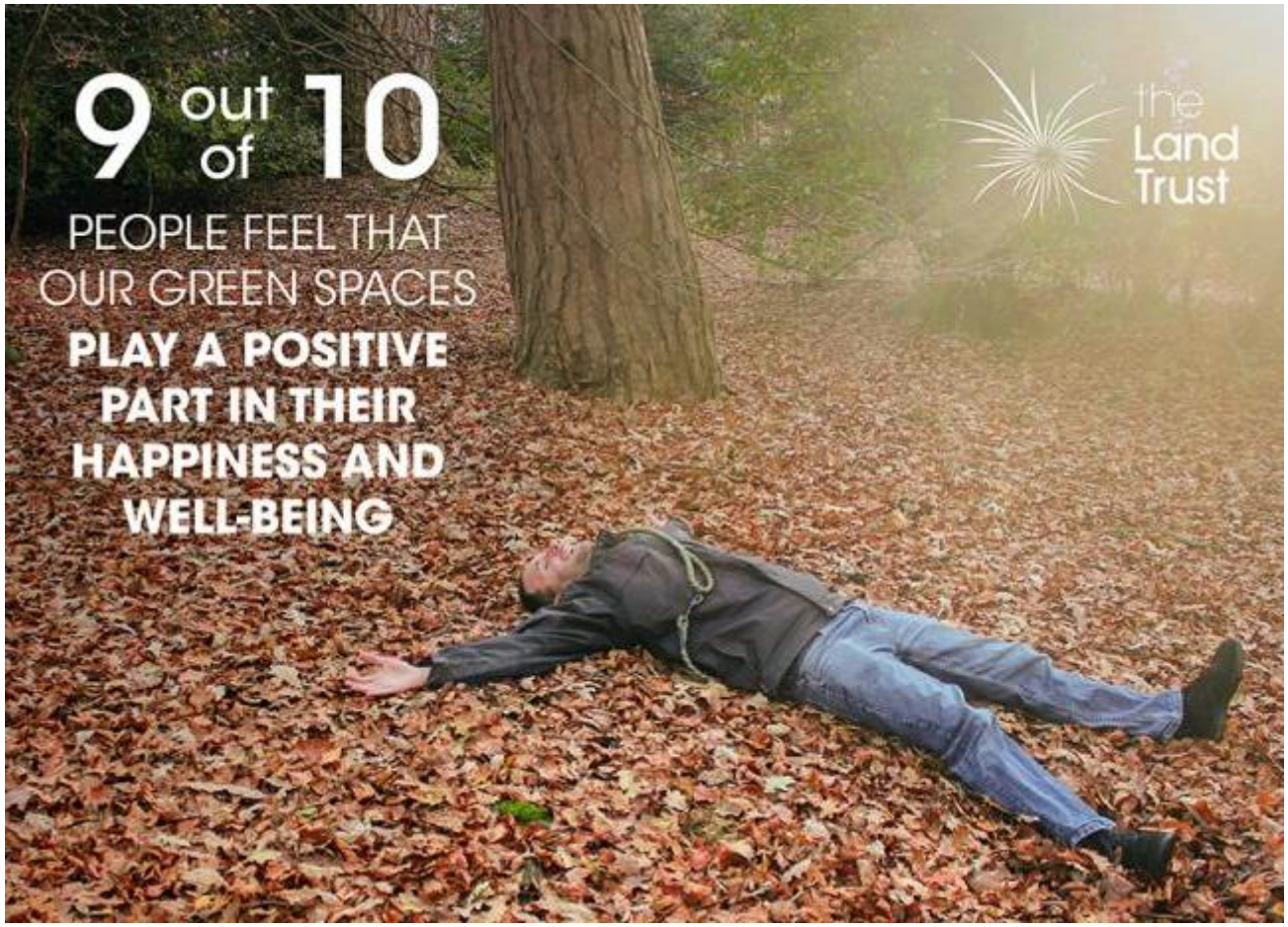
- The NHS is in financial crisis and has been for some time, even with £2b added for mental health service in budget.
- The biggest drain on its financial resources are largely preventable with issues such as obesity and diabetes costing billions a year.
- The combined cost of mental health problems to the UK economy every year is over £100 billion.
- We believe that spending time **BEING ACTIVE** in well-managed green spaces can be the solution to so many of these issues and our research proves it.
- There needs to be a shift from 'I have a problem and the NHS needs to sort it out' to people taking responsibility for their own health.

How people feel about our green spaces…

The site "has supported me with my fitness and weight loss in a pleasant and safe environment"

Impact on happiness and wellbeing



"Suffering mild depression and anxiety, I come to walk and jog to let off some steam."

Social value of health

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FOR **EVERY £1 SPENT** P.A. BY THE LAND TRUST, **SOCIETY BENEFITS** ON AVERAGE **£30.30** IN HEALTH CARE PROVISION BECAUSE PEOPLE USING OUR SITES FEEL FITTER AND HEALTHIER.[4]

The Land Trust's green spaces contribute the equivalent of **£53.2 million** p.a. of benefits to the health and welfare sector.

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Thank you

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