

Connecting Communities with Nature: Halkyn Mountain

Lead organisation: Flintshire County Council

Grant Award: £285,000

Location: Halkyn Mountain, Flintshire

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The Halkyn Mountain project is set on a 2,000 acre common, designated for its wide range of habitats shared between five communities. The common and its natural resources are central to the future prosperity of these communities. The Project's collaborative approach is led by Flintshire County Council with Natural Resources Wales, North Wales Wildlife Trust, the Fire and Rescue Service all supporting and working with landowners.



The project improved the economic value of the common and invigorated farm businesses. The common has been grazed for centuries but has experienced a continual decline of the practice over the years. A key priority of the project is to improve the quality of the common by re-engaging graziers, and helping to encourage a younger generation into the grazing tradition.



The aim is to manage key habitats and species to be in favourable condition. Gorse and bracken will be cleared to enable grassland and heathland to re-establish, providing additional grazing and therefore reducing overgrazing that occurs on parts of the common. Explore the potential to develop a marketable product in the form of Halkyn compost from the vegetation management, to supply local communities and thus reduce the need for peat base composts and improving the economic viability of the Common.



The project also supports sustainable grazing practices of the commoners by encouraging the activation of underused grazing rights and the installation of cattle grids to encourage graziers to stock parts of the mountain that were previously avoided for fear of animals wandering off along roads away from the common cattle grids to enable access in key areas.

The project has encouraged local people and visitors to use and enjoy the common in appropriate and responsible ways by improved interpretation and awareness raising activities will enable walkers and riders to follow less sensitive routes. This will reduce potential disturbance to grazing stock and provide an opportunity to tackle recreational pressures. The Common is a popular local amenity site frequently used for traditional recreational activities such as walking, cycling and horse riding. The varied and challenging landscape could lend itself to more contemporary forms of exercise, for example green gyms and outdoor boot camps. By addressing the challenges facing the Common the project aims to create a good quality, well managed common land opening up recreational opportunities for the surrounding communities, develop skills to help enrich their lives, leading to more resilient and healthier communities.

Sustainable Grazing: Delivery of 5 cattle grids to target cattle grazing on parts of the hill to improve biodiversity

Training and job creation: Project Officer employed for duration of the project

Habitat restoration: 20ha gorse cut. 39ha scrub cut

Habitat Restoration: 74ha bracken crushed. 5ha heathland enhanced

Building collaborations and partnerships: Supporting commoners has led to 10 grazing right activated leading to larger areas being managed sustainably

Building collaborations and partnerships: 3 Police and Fire coordination exercises held per annum

Community engagement: 6 community action days per annum (including volunteering activity, litter picks, bowl turning event and a Wildlife Photography workshop held in conjunction with RSPB

Community engagement: 19 recreation and exercise events and 15 Public engagement activities carried out

Protection from invasive species: Cotoneaster and Himalayan Balsam control was carried out in the area to prevent the spread of seed further; surveying and monitoring will continue

Community engagement: Orienteering course and a guided walk on the mountain for members of the Friends of Hilbre taking in some of the key points of interest



Health and Wellbeing: supported by volunteer programmes, training courses, citizen science, recreational programmes and a job club.



Community Cohesion: supported by volunteer programmes, training courses, and recreational programmes. Project collaborators include Local Authorities, Natural Resources Wales, North Wales Wildlife Trust, the Fire and Rescue Services and landowners.



Rural Skills and Heritage: supported by woodland restoration, volunteer programmes, training courses, citizen science, recreational programmes, community woodland and bracken management.



Development of Skills Capacity and Expertise: supported by volunteer programmes, training courses, citizen science, a job club, community woodland management and a wood-fuel service.



Collaboration: North Wales Police and North Wales Fire Service will implement a range of measures to tackle key issues/problems of misuse such as arson, illegal 4x4 activities and dog attacks on livestock on the Common.



Education Programmes: schools participated around national curriculum themes based on the environment. Using the common to promote health and wellbeing to encourage outdoor exercise on the common.



Rural Skills and Heritage: embracing low impact tourism development, based on a quality product has the potential to bring economic benefit to local communities and safeguard and sustain local services.



Community Cohesion: engaging effectively with a wide cross-section of the community and communicate and educate on the significance of the activities being undertaken and the relevance to the Common.



Rural Skills and Heritage: use the common as an education resource, to allow residents to gain skills and to benefit from the free resources of Halkyn in a sustainable way.

Get Involved: Come and explore Halkyn Mountain and enjoy fabulous views over the Dee Estuary and the Clwydian Range. For further information, please contact the Halkyn Mountain Ranger: 01352 703900.



Free guided walks available via Explore Halkyn webpage.

www.halkynmountain.co.uk/explore-halkyn website: www.halkynmountain.co.uk