

THE LONDON TREE AND WOODLAND AWARDS 2019

CASE STUDY - COMMUNITY WOODLAND AWARD

WINNER – FRIENDS OF STAMBOURNE WOODS



The London Tree and Woodland Awards celebrate the work of individuals, communities and professionals to protect, improve and expand the capital's tree and woodland cover.

The Community Woodland Award is for a woodland project that has been inspired, driven and delivered by local community groups.

The winner of the 2019 award was the Friends of Stambourne Woods.

Friends of Stambourne Woods:

Friends of Stambourne Woods works with Croydon Council to enhance the biodiversity and amenity value of a small urban wood in Upper Norwood. The woods contain many native species including remnants of the Great North Wood, alongside an exotic collection of tree specimens planted around the time of the Great Exhibition.

Once Church Commission land and private gardens, the Woods were purchased by the Council in 1962 and opened as a verdant public link between Westow Park and South Norwood Lakes in 1984. The Friends of Stambourne Woods (FoSW) was formed in 2016 to revive local connection to the woods, which had become an undervalued, overgrown, litter-strewn place.

In less than three years, a wide-ranging engagement programme has been developed with financial and in-kind support from local councillors' ward budget, The Conservation Volunteers,



London Wildlife Trust, Croydon Council's Ambitious Park Fund, National Park City, Grow Wild, Woodland Trust, the King Badouin Foundation and the South London Botanical Institute.

Activities:

The volunteer-run group hosts monthly working parties, as well as other ad hoc activities. Everyone is welcome, regardless of experience and the group offers activities which require different levels of physical effort. The conservation, bushcraft and forest school programmes aim to enhance the environmental benefit of the woods, connect both adults and children to nature and foster community-building and public engagement.

The events promote year-round use, alignment with the changing seasons, stimulation of the senses, increased appreciation of the details of growth and knowledge of flora, fauna and fungi. Attendees are drawn from the local community, with all ages represented and a typical session involves around two-dozen people. Among the activities are expert-led fungi, plant-lore, owl, bat and tree walks; small mammal and bug-hunts, forage and feasts, land-art, tree climbing, animal yoga and barefoot walking.

FoSW have removed rubbish, controlled Cherry Laurel overgrowth, raised Holly, uncovered Mulberry, cut back ivy, planted hedgerows, dug in standing deadwood, installed notice boards, opened paths, tagged a tree walk and much more. They are now focused on mapping and with the help of a small equipment grant from councillors' ward budget, will feed bio-mapping into the FoSW management plan and interpretation signs. It will also help ensure ongoing protection for this now well-loved woodland.



Outcomes:

Friends of Stambourne Woods aims to foster a nurturing bond between local people and this hidden woodland and offers benefits for community, environment and personal wellbeing. Its Seven Centuries Arboretum vision for the future is an urban semi-natural woodland that celebrates its history as a place of Victorian specimen collection and looks forward with planting that reflects scientific climate change predictions.

The woods will have diversity of structures, ranging from areas of varied-age high forest to exotic specimens, alongside trees chosen to withstand future climate changes. Biodiversity boosting features, such as standing deadwood, will be incorporated naturalistically with the aim of improving the range and weight of flora, fauna and fungi. The woods will continue to provide a safe amenity



and interest for local people, with social seating areas and opportunity for involvement in monitoring and enhancing biodiversity.

The group has demonstrated its clear vision for the woodland with real progress to create a vibrant woodland space. Croydon Council Trees and Woodland Officer Richard Edwards comments: "I would like to endorse the work of FoSW. They have taken what was a cut through and turned it into a vibrant woodland space being used by local residents."

Sarah Johnson, chair of Friends of Stambourne Woods says: "It's wonderful to receive recognition for the transformative work we've been doing here in Crystal Palace over the last three years. We hope that more people will get to know about our little project, come and join us or perhaps be inspired to create something similar on their patch."

2019 Awards Ceremony:

The London Tree and Woodland Awards were presented at a ceremony hosted at City Hall on 10 July by Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy and Sir Harry Studholme, Chair of the Forestry Commission.



2019 Award Sponsors:

The awards were kindly sponsored by the following organisations:



Coombe
Forestry



 Clear Channel



For more information on the awards go to: www.london.gov.uk
#TreeOscars



London Tree &
Woodland Awards



SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON