



**CASE STUDY**

# CASTLEMILK / CATHKIN BRAES



**Improving woodlands means a chance to explore a clean, safe and natural environment.**

**LOCATION** The woodlands of Castlemilk and Cathkin Braes are located to the south east of Glasgow, adjacent to Rutherglen, Croftfoot, Simshill and Carmunnock. The woodlands of Cathkin Braes fall within Cathkin Braes Country Park.

**SITE DESCRIPTION** Made up of 109 hectares of mature woodlands, open spaces and a network of paths. The site is owned by Glasgow City Council.



**For many years the woodlands were neglected and local residents previously viewed the Park as a place with poor environmental standards, where anti-social behaviour took place.**

**Countless hours of volunteers' time has helped to improve the woodlands.**



### BEFORE WIAT

The Castlemilk woodlands are situated mainly around the ruins of Castlemilk House, which was demolished in 1969.

During the 1950s, the area was developed as a housing scheme to accommodate thousands of people from inner city areas such as the Gorbals.

Over the years, social problems associated with poverty and unemployment grew. A regeneration strategy began in the 1980s, focusing on improving housing and the building of a sports centre, swimming pool and community centre.

Most of the woodland has undergone various management regimes in the past, starting out as semi-natural woodland before introduction of non-native species in the 19th Century.

### WIAT ACHIEVEMENTS

The Castlemilk Environment Trust was established in 1996 with funding from the then Castlemilk Partnership, Glasgow City Council and Scottish Homes to restore the natural environment of Castlemilk. Early activities included a woodland survey and civil engineering report on the drainage and ground stability of the pond area and dam.

Since then, funding of over £2 million has helped to:

- Employ a Park Development Officer;
- Remove fly tipping and rubbish – including the removal of 32 burnt out cars;
- Establish an arts project involving 18 artists working with the community;
- Restore a Grade 2 listed bridge;
- Bring the woodland into better management;
- Develop an interpretation trail;
- Run an education programme;
- Undertake an archaeological excavation of the ice house; and
- Upgrade and extend the path network.

**“ I enjoy checking out the trees and wildlife along the paths and the map packs help point out what there is to find. ”**

Helen Gavan, local resident

### WIAT WORKS

Castlemilk and Cathkin Braes now attract many more people to the woodlands. New and upgraded paths, plus a map pack, have helped to increase the number of people using the woodlands.

Cathkin Braes is used for the Branching Out programme – an innovative programme for adults using mental health services in Glasgow. The programme aims to provide physical activity through health walks and allows participants the chance to learn new skills through conservation and bushcraft activities – for example, rhododendron clearance, willow coppicing, shelter building and willow sculptures.

The Jeely Piece Club provides a fantastic service for children and families within Castlemilk and the surrounding areas. It uses the woodlands of Castlemilk for a successful 'Go Play' project. This project encourages children to get out and about and explore the natural environment around them.

Additional funding has helped provide interpretation and allowed for a range of community events and activities, including social forestry events and woodland walks, which have helped to engage even more of the community.

### ON-GOING COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

- Volunteer led walks using the map packs to navigate the trails;
- Lantern festivals at Halloween;
- Community arts programmes at the Stables; and
- School initiatives such as encouraging pupils from Castlemilk High to exercise through mountain biking.

**“ Not enough people realise what is to be found in the local natural environment and how important it is to keep it natural ”**

Jason Stuart, local volunteer



### TIMELINE

#### 1999

Over £530,000 was secured from six funding sources for environmental improvements.

#### 2001

A survey revealed that the greatest barriers to people using the Park were crime fears, poor environmental standards and anti-social behaviour.

A Community Parks Officer was appointed to encourage greater community involvement

The Community Parks Officer ran a programme of events, organised volunteers and worked with community organisations and schools.

#### 2005

WIAT funding of £74,000 helped to support the preparation of a woodland management plan and management activities.

#### 2007

£72,000 from Forestry Commission Scotland, Entrust and Paths for All funded a variety of things including a Development Officer post.

#### 2009

Over a 13 year period Castlemilk Environmental Trust attracted over £2 million to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

#### 2010

An action plan was developed. The Jeely Piece Club secured nearly £200,000 to encourage natural play in the woodlands.



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

### THE VISION IS THAT:

Castlemilk Park becomes a local resource that brings significant environmental, community and economic benefits to Castlemilk.

The existing strong link between the local housing associations, community groups and Forestry Commission Scotland is a good starting point to help deliver further improvements including the Commonwealth Community Woodlands Legacy Project.

### KEY AREAS FOR ACTION WILL BE:

- Develop a Commonwealth Community Woodland Activities Programme;
- Increase volunteering through community engagement;
- Strengthen the existing partnership to deliver the vision and goals for the area; and
- Deliver a lasting legacy from the Commonwealth Games Mountain Biking Venue.

If you would like to find out more about forestry in Scotland, please call 0131 334 0303 or email [fcscotland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fcscotland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

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Jeely Piece Club

