



CASE STUDY

NINEWELLS HOSPITAL

Revitalising greenspace in hospital grounds for health and wellbeing.



LOCATION Ninewells Hospital is located in the south-western suburbs of Dundee immediately north of the A85 as it enters the city.

SITE DESCRIPTION There are 23 hectares of mature and semi natural woodland and greenspace within the grounds of the hospital. These include the Arboretum woodland.



Woodlands and greenspace can provide a therapeutic alternative to hospital buildings. The Ninewells greening project set out to demonstrate how to create a green, health promoting hospital.

With good design and access improvements, hospital grounds can be used by everyone for physical activity, recreation, recuperation, viewing nature or simply to spend time relaxing or convalescing in peaceful surroundings.



BEFORE WIAT

The hospital opened in 1974, and the clinicians recognised the therapeutic value to patients and staff of the external scenery. The intention was for wards to overlook quiet landscaped gardens and the Arboretum woodland.

Since the 1980s the Arboretum woodland has been neglected and largely unmanaged. Access was restricted, with no facilities for staff, patients or visitors to spend time in the woodland.

In 2010, a survey was completed with 678 staff, students patients, visitors and local residents to establish the current usage of the woodland, and to find out what people would like to see improved. It concluded that 66 per cent of staff and 88 per cent of patients were unaware of Arboretum wood. 78 per cent of staff and 66 per cent of patients would like to see accessible paths to woodland.

WIAT ACHIEVEMENTS

A steering group was formed in 2009 with members including Forestry Commission Scotland, NHS Tayside, Maggie's Centre and Dundee City Council to look at ways to make greater use of existing woodlands and greenspace in the grounds of Ninewells Hospital.

The project objectives:

- Create an outdoor environment for health improvement;
- Improve the quality of green space in the hospital grounds; and
- Improve access to woodland and open space for staff, patients and local people.

“ I really just want a safe area to walk in. I try and have a walk around the hospital each day during my lunch break. I have no window in my office so getting out for some fresh air and daylight is very important to me. ”

Staff Member, Ninewells Hospital.

WIAT WORKS

A woodland management plan has been developed and an overarching site master plan for the hospital grounds created, which should help secure the long term future of the woodland and open space in the hospital grounds.

Some of the initial improvements include:

- Creating all abilities paths with a network of short, medium and long distance trails;
- Installing way marking;
- Installing regular seating and rest areas along paths;
- Developing woodland information signs at hospital entrances, designing a site map and installing interpretation panels in Arboretum woodland;
- Improving access to the woodlands and greenspace for a wide range of users including patients, visitors and local residents;
- Creating new entrances to the woodland;
- Carrying out remedial tree work; and
- Planting trees and shrubs, and thinning overgrown areas to allow clear sight lines along paths.

ON-GOING COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Green prescriptions are being promoted at the hospital and a programme of activities in the hospital grounds has been introduced. This has started with trained health walk leaders running weekly health walks for patients from the Maggie's Centre. This provides patients with the opportunity to spend time in high quality greenspace to aid their recovery. Health professionals have traditionally used contact with nature activities as part of a holistic programme of treatment for patients and this project will re-establish this practice at Ninewells.

A number of the NHS staff are helping to look after the greenspace, and survey the type and numbers of wildlife and wildflowers in the woods. The lead occupational therapist for neurosciences has reported his team regularly take patients with neurological problems, or stroke, amputee and wheelchair users out to the woodland and are looking forward to a suitable garden to work in.



TIMELINE

2009

A project steering group was established.

2010

The project steering group developed a site master plan and agreed a phased programme of works to meet its objectives.

A survey was completed to establish use of the woodland, and to find out what people would like to see happen.

2010

The steering group secured a budget of £96,000 (£63,000 from WIAT challenge fund and £33,000 match funding from NHS Tayside).

Proposed 2011/12

Planned work includes constructing a link path that would complete the Ninewells greenways orbital walk / cycle path.

The steering group would like to see allotment and garden areas, greening of courtyards and environmental art in Arboretum wood.



Studies have established that hospital gardens not only provide restoration or calming nature views, but can

reduce stress.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The next step for the project is to look at ways to encourage staff, patients, visitors and local people to make greater use of the woodland and greenspace in the hospital grounds, and promote the woods as a place for recreation, relaxation and therapeutic activity.

The long term plan is to introduce environmental art to the woodland including sculpture and wood carvings and to create a sheltered garden room to allow staff to use this space for physical or talking therapies such as tai chi or cognitive behaviour therapy.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain volunteering activity;
- Introduce a programme of led activities including health walks, horticulture, garden therapy, conservation, and art therapy;
- Secure funding to create an allotment, sensory and physic garden;
- Deliver green prescriptions i.e. Branching Out and conservation and greenspace on referral for patients using mental health services;
- Secure funding to create the final section of Ninewells greenway walk/cycle orbital path just west of the main hospital entrance;
- Secure funding for a woodland art project in partnership with Maggie's Centre; and
- Secure resources to construct a sheltered level garden room for tai chi and other forms of therapy.

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

www.forestry.gov.uk/wiat

