

Concept ideas for the Nature Trails project at Cherry Hinton Hall



Background information about the Big Lottery

In 2008, Big Lottery money was made available for local authorities to apply for funding to make improvements in access to play opportunities for children and young people. .

In Cambridge, the funding has been allocated for developing 4 innovative projects by 2011 that enhance and expand access to a range of free, good quality and inclusive play experiences available to children and young people.

The Big Lottery projects across the City are intended to offer children and young people the opportunity to develop greater well being through improved access and facilities for outdoor play in the natural environment.

A key theme across the projects is to encourage children, young people and their families to explore nature, to be challenged and to learn and have new experiences that traditional play parks do not offer.

The nature trails projects have been developed in partnership with conservation and biodiversity officers.

On-site at the Duck Pond

- ChYpPS have for a number of years been running nature themed activities from Cherry Hinton Hall and in the summer of 2008, 176 children and young people attended activities such as pond dipping, bug hunts and nature scavenger trails.
- Activities on site at the duck pond area in 2009 had 191 attendees.
- Over the past two years, a total of 724 face to face contacts have been made on site at Cherry Hinton Hall duck pond area. For more details, see the consultation and statistics spreadsheet.
- In May 2009 workshops were held at The Spinney school, involving 200 pupils as well as teachers and support staff in helping to create ideas / suggestions for the nature trails.



Potential Locations



Please note
this map is not
to scale.

These areas
are
suggestions.
All suggested
locations can
be changed.

 Site for Information Board

Pond Dipping Platform

- An ideal location for a pond dipping platform would be to the left of the large pond area, over the bridge as there is currently a large clearing.
- A pond platform would create a dedicated space for visitors to explore pond life, find out what creatures live in the pond and understand more about the life cycle.
- Local schools would be able to use the pond dipping platform to enhance the curriculum, assisting learning in science lessons as well as local nature, wildlife and conservation projects.
- The platform shown here is produced by a local company using recycled materials and has a longer life expectancy than traditional wooden platforms.
- The materials resist rot, vandalism, cracking and are maintenance free.

Beside the platform could be a board highlighting insects and other pond life to look out for as well as an activity idea such as how to make your own pond dipping net.



Alongside the pond installation, environmental improvements such as pond clearance days and planting new reeds and water lillies would improve pond life and bio-diversity.

Seating Solutions



- In Spring 2009, two picnic benches were taken away as they were damaged with the intention of re-instating them at a later date.
 - Options around seating include traditional style picnic benches as well as new styled seating inspired by the wildlife on-site - options include butterfly, dragonfly, bee, swan, grasshopper.
- Additional seating would allow for members of the community to sit, relax and watch the pond and wildlife as well as offering parents and carers space where they can watch and supervise children exploring the natural surroundings.

Kingfisher reflection Area

- On a daily basis a Kingfisher visits the pond at Cherry Hinton Hall.
- One option is to install some perches in the pond to encourage the Kingfisher to rest where it can be viewed.
- A new bench could be installed alongside the pond where the Kingfisher is often seen, offering a space for quiet reflection for use by all visitors.
- Willow archways, encouraging exploration within the area, could lead to a mosaic of a kingfisher.
- The mosaic would be created with users of the site on a whole community action event, using a local artist to assist.





Information boards

- Information boards are used all over the country to enhance the public's experience when visiting local parks, nature reserves and places of interest.
- Information Boards are an exciting way to inform, educate and involve people of all ages about the environment around them.
- These information boards would be designed in conjunction with local children and other members of the community, creating family friendly information with easy text, large pictures and information specific to Cherry Hinton Hall.

The suggested board themes are as follows:

Pond Dipping -situated near the pond, with images of things to look out for

Woodland Habitat - situated near the woodland to the right of the current look-out tower, with specific information about small mammals and birds to be found within the shrubbery

Creepy Crawlies -situated near a new seating area and will include butterflies and insects

Wildfowl - situated close to the weir, this will have information about all the birds on-site including the geese, moorhens, swans, coot, kingfisher

Nocturnal Animals - situated near the large oak tree, to include foxes, bats, owls

Bird and Bat Boxes

- A series of Bird and Bat boxes will be installed throughout the wooded area and around the natural play area near the duck pond.
- It is hoped to involve the local community, Friends group as well as children and families building the boxes on-site. 30 were made on-site during Bird Box week and are ready to be installed.
- Anglia Ruskin University are keen to monitor the boxes and are encouraging members of the public to come and take part in a talk about the birds and find out more about bird watching as well as being able to take part in building and installing the nests.



Picnic and BBQ area



- During on-site discussions with users, it became clear that the existing BBQ area was not used, or adequate and many people were not aware that there was a dedicated space for BBQ's.
- A large number of parents suggested, they would like to see a space for picnics and BBQ's close to the pond area.
- In Spring 2009, the old BBQ area was taken out, as part of the first stage of the pathfinder project.
- The potential site for a new, bespoke dedicated BBQ area with picnic bench is near the large Millstone, just before the bridge.

Butterfly / Wild Flower Space

- Creating a dedicated space to encourage butterflies and creepy crawlies would bring enhanced bio diversity to a small area near the pond.
- An information board specifically about butterflies and bugs could be sited very close to encourage exploration of the wildlife in it's natural habitat.
- This project could aid intergenerational work between children and other community members with an interest in wildlife, flowers, gardening or just getting active.
- Community Action days could contribute further to any upkeep required.



Finger Mazes

These visually pleasing boards are specifically suitable for children and adults with special needs as a variety of textures and colours ensure a sensory experience whilst developing motor neuron skills such as dexterity and hand-eye co-ordination. The bright and colourful textures of the finger mazes are also suitable for children of all ages.



Projects and Events

Winterdaze Family Fun Day - Wednesday 17th February 2010

In half term, the reccy rangers ran a very successful family fun day on site at Cherry Hinton Hall, with 150 attendees. Activities included kelly kettles, natural art sculptures, cooking, scavenger hunts, bird talks and making bird boxes. The conservation officer led a walk and talk about the local birds to link with National Bird Nesting Week. Children, young people and their families took part in making 30 bird boxes on the day and they are to be installed in the next few weeks around Cherry Hinton Hall.

Community Action Days - dates to be confirmed

Proposed community Action days throughout project, inviting the Friends, children and families and other members of the local community to come together to clean or clear parts of the site, including the stream and pond or help prepare a new wild flower / butterfly garden - in partnership with the conservation team, ChYpPS and other council departments.

Creating the Kingfisher Mosaic

Local children, young people and residents would be invited to work with a local artist to create the mosaic on-site.