

# Moston Fairway Forest School

***“This is what it’s all about, opening up our natural world to young enthusiasm and inspiring kids to love learning and being outdoors”*** *Nick Baker, TV Presenter and Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts vice-president*

## Background

Moston Fairway is a Site of Biological Importance managed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. The site is tucked away between a housing estate and railway sidings, yet provides an important ecological bridging role between the Moston Brook and the wider Irk Valley in North Manchester. Historically, the site has had limited management, becoming overlooked and forgotten and suffering from small scale anti-social behavior such as fly tipping and fires, contributing to Moston’s high position on the index of health and multiple deprivation.

In recent years, a strong collaborative partnership between the Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT), the Moston Brook Project, the Irk Valley Project and Manchester City Council (MCC) has helped secure the long term future of the site by extending the LWT’s ownership boundaries and having a more active presence on site. The site is not much larger than a couple of football pitches, but has flourished as an urban wilderness.



## Project

The education team of Lancashire Wildlife Trust have been pioneering Forest Schools in the North West since 2009. Other sites include Seven Acres in central Bolton and Brockholes near Preston. Part of a £66k award to the Lancashire Wildlife Trust from players of People’s Postcode Lottery was used to develop the Wildlife Trust’s Moston Fairway reserve as a Forest School site. Education Officers began working with a number of local primary schools as part of a one year programme of activity.

Moston,  
MANCHESTER

### BENEFITS



Recreation  
& Leisure



Quality of  
place



Land and  
biodiversity

### COST



### TIMESCALE



## Outcomes

The Forest Schools movement takes a learner-centred approach to outdoor education and leisure in a woodland environment. Programmes allow individuals to develop a relationship with the natural world, and sessions foster resilience, creativity and confidence. The project has brought a whole new group of children and families into contact with the reserve and generated amenities and partnerships that will mean community engagement and involvement on the site going from strength to strength in the future.



## Learning

The project demonstrates how successful community engagement can help build connections between people and place and act as the means to encourage more schools to follow suit.

One key legacy is the training of twelve teachers across the four original schools, which now run independently due to the capacity building nature of the project. This highlights the long-term sustainability of the project, ensuring the continued education of children in the importance of the environmental consciousness and stewardship.

The project has also secured a further £50,000 of funding to roll out the Forest Schools initiative on two other sites in the Irk and Medlock Valley, incorporating four new schools (St. Dunstan's Primary, Lily Lane Primary, Christ the King Primary and St. Willibrord's Primary) through an established support network in 2016.

## Future

The linking of Moston Fairway to Moston Brook and the wider Irk Valley is vital to the long term viability of the site both as recreational resource and biodiversity stepping stone. There is also a groundswell of activity in Forest Schools citywide with projects established in North Manchester through Groundwork and Paupers' Wood in South Manchester. The Wildlife Trusts nationally are developing this model of community engagement with support from players of People's Postcode Lottery across London, Nottingham, Avon, Leicestershire and Birmingham as well as Lancashire.

## Like this? See:

<http://pauperswood.blogspot.co.uk/>

<http://www.lancswt.org.uk/forest-schools-manchester>

## For further information on the project:

Moston Fairway Report – November 2015 at <http://www.lancswt.org.uk/>

Moston Fairway Forest Schools Film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfEr6wpRNZA>