


<b>Name of project/group</b>
Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust
<b>Type of project</b>
Social action / Community empowerment / Opening up public services
<b>Location</b>
Arnos Vale, Bristol, South West
<b>What was involved</b>
<p>Arnos Vale is an important historic cemetery, included on the English Heritage register of parks and gardens. The site was threatened by redevelopment and following a high-profile media campaign; Bristol City Council took ownership in 2003. The Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust was given a licence to manage the site and undertook a major restoration programme, with grant aid from a range of funders and a £4.8million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Working in partnership with Bristol City council, the key elements of the project included restoration of the site's designed landscape, monuments and buildings, and transformation of the 45-acre site into a well-managed heritage and wildlife visitor destination. An education project was developed alongside site interpretation, talks and ticketed learning events.</p> <p>The four year project had four main aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conserve the key surviving elements of the historic designed landscape by selectively clearing and re-planting informed by the original design.</li> <li>• conserve and re-use the main cemetery buildings.</li> <li>• conserve and repair the listed and most visually significant monuments and tombs, and boundary walls and gates.</li> <li>• manage and conserve all areas of the cemetery as a nature reserve.</li> </ul>

<b>Achievements</b>
<p>Arnos Vale is an important historic cemetery which was at risk through neglect and the threat of redevelopment. The project inspired local people and Bristol City Council to work together to find a solution for this unique site. It has been restored to serve the community by providing a focus for learning and volunteering activities. It is now a local community asset supported by a network of volunteers and members or <i>Guardian Angels</i> as they are called.</p> <p>The project represents the culmination of 17 years of campaigning by the local community to save the cemetery from dereliction, and make it publicly accessible. It was almost entirely led by volunteer effort and drew on a very large volunteer base of people. The work has transformed the cemetery with a new visitor centre and improved public access. The site has become a popular destination for local people and visitors with a small entrance interpretative display and shop</p>

selling books and merchandise about the cemetery. It offers venue hire for all manner of events, a full programme of education activities, open days and guided walks, and conservation activities, in addition to its revival as a working cemetery.

### **Lessons Learnt**

- As the grantee was not able to access the site to carry out full survey works, some elements of project planning were made more difficult. As a result, costs increased significantly and the scope of works had to be reduced.
- The Project Executive role should be fulfilled by an organisation with sufficient organisational capacity and a direct interest in the future management and running of the site.

### **Project contact**

<http://www.arnosvale.org.uk/>

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