



Gordon Miller Award 2018

Nomination Form

The search is underway to find the **most deserving project, initiative or innovative practice that has made or is making an outstanding contribution to countryside/urban greenspace management for the Gordon Miller Award 2018**. The Award is presented annually, with the 'trophy' being passed to the next recipient.

The Award is a way of acknowledging the hard work and commitment of people who contribute to making the UK's countryside and urban greenspace a wonderful and inspiring place to visit, live and work in. Each year CMA will look for a person or a group of people for whom sharing their knowledge, skills, experience and enthusiasm has resulted in an exceptional contribution to the management of the countryside and/or urban greenspace of the UK.

The intention is **not** to introduce a highly competitive 'winner/loser' scenario; the aim is very much to encourage members to put forward great projects that everyone can see and hear about; showcasing the fabulous work that we all know takes place around the land. The RANGER already highlights great work from around the country. Each of the projects submitted will receive acknowledgement and feature in the RANGER and on the web site. Let's take some time to promote and celebrate great work whether it's through members, organisations, volunteers or partners working together.

The project doesn't have to have started during 2018, although it may have done! In fact it may have been running for a few or several years. Important elements are likely to be innovative ideas, people working together, commitment, time & effort, and results or outcomes of the project.

Nominations can be **projects, initiatives or innovative practices that have resulted in positive improvements for habitats, species, access or people (education or interpretation)**. Nominations can be for employers, other organisations / groups, volunteers or individual countryside management staff. You can nominate a person or organisation that you feel deserves to be the winner of this year's Award, or you can put one of your own projects forward.

Nominations should be made by completing the form overleaf and returning to chairman@countryside-management.org.uk by end of play Sunday 30th September 2018.

All applications will be sent around CMA membership by email and voting will determine those that go forward to Conference. Nominated projects will then give a "final pitch" at the CMA Conference 2018 with a 10mins presentation.

Please ensure either that someone will be attending and willing to give a 5 minute presentation (with or without powerpoint) and it doesn't have to be someone directly connected to the project. You could ask someone who is attending to present for you.

The presentation itself is not part of the judging process; it simply gives you the chance to ensure everyone at Conference is fully aware of the work, and benefits of, the project put forward. The recipient of the Award will be decided by a paper vote from delegates and the Award presented that evening.

Countryside Management Association Gordon Miller Award 2018

Nominee

Name of individual, organisation or project being nominated: <i>Matthew McGettigan and Dean Williams, Chafford Gorges Ltd, Essex Wildlife Trust.</i>
Where is the activity/project being carried out? (location & region) <i>Grays Chalk Pit SSSI, Chafford Gorges Nature Park, Grays, Essex. RM16 6RW (East of England)</i>

Nominee Contact details – CMA needs to be able to contact someone about this nomination (NB these personal details will not be published without explicit permission)

Primary contact name:
Address:
Town/City:
County:
Postcode:
Email:
Phone number:

Your contact details (if different to above)

Contact name:
Email:

About the activity/work/project

<p>Summary <i>(150 words max)</i> Please summarise the work/project, being clear about what was achieved and the difference the project has made.</p> <p>This will be used on the web site and in Ranger to describe your project.</p>	<p><i>Grays Chalk Pit SSSI was designated for its invertebrate assemblages. These assemblages are those linked to a mosaic habitat of chalk grassland and those associated with ephemeral pools and chalky banks. The site also holds populations of several plant species which are scarce at county or national level and are mainly associated with open habitats on chalk.</i></p> <p><i>These important habitats had been left to succeed into secondary woodland, and the sites SSSI status was “unfavourable”, without significant improvement by 2016 the site would be re-categorised “unfavourable declining”. Matthew spearheaded a felling and scraping project, with the habitat works completed by 2016.</i></p> <p><i>The site’s SSSI status is now “recovering”, and the chalk grassland has returned. Interpretation has been installed and subsequent follow up surveys were carried out in 2017 and 2018 showing that invertebrate assemblages, and rare wild flower populations, are improving.</i></p>
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What was done

(500 words max)

Please describe the work/project in more detail

The project had failed to make progress under my predecessor for several years. When I took over the project I was picking it up with two years to restore 10ac of secondary woodland to chalk grassland with ethereal wet areas, we had to act fast. If the site's SSSI status had been downgraded, then funding we were relying upon from Natural England would no longer be available and the project would likely never go ahead. We also had to mitigate for great crested newts (CGN), and bat roost habitat and interpreted the work to the local community who would only see a wildlife trust cutting down acres of trees. After having planned every detail the site was completely flooded out in 2014, making work impossible. We were left with only one year to complete the works without losing our main funding source!

We ran several community consultation events and leaflet dropped the local residential area. As some of the wood needed to be burnt we used an air burner, which burnt the wood and trapped the smoke, to reduce disturbance to the local community.

Felling finally took place in winter 2014/15, when the summer bat roosts were less active, trees were individually inspected to avoid destroying high bat roost potential. Felling areas were also selected to avoid damaging rare plant communities and keep disturbance away from a pond on site known to be used by GCNs.

The nutrient rich soil, left by leaf-litter from the woodland, was scraped back in summer 2015, when CGNs were less likely to be hibernating around tree roots (which were left in the ground after felling to not disturb the GCNs. This left low nutrient chalk soils, free from tree seeds, the surface of which was sculpted with a varied topography providing a range of microclimates for plants and invertebrates, including the development of seasonally wet areas which are key to the site's SSSI status. This work was always carried out meticulously under the watchful eye of an ecologist.

Although a lot of the wood from the felling was burnt in the air burner, some was piled up and partially capped with chalk to provide huge hibernacula, the chalk banks of which provided habitat for mining Hymenoptera, basking butterflies and further chalk grassland plants.

The habitat improvement aspect of the project was successfully completed before the deadline of 2016, so our funding and SSSI status was secured.

Finally, interpretation was then added to the site and guided walks were put on for the local community, both to explain the works again and thank them for their support.

Subsequent surveys have been carried out in 2016 and 2017 to assess the effect on the invertebrate assemblages as well as on the rare plants, GCNs and summer bat roosts. These have shown an increase in both invertebrate and plant populations and have not shown any damage to GCN nor bat populations.

Against all the odds the project came off a success!

<p>Outputs/Outcomes <i>(300 words max)</i> Please provide some facts and figures (e.g. no of schools / vols engaged, events delivered, acres improved /joint working), how the project was innovative or demonstrates best practice.</p> <p>Sell your project!</p>	<p><i>As a result of this project Natural England have changed the SSSI status of Grays Chalk Pit SSSI from “Unfavourable Declining” to “Unfavourable Recovering”.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the project we carried out surveys after the work to record any success indicators. This report is being finalised at the time of this application, but early results seem very positive and some species of not include:</i></p> <p><i>Rhagionid fly <u>Spania nigra</u> with larvae that mine inside the leaves of thallose liverworts, which are associated with seepage in quarry cliffs.</i></p> <p><i><u>Pherbellia griseola</u>, a fly, is Nationally Scarce and this may be only third Essex record</i></p> <p><i><u>Asiraca clavicornis</u>, a planthopper, which is Nationally Scarce</i></p> <p><i>Small Blue Carpenter Bee <u>Ceratina cyanea</u> which is a Red Data Book species.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, this project was achieved without harming the other protected species that use the site – despite the significant challenges this presented. Great Crested Newt, and bat species and population data seem to have increased since the works.</i></p>
<p>If appropriate: <i>(150 words max)</i> who was involved? Partners? Employers? Vols? Funding?</p>	<p><i>The project was only achieved by many departments within the Essex Wildlife Trust coming together, even to the point off staff members from a whole range of roles giving up time to come and assist with the felling and clearance work.</i></p> <p><i>We also worked with partners and contractors including: Natural England, Ecology Link, EECOS, Essex Bat Group, Pearls.</i></p>
<p>Downloads, videos, images <i>(please add links or attach 2 -3 images for use on the CMA website Ranger and wider promotion eg press releases. (Please only list if credits agreed)</i></p>	<p><i>See attached photos with submission e-mail.</i></p>

Permissions:

By submitting this form you agree to CMA storing the information for the purposes of administering the Award.

By submitting this form you agree to CMA publishing the information provided on the form, photographs or video (but not the personal details without permission) to publicise the Award and your work. CMA is happy to discuss specifics that should not be publicised (names/details/photos)

Signature:

Name: MATTHEW MCGETTIGAN

Date: 21/9/2018