



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

STRATEGY 2020-23

Our Aspiration

Phoenix Futures will achieve carbon neutral status in the first year of the strategy and work in subsequent years to be a carbon offset organisation.

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WE WILL

**ACHIEVE CARBON NEUTRAL STATUS IN THE FIRST
YEAR OF THE STRATEGY AND WORK IN SUBSEQUENT
YEARS TO BE A CARBON OFFSET ORGANISATION**

BY

**SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO CONNECT
TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS

INCREASING CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE

**EDUCATING & CHAMPIONING ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY**

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL TRACK RECORD

SUPPORT PEOPLE TO CONNECT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

We have long understood the value of connecting to our environment to support our mental health and wellbeing.

In 2001 we developed a therapeutic approach to support people in treatment for drug and alcohol issues to connect to nature and open spaces. In turn, this work contributed to the conservation and environmental regeneration of many areas across the UK.



RECOVERY THROUGH NATURE - THE BEGINNINGS

Our conservation approach started in earnest in 2001 in partnership with Natural England (then called English Nature) in The Peak District.

The initial task for the residents of our Sheffield Residential Service was the reconstruction of a drystone wall around the watermill meadow in Lathkill Dale.

This first task took a year and a half to complete and established our commitment to challenging and genuine conservation work.

The completion of this project established the high standards we achieve with guidance from our partners. Whilst creating a safe and enjoyable learning environment that increases the skills and confidence of people in treatment.



Our community-based programmes established a partnership with The National Trust at Alderley Edge in Cheshire.

EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAMME

Once we appreciated that our conservation work was significantly beneficial in helping people overcome drug and alcohol problems we expanded RtN to other programmes with new partners throughout Scotland and England.

For example, in our community-based programmes, we established a partnership with The National Trust at Alderley Edge in Cheshire. It was agreed that here we would attempt to tackle conservation development projects that the Trust team themselves simply didn't have the time or resources to commit to.

Another early project was the re-creation of lowland heathland. Over a period of a year, an area of pioneer woodland species was cleared, and a post and wire fence erected to create an enclosure. The people who use our services helped introduce cattle onto the site with the intention that their grazing and trampling (over a short period) would encourage the dormant heather to begin to regenerate.

Today we work with The National Trust at Alderley Edge by collecting acorns from the ancient oaks on the site and growing them at our RtN sites. These ancient trees are struggling to regenerate due to various reasons, but our samplings will be planted back on the site with the protection they need to flourish.

Just down the road from Alderley Edge we also grow wildflowers for The National Trust's site at Hare Hill. These flowers are planted to re-create a lowland wet meadow, and have very successfully been grown in our prison-based RtN projects.



BRINGING RECOVERY THROUGH NATURE HOME

In 2018 we piloted a new approach to our RtN programme to help more people to take part. This new development is a fundamental part of Phoenix Futures' sustainability strategy and is designed to be led by people who use our services.

There are three guiding principles to our new approach;

1. Growing our own produce 'From seed to table'. Food is grown and eaten by people who use our services. Surplus produce is supplied to local food-share and food-bank projects
2. Carbon reducing conservation work located at surrounding habitats within the grounds of, and local to, our own properties
3. Conservation work for our RtN partners

Ownership of these projects by the people who use our services is fundamental to success. They make the decisions for planning and design and take responsibility for growing.

MORE PARTNERSHIPS OLD AND NEW



The John Muir Trust:

Since 2006 we have worked in partnership with The John Muir Trust, delivering 1,861 certificates to our Service Users.

The National Trust:

Partnership initially established in 2005. Currently a key part of Phoenix Futures' remote conservation work through which we grow rare, difficult to grow, ancient and specimen trees at various of our RtN sites.

Shipley Park Ranger Service:

Since 2018 we have supported the Ranger Service with tasks such as clearing up in their memorial gardens and they help us with tasks like removing rubbish.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust:

A new partnership is being developed through which we hope to benefit from the Trust's expertise to develop our remote conservation projects, particularly looking at wildlife habitats.

Essex Rural Skills Project:

Abbotsford Rural Training – a collaboration since 2016, with RtN Basic forestry skills training with certification.

Essex Wildlife Trust:

Since Jan 2015 we have worked together to create a conservation based recovery programme.

Colchester Allotment Project:

Since 2017 we have collaborated to create a gardening project with a conservation message.



REDUCING EMISSIONS

As a national housing and care home provider our highest sources of CO₂ emissions are;

- Energy consumption - heating and lighting in our registered care and housing properties
- Travel - through our own fleet of vehicles (cars and minibuses) as well as business travel for staff working in a UK wide organisation

Since 2011 we have taken steps to reduce our emissions including

- Installation of biomass boilers in our residential services in 2013. By exclusively using pellets from renewable woodland, in accordance with our obligations under the RHI, (Renewable Heat Incentive) these biomass boilers have been carbon neutral from day 1 of their operations
- As of 1st November 2019, all our electricity supply has moved over to renewable sources and our smaller housing units moved over to renewable gas supplies

In 2019 we piloted approaches to test how we could reduce our emissions through travel including;

- Staff with the highest carbon use through travel changing their travel behaviour and travel approaches
- Taking a new approach to our Recovery through Nature that didn't require the use of minibuses
- Using technology to reduce the need for travel across the UK for meetings

-27%

REDUCTION OF CARBON EMISSIONS



As a result, we reduced our CO₂ emissions from public transport use by 20 tonnes. In 2019/20 our actual carbon emissions were at 592.29 CO₂ Tonnes, a reduction of 27% on the previous year.



PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT CARBON REDUCTION

ShIPLEY Country Park:

In 2018 we developed our new RtN direction at Shipley Park, including remote conservation work, growing our own edible produce, and creating wildlife rich havens.

Derbyshire County Council:

We have had an established relationship with DCC at Shipley Park since 2018, and as such have been actively involved in building a public talking park as a mental health support initiative for the community.

Ilkeston Community Gardens:

Since 2019 we have offered our assistance with this community project as they build and create a bio diverse self-sufficient garden for the local community.

Lee Valley Park Ranger Service:

Partnership since 2016. We are currently growing various species for Ranger Service, including the very difficult to grow and rare native Black Poplar, as part of our remote conservation programme.

Braintree Allotment Project:

Since Sept 2020 we have supported this gardening project and its conservation objectives.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL TRACK RECORD

CARBON CAPTURE

In 2011 Phoenix embarked on a huge environmental project to inspire and celebrate recovery. The Phoenix Forest was invented by people in recovery committed to planting a tree to celebrate the recovery journey of every person who had completed treatment in one of our services.

Since then we have planted 11,504 trees in 2 sites in partnership with the Woodland Trust and our site in Scotland in partnership with the John Muir Trust.



PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS THAT SUPPORT CARBON CAPTURE

The Woodland Trust:

Initially established in 2008 as our partner in creating the Phoenix Forest we are currently working at The Mead in Derbyshire with acorn collection and growing oak saplings to re-create local native woodland.

The Cambo Estate:

We have collaborated since 2017 to plant, prune, clear and help upkeep the pathways around the estate.

Silverburn Park:

Since 2017 we have planted, pruned, cleared and supported the general upkeep of the park.

Forestry and Land Scotland:

Taking place over several sites around the Cardenden area. Since 2017 we have pruned, cleared and supported the upkeep of land and pathways.

ScotRail (Adopt a Station):

This partnership was established in 2019 with the objective of enhancing the aesthetics of rail stations through creating wildlife rich havens within their surrounding areas. This is delivered through both our Glasgow and Fife based RtN projects.

Bennerley Viaduct Preservation Society:

We have been actively supporting this World Heritage watch list site at Bennerley viaduct since 2019 with the objective of developing a wild space under one of the viaduct arches.

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR STRATEGIC ASPIRATIONS

REDUCING EMISSIONS – OUR COMMITMENT

1. In 2020 we will transfer our remaining gas consumption to renewable energy, which will mean we will mitigate our CO2 emissions from 100% of our energy consumption.
2. We will continue to reduce our emissions through transport, using technology to support the reduced need for travel, continuing with working from home approaches to reduce personal travel, and making policy decisions to promote more efficient transport options where travel is necessary.
3. Our Recovery through Nature programme will focus on home grown produce, reducing the carbon cost of the food we consume in our housing and residential services, and teaching people who use our services the health and wellbeing benefits of low cost home grown produce.



INCREASING CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE INITIATIVES – OUR COMMITMENT

1. In partnership with ScotRail we will create carbon capture gardens at stations in Glasgow, initially at Central Station and Anniesland Station and further stations across the ScotRail network.
2. Since 2011, we have planted over 10,000 trees as part of our Phoenix Forest initiative, commemorating the successful recovery of every service user we have worked with. Our Phoenix Forest initiative will continue in England and in Scotland through the life of this strategy.



EDUCATING & CHAMPIONING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY – OUR COMMITMENT

1. We will expand the reach of our Shipley Park project to create a national Recovery through Nature Academy. The RtN Academy will be a teaching and learning centre for RtN champions across the country as well as our RtN nursery growing plants for use across our services and supporting our partners with our expertise.
2. We will support staff and people who use our services to understand how they can better care for the environment we live in. Through education programmes and awareness raising initiatives we will support people to make changes in their lives that bring about sustainable improvement in our environment.
3. We will create environmental champions that will lead education and awareness raising programmes through the life of the strategy.
4. We will work with others to share our learning and create a blueprint for charities to reduce their emissions and better care for their environment.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING



The implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the Environmental Sustainability focus group made up of representatives from across the organisation.



Environmental Sustainability Champions (ESC's) will be the driving force of the education and behavioural change strand of the strategy.



We will create a metric to measure our progress over the life of the strategy with an Environmental dashboard that allows us to identify areas of focus and achievement.