



Caddington Woods

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In summary:



“

The work to provide nature-rich spaces at Caddington Woods doesn't just benefit wildlife - it provides a stunning place to live.”

Nicola Johansen
Redrow Group Sustainability Manager

8HA
OF GREEN OR PUBLIC
OPEN SPACE

£5M
CONTRIBUTION
TO INVESTMENT
INTO COMMUNITY
PROJECTS VIA
CHARITABLE TRUST

94
AFFORDABLE HOMES, INCLUDING 46
COMMUNITY TRUST HOMES

63%
PREDICTED NET GAIN FOR
BIODIVERSITY

Fact file



- Predicted 63% net gain for biodiversity
- Formerly a 22 hectare, 6,500-space car park
- 8 hectares of green or public open space
- 11.9 hectares for housing
- £1.6 million investment in education
- £400,000 of health care funding
- Almost £470,000 allocated to sports and leisure
- £720,000 to be divided between green infrastructure, public rights of way and highways improvement, plus policing, refuse and recycling.
- 314 new Redrow homes
- 94 affordable homes, including 46 community trust homes
- £5m investment into community projects via innovative new charitable trust including:
 - o £2.6m investment into bespoke bus services
 - o £1m investment into the woodland & landscaping
 - o £1.25m into on-site community development and youth work
 - o £400,000 into grants to the local community/parish

Homes for nature and people



At Caddington Woods in Chaul End, Bedfordshire, Redrow has transformed a former vehicle storage facility into a sustainable new neighbourhood, providing homes for nature and humans alike.

Redrow's approach to both the environmental and community infrastructure has been innovative throughout. It is one of the spots selected to reintroduce wildlife-friendly habitats to land previously unsupportive of flora and fauna, through partnerships with the RSPB, Bumblebee Conservation Trust and support for hedgehogs.

By championing biodiversity and taking a 'net gain' approach, Redrow has created nature-rich spaces that benefit wildlife and a stunning place for people to live.

The scheme is predicted to achieve a 63% net gain for biodiversity, mainly due to the replacement of hardstanding - which has negligible value to wildlife - with new biodiverse planting and the retention and enhancement of the woodland areas.

A pioneering community trust, harnessing revenues from the rent of affordable homes, will invest £5million into the area over 20 years to support the new neighbourhood. It will fund bespoke bus services; manage the woodland and landscaping; and run a state-of-the-art community centre.

The three, four and five-bedroom properties at Caddington Woods have attracted a mix of first time buyers, growing families and rightsizers. Part of the appeal is the opportunity to live in a picturesque location and be part of a sustainable new community. The first of 314 homes at Caddington Woods were released for sale in spring 2016. By September 2019 almost 60% of the properties had been sold and were occupied.

Grey history, green future

Redrow acquired the 54-acre site, between the hamlet of Chaul End and Caddington village, from Vauxhall/General Motors, who had owned the land since the 1950s. They originally used it to test new models; while more recently it was used as a vehicle storage facility. The site was predominantly hard-standing, surrounded by woodland belts on all sides.



Nicola Johansen, Redrow Group Sustainability Manager, explained: “The development site was previously a car park, surrounded by broadleaved woodland, plantation woodland and containing areas of scrub, grassland and two ponds. We have retained the woodland, managing it to enhance its biodiversity value and improve its condition. We’ve also improved the existing ponds and created new habitats for wildlife including species-rich grassland and native shrub planting.

“The final development will have eight hectares of green or public open space for residents and the local community to enjoy. We’re forecasting a 63% net gain for biodiversity across the development.”

Partnerships

Prior to development, Redrow measured the ecological value of land, before taking steps to enhance it by creating green spaces, along with new homes and community facilities.

Forming part of this activity, Redrow worked closely with the RSPB to establish the best way to manage and improve broadleaf woodland areas and their associated wildlife on the development. Along with the work to create bumblebee havens, this has helped to create a new development that will have a positive impact for local wildlife.

The award-winning housebuilder produced a long-term strategy to improve the natural assets of its Caddington Woods development. Alongside new homes the development includes wildflower meadows, tree planting, ponds, and pocket swales which all provide shelter, food and water for wildlife.

“We worked with the RSPB on the original designs for the green spaces and green infrastructure at Caddington Woods to ensure they are the best they can be for wildlife,” Nicola said.

“But the work to provide nature-rich spaces doesn’t just benefit wildlife – it provides a stunning place to live.”

On the CaSE



Redrow partnered with Central Bedfordshire Council, General Motors, and the local community to launch the Caddington and Slip End (CaSE) Community Trust.

The registered charity operates via an innovative scheme which harnesses the rental values of affordable homes at Caddington Woods to give back to the community. Forty-six of the affordable homes have been, or will be, endowed by Redrow to the Trust, to be rented at Intermediate Rents (i.e. 80% of market rent) to those who meet relevant criteria.

The key difference with this scheme, however, is that the revenue derived from this will be invested back into the community through CaSE – for instance, to pay for upkeep of public open space on the site, to provide a bus with free and discounted services taking people from the development to the local village or school, and other community projects.

Redrow has also constructed a state-of-the-art community centre, which has been handed to the Trust to run.

In a 20-year period, the income derived from the 46 properties will allow the Trust to deliver:

- **£2.6m** investment into bespoke bus services
- **£1m** investment into the woodland & landscaping
- **£1.25m** into on-site community development and youth work
- **£400,000** into grants to the local community/parish
- Full operation of a community centre

After 20 years it will leave a 'sinking fund' of £1m for continuously upgrading and improving the CaSE Community Trust properties, community centre, play area and public open space.

Redrow has also agreed to contribute £1.6 million towards education and gifted around £400,000 to health care. Approximately £470,000 has been allocated to sports and leisure, with just under £720,000 to be divided between green infrastructure, public rights of way and highways improvement plus policing, refuse and recycling.

Woodland

A survey of the existing woodland surrounding the site was carried out and a management plan developed, which details how the site will be enhanced.

A contractor has been appointed to implement the woodland management plan.

Because woodland that hasn't been looked after for many years is crowded, dark and lacks space for wildlife and the trees are often weak and unhealthy, the plan will:

- Give the best trees more space by thinning out some of their neighbours to stop them being too crowded.
- Coppice some of the scrubby woodland. This ancient form of woodland management involves cutting trees and shrubs to ground level to stimulate regrowth. This removes the heavy shade, increasing the amount of sunlight reaching the ground 20 fold.
- Paths to be constructed using low-impact methods including no-dig construction.
- Information boards will be installed at the start of the path, including information about the woods to help people explore and enjoy them
- Many of the logs arising from the tree thinning will be left of the woodland floor to provide a habitat for wildlife.
- A range of bat and bird boxes will be installed in the woodland to encourage nesting.
- Thinning and coppicing will increase the wildlife value of the woodland. The increase in sunlight will benefit a range of wildflowers, including:
 - o Spring: bluebell, primrose, wood anemone, lesser celandine, yellow archangel; dog violet, wood spurge.
 - o Summer: meadowsweet, sanicle, wood avens, bugle, creeping jenny, hemp nettle, foxgloves, St. John's wort, centaury, and burdock.



Many bird species will benefit as the woodland develops following management; for example, dunnocks, song thrushes, lesser whitethroats, nuthatches and bullfinches could be found. And the coppice regrowth may, in time, attract nightingale, garden warbler, long-eared owl, or even turtle dove.

Hedgehogs, bats and possibly badgers will use the woodland edge to feed.

Because the soils are chalky, a number of butterfly species may colonise including small blue and Duke of Burgundy butterflies, both of which live in neighbouring chalk grassland sites.

The long term management will involve annual inspections and maintenance.

Show Gardens



The RSPB also advised on landscaping to the four show home gardens at Caddington Woods to highlight measures homeowners can introduce in their own gardens. Landscape gardeners from the TCL Group then created four interlinked wildlife-friendly show gardens utilising flowering trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, grass, plus dead and decaying wood features. Rustic stepping stones provide an informal route across the gardens with timber walk-through pergolas and climbers to the front.

Information boards on display in each of the four show gardens explain the rationale behind their design, while leaflets produced in conjunction with the RSPB give visitors a further insight.

Buzzing about bees

Supporting the plight of the bumblebee, and as part of Redrow's ongoing partnership with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, the housebuilder has introduced pollinator-friendly habitats across Caddington Woods, helping to boost the number of bumblebees, as well as other wildlife.

Building awareness with new residents, Redrow gifted membership of the Trust to homeowners. Each membership includes factsheets, bee-friendly wildflower seeds, a car window sticker, postcards and a fold-out bumblebee identification guide.

Residents are encouraged to create a haven for bumblebees in their own gardens, introducing flowers rich in pollen and nectar, such as sedum, lavender, alliums, herbs and wild roses.

Helping Hedgehogs

Redrow worked closely with the People's Trust for Endangered Species and the British Hedgehog Preservation society to develop 'Hedgehog Highways' the development, which will allow these nocturnal creatures to roam for food and a mate without barriers, helping to ensure their survival.

Redrow also hosted a talk at Caddington Woods from an expert from the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, enabling members of the public to learn about the hedgehog, its habitat, and how to encourage four legged friends to come to their garden.

Schools



To encourage children to understand their environmental impact and foster a love for nature from a young age, Redrow hosted visits from local schools.

Children from Caddington Village School were invited to help establish pollinator-friendly habitats across Caddington Woods to help boost the number of bumblebees, as well as other wildlife. They built bumblebee hotels aimed at providing a location for solitary bumblebees to nest and helped plant daffodil, snowdrop and hyacinth bulbs. The group also enjoyed a talk from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust about how they can help bumblebees in their own homes and at school.

Community Centre

At the heart of the blossoming new neighbourhood is a state-of-the-art new community centre, built by Redrow and managed by the CaSE Trust.

Redrow's Nicola Johansen said: "The community centre is classified as a Zero Carbon building due to the large number of solar photo voltaic panels on the roof which offset any carbon the building creates."

The centre, along with a new play area, is due to be officially opened in October 2019.

Children from Caddington Village School and Slip End Village School took part in an art project to create a mosaic display for the centre. The initiative saw more than 200 pupils design and paint tiles to reflect local and nature-related themes, including 'wildlife', 'woodland' and 'Caddington'.

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