



Secrets of the Sands.

'Secrets of the Sands' is the Landscape Partnership for the **Greensand Ridge**, a long narrow wooded sandstone ridge surrounded by clay vales. Found to the south of Bedford, this distinctive landscape feature runs 35 miles south west to north east, from Leighton Buzzard to Gamlingay.

The Greensand Ridge was considered for centuries as 'marginal land' because of the lightness and acidity of the sandy soils. So it was used by major landowners for hunting, recreation, forestry, heathland and livestock grazing. The aristocracy built manor houses for themselves and estate villages for their workers. The natural habitats of this Greensand landscape are heather heathland, acidic grassland and woodland.

This heritage has been gradually declining for decades, due to the changing economics of land use and modern built development. 'Secrets of the Sands' brings the key partners in the landscape together to reverse some of this decline. It will raise awareness amongst local people and visitors about the Ridge's unique heritage, and involve them in creating a sustainable future.

BRCC and the Greensand Trust are leading the **Secrets of the Sands Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership Programme** for the Greensand Ridge.

The vision is that by 2020 the Greensand Ridge will become a living and working landscape that is cherished by present and future generations and we will have reversed the gradual decline in the area's landscape character.

We are working towards creating a strong community led partnership and strategic framework to promote the area's interests and to secure the necessary investment to sustain the area's distinctive local charm, natural character and built heritage.

The aims of this programme are:

1. To restore and strengthen landscape character in the area, focusing on key habitats and built environment features intrinsic to the landscape;
2. To reconnect local communities with their landscape and to develop a sense of place;
3. To invest in skills to enable the stewardship of the landscape for generations to come;
4. To contribute to rural economic growth;



5. To create a robust, effective partnership for managing the landscape beyond the life of the Landscape Partnership scheme.

The Programme threads are:

'Living Heaths'	Heathland and acid grassland restoration, conservation and promotion
'Working Woodlands'	Ancient and broadleaved woodland conservation and promotion
'Historic Parks'	Historic parkland and wood pasture restoration, conservation and promotion
'Community Heritage'	Community led historic built (specifically sandstone structures) and natural environment conservation and enhancement
'Revealing the Ridge'	Set of heritage themed walking, cycling and horse riding trails, supported by local heritage information and interpretation and artworks
'Celebrating the Ridge'	Public awareness raising events and activities, including community arts, storytelling, photography, heritage roadshow and festival and educational outreach
'Heritage skills'	Formal and informal skills training for heritage feature owners/ managers and community volunteers, including conservation management and promotion

If you would like more details please contact Claire Poulton, the Secrets of the Sands Landscape Partnership Programme Manager on clairep@bedsrcc.org.uk