

Sustainability

Sustainability means using our natural resources in a responsible way so that they can meet the needs of the current and future generations.

E.g. Water



Choose one the natural resources from above and list all of the ways it is used in your school.

E.g. Water is used for washing paint brushes in art



Make a list of ways in which your school could reduce your usage of that resource

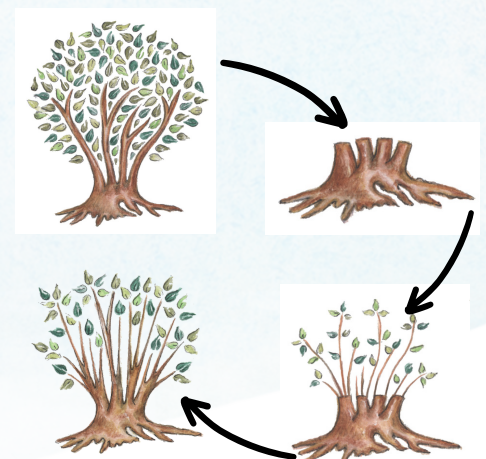
E.g. save water from washing paint brushes to water plants in wildlife area

At The Parks Trust we are working hard to try any ensure that our practices are as sustainable as possible. Below are some examples of what we do.

Coppicing

Coppicing is the traditional process of cutting back plants to just above ground level. Plants such as laurel, hazel, dogwood, rose and willow have been managed in this way for hundreds, if not thousands of years. Traditionally it would have been undertaken to provide local communities with firewood, fencing or building materials.

Coppicing helps plants to live longer by encouraging regrowth. This process also allows light to hit the ground so grasses and wildflowers can grow. It can also eliminate pests and diseases, removing fungi or bacteria that can attack plant stems.



Hay Cutting

The Parks Trust and their farming partners carry out hay cutting every year to help support their livestock. For hundreds of years, collecting and storing hay for the Winter months used to mean the difference between life and death for cattle and sheep and often for the survival of the farm. Now we have access to other foods to supplement their diet, but it is more environmentally responsible to feed them on locally grown grass.



We also cut hay for biodiversity reasons. Our hay meadows have been sown with native wildflowers. This provides food for pollinators such as bees and butterflies, species that are increasingly under threat. Mowing the land and removing the hay reduces nitrate levels released into the soil and over the years encourages wildflowers to compete with the nitrate hungry grass.

Grazing Sheep

Sheep help us maintain wildlife habitats, creating better conditions for wildflowers which in turn attract pollinating insects such as butterflies, bees and hoverflies as well as larger animals and birds. Without grazing livestock we would need to use heavy machinery more regularly to mow the grass and then remove the cuttings. If cut grass is not removed, the nutrients enrich the soil, promoting strong grasses that would outcompete the wildflowers. Grazing with sheep is also more sustainable and cost effective than cutting the grass as it means that we do not need to use machinery as frequently.



Sheep help us to maintain our historical sites. We have many ancient monuments and features within the parks, including medieval villages. Sheep help us keep the grass down in these areas, meaning that we are less likely to damage the landscape and our shared heritage with machinery



Lastly, the sheep provide us with a connection to our farming heritage. Until relatively recently Milton Keynes was largely fields used for farming. We continue this cultural heritage and believe that having livestock in our parks brings delight, understanding and connection to animals and farming.

What could the possible impacts be if we don't act sustainably in the future?

For me as an individual	For organisations such as our school or The Parks Trust	For the planet as a whole