

ADEPT President's Awards 2024

Entry form

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Award category Shaping Places for People

Project Title P.H.O.E.B.E Ambling African Women

Local authority entrant Suffolk County Council

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

The Ambling African Women break down barriers to accessing Suffolk countryside.

Please note we need at least one supporting image per award submission. Upload your image/s below.



Video - please paste links to any video evidence here. (Leave blank if not relevant.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTpynDBKBkw>

Shaping places for people: How was this project an innovative response to a significant concern? (150 words max.)

The 2019 Landscapes Review was a government commissioned report on the systemic transformation needed within Britain's National Landscapes and National Parks network. The report emphasised that although the natural environment is open and free to all, it does not always feel that way to certain groups. In response to this SCC's Green Access Team commissioned the University of East Anglia to conduct research with P.H.O.E.B.E (Promotion of Health, Opportunity, Equality, Benevolence and Empowerment) in 2022 to identify specific barriers to countryside access. The research focussed on listening to barriers people from underrepresented groups experience when engaging with the natural environment and identifying opportunities to remove these barriers to engagement. This research created the foundations for a partnership between Suffolk County Council and both National Landscapes in Suffolk & Essex working with P.H.O.E.B.E. to break down barriers to access the countryside and develop a new walking group called 'Ambling African Women'.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the quality of outcomes obtained from the project (for example improved/more efficient services, increased inclusivity for residents, futureproofing the service). (150 words max.)

Through this partnership, Ambling African Women walking group was launched in August 2023. This has enabled members to access the countryside for its known health and well-being benefits, increasing inclusivity for community members across Suffolk. The project has given a sense of belonging and has opened up new areas of Suffolk's countryside to members of the community that were previously unknown.

The project also supported members of P.H.O.E.B.E to complete walk leader and first aid training, giving P.H.O.E.B.E the confidence to be independent on walks. They will be leading their first public guided walk in the Suffolk Walking Festival in May 2024.

Through this project and the support given by SCC's Green Access Team and the National Landscapes team they have gone on to purchase, through lottery funding, a minibus which provides the independence to take the Ambling African Women walking group to more distant and diverse countryside locations.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of collaboration between place and people services (both within the council and with external partners/providers). (150 words max.)

The project was led by SCC's Green Access team in partnership with both National Landscapes in Suffolk & Essex who facilitated a walk and events programme led by members of the team and professional freelance walking guides.

The project provided access for all members of the groups that P.H.O.E.B.E. supports, to visit different areas utilising existing public transport links, to promote sustainable visiting and accessibility.

Collaborative working with Community Rail Partnership and Greater Anglia provided support with booking and supply of rail tickets, and the council's Connecting Communities and Katch Bus services provided bus services where there wasn't, making harder to reach places accessible for people without a car. At the launch of Ambling African Women, 32 people took the train and Katch service to the event.

First aid training was provided by RCR Services with walk leader training delivered by expert walk leaders from the Suffolk Walking Festival.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of buy-in to the project or its goals from members of the local community, health and social care and external organisations. (150 words max.)

Founded by Zimbabwean women social workers in 2008, P.H.O.E.B.E offers specialist domestic abuse advice, information, casework, advocacy and support and counselling services to black and ethnic minoritised women and children. They prioritise health and wellbeing in the community and see the walking group as being a way that can get their community active. At the launch of Ambling African Women there were women of all ages and fitness levels taking part, from babies in pushchairs, up to retirement age women, with plenty of chatting and socialising along the way. One of the goals from the CEO of P.H.O.E.B.E was to purchase a minibus to provide groups with independence which they have since achieved. They are also wanting to open up the Ambling African Women walking group to the wider community to encourage other charities and organisations to access the countryside for its known health and well-being benefits.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the use or consideration of new sources of investment to fund projects. (150 words max.)

UEA's research identified the lack of affordable and convenient transport as a significant barrier to P.H.O.E.B.E accessing Suffolk's countryside. Until this project P.H.O.E.B.E's experience of green space was limited to urban parks. From this project they have successfully secured National Lottery Funding to purchase a 17-seater minibus, providing independence in planning walks for Ambling African Women and widening their opportunity to experience green and blue space. They have arranged to park the minibus at the National Landscapes Team office and have since applied to the National Landscapes "Landscapes for All Community Grants" to fund their summer programme for the Women, Youth, Mothers & Babies and Children Groups to experience the Dedham Vale and Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscapes. An application is also being progressed under DEFRA's "Farming In Protected Landscapes (FiPL)" fund to experience a working arable farm and learn about food production in the UK.