

Pocket Parks, Northamptonshire

Brickle Pocket Park is an area of land in Northamptonshire owned and managed by local residents to provide free, open access for people to enjoy the local countryside on their doorstep.



Park Life



The Brickle Pocket Park, near Silverstone in Northampton was the village brickyard before a group of local volunteers got together and transformed the area, which had been derelict for some time, into a thriving haven for wildlife and plants for people to enjoy.

The Pocket Parks initiative started in 1984 in Northamptonshire and has continued to go from strength to strength - Northamptonshire County Council received beacon status in 2002/2003 in the 'Improving Urban Green Spaces' category.



Ivor Floyd, a 75 year-old retired civil servant and Brickle Pocket Park committee member, said: "The Pocket Parks serve many purposes. They make a valuable contribution to the protection and conservation of Northamptonshire's landscape, heritage and wildlife as well as giving local people the opportunity to enhance the place in which they live or work."

“The committee’s dedication to Brickle Pocket Park means decisions are made and executed at a grass roots level. It gives the community a real sense of purpose and by working together we’ve created a tranquil and peaceful environment for everyone to enjoy.

“We still have a lot of scope to develop Brickle and in the coming few years our plan is to increase the species of plants and trees in the park, which we hope will attract an even wider variety of birds and insects.”

Rose Little, Pocket Parks Officer at Northamptonshire County Council comments: “We’re really proud of the Pocket Parks scheme which has been a huge success since it began 25 years ago. There are now 82 Pocket Parks across Northamptonshire all run by volunteers from the local community. The County Council, alongside district and borough councils, funds the initial set up of every park but it is soon handed over to the community which manages and maintains the parks.



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Rose continues: “Ivor and the team at Brickle should be very proud of their achievements, they run it extremely well and although I’m always on hand to offer support, I’m confident that the management team have everything under control and only need help when there is a specific problem.

Ivor concludes: “It’s nice to know the County Council is there to support us and are interested in what we’re doing and are on hand if there is ever a crisis.

“By getting on board with Brickle Pocket Park I’ve made a lot of friends in the neighbourhood. I’ve never been involved in community led initiatives before but it has brought a group of us together and gives us all a real sense of community spirit. When I see people making use of, and enjoying the park space we’ve created I can see all the hard work has been worthwhile.”

Results

- Pocket parks scheme in Northamptonshire has been running for 25 years
- Since the scheme started in 1984 over 80 parks have been established
- It is estimated that every £1 the council invests in the scheme generates over £8 worth of volunteer effort – a saving to local council tax payers of over £300,000 a year
- Silverstone Brickle Pocket Park opened in 1993.