



University of Exeter

Hoopern Valley Project



To prepare for some exciting new arboricultural projects in the Hoopern Valley, the University of Exeter needed to create a 25-year woodland management plan. JP Associates was asked to help

About the Hoopern Valley project

As well as operating a world-class educational institution, the University of Exeter is also a significant landowner. On the periphery of the University's Streatham Farm Campus is Hoopern Valley, a parcel of sloping land that has historically been under light agricultural management.

This was about to change, though.

To celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, the University's Grounds team worked with the Woodland Trust to create The Hoopern Valley Jubilee Wood. This comprises a delightful tapestry of native trees including oak, silver birch, hazel, cherry and rowan, designed to enhance permitted public access routes, which were an instant hit with local residents and tourists alike.

This project's success highlighted the valuable role that the Valley could play in the University's commitment to conserving and promoting indigenous trees, flora and fauna.

Further, it fuelled the University's vision of drawing Hoopern Valley into its Streatham Estate parkland, which has been granted the Green Flag Award® for excellent green spaces with high community value. Iain Park, the University's Director of Grounds, said,

“Working with JPA we were able to discuss and firm up some inspired ideas for this space.”

Iain Park, Director of Grounds, University of Exeter

‘The Jubilee project revealed that Hoopern Valley is an ecologically-rich site with diverse habitats. If creatively managed, we realised it could make a valuable contribution to the local ecosystem while offering outstanding leisure, volunteering, learning and research opportunities.’

An estate owner's challenge

However, before such ambitions can be realised, the site needs a thorough overhaul.

Mr Park said, ‘Just working out where to start was a daunting challenge. From an arboricultural and ecological perspective, the area has been neglected for a long time. Consequently, it has a range of over-populated wooded areas planted during the 1970s that present a multitude of health and public safety issues. Further, its traditional flora and fauna have suffered from over-grazing, and its riverbanks have degraded so much that its indigenous otter residents have relocated to another part of the watercourse.’

JPA team	Land & Habitat
JPA services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland management plan • Land assessment • Public Open Space (POS) management
Location	Exeter, Devon



“JP Associates’ experience meant that our proposal is practical, costed and deliverable, enabling us to make successful funding bids.”

Iain Park, Director of Grounds, University of Exeter

One thing was clear: the University’s Grounds team needed to secure significant funds for a vast range of remedial works to restore the Valley’s traditional ecosystem before it could embark on new projects. This necessitated the development of a comprehensive plan detailing the team’s long-term vision for the Valley.

JPA’s Land & Habitat solution

For help with this, the University turned to Tiverton-based arboriculture consultancy JP Associates (JPA), whose Land & Habitat team combines estate management, arboricultural and agricultural experience.

JP Associates first conducted an extensive audit of the site, identifying and plotting trees along with areas of special interest – both good and bad – that need immediate attention.

It then helped to prioritise and schedule the many tasks required to restore the health of the Valley’s ecosystem, from thinning the existing woodlands and clearing the water courses, to re-introducing native species.

Importantly, JPA also worked with tree surgeons and other service providers to prepare an accurate budget for all the works, enabling the Grounds team to commence the necessary fundraising effort.

Moving into the second phase of the project, JPA then investigated ways to support the University’s desire to improve its publicly accessible open spaces, and community engagement that could enhance its current ‘Green Flag’ activities on the campus.

It made a range of considered recommendations. These included the development of publicly accessible open spaces, and eco-friendly work practices such as using horses to extract felled timber from the steep woodlands and making charcoal from felled trees.

Meanwhile, the University’s team created a programme of volunteer projects, such as pond clearance, weeding and planting, and explained how the site could provide a ‘Living Laboratory’ for education and research projects. In the process it demonstrated how the various works would support the University’s Biodiversity Enhancement commitment.

Achieving a sustainable vision

All this was combined into a 25-year Woodland Management Plan to articulate the University’s vision for the restoration and management of Hoopern Valley.

Mr Park said, ‘We developed a very good relationship with JP Associates leading to some inspired ideas that have really helped our cause. In particular, their experience meant that our proposal is practical, costed and deliverable, enabling us to make successful funding bids.’

‘This teamwork has opened up a hugely exciting opportunity to encourage native species to flourish, to create habitats that will hopefully entice the otters back, and to create a space that will contribute long term to the biodiversity, learning and public enjoyment of Exeter.’

Key achievements

- Extensive arboricultural assessment of Hoopern Valley
- Completion of costed 25-year Woodland Management Plan



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Certificate Number 9587
ISO 9001, ISO 14001

To learn more about
JP Associates, please visit

www.jp-associates.co.uk



About JP Associates

JP Associates provides impartial, quality-assured consultancy to clients involved in development projects, or the management of woodland, open land or urban spaces across the south of the UK. Founded in 2000, the company is known for its friendly, responsive service and for delivering pragmatic solutions. Its three units are:

JPA Arboriculture Independent consultants helping clients assess, plan, develop and manage sites with trees and hedgerows

JPA Trees & Development Expert arboricultural partners for residential or commercial development projects

JPA Land & Habitat Trusted advisors helping clients balance commercial, aesthetic and regulatory requirements, and manage invasive species such as Japanese knotweed.