

CASE STUDY


Bankside Urban Forest

“We are transforming the Bankside neighbourhood to make it environmentally resilient, to promote social life and to support local economic initiatives”

Valerie Beirne, Bankside Urban Forest Manager




PROFILE SNAPSHOT

Website	betterbankside.co.uk/what-we-do/bankside-urban-forest
Social channels	 BetterBankside
Contact us through Alliance	Valerie Beirne (vb@betterbankside.co.uk)
Country	England
Main sector	Public-private
Uforest thematic discipline	Urban landscape planning
Stage of development	Implementation



By promoting local, new jobs in the green sector.



By energising the local community to work for inclusive, green spaces, to slow down traffic and to safeguard cultural heritage.



By making the most of unused spaces and by efficiently using natural resources.



By increasing the neighbourhood's green cover by more than 1000m² and by improving over 10,000m² of public space.





START-UP

Starting in 2008, the Bankside Urban Forest is a long-term, open-forest strategy that aims at integrating forest ecology principles into streets and public spaces in Bankside, one of the oldest, medieval-street-patterned neighbourhoods in London.

BANKSIDE URBAN FOREST'S GOALS:

This initiative has an annual business plan related to:

- Improving Bankside for everybody.
- Integrating new developments into the existing fabric, making sure these deliver both commercial and environmental benefits.



INITIATIVE MODEL

MAIN ACTIVITIES:

What does Bankside Urban Forest do?

- It designs and executes different-scale projects, both temporary and permanent, to turn streets into pedestrian, green and communal areas that foster social interaction.
- It promotes tree-planting days on housing estates.
- It influences developers by offering green infrastructures ideas to incorporate into their target buildings and sites designs.

BENEFICIARIES:

Who benefits from Bankside Urban Forest's activities?

- 1. Local businesses and major developers** that fund projects, because the market is driving developers to look at demands of end-users for more sustainable buildings and surrounding landscapes.
- 2. Local residents, business workers and tourists**, that enjoy a better, healthier and resilient environment.
- 3. The green-economy workforce**, that finds new jobs in the urban horticultural and forestry sector.

PROMOTION:

What is Bankside Urban Forest's promotion strategy?

The Bankside Urban Forest's communication strategy is based on the following channels:

- Events and activities related to project briefs and proposals.
- Mailing lists.
- Social media.
- Bankside promotion website.

GOVERNANCE:

How does Bankside Urban Forest implement its activities?

- Led by **Better Bankside**, one of the first Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in the country.
- **Consultation board** by the Bankside Urban Forest Management Group that comments on greening plans for major developments.
- Executed locally by an **urban gardener and volunteers**
- In collaboration with:
 - Local authority (Southwark council).
 - Developers.
 - Major Landowners.
 - Cross river partnership: Regeneration agency.
 - Architecture foundation: cultural organisation focused on nature and architecture.
 - Tate modern: Cultural Institution with an art gallery.
 - Neighbours participation (ex.: mapping the area).



FINANCES:

What are Bankside Urban Forest's main resources?

- **Public funding (70%)** from the government or local authorities.
- **Private funding (30%)** from small and large neighbourhood's businesses and community groups.

POLICY AND STANDARDS LEADING THE INITIATIVE:

The Bankside Urban Forest participates annually to industry-standard accreditations:

- **Green flag award**, internationally recognised accreditation for maintaining green spaces.
- **Royal Horticultural Society**, a national initiative for establishing the quality of management (which includes the environmental aspect), design and how to involve the community.



UNIQUENESS

What makes Bankside Urban Forest a one-of-a-kind project?

- The **historic, constrained pattern of the neighbourhood** that coexists with emerging needs.
- The **focus on the role of the small scale**, especially for the spaces between buildings, integrating new developments into the existing urban fabric.
- The **holistic, inclusive approach** encourages the active involvement of the local community.
- The **flexibility** for funding, planning and delivering projects.



EXPECTATION

By **2025**, Bankside Urban Forest aims at continuing to identify key projects areas to work on, with people understanding the value of higher quality green and accessible spaces.

By **2030**, the initiative aims at achieving zero carbon emissions, energizing the business community in climate action for cleaner mobility and operations, greener spaces and business savings.

What does Bankside Urban Forest need to be successful?

- Skills on green infrastructures and recognised qualifications for urban designers and landscape architects.
- Ongoing support, commitment and funding.

What are today's main challenges?

- The lack of long-term management.
- An economic evaluation such as a return of investment.
- Concerns from local people towards escalation in land value, a rise in public and speculative interests, and a dramatic increase in tourism.

Promoted by:



In partnership with:

