

GFSL Volunteering Day: 23 July 2021

News story

GFSL organises East Sutton Park Volunteering Day to tackle some of the outstanding works in the prison's 85 acre grounds.



East Sutton Park is an open prison and young offender institution (YOI) in Maidstone, Kent, for women aged 18 and over.

The prison is located in a location of extreme historical interest, with many links to activities of prison, probation and the law.

The estate is documented in the Domesday book as being once owned by William the Conqueror.

In 1946, East Sutton Park was purchased by the MoJ and inaugurated as the first female borstal, presided over by the first Governor, Elsie Hooker. She devoted seventeen years of her life to rehabilitating the teenage girls in her charge and helped transform many lives.

In a nod to Elsie's unwavering attention to the grounds and team spirit, GFSL organised The East Sutton Park Volunteering Day. To tackle some of the outstanding works in the prison's 85 acre grounds, a group of 14 people from both GFSL and the MoJ spent the day together, helping to restore some neglected areas of the farmland.

The day's success was celebrated with a BBQ, organised by the farm manager. GFSL are already planning to hold volunteering days four times a year across other sites.

GFSL's Director of Operations, Len Bridges said:

I'd like to thank the whole team for organising such a successful volunteering day – including Site Manager Nathan Scott and the Farm Manager, Christopher Boakes for all their hard work.

MOJ Chief Property Officer, Andy Mills added: ‘

The day was a fantastic way of coming together as a team, literally getting our hands dirty to understand the challenges and rewards the maintenance of our state offers, and to see how transformative engaging prison residents in our work can be.

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