



Green Links Bridgend Year 1 Project Report for the Nineveh Trust 2019-20

Progress against outputs

TASK 1: New scientists programme - working with schools in locality of Bridgend LNRs: leading activities for pupils, running training for teachers and creating learning resources linked to Welsh curriculum. To be delivered by Project Officer and supported by external contractor Sticks and Stones Outdoor Learning.

PLANNED OUTPUTS:

- 8 sessions for schools
- 3 educator training sessions
- 4 sessions for young people
- 2 sessions for nurseries

OUTPUTS DELIVERED:

- 9 school session completed
- 3 educator training session completed
- 4 sessions for young people
- 2 sessions for nursery completed

Numbers engaged
271 children
42 teachers and staff

We continued to engage schools and nurseries throughout the autumn and winter. Tremains Primary, Brackla Primary and Banana Moon nursery, which are located around Tremains Wood in Brackla, have been supported through a programme of demonstration sessions (for Year 1, 2, 5 and 6), teacher/leader training and teacher-led supported sessions. Tremains Primary have also visited the woodland independently, which demonstrates the increase in confidence of the teachers who now feel able to lead outdoor learning sessions by themselves. Banana Moon staff also planned and delivered a session in the woodland and are now able to visit independently.

“It was great to explore Tremains Wood during the teacher training and the activities explained and carried out were enjoyable and educational. Thanks. The sessions delivered to the children were also enjoyable and educational” Year 6 teacher at Tremains Primary School.

We successfully carried out 4 activity sessions for young people and invited young people’s groups and local families to attend. These sessions used a range of activities to engage the participants including games and crafts and we had excellent feedback.

“I’ll definitely take the boys exploring again, especially if there’s blackberries to find. The three of us loved it. It was a perfect mix of walking, activities and learning and it was right on our doorstep.” Kate who attended the Autumn Activity Morning at Craig y Parcau woodland.



Tremains Primary School in Tremains Wood

TASK 2: Well-being programme – leading well-being and nature-based activities for local families



Autumn Activity Morning at Craig y Parcau

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- 3 community leader training sessions

OUTPUTS DELIVERED:

- 13 well-being activities
- 12 family activities delivered at Tremains Wood
- 3 community leader & group consultations

Numbers engaged
162 adults and children engaged

A woodland festival took place in Tremains Wood in September and included 12 family activities including woodland storytelling, foraging walk, tree walk, bug hunts and woodland craft activities. This event was ran in partnership with a number of organisations and the Tremains Woodland Rangers – the local volunteer group. Over 60 people attended despite the rainy weather and we had feedback that the activities were enjoyed by all.

Well-being activities have included public events such as ‘Get to Know your Woodland’ walk at Craig y Parcau and drop-in engagement activities on Locks Common. We have also led a bespoke wellbeing nature walk for Porthcawl Mental Health Matters Group at Frog Pond Wood and had positive feedback about the activity.

“The feedback was very positive from the group. They enjoyed the walk and the opportunity to visit the pond, getting outdoors together.” Sara from Mental Health Matters

In the autumn we delivered a programme of activity for the Brackla Language & Play group, coordinated by Bridgend County Borough Council. The group is for children who are experiencing communication difficulties and their carers.

Activities took place in nearby Tremains Woods which the group had not visited before, despite their meeting venue being only 10 minutes walk away. We had excellent feedback from these sessions...

“It was lovely to gain new ideas for our team to use in future and for the families to make the most of the outdoor space around them. I noticed a big change in some of the children and how they benefited from this programme. For example, engaging more in the activities and using their speech more to communicate.” Sophie, coordinator for Brackla Language & Play Group.

Carer feedback -

“The difference after the first couple weeks was impressive”

“Fantastic sessions”

“I feel the course has made a difference to myself and X”

Partnerships with these organisations have taken time to develop and we felt that it was appropriate to carry out ‘consultation’ workshops to enable the leaders and the beneficiaries to share their interests and views of local green space, thereby developing activity ideas in an inclusive and effective way. This was carried out with Mental Health Matters in two locations – central Bridgend (in relation to engagement at Craig y Parcau) and Porthcawl (in relation to engagement at Locks Common) and also with Families First where we spent time with staff and families during a welly walk in Bryngarw. This process has meant that we better understand the barriers faced by these groups and are more confident that the activities we are running in autumn are appropriate and inclusive.



Storytelling at Tremains Wood



Blackberry picking at Tremains Wood

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Activity morning in Trog Ffona Wood.

TASK 3: Volunteer programme – leading conservation activities for local communities on LNRs. Running training for volunteers. To be delivered by Project Officer and supported by Bridgend CBC, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales and NRW.

PLANNED OUTPUTS:

- 11 volunteer activities
- Volunteer support

DELIVERED OUTPUTS:

- 11 volunteer activities
- Volunteer support

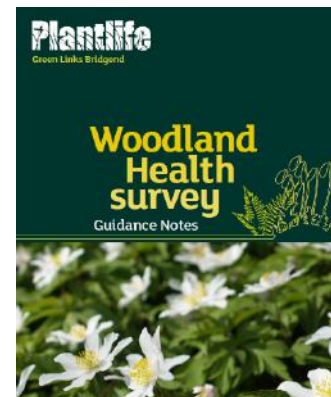
Numbers engaged
55 volunteers engaged

We planned and carried out a series of training and activity sessions with existing volunteer groups over the summer and autumn months. This has included mammal, bat, bee, butterfly and fungi surveys. There has also been a series of 'bio'blitz' type events on the sites with no existing volunteer groups with the aim of generating interest from the local community.



As well as engaging both existing and new volunteers, these events have created valuable records which have been sent to both SEWBREC and Bridgend County Borough Council. We had an exciting find at Tremains Wood during the fungi survey when the dotted fanvault fungus (left) was found. It has only previously been recorded three times in Wales.

We have also trialed and created a 'Woodland Health Survey' (right) in partnership with Llais y Goedwig and Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales. Its purpose is to help groups have a greater understanding of the woodlands they manage and to help them create a management plan. Llais y Goedwig will share this resource and continue to train other groups across Wales to use the survey. We also plan to use it during the remaining years of the Green Links Bridgend project with other volunteer groups and disseminate the resource more widely across the UK.





Bumblebee survey at Frog Pond Wood



Winter Tree Identification at Craig y Parcau

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- Monitoring and evaluation
- Promotion of activities
- 2 resources produced for communities
- 2 meetings of steering group, 2 meetings of core group, 1 meeting of Green Network

We have continuously monitored the project activities through observation. This has included using the research of *Lumber R, Richardson M, Sheffield D (2017) Beyond knowing nature: Contact, emotion, compassion, meaning, and beauty are pathways to nature connection* to assess the effectiveness of our activities. We have also asked for feedback from participants, leaders and partners and used this to amend engagement activities.

We have connected to local Facebook community hubs to share our events and gather local interest. We have also made contacts and worked with local groups such as Tremains Woodland Rangers and Bryngarw Volunteers who have also promoted activities through their own networks. Organisations in the steering group have worked hard to share activities through their existing networks including Bridgend County Borough Council, Valleys to Coast Housing Association and the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales. We have also identified other networks and made links with new organisations such as Grapevines which promote Mental Health & Wellbeing Services in Bridgend.

We recognised that sharing activities in existing networks may engage some members of the community but that another approach was needed to reach those who may have barriers to getting involved. We have done this by working with organisations such as Mental Health Matters and Families First who already engage hard to reach audiences and understand the barriers to engagement.



We have produced fewer resources than expected. This is because feedback from the steering group and schools highlighted the number of school resources already available and it was recommended that the project utilise these. We therefore used resources from a variety of organisations and the teacher training sessions highlighted these and how they could be accessed. We did however print a fungi identification leaflet which was used during some of the volunteer sessions and also the Healthy Woodland Survey described above.

Two steering group and two core partner group meetings were held in May and September which gave an opportunity for partners and stakeholders to shape and feedback on project activities. We also held the first Bridgend Green Network meeting in September which brought together people who co-ordinate or promote volunteer activities in the county.

This was a success with representation from a wide variety of organisations and bodies including NRW, Bridgend County Borough Council, BAVO, Valleys to Coast Housing, Bridgend College, Parc Calon Lan, Bridgend College, Garw Valley Railway and the South and West Wales Wildlife Trust. There was much enthusiasm and support for the network and we agreed to create a joint Facebook page to advertise our activities. We also decided to meet again in 2020 to plan a joint 'Balsam Bash' campaign in the summer.