



Thank you for your grant which has enabled us to enrich the activities and events we run at Tortworth.

We are half way through our two-year Heritage Lottery Fund project through which we are engaging more people in our volunteering activities and events.

The grant from Nineveh has allowed us to purchase a range of ecology equipment and resources that will enable us to engage with children and adults alike for many years to come, via formal education sessions, public events, and also our volunteering days. We have already made good use of much of this equipment with our regular volunteers, a group of SEN college students, and during socially distanced events.

The Coronavirus pandemic has put limitations on what we have been able to do in the last 12 months, and how we have been able to engage with people, but we have adapted and been flexible and creative with how we've reached people. Despite the limitations, our visitors and volunteers have still learnt about the trees and the ecology of the site.



How we've spent the grant:

Kit for species surveying and recording (including children's bug hunting)	£400
FSC guides	£95
Wildlife reference books	£80
Bat detectors and cases	£160
Binoculars	£115
Extra gloves and hand tools to enable students to take part in conservation volunteering	£150
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1000</b>

Changes we made from our funding request:

- We asked for funding to build a moth trap, but we started making this before the grant was awarded and therefore redirected the funds to buy other species surveying kit.
- We started a partnership with an organisation that has bat detectors, therefore we only need 2, not 4 as listed in funding bid. Instead of the additional bat detectors, we bought 2 pairs of binoculars, as requested by some of our volunteers and staff team.
- Because schools were either closed or navigating the very tricky Covid situation last year, we weren't able to host any school groups. Instead, we worked with a group of students from a local SEN college who came and did conservation volunteering with us. In order to host the group and run appropriate activities safely and in line with our Covid risk assessment (which includes quarantining gloves and not sharing tools) we needed extra work gloves and hand tools.
- We were donated several large plastic boxes and therefore didn't need to purchase them – instead we redirected this budget to buying more FSC guides.
- We purchased a leaflet dispenser to hold paper survey forms.

Examples of how we have used the equipment so far:

- We used bat detectors and bat ID guides during a bat and moth night attended by 24 people
- We ran 5 family bug hunt sessions at our Autumn Open Day (for groups of up to 6 people)
- At our October volunteer day (attended by 12 volunteers) we used FSC guides to identify fungi
- Our weekly volunteer group (5 regular volunteers) have been identifying spring flowers this year



- We have launched a Tortworth Arboretum project on iNaturalist and are encouraging volunteers and visitors to take part as a safe and socially-distanced activity. We have paper survey forms available in a leaflet dispenser for people that don't use apps/smartphones.
- We have been donated a bespoke 'learning shelf' where we display all of our new books and FSC guides for volunteers and visitors. It is kept securely in our container when we are not on site, then brought out and hooked in place in our roundhouse when people are on site so that they can easily see and access the resources.
- Our tree officer used our new books and ID keys to teach volunteers how to identify Winter tree buds.
- We ran 4 conservation volunteering sessions for SEND college students (as detailed above).

#### Evaluation:

Feedback gathered by an independent consultant found that in 2020 87% of our visitors felt that visiting the Forest Centre has helped to improve their knowledge of woodlands and given them a better understanding of our natural world. Volunteers also reported their knowledge and understanding had improved.

The consultant also received feedback from the college tutor who brought their students to 4 sessions at the Forest Centre. The tutor outlined the positive impact this had on the students' learning and development, and the invaluable part this has paid in broadening the students' outlook and understanding of the role they can take in supporting their local environment and community.

53 species of flora and fauna have been recorded through our iNaturalist project.

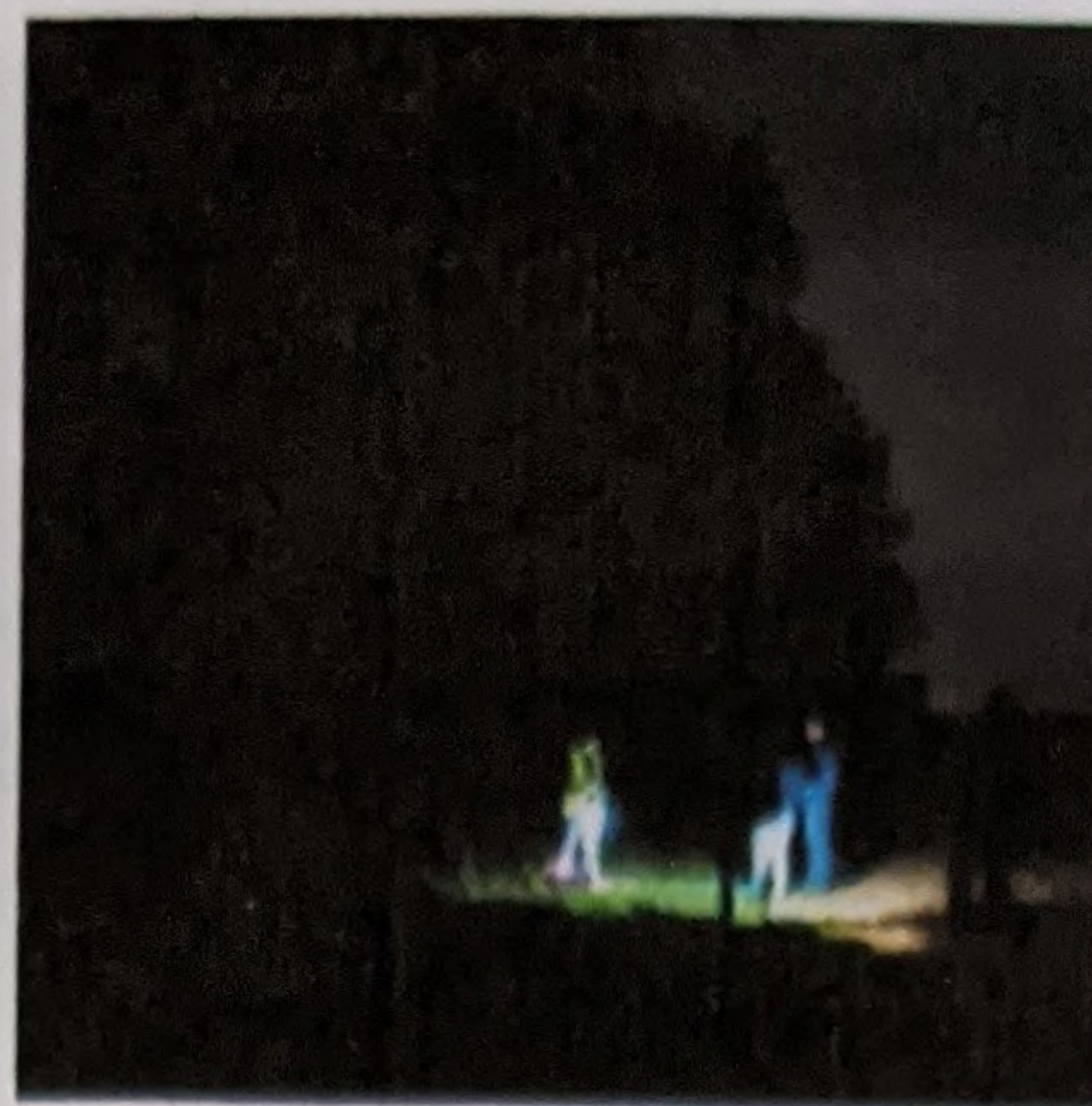
#### Looking ahead:

We haven't been able to run all of the events and activities that we planned to use the equipment for, but it is a valuable asset that we are confident we can make good use of in coming months and years. In 2021 we plan to run 4 sessions for local primary schools, a bat night, an owl prowling, a butterfly event, beginners birdwatching workshops, various other events, and activities at our open days (including bird walks and more bug hunts). Thank you for enriching our offer to visitors and volunteers!





Identifying a 7 spot ladybird on a Money Puzzle branch, Spring 2021



Visitors using bat detectors on our Bat and Moth Night, October 2020



Families looking for bugs at our Autumn Open Day, October 2020



Volunteers identifying the first butterflies of the year, Spring 2021



A college student making use of new gloves and a pruning saw, November 2020



A college student making use of new gloves and a pruning saw, November 2020



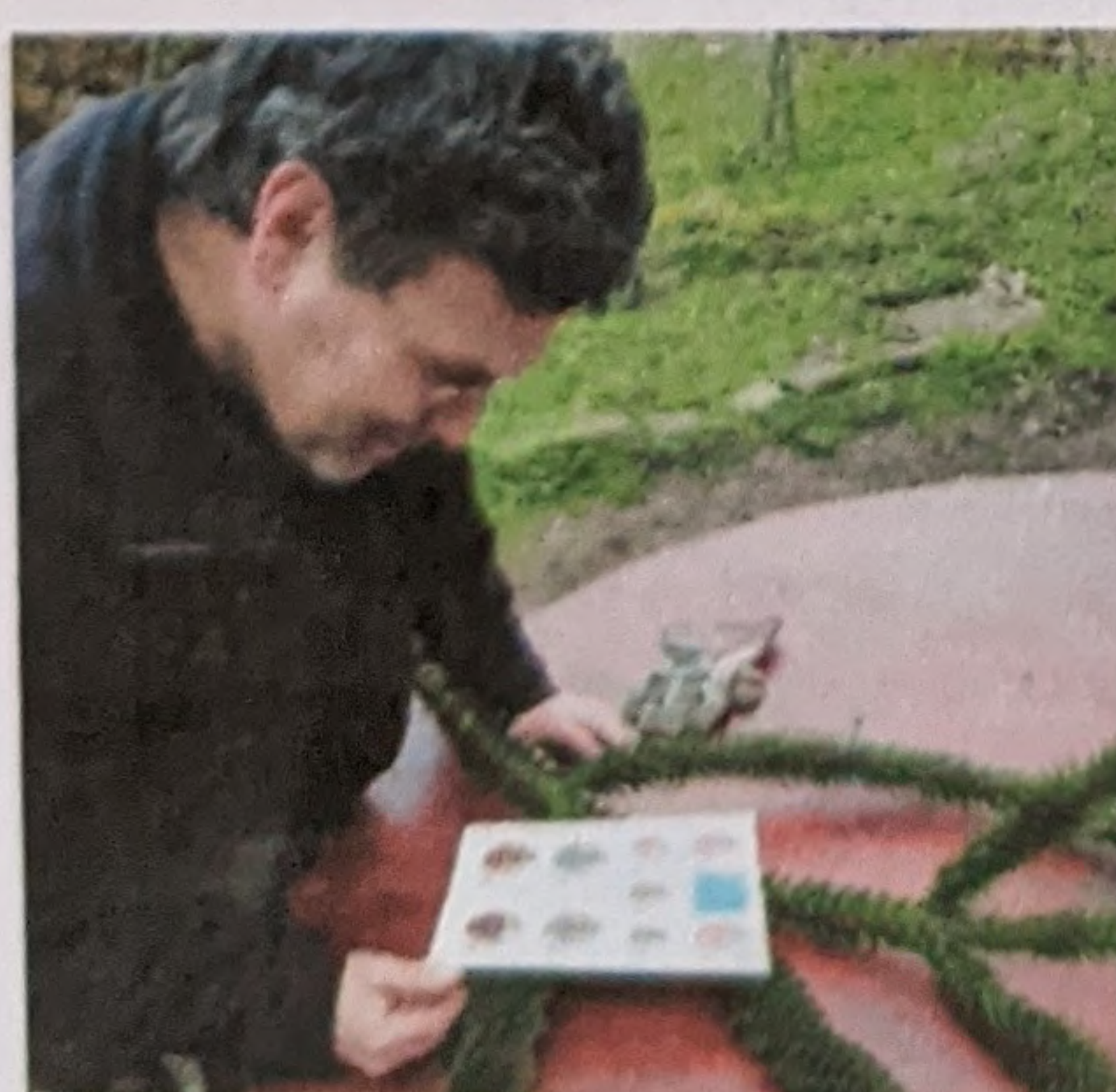
Visitors looking at moths on our Bat and Moth Night, October 2020



Volunteers identifying fungi, October 2020



A child using a hand lens during a family bug hunt, October 2020



A volunteer identifying a ladybird



Our 'learning shelf', making our new resources visible and accessible



A leaflet dispenser with paper survey forms, and information about our iNaturalist project