



How the Nineveh Charitable Trust made a difference to Andover Trees United in 2021

Project: A Calendar of Events for Nature and People



In February 2021 the Nineveh Charitable Trust awarded a grant of **£4,150** to enable us to carry out a **wildlife surveying and citizen science programme and calendar of nature-themed events for the local community.**

The Target

- To enhance current public understanding of the ecology of 44 acres of new woodland, through a citizen science species monitoring programme and calendar of events.
- Whilst remaining Covid secure, to increase nature connectedness through the engagement of 200 people from the Andover and Test Valley through the collection of this data and participation at events.

Project Summary

An ecologist-led wildlife surveying and citizen science programme and calendar of nature-themed events for the community of Andover and Test Valley, April – September 2021. The project will create a new, career-entry job opportunity for a recent Ecology graduate, who will devise and deliver the programme. Trustees and the (volunteer) Management Team will have overall responsibility for project management, tasks being delegated across the 18 strong group.

Programme Content

- A species monitoring programme will consist of 30 sessions in the woods April - September 2021 and will involve transect surveys for pollinators, flora, birds and butterflies.
- 6 youth volunteers aged 14-16 years will be trained in species monitoring techniques over 6 monthly workshops (6 days)
- Up to 12 members of the local community will be inducted as recording assistants over 24 weekly surveys (24 half days)
- 10 community events including 3 bioblitzes and 7 nature-themed workshops

This is what you helped us achieve:

10 citizen science events

- 2 bat walks
- 1 moth trapping event
- 3 bioblitz's
- 1 invertebrate search event
- 1 pond dipping event
- 1 wildflower walk
- 1 native tree walk

(involving 138 people: 50 under 18s, 19 18-24s, 29 over 55s, 40 25-54s)

24 half days of wildlife surveying

(involving 17 different people)

3 school visits

(involving 62 children: 40 primary-age, 22 college-age)

6 youth volunteers aged 14-16 years were trained in species monitoring techniques over 6 monthly 2-hour workshops

~3000 new data points for the Nature in Harmony database - Increasing the information and understanding of our 44-acre woodland. The data will be uploaded to LivingRecord, where it will join the national biodiversity database. Data is not yet analysed but once it is (by spring 2022) we would love to send you a copy of the report.

223 people involved in total.

The project enabled job-creation for a recent Ecology graduate. They devised, delivered and evaluated the project. This included the creation of learning resources and ID guides, the delivery of workshops and activities, the training of our youth team plus 17 other individuals from the community in survey techniques. They also communicated with volunteers before and after events/activities, liaised with the management team in event organisation, and will be managing the data entry and report writing. The grant also enabled us to provide this graduate with a top-up training course to enhance their knowledge of chalk downland grasses (this topic was identified by the graduate as the area most lacking in knowledge) - this extra training ensured that they delivered high quality community engagement. This job opportunity within the environmental sector is an invaluable experience for any entry-level graduate.



Feedback from participants:

“My granddaughter Heidi (aged 3) absolutely loved learning the names of the wildflowers, so much so that she now has her own wildflower book which she reads before bed every night!” - wildflower walk participant

“Hi, I just wanted to say a big thank you for the excellent day our A Level Biology and Environmental Science students spent with you on Wednesday. Alex was an excellent host and ran the two ecological survey exercises wonderfully well. Our students are busy collating the data we collated on the day, and processing the results.” - College tutor

“I loved looking in the grass, I found beetles.’

‘I loved the beautiful flowers, they gleamed like sunshine and it was so fun. My favourite was the Birdsfoot Trefoil. I wish I could go back sometime.’

‘I loved Harmony woods! I didn't know there were plants like the Yellow Rattle and Birdsfoot Trefoil.’

‘I had a lovely time at Harmony Wood. I loved looking for the leaves and flowers so much. I liked going in the grass.’

‘I loved the skylark. I liked it's song ... it was pretty.’

‘My favourite part of Harmony woods was when we looked at the different flowers.’

‘I really enjoyed using the quadrats to see how many species of plant there were in 3 different areas.’

‘I was really excited to meet Alex. It was really fun finding out about the flower species.’

‘I loved the Oxeye daisies because I had never learnt about them before.’

"My favourite thing was when we identified species of flowers. My favourite were Oxeye daisies." - Primary school students

"I just wanted to thank you for an inspiring and informative evening of moth trapping last night. I woke this morning to find the girls up and dressed, conducting their own independent survey of the wildlife in our tiny garden.

They plan to use a spreadsheet to present their data and then repeat it on the same day next year.

This has been such a valuable learning experience for them. They are discussing how to work scientifically and the best way to research and record data.

I really can't thank you enough." - moth trapping participant

"The facilitator had a really wonderful way with the children and the adults who attended. This is a very special project 😊"

"The bat survey meant I visited the Harmony Woods site in the dark, a totally different experience from in the day. A different kind of magic!"

"Everyone involved is very friendly and helpful."

"Keep going and thank goodness for ATU"

"Alex was brilliant. Just the right level of info and very relaxed & inclusive."



Our qualitative feedback questionnaire produced very positive responses, from 32 different people - here are some of our questions and their answers:

- **Did you enjoy your time with us?** - “FANTASTIC” “Loved it” “most definitely” “very much” “Yes. Enjoyed being outside, learning to use new equipment and learning more about wildlife, being with others”
- **Which aspect in particular did you enjoy?** - “being able to understand and observe the different habitats within the ecosystem of the woods”, “outdoors and making a difference”, “Learned something new in a lovely environment”, “Being close to nature and helping to make a difference”, “Practical, science based learning for myself (a primary teacher) and the two children who attended with me.”, “Being outdoors amongst the magic of nature, meeting and spending time with people and an exciting experience”, “Feeling like I am making a difference”. “all of it”
- **How did you feel during and/or after the event?** - “passionate and intrigued”, “Excited and positive”, “This was a relaxed, friendly event which clearly inspired a great deal of interest and enthusiasm for the process. The children conducted their own independent invertebrate survey the following day.”, “A bit unsure at the start but grew in confidence as the hour passed. Excited to pick up a signal”, “That I had learnt new things”
- **Have you learned something about your local environment/ecosystem? What have you learned?** - “Yes about how different species affect each other”, “yes, the area has a huge diversity and each species depends on different factors to thrive in”, “Quite how many varieties of flora and fauna there are when you look closely”, “So much about moths and their importance as pollinators”, “Yes, I learned about the different habitats bats use (roosts, commuting, and foraging)”, “Yes, that there are way more flowers than I could ever have imagined”.
- **Would you like to get involved with ATU again?** - 100% responded with ‘yes’

