

Wild Woods 2020 - 2021

South West Community Woodlands Trust (SWCWT)

SWCWT received £6,000 in November 2020, to run a one-year woodland education and conservation project for children in the Stewartry area of Dumfries and Galloway, in South West Scotland.

Wild Woods Project

Funds from Nineveh Trust contributed to the cost of paying two professional outdoor educators to organise and run Wild Wood sessions. These engaged children in fun and meaningful activities in Taliesin, a 24-acre community woodland site that is owned and managed by the trustees of SWCWT.

The project was aimed at 6 - 12-year-olds and was planned to run for three x 10 week blocks. The first block of sessions was run from end of September until December 2020, with half of these being paid for by Nineveh once the grant was accepted and funds received. Due to Covid restrictions there was then a break, with the next block of 10 beginning in April 2021. To make up for this break, three single sessions were run during the summer holidays for children from the local village. Another block was run from Sept – Dec 2021.

Autumn 2020



12 children attended these 10 sessions. Activities included mini rafts, parachute games, fire safety, fire lighting, hide and seek games, cooking on the fire, tree climbing, bird feeding, nature connection games, Autumn leaf lanterns, knife use, fungi forage and spore prints, whittling, creating with clay, mini-dens and shelters.



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Spring 2021

Spring activities focused on woodland eco-systems, including games about the web of life, natural scavenger hunts, nature connection, pond dipping, natural jewellery making, tracking, animal games, tool use, fire making, mini beast hunts, making bug hotels, river walk, creating clay bugs, and camouflage.



Summer 2021



Three fun days were run in the community woodlands in July. This was in response to requests from Parents who were keen to get their kids out, playing and socialising again. Each session was on from 10 until 2. This offered a good amount of time for games, fire and food, pond dipping and water play, and creating / making with natural objects.

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Autumn 2021

Another block of 10 sessions was run between September and December 2021. These offered games, knots, shelters, clay creations, Kubb (Norse stick game), carving, rhythm sticks, wood collecting and fire making, campfire cooking, natural glue making, tree I.D, and den building.



Wild Woods – Overall

The project created exciting opportunities for children to play and learn in a natural landscape. The project leaders ran fun and interactive conservation activities and environmental games for children throughout the year as well as teaching traditional crafts.

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£6,000 was received from Nineveh Trust, with the rest of the funds coming from parental contributions. The grant from Nineveh kept the cost of the sessions low, at £5 per session per child. Apart from the three summer days, children booked onto a block of 10 sessions. Each session ran for three hours, so each child attending a block of ten sessions benefitted from 30 hours playing and learning outdoors, a gradual building up of their skills in games and tool use, and making at least two objects from natural materials.

One aspect of the project that was planned but did not take place was completing a John Muir Award. Whilst activities offered to the children did support the John Muir approach to 'Discover, Explore, Conserve and Share' a wild space, the John Muir Trust felt that the age range attending Wild Wood sessions (mostly 6 – 8 year olds) was too young to fully engage with a John Muir Award. This is something we would like to consider doing at a later point.

Gratitude and Appreciation

We would like to thank you for giving us this opportunity. Wild Woods has been an enjoyable and valuable experience for the children that took part. Parents and carers of the children have been hugely appreciative of the reasonable cost of the sessions that was only possible because of the grant from Nineveh Trust. It is so important, now more than ever, that children have an opportunity to play, explore, create and learn outdoors, in the fresh air amongst the trees. This has created a connection between children and this natural outdoor space and has educated and inspired children and their families to care for the environment around them.

Thank you, from the Trustees of South West Community Woodlands Trust.