

Avon Wildlife Trust

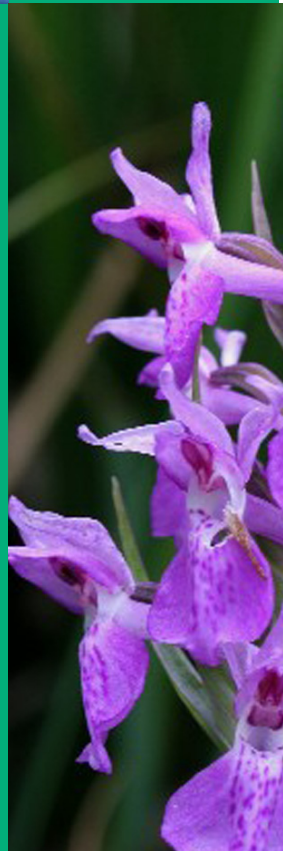


Final Evaluation December 2012



PeopleAndWildlife

Connecting communities and the natural world



Wildlife - It's All About Us

Heritage Lottery Fund
Project No. HG-07-00860





Avon Wildlife Trust (AWT) works within the area of the former county of Avon to secure a strong future for the natural environment and to inspire people to appreciate and enjoy it. With the support of over 16,500 local members the Trust works to safeguard and enhance the natural environment, runs programmes to engage and involve local people, and campaigns on issues which threaten or damage it.

Funding from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has allowed the Trust to deliver an innovative project called 'People And Wildlife' (PAW)* between 2009 and 2012 which engaged audiences across the region from groups that had previously been under-represented in its work.

Over the lifetime of the project 43,751 people were engaged in this diverse and exciting project.

The project inspired people about nature through:

- Encouraging them to spend time outside in nature reserves and their local green spaces
- Involving them in multi-media events to produce video, sound and photographic evidence of their experiences
- Organising innovative events that helped them to get closer to nature
- Developing social networking to encourage people to share their interest in wildlife

The project encouraged people to care for wildlife through:

- Offering practical conservation days on nature reserves
- Supporting communities to improve their area for wildlife
- Offering work placements and training

This evaluation report outlines the success stories, outputs and outcomes achieved, methods and resources used to deliver the project and the lessons learnt to describe what has been a rewarding experience and inclusive project.

*Formally known as 'Wildlife - It's all about us' the name was changed to reflect the Trust's People and Wildlife Strategy and Objectives.

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1 *An introduction to the project*

Avon Wildlife Trust

Avon Wildlife Trust is the largest local charity working to protect wildlife in the Avon area. With the support of over 16,500 members we look after 35 nature reserves, campaign on issues which threaten wildlife, and encourage greater concern for the natural environment. We have started an innovative Learning Programme that seeks to ensure that every child in Avon has the opportunity to experience life and learning in the natural world. We lead conservation work by taking an innovative approach to wildlife recovery on a landscape scale, to increase biodiversity in the wider environment and protect the character of the landscape. We set the agenda as part of the national partnership of Wildlife Trusts with 800,000 members throughout the UK, and regionally as a member of the South West Wildlife Trusts. We run a major education and conference centre at Folly Farm in the Chew Valley.

It is widely recognised that in our society we are becoming increasingly detached from our natural heritage. There is overwhelming evidence that direct contact with the natural environment can offer a greatly enhanced quality of life. Not only can it offer individuals real mental health benefits but it can have a deep and beneficial impact on communities. With the alarming increase in obesity, stress and antisocial behaviour, the natural world may be part of the healing solution. In 'Natural Thinking' (2007), research carried out by Dr William Bird for RSPB, he concludes:

“Ignoring the evidence may result in further loss of natural green space (because people see no reason to care), that will never be recovered and so deprive generations of a ‘natural health service’.”

Recognising the need to engage with a more diverse audience the Trust produced an Audience Development Plan 05/06 (ADP) to identify under-represented groups. The audience profile was found to be lacking in several groups:

- Black and minority ethnic groups
- People on low incomes in urban areas of deprivation
- People with learning difficulties and with physical impairments
- Young people (aged 16 to 25)
- Families especially those with young children

The plan conducted extensive public consultation with a cross section of these groups (see Executive Summary - Appendix 1) which resulted in an outline Action Plan. The Action Plan proposes the development of an innovative programme of new activity to capture and connect this potentially large area of interest from new groups traditionally not associated with natural heritage activity.

In 2009 Avon Wildlife Trust was successful in securing £300,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop and deliver an innovative programme of work that would engage audiences currently under-represented in its work.

People And Wildlife

The programme has encouraged participation by offering three 'pathways' designed to enable new audiences to celebrate local natural heritage and take part in conservation work that will safeguard it for the future.

1. To engage a much wider diversity of people with nature and the great outdoors, inspiring and enabling them to 'get out there'
2. To support people to take practical action for wildlife, so they can improve their neighbourhood for nature and provide spaces that they can visit and enjoy
3. To empower people to continue to explore the outdoors and feel confident to take on local projects

Research conducted by the Audience Development Plan strongly indicated that to successfully harness the support of new audiences, it was vital to work within the community setting. Green sites, from pocket parks to local nature reserves on the doorstep of communities, were used to help participants connect with their local natural heritage. Once interest was captured, and communities wished to access nature further afield, then full use was made of the Trust's diverse network of nature reserves, where further wildlife celebration, improvement and practical volunteering projects could take place. There was a particular focus on developing and using Trust nature reserves which had the potential to meet the access needs of these groups (physical, information and interpretation, and their location to these communities). These Trust sites are referred to as flagship reserves.



How was the project evaluated?

The People And Wildlife programme was evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative methods. A detailed spreadsheet of all activities and people engaged can be found in Appendix 2.

Quantitative Outputs

People - numbers of individuals reached within each specific target audience:

- Black and minority ethnic
- People living in areas of higher deprivation
- Families with young children
- Young people (aged 16-25)
- Adults with learning and physical impairment
- Mental health recoverers



Places - number of sites the project worked on and types of events the project delivered:

- Interactive roadshows/workshops
- Community-based walks and talks
- Guided walks at flagship reserves
- New volunteer groups established
- Doorstep sites community projects
- Trust nature reserve community projects



Quantitative outputs were compiled on a monthly basis as part of the project review process. The project team monitored and evaluated progress against the specific targets agreed for the project during the approval process with HLF. Throughout the life cycle of the project, our delivery approach was reviewed and where necessary modified to ensure that each of the specific targets would be met.

A more detailed evaluation of progress against quantitative targets was undertaken at the halfway point of the project, and some changes to our delivery approach were incorporated to ensure that we continued to deliver at a level that would ensure all our quantitative targets would be fulfilled.

The project was also extended at this point by 12 months with approval from HLF, and the targets were increased by the appropriate amounts to accommodate this 25% extension of the timeline.

Qualitative Feedback

Qualitative feedback was gathered and evaluated on an ongoing basis throughout the lifetime of the programme to ensure projects were responsive to changing needs. Through continuous consultation with Neighbourhood Partnerships, Residents Associations and Park Groups, this enabled the project team to develop meaningful projects where the needs of the community were met and encouraged ownership of the project. Continuous feedback from beneficiaries ensured that activities were appropriate for a specific group or individual's needs and abilities.

Qualitative feedback was gathered by various means including:

- Continuous verbal feedback - documented
- Comment sheets at events - written quotes
- Twitter and Facebook feedback
- Volunteer supervision notes
- Video clips and sound feedback
- Video clips - stories
- Neighbourhood management teams and friends groups
- Group leader feedback



3 Project outcomes and success stories

The PAW project has been a tremendous success with 43,751 people engaged over its lifetime.

There have been numerous success stories and a wide range of groups that were previously difficult to reach have been engaged. A number of these success stories are highlighted below.

The People And Wildlife project aimed to inspire, support and empower under-represented communities to connect and care for wildlife and nature. Through consultation and feedback, opportunities were developed and delivered to ensure projects were relevant, supported the needs of individuals and ensured that communities took ownership and were at the heart of the project.

In this section we look at success stories against our project targets. The table below highlights these outcomes in a quantitative format.

<i>Place Targets</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Percentage of Target</i>
Doorstep site community projects	24	48	200%
Community-based walks/talks	183	216	118%
Community projects on Trust nature reserves	13	13	100%
Guided walks/workdays at flagship reserves	157	348	222%
New volunteer groups established	12	17	142%
Training events	24	27	113%
Interactive roadshows/workshops	113	212	188%
Virtual engagement opportunities	20	26	130%
Total number of activities	546	907	166%

Doorstep site community projects

We worked in many areas across the Avon area, which incorporates the unitary authorities of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) and North Somerset.

Across the region there are a great number of green spaces ranging from small play areas in schools or within housing estates, to large Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). For the purposes of our project these sites are known as 'doorstep sites', and incorporate all the sites (other than any of our own 35 reserves) where we have worked with the community. These doorstep sites have been used to support people taking practical action for wildlife, and to improve their neighbourhood for nature as well as providing spaces they can visit and enjoy. All doorstep sites were identified through consultation with that community, ensuring the sustainability and ownership of the project.

Doorstep site community projects

South Ward Wildlife Week

In conjunction with The Neighbourhood Management Team and North Somerset Council the People And Wildlife team organised a series of activities in South Ward, Weston-super-Mare.

We worked with Brandon Trust planting cowslips at Jubilee Park as suggested by the Friends of Jubilee Park. We planted bee and butterfly loving plants at Chocolate Garden with three local schools. Fairways, a pupil referral unit, came to record and interview the local residents as part of their course to produce a podcast.

Meadows were created at Coniston Green and Byron Rec with the Coniston Green Gardeners, community action team volunteers and junior wardens.

On 27 May we supported Neighbours Day at the Chocolate Garden, helping people plant up hanging baskets to take away, expanding on the work already done and spreading word about wildlife in Weston. We bought the plants locally from Westhaven School, which supports children with special needs, and that had come out during the wildlife week. On 28 May we attended another Neighbours Day planned at Jubilee Park; unfortunately due to poor weather we had to stay indoors, making animal masks, natural pendants and hedgehog stencilling.

The project was targeted with working on 24 doorstep sites across Avon. It worked across 48 sites, representing a delivery of 200% of target.



Doorstep site community projects

Badock's Wood

The Trust's People And Wildlife Project worked with volunteers from Airbus, The Conservation Volunteers and local residents to transform a small corner of Badock's Wood in Bristol into a wildlife pond. Badock's Wood is a wonderful wildlife haven and the only missing ingredient among the wildflower meadows, woodland and stream was a wildlife pond.



Over the four weeks of the project the volunteers managed to shift over 100 tonnes of clay (which came from Canford Cemetery) by hand. The pond required 30,000 litres of water and after installing fences, to keep out badgers and dogs, a dipping platform for local schools and families was installed. The pond is now complete and waiting for the wildlife to move in!



During the course of the project 216 community-based walks and talks were delivered against a target of 183 (118% improvement on target).

Community projects on Trust nature reserves

Community projects on nature reserves offered community groups the opportunity to get out of the city and explore nature.

Led by the project officers, opportunities ranged from guided walks, exploration activities including bush craft, to practical conservation days. All PAW targeted audiences were involved in practical days on reserves as taster days which were also linked with developing regular volunteering opportunities for under-represented groups and utilising these sites for training. The main audiences interested in regular work were people with mental health and learning disabilities and young people. A comprehensive breakdown of groups and Trust reserve sites is in Appendix 3.

Community projects on Trust nature reserves

Folly Farm

The Folly Farm kitchen garden project has provided an opportunity to establish relationships with local groups and individuals, in restoring and improving the Centre's kitchen garden. These efforts help attract wildlife whilst encouraging more people to experience being outdoors and working towards conserving it.

We've worked with Brandon Trust to help their clients to experience the outdoors at Folly Farm over the last two years. The emphasis has been on supporting them in managing an area of the kitchen garden through the full year, from sowing to harvesting and using the garden as a base to expand and explore the wider nature reserve at Folly Farm.

In preparation for the new growing season we've worked with Brandon Trust, mental health groups and disadvantaged young children to develop the kitchen garden further with new raised beds, improved composting facilities, more accessible paths, a soft fruit bed and a herb garden.



The project met the target of working on 13 Trust nature reserves (100% of target).

Community projects on Trust nature reserves

Community Action Team The Thursday Group

Every Thursday the People And Wildlife Team worked with a small group of people who were recovering from mental health issues. At the beginning of the project the group worked in the Trust's Brandon Hill nature reserve in Bristol, restoring the heathland and managing the woodland. Since then they have been travelling throughout the local area to work on nature reserves and supporting community projects. In 2012 they helped to install dormouse boxes at Goblin Combe, made by members of the Alzheimer's Society and local 6th form college students.



"I like making things that are permanent"

Overall 348 individual work days were spent improving and exploring wildlife habitats on flagship reserves against a target of 157 (210% improvement on target).

VOLUNTARY WORK by Dave Pearce

If you have some time to kill,
And you have the energy and will,
Then why not get a free ride,
Out into the countryside.
For a few hours of leisurely labour,
You will have an experience to savour.
Help to build a wall of stone,
You'll feel content and not want to moan!
Put your hand to planting trees,
And your heart will fill with ease!
Clearing grass, maintaining paths,
With new friends have many laughs!
So don't just sit and with boredom sneer,
With Avon Wildlife Trust volunteer!

Training events and new volunteer groups established

Training is important to empower people to gain confidence and skills. This section highlights some of the training we offered, including certified training such as the John Muir Award and the Diploma in Work-based Conservation and practical training sessions with regular volunteering groups and communities.

Training events and new volunteer groups

John Muir Award and Horizons

The John Muir Award is an environmental award that encourages people of all backgrounds to connect, enjoy and care for wild places through a structured yet adaptable scheme. The Award is not competitive but should challenge each participant. Taking part develops an understanding of, and responsibility for, a chosen wild place or places. There are four challenges at the heart of each John Muir Award: Discover, Explore, Conserve and Share.

Horizons is a course run by Bristol City College providing challenges to help develop young people with learning disabilities to become more independent, increase confidence and develop life skills. After working with them on a local green space in Hartcliffe, creating a wildflower meadow and planting spring bulbs, we agreed that they would benefit from undertaking a project as a group to pursue John Muir Awards.



The work towards the award was based at the Trust's Folly Farm nature reserve, and also included a conservation day at their local site at Hengrove Mounds, in conjunction with the Bristol City Council Wild City Project. Over four weeks they learnt about bushcraft, including lighting fires with flints, preparing and cooking a stew and shelter building.



They explored the woods listening to bird song, identifying flowers, looking at bugs and finished off by building an insect hotel. They were also given sound recording equipment to capture sounds in nature which included sheep, pigs, bird song, babbling brooks and even volunteers on a training day constructing a fence. These sound clips were then used to produce a music track at a local music studio.

Sharing experiences is an important part of the John Muir Award. A final day was dedicated to creating four story boards that were displayed at the Bristol Festival of Nature along with a video and music track (Appendix 8). The students also displayed the story boards at their college celebration awards.

Other groups of adults with learning difficulties have also benefited by working with the PAW project to pursue their John Muir Award.

“Being in the group has been great. Not only has it helped me get out of the city and into the countryside but I’ve also learned lots of new skills even gaining a qualification in Environmental Conservation. My tutors are really helpful and I’ve made some good friends.”

PAW volunteer

Training events and new volunteer groups

Level 2 Diploma in Environmental Conservation

During the lifetime of the PAW project numerous volunteers have worked with us to support the disadvantaged groups that we work with. We’ve encouraged and funded those volunteers that have been interested in pursuing a Level 2 Diploma in Work Based Environmental Conservation. Five of our volunteers achieved this qualification by undertaking practical conservation work every week with the PAW project for a minimum of six months. Participants write diaries of their experience and build up a portfolio of work.



The diploma was co-ordinated through Cornwall College and administered and assessed locally by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV formally BTCV) through work assessments, regular reviews and work observations.



“I’ve learnt loads during my placement and gained a lot of confidence.”

Sam Bentley-Toon, PAW volunteer

The project team delivered regular training and empowerment sessions, recording 27 training events (108% improvement on target) and training 422 under-represented people (175% improvement on target).

Training events and new volunteer groups

Practical Conservation Training

The PAW project teamed up with Osprey Outdoors, a community interest company which specialises in working with people who have their own challenges, whether behavioural, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, disability or illness. The group is based in Weston-super-Mare so this was an exciting opportunity for the PAW team to work on Trust nature reserves close to the town including Purn Hill, Hellenge Hill and Walborough. With structured training and direction provided by the PAW project, the group has constructed steps, kept paths clear of vegetation, pulled ragwort at Purn Hill and Hellenge Hill and carried out hedge laying using traditional methods at Walborough. Throughout the partnership the group has been provided with training to develop new skills and confidence so that they can continue to work on the reserves over the coming winter and beyond. The PAW project also provided some basic tools to allow them to continue this productive work.



“I enjoy coming out because I’ve learnt along the way not only the things I can’t do but all the things I can do now. It’s very empowering. It’s helping other people.”

During the course of the project 17 new regular volunteering groups were established with the support and assistance of the project, against a baseline target of 12, representing a 142% delivery against target.

Empowerment and community cohesion

It has been a vital component of the PAW project that we empower groups and communities so that they can continue to carry on after the project has ended.

By providing training and support during the project, many community groups are now able to continue to volunteer on Trust reserves or on their own community space without the support of the PAW team. These include Brandon Trust, Milestones, St Christophers, Swallow and many others.

Empowerment and community cohesion

Swallow

Midsomer Norton based charity Swallow supports people with learning disabilities and provides work skills activities to help to build confidence in their clients, so that they realise that they can contribute to the local community through positive employment.

The PAW project worked closely with the charity to design and implement a new wildlife garden at one of their respite residences in Midsomer Norton. All the work to transform the old garden was undertaken by the group which developed a small wildflower meadow, a wildlife pond, a composting facility and a raised bed vegetable garden.

The group continues to work at their site without the support of the PAW team.



"The Avon Wildlife Trust came along and offered help just at the right time, it's made a tremendous difference already and we can't wait to see the finished result."

Judy Hampshire, support worker for Swallow

Empowerment and community cohesion

Bird Box Bonanza

Over the autumn and winter months young people made house sparrow high rises, and wren and blue tit boxes as part of Young Bristol's taster days. To promote their good work and to highlight the issue of declining house sparrow populations, St Nicholas' Market on Corn street allowed us to display and sell the boxes over the Christmas period. This has been a simple but effective project engaging with young people.



Soundwell College's employability class, which supports young people with mild learning difficulties to gain skills for employment, participated in the bird box bonanza. The project has been ideal for this group as part of their course is to deliver a social enterprise project.



Not only did the group make the boxes, they were able to sell them to recoup money for materials. This enabled the college to run a sustainable project providing birds boxes throughout the year to help bird species and also promote the work of the Trust.

In total 212 interactive roadshows and workshops were delivered against a target of 113 (188% improvement on target).

Empowerment and community cohesion

Wild Weston

Wild Weston is a project that PAW has been working on after receiving initial matched funding from Quartet, followed by funding from North Somerset Council. During 2012 the focus of the project was to create meadow areas and other planting schemes across the ward in three parks and to link them all together to provide a corridor of colour and diversity for wildlife and for people.



The project worked with many groups in the Bournville and Coronation areas encouraging the community to take part in the enhancement work of their green spaces. In addition to the meadow creation work, activities included planting wildflower bulbs, constructing bird boxes, enhancing hedgerows by planting new whips in the gaps, laying hedges to encourage new growth in the spring and even installing kissing gates.

In order to make this a sustainable project to continue after the PAW project came to an end, there was a regular focus on encouraging and empowering individuals within the community through training and development leading to them becoming wildlife 'Champions' for their area. The 'Champions' continue to manage and maintain the improvements made to their green spaces and encourage others to volunteer, thus ensuring that momentum is not lost.

'Champions' include Osprey Outdoors who have learnt new skills as a group so that they are confident to work together to continue to undertake conservation work without Trust support.

The PAW project worked with the Bourneville Area Residents Association (BARA) to support a 12-week horticultural introductory course which has enabled local people to become 'Champions' by developing the skills to maintain Coniston Green and Chocolate Garden at the heart of their community.



"People who have been unemployed for a long time spend a lot of the time indoors looking at the same four walls or they go indoors to a doctor's surgery or to a job centre and they don't actually get to go outside of their own four walls and a lot of people on benefits haven't got any transport to go out into the countryside"

Osprey Outdoors Co-ordinator

There is a huge amount of evidence that proves that spending time outdoors in green spaces is good for our health and wellbeing. The observations of the PAW team added weight to this evidence. Providing activities that all audiences could get involved in played a key role in building community cohesion.

"I love coming out with Osprey Outdoors and helping out Avon Wildlife Trust as it helps me to feel like I am making a contribution towards life and I always loved wildlife, and wanted to learn new techniques such as dry stone walling, hedge laying and step building. I meet people that appreciate what we do as well as learning about wildlife and how to sustain it."

Osprey Outdoors Volunteer

"This is a public area so we've got the public walking by and we interact with and explain to them what we're doing so that's why we come out and do conservation"

Osprey Outdoors Volunteer

Empowerment and community cohesion

South Gloucestershire

As part of a long-term engagement project centred around South Gloucestershire and in particular the Yate Community, we've worked with a number of Young People's organisations (for example Brimsham Green 6th Form) linking them with Seniors to explore and take action for wildlife in their community, for example building and installing bird boxes.

PAW worked closely with the the Alzheimer's Society to make bird and bat boxes for installation in local parks including Yate Common and Ridgewood to coincide with Bat walks the project ran in the communities.



Empowerment and community cohesion

Jubilee Park Traditional Hedgerow

More than 80 volunteers came to Jubilee Park, a community park in the Coronation area of Weston-super-Mare to plant a hedgerow of native trees.

People turned out in force including Broadoak School students in Years 9 and 10, junior wardens, the Trust's Community Action Team and local families and friends. It was muddy and hard work but everyone seemed to spur each other on, digging and planting while also learning why native hedgerows are so important to wildlife in North Somerset. As a 'thank you' for their efforts, volunteers could take away one of the trees to plant in their own gardens to extend the project beyond the local park.

Mary Morgan, Project Development Worker from the Neighbourhood Management Team, said: "It is wonderful to see so many volunteers out helping the environment and supporting their local community park. Thank you to Avon Wildlife Trust for organising such a successful event and also a big 'thank you' to everyone for their efforts."

PAW officers were pleased and amazed by the turn out on both days, the weather was cold and the soil was very sticky and hard to work with. Some of the families and especially children quite liked being caked in mud!



Opportunity to improve access to nature

Supporting groups by online and virtual engagement played an important role in attracting new audiences to the Trust's work. Over the lifetime of the project we developed three Citizen Science online projects and a Wildlife Action Pack, updated and improved website pages and supported new audiences to access nature for the first time. A document listing virtual and online resources can be found in Appendix 4.

Opportunity to improve access to nature

Wildlife Action Pack and PAW Parcel

One of the challenges we faced during the project was the huge number of groups and organisations who needed a helping hand to get started. With only two staff and a small pool of dedicated volunteers we couldn't support all of them so we had to think of a way of reaching out to them without having to physically be with them. The solution we designed was two fold.

The Wildlife Action Pack is an online resource containing practical advice on wildlife gardening, pond and meadow creation and many other activities that groups could use to get started or to maintain their existing wildlife features. All the downloadable resources were short and succinct and designed to exceed no more than two A4 sheets.

The PAW Parcel is a pack that could be requested from the project containing resources to use at family outdoor events. It contained lots of activities for children including mask-making, wildlife journals, pencils, crayons, magnifying lenses as well as instructions on how to run activities and even a bird box for their local green space.

Both proved highly successful with groups ordering them regularly online or via the Trust's office.



Opportunity to improve access to nature

'Wild Days Out'

Connecting with the Black and Minority Ethnic Community

In October 2010 we concentrated on direct engagement with families from black and minority ethnic communities and organised three fun family days out. A mixture of guided walks, craft activities and bird box making were all available at Willsbridge Mill. We invited families to join our Apple Day and by providing transport we encouraged a further 60 people to the event. Somalian, Asian and Polish families and the Totterdown Mosque Sunday Group, all joined together to experience the three different events. We continued to work with this audience to ensure that our activities were accessible to all.



A short film is included in Appendix 8 (black and minority ethnic community day film)

Opportunity to improve access to nature

Wild Sparrows Website

We set up an interactive map and wild sparrows blog for people to comment about their sightings and experiences of house sparrows and what they have done to help protect them. This has led to many comments about how best to help sparrows as well as many discussions about the reasons for their decline. The site was unique in its approach and attracted entries from all over the UK as well as a few from sparrow lovers internationally.

Wild Podcasts

We produced our first ever wildlife podcast about a bus journey from the centre of Bristol to the shopping mall at Cribbs Causeway along a popular bus route. The team interviewed local people, including wildlife TV presenter Simon King who was brought up near the bus route. The podcast has revealed the hidden wildlife that is just beyond the bus window and attracted many listeners from across the city. We've also developed a podcast guided walk around the social, industrial and natural history of one of our popular urban nature reserves at Willsbridge Mill.



The project team developed 26 online and virtual engagement activities and resources against a target of 24, engaging a further 9,382 people.

4 Reaching beneficiary targets: quantitative assessment

How successfully has the project been at reaching its target beneficiaries?

<i>People Targets</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Percentage of Target</i>
Black and minority ethnic (deeper direct engagement)	540	556	103%
Low income (deeper direct engagement)	2,120	2,547	120%
Families with young children (deeper direct engagement)	8,727	10,520	121%
Young people (deeper direct engagement)	770	1,198	156%
Learning disabilities (deeper direct engagement)	489	3,173	649%
Mental health recoverers (deeper direct engagement)	253	551	218%
Under-represented and general audience engaged at events (basic engagement)	15,284	15,402	101%
People responding to online engagement activities (e.g. via species projects)	4,500	6,604	147%
Number of under-represented people empowered by training etc.	240	422	176%
Number of people empowered by using online resources (including under-represented people)	2,000	2,778	139%
Total number of people engaged (measurable)	34,923	43,751	125%

Black and minority ethnic (BME)

The project reached black and minority ethnic communities through targeted events and individual volunteering. We also reached black and minority ethnic groups through umbrella organisations such as Refugee Rights, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL college group) and established community groups living in areas of higher deprivation. Ethnic and religious groups included Somali, Polish, Muslim and Hindu.

We also reached individuals by attending events such as Refugee Week which proved successful in engaging with this audience.

After initial contact and activities many groups and individuals continued to attend our events. A higher proportion of attendance at events such as our Spring Watch and Autumn Watch events and Bristol Festival of Nature was apparent following our engagement with these communities.

Refugee Rights

Bristol is home to a significant number of refugees (55,400 or 13.5% of the population - Bristol City Council 2009). They tend to live in some of the most deprived and heavily urbanised parts of the city, yet many of them come from rural and agricultural backgrounds. The People And Wildlife team offered Refugee Rights the opportunity to visit Trust nature reserves, with transport and food and refreshments provided in exchange for some conservation work whilst on site. The idea was so popular that we had to provide extra mini buses on occasions to meet the demand. The participants were delighted to get out of the city for the day and explore the countryside and we learnt about how bees are kept in Kurdistan and were amazed at how much a group of Somali refugees knew about barn owls, but the highlight for us was the bread made on a cob oven by an Iraqi woman.



***Black and minority ethnic:
556 deeper engagement
3,840 basic engagement***

Low income

The PAW project covered a wide geographic area and four unitary authorities. It approached the low-income audience by working in areas of higher deprivation and working with people from deprived backgrounds taking them to locations away from their local neighbourhoods. Attracting this audience through organised events was achieved in partnership with neighbourhood management teams, housing association and residents associations.

There was often a greater risk of vandalism or anti-social behaviour, for example our first attempt at planting an area of parkland in a deprived area in Weston-super-Mare was unsuccessful as all of the plants were pulled out or stolen. We adapted our approach to include more community liaison and communication and to select projects where the damage risk was lower. For example practical activities on doorstep sites were confined to straightforward planting such as wildflowers, bulbs and sowing seeds. Providing free activities such as planting up hanging baskets to take home proved successful in attracting a wider audience to public events. This complemented, enhanced and widened the doorstep projects creating wildlife corridors.

Hartcliffe and Withywood

One of the first groups to approach us at the beginning of the PAW project was the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership which facilitates improvements in this large area of social housing on the southern edge of Bristol. With their guidance we organised a series of walks to find out what local people thought of their green spaces. Since then we have supported the community in the creation of meadow areas in Willmott Park and Pigeon House Stream, helped them build raised beds for food growing in the Withywood Centre and nest boxes to encourage house sparrows. Local residents, Headway, an organisation supporting people recovering from head injuries, the Teenage Parent Project, Hartcliffe and Withywood Ventures and CSV Play Rangers undertook activities in this community.

Feedback told us that some people in the area did not understand the value of nature and sometimes saw long grass meadows or natural hedgerows as untidy. We worked with the community organisations and local children to develop a simple leaflet to show how important these areas are for wildlife and encourage greater support for them.



Low income:
2,547 deeper engagement
3,660 basic engagement

Families with young children

We learnt in the first year of the project that the most effective way to engage with families was through targeted local community events. These tapped into the community directly, especially during school holidays and half-term weeks.

Explorative and craft activities were the most popular with this audience as many families have more than one young child, so occupying them as a group on activities is better than appealing to each child individually. Popular activities included bug hunts, craft activities, constructing bird boxes and planting plug plants. Families would learn about wildlife through interacting with the activity and other people - for example by making a habitat such as an insect home or a clay hedgehog. Promoting our Citizen Science projects also worked well with this audience.

Lawrence Weston Community Farm

During the second, third and fourth years of the project we worked closely with Lawrence Weston Community Farm on several family-oriented events. This allowed us to directly target a deprived community and link them up with our nature reserve at Lawrence Weston Moor. We conducted bug hunts, pond dips, woodland exploration days combined with sustainable natural activities to connect with a huge number of families in the area.



***Families with young children:
10,520 deeper engagement
7,070 basic engagement***

Young people (aged 16-25)

The project approached this audience through organisations such as Young Bristol and Vinvoled as well as local colleges. Taster days were facilitated through the above organisations which led to regular contact with various groups throughout the lifetime of the project.

Many regular groups were set up with young people including Horizons, a group of adults with learning difficulties, Connexions South West in Southmead, with ESOL and learning difficulty students at Speed Well, Ashley Down, Hengrove and Marksbury Road Colleges.

A main objective for Young Bristol was to find opportunities for young people to work in the community through volunteering to increase community engagement and cohesion. PAW offered groups activities to undertake practical conservation days both on Trust reserves and on doorstep sites.

Young people

We formed strong partnerships with Young Bristol and Vinvoled, supporting young people aged 16 to 25 to take practical action for wildlife. One activity was provision of a series of practical conservation days at the Trust's Folly Farm reserve. Over 40 young people who were not in education, employment or training and were from deprived areas of Bristol helped to re-establish a derelict kitchen garden, built a bird table sculpture and cleared a wildlife pond. All the groups worked hard and although some people were not enthusiastic about the work, it was clear that they were relaxed through being in that environment.

This approach was broadened out across the region with young people being referred to us from Bristol City Colleges, entry into employment providers in Bedminster and Yate as well Barton Hill Youth Inclusion Project, Teenage Parent Project, foster care groups and sheltered housing organisations. Tasks varied from coppicing and hedge laying, creating raised beds, planting wildflowers, gardening, making bird tables and nesting boxes, to planting trees and pond work.



"I think that Folly Farm is a great way for young people to have a go at volunteering and see the benefits of their work in a few sessions. They also get a chance to learn new skills such as woodwork or gardening and learn about nature. I think this is of great benefit to these young people because some of them don't usually get these opportunities. They can also put it on their CV as volunteering experience as well as getting a certificate for their hard work"

Carla Thomas, Young Bristol

One key lesson learnt with young people was that one size doesn't fit all. Not all young people enjoyed practical activities and getting dirty and some responded with 'I don't get paid for this why should I do it, this is proper work'. This response occurred numerous times with various groups although it was usually confined to certain individuals. This reaction normally occurred when youth organisations planned an activity with the Trust without consulting the young people.

To resolve this issue we decided to provide supplementary tasks which we felt would be more appealing such as documenting the event through photography and filmed interviews.

With this improved understanding and the feedback from the young people, new projects were developed that incorporated digital media as a way of engaging and attracting young people.

Two distinct projects were developed using digital media one was called 'Photomontage' and the other was 'Sounds of the Seasons'. The project found that groups would be more likely to engage in all activities when packages incorporated digital media as well as exploration and conservation.



**Young People:
1,198 deeper engagement
415 basic engagement.**

Adults with learning and physical impairment

There was a great demand by learning disability groups to provide practical outdoor volunteering opportunities. Two key organisations that the project worked with throughout PAW were Brandon Trust and Milestones.

The project provided weekly opportunities, mainly based at our two flagship reserves Folly Farm and Willsbridge Mill. These sites were chosen mainly because the necessary facilities such as disabled toilets and parking were available to ensure the comfort of those taking part in the scheme.

Accessing this audience was easier (as demonstrated by our delivery against targeting being over 600%). This was largely due to the organisations' structure to be able to access services readily and having similar targets and strategies to involve learning disability beneficiaries with the PAW project. The objectives of PAW were to get the clients outside and actively undertaking activities in the community, encouraging health and wellbeing, self-confidence and learning new skills.

The organisations we worked with always provided support workers, ensuring appropriate student to staff ratios and this helped us to provide a safe, comfortable and familiar outdoor environment which allowed all ability levels to get involved. This also meant that our project volunteers felt more confident to lead these groups. As learning disability groups have a wide range of abilities much staff time was needed to design and develop activities to allow everyone to participate but also to have enough variety to make it interesting for the more capable.



Learning disabilities St Christopher's School

The PAW project has been working with St Christopher's Residential School, a place that supports young people with complex learning disabilities. Activities were developed to provide these young people a chance to experience nature at Willsbridge Mill. They have explored the reserve, collected natural materials that birds might use to make a nest and focused on the different textures of plants. They were involved in weeding the wildlife garden, raking leaves and keeping paths clear of vegetation. More recently they helped construct a bird feeding station and insect hotel. Support workers are now confident to bring groups to Willsbridge after the PAW project has ended.

***Learning disabilities:
3,173 deeper engagement
267 basic engagement***

Mental health recoverers

The Community Action Team, a regular weekly group of conservation volunteers, was set up in October 2009 originally in partnership with the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership but other organisations such as Rethink also referred people. The ethos behind the group was to offer opportunities for people recovering from mental health problems but was designed to be an inclusive project to, steering away from labelling it as 'mental health group'. This worked extremely well with able volunteers naturally supporting the more challenged individuals making this a really cohesive team. Evidence showed that individuals, joined the group to get out of the city and into the countryside and some of the volunteers stayed with the group for the whole four years of the project.

Work was carried out on doorstep sites and Trust reserves, though for health and safety purposes individuals were only referred with low end needs unless accompanied by a support worker. Other mental health groups the project worked with included Headway, the Alzheimer's Society, Big issue vendors and Change.



Regular groups

We've had many regular groups over the years and some have been long-standing. We set up the Community Action Team in October 2009, which is still going today. It has always been a mixed ability group with many referred from the Wiltshire and Avon Mental Health Service. PAW officers have seen many volunteers come and go and move on to new opportunities. It has been a wonderful experience to see people grow, become more confident and make real friends. Everyone supported each other and everyone was on equal ground. I've seen improvement in skills, perseverance at difficult tasks and team work. A few have gained a diploma in Environmental Skills.



**Mental Health:
551 deeper engagement**

"Because I heard something a while ago off someone that said 'if you want to feel worthy do something worthwhile' and I feel that this is worthwhile and I get a lot out of it. I really enjoy it."

Under-represented groups and general audiences

Engaging under-represented groups at events became stronger every year that we made new contacts. Our first project event 'Earth Hour' took place in early 2009, a night-time experience of lantern making, lantern procession, bug hunts, storytelling and astronomy. Since then the project has delivered numerous events including Apple Days, Wassails, Bat Walks, Owl Prowls, Family events across the region and the ever-popular wildlife festivals Spring Watch and Autumn Watch at Willsbridge Mill. From exhibitors to storytellers, guided walks to music, artists to artisans, these events really capture the essence and enjoyment that nature can bring by linking fun seasonal wildlife activities with local communities. A breakdown of events and audiences can be found in Appendix 5.

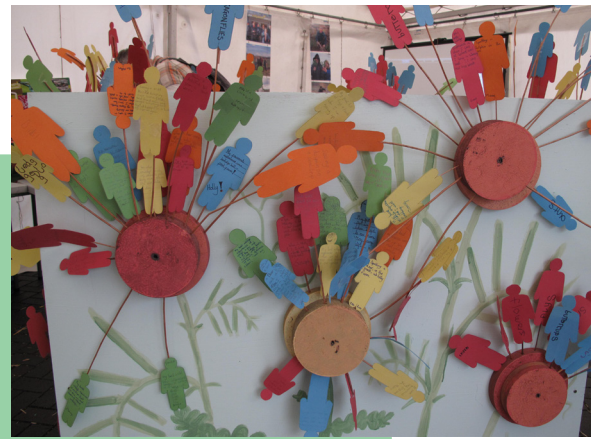


Autumn Watch

Autumn Watch is an opportunity for people to get out in the fresh air and enjoy the abundance of wildlife in Autumn. This year more than 400 people attended the event. With wildlife-themed activities and stalls, music and food. People also had the opportunity to experience and learn about owls, bees and hedgehogs with real live creatures there on site to promote the theme. In addition to the local community we always had a large turn-out from under-represented groups, including people with learning difficulties and people from BME communities.

The event was supported by volunteers from within PAW project and also from young people groups such as Vinvolved. Events like this are a great opportunity to allow different cultures and abilities to join together to celebrate the natural world. See Appendix 8 (Apple Day Film).





Bristol Festival of Nature

Throughout its life cycle the PAW project played an active part in the delivery of the Avon Wildlife Trust elements of the Bristol Festival of Nature. Our Citizen Science themes were promoted, for example we delivered a frog theme to link into our 'Log-a-Frog' project. Frog activities included frog masks with tongues to catch flies, bookmarks and badges.

In 2012 we had our very first People And Wildlife tent celebrating all the great stories and work that had been accomplished over the last three and half years of the project as our first step towards the end of the cycle. This was an exhibition of photographs, videos and illustrated the work accomplished by so many people. A participative art sculpture 'meadow memories' took shape over the weekend as the public shared their best nature experiences on a people petal to create flowers for the meadow sculpture.



Events:
15402 people engaged

Impact on communities: A qualitative assessment

How successfully has the project impacted on communities and beneficiaries?

Qualitative feedback from stakeholders and beneficiaries was essential to the development of the project. Information was gathered and evaluated on an ongoing basis throughout the lifetime of the programme to ensure projects were responsive to changing needs. Through continuous consultation with Neighbourhood Partnerships, Residents Associations, Park Groups and beneficiaries, the project team was able to develop meaningful projects where the needs of the community were met and which encouraged ownership of the project. Continuous feedback from beneficiaries ensured that activities were appropriate for a specific group's or individual's needs and abilities.

Feedback highlighted the success of the project in reaching and inspiring communities, but was not gathered for further analysis. This section illustrates the methods used to collect data and comments from stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Feedback from stakeholders such as the Neighbourhood Management teams, Park Groups and residents was predominately gathered at neighbourhood meetings such as Pride of Place where residents, public sector bodies and charities met to discuss priorities for the area. Discussions were documented through the minutes of the meeting. Further evidence was gathered through project partner testimonies.

Video documentation on specific projects were created throughout the lifetime of the project. These captured the essence of the PAW programme and illustrated how beneficiaries reacted and benefited from outdoor activities. A full list of video clips can be found in Appendix 8 with accompanying CD.

Feedback from beneficiaries was also documented on comment sheets, 'thank you' emails and by recording verbal comments to the team. Another indicator that measured the success of an event was the number of groups enquiring to be involved in more frequent and regular activities.

We also gathered evidence and feedback to make an assessment of the impact of being involved with the PAW project on peoples' lives. We asked beneficiaries to tell us about what they got out of being involved in nature and environmental projects and how these activities made them feel.

Where beneficiaries had communications issues, we discussed projects and benefits with their support workers. This process of gathering feedback demonstrated the huge impact that these projects have had on marginalised communities in terms of reducing isolation and increasing self esteem and confidence. Some of these discussions were recorded and can be found in Appendix 8.

The following pages outline some of the comments that best reflect that engaging with the natural world improves people's lives and strengthens communities. A full list of comments and feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders can be found in Appendix 6.

Quotes from young people in sheltered housing at St George's

"Really enjoyed myself. I did things today that I have never done before and I met other people who were visiting Folly Farm, who were disabled and I want to work with them too. I have only been at SGH [St George's House] for a few days and I have made friends already."

"I really enjoy it, I felt that I had done something useful and felt that I got stuck into the work with the others."

"I enjoyed the carpentry side of the day but I wasn't keen on the gardening as this wasn't really my thing, so I am not sure if I would do this again."

"I enjoyed working in a team to get a flower bed built. It has boosted my knowledge of how they are made and the craftsmanship that goes into this kind of work. I also work very hard in dipping and levelling out the ground for the flower bed."

Quotes from adults with learning difficulties from Milestones

"I like making bird boxes. I like Willsbridge they make all sorts of different stuff. I like it because it makes me feel good. I like coming here all the time. I want to come here more because I like it."

"I would be bored." In answer to the question: "What would you be doing if you weren't at Willsbridge?"

'Thank you' emails from PAW participants



Email from a careworker at Swallows, Midomer Norton

I am writing to thank you for all your help with our wildlife gardening project at Base House.

SWALLOW is a charity supporting people with learning disabilities. One of the projects that we run, the Work Skills Enterprise Scheme, gives our members skills and experience that they need in preparation for positive employment. As part of our horticulture project we are using the garden at Base House, our training house, to grow plants and vegetables. Projects like this that support disadvantaged groups in developing their confidence and social skills are critically important in our community.

The support that the Avon Wildlife Trust has given through their People And Wildlife Project has been invaluable. The skills and expertise, materials and manpower from Avon Wildlife Trust has helped transform the garden and made a tremendous difference to the project and to the lives of the members involved.

Nicky Tew

Email from a Neighbourhood Development Worker, South Ward

As the Neighbourhood Development Worker for Weston-super-Mare South Ward I regularly work in partnership with Avon Wildlife Trust to involve local people in parks and open spaces, to encourage an understanding of the local environment and a sense of pride and ownership. As part of the People And Wildlife project, Avon Wildlife Trust has supported local residents to organise planting events and events that share information and build up local people's confidence to engage in the natural world and in their local environment.

The area is one of multiple deprivation and there are many barriers for local people. South Ward is in the most 2% deprived IMD wards across England (<http://communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/indecies2010%20>). North Somerset also has the widest gap in life expectancy in the South West and a bigger gap than the England average. The difference between the most affluent 20% and the most deprived 20% of the population in life expectancy for 2007-9 was nine years for men and six years for women (Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2010 North Somerset).

I have been impressed with the way that Avon Wildlife Trust work to improve access for those in this 'hard to reach' community. By working with local groups such as the Bournville Area Residents Group and the Friends of Jubilee Park as well as the Junior Wardens, and supporting these groups to get involved and to become more active in the environment, the Trust has become part of the local infrastructure over the past four years, and has developed local knowledge and links that enable the work to be most effective.

Other infrastructure agencies such as North Somerset Council and the For All Healthy Living Centre and Alliance Homes, have benefited from the support of the Trust with allotment and park projects and with the development of the volunteer base in the Chocolate Garden.

The Chocolate Garden won the neighbourhood section of the South West in Bloom as a result of the involvement of volunteers, and the achievements of those volunteers supported by the Avon Wildlife Trust last year. Events included the hanging basket planting day, Christmas wreath-making as well as bulb and other planting events.

Mary Morgan

Email from Horizons Programme Coordinator

Avon Wildlife Trust facilitated a volunteering team day, organised by Young Bristol, in which my students participated.

The students, aged between 17 and 21 all have learning difficulties/disabilities. The chance to work with Avon Wildlife Trust colleagues to make a park in Hartcliffe a more beautiful public space, was a rewarding experience.

The day gave students a chance to practise all those individual and team skills that we've talked about and seek to develop on the Horizons Programme at college: personal challenge, team work, perseverance, problem solving, new skills, confidence building, pride in a job well done, working in adverse weather, working with new people, awareness of health and safety.

Being volunteers was a valuable experience of citizenship in their local community.

South Bristol has very little infrastructure and opportunities such as these to offer my students, and they can often feel disenfranchised even within their own communities.

Projects such as yours perfectly match the Ofsted requirements that we incorporate Every Student Matters outcomes into the curriculum.

Planting bulbs and seeds with you demonstrated these ESM outcomes: Being Healthy, Making a Positive Contribution, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving.

The opportunity has helped students to practise work skills that will underpin their eventual hope to progress into supported employment (ESM outcome: 'Achieving Economic Well-being').

I hope that Avon Wildlife Trust will continue to have the funds to offer similar experiences in the future.

Yours faithfully

Sally Seaman



Email from a worker at CSV Play Rangers, Hartcliffe

Kelly Bray from the Wildlife Trust has given us many hours of her time.

Across Hartcliffe and Withywood, we have had great opportunities to work with many children and young people of all ages, to produce wildflower gardens, and create small gardens of their own.

The support Kelly has given us, has meant we can involve more children and young people to create environmental spaces for the whole community.

As lead Play Ranger for Hartcliffe and Withywood, I find that having these resources available through the Wildlife Trust, has proven to be a very worthwhile and important part of our work, giving many children and young people more knowledge and understanding about the environment around them.

Karen Price



Email from a member of the Dundry Slopes Group, Hartcliffe

This project has been important for the Hartcliffe, Withywood and Dundry area, working to promote the importance of wildlife and improving the natural habitat of the area with local people and groups.

Over the past few years Avon Wildlife Trust have been able to bring information, equipment and expertise to our area, providing an opportunity for the local people and wildlife which I hope to see continue for many years to come.

Keith Way

Email from the secretary at Windmill Hill Community Orchard Association, Bedminster

I am writing on behalf of the Windmill Hill Community Orchard Association to thank you for your support and assistance with the orchard's 'Wild Weekend' community event we are holding on 20 May. Your suggestions for the 'baby bio-blitz' and the resources you have provided for our children's activities will help us make the event a big success.

As you know, we created the community orchard in the St John's Burial Ground, located on Cotswold Road, Windmill Hill. This walled garden suffered from fly-tipping and neglect over the years and had consequently fallen into misuse. We formed our association some 18 months ago to reclaim this space for the community by transforming it into a productive and vibrant community orchard.

Windmill Hill is an ethnically diverse area of Bristol. The people of Windmill Hill come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, with the area immediately surrounding the orchard ranked within the top 29% most multiply-deprived areas in England. One of the main aims of the Windmill Hill Community Orchard Association is to engage local people from all backgrounds in the creation and shared use of this community space, thereby fostering and strengthening community cohesion and engendering respect for our natural environment. Your assistance in planning this community event helped us achieve those objectives.

Yours sincerely

Nancy Carlton

Alzheimer's Society

"People with dementia and their carers in Bristol are socially excluded and isolated."

When asked what people get out of being involved, they told us:

"Improved social skills, sharing experiences, team building and improved feelings of self-belief, health and well-being."

People recovering from Mental Health Problems

The beneficiaries have given very positive feedback about how being involved with nature has benefited them. For example, a mental health recoverer in Weston told us:

"It helps being outdoors and makes me feel I am making a contribution towards life and you get to meet people who appreciate what we are doing."

Richard:

"I like fresh air and the work's enjoyable. Doing something, not lazing about."

When asked, "what did you do when Kelly was away?" he said:

"Nothing. Went outside in a little hut thing and had some fags. Watched television."

Trevor:

"Going out for the day meeting other people and doing something useful helps people to integrate socially with other people, especially older people (50s). Personally every week no matter what needs doing, just to be with nice people for the day. These days out make me feel good, give me a sense of achievement whenever I do something which will be semi-permanent for a few years. My only regret is that I did not try volunteer work before I actually did."

A worker for a mental health organisation told us:

"Most people enjoy the freedom of the outdoor environment and the confidence it brings to work with people from different backgrounds."



The PAW team

The project team was at the core of evaluating the changes the project had on people's lives.

"I have seen many beneficiaries grow in the lifetime of the project, more so when working with regular groups where quiet individuals would become more involved in the project, becoming more confident with their surroundings and increased participation in activities and more vocal within the team."

Joe McSorely, Community Action Officer

"We've worked with refugees whose faces light up at the experience of being in the countryside, the shy smile of those who conquer a task, pure elation at getting a spark from a flint, uninterested young people transform mood from cynical to astonished, the challenges, revelations, sharing stories and laughter. The People And Wildlife project was set up to engage and inspire people about nature and that is exactly what it has done."

Kelly Bray, Community Action Officer

The qualitative evidence shows that the PAW project has had a lasting effect on communities and beneficiaries. The qualitative data indicates the following outcomes:

- Providing experienced staff to support groups has been invaluable. Through ongoing training, group leaders have gained the confidence and skills to continue activities after the lifetime of the project.
- Many groups and beneficiaries still need longer-term support to enable them to work on outdoor activities independently. This shows that funding for future projects and skilled staff is still needed before community infrastructure and cohesion priorities are to be met.
- Being outdoors and volunteering offers opportunities to meet new people and socialise, reduces isolation and increases confidence.
- Volunteering activities offer opportunities to gain new skills in practical conservation and also in team work.



This section highlighted the success of the project in reaching and inspiring communities but measures were not put in place for further analysis. Future projects should take into account social indicator surveys on health and wellbeing, confidence and community cohesion. This will produce a greater understanding of potential or envisaged outcomes within the community. Therefore sufficient staff time to develop methods for measuring and monitoring beneficiary progress at the start and end of their involvement, should therefore be considered.



Methods of delivery: lessons learnt

What has been learnt about the methods used to deliver the project?

The People And Wildlife project aimed to inspire, support and empower under-represented communities to connect and care for wildlife and nature. Through consultation and feedback, opportunities were developed and delivered to ensure projects were relevant, meaningful, supported the needs of individuals and ensured that communities took ownership and were at the heart of the project. Some of the key lessons learnt are recorded below.

Adults with learning disabilities

Lessons learnt:

- These groups are easier to reach because of the existing support mechanisms and structures provided by the support organisations.
- Capabilities are hugely varied between groups and between individuals so tasks have to be well structured and clear. The need to gain feedback from beneficiaries on an on-going basis was paramount to ensure that the project was responsive to changing needs and learning styles.
- Flexibility is key as priorities and needs can change by the minute.
- Wildlife gardening and food growing are the best methods of involving this audience as the tasks are straightforward, can be performed physically by all of the group (though sometimes with the need for raised beds, wheelchair access and so on), and tasks can be tailored around repetitiveness and the annual cycle.
- Doorstep site activities included planting wildflowers, bulbs, seed sowing and light pruning and cutting back of vegetation using simple tools such as loppers and shears worked well.

Mental health recoverers

Lesson learnt:

- Evidence showed that individuals joined the group to get out of the city and into the countryside. The team ensured that individuals experienced as many nature reserves as possible.
- Participants did not want to be part of a 'mental health group'. The team adopted the approach of a mixed ability group but kept the group size small.
- Individuals wanted to gain new skills so the project covered a wide range of activities.
- Individuals enjoyed participating in conservation activities that involved building semi-permanent structures.

Black and minority ethnic

Lessons learnt:

- Reaching individuals through events such as Refugee Week was a very successful route.
- Techniques to engage with BMEs was time consuming. Initial conversations with group leaders were followed by discussions, then meeting the group to develop a package for their needs.
- Many had young children so family community days out were ideal.
- Most refugee groups had never heard of the Trust so this was a good group to engage with in terms of the charity's vision.

Low income

Lesson Learnt:

- Organising events in partnership with neighbourhood management teams, housing and resident associations and park groups shares the promotion and advertising and leads to more successful events.
- Further engagement, awareness and interpretation of the activities undertaken by local groups is necessary to maintain interest and motivation within the community.
- Promoting the positive changes from the projects for People And Wildlife is essential as it enables members of the community to understand and respect what others within the community are trying to achieve.
- Practical activities on doorstep sites are easier to manage if they are confined to straightforward planting such as wildflowers, bulbs and sowing.
- Evidence from feedback showed that by offering free activities that included making something which could be taken home attracted more people.
- When working in communities with high indices of deprivation, we should engage with that community before supporting practical action and ensure we promote the work in such a way as to show that it is led by the community.



Weston-super-Mare - Photomontage

Avon Wildlife Trust and Neighbourhood Management worked with young people to create a small butterfly garden. Unfortunately other people in the area did not understand or care who created the garden and so it got destroyed. This was very disappointing for those involved. After attending a meeting of keen local residents it was decided that a different approach was needed to engage other users of the park to understand the value that wildlife and green spaces can bring to people.

Art projects are a great way to engage and inspire people to explore nature. Over the summer Avon Wildlife Trust worked in South Ward to engage with families and young people about how they felt about their green spaces and parks.

Two outdoor sessions took place, one in Jubilee Park and one in Byron Rec. The sessions were centred around exploring local sites through the medium of a camera. The groups examined what was good and what was bad in their local park, explored the area with bug pots looking for fantastic different creatures and documented them all on camera.

Using special macro lenses, many young people could not stop trying to take pictures of ever smaller and more interesting bugs and the immense detail of plants. They found grasshoppers, butterflies, ladybirds, bees and many other 'creepy crawlies'.

A second session was held at a Barnardo's family day. All of the pictures were printed and everyone was surprised by the quality of the photos. While talking through their pictures, participants commented on what wildlife they had seen, what they liked about the park and selected the best pictures for their final photomontage.



Families with young children

Lessons learnt:

- Attending organised family events was the best way to engage with this audience.
- Explorative and craft activities were the most popular as many families have more than one young child, so occupying them as a group on activities is better than appealing to each child individually.
- Popular activities included bug hunts, craft activities, constructing bird boxes and planting plug plants.
- Families would learn about wildlife through interacting with the activity and other people, for example by making a habitat such as an insect home or a clay hedgehog.
- Making window boxes or hanging baskets to take away also complemented, enhanced and widened the doorstep projects and helped to create wildlife corridors.

The secret lives in long grass

The People And Wildlife project at Avon Wildlife Trust is a great way for people to get involved, explore and enjoy nature. We worked in Hartcliffe and Withywood to engage with families and local residents about the value of their green spaces and parks. Last year we worked with young people and volunteers to create small meadow areas. This was a great way to get people involved but those that did not take part have a misconception about why leaving areas of long grass in parks is important. Sometimes they just see it as a neglected overgrown area.

After attending a meeting of keen local residents we decided that an information leaflet would help other users of the park understand the value that meadows and longer grass can have for wildlife. Over the summer we joined the Big P weekly sessions for young people and families to play outdoors. We ran two sessions in two different parks encouraging people to explore the area and participate in a bug hunt to see what small creatures they could find.

They found grasshoppers, butterflies, dragonflies, ladybirds, bees and many other creepy crawlies. We then got the children to draw what they saw so we could use their images to produce an information leaflet to illustrate 'what lives in long grass' and the benefits it provides for other wildlife. The leaflet was distributed in local community centres, schools and around the local area. This will hopefully give a better understanding for users of the park on why it is important to leave some areas to grow wild.

A project like this not only provides information on the importance of caring for nature but more so through the participation of local people to produce it.

Kelly Bray, Community Action officer says "You don't always have to get your hands dirty to help protect wildlife. More often than not it is about understanding and appreciating what is already there. This was a simple project that will hopefully encourage more people to get involved and create further meadows in their local area."



Young People aged 16 to 25

Lessons learnt:

- Evidence showed that constructing something semi-permanent engaged this audience more, for example building insect hotels, bird boxes, paths work, wildflower meadows.
- Tasks needed to be fairly fast-paced and to show some visible improvement. Planting was less favourable due to its slow pace and time lag before clear results. Activities such as coppicing or clearing large areas of vegetation could immediately be seen as an achievement.
- Outdoor practical activities provided team work, increased confidence and learning new skills and the groups benefited hugely from supporting and working with each other much more than the team ever anticipated.
- Providing packages that incorporated digital media, but also exploration and conservation, the project found that groups would be more likely to engage in all activities.

Sounds of the Seasons

'Sounds of the Seasons' was an explorative project to engage young people to appreciate nature using the medium of sound and music. The project aimed to turn sounds of nature into urban beats.

We worked with a lot of young people and took them out to our reserves offering practical opportunities for them to get involved. Through my experience, not all young people like getting their hands dirty, but this doesn't mean that they cannot appreciate the countryside and the wildlife it supports. This is why the team came up with a sound project. Working in conjunction with Young Bristol we developed a sound project with two exciting elements. Using sound recording equipment from the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, working with sound recordist Steve Pelluet from the BBC, we developed a stimulating sound project.

Two groups were involved in the project where the first session involved recording sounds at Willsbridge Mill. As soon as the headphones were on it transformed the young people's attitude to the project and nature in general. All were thoroughly engaged and so many questions were asked about nature. It was perfect.

The second part of the project was at Orange Street Studios. Admittedly this was the main hook for most of the young people signing up but you would never know that if you were at Willsbridge Mill that day. Writing lyrics and using recorded sounds, the aim was to create a music track in one afternoon. It was a tall order but the young people were up for the challenge and the results were amazing. Video footage of the project can be found in Appendix 8.



Summary of lessons learnt:

- If we understand what our clients need and think, we can provide them with an experience that could become something they do regularly.
- If we can make engagement with wildlife easy, people will take part.
- People with specialised needs are quite capable of running their own projects once they have enough experience and feel confident in what they are doing.
- Longterm relationships with groups help to foster confidence within those groups that they can achieve things themselves.
- Working through existing service providers in communities enables us to network with that community and develop relationships quickly.
- Long-term relationships with groups is much more valuable than one-off experiences.

Bicycling Butterfly Sculpture

Families from Keynsham came together to celebrate nature and wildlife by producing a giant bicycling butterfly sculpture at Broadlands School. The wings of the butterfly were made up of bicycle wheels and other recycled parts. Each wheel has a viewing slot to watch creepy crawly animation. Over six weeks families took pictures and made videos of their natural surroundings, exploring the local pond, stream and school wildlife garden. Parents and their children worked closely together figuring out how to build the sculpture and create the animation and it was this teamwork that made the sculpture so successful. This deep involvement enabled the young people to really understand complex issues like sustainability while discovering nature too.



Parent Janet Morris said:

"It makes you realise what is on your own doorstep and what is under your own feet."

Her son Aaron, aged 15, added:

"I enjoyed it all from day one - we kept busy and really enjoyed the pond visits!"

7 Resources needed: lessons learnt

What has been learnt about the level of resources needed to deliver the project?

This section details the level of resources needed to deliver the project and the lessons learnt. It has to be noted that the original HLF bid was for a three-year project but with discussion with HLF the Trust was able to extend the programme for a fourth year. Below highlights the reasons why this was able to happen.

Outlined in the HLF application the Trust developed a project network offering a series of 'pathways' from low to medium and high-level involvement. The key feature of this three-tiered approach would be its flexibility and capacity to enable audiences to move through the three stages. Participants could engage at any level or begin from the lowest level and progress through to the highest level, a transition from connection to participation.

Right from the start evidence showed that there was huge demand for groups to be involved in practical volunteering. In particular adults with learning disabilities and young people, because their organisation's aims and objectives fitted well with our own objectives. Therefore more conservation days were offered and more regular groups were established, which meant more staff time was required for project delivery.

Another strand that needs to be mentioned is that many doorstep sites were in areas of higher deprivation, mainly in parks and other public spaces. Local residents and councils wanted to see more people enjoying green spaces and enhancing them for wildlife transforming parts of amenity green spaces into colourful wild havens. As mentioned in Section 5, many areas were subject to vandalism. Improvements were limited to subtle activities such as meadow creation and bulb planting and it was found that leaflets were preferred to interpretation boards. These factors kept project costs low.



Online resources and digital media

The Community Communications Officer played a vital role in the success of the project. The post supported the project by providing innovative and attractive design work for leaflets, posters and resource packs, a website including resources, links and blogs. It enabled the Trust to explore new social media options such as Facebook and Twitter. The post enabled the project to attract new audiences through digital media and to capture stories and events on film.

Three Citizen Science Projects supported the Trust to expand and connect new audiences providing an opportunity to reach a greater number of people. People could put their sightings online and see them collated with other sightings on an interactive map. Comments and stories were also shared. This information was then collated and analysed to produce a report for each project and data was sent to the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC).

We were frequently contacted by groups who wanted us to give help and advice in developing their wildlife project or attend local community events. We were unable to support all of them and many of them were not target beneficiaries of the HLF-funded project. To help everyone, we developed a Wildlife Action Pack and the PAW parcel.

The Wildlife Action Pack included practical advice on wildlife gardening, pond and meadow creation and other types of practical action. It also included sections on funding and promotion and complemented face-to-face training courses.

The PAW parcel contained family activities, including mask-making, a games booklet, wildlife journals, pencils and much more. This enabled community groups to deliver wildlife related activities at their own local events.

Both the online and virtual resources produced by the Community Communications Officer enabled the project to reach a wider audience and assisted the team to deliver its targets. A communications report can be found in Appendix 7.

Lessons learnt:

- Using different media such as photography and art can be a great stepping stone for new audiences to be inspired by nature.
- We can facilitate communication and engagement through use of the Internet and digital technology.
- Future projects should incorporate an experienced digital designer.

Transport

Purchasing a minibus was vital to the day-to-day running and delivery of the project.

Lessons learnt:

- Free transport to some events and activity days is critical for cash-strapped groups and essential for the refugees.
- A transport budget needs to be considered as it's not always the most convenient solution for the leader to be the bus driver.
- People will explore wild spaces if the basic barriers, like transport or providing a guide, can be overcome.

On-site facilities

Willsbridge Mill and Folly Farm are centres on two of our flag ship nature reserves and were vital to attracting under-represented groups. Providing indoor facilities, toilets and comfortable surroundings with accessible paths, these centres enabled the project to successfully engage with many audiences especially BMEs and adults with learning disabilities.

Lessons learnt:

- New audiences were more likely to come out on our activities if they knew there was an indoor space.
- Disabled toilet facilities were imperative for many of the groups involved in the PAW project.

Staff and volunteer resources

Hands-on delivery takes up a huge amount of resource. Delivering to a wide range of people requires highly skilled staff who can switch between different audiences and deliver to their needs quickly. Volunteer placements experienced a major learning curve.

Lessons learnt:

- It is very labour intensive working with groups with specialised needs, and requires time to adequately understand.
- Learning disability groups have a wide range of abilities and thus necessitated a large amount of staff time to differentiate tasks so all could participate.
- People recovering from mental health issues require lots of support and direction and with no support workers, this group was more challenging to manage and necessitated the need for volunteer placements.
- The majority of volunteer placements did not feel confident to lead mental health groups alone so it became time-consuming for staff.
- Delivering weekly regular activities limited days to develop new initiatives.





How well has the project been managed?

As a medium-sized charity, we have the organisational infrastructure to both deliver and provide back office support to projects of significant scale and ambition.

Management and support

This project was overseen and managed by the Trust's Director of Community Programmes, someone with over 20 years of engaging diverse communities with the natural world.

The director managed the strategic direction of the project and supported the team in providing access to networks and contacts to engage target beneficiaries. Individual project activities were developed within the community with support and involvement of relevant local organisations.

Budget management

The project budget was managed by the Trust's Director of Community Programmes with support from the Director of Finance and other staff. The Trust used effective financial management procedures to ensure projects are value for money and budgets are adhered to. Ultimately the project delivered slightly within the designated budget.

Managing risks

Risks were evaluated through a strategic project risk assessment log produced by the Director of Community Programmes.

Risks, such as health and safety, were managed through the adoption of the Trust's policies and procedures and delivered in the field by the project team. Standard health and safety assessments were in place throughout the project and all staff and placement volunteers were CRB checked.

Staff management

The Trust recruited experienced staff for this project. Detailed job descriptions were used to enable the evaluation of applicants through an interview process. A stringent recruitment and equal opportunities policy is in place and ensured the recruitment process was fair and that the most appropriate candidates were appointed.

All staff had regular appraisals so that training and knowledge could be reviewed and staff development and training agreed. Volunteers were also carefully inducted into their roles and their training and support needs were identified and managed, so they could be effective and feel fulfilled.

The Team

The HLF grant enabled us to bring together a team of people who know how to support different groups to become more involved in the natural environment.

Kelly Bray and Joe McSorley are both experienced community development workers and their roles as Community Action Officers enabled the project to really work with a much broader range of people than ever before. Kelly is especially experienced at working with vulnerable people while Joe has a natural ability to inspire young people. Caroline Dalq, the Community Communications Officer, worked to ensure the project was communicated to the widest possible audience and was responsible for developing ways of using new media to inspire people about nature. Steve Micklewright, the Director of Community Programmes, managed the project and brought a background in communications and community empowerment to the team.



Kelly Bray



Joe McSorley



Project response to internal and external changes

In 2010 the team evaluated the project and produced a half-way report. The findings showed that the programme had steered towards more delivery due to the huge interest from groups wanting to volunteer on practical activities and the need for smaller scale doorstep projects. This left a gap in budget spending allowing the programme to extend its activities for a further year. This enabled the team to increase its number of audience targets, deliver more innovative projects and provide extra time to support and train groups, assisting the sustainability and legacy for activities to continue after the lifetime of the project.

The financial climate in the UK had a huge impact on the project effecting the ability to secure matched funding. Assurances were originally made in the project design phase from the four Unitary Authorities to provide the match-funding for the project. These organisations were hit hard with the recession meaning they could no longer honour their original commitment. We were however able to secure £42,935 matching funding and would like to thank the following funders.

The Dulverton Trust	The Verdon-Smith Family Charitable Trust
Quartet Community Foundation	Garfield Weston Foundation
South Gloucestershire Council	North Somerset Council
Snowline	Airbus
Bristol City Council	
Kings Forest and The Chase Forum	

There was a huge uptake of individuals wishing to be directly involved in practical volunteer days, which highlighted the success of the project and its direction. Over the lifetime of the project a staggering value of volunteer time totalled £275,075. The original volunteer time target to be claimed was £44,175. The Trust was able to claim a further £22,318 in volunteer match-funding bringing the total claimed to £66,493.

The financial climate also impacted upon staff resources from other partner organisations. Staff support that had been available for certain project areas often ceased with no replacement. Cuts and restructuring often meant that new contacts had to be made and new relationships built, slowing the delivery and progress of the project.

Charitable partner organisations also suffered from the financial climate with many programmes folding due to funding shortages. This meant that many regular groups that the project had developed relationships with unfortunately stopped, making sustainable project aims harder to reach. Staff cuts meant that organisations such as learning disability service providers found it harder to provide the right level of support workers to participate in activities and many scheduled events were cancelled. Two years into the project there was also a noticeable decline in young people services.

10 Summary and key messages

Funding from Heritage Lottery Fund has allowed the Trust to deliver an innovative project which engaged audiences across the region from groups that had previously been under-represented in its work. Over the lifetime of the project 43,751 people were engaged in this diverse, wide-ranging and exciting project.

The project offered regular volunteering opportunities both at Trust reserves and at local community green spaces, providing support and training to new audiences. It provided exciting workshops and exploration days, engaging groups to connect with nature. The project developed activities to suit the needs of beneficiaries to ensure projects were relevant and sustainable and utilised digital media to open up new avenues for engagement.

The qualitative feedback from the project showed a significant increase in the self confidence, social skills, health and well-being of participants. This was particularly apparent among adults with learning disabilities and mental health recoverers, especially those attending regular volunteering sessions. The training and support offered by the team have inspired groups and individuals to continue activities after the life of the programme.

Key lessons learnt

- When working in communities with high indices of deprivation, it is important for the project to be seen and promoted as community-led. Deeper engagement with the community is necessary before supporting practical action.
- Using different media such as photography and art can be a great stepping stone for new audiences to be inspired by nature. Providing packages that incorporate this media with elements of exploration and conservation means that groups are more likely to engage in all activities.
- Many groups and beneficiaries still need longer-term support to enable them to work on outdoor activities independently. This shows that funding for future projects and skilled staff are still needed if community infrastructure and cohesion priorities are to be met.
- To improve people's health and well-being, ensure they have better access to a natural environment on their doorstep. It is essential to work with that community for a sustained period to see real change. Therefore recommendations should be to either seek longer-term funding or to reduce the geographic areas of work.

Target audience	Direct *	Basic*	Total
Black and minority ethnic community	556	3,840	4,396
People living in areas of higher indices of deprivation	2,547	3,660	6,207
Families with young children	10,520	7,070	17,590
Young people aged 16-25	1,198	415	1,613
People with learning or physical disabilities or mental health issues	3,724	267	3,991
Under-represented and general audiences engaged in training and online		9,804	9,804

* Direct - deeper direct engagement

*Basic - engagements at events and online

Key messages

There is a market for nature engagement activities

The People And Wildlife programme had a target to engage with 34,923 people. In fact the final total of engagements was 43,771. This illustrates that there is a demand and need for nature-related activities.

Programmes should provide a variety of opportunities

By providing a variety of enjoyable and flexible opportunities, all audiences can be catered for and activities can be kept interesting, facilitating retention and sustainable projects.

Some groups are easier to reach than others

In spite of the financial climate, and its impact restricting small organisations, staffing and financial resources, there was an overwhelming uptake for conservation volunteering from organisations supporting young people and those with learning disabilities.

Small scale projects go a long way

The PAW programme was able to extend the project by a further year due to an under-spend in the project. This was because people wanted small-scale community projects. This highlights that delivering effective simple activities using smaller budgets has a major impact on engaging communities.

Leadership is key to co-ordinating projects

Many groups continue to engage with outdoor activities beyond the life of the PAW programme. This is still only a small proportion of the entire project. Therefore funding is still needed to offer similar projects. There will always be a proportion of individuals and groups that will find it very hard to independently lead their own activities.

Provide longer-term projects

Projects that focus on small geographical areas over many years build stronger relationships with that community and improve the success and sustainability of projects.