

Hallr Wood

Annual Report May 2023

Central Somerset Outdoor Learning Partnership

Registered Charity Number 1151284

<https://wilderwoods.org>

Hallr Wood has continued to be used every day of the week during term time and often in the school holidays and at weekends too.

Holiday and weekend activity has included a LANTRA Tree Safety course, Advanced First Aid for the Outdoors (both offered free to Kim at the school), Using the outdoors to support young people with Autism, Ecotherapy for Mental Health professionals, and a Nature module in level 4 Counselling course.

We are also soon going to be hosting a weekend survival camp for the Wells Explorer Scouts.

Regular Groups:

Blue School SEN/ nurture group

The Blue School has been sending groups of students with additional needs and/ or poor mental health to us, since 2011. The same students can attend once a week for up to 3 years. Having one day a week to spend time outside, learning practical skills, green wood work, camp cooking, crafts and woodland conservation, can have a very beneficial effect. They also often improve their communication and social skills in a smaller group and develop strategies to help manage sensory and other issues which cause difficulties and meltdowns. They finish every summer with an always unforgettable overnight hammock camp.

Avalon School

Sessions are run weekly for students from Avalon School as part of the Wild Music Project. The cost to the school is heavily subsidized by a grant from Glastonbury Festival.

Individual Referrals We continue to get requests but have decided that the administrative burden of doing this work is far too much so it is unlikely that we will resume this provision unless things change.

EHCP participants

We have been supporting a young man through all his tree climbing and surgery qualifications since 2019. He is now ready to get a part time job, in addition to carrying on helping us with our woodland management.

Adult Social Care

We support a few other young adults who came originally to us through schools and Pupil Referral Units. Sometimes this is informal and other times Adult Social Care funds them.

St Dunstan's

We have been running a pilot project for St Dunstan's School for a mix of year 7,8 and 9.

Other regular users of the wood:

Charlton's Pre-school – Kim regularly brings the Pre-school on Tuesdays, using their own Squirrel camp at the top of the woods. Our students help them carry their bags up.

Charlton Mackrell Primary School – Kim has several reception children every week on Thursdays, to Squirrel Camp.

During the Summer Term, every class from the school came for sessions, I think they have about 90 children!

Bridgwater PRU The PRU is still using the site regularly for KS2 children on Fridays independently.

Hallr Wood Singing group This began as a support for people during the pandemic but has continued to be offered on some Sundays.

Wednesday Work Days and Care of the Woods:

We open the woods on Wednesdays to general volunteers and some of the young adults with additional needs who we support. We have a small group of early retired men who enjoy helping us with repairs and projects. They support each other and often request to keep coming in the holidays too!

They have helped us with various projects including installing the hand pump for the bore hole which Grove so kindly funded. Although we can't use it for drinking without buying more complicated filter systems, it has proved a fabulous help for our general camp water supplies for washing up etc. The children enjoy pumping it up by hand into buckets to take to the camp. It also gives them a valuable chance to reflect on how people manage without access to water on tap.

Community Volunteer Days; We have run several Sunday volunteer days, one in December, January and March, mostly to support our D of E volunteers. We planted a substantial number of additional whips, silver birch, hazel and a few hornbeam.

In the Spring Term we had external tree surgeons in on Wednesdays to tackle a few trees and a roadside ash, which are too specialized for our team and woodland apprentice. This included pollarding the very large ash tree going up to Squirrel camp which we have been concerned about for some years, due to signs of lightening strike and exterior fungal growth.

Summer Holiday 2022 Activities:

August 2nd^h Inclusive Woodland Picnic and Playday

We delivered a day of mixed activities to 18 children and their carers/ families with financial support from the Somerset Inclusion Team.

We had very good feedback.

Big Green Week Activities

Cabinet of Living Cinema September 24th Red Turtle screening- about 50 people attended this magical and very special evening

Hallr Wood Open Day Sunday September 25th 2:00-6:00

We had a lovely, well attended event (we reckon it was about 100 adults and 60 children plus our team of helpers) with a singing workshop from Dora and the usual wonderful green wood working demonstrations, plenty of activities and nets and swings plus a stall from Ben the young photographer from the village. The café was run once again by our ex-D of E volunteer Keeva – and her mum Kate. The cakes were amazing. Thanks also to Iain and Jane on the registration desk and everyone else who turned out to help plus Nathan and Caelia who provided music. A first for us and a real highlight of the day, was the horse and trap rides down from the car park. Thank you to Lisa and Adam! Funds raised mostly helped cover costs of the day but have also been used to buy Autumn bulbs and other incidentals.

26th October Punkie Night; We provided an opportunity for friends and family members to come to the woods to celebrate 'Hallrween' and Punkie Night.. There were 33 children, many of them with additional needs. This was a spectacular evening of activities and fun.

Support from Grove Developments: Many thanks to them for all their support for our water project which was not without difficulties and complications. We are so grateful to them for their patience and interest and hope to invite them to a celebration in the woods soon.

Glastonbury Festival Stewarding Team donation: Once again a stewarding team have chosen to support our work at Hallr Wood. Many thanks to them for this support for the Wild Music Project.

Finances: For many years now, we have had regular schools and clients who pay for our educational services, so we have become completely financially self reliant.

It is always our policy to be non profit making and we provide our services at cost. We also ensure that no one is turned away because of low income. Independent users of the wood, including the Charlton's Preschool and School, make nominal donations which help us buy materials and resources and cover costs of maintenance etc.

Our next OPEN DAY is on Sunday 10th September 2:00-6:00pm

Deb Millar 12/05/2023

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