

STROUD VALLEYS PROJECT

Enriching lives transforming places



Welcome to the Spring / Summer 2017 edition of our Newsletter and Events Guide. We hope you like it and find items to interest you.

Outdoor learning about Nature

Our exciting new project, **Wild Classrooms** aims to focus and support outdoor learning. It is based around getting children outside to



observe and experience seasonal changes and /or cover elements of the science curriculum. It can also be easily adapted to a more sensory approach to experiencing nature and/ or act as a stimulus for creative projects. Every participating group gets a copy of our original A2 full colour monthly wildlife calendar, a class set of A4 children's notebooks, Teacher's/Leader's notes and up to three visits from Tamsin, our Wild Classrooms Project Officer.



Using the calendar as a guide, the idea is that the children can go out each month or even once a term and look for any changes that they can observe or cover elements of the curriculum. They then record their findings in their notebooks. This can be as formal or informal as the teacher/leader chooses and can include drawings, poems, pressed flowers or photos. Anything, in fact, that records the children's experience of their changing '**Wild Classroom**'!

Tamsin will come in for up to three visits during this time, either to lead wildlife observations or to teach seasonal curriculum linked activities. Then at the end of the year, she will come for a final visit and look at the children's books and stamp the final page to show that they have completed the project.

For more information please contact Tamsin, Wild Classrooms Project Officer at tamsin@stroudvalleysproject.org or ring 01453 753358.



Children's Day at Stroud Farmers' Market



We are starting our second year of working with Stroud Farmers' Market running their children's activity days. We ran our first one of 2017 in March and were visited by over a hundred children. The activities included our now familiar taster trail, in which children go around the market sampling the delicious food on offer, as well as decorating cotton carrier bags and taking home tasty recipes. We will be at the Farmers' Market again on 17 June and again in September (date yet to be confirmed).



For more information contact Richard at 01453 753358 or tamsin@stroudvalleysproject.org

Project News

Wild Wednesdays

We will be running wildlife based family activities every Wednesday morning for four weeks in August.

The sessions are
Week 1 Minibeasting;
Week 2 Pond dipping;
Week 3 Pond dipping at a different site;
Week 4 Family walk.

The sessions are designed so that families can pick and choose how many they attend - they can come for just one or sign up for all four and get a free copy of our Wild Classrooms notebook. Each Wednesday will be at a different location around central Stroud and will be a great way to get out and enjoy a wild summer.

For more information please contact tamsin@stroudvalleysproject.org.



Family Walk
Photo : Deb Roberts

Making green spaces work for wildlife

Over the last year we have been working for a number of organisations and businesses; big and small, individual households, Parish Councils and Stroud District Council on building up contract work. The work and income is 'unrestricted' meaning that the income can go purely to the running of SVP rather than to any particular funder's objectives.

In the past few months we have been working on a number of contracts, once a month working at the gardens at Rodborough Court, once Randall and Payne solicitors now owned by Omnitrack, pond restoration work for Eastington Parish Council (see before and after picture below) and monthly at Rowcroft Medical Centre, Stroud.



Before



After

We hope to continue working with all of these organisations as they have given us the opportunity and chance to broaden and expand our unique work.

For further details about how we may be able to help you, contact us on 01453 753358.

Five Ways to Support Us Without Paying a Penny!

Recycle your old mobile phones and ink cartridges

Drop them at our eco shop and we will receive a donation towards our work.



Recycle jewellery, foreign bank notes, coins, stamps, gadgets:

Unwanted jewellery, old/new UK and foreign banknotes, coins and stamps, gadgets: sat-navs, game consoles and games, tablets, video cameras, iPods and laptops of any age.



Shop on-line to using these sites

Every time you shop on-line you can generate free donations to us. You will need to register in order that the donations come to us. Click through to the store via one or more of the sites below. In particular, if you are making big purchases like holidays or house insurance, please consider using these sites:

www.thegivingmachine.co.uk

www.easyfundraising.org.uk

www.givingabit.com

www.giveasyoulive.com

Energy switchovers:

If you are thinking of switching to green energy, we are linked to Good Energy and Ecotricity, both of which give us a donation - but you must tell them you wish us to benefit. If you switch or are intending to switch, please let us know so we can help to ensure we get the donation.

Sign up with the Co-Operative phone and broadband

This is competitively priced - sign up through our charity and we will receive a £20 bonus as well as 6% of your bills at no extra cost to you. Ring them on 01608 434040 quoting reference **AF0134**.

For more information on any of the above, ring Carolyn at our office: **01453 753358**

Project News

Caring for the Cows

We are currently working on a project to help conserve Rodborough Common, working with Stroud District Council, National Trust and Natural England (Rodborough Common Conservation Programme).

Both Rodborough and Minchinhampton Commons are Sites of Special Scientific Interest as they have such a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Rodborough Common is a particularly important European limestone grassland site and receives a higher level of protection as a 'Special Area of Conservation'.



Photo : Deb Roberts

Thousands enjoy these beautiful Commons. However, increasing numbers of visitors could have a damaging effect on this precious environment. Stroud Valleys Project is working with its partners to help raise public awareness of the things we can do to help take care of the Common and we'll be launching a leaflet to advise people visiting the Commons of some simple steps they can take to help protect them.

The cattle that graze the commons between May and October play an essential part in maintaining the conditions in which our wildflowers thrive. To celebrate Marking Day, the traditional day that the cows return to the commons, we are working with the National Trust and local organisations to arrange a day of activities for all the family. There will be a chance to learn about local history and wildlife and there will be a talk by butterfly expert Matthew Oates. The event will take place around The Lodge on Minchinhampton Common on 13 May. Drop by between 11am – 3pm.

On 17 June at 2pm there will be a walk on Rodborough Common with Stroud Valleys Project and the National Trust Ranger for the commons. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the plants and butterflies to be found on the commons and the conservation work being done to protect them.

We will be forming volunteer groups to engage in further work to help conserve the commons this summer. One group will help to distribute the 'Caring for the Commons' leaflet and chat to people about dog walking routines. Another group will be conducting surveys of the flowers and grasses along footpaths on the commons.

If you are interested in volunteering to help with the Rodborough Common conservation project then please contact us.

For more information contact Stroud valleys Project on 01453 753358 or info@stroudvalleysproject.org

Hedgelaying and clearing at Cam

Work at the Rackleaze wetland site has continued with volunteers involved in the annual comfrey cutting, this year for the first some comfrey areas cut by the scythe as can be seen here.



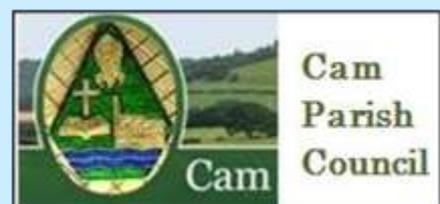
This annual management helps us to keep control of the comfrey that if untouched would out compete other wildflowers at the wetland.

The group of volunteers over the past few sessions have been laying an old hedge line that links between an another hedgerow and the field pond on-site.

SVP would like to think that visitors to the site respect its space and enjoy this beautiful wildlife oasis, I have sadly had to be in contact with both the Stroud District Council Neighbourhood Wardens and the Cam Parish Council in regard to the continuing problems of dog fouling and littering.

However, on a much brighter note I intend to set off this spring with a number of sessions working along at the potential water vole habitat, a small piece of riverbank edge land that we help to maintain adjacent to Rackleaze and the Sundeala factory.

For more info about our work are doing at the wetland site contact Richard Lewis on



01453 753358.

Project News

Supporting people and partnership working

The GEM Project (Going the Extra Mile) is a unique partnership of community focused organisations. The GEM organisations have committed to work together to help people overcome barriers and improve their lives. Navigator Developers within the GEM project offer 1:1 support to help people make the most of the many talents they have, and we are very pleased to host the Navigator Developer role at Stroud Valleys Project.

'It means a great deal for our charity. The GEM project has given us the time and resources to enable us to get to know our volunteers just that bit better. It has given us the time to network with other charities and find out about other services that are available to help them' said Julie Wickham (Navigator Developer)



Wall before



Wall after

Thanks to the Extra Mile Fund we have recently been able to send two people on a Cotswold Stone Wall course, run by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, studying for their Llantra level 1 certificate in Cotswold stonewalling. This will not only help them, but will help our charity in the outdoor work we do. Both volunteers have offered to help teach others through our work.

One volunteer said, 'It was well worth doing and very satisfying. I would recommend it to anyone. It's a great way to keep the old traditions alive. Thank you to GEM and Stroud Valleys Project for making this possible'.

This project is a partnership of community focused organisations, managed by Gloucestershire Gateway Trust on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council. The GEM Project is jointly funded by the Big Lottery Fund and European Social Fund.

If you or someone you know may be interested in this group, or for further information, contact Julie Wickham or Clare Mahdiyone on 01453 753358 .



Benchmarking for Queen Elizabeth II Field

Since we began our conservation work at Queen Elizabeth II Playing field in Dudbridge back in September 2016, we have been very busy! We have mainly been working on the pond area, which was gradually being taken over by brambles,



Volunteers making the mortises for the mortise and tenon joints of the new bench

alder and bulrushes. The area has now been completely cleared, leaving only a few brambles as a hedge because they are so beneficial for wildlife. We cleared some of the bulrushes from the pond, put in a dipping platform, planted a native hedge around the fence and four local variety apple trees. In the autumn we planted bulbs and wildflowers on the bridge bank which are now just in flower and will be carrying on this spring with native wildflower plugs. Over the winter we have been working on a green oak bench for the pond area which we hope to install in May.

We go out once a week, so if you live near the site and have some spare time on a Tuesday, why not come along and join us? Volunteering is a brilliant way of not only practically helping the environment but also helping keep you fit, reducing your stress levels and bringing people together. If you are not free during the week but would still like to be involved in the project in some way, we are hoping to start a Friends of QE II Field Group.

If you would like to volunteer or for any more information, please contact Tamsin at Stroud Valleys Project on 01453 753358 or tamsin@stroudvalleysproject.org



Project News

Woodworking for health and wellbeing

The Green Health Team has been really busy in the past few months working on a number of different projects. At the beginning of November the patio area at The Exchange was completed, making the space an area



where people can now enjoy and appreciate. The group have now moved onto the building and constructing of two hardwood oak benches, both to be installed at the Wild About Kingswood project where we are working in partnership with Kingswood Parish Council.

This project has seen us working under the guidance of both professional woodsmen Adrian Leaman and Dave Cockcroft from Wholewoods, based at The Woodyard, HRH Royal Duchy Farm, Tetbury. The work started with the choosing of planking for the benches just before Christmas and initial construction. What has followed has been a great journey over eight Tuesday sessions for all involved and has enabled both volunteers and staff to learn new skills in hand crafting timber on a large scale (see picture). It has also given all involved a sense of ownership and pride in the work achieved.

If you're interested in getting involved in the Green Health Team project, please contact Richard on 01453 753358 or richard@stroudvalleysproject.org.

wholewoods

money raised by
healthTotal
through



people's
health
trust

Wild About Kingswood

Our partnership with Kingswood Parish Council at the Wild About Kingswood project continues apace. Volunteers have built the project community shed, done hedgerow management work around the dew pond with the old hedgerow being laid, and gapped up with saplings and bindings being tied in to give structure and support. This work will also



make the hedgerow great for wildlife by creating a small wildlife corridor that links up two

of the mature hedgerows on-site. A number of bird boxes have also been put up in the small woodland area, again boxes made by both the Tuesday GHTeam and the Wednesday Kingswood group. These types of small bird box can also be purchased from our SVP Eco Shop in Threadneedle Street, Stroud

The installation of two beautifully handmade benches has also been completed, one adjacent to the main breeding pond and the other next to the small woodland entrance to the Tyndale View housing estate. The right weather and the man/women power meant we could put the benches in over two consecutive weeks.

A big **THANK YOU** to all the volunteers that were involved in the building and installing of the benches, as well as to Adrian Leaman and Dave Cockcroft who helped us make it all happen!

Keep an eye out for a number of public events being held at the Wild About Kingswood site over the summer, highlights being the annual Great Crested Newt survey, a bat walk, scything course and pond survey for further details on times and dates contact the SVP office.

For more information, contact Richard on 01453 753358 or richard@stroudvalleysproject.org.



Creating a new Sensory Garden in Stratford Park

Shop and Friends

SVP eco shop

Spring always sees a roaring trade in Demeter seeds which are supplied by the Seed Co-Operative – and this year has been no exception. We have a wide range of vegetable, herb and salad seeds, and a few of our favourite flowers. We are delighted to hear that the Seed Co-Operative are finalists in the BBC Future Food and Farming Awards 2017. We also have a range of organically acceptable slug deterrents . If you have great success with your seedlings, don't forget our plant swap on 3 June – exchange surplus seedlings for something new.

You can also find materials in the shop which support our other events – including identification charts for orchids, newts, bats, birds and butterflies, and our ever popular origami butterfly sets.

We like to stock environmentally versions of things customers buy regularly so please let us know of anything that we do not currently have which you would like us to stock. We can then look into whether we can!

ECO REFILL RANGE



Joining Form for NEW SVP Friends

(You don't need to fill this in if you are already an SVP Friend)

Please tick one of the following boxes to indicate the amount you would like to give, and complete the short form below :

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| £15 (individual) | <input type="checkbox"/> | £25 (family) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £30 | <input type="checkbox"/> | £50 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £100 | <input type="checkbox"/> | £250 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £500 (company) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name.....Date.....

Address.....

.....Post Code

Email

I have set up a Standing Order form with my bank for the amount of annually/monthly*

OR I enclose a payment of made payable to 'Stroud Valleys Project'

(*please delete as necessary)

Please return this completed form to Stroud Valleys Project, 8 Threadneedle Street, Stroud GL5 1AF.

GIFT AID at no extra cost to you

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made (tick all boxes you wish to apply) :

- Today In the past 4 years In the future

Signature

We would like to acknowledge your support on our web-site and in our annual report,

but please tick this box if you would prefer us **NOT** to



Enriching lives, transforming places



THIS NEWSLETTER is a team effort by John Ockham, Clare Mahdiyone, Tamsin Bent, Richard Lewis, Carolyn Buckley, Deb Coleman, Julie Wickham, Deb Roberts and lots of volunteers who proof-read, prepare and stuff envelopes - thanks to you all!

Produced using renewable energy and recycled paper

Stroud Valleys Project office and eco shop are located at 8 Threadneedle Street, Stroud, GL5 1AF Tel: 01453 753358

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