

# Wild4Life Project Annual Review 2013-14

## Contact:

Rowena Kenny  
Wild4Life Project Officer  
☎ 01454 863556  
✉ Rowena.Kenny@southglos.gov.uk



## Welcome

Wild4Life is a four year project which provides opportunities for people to get out and about and involved in their local green spaces in South Gloucestershire. It aims to bring people closer to nature to improve their health and wellbeing.

The Wild4Life project is working in priority neighbourhood communities with children, young people and families in Filton, Patchway, Yate and Dodington, Cadbury Heath, Staple Hill and Kingswood.

Wild4Life is funded by the Reaching Communities programme of the Big Lottery Fund, NHS South Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire Council.

4600 people were directly involved in the first year of the project through 82 events and targeted sessions. This annual review summaries the key work and achievements of the project during 2013.

## Project Outcomes and Targets

Project outcomes and activity targets for year one (September 2012 - December 2013) have been significantly exceeded. Sustained outcomes have already been achieved, surpassing the original aspirations of the project. Volunteer in kind involvement and support for the project has totalled £19140 (exceeding the year 1 target of £11400 by £7740).

### Outcome and activity levels achieved with children, young people and families in specific targeted sessions:

- 901 stated an improvement in their mental wellbeing through involvement in the project. (401 over target)
- 797 stated an improvement in their physical activity levels through involvement in the project. (297 over target)

- 949 stated an increased confidence to access and enjoy local open green spaces. (249 over target)
- 7 new and existing volunteers and 43 foster carers and children's centre staff reported increased skills and confidence to support outdoor play in children's centres and priority neighbourhood play schemes. (17 volunteers under target - this outcome is currently under review for year 2)
- 948 parents and carers from the above groups participated in events in local green spaces. (841 above target)
- 3450 Priority Neighbourhood community residents participated in events including community conservation projects and seasonal celebration events in local green spaces (870 above target)
- 7 volunteers and 43 foster carers and children's centre staff received training in outdoor play and learning. (23 under agreed target of 30 volunteers though 20 over target if foster carers and children's centre staff included)
- 2817 children and young people (under 24) with high level needs participated in outdoor play and bushcraft engagement events (2416 above target)



## Children's Centre Nature Play in open spaces

Families from Cadbury Heath and Kingswood were involved in 10 weekly Nature Play sessions in both Cadbury Heath and Kingswood Park.



*'This is the best activity group my children have been to!'*

**parent/carer**

*'Fantastic sessions for all ages. Really important for children to explore the outdoors and understand the world we live in!'*

**parent/carer**

*'It is fantastic to see local families enjoying the Nature Play sessions. This type of activity really supports parents to provide a healthy lifestyle for their children.'*

**Children's Centre Locality Manager**

*'The project was very popular with lots of positive feedback from families about the impact it had on their attitudes to accessing the outdoors. The activities with families showed them a different way of playing in outside areas which is especially valuable within a built up area like Kingswood. This will help to develop the children's learning dispositions such as curiosity and resilience, skills which will help them become 'school ready'.'*

**Children's Centre Manager**

## Nature Play training

Following Nature Play sessions, training was delivered for children's centre volunteers and staff, play scheme volunteers and foster carers to support outdoor play in open spaces:

*'All of the staff involved in both the training and activity sessions reported an increase in confidence to initiate ideas and sessions into their activity planning. This impact is shown through the staff in Kingswood's wish to spend our resource budget on equipment to enhance the future nature play sessions in the wildlife area of the park.'*

**Children's Centre Manager**

*'I just wanted to put down how grateful I am for everything I've learnt over the last few months. I feel much more confident now to take on leading sessions and I'm not at all concerned about running out of ideas for activities!'*

**Support worker**

*'Really enjoyed it and found it very interesting and inspirational.'*

**Volunteer**

*'Definitely inspired to get out there. Thank you'*

**Foster Carer**



Download the full Kingswood and Cadbury Heath Wild4Life Nature Play project reviews at:

[www.southglos.gov.uk/wild4life](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/wild4life)

## New Nature Play community group

Following the Wild4Life Nature Play sessions, a new 'Cadbury Heath Nature Play' community group has been set up by parents and volunteers with support from local partners. The group is growing from strength to strength and continue to run sessions. The group has also secured funding for further accredited training, resources and access improvements in the community.

*'Parents have gained the confidence and enthusiasm to want to run the sessions themselves and the children benefit from playing with natural materials outside in the fresh air,'*

**Children's Centre Manager**

## Breakthrough Bushcraft



The South Gloucestershire Breakthrough project provides mentoring support for referred vulnerable young people. Building on previous partnership work, Wild4Life and Breakthrough ran 6 bushcraft days and 1 overnight camp for young people in 2013. 100% of participants reported increased emotional well being through involvement in the sessions:

*'I feel better in the woods cos its nice and quiet and so much space'*

**mentee**

*'I learnt a lot of skills. I like it being practical. I feel relaxed and gives time and space to clear your head'* **mentee**

*'I wish I could do this every day. I love the silence in the woods.'*

**Breakthrough mentee**

## Family Wild4Life days

An exciting and pioneering new partnership was piloted between CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) and Wild4Life in 2013. Service users and their families were invited to participate in 4 Wild4Life Family days with the opportunity to enjoy being in a small supportive group to learn new skills and enjoy time together in a beautiful woodland environment. Building on the success of the pilot first year, plans are underway to expand this work in 2014:



*'I held a frog for over 5 minutes! It felt nice slippery and relaxing. It was the best day of my life.'* **child**

*'I felt so proud of my mum when she overcame her fear and went on the swing'* **child**

*'Lovely to be somewhere I can relax and not feel other people are being judgemental or I have to explain stuff or apologise'* **parent/carer**

*'Wonderful being able to experience success in practical ways.'* **parent/carer**

## Geocaching



Geocaching in South Gloucestershire is taking off as a great activity to encourage people to explore and enjoy local green spaces. Wild4Life ran 5 sessions introducing geocaching to 42 people from Active Family groups and adult learning disability groups in 2013.

*'I'd like to do this again every Wednesday. I really enjoyed it'*

**Learning disability service user**

*'Thank you very much for spending time with us. Everyone had a great time. I didn't know anything about it before and now I can use it with the group'*

**Support staff**

Two 'Cache in Trash Out' (CITO) events were also held involving 70 people clearing rubbish and setting new caches along the Frome Valley Walkway, Yate and the Tumps, Patchway.



## The Big Pull!



Himalayan Balsam is a non-native (non UK) plant which is rapidly invading the banks of our rivers and streams, destroying habitats and causing erosion and flooding.

The Wild4Life Project and Avon Invasive Weeds Project are working together to organise the Big Pull along the river Frome. In 2013, 106 volunteers took part in four community workdays over the summer.

Big Pull sessions were also run with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), community payback teams and students undertaking work experience and research. A 675m stretch of the Frome in Yate was cleared in 2013 and plans are well underway to check this area again and clear further downstream in 2014.



*'What a Fab way to spend a sunny Saturday morning!'* **Volunteer**



*'Great morning - something very therapeutic about pulling up that balsam!'*  
**Big Pull Volunteer**

## Priority Neighbourhood Community events

Wild4Life has delivered an extensive programme of walks, seasonal celebration events, play ranger holiday sessions and workshops at community events directly engaging over 3500 priority neighbourhood residents.



### Yate Common Wild Walk

These events include a highly successful summer Family Wild Walk event on Yate common involving over 100 local people.

*'Magic – superbly organised and advertised. Loved it!! Our new favourite*

*place! Did not even know about these woods. I will take the kids regularly from school to enjoy on sunny days like these.'*

**Wild Walk parent**

*'I am so glad we came – it is wonderful to see them being children, enjoying themselves and having a break. They never get to do things – they don't go outdoors and when they do they love it. This is what they deserve'*

**Wild Walk young carers support group**

Wild4Life co-ordinated the launch of the new accessible play area at Scott Park in September 2013 and ran outreach workshops at local special schools:

*'Enormous thanks for all your work in ensuring a successful launch of the accessible play area and QEII playing field. We could not have done it without you.'*

**Patchway Town Council**

The first Abbotswood Apple Day was launched in October 2013 co-ordinated by Wild4Life with fantastic support from local groups, churches and invaluable help from the Friends of Grimsbury Farm. Attended by over 300 people, plans are well under way for Apple Day in 2014.



**Abbotswood Apple Day**

*'Brilliant local event. Lovely relaxed atmosphere and lots to do'*

*'Great to see everybody happy and joining in together'*



## Thank you

**Many thanks to everyone who has been involved in and supported the Wild4Life Project in 2013.**

**I look forward to working with you in 2014 and would love to hear your ideas and suggestions for the project.**

*Rowena*

Rowena Kenny

### **Wild4Life Project Officer**

Landscape and Environmental Projects  
Community Spaces  
Environment and Community Services  
South Gloucestershire Council

Tel: 01454 863556

Mob: 0774 7448854

[Rowena.kenny@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:Rowena.kenny@southglos.gov.uk)

[www.southglos.gov.uk/wild4life](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/wild4life)



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