



**PLYMOUTH LOCAL ACCESS
FORUM**

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8 March 2013

When calling or telephoning please ask for: **Mr Ross Johnston**

PLYMOUTH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

DATE: MONDAY 18 MARCH 2013

TIME: 10.30 AM

**PLACE: COUNCIL HOUSE, PLYMOUTH (NEXT TO THE
CIVIC CENTRE)**

Committee Members–

Mr Fairchild, in the Chair.

Mr Stewart, Vice Chair.

Mr Attrill, Mr Curno, Mr Emery, Councillor K Foster, Councillor Fox, Mr Goddard, Mrs Harvey, Ms Hitchens, Mr Pawley, Mrs Rodgers, Mr Skinner, Mrs Stewart and Councillor Wheeler.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf

Members are requested to sign the attendance list at the meeting.

PLYMOUTH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Forum Members.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on this Agenda.

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

The Forum will be asked to confirm the minutes of the 17 December 2012.

4. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

To receive reports on business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

5. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS (Pages 7 - 10)

To monitor progress on previous resolutions.

6. STEPPING STONES TO NATURE PROJECT UPDATE (Pages 11 - 34)

To receive an update on recent Stepping Stones to Nature projects, the Stepping Stones to Nature Annual Report 2011 – 2012, and to watch a short film about the developments of Ham Woods.

7. SOUTH WEST COAST PATH UPDATE

To receive a verbal update on the South West Coast Path.

8. PLYM VALLEY CYCLE TRAIL UPDATE

To receive an update on the Plym Valley Cycle Trail.

9. CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND (CPRE) UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from Bob Harvey on the CPRE.

10. CONFERENCE UPDATES

To receive updates from the Chair on the LAF National Conference and Regional Conference.

11. WORKING GROUPS

To agree any working groups for items on this agenda.

(a.) UNRECORDED FOOTPATHS WORKING GROUP

To receive an update on the Unrecorded Rights of Way Working Group.

12. WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages 35 - 36)

To receive the Forum's Work Programme for 2012 - 2013.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

(Pages 37 - 38)

To consider any correspondence received and note any correspondence sent by the Forum.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To agree meeting dates for the next municipal year as follows:

- Monday 17 June 2013 at 10:30am
- Monday 9 September 2013 at 10:30am
- Monday 16 December 2013 at 10:30am
- Monday 17 March 2014 at 10:30am

15. ISSUES ARISING FROM FORUM MEMBERS

To discuss any issues brought forward by members of the Forum.

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Plymouth Local Access Forum

Monday 17 December 2012

PRESENT:

Mr Fairchild, in the Chair.

Mr Stewart, Vice Chair.

Mr Attrill, Mr Curno, Mr Emery, Councillor K Foster, Councillor Fox, Mr Harvey, Ms Hitchens, Mrs Rodgers, Mr Skinner and Councillor Wheeler

Apologies for absence: Mr Goddard, Mr Pawley and Mrs Stewart.

The meeting started at 10.30am and finished at 1.00pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

27. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

28. **MINUTES**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2012 are approved.

29. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

Ray Fairchild, Chair, informed members that he had recently attended a South West LAF meeting.

30. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

The Forum noted the tracking resolutions and agreed that –

- (1) with regard to Minute 17, Bob Harvey would provide confirmation that a letter was sent to the Government in response to the Independent Panel on Forestry's report;
- (2) with regard to Minute 20, Bob Harvey would ensure that LAF members' email addresses were added to the CPRE distribution list;
- (3) with regard to Minute 23, the LAF Secretary would write a letter to the Director for Place explaining the Forum's concern regarding the lack of response to the Forum's requests about Coombe Dean School.

31. **ANNUAL REPORT 2011 - 2012**

Ross Johnston, LAF Secretary tabled a copy of the Natural England Annual Report proforma and informed members that the report needed to be agreed and submitted to Natural England by 31 December 2012.

Members of the Forum made a number of suggestions and amendments for inclusion in the final version of the proforma.

Agreed that the LAF Secretary would take into consideration all LAF members comments when finalising the Annual Report and provide a final version to Ray Fairchild, Chair for approval prior to the proforma being submitted to Natural England.

32. **CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND (CPRE) UPDATE**

Bob Harvey, LAF member, gave a presentation on the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and informed members that –

- (a) the CPRE were currently involved in a number of issues, which included –
 - work on promoting the impact of Ash die-back;
 - presenting 'Best Kept Village Awards' to Thurleston and South Poole;
 - raising awareness of the impact of wind turbines and solar farms;
 - responding to the government's consultation on the Triennial Review of the Environment Agency and Natural England;
- (b) the Triennial Review was of particular concern to the CPRE as it was felt that the amalgamation of Natural England with the Environment Agency would potentially have a detrimental effect on the natural environment.

Members commented that the effect of Ash die-back and other tree based diseases was a concern.

Bob Harvey was thanked for his update.

33. **HUDDLE UPDATE**

Hilary Winter, Regional LAF Co-ordinator for the South West, attended the Forum to give a demonstration of Huddle, an internet based social-network tool for LAFs.

Hilary commented that it was excellent to see the Plymouth LAF was so well attended, particular by elected members, and that the participation and involvement of all members was invaluable to the progress and work undertaken by LAFs.

Ray Fairchild, Chair, thanked Hilary for her demonstration and attendance at the meeting.

34. **SOUTH WEST COAST PATH UPDATE**

The Forum received an update on the South West Coast Path.

Members commented that –

- (a) when the steps in Royal William Yard had been constructed they would be included on the Ordnance Survey Map;
- (b) there had been a further landslip on the South West Coast Path, around Jennicliff;
- (c) on 21 April 2013 the South West Coast Path Association would be hosting a walk of the entire South West Coast Path in celebration of its 40th anniversary.

Agreed that Robin Pearce, PROW Officer, is requested to provide an update to all Forum members by email on the South West Coast Path's recent landslip at Jennicliff.

35. **GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL UPDATE**

The Forum noted the written report on the Growth and Infrastructure Bill and agreed that in order to better understand some of the changes the Bill proposes a definition of the term 'affordable housing' is circulated to members by email.

36. **WORKING GROUPS**

There were no new working groups agreed.

37. **UNRECORDED PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

Ray Fairchild, Chair, informed the Forum that –

- (a) the working group had most recently met on 20 November 2012, where it had focussed on noting the most important footpaths in the city that were under threat;
- (b) there were many footpaths identified as under threat, but in order to adopt these footpaths as PROW there needed to be evidence provided to back up the claim that the footpath had been regularly used by the public;

- (c) in order for the working group to achieve its aims of adopting more footpaths as PROW then the group needed to focus on sourcing evidence to claim PROW status.

Agreed that –

- (1) Robin Pearce, PROW Officer, is requested to provide an up to date priority list of footpaths to be adopted as PROW;
- (2) Robin Pearce, PROW Officer, is requested to provide members with details of how many footpaths have been adopted as PROW in the past 12 months;
- (3) a further working group is set up in February 2013 to review the evidence supporting the footpaths that are at the top of the priority list.

38. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The forum noted the work programme for 2012 – 2013 and agreed that –

- (1) a Definitive Map update is added to the work programme for the Forum's meeting in March;
- (2) an update on the recording of PROW is added to the work programme for the Forum's meeting in March;
- (3) an update on the Plym Valley Cycle Trail is added to the work programme for the Forum's meeting in March;
- (4) Bob Harvey would provide a further update on the CPRE at the Forum's meeting in March.

39. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence for the Forum to consider.

40. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed that the next meeting of the Forum is held at 10.30am on Monday 18 March 2013.

41. **ISSUES ARISING FROM FORUM MEMBERS**

John Emery provided a report on the recent public enquiry into the Footpath Extinguishment Order at Ridgeway School, Plympton.

It was commented that although Forum members acknowledged that the PROW Officer had been unable to attend due to ill-health, they were concerned that Plymouth City Council did not provide adequate resource to this post whilst the PROW Officer was absent from the workplace.

Agreed that Ray Fairchild, Chair will write a letter to Plymouth City Council highlighting the Forum's concern regarding the insufficient resourcing of the PROW department.

Members were further informed that the Regional LAF Conference would be held on 5 March 2013 and it was anticipated that four members from each Forum would be able to attend.

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PLYMOUTH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

TRACKING RESOLUTIONS

Date / Minute number	Resolution	Explanation / Minute	Action	Progress
17.9.12 Minute 17	that Bob Harvey, LAF member, would draft a letter to the Government in response to the Independent Panel on Forestry's report and its recommendations.		Bob Harvey	On 17.12.12 Bob Harvey sent an email confirming that he had sent a report.
17.9.12 Minute 20	Bob Harvey would add the LAF members' email addresses to the CPRE distribution list to ensure that all members receive minutes of CPRE meetings.		Bob Harvey	Bob Harvey confirmed he would do this at the Forum's meeting on 17.12.12.
17.9.12 Minute 23 17.12.12 Minute 30	the LAF Secretary would seek a response on the Forum's letter regarding to Coombe Dean School and an update provided at the next meeting; with regard to Minute 23, the LAF Secretary would write a letter to the Director for Place explaining the Forum's concern regarding the lack of response to the Forum's requests about Coombe Dean School.		Ross Johnston	Emails were sent to Ian Gillhespy on 6.11.12 and 4.12.12 – no response had been received. Outstanding.

17.12.12 Minute 31	the LAF Secretary would take into consideration all LAF members comments when finalising the Annual Report and provide a final version to Ray Fairchild, Chair for approval prior to the proforma being submitted to Natural England.		Ross Johnston	The final annual report proforma was drafted and emailed to Ray Fairchild for approval and subsequently submitted to Natural England, via Hilary Winter, on 24 December 2012.
17.12.12 Minute 34	Robin Pearce, PROW Officer, is requested to provide an update to all Forum members by email on the South West Coast Path's recent landslip at Jennicliff.		Robin Pearce	Robin Pearce was asked to provide this on 8 January 2012.
17.12.12 Minute 37 (1)	Robin Pearce, PROW Officer, is requested to provide an up to date priority list of footpaths to be adopted as PROW;		Robin Pearce	Robin Pearce was asked to provide this on 8 January 2012.
17.12.12 Minute 37 (2)	Robin Pearce, PROW Officer, is requested to provide members with details of how many footpaths have been adopted as PROW in the past 12 months;		Robin Pearce	Robin Pearce was asked to provide this on 8 January 2012.
17.12.12 Minute 37 (3)	a further working group is set up in February 2013 to review the evidence		Ross Johnston	Outstanding.

	supporting the footpaths that are at the top of the priority list.			
17.12.12 Minute 41	Ray Fairchild, Chair will write a letter to Plymouth City Council highlighting the Forum's concern regarding the insufficient resourcing of the PROW department.		Ray Fairchild	Outstanding.



= Complete resolution



= Outstanding resolution

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**Stepping Stones to Nature Report
Local Access Forum March 2013
Update from July 2012 – March 2013**

Zoe Goss, Stepping Stones to Nature Project Coordinator

Site Based Improvements

Ham Woods

- Orchard planted at Ham Woods with funding from Big Green Space Challenge, local Councillor and Stepping Stones in partnership with Friends of Ham Woods. Local community and Mayflower Primary school involved in planting.
- Ham Lane resurfaced. Supported PCC Transport bid to improve access to lane for cyclists and walkers. Awaiting outcome of bid.
- 'Woodland Rendezvous' seating area completed. In use by local schools.
- Ham Friends Group with OPAL applied to Plymouth University do some research on the effects of different invasive species management on woodland biodiversity. Awaiting outcome on March 14th.

Southway Valley LNR

- Orchard planted in Southway Valley Nature Reserve with funding from Big Green Space Challenge, local Councillor and Stepping Stones in partnership with Southway Drive Allotments Assoc, Beechwood and Oakwood Primaries, Youth Services and local community.

Kinterbury Creek

- Removed old container (Street Scene Services) from site and put in new bins at Wolseley Road entrance. Working with PCH to put in a Moneytree bid for new fencing and hedging along gardens on Foulston Avenue which back onto the creek.

Forder Valley

- Paths topped up with woodchip. 2 signs stolen, are on order to replace.

Woodland Wood

- Successful bid to Big Green Space Challenge for tree planting including hazelnuts and cherries. Trees planted with help from Shakespeare Primary, Brook Green and St Peter's Primary.
- SS2N also match funding improvements to play area at Whitleigh Way. Work commissioned and will be carried out next quarter.

Other

- SS2N will be supporting the delivery of some Big Green Space challenge projects over the next year with Friends of Central Park; Keyham Community Garden; Flora Court Residents Group; Central Park Allotments; Plympton St Maurice Civic Association; Woodford Primary School
-

Community Engagement

Communications

- Improvements to Parks webpages on PCC website seem to be popular. We recorded the 2nd highest traffic ever in February 2013, a 59% increase on 2012. Just short of 7,000 people viewed the parks and nature pages
- 550 people viewed the www.plymouth.gov.uk/parksnatureevents pages where we are posting regular Stepping Stones and other events.
- **Stepping Stones Plymouth** facebook site has over 100 'friends' and growing.

Community Engagement

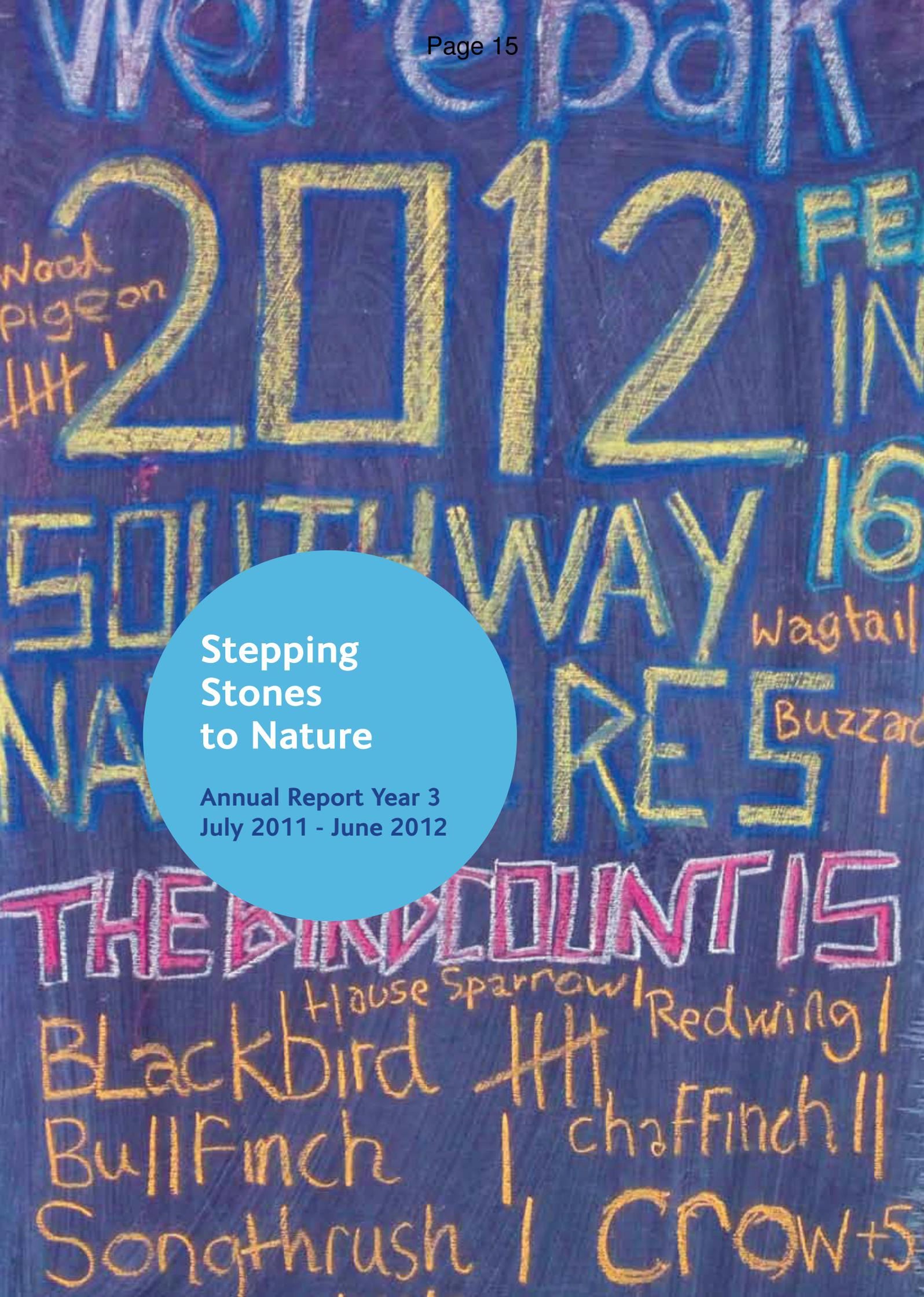
- Guided nature walks programme proving popular. We have 14 people registered to train as volunteer walk leaders on March 13th.
- Woodland Wood Schools Engagement programme initiated – 170 pupils engaged from 3 local schools in learning outside the classroom.
- Our Southway Educational programme also started with Beechwood and Oakwood primary schools. Beechwood is making a film of the orchard project with photographic social enterprise FotoNow. Oakwood School are using hazel coppicing to learn about woodland management.
- Engaging with Southway Youth Services using photography as a tool (with FotoNow) to start the young people on the orchard project. Over 30 young people have engaged with us, making toffee apples, tasting apples. It is proving difficult to get them outdoors though hopefully when the weather improves this will happen!
- 2 storytelling events in Ham Woods with Halcyon Centre. 30 people attended the first and 68 the second! All local families.
- Supporting Stonehouse Play Project to deliver a 'Nature in the Night' programme with young people from Jan-Mar 2013.
- 2 Moor Men projects between Dartmoor National Park and NHS Public Health. 16 men participated: 66% had increased their physical activity levels; 33% accessed their local green space more. 84% had visited Dartmoor more often. 66% had increased confidence when visiting Dartmoor.
- Our Muslim Women's Willow project (Race Equality Council, National Trust) was completed with a celebration event at Saltram which was open to local people – 45 adults and 50 children attended. The structures will be left on site for people to enjoy and play around. As a result we are discussing with National Trust how we can support them to create more playful routes around the site.

Other

- 13 professionals from land, community, voluntary, social housing, education signed up to our 'Embedding Change Partnership Programme' a legacy programme which is supporting them to deliver green space projects and exist as a network beyond the life of Stepping Stones
- SS2N together with PCC Education team has been commissioned to deliver DEFRA's Natural Connections 3 year project in South West, led by Plymouth

University. 35 Plymouth schools will be involved in improving the delivery of 'Learning in the Natural Environment'

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**Stepping
Stones
to Nature**

**Annual Report Year 3
July 2011 - June 2012**

WOTODOK

2012

SOUTHWAY 16

RES 5

THE BIRD COUNT IS

House Sparrow		Redwing	
Blackbird		Chaffinch	
Bullfinch		Crow	+5
Songthrush			

Wagtail

Buzzard

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Introduction

Background to SSZN

Funded by Big Lottery as part of Natural England's Access to Nature Programme, Stepping Stones to Nature (SSZN) is a 4 year partnership project which aims to get more people engaging positively with nature in and around Plymouth.

Based within Plymouth City Council, the project sits under the Planning Services' Green Infrastructure Project and works alongside Street Scene Services who manage the city's green spaces. Delivered in partnership with a range of community, voluntary and public sector providers, the project feeds learning and best practice into the city's plans to create sustainable business models for the future management and enhancement of open spaces.

Project summary

Through a programme of capital works, community engagement, marketing and promotion, SSZN aims to improve access to Plymouth's natural spaces so that they are:

1. Easier to get into and around
2. Used and cared for as participants gain confidence, knowledge and ownership
3. Valued, used and promoted for their health benefits
4. Used by a range of organisations working together

Evidence shows that the use of green space can significantly improve the individual experience of health and quality of life. However, we know that the differing social conditions that enable access and use of green space reflect the local geography of persistent health inequalities.

The project therefore focuses on the more deprived areas of the city as well as targeting groups we know that need support to access the outdoors (including BME and disability groups, people with health issues and young people).

'All over the city, activities run as part of the Stepping Stones to Nature project are helping to change lives. They are encouraging community pride, bringing people of all ages to enjoy healthy outdoor activities and get people out and about in our parks and woodlands.

'I've also been struck by the way the project has teamed up with other groups and organisations to make events happen and enable our residents to feel good about themselves and where they live.

This is a great example of cooperative working to make a better Plymouth.'

Councillor Brian Vincent, Cabinet Member for the Environment

Executive Summary Year 3: July 2011 - June 2012

This report details the progress towards our goals during the third year of the project and the plans for legacy as we go into our final year.

This year we have focused on deepening engagement with our target groups using the relationships and local knowledge built to date. Through our partnerships with organisations, schools and local communities notable achievements include:

- Delivery of capital works on 5 green spaces to improve access and provide signage
- Creation of on-site resources (such as orienteering courses and destination points (such as storytelling seating circles), designed and installed with help of local families and school pupils
- Upgrading and provision of new on-line resources (such as downloadable nature trails) and access information on Plymouth's Parks on PCC website
- Delivery of targeted in-depth projects with families in deprived areas, disability and BME groups; deepening their involvement with their local green space and further afield
- Delivery of targeted health projects such as Moor Men's Health, supporting men with health issues to access Dartmoor; Training 20 volunteers to set up and lead Walking for Health groups. SSZN is now embedded into the city's Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan with a view to creating a pathway for future work after the end of the project
- Creation of new partnerships with arts organisations to bring a fresh and creative approach to engagement. A highlight was commissioning international land artist Peter Randall Page to work with the community to carve and install a sculpture in Ham Woods in Summer 2012. Peter's work is also due to be exhibited at Plymouth University in 2014
- Coordination of the national Love Parks Week programme for Plymouth in 2011 and 2012, giving the South West region a ranking of third in the country for numbers of events in 2012

As we go into the final year of SSZN it is clear that we have achieved a lot and will exceed our initial targets. However, a real mark of success will be to secure the project's legacy. This will include collating evidence towards additional funding bids; leaving strong partnership networks in place and embedding new ways of working to ensure continuation of best practice.

Zoe Goss, Project Coordinator

Featured in the report are a range of more in-depth case studies written by partners to illustrate the project in action.

The quality of our monitoring, evaluation and reporting had national recognition from Natural England this year and as a result the project has been used for case studies in the Access to Nature learning papers 'Making Partnerships Work' and 'Free to Explore'.

The achievements of the project are down to the support of our partner organisations and enthusiasm and flexibility of their staff to 'do things differently'. This is reflected in our research project that tracks the process of our partnership working - the findings of which are helping us to shape the project as we go along.

'Through the work undertaken by SSZN, wider networks have developed with greater understanding of the value of Greenspace. I think the contacts made through these networks will continue beyond the life of SSZN'
Partner organisation

Mapping the project - an overview Year 3



Outcome 1: Natural spaces are easier to get in and around Improving and maintaining physical access to sites

Capital works have been delivered on 4 sites this year and we are working with PCC Street Scene Services who manage all the sites, to ensure access improvements to all 6 SSZN sites are maintained regularly and to a high standard.

The majority of the work has been done by Groundwork and TCV's (formerly BTCV) volunteers which has helped them to build skills, employability and improve health.

All improvements have been designed and decided upon through consultation with local residents, organisations and stakeholders.

As we go into our final year, our key challenge is to work closely with Street Scene Services to ensure the Friends Groups / Forums we have set up for each site, have clear communication and training pathways for them to continue their involvement in maintenance and improvements of these sites beyond SSZN.



Brook Green pupils carving the wisdom poles

Woodland Wood

Woodland Wood is a 29 hectare nature reserve between the neighbourhoods of Honicknowle and Whiteleigh, 2 of the more deprived areas of Plymouth. Over the past 2 years we have installed new paths, signage and play features. Each year we are seeing site usage increasing and anti-social behaviour decreasing. This year, with £10k from Plymouth Community Homes Money Tree fund we:

Improved West Park entrance
This involved a joint project with Street Scene Services to remove old, disused changing rooms and convincing Western Power to paint their substitution a dark green.

Created a Nature Trail- physical and virtual
We involved adjacent schools (3 primary, 1 secondary), children's centre and local families in:

- Design, sculpting and installation of a storytelling chair and seating circle and wisdom poles. This is now being used regularly by the school and local families.
- Design, artwork and trialling a downloadable nature trail map for families.

Over 200 families and local children attended the celebration opening event, supported by OPAL.

Installed a permanent orienteering course
Working with PCC's Outdoor Education Officer, local primary schools helped us to map, design and trial a permanent course in the woods. This will be available online for any school or group in the city to use.



Families help install the storytelling area

Next Steps
With 2 disparate neighbourhoods, it has proved difficult to set up a Friends Group for the site. However, the successful schools engagement has enthused them to get more strategically involved. During the school year 2012/13, TCV will be delivering an education programme which includes pupil sessions as well as teacher training to support the schools to take a longer term view of how they can use and take care of the site. We will meet each term with this **Woodland Schools Forum** to discuss progress and take forward any new initiatives.

With regards to wider community involvement, as this year's work focused on improving the West Park area with local residents, next year we will aim to engage with the community on the Whiteleigh side of the woods. This will include **improving the entrance** around the Whiteleigh Way area, **improving the existing run-down play area** and creating a small **community orchard**.

Case study

Building capacity of schools, community groups and families to use Woodland Wood
Jemma Sharman, SSZN Outreach Officer, Plymouth City Council

In 2011 I supported a group of local families in West Park estate, adjacent to Woodland Wood, to successfully bid for £10k from Plymouth Community Homes Money Tree Fund. The project aimed to encourage more families and local organisations to use the woods for education, play and recreation.

Over the last year Brooks Green Centre for Learning (BGCFL), Shakespeare Primary School, St Peters Primary School and Knowle Primary School have designed and installed a story-telling chair and wisdom poles; an orienteering course with map and a nature trail leaflet - both available as downloads from the PCC website. We also held a number of community events with local families to help clean up the entrance and encourage parents to take their children to the woods. More than 70 students and 50 residents were directly involved.

The project finished with a big celebration event in March to thank everyone for their time and support, with more than 200 adults and children. All schools and families involved were given membership to the National Trust entitling them to a year's free entry to properties.

Since their involvement in these physical improvements, the schools tell us that they're now using the woods on a regular basis - whether that's forest school activities in the story-telling area, learning new wildlife identification along the nature trail or practising geography on the orienteering route. BGCFL have also been helping The Conservation Volunteers keep the paths and entrances clear, learning useful practical skills in the process.

Quotes from students at the 3 participating schools:

'Since doing this is stuff in the woods I'm down here all the time'

'I don't normally do walking but I like exploring'

'I'm gonna get my mum to see this. When are we coming back?'

*'I don't walk places, my mum drives, I hate walking'.
The same child later
'I love it here, are we allowed to climb trees?'*

Page 18
'I've been teaching in Honicknowle for over 20 years and for most of that time Woodland Wood was considered a "go-go" area. 18 months ago I was put in touch with SSZN and have been working with them regularly since.'

Numerous groups of children have used the wood, both during and outside the school day. Activities included science/habitat work, environmental improvement (litter-picking), night walks, route following/orienteering, team building, art/craft work, Forest Schools/bushcraft activities and simply playing. Most classes from the school have used the wood this year; my own class have had 6 visits.

I led "INSET" in the Wood for colleagues to encourage them to use the area. SSZN have also acted as a link to other schools in the area as well as organisations such as OPAL, and TCV who have added their expertise to enhance the pupils' learning.'

I consider the Wood to be a highly valuable resource for the school with potential for use throughout the curriculum and I intend to use it as much as possible in the future.'

Nick Hart, Teacher
Shakespeare Primary School

Outcome 1: Natural spaces are easier to get in and around Improving and maintaining physical access to sites

Ham Woods

In the west of the city, Ham Woods is a 42 hectare site, an important green resource in a more deprived area of the city which is currently going through an unsettling period of regeneration and where there are significant health issues. Over the past 2 years we've worked to build community capacity to engage in the site and improve it - not just to meet local needs but to build pride and a sense of local ownership over the space. This year we delivered:

- Access improvements**
 - Completed an upgrade to a 1.2km path to create buggy and wheelchair access from east to west
 - Resurfaced the potholed Ham Lane, a key route through the woods, with £30k match funding from PCC Transport and Highways
 - Worked with local schools and residents to design new interpretation boards:
 - 6 installed around the site
 - Worked with PCC Public Rights of Way Officer and Street Scene Services to install new waymarkers, signposts: create marked circular routes around the site and repair 2 stone bridges

One resident counted 95 children using the new paths as a cut through after school one day!



Ham Woods interpretation board

Capacity Building the Friends Group to support improvements and maintenance

We have a strong and dynamic group of over 20 regular participants in the Friends of Ham Woods, who are now constituted with their own bank account and website. They have monthly meetings and are heavily involved in the woods' ongoing maintenance and improvements as well as organising guided walks. With help from PCC Street Scene Services we have:

- Supported the Friends Group to deliver 5 community volunteering days and 1 business volunteering day clearing invasive species
- Taken the Friends Group through the process of commissioning an internationally renowned land artist, Peter Randall-Page, to deliver a seating sculpture on site through our partnership with Take-a-Part. See case study on page 29

Next steps

The stone sculpture will be complete at the end of Summer 2012 and we'll have a community celebration event to raise the profile of the woods. The improvements allow us to promote Ham Woods on the Visit Plymouth website as a great green space for a day visit. This is a great opportunity to raise pride and aspirations in a deprived area which has suffered from a negative image.

We are also supporting the Friends Group to create a 'Woodland Rendezvous' seating area with an additional grant we secured from PCC Arts department; and an orchard through an environment grant from a Ward Councillor.



New steps up to the meadow

'I live in Fountains Crescent and I've never been here before. I'd no idea this was so nice and a good place to come with the kids. I'll definitely come back, specially during the summer holidays'
Mum, Ham

Outcome 1: Natural spaces are easier to get in and around Improving and maintaining physical access to sites

Southway Valley LNR

In the North of the city, this is a 17 hectare, narrow woodland in a valley with open clearings at the east and west ends one of which has a popular monthly miniature railway. Engagement with the local community over the last 2 years, has led to a number of improvements being delivered:

- Groundwork volunteers created a good quality ½ mile circular path at the east end of the site, around the miniature railway.
- Beechwood and Oakwood Primary school pupils and Whiteleigh and Southernway Children's Centre families helped to design and install playful seating including a tree den, sculptures, interpretation boards and picnic areas. These were based at either end of the woodland to encourage access from adjacent playgrounds which in turn would lead them into the more wooded areas.
- At the request of Oakwood School we opened up an old path that leads from their back gate into the woods to enable them to have easier access for school activities.
- We worked with PCC Public Rights of Way Officer and Street Scene Services to install new waymarkers, signposts and create marked circular routes around the site

'The feedback from the sessions with our Year 5 children was all very positive. There are some 'tricky' characters in this year group and as we know from previous experiences, the minute they are out amongst nature, they fully engage. This is why we are thrilled to be involved with your organisation and are looking forward to seeing the outcome of this project.'
Lisa Reburn, Head, Beechwood Primary

'This is so much better, I will bring the buggy next time. Great no muddy shoes!'
Parent, Southway

Next steps
The final year will concentrate on developing a more welcome entrance at the east end of the site and supporting the development of a Woodland Forum which can continue beyond the life of the project.

This will include:

- Working with Southway Allotments Association, Beechwood and Oakwood Primaries and Youth Services to plant and provide training and support to maintain a community orchard
- Working with Oakwood School on a curriculum-based project developing the skills and knowledge of staff and pupils to care for the woodland and using it for educational purposes

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New tree den and climbing area



Carving sculptures at Southway

Outcome 1: Natural spaces are easier to get in and around Improving and maintaining physical access to sites

Kinterbury Creek

Based in the west of the city in Barne Barton, one of the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city, Kinterbury Creek is tucked away in a valley, between residential areas. It is a long thin site, with a basic play area, woodland and a stream which opens out onto a lovely vista of the estuary, where you can watch wading birds on the mud flats. Anti-social behaviour issues, litter and dog mess are regularly reported and the site is generally underused despite a lack of public open green space in the area. Based on community feedback at various events and activities this year SS2N has:

- Upgraded some paths to ensure easy access into the site
- Removed damaged signage, flytipping along boundaries and burnt seating area
- Replaced the damaged bridge over the estuary. Unfortunately this was subject to an arson attack and we are currently consulting with the community to decide whether to replace it
- Delivered a regular programme of events (in partnership with Blue Sound) to engage young people, families and local schools in positive nature activities on site. Most of the people attending had not visited Kinterbury Creek or hadn't been since they were children

Next steps

We are working with Plymouth Community Homes to improve one of the boundaries to the site which is along the back gardens of their housing. The fencing is damaged and this is encouraging fly-tipping and littering. Continue working with residents and local agencies to establish a Friends group for the site, to help implement further improvements and maintenance of the site, including potential play, signage and entrance improvements.



Consultation at Kinterbury with Sled on Wheels

Quotes from Barne Barton Fun Day, Kinterbury Creek workshop:

'He has been so brave holding the crabs- I didn't know you found them in here'
Mum, St Budeaux

'I try and come down here for the sessions because then I know I won't spend any money I haven't got'

'I haven't been to this site in a long time - I'd forgotten in was so nice. There's less rubbish than last time.'
Mum, Barne Barton

Outcome 1: Natural spaces are easier to get in and around Improving access to information

People tell us they don't know where they can go, or what they can do. Providing appropriate information using a range of media is key to breaking down the barriers to enable people to access nature. To this end, in year 3 we:

- Upgraded Plymouth City Council's webpages, creating a new framework with map and photos for each park and nature reserve in the city, and an events page. The number of page views continues to increase. Year 3 saw a 34% increase from Year 2.
- Promoted and coordinated a second successful 'Love Parks Week' events programme in July 2011 with local community groups, charities and public sector. Advertised as part of the Council's Summer Festival programme, 1300 participants attended events across the city - an increase of 300 in the first year. 40 events are already registered for July 2012.
- Created online downloadable resources for our sites. This includes A4 printable versions of the sites' interpretation boards/maps and an online nature trail for Woodland Wood.
- Gained agreement from Plymouth City Council to set up a Stepping Stones Facebook page (87 friends to date) and promoted events on Visit Plymouth Facebook page which is getting around 700 views per event.
- Regular articles in local press and on Radio Devon as well as promoting through Plymouth Parent Partnership, Visit Plymouth, Plymouth Community Homes and other neighbourhood based organisations.
- Delivered various presentations on the SS2N project's achievements and way of working, helping us to disseminate learning and promote to a wider range of partners. This included Natural England's National Access to Nature Conference, Plymouth's Healthy Communities Conference; Green Space South West's Regional Community Forum; Good from Woods South West regional conference.



Love Parks Week leaflet, 2012



Exploring nature in the City Centre with our wildlife trail leaflet

Outcome 2: Natural spaces are used and cared for as participants gain confidence, knowledge and ownership Within Plymouth - the first stepping stone

During Year 3 we provided 50 activities on the 6 SSZN sites. Nearly 2500 people attended - the majority from surrounding neighbourhoods in more deprived areas of Plymouth.

School holidays programme on SSZN sites

Each school holiday we ensured there were regular activities on each site to encourage families to get into the habit of using the spaces and to build their knowledge and confidence. We did this by:

Providing weekly sessions on the same day at each site:

This provided consistency so that parents and children knew when they could come back. Some young people at Southway Nature Reserve said...
'We have never been to the woods before but we made 3 clay faces on trees and we're bringing our mates down tomorrow to see it!' By the end of the sessions, we had a regular group of young people attending. In addition 3 young people brought their parents back, who had previously refused to come down'.
Debbie Lowe, Wild about Woods leader

Having a set meeting time and place:

We trialled a new way of working with families, moving away from the 'drop-in' style event, to meeting at a specific time and devising activities. This started to take them deeper into the woods, exploring areas they hadn't been to before.
'It was very interesting to learn about different birds, making fires and various plants and trees'
Parent, Woodland Wood.

This also helped families from different backgrounds to mix together through shared activities. *'Really good to see such a mix of families and children all playing and chatting together'*
Parent Woodland Wood

Creating teamwork activities which build skills and confidence:

Each session now aims to get parents involved and working together with their children. *'Watching the kids was brilliant, and joining in with them!'*

Families are telling us they are coming back independently. One young family came back to do a scavenger hunt with their children, something they would never have thought about doing before. *'Coming down to the woods is a regular thing for us now'*
Resident, Southway Valley.

'I think I have enjoyed this more than my children. It is brilliant, and we have made a Christmas wreath all on our own.'
Resident, Southway Valley

Accrediting activities as part of Plymouth's Summer Mix Youth Programme and Children's University:

This enabled participants to gain recognition as part of a wider programme. National Trust, Dartmoor National Park and OPAL all provided activities.

'The activities are clearly something which parents believe will encourage them to take more family walks together and to look out for the bugs and other creatures they learnt with OPAL'

Fiona Sheaff, PCC,
Children's University

Outcome 2: Natural spaces are used and cared for as participants gain confidence, knowledge and ownership Within Plymouth - the first stepping stone

Targeted work with schools and children's centres

As well as promoting our events through the local schools and children's centres, we also carried out some targeted projects. These included:

- Initiating 'Branching Outdoors', a project to engage the most vulnerable families from Keystone Children's Centre with their local, natural environment through forest schools. We gained £1640 additional funding from Family Mediation after evidencing how access to nature can improve family bonding. To date 30 parents and 18 children have participated. This project will continue into Year 4.
- Delivering 'Narrowing the Gap' a project to engage Ford Primary School families - see case study on next page

'Families and staff at both Manor St and Fredrick St Children's Centres have gained interest, knowledge and confidence in taking children to local green spaces. They have enjoyed and repeated a range of outdoor play activities and have access to information about local wildlife, plants and trees'

Jen Reeley,
Forest School Facilitator



Kintisbury nature workshop

Case study:

Narrowing the gap: Using nature to engage families with the wider school agenda
Sarah Salisbury, Parent Support Advisor, Ford Primary School

Ford Primary School is situated in Keyham, a more deprived area of Plymouth, with no immediate access to green space.

After doing some activities with SSZN, we decided to set up a more focused programme to engage parents and children with the local surrounding natural spaces. The benefits of the project have surpassed our expectations.

11 families from Year 3 participated in a 7 week programme. These were targeted families, which had been hard to engage - as the children enter the 'Junior' side of school life we see less and less of the parents. Activities were based in a number of local green spaces, (Keyham Green Spaces, Ham Woods and a local park) to promote use of local spaces and to highlight how these areas could be used independently as a family.

Additional funding from a local Community Organisation, Wolsley Trust, bought wellies and macs for the adults and children. Since then, a number have joined the Wolsley Trust which has helped us strengthen community links and broadened the families' knowledge of the local area. An invitation was sent to the families in the 1st week of term, with the children only participating the following week. There were a number of concerns about the parents' commitment, it required a great deal of persuasion and negotiation by me. I spoke with them on an almost daily basis, discussing how exciting it would be and assured the more nervous parents of what was expected. However, once the children had completed their 1st session, there was an amazing response.

Initially the parents were self-conscious, nervous and very quiet, time around the campfire included introductions with silly names, the setting up of base camp and collecting firewood was very popular and reinforced the informal learning atmosphere, everyone participated. The structure and routine of setting up base camp gave us a solid foundation each week, and the parents and children began to organise camp with little prompting.

The activities and the relationships built have gone from strength to strength and as a school we have benefited a great deal.

- 2 parents have CRB clearance and volunteer every week in class
- A mother who is in the middle of completing a Community Degree has now decided to teach and hopes to be able to qualify on the graduate training programme here at Ford
- 3 other parents are now members of our Gardening & Cooking Club
- ALL of the parents from the project have also joined the school in helping to create a new garden area adjacent to the school
- The majority of children Club and have a renewed interest in being outdoors and the environment
- There has been an improvement in 3 of the children's attendance levels
- Becoming friends through the project, a connection was made with a child's paternal family, the child now has contact with their father!
- The families have also discussed how there have been benefits at home, the children have become responsive to experiencing new foods and helping prepare dinner
- The parents are far more confident discussing school matters, with either the teacher or Parent Support Adviser
- A number of the families have also attended further activities in Ham Woods, with their children at the weekend
- The project has also broadened the children's life experiences, which has impacted on their learning



Ford Primary celebration event



Getting parents involved

Case study:

Narrowing the gap: Using nature to engage families with the wider school agenda
Sarah Salisbury, Parent Support Advisor, Ford Primary School

Why was the project such a success?

As part of the evaluation a great deal of consideration has been given to how we managed to attract and retain so many of our harder to reach families. Some key reasons we noted were:

- The activity wasn't at school so parents did not have to physically enter the school building, as we met at the gate. As the weeks passed they became comfortable entering the school and helped to organise the wellies and stopped for coffee at the end of the session
- The passion of the people involved in delivering the project, Debbie the Forest School Leader and me invested energy and enthusiasm that was recognised by the children and parents, this allowed them them to show enthusiastic and enjoyment too
- The families realised that their contribution was valued, their suggestions were considered and where possible, changes were made to the programme to reflect this
- A non-judgemental atmosphere. The group were very respectful of each other's life experiences and openly discussed their experiences and challenges they faced as families build relationships
- Giving time to enable people to build relationships
- The flexibility of the project, including older siblings, amending the programme to take into consideration suggestions for parents!



Families doing creative activities together

P I am now participating in the SSZN Embedding Change Partnership Programme. In partnership with Public Health and the Zone youth organisation, we are developing a training day and resource pack on use of green spaces for other Parent Support Advisors in schools in the city.



Family woodland games

Outcome 2: Natural spaces are used and cared for as participants gain confidence, knowledge and ownership Capacity Building

A key aim of the work is to ensure there is a network in place to support engagement once SS2N is finished.

This year we:

- Delivered 2 training sessions on biodiversity surveys to 27 local residents through OPAL. We know that at least 2 participants have delivered their own surveys since. See case study on next page
- Delivered 2 walking for health leader's training sessions for 20 people through Public Health. See case study 'Walk a while it will make you smile' on Page 25
- Supported the development of Friends of Ham Woods
- Engaging youth groups and businesses in volunteering days on site
- Setting up the Embedding Change Partnership Programme network, see page 28

I supported 2 businesses, Wrigleys and Orange, on employee volunteering days in our nature reserves this year. 80 volunteers helped clearing rubbish, cutting back overhanging vegetation, pond weeding and path clearance. I think it made a massive difference.

Orange worked with the Friends of Ham Woods, who led the day and were really pleased with the results. We chose Wrigleys to volunteer in Forder Valley as their factory is close by. Very few of them knew that the nature reserve existed. People really seemed to enjoy the day working as a team and achieving a visible difference to the site. They said they would definitely visit again and even mooted the possibility of 'adopting' the work in the site and having a few regular days a year.

Next year with SS2N we are looking at supporting other businesses and City College's Work Based Learning programme to take an active role in caring for local green spaces.

Emily Bullimore, Community Liaison Officer, PCC Street Scene Services

Case study:

Training up citizen scientists for the future
Alison Smith, Community Scientist, Open Air Laboratories,
School of Biomedical & Biological Sciences at Plymouth University



Survey training

Over the past few years OPAL has been working with Stepping Stones to Nature, helping to get schools, youth and community groups studying their local environment as citizen scientists. This year, whilst continuing our outreach work, we have been building capacity through training so that this work can continue in the long term.

Citizen science has a vital role to play in helping improve our understanding of green spaces. It has been shown to be an effective way of improving community-level understanding about our environment, with over 90% of OPAL survey participants stating they had learned something new about nature. In addition it can improve scientific understanding, by generating large numbers of records for plants and animals and inspiring new people to becoming biological recorders.

OPAL ran two training sessions on how to carry out OPAL surveys and led sessions with groups in Ham Woods in Spring 2012. 27 local teachers, friends group volunteers, community and youth group leaders, and neighbourhood staff from Plymouth City Council attended.

As a result of these sessions many of those trained have gone on to run their own events in their communities and schools:

2 Staff from the PCC Neighbourhood Regeneration team for North Prospect have run Bugs Count events in parks. This has further inspired members of the local community to get involved in the survey. One community member who has set up a group to help disadvantaged children has been in touch with OPAL about some specific training for himself and other volunteers so they can run their own surveys.

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Over the coming months OPAL will be working to strengthen links with group leaders and teachers, and host further training sessions to ensure citizen science continues to generate new understanding and interest in our nature reserves and open space in Plymouth.



Millipede hunting with OPAL

Outcome 2: Natural spaces are used and cared for as participants gain confidence, knowledge and ownership Access to Plymouth's surroundings - trips to next steps

We have continued to work with our partners National Trust, Dartmoor National Park Authority and Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to support nearly 250 residents on 20 trips to access nature just outside of the city.

As well as supporting a number of one-off trips, we have done some more in-depth, longer term projects with target groups. Feedback from groups who attended last years' trips has shown us that groups continue to use the spaces after a supported trip. Stonehouse Play Association now regularly use the Saltram Forest School site for youth activities; Tamarfolk Children's Centre have a huge board of information on the Tamar Valley line in their foyer for parents.

Dartmoor National Park

- Moor Men's Health - a joint project with NHS. See case study on page 26
- Summer Mix 2011 'Life with a Ranger' - 2 young men took part in 2 days on site
- Play Day at Princetown High Moorland Visitor Centre - 50 Plymouth participants taking part in family activities in the centre and a walk across the moors
- 4 trips to Burrator to participate in nature activities with South West Lakes Trust and Dartmoor National Park for Age Concern, Oasis Community Centre, Keystone children's centre and Race Equality Council. It also formed part of a consultation towards improvements to the site. See case study on page 20



Den building at Princetown High Moorland Visitor Centre Garden



Guided walk along the old railway at Princetown

Outcome 2: Natural spaces are used and cared for as participants gain confidence, knowledge and ownership Access to Plymouth's surroundings - trips to next steps



Daphne the lifestize willow structure at Saltram

National Trust

- 1 trip to Saltram Forest School for Keystone Children's Centre
- 1 training session on Storytelling for 3 local residents at Antony House
- 2 in-depth projects for Young Carers in Plymbridge Woods and Women from Plymouth Diversity and Race Equality Council at Saltram. See case study on Page 22 & 23

Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (TVAONB)

- 2 trips to Calstock with Tamar Folk Children's Centre. 60% had not visited Calstock before. 85% said they would return. 'I thought the train would be hectic with all the buggies but it was unusually relaxing. Will do this trip again!'
- 1 trip to Calstock with Pilgrim's Primary School
- Supported development of the Grand Day Out, a family day encouraging Plymouth families to access the Tamar Valley rail line. 8 families participated.
- Installed a new interpretation board for the Discovery Trail walk from Plymouth to Tamar Valley, with help from Mary Dean Primary school pupils
- We ran 2 guided nature walks and 1 sponsored walk along the Discovery Trail. 74 people attended from in and around Plymouth

'I'll definitely be bringing my grandson back... there's so much we can do together. The railway trip is awesome!'

Plymouth participant at Grand Day Out



Article in the Evening Herald

Case study:

Using the SSZN partnership to engage new audiences to support the future use of Burrator on Dartmoor
Emily Cannon, Project Development Officer, South West Lakes Trust

Burrator Reservoir is on the edge of Dartmoor, surrounded by mixed woodland which leads onto the open moor. It's an ideal starting point for 'wilder' trips, with a good circular walk around the perimeter. To develop a Phase 2 HLF application for the 'Burrator Historic and Natural Environment Project' we had to design and carry out an extensive programme of community consultation to find out 'peoples' current experience and use of Burrator, what barriers people face accessing it, and identify opportunities that enable new audiences to engage with the site in the future.

We delivered a programme of informal drop in sessions, talks, taster sessions and events, which enabled us to identify people who had stories to tell and site memorabilia. We learn about how many people know about and use the site, what they use it for, and like about it (few people knew about the site's wealth of archaeology), and find out what opportunities for learning and participation they would like to see developed.

We also explored the key barriers people face in accessing Burrator and the wider countryside. These include lack of public transport, lack of knowledge and confidence in exploring the site, the bleak Dartmoor perception, concern that it is physically inaccessible for people with mobility difficulties and general fear of the unknown.



Trips to consult with different groups on improvements

SSZN provided us with invaluable support by introducing us to a number of community groups and we also introduced them to new groups. SSZN was able to provide transport for them to visit Burrator as part of their 'trips to next steps'. This provided SWLT with the opportunity to deliver a greater number of taster sessions and get feedback from a wider range of audiences.

This model of partnership working has enabled SWLT to design an inclusive and achievable project that is relevant not just to the needs of our regular site users and the local community but also new audiences. As a result we have developed a Stage 2 HLF bid which includes a programme of access improvements, facilities, interpretation, learning and participation which we believe is very inclusive and promotes access for all.

To build on the programme, we were invited to be part of the SSZN Embedding Change Partnership Programme (ECP). This new ECPP network of landowners and community organisation representatives will provide a support mechanism for organisations to develop and maintain partnership working and provide a forum for sharing of good practice. I feel this group will be invaluable for SWLT in supporting the Burrator Project to be successful from the start and sustain the work SSZN have started.



Group visit to Burrator with South West Lakes Trust, supported by Plymouth Diversity and Race Equality Council.

Case study:

National Trust getting outdoors and closer to nature - introducing new audiences to our open spaces
 Steph Rodgers Senior Community Ranger, Plym Valley

Young Carers Club Plymbridge Woods

A successful trip to Saltram for families with Friends and Families of Special Children (F&FOSP), an organisation that supports families with children with disabilities, led to a new partnership. Consultation with their Young Carers project - The Fun and Freedom Club, showed that the young people were interested in an outdoor project. SS2N brought the idea to National Trust (NT) and 'Woodland Adventures at Plymbridge Woods' was born.

The aim of the project was to provide a programme of woodland based activities for the young carers group which:

- Improved health and well-being by giving the children an opportunity to play, relax and have a break from their caring responsibilities in a healthy outdoor environment
- Built the children's confidence, knowledge and skills around nature, woodlands and the environment
- Developed new partnerships

We put together a varied programme of activities delivered by NT with support of SS2N and F&FOSP staff and volunteers over a 7 month period. 12 children signed up and participated. The final session included parents and was an opportunity for us to showcase what the children had been doing and share their learning with their parents.

Outcomes

Steph Rodgers,

National Trust, Plymbridge:

Through repeated visits it is noticeable that these children are more comfortable being outdoors. Playing well together, helping each other and venturing off to explore on their own has increased. They are more aware of their surroundings and always vocal about how much they like it outdoors. Children respond to activities dependant on their mood so it's good to be able to have a fluid programme.



Certificate ceremony



Play by the River Plym



Woodland ID

Lucy Tozer, National Trust volunteer:
 One or two children were nervous about bugs at the beginning, but once we got started, were excited by what they found in the woods. Because they have been before this group are now very aware of safety in the woods and are in tune with the outdoors. One boy was very interested by the bugs found during pond dipping - he had read about some of them in books but was excited to find them in local ponds. 5 out of 6 parents who attended the celebration session said that this programme had enabled them to have a 'break'.

Comments included:

'I didn't have to worry about Will too much'
'It was good to know the children were safe and having fun'
'It gave the boys a break as life can be quite difficult for them at home sometimes'

All parents agreed that the programme had enabled the children to make friends and interact with other children which they thought was important.

'It is important that he can do things outside that I am unable to do. Also with other children who understand.'

All parents agreed that the children had learnt about nature, were more active and more confident outdoors and all parents agreed they now felt more confident to come back to Plymbridge Woods.

Case study:

National Trust getting outdoors and closer to nature - introducing new audiences to our open spaces
 Emma Ouan, Saltram Visitor Experience & Marketing Manager

Saltram Willow Weaving Project

In SS2N's 2nd year we ran 4 basket-making workshops at the Muslim Women's Group, held at Plymouth Diversity and Race Equality Council (PDREC). The women enjoyed the project immensely and created interest in further developing weaving techniques.

In SS2N's 3rd year we were keen to develop the project further. After a meeting with NT Saltram it was agreed that it was an ideal venue to work and create a structure in one of their green spaces that visitors could enjoy. It also provided a safe space for the women, with an indoor area if the weather was bad.

Together, partners developed a 4 month programme using willow weaving as a tool to build participants' confidence and enjoyment of nature. The participation was opened out to other women's craft groups to encourage a more diverse group as PDREC's aim is to get women from many different ethnic backgrounds to work together and break down barriers. 25 women participated overall.

Willow weaving and design sessions were interspersed with guided walks in Saltram's house and grounds, supported by the Head Gardener, helping to build the participants' knowledge of the local flora and fauna, and relationships with NT staff. The sessions were all working towards the final output of building a huge willow structure within the public grounds of Saltram.

A couple of the participants designed the structures and the group built a sea monster (due to the proximity to the river) and their own interpretation of Daphne the Greek Goddess as an Olympic Torch bearer. The official public opening invited participants' family and friends, as well as regular visitors to Saltram to the sculptures and a willow weaving taster session. Over 50 other local families attended which coincided with Love Parks Week.



Building willow structures

'National Trust Saltram was a fantastic host and we were able to use a variety of materials from the Saltram grounds for our structure. The staff were welcoming and embraced the idea of using their green spaces for new and creative ideas.'
 Vanessa Crosse,
 Plymouth & Devon Race Equality Council



Willow bird feeders

Outcomes

- A few participants had never been to, or even knew Saltram existed. Since the project some of the participants now feel confident enough to visit Saltram independently with their friends and families
- A few participants reported that they had mental and health related illness and being part of this group had improved their wellbeing on many levels. E.g. many people reported that they slept more soundly, the activity stopped them thinking about their problems.
- Building a large willow structure together enabled people to learn to work as a team, share their culture and interact with the wider community. As the project progressed this became an integral part of the sessions, not only just within the women in the group but also talking to members of the public about the project. This has helped to raise the confidence of some of the women to integrate within the wider community
- There was a huge sense of achievement in creating an installation that will be a legacy that can be shared by the wider community as well as their family and friends.
- The women set up a facebook page dedicated to the project. Many of the women have family in different parts of the world and wanted to share the pictures of the project as they were very proud of the end result.

The structures look very striking on the site. The head ranger put a picnic bench there and the area is now being used by children and families to relax and play. As a result of this project the National Trust are discussing with SS2N a follow up project to improve play opportunities in their grounds - possibly using willow.

Outcome 3:

Natural spaces are valued, used and promoted for their health benefits

Plymouth has significant health inequalities between the poorest and most affluent neighbourhoods. Good quality, well-used green space can play a significant role in improving health.

This year we have continued to target activities at groups who suffer from poor health. These have included hard to reach families, residents and children's centres in more deprived areas, men with health issues and people who have suffered from heart disease. We encourage participants to notice the impact that being outdoors has on their health and to record their observations at all events.

Outcomes

- Evidence shows that as a result of engagement, people seem to be putting a higher value on their own use of green space and returning independently and regularly
- Walking for Health groups continue to grow. 20 leaders were trained and we have 5 groups holding regular walks. See case study opposite
- Evidence gathered over the past 2 years is enabling us to consider future greenspace health projects in partnership with Public Health. See Case Study Moor Mens Health with Dartmoor National Park on pages 26 & 27
- SS2N is now embedded into the city's Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan with a view to creating a pathway for future work after the end of the project



Bat and moth walks are really popular

Case study:

'Walk a while, it will make you smile!'
 Keystone and Morice town Children's Centres's parent-led Walking for Health groups
 Nikki Hawkings, Family Activities Coordinator, Keystone Children's Centre

Walking for Health fits in well with our Children's Centre's promotion of healthy lifestyles and our HENRY (health, exercise and nutrition for the really young) programmes. During 2011, we ran a number of successful family walks and activities with Stepping Stones. However we realised that in order to make this sustainable we needed to train volunteers to lead the walks due to lack of staff capacity.

Together with SS2N and NHS Community Health Improvement Team, we agreed to run a project training a group of parents who volunteered for and used 2 of our children's centres at Manor Street and Morice Town.

To gauge interest and to attract parents to participate, 2 puddle walks were incorporated into 'Tumble Tois', a regular group programme. 9 families attended. From this, 1 parent and 5 parent volunteers were recruited to the training which started in February 2012.

The walk leader training is normally completed in a day training course. However, feedback from the parents told us that this wouldn't work. We amended the training to 4 two-hour sessions and SS2N funded a crèche during the sessions. This suited parent's time availability and also gave more time to digest information and build relationships. SS2N also funded sets of waterproofs and wellies for the children's centre to keep for use by participants who needed them during wet weather. The training concluded with a walk organised by the new leaders to a local play park and awarding certificates. This was attended by 13 adults and 14 children and was enjoyed by all.

Since completing the training the group have delivered a celebration event, doing a walk from each Children's Centre to meet in the middle at Victoria Park for fun and games; 36 parents and children took part. We've also organised 2 more walks in local parks.

Outcomes

All of the parents stated that they felt more confident in taking part in group activities. I have noticed that they are also more aware of risks and low level parenting skills. The training and certification is important to improve parents' employability and their confidence to re-enter the job market. The parent who participated has also now joined us as a volunteer.

Participant comments included:

'It has given me confidence to do and organise things, getting to know people better as well as the local community e.g. Oasis Caff.'

'I think more about walking for short trips and enjoying local/parks/green spaces with my family and toddler groups.'

'I feel more confident in arranging walks in the future.'

Next steps

SS2N will be working with our Parent Support Group to build their confidence in delivering walks. Part of this will be equipping them with the confidence and knowledge to run nature based activities to engage parents with their children during the walks. We also hope to train 3 other parent volunteers to be walk leaders and link the group into the wider Plymouth Walking for Health network.

Case Study:

Moor Men's Health - a health project joining Plymouth with Dartmoor National Park
Dean Blagdon, Community Physical Activity Worker, NHS

In Summer 2011 Dartmoor National Park Authority (DPNA) attended a Men's Health event in Plymouth City Centre, organised by the NHS as part of Men's Health Week. People attending expressed surprise at seeing Dartmoor at a health event and didn't appear to see the link between health and getting outdoors on the moors.

At an evaluation with SS2N we agreed to initiate a new project that explicitly linked use of Dartmoor with improved health and well-being. We agreed to target it at men, delivered by men: Dean Blagdon, Community Physical Activity Worker with NHS and Orlando Rutter, Senior Outreach Officer at DPNA - where we felt our knowledge and skills could complement one another.

The project promotion of 'Moor Men' was targeted at NHS priority neighbourhoods with poor health as well as an open invitation in the Evening Herald. 6 people attended our recruitment information event where we gave a presentation on the benefits of physical activity and an overview of the history, geology and wildlife of Dartmoor. Potential recruits were asked to complete a well-being questionnaire and a health check, followed by a group discussion on possible activities and suitable times. Participants were encouraged to bring a friend to the first activity day.



Moor Men's Health Dartmoor inspired poetry

The project itself consisted of 3 days on Dartmoor followed by an evaluation event. Each day explored a different area of Dartmoor and were structured to address specific areas of health for participants at each session. Day 1 started with a 6 mile guided walk along disused railway tracks with a focus on cardio-vascular health and nutrition; day 2 was conservation and nutrition; clearing a pathway through Burrator forest concentrating on musculo-skeletal strength and flexibility, and day 3 an experiential walk in the woods with a focus on soft skills and mental well-being finishing with a creative/poetry session.

The activities were structured to:

- Build confidence to access Dartmoor independently
- Improve cardiovascular health and stamina and discuss nutrition and hydration
- Develop a 'safe environment' in which to discuss and share personal stories around mental well-being
- Build relationships between team members and foster a team spirit

Outcomes

- 8 men participated. As facilitators we saw the men develop as a team, showing care and concern for each other and able to open up and talk about issues.
- 5 men attended the evaluation meeting.
- Out of this: 3 had increased their physical activity levels / 2 had accessed their local green space more
- 5 had visited Dartmoor more often / 4 had increased confidence when visiting Dartmoor
- The NHS signposted one participant onto their 10% weight management programme and DNPA is supporting another to volunteer on Dartmoor with a ranger

'I'm perhaps a little more adventurous now!'
'More active now'

Case Study:

Moor Men's Health - a health project joining Plymouth with Dartmoor National Park
Dean Blagdon, Community Physical Activity Worker, NHS

What worked?

- Having participants from a wide social spectrum with different health issues, enabled a more diverse group where individuals were able to support one another in different ways. Looking at the weaker members and to encourage them to push themselves that little bit more, using my weakness in some activities'
- Having the same central meeting point for every activity day - Brickfields Sports Centre - made it easy for participants to remember
- Having Dean as a key liaison always there to meet people before the activity and taking time to ring around reminding people to attend and 'checking-in' with them
- Sharing leadership between DPNA and NHS meant we didn't both have to be there each day, ensuring a more effective use of resources, although we were both there at the beginning and the end
- Allowing the dynamics of the group to develop, not interfering as a leader, enabling people to interact as adults
- Keeping the group to a small enough size, where good relationships could develop
- Keeping the group to men only, including facilitators

'I feel safe talking about how I feel with people in this group'

'I wouldn't have been able to say any of this if women had been present'
'I enjoyed the company of guys; the camaraderie'



Moor men's health conservation volunteering

Outcome 4: Natural spaces are used by a range of organisations working together

Partnership working continues to be key to the success of the project. We have strengthened our work with current partners, which has created new spin-off projects outside of SS2N and we have made new partners this year, bringing the total number of organisations involved to 60.

Part of our exit strategy is to ensure that these partners are part of a sustainable network empowered to continue to work together after SS2N is complete. Some achievements this year include:

- Working with the University on a successful bid to Natural Connections Demonstration bid to DEFRA to engage schools in deprived areas with learning in the natural environment for delivery in 2012/13
- Supporting a successful bid by START Refugee organisation to the Communities Learning Innovation Fund to support walking groups for delivery in 2012/13
- Working in partnership with South West Lakes Trust, sharing best practice and relationships to support their bid to Heritage Lottery Fund to improve Burrator for use by local communities (in particular the Plymouth audience). See case study opposite
- Working with the city's arts community, bringing high quality art to green spaces and innovative ways of engagement - for example commissioning international land artist Peter Randall Page and 'Shed on Wheels' through Take a Part. See case study opposite
- Disseminating information gathered to date on our partnership research project led by Janet Richardson Professor of Health Service Research at Plymouth University. This has included a publication of a paper in Health Promotion International 'Building HIA approaches into strategies for green space use: an example from Plymouth's



Partnership with Take A Part, Arts Organisation

'This was the best networking event I have ever been to'

Ash Pearson,
Devon and
Cornwall Manager,
The Conservation
Volunteers



Case study:

The role of public art in engaging people with the natural environment
 Jodie Bishop, Public Arts Officer, PCC

Art can play an important role in shaping and animating our parks, woodlands and open spaces: the introduction of art trails and mapping can aid navigation through open spaces, projects inspired by local heritage can help to tell the story of an area and more permanent works can create a focal point, add distinction and develop a sense of place.

For artists the natural environment provides a continual source of inspiration as well as a unique location to site work and engage new audiences who might not normally visit a gallery setting.

As public arts officer for PCC, I have worked closely with SSZN to develop a range of creative projects in local green spaces which aim to:

- Draw people to visit and experience new areas in the city
- Encourage regular visitors to re-look at and appreciate their surroundings through new engagement experiences or by simply altering the everyday view
- Generate pride and a sense of ownership that encourages future care and conservation of the space
- Engage new audiences with contemporary art

Community involvement in the process of creating and commissioning art projects has been as important as the final artwork produced. Core to the success of projects has been the continual engagement of members and their willingness to take ownership, be challenged and explore new ideas for their community.

Some examples of this year's projects

Plymouth, People Parks Photography
 A partnership with Plymouth University and local business 51 Studio, this was a project which supported undergraduates to gain experience of working with a business client as part of their degree course. Student Amy Rixon was nominated to work with PCC and 51 Studio on a photography project to celebrate our green spaces and the people who use and care for them.

Amy both photographed and captured stories and memories from participants across the city. The output was an exhibition and booklet which profiles the different relationships people have with the city's natural environment, documenting an alternative heritage told by the people who use the spaces. Over 70 people attended the exhibition launch. Not only did it provide Amy with her first exhibition and enhance her portfolio as an emerging young artist, it provided a tangible output to demonstrate how much we value local people's involvement in the city's green spaces. Participants were pleased to be asked and very proud to be represented in the final product.



Plymouth People Parks Photography exhibition

'The Plymouth People Parks project was a collaboration between Stepping Stones to Nature and myself, that is part of my degree BA (Hons) Media Arts at Plymouth University.

Along with my own personal learning objectives that relate to my work as a practitioner, I learnt about a side of the chosen city of my studies that I did not know existed.

I met inspirational people who use, care for and manage Plymouth's green spaces whilst learning of the changes they have made and are making that result in these spaces being enjoyable for public use.'

Amy Rixon – reflection on Plymouth People Parks

'Shed on Wheels gave us a good insight into what is on our doorstep! For everyone to see and experience and try. A wonderful haven of nature and interest.'

Resident

Shed on Wheels - a mobile community engagement tool created as a follow on from Take a Part's Grow Efford project, the Shed on Wheels is a converted milk float which acts as a mobile community engagement tool. Created by regional artists Rufus Maurice and Belle Benfield it is made from recycled materials and is a really iconic and eye-catching piece.

It was moved around to different green spaces during Love Parks Week 2012, it acted as a focal point, meeting area and communal picnicking space. People were encouraged to interact with the SOW, going on foraging walks and coming back to try out their finds, like nettle tea and elderflower fritters. People were also invited to share a story about their local park, often with someone new, from a selection of themes that they choose from cards - this meant that SOW also acted as a social space, developing community networks.

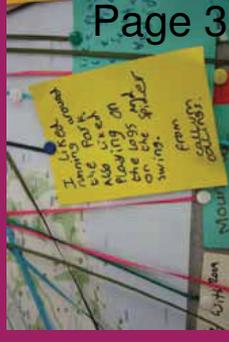


Using Shed on Wheels for consultation

Case study:

The role of public art in engaging people with the natural environment
 Jodie Bishop, Public Arts Officer, PCC

The Future
 Plymouth has a fantastic wealth of outdoor spaces. Through continued partnership with SSZN, public art can play a key role in encouraging people to visit, enjoy and appreciate these spaces whilst providing artists with the opportunity to create inspired and unique artwork. We are looking forward to building on projects for the final year of the project.



Using Shed on Wheels for monitoring and evaluation

Case study continued:

The role of public art in engaging people with the natural environment
Jodie Bishop, Public Arts Officer, PCC

Peter Randall Page in Ham Woods

Funded by Arts Council England, we partnered with local arts organisation Take a Part, to look at public art in Ham Woods. Over a 6 month period, the local community were involved in a commissioning process for a sculpture. This included a trip to the Centre for Contemporary Art in the Natural World for inspiration and ideas; creation of a brief and interviewing potential artists on site.

Internationally renowned artist Peter Randall Page was chosen, as the community felt he understood and appreciated their local woodland. He has taken time to build a relationship with the community through regular site visits and supporting a trip to his studios where residents learnt about his techniques and viewed the work in progress.

'In Praise of Trees' is a stone seating sculpture inspired by a fallen tree which left a gaping hole in a stone wall. It provides an iconic destination point within the woods as well as a functional use as a seat!

The installation is being documented by a local resident and the Friends Group will be helping to run a celebration launch event in the autumn. The artist will be exhibiting in Plymouth University in 2014 where we hope to show a documentation of the project. This is an opportunity to put Ham Woods 'on the map', attract a new audience and raise pride in the local area.



Ham residents visit Peter Randall Page's studios

'Ham Woods is a very special place, a steep sided valley it has been saved from development and it is an enchanting peaceful natural wood within the bustle of Plymouth. Having spent some time exploring the woods and wandering the paths I kept revisiting the site of the sculpture; I feel that this place is a natural focal point, right in the centre of the park.'

After a storm brought down an old oak tree destroying an ancient wall, I decided that this was the place for my sculpture and that it would be ideal to rebuild the existing stone wall and to include a sculpture incorporating an oak seat. The work would be both a memorial to the fallen oak and a celebration of trees and woods in general; a focal point and a place to sit and contemplate the beauty of Ham Woods.'

**In Praise of Trees.
Peter Randall-Page
September 2012**



*'In Praise of Trees', Ham Woods
Dartmoor granite sculpture set in local stone
Peter Randall-Page*

Year 4: Legacy planning

By the end of year four we aim to:

- Ensure successful completion of the project's outputs and outcomes as agreed by partners and funders
- Collate evidence and learning for dissemination locally and nationally, through reports and research project
- Put in place procedures to ensure continuation of best practice

We will do this by:

Completing physical access improvements on SS2N sites

- Deliver final access improvements to leave the sites as accessible as possible
- Ensure the 6 SS2N sites have an agreed programme of maintenance delivery and budget
- Designate additional Public Rights of Way to ensure long term protection

Ensuring partners are linked into information networks

- Coordinate and deliver range of activities during Love Parks Week 2012 and 2013 as part of the Plymouth Summer Festival to raise awareness of Plymouth as a green and blue city
- Support Street Scene Services to improve website information on natural spaces activities and events
- Work with Visit Plymouth website to ensure information up-to-date and accurate and link website with providers
- Continue to publicise project activities in local media

Developing local evidence base of link between health and green space for future funding bids and to justify ongoing work

- Continue to develop walking for health across the city, rolling out the 'Walk a While, it will make you smile' project to other children's centres
- Complete research project with YMCA, NHS and Plymouth University to evidence the impact and the sustainability of a woodland walking group in Ham Woods

- Deliver another Moor Men's Health project
- Provide evidence of outcomes towards city's Mental Health and Well Being Action Plan with a view towards future funding

Working with PCC Street Scene Services and Planning to ensure legacy in place

- Continue to build confidence of residents and stakeholders to use local spaces through series of positive activities on all SS2N sites (Forder, Woodland, Efford, Ham, Southway, Kinterbury Creek)
- Continue to support development of Friends Groups / Forums to build capacity of local involvement and ownership for the above sites
- Work with local schools to develop orienteering and nature trails on all SS2N sites
- Plant community orchards in Woodland Wood, Ham Woods and Southway Valley and train local people in management and maintenance

Supporting organisations to work together to continue activities beyond the life of the project

- Continue to collate evidence for research project on organisational change
- Continue to deliver series of 'mini projects' with target groups in priority neighbourhoods with partner organisations (including next steps with National Trust, TYAONB, Dartmoor)
- Complete the Embedding Change Partnership Programme and identify model to continue this network
- Complete final project report and research paper
- Identify funding opportunities to build on the project's work

Thank you to all the organisations who worked with SS2N this year

Project Delivery Partners

Dartmoor National Park Authority, Groundwork, Plymouth City Council, NHS, National Trust, Open Air Laboratories, Tamar Valley AONB, TCV, Plymouth University

Local partners

Children's Centres
Dell (Efford), Four Woods (Honicknowle), Green Ark (Devonport), Keystone (Keyham and Stonehouse), Lark's (North Prospect), Plymbridge (Estover), Whitleigh and Southernway (Southway), Tamarfolk (St Budeaux)

Primary Schools

Beechwood (Southway), Ford (Ford), Knowle (Honicknowle), Leigham (Leigham), Lipson Vale (Lipson), Mayflower (North Prospect), Mary Dean (Tamerton Foliot), Oakwood (Southway), Pilgrim's (City Centre), Riverside Academy (Bame Barton), Shakespeare (Honicknowle), St Peter's RC (Whitleigh)

Secondary schools

All Saints Academy (Pennycross), Brooks Green Centre for Learning (Whitleigh), Sir John Hunt Community Sports College (Whitleigh)

Community and Voluntary Organisations

Targeted community provision
Crown Centre (Stonehouse), Friends and Families of Children with Disabilities (city wide), Halcyon Centre (North Prospect), Plymouth and Devon Race Equality Council (city wide), Plymouth Guild (city wide), Routeways (Devonport and city wide), Shekinah Mission (city wide), Take a Part (Efford and city wide), YMCA (city wide), START (Students and Refugees Together)

Youth Provision
Free Spirit (North Prospect), Stonehouse Play Association (Stonehouse and city wide), The Zone (city wide)

Environment

Marine Biological Association, South West Lakes Trust, Mount Edgcombe Country Park, GreenSpace South West, Woodlands Trust, Buglife

Art

Basketry and Beyond, FOTOnow

Social Housing Providers

Plymouth Community Homes, Sutton Housing, Sovereign Housing

Public Sector

Forestry Commission, Natural England, Police, Plymouth City Council: Arts, Planning Services, Street Scene Services, Youth Services, Leisure and Tourism, Neighbourhood Regeneration, Transport

Public Private Partnership

City Centre Company, Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership

Private Sector

Asda, Orange RockCorps, Wrigleys

Stepping Stones to Nature
Planning Services
Plymouth City Council
Civic Centre
Plymouth PL1 2AA

Tel: **01752 307849**
Email: steppingstones@plymouth.gov.uk
Web: www.plymouth.gov.uk/steppingstones

**A large format brochure
is available on request.**

Stepping Stones to Nature is funded by
Big Lottery's 'Access to Nature' grant scheme,
managed by Natural England. The programme
aims to encourage people from all backgrounds
to understand, access and enjoy our natural
environment. For more information go to
www.naturalengland.org.uk



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**PLYMOUTH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

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16 January 2013

Anthony Payne
Director for Place
Plymouth City Council
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PL1 2AA

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Plymouth Local Access Forum. Plymouth City Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this forum in carrying out its functions.

When calling or telephoning please ask for: **Mr Ross Johnston**

Dear Sir,

At the last meeting of the Plymouth Local Access Forum I was instructed to write to you regarding the insufficient resourcing of the Public Rights of Way team.

At a recent public inquiry the Rights of Way Officer was unable to attend because of ill-health having been signed off work with pneumonia. As such the Council failed to provide any suitably qualified lead officer at this inquiry which was of a deeply serious nature involving the promotion of the safeguarding of some of this city's most vulnerable children. It was stated that it was not possible to find any qualified officer in the Council having knowledge of public rights of way or able to respond to public rights of way matters and so the inquiry was not attended by the Council.

For a long time now we have been concerned about the level of resourcing allocated to Public Rights of Way which is an area of work which is subject to some rather unique legislative pressures. The short version of these pressures is that in 2020 any footpath, bridleway or byeway not properly recorded will be extinguished and lost to the City forever. This could potentially result in the loss of around 800 potential rights of way. The main issue as we see it is that the legal processes your officers are obliged to follow are both extremely long and very expensive making progress slow. They quite rightly prioritise their work where they can make the most improvements and they do so very effectively.

Our request to you is that we feel under the council wide reorganisation that an assistant to the Public Rights of Way Officer be found. We are well aware of the views of your officers and their managers but would be grateful to hear your opinions on this matter.

Yours Sincerely

R.G.Fairchild
Chair of the Plymouth Local Access Forum

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