

**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'