

# Stepping Stones to Nature

Annual Report Year 3  
July 2011 - June 2012

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Introduction

**Background to SS2N**  
Funded by Big Lottery as part of Natural England’s Access to Nature Programme, Stepping Stones to Nature (SS2N) 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, SS2N 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).



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. 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
- 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
- Working with partners to support 2 successful funding bids for new projects in the city during 2012/13: DEFRA's Natural Connections Demonstration bid to engage schools in deprived areas with learning in the natural environment, with Plymouth University; Communities Learning Innovation Fund to support walking groups with START Refugee organisation
- Recruiting 13 organisations from health, education, community and public sectors to our partnership legacy programme 'Embedding Change' with the aim to build their capacity to work together beyond the life of Stepping Stones

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'.

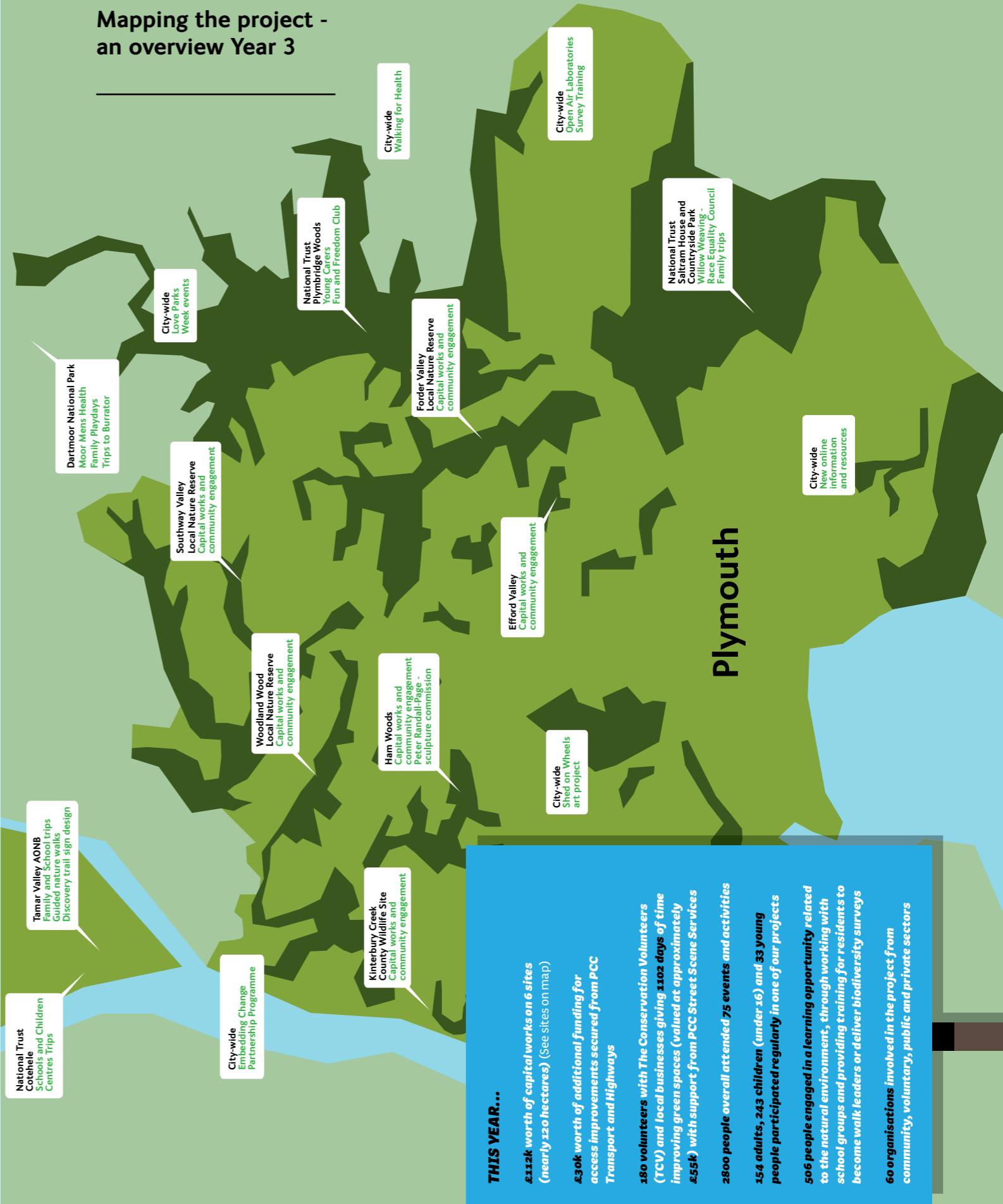
The achievements of the project are down to the support of our partner organisations and enthusiasm and flexibility of their staff to 'do things differently'. This is reflected in our research project that tracks the process of our partnership working - the findings of which are helping us to shape the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

**‘Through the work undertaken by SS2N, 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 SS2N’**  
Partner organisation

As we go into the final year of SS2N 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**

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 SS2N 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 SS2N.



Brook Green pupils carving the wisdom poles

Woodland Wood

Woodland Wood is a 29 hectare nature reserve between the neighbourhoods of Honicknowle and Whitleigh, 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 substation 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 Whitleigh side of the woods. This will include **improving the entrance** around the Whitleigh 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, SS2N 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.

Working with children through schools has also been a great way of encouraging parents into the woods to see what their children have been up to! We know the woods are now well-used and our events are regularly engaging more than 40 families. We have seen their confidence and interest grow and we are keen to harness that energy and enthusiasm in the last year of the project, to ensure this is sustained after SS2N.

Quotes from students at the 3 participating schools:

'Since doing this 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?'

*'I've been teaching in Honicknowle for over 20 years and for most of that time Woodland Wood was considered a "no go" area. 18 months ago I was put in touch with SS2N 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. SS2N 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 Whitleigh 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

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



New tree den and climbing area

*'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



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 Shed 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



Love Parks Week leaflet 2012

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.



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 SS2N sites. Nearly 2500 people attended - the majority from surrounding neighbourhoods in more deprived areas of Plymouth.

School holidays programme on SS2N 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

**‘A 16 year old male participant who was quiet at the start of the session and who had not done anything like this before, was asking questions about how to pursue an environmental career by the end of the day and his confidence had clearly grown’**  
Alison Smith, OPAL

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



Kinterbury 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 SS2N, 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, Wolseley Trust, bought wellies and macs for the adults and children. Since then, a number have joined the Wolseley 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 have also joined the Gardening 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
- Giving time to enable people to build relationships
- The flexibility of the project, including older siblings, amending the programme to take into consideration suggestions
- Minimal amount of paperwork for parents!

The project has been a resounding success and has enable me to reflect on what worked well, how in future we deliver other activities and an understanding of the challenges families face on a daily basis. The Senior Management Team is also considering how this type of activity can continue to be supported by the School.

I am now participating in the SS2N 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.



Families doing creative activities together



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.

Volunteers from Radford Woods Friends Group have run a number of sessions using the OPAL Water Survey with families and young people in the area.

At Eggbuckland Community College, OPAL has worked with a number of teachers to carry out OPAL Water Quality Surveys and Biodiversity Surveys. This included running a day event for college students at Forder Valley Local Nature Reserve. School staff are now keen to take this work into the wider community and we are helping them apply for a British Ecological Society grant to run educational sessions to engage the local community with woodland monitoring at sites around Eggbuckland and Leigham.

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 green 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 lifesize 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 SS2N 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; 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

SS2N provided us with invaluable support by introducing us to a number of community groups and we also introduced them to new groups. SS2N 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 SS2N Embedding Change Partnership Programme (ECPP). 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 SS2N 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.

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.



Certificate ceremony



Play by the River Plym



Woodland ID

Case study:

National Trust getting outdoors and closer to nature - introducing new audiences to our open spaces  
Emma Quan, 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.



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

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.



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 Centre'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 Tots', 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 Café.'**

**'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 volunteering 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

Next steps

The participants are keen to continue and we (NHS and DNPA) have agreed to facilitate another programme in Autumn 2012. It's an opportunity to build on the current group and offer some of the first participants a role to mentor new members and train as walk leaders. We will encourage the group to think about what comes after the programme right at the start and support them, in the longer term, to become a self-sustaining group.

**'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

- Engaging 13 organisations on the SS2N Embedding Change Partnership Programme, a professional development programme to bring land management organisations together with urban community, health and education providers to deliver practical interventions that create new, sustainable ways of working that fulfil their own organisational objectives. We hope that this group will continue as a network after the end of SS2N

**'This was the best networking event I have ever been to'**  
Ash Pearson,  
Devon and Cornwall Manager,  
The Conservation Volunteers



First training session of the Embedding Change Partnership Programme

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 SS2N 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 Parks People 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

Case study:

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

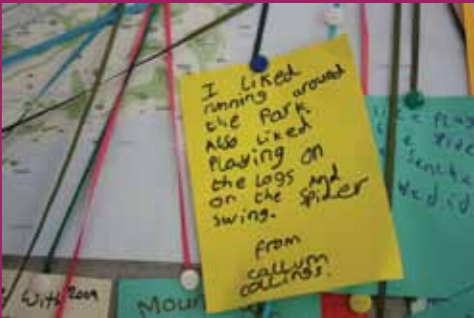
**Shed on Wheels - a mobile community engagement tool**  
Created as a follow on from Take a Part’s Grow Efford project, the Shed on Wheels is a converted milk float which acts as a mobile community engagement tool. Created by regional artists Rufus Maurice and Belle Benfield it is made from recycled 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

**The Future**  
Plymouth has a fantastic wealth of outdoor spaces. Through continued partnership with SS2N, 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 slate  
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
- 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

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

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 (Barne 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 Edgecumbe Country Park, GreenSpace South West, Woodland 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  
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Plymouth City Council  
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Plymouth PL1 2AA

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Email: [steppingstones@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:steppingstones@plymouth.gov.uk)  
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**A large format brochure  
is available on request.**

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aims to encourage people from all backgrounds  
to understand, access and enjoy our natural  
environment. For more information go to  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

