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Arboretum

Evaluation of Wild Evenings at Westonbirt afterschool programme with Tetbury Area Youth and Community Trust



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Introduction

Following on from the success of last year's Wild Evenings at Westonbirt pilot programme, we partnered with Tetbury Area Youth and Community Trust to run another Wild Evenings at Westonbirt programme for 2025. This year we worked with 11 Year 7 and 8 learners from Sir William Romney School. We are grateful to Forestry England, the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum and Children in Need for providing the funding.

The idea for the Wild Evenings programme came from a workshop, with 12 young people from Tetbury Youth Club, that we ran as part of the Insights youth voice programme in 2023. One of the themes that came out strongly was that young people recognized the benefits of being in green spaces for mental health and wellbeing (especially since Covid); so they suggested an afterschool club, at Westonbirt, to help them relax and unwind.

This year's nine-week programme was highly successful with 6 out of 8 of participants (who were at the final evaluation session), rating it as 'Great' and 2 as 'Brilliant'. Participants also reported positive changes in their self-reported wellbeing scores at the end of the programme, compared to the beginning. The areas they reported most change in were:

- I am more physically active outside the programme/ at home
- I feel more positive about myself and my achievements
- I feel better able to cope with setbacks /challenges

And, in the final evaluation questionnaire, 5 out of 6 respondents reported a positive impact on their 'connection with outdoors and nature' as well as their 'level of physical and mental health'.

TAYCT summed up the impacts of the programme as, *"Running the group after school gave some of our young people a real opportunity to decompress after a day of managing sometimes quite difficult situations at home and school. For some of our young people who are managing some very challenging circumstances, to be able to have that release, to walk, talk, be in fresh air and move their bodies before going home would have been hugely beneficial."*

This project gave some of our group members the confidence to try new things and to experience success in things they would not have had the confidence to try. This may have been simply getting on the bus and coming along or trying out new skills and activities.

For a lot of young people in this group, trying new things, going to new places and being outside of their small comfort zones is very scary. This group created a safe space where they felt confident enough to try new things and take on new challenges such as crafts, fire lighting, cooking, tool use and being outside in nature in a safe, supportive and nurturing space."

We had fantastic feedback from parents/carers who had noticed benefits for their young people, having attending the programme.

"XXX loved coming. The only time she left the house the last couple of months was for school and youth club, so coming here has been good to get her out into nature."

“XXX and XXX thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Both found the sessions “calming and relaxing” and always looked forward to going. XXX really enjoyed tree climbing and being outdoors. Thank you for inviting my daughters to this, they will have wonderful memories of their time!!!”

“An amazing programme - very encouraging in every way - very engaging and happy! They had a very positive and enjoyable experience which gave him confidence moving forward. Our thanks as a family”.

“Keep doing this - kids love it and need it!!!”

Delivery partners

The programme was delivered by the Westonbirt Community team (consisting of the Community Co-ordinator and five Community Volunteers) in partnership with Tetbury Area Youth & Community Trust (two youth workers, funded by TAYCT, worked with the group each week). For all but two of the sessions, the same team of volunteers and staff supported the programme to ensure consistency for the young people, enabling us to build a relaxed and trusting atmosphere.

Sir William Romney school allowed their minibus to be used to transport the group.

We are grateful to Forestry England and the Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum and for funding the Community programme. The TAYCT funding came from Children in Need.

The aim of the programme

The overall programme structure was co-designed by the TAYCT Head of Youth Services and the Westonbirt Community Coordinator, based on what the young people told us during the Insights research project. The aim of the programme was:

To provide a safe, afterschool club where young people can wind down and begin to restore their mental health after a hectic day at school:

- A place to relax and work on their resilience, self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing
- A place to connect with nature
- A place to learn new skills

The young people

During last year’s pilot we worked with 13 young people, aged between 11-16. This year, the TAYCT Head of Youth Services, felt that it would be more impactful to work with younger young people, focussing on Year 7 and 8 pupils. One year 9 pupil was also invited but after the first session decided not to continue.

Youth workers from the youth club put together a list of young people who they identified might enjoy and benefit most from the programme. One of the TAYCT Youth workers who attended the group is funded to mentor young people at Sir William Romney School, this allowed her to encourage and support the young people to attend the programme.

The programme

The programme consisted of nine sessions which ran from 4pm - 6pm through April to mid-July. All sessions were run with a Forest School, learner-led approach.

Week 1 was an introductory session, during which the young people talked about what they were interested in and what activities they'd like to try. We listened to their ideas to co-create a draft plan for the programme.

Week by week we added to and adjusted the plan depending on what the young people were telling us they were interested in and enjoyed doing. There was never any pressure for the young people to do a particular activity, they self-selected the things they wanted to do. This included simply sitting by the fire, chatting, relaxing and eating, as well as trying whittling, climbing trees, discovering firelighting skills, playing games, mindfulness activities, building deer protection fences to protect our coppiced hazel, finding out how to identify trees, campfire cooking and being creative through arts and crafts.

In **week 9**, the young people invited their families to a celebration event. During the two-hour session, the young people shared what they had been doing over the last eight weeks. Following this, Nia Crouch (Westonbirt Engagement Manager), Sophie Nash (Westonbirt Programme Manager), along with Emily and Mikala (TAYCT) presented all of the participants with their Westonbirt Award certificates and we also celebrated four young people achieving their John Muir Awards. We also created a Powerpoint presentation and gallery of printed photos taken over the course of the last eight weeks (shot by one of the TAYCT youth workers), for the event participants to enjoy.

Actual programme plan for the Tetbury Youth Club Wild Evenings at Westonbirt afterschool programme - 29th April - 15th July 2025

| Week & date | Activities available |
|---|--|
| Session 1 29/04/25, 4-6pm Introductions and getting to know the site | Meet, introductions and welcome at Welcome Building (WB). Introduction to Tricia and Ben (the Therapy dog) Walk to Community Shelter (CS) doing a Scavenger Hunt along the way (a kind of nature treasure hunt), to get to know the site and the wildlife that lives here Explore site and refreshments Getting to know each other, interests, aims, hearing what young people would like to try to start planning the activity programme. Also, agreeing 'camp rules / ethos' Snacks: Marshmallows and toast, plus various toppings Explain Westonbirt and John Muir Awards Tidy up, transition out and walk back |
| Session 2 06/05/25, 4-6pm Scavenger hunt, Kelly kettle challenge, Ethos, safety, relaxing, eating and skills | Meet and welcome at WB - recap on last week Walk to CS Crossing the threshold: Meeting the coast redwoods Firelighting skills - lighting the Kelly Kettles, making a hot chocolate and toasting marshmallows. Tool skills - making toasting forks with tools Other activities: chatting with friends, chilling in the hammock, games. Snacks: Making toasting forks and toasting bread, spreads, marshmallows, fruit Reflection - best bits and suggestions for next week Agree firelighters and snacks for next week Tidy up, transition out and walk back |

| | |
|---|---|
| Session 3 13/05/25, 4-6pm Relaxing, eating and skills | Meet and welcome at WB - recap on last week Walk to CS - colour matching activity along the way Crossing the threshold - Ringing the bell Free choice - From interests shown last week and first week - whittling butter knives, making clay faces, making cheese toasties, games, chilling by the fire /chatting with friends. Snacks: marshmallows, fruit, cheese toasties. Agree firelighters and snacks for next week Tidy up, transition out and walk back |
| Session 4 20/05/25, 4-6pm Relaxing, eating and skills | Meet and welcome at WB - recap on last week Walk to CS, checking out the jackdaw chicks and some tree climbing on the way Crossing the threshold - ringing the bell Firelighting and refreshments Free choice - From interests shown in first week and last week - Tree climbing, whittling butter knives or wands, nature windows, chilling by the fire, playing giant Jenga and skittles, lounging in the hammock, making and cooking sausages Snacks: Marshmallow and S'moreos, fruit, sausages and toast with various toppings, icing your own cupcake Reflection - best bits and suggestions for next week Agree firelighters and snacks for next week Tidy up, transition out and walk back |
| Session 5 03/06/25, 4-6pm Relaxing, eating and skills | Meet and welcome at WB - recap on last week Walk to CS Crossing the threshold: ringing the bell Firelighting and refreshments Free choice - from interests shown in first week and last week - whittling / continuing butter knives, tree id and leaf printing, chilling by the fire and in the hammock, giant Jenga and skittles, making and eating burgers Snacks: Burgers and salad, marshmallows, S'moreos, fruit Reflection - best bits and suggestions for next week Agree firelighters and snacks for next week Tidy up, transition out and walk back |
| Session 6 10/06/25, 4-6pm Relaxing, eating and skills | Meet and welcome at WB - recap on last week Walk to CS Crossing the threshold: ringing the bell Firelighting and refreshments Free choice - from interests shown in first week and last week whittling, Kelly kettles and marshmallow toasting, acrostic poetry, tree climbing, giant Jenga Snacks: Egg and bacon baps, goats cheese toasties, fruit, marshmallows Reflection - best bits and suggestions for next week Agree firelighters and snacks for next week Tidy up, transition out and walk back |
| Session 7 24/06/25, 4-6pm Relaxing, eating and skills | Meet and welcome at WB Walk to CS Crossing the threshold: ringing the bell Firelighting and refreshments Free choice - from interests shown in first week and last week - whittling, hapa zome, building deer protection fencing, chatting with friends, hanging out in the hammock, playing games Snacks: Marshmallows, S'moreos, fruit, sausage butties Reflection - best bits and suggestions for next week Tidy up, transition out and walk back |

| | |
|---|--|
| Session 8 08/07/25, 4-6pm Relaxing, eating, skills, planning celebration, evaluation | Meet and welcome at WB Walk to CS Crossing the threshold: ringing the bell Firelighting and refreshments Free choice - whittling, hanging out in the hammock, games, making pizza Final evaluation: Filling in questionnaire and completing wellbeing trees Talk about the celebration event and asking young people to think about what they'd like to share with their families Snacks: Pizza, fruit Reflection - best bits and suggestions for next week Tidy up, transition out and walk back |
| Session 9 15/07/25, 1-3pm Celebration event | Meet, introductions and welcome at Welcome Building (WB) Walk to the Great Oak Hall (too wet for the Community Shelter) - refreshments Powerpoint presentation and gallery of pictures documenting activities over the programme Welcome to parent/carers and explanation of the programme Young people share what they have been doing over the last 8 weeks and John Muir Award winners talk about their conservation heroes Westonbirt Award certificates presented by TAYCT youth workers, Westonbirt Engagement Manager and Programmes Manager. John Muir Award recipients acknowledged Evaluation - gathering of parent/carers' thoughts about the impact of the programme on their young people |

The group did a lot over the eight weeks, including:

- a scavenger hunt (to get to know the arboretum and the nature that lives here)
- learnt to light Kelly kettles and toast (a lot of!) marshmallows
- whittled toasting forks, wands, mushrooms, and butter knives
- used axes to make stakes and constructed deer protection fences
- had a go at Hapa Zome (Japanese art of flower and leaf bashing, releasing pigments onto cotton)
- one young person produced a lovely Lost Words-inspired acrostic poem
- learned to identify and print British native tree leaves
- took part in sensory activities (such as making smelly cocktails, looking for perfect colour matches in nature, listening to different birdsong and playing with our squeaky birds)
- crafted clay tree spirit faces which now guarding the trees in the Community Shelter area!
- had fun climbing trees
- played a lot of giant Jenga
- did some mindful colouring, chilled by the fire, stroked Ben (a Pets As Therapy dog that one of our volunteers brings to sessions with selected groups) and had mindful moments in the hammock.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We used a number of methods to evaluate the programme, including:

- As part of my Forest School training, the Community Coordinator wrote up **observations** after each session. These were used to inform the content of the next session and to focus any participant support or encouragement that might be needed.
- **Wellbeing trees** form - filled in by young people pre and post programme.
- **Questionnaire** - filled in by participants at the end of the programme.
- **Feedback from parents / carers** - staff and volunteers took note of comments made by parents or carers at the celebration event. The TAYCT also spoke to the young people after the programme finished.
- **Feedback from TAYCT staff and volunteers.**

Results of the Evaluations

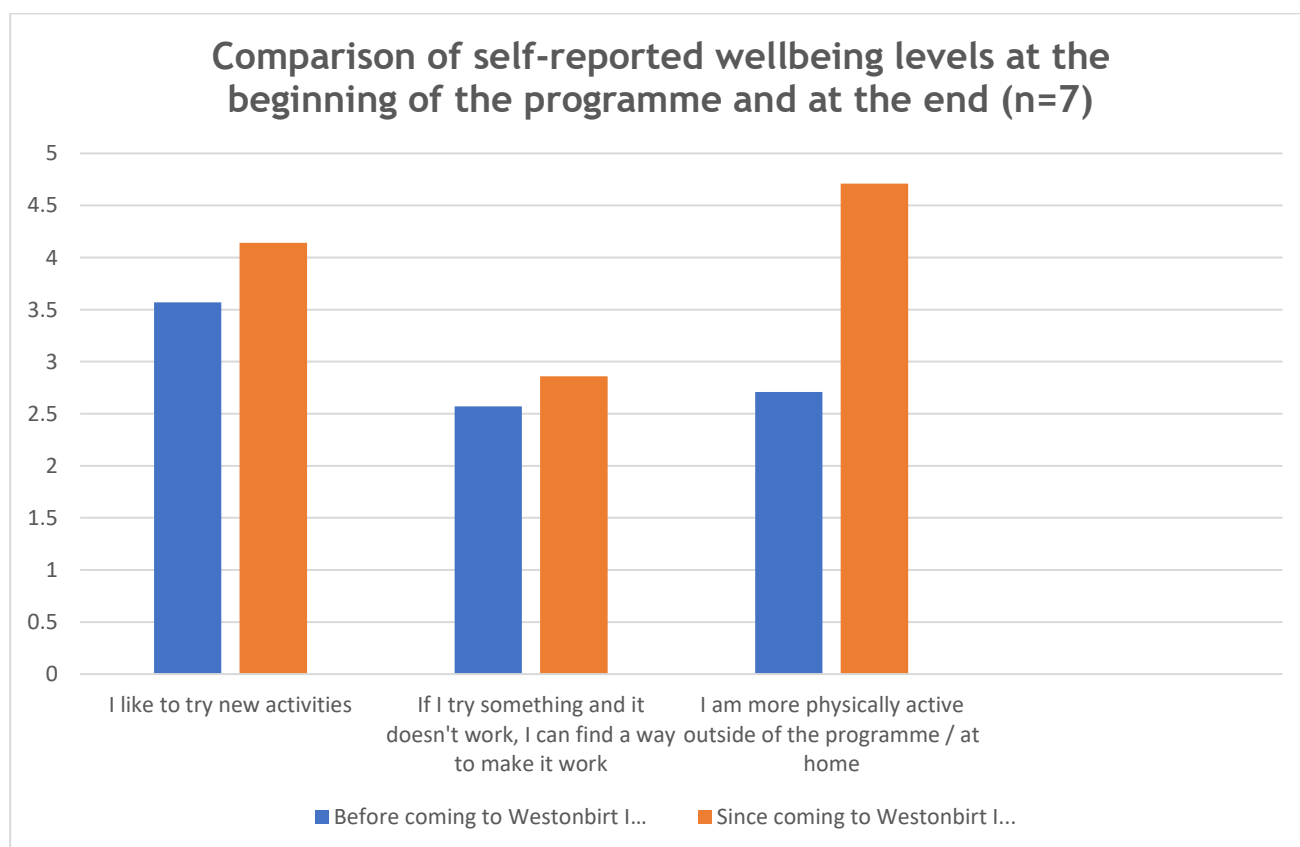
Wellbeing trees

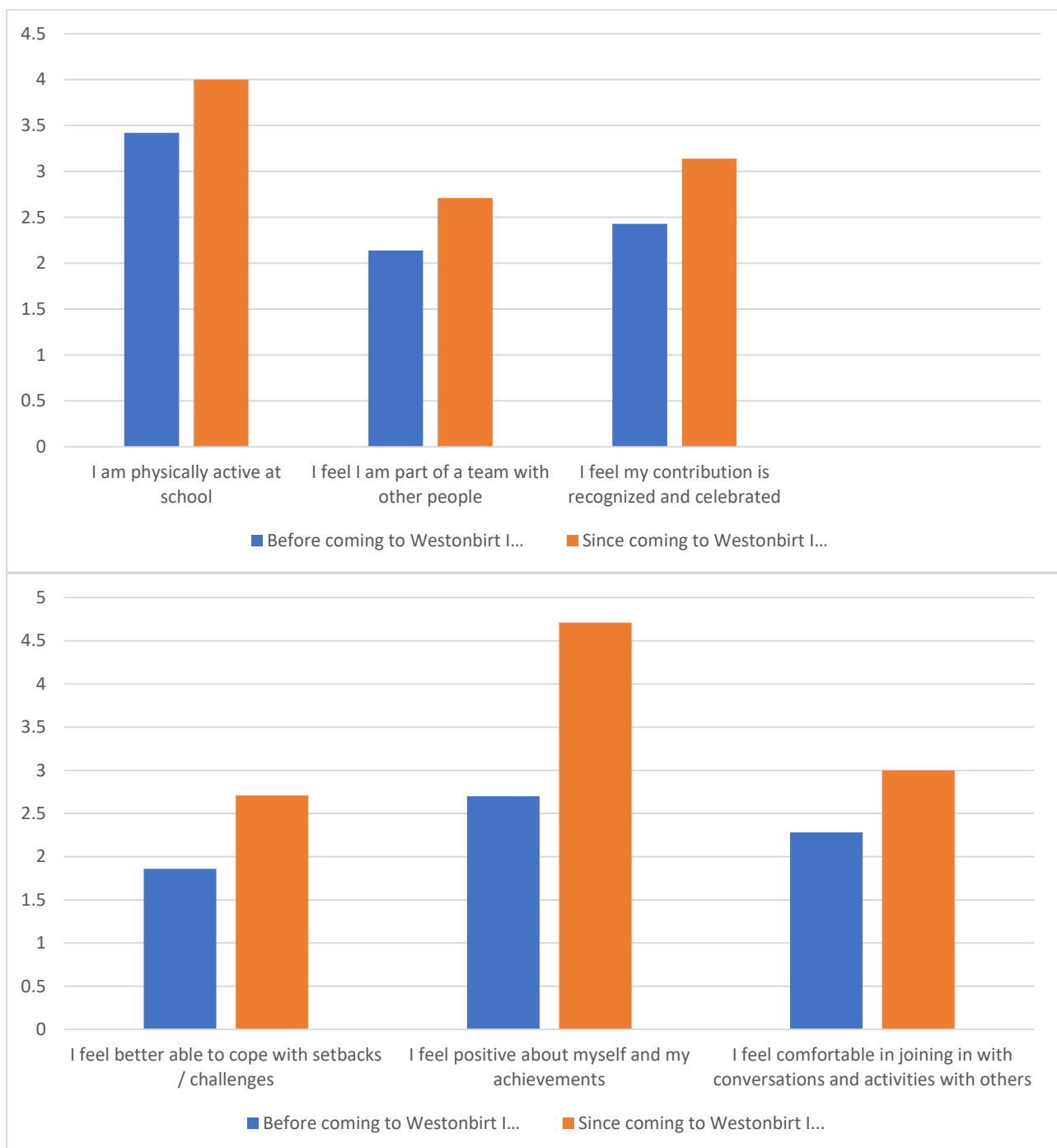
At the beginning of the programme, we asked the young people to fill in the 'Before coming to Westonbirt I...' side of 'Wellbeing tree' sheet. Below an outline of 10 trees are different wellbeing statements. The participant reads each statement and shades the tree to match how they feel on a scale of 1 (none of the time) to five (all of the time). Once completed, each sheet is then sealed in an individual envelope with the name of the participant on it.

At the end of the programme, each young person was given their envelope back. They opened them and filled in the 'Since coming to Westonbirt I...' side of the sheet, folded up their evaluation sheet and placed it in a wallet. None of the sheets had names on them so that they were anonymous.

Eleven of the participants filled in the Wellbeing trees at the beginning of the programme. Four young people did not fill a form in at the end of the programme. As this was a small group anyway, the sample size is very small (n = 7).

Analysis of the sheets showed the following:





The columns show an average of the self-reported scores for each statement at the beginning and end of the programme. Participants reported positive changes in how they felt in response to all statements. The statements with the biggest average change from beginning to end of the programme are:

- I am more physically active outside the programme/ at home
- I feel more positive about myself and my achievements





- I feel better able to cope with setbacks / challenges
- I feel my contribution is recognized and celebrated.

The statement that participants felt the programme had made least impact on, was:
'If I try something and it does not work, I can find a way to make it work'.
















Questionnaire

Only 8 of the 12 participants filled in the end of programme evaluation questionnaire as four of the young people weren't at the final session. The sample size is therefore very small (n= 8). The responses were as follows:

Tell us you what you thought of the programme... (circle the face that is correct for you):

| | Not good | OK | Great | Brilliant! |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, what did you think of the afterschool programme at Westonbirt? |  |  |  |  |
| Number of cohort circling each face. | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 |

How did coming to Westonbirt impact...

| | Negative | | No impact | | Positive | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Your connection with the outdoors/nature |  | 0 |  | 1 |  | 5 |
| Your interaction with other people |  | 0 |  | 4 |  | 2 |
| Having a positive view of yourself and your ability |  | 0 |  | 2 |  | 4 |
| Your level of physical / mental health |  | 0 |  | 1 |  | 5 |
| Your overall happiness and wellbeing |  | 0 |  | 4 |  | 2 |

NB: n=6 for this section, as two participants left this section blank

What did you enjoy about coming to Westonbirt?

Being with my friends x3

Tree climbing x 2

It's fun. I've really enjoyed talking to people.

I've really enjoyed whittling

[Spending time with] Katharine [one of the Westonbirt volunteers]

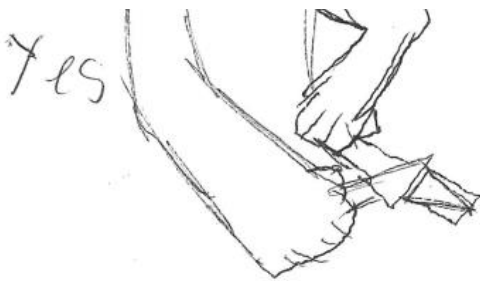
Seeing the wildlife



Did you learn anything new during your time at Westonbirt?

Whittling. I liked being trusted with sharp tools

Whittling x 4



Hapa Zome x 2

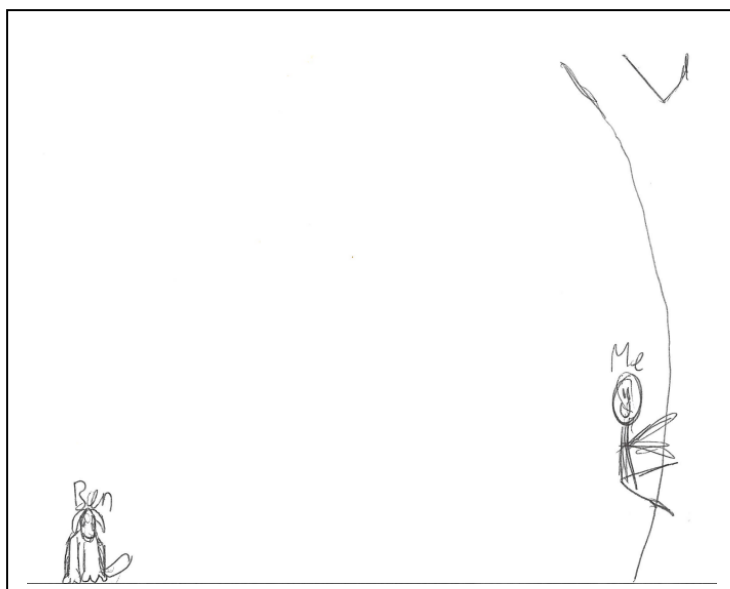
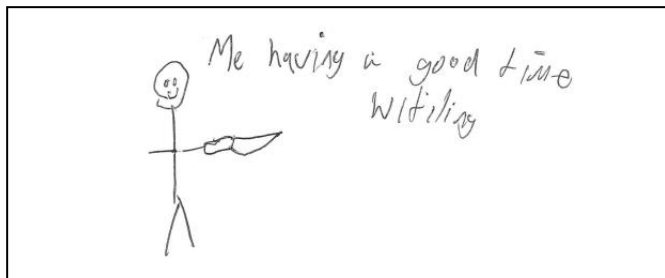
How to use the Kelly Kettle x2

Is there anything you didn't like?

Nothing x 5

Would like longer sessions, including a sleep over

Do you want to say anything else, or draw a picture, that sums up what you thought of the afterschool club?



Feedback from parents / carers

We also asked parent/carers what they thought of the programme and if they had noticed any impact on their young people as a result of coming. Here's some of what they said:

"XXX loved coming. The only time she left the house the last couple of months was for school and youth club, so coming here has been good to get her out into nature."

"XXX and XXX thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Both found the sessions "calming and relaxing" and always looked forward to going. XXX really enjoyed tree climbing and being outdoors. Thank you for inviting my daughters to this, they will have wonderful memories of their time!!!"

"An amazing programme - very encouraging in every way - very engaging and happy! They had a very positive and enjoyable experience which gave him confidence moving forward. Our thanks as a family".

"Keep doing this - kids love it and need it!!!"

Feedback from Tetbury Area Youth and Community Trust staff

The TAYCT staff met to discuss how they thought the programme had gone and complete one of our standard Community Programme evaluation forms.

They felt that overall, the programme had had a '*significant impact*' on the participants' mental health and wellbeing. They gave the following examples:

| | Specific stories |
|---|---|
| Connection with outdoors / nature | This project gave our group a chance to spend time in nature in a way that a lot of them would not otherwise do. For some of our young people they spend a lot of time indoors and would not seek out nature spaces as a way to spend their free time independently. |
| Interaction with wider society / people they don't know | This project gave our group the opportunity to meet, spend time with and connect with other young people, volunteers, leaders and youth workers in a way that they wouldn't otherwise have done. Many of the young people in this group have social anxiety and to spend time with people they don't know is out of their comfort zones. |
| Positive view of themselves and their ability | This project gave some of our group members the confidence to try new things and to experience success in things they would not have had the confidence to try. This may have been simply getting on the bus and coming along or trying out new skills and activities such as fire-lighting and use of tools. Succeeding in this helped them to have a more positive view of themselves and their ability to succeed. |
| Openness to take on new challenges | For a lot of young people in this group, trying new things, going to new places and being outside of their small comfort zones is very scary. This group created a safe space where they felt confident enough to try new things and take on new challenges such as crafts, fire lighting, cooking, tool use and being outside in nature in a safe, supportive and nurturing space. |
| Ability to positively deal with setbacks / difficulties | For a lot of our young people the idea of 'failing' is seen as very negative and something to be avoided. Much better not to try something new if there is a chance that they may not succeed. Running a small, supportive and nurturing group like this gives them the space to take on new challenges and experience the strength and growth that can come from having setbacks and difficulties as you learn. |
| Level of physical activity | For a some of our group members they do very little physical activity outside of school PE Lessons. This group gave them a chance to stretch what they could do, whether it be the walk to the community shelter and back each week, going over the bridge, climbing a tree or using their bodies to work tools and create. |
| Overall happiness and wellbeing | Our young people reported enjoying the sessions and some reported that it had increased how positively they felt about themselves and their achievements. The young people reported feeling confident and comfortable as the sessions went on and were happy to voice when there was something they didn't enjoy or would like to change. They reported feeling happy talking to people and learning new skills like whittling. |

Running the group after school gave some of our young people a real opportunity to decompress after a day of managing sometimes quite difficult situations at home and school. For some of our young people who are managing some very challenging circumstances, to be able to have that release, to walk, talk, be in fresh air and move their bodies before going home would have been hugely beneficial.

Impact of visit(s) on you as the group leader

Youth workers felt that the group gave them an opportunity to really get to know some of the young people much better as individuals. It allowed them to form closer bonds and become someone that these young people can go to and talk to when they need to. Behaviour boundaries needed to be enforced and upheld weekly with some of the young people in this group and this allowed the young people to see the youth workers as safe, consistent adults who could be relied upon to hold the space and manage them when needed. This will benefit our future work and relationships with these young people.

Feedback from Westonbirt Community volunteers

We're hugely grateful to our fantastic Community Team volunteers for using their skills, talents and patience to support the young people through the programme. They often say that they get as much out of it as the young people and that interacting with the participants keeps them young! One volunteer reflected...

"I observed how the young people arrived shyly, sticking to their particular friends but as time went on much more extroverted, talking, working and playing with others. Also, they enjoyed the interaction with older adults, calling us by our first names as we were neither parents nor school staff.

They enjoyed preparing and cooking over the fire, also lighting the Kelly kettles and toasting marshmallows. Some were very pleased with their whittling skills producing things that they showed pride in".

Another volunteer, said...

"I felt it took quite a few sessions for the young people to relax and become confident to try new things. The fact that the young people kept coming each week was a major achievement and showed how much they appreciated / enjoyed it.

I did not realise until the celebration service just how much the young people got from it. It was an amazing experience and a privilege and pleasure to be involved- thank you for the opportunity".

What went well

- The evaluation and comments from participants, parent/carers, staff and volunteers demonstrate that overall we met the programme aims in that we provided a safe, afterschool club where young people could wind down and begin to restore their mental health after a hectic day at school. The programme gave the young people a place to relax and work on their resilience, self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing; as well as place to connect with nature and learn new skills.
- The Forest School, learner-led, collaborative planning approach seemed to be perfect for an afterschool programme and this group. The youth workers reported that participants particularly enjoyed creating the deer protection fencing, Kelly kettle challenge, whittling, tree climbing and toasting marshmallows.
- The participants were really well chosen by the TAYCT youth workers and seemed to gel really well as the weeks went by.
- We had a great team of adults supporting the programme. This gave us the ability to offer a range of activities, giving plenty of choice to young people to try new things in a safe, supportive atmosphere.
- Having the same familiar adult faces each week allowed it to feel a safe place for the young people where they knew what to expect as the weeks progressed.
- The volunteers have loved the cross-generational aspect as well.
- As last year, Ben (the therapy dog) was a real hit (see the drawings above!). It was lovely to see how excited some of the young people were to see him at the start of the sessions. In all sessions, young people would spend time sitting and stroking Ben and chatting with their friends - it appears that this canine and human connection time helped their wellbeing.
- Transport to Westonbirt has been a barrier to this group coming to Westonbirt in the past. The barrier has been removed by TAYCT youth workers receiving training as a MIDAS minibus drivers and Sir William Romney school allowing the youth workers to drive their minibus to the sessions.
- Last year we did have problems with young people forgetting to bring a change of clothes for the evening session. This year, the TAYCT Head of Youth Services managed to get the message across to parent/carers and ensured participants did bring a change of clothes and were appropriately dress for an evening in the woods. She also bought a stock of wellies but the fine weather, for every session (apart from the Celebration event), meant that they weren't actually needed.
- The food was very popular. For some young people food poverty is an issue. The young people seemed to appreciate the choice of food and being able to choose what they ate from week to week.
- The celebration event was a real joy and parent/carers told us how much they enjoyed finding out what their young people had got up to.
- The older sibling of two of the participants has now joined our Wild Westonbirt youth group with his friend (his sisters had come home raving about the fun they'd had in the woods, so he was inspired to join!).

What didn't go so well

- There was one Year 9 participant who had been out of school for a while. They came to one session with their younger brother and while we tried to make them feel included, I think they felt awkward, being around younger kids, and unfortunately didn't come to another session.

- TAYCT fed back ...*"This group struggled a little bit in the first few weeks with the sitting in circle time and having to all go round as say their names each week and particularly being asked their pronouns. As a younger group compared to last time this wasn't something they were overly comfortable with or enjoyed"*.
Because not all participants made it to the first session we did need to repeat introductions in the second session to enable the young people and the staff and volunteers to begin to get to know one another - some of the young people didn't like this repetition but it was a necessary activity at the start of the new programme.
- We had some behavioural issues (including dangerous behaviour that could have hurt general visitors to the arboretum). TAYCT fed back... *"In general the youth workers found this group to be very different from previous groups and had to adapt the way they worked with them and really lay down behaviour boundaries before sessions. They had to remind themselves that this group were only 11/12 years old and had been stuck inside in school all day. There was an obvious energy release which was fantastic, but sometimes hard to manage when more focus or listening was required of them. The biggest challenge with this group from our point of view was the walk over [to the Community Shelter] and back. They liked the freedom of walking and running off but struggled with times where they were asked to stop or sit and have a chat about something. They were super excited to get to the shelter and activities and didn't do too well in being asked to stop and wait and listen and behaviour often reflected this. Again probably a result of the age of the group"*.
- TAYCT also fed back... *"This particular group weren't as crafty or into cooking as previous groups but they definitely enjoyed eating the food!"*

What we can do better next time

- If we work with a similar age group, we will learn from this year's experience and adapt our programme and expectations for working with a younger age group. Whilst we collectively agree 'camp rules / ethos' during the first session, reviewing and tweaking them may be necessary.
- Some active, running around games at the start of each session may help the young people release some pent up energy, having been on the minibus and in school all day.
- We will also look at better ways to evaluate the programme for younger, young people. Maybe either teaching self-reflection skills (not assuming that they are able to do this as we did with the older cohort), as well as asking the adults to write down observations and make verbal records for those young people who shy away from written methods. This will better enable us to capture the participants' successes and achievements, as well as wellbeing impacts.

Summary and recommendations

In Summary

This programme has been very successful, showing some real, tangible benefits for most of the young people. The evaluation and comments from participants, parent/carers, staff and volunteers demonstrate that overall we met the programme aims in that we provided a safe, afterschool club where young people could wind down and begin to restore their mental health after a hectic day at school. The programme gave the young people a place to relax and work on their resilience, self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing; as well as place to connect with nature and learn new skills.

Through the Wellbeing tree evaluation, the majority of young people reported that their physical and wellbeing levels had increased over the course of the programme. The statements with the biggest average change from beginning to end of the programme were:

- I am more physically active outside the programme/ at home
- I feel more positive about myself and my achievements
- I feel better able to cope with setbacks / challenges
- I feel my contribution is recognized and celebrated.

The end of programme questionnaire showed that 6 of respondents rated the programme as 'Great' and 2 as 'Excellent'.

Parents / carers, staff and volunteers also commented on the value of the programme and the changes they had seen in the young people. It was great to hear how much parent/carers valued the programme and that they had noticed an impact on their young people:

"XXX loved coming. The only time she left the house the last couple of months was for school and youth club, so coming here has been good to get her out into nature."

"An amazing programme - very encouraging in every way - very engaging and happy! They had a very positive and enjoyable experience which gave him confidence moving forward. Our thanks as a family"

Our partnership with Tetbury Area Youth and Community Trust has been fantastic. As TAYCT staff and Westonbirt volunteers were consistent from last year to this year, we were able to provide an experienced and supportive adult team who could provide opportunities for the young people to learn new skills, build confidence and improve their overall health and wellbeing. We therefore recommend that (if all the necessary funding is secured), we run the programme again in 2027, with a new cohort of young people. Programmes like these certainly help us work towards our Westonbirt Arboretum mission of enabling people to 'connect with trees to improve quality of life'.



