

## **Report to the Nineveh Trust – April 2023**

### **Learning and Wellbeing at Carymoor**

We are writing to provide an update on our environmental education work for 2022-23 which the Nineveh Trust was kind enough to support with a grant of £4000 in November 2021. We aim to enrich people's lives by providing outstanding outdoor learning opportunities at our unique nature reserve. We want our visitors to be inspired to live more sustainably and to feel connected to the natural world.

During 2022-23 we still felt the impact of Covid but began to see a recovery in visitor numbers to something approaching normal. The cost of living crisis has also meant teachers are more reluctant to ask parents for money towards school trips. The rising cost of diesel has also meant coach hire is more expensive than ever.

Despite these challenges, during 2022-23 our Education Manager undertook a wide range of work, helping and inspiring our community to live more sustainably and to help people connect to the natural world at our fantastic nature reserve.

During 2022-23:

- 105 school groups (3739 children) visited Carymoor to take part in our environmental education programme. 53 visits were for our Wild Days Out, focused on wildlife, with the other 52 covering sustainability themes and history days.
- 47 Schools Against Waste outreach visits were carried out in Somerset primary schools, reaching over 7000 children through an assembly. Of those children 3607 also took part in a workshop. These sessions all promoted the importance of the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle message and ways in which schools can make a difference.
- We ran 43 sessions for nurture groups at Carymoor, working more regularly with children to help build their confidence and self-esteem.
- We ran 3 inset sessions for teachers from the Ansford Learning Partnership, designed to help them build their confidence in teaching outdoors and to give them a range of tools and activities.



**Feedback from schools:** *'I just wanted to pass on my heartfelt thank you for the most spectacular day at Carymoor yesterday. From start to finish you had us all in the palm of your hand and the day was executed perfectly. The children enjoyed themselves SO much - 'best day ever' and we as staff and parents also had the most fantastic day. We all learned so much and the activities were brilliant, I felt that all children had the opportunity to shine too!'*  
Wedmore First School

*'The children had a wonderful day where your passion and enthusiasm ignited their interest in everything you shared with them throughout the day! They loved learning about recycling, making recycled bead bracelets and the fabulous visit to 'Kroo Bay.' You really were fantastic, engaging and a whole lot of fun! I went back to school to share our wonderful day, explaining how the other classes all need a trip to Carymoor!'* Wardour Primary



Our Education Manager ran a weekly Forest School session for children from Evercreech Primary both at Carymoor and in woodland close to the school. These sessions involved providing multiple sessions for every child in the school, encouraging wellbeing and building confidence. This project was supported by colleagues from Exeter University working on the Education at a Time of Emergency project, designed to help environmental education practitioners have more impact when teaching about climate change.

**Adult learning:** We continued to provide adult learning courses, working in partnership with Somerset Skills and Learning, with courses on rural crafts, wellbeing, and conservations skills. The courses were aimed at people who were socially isolated and unemployed, with a focus on building wellbeing, new skills and confidence levels. Over 120 people attended a course during the year.

*'I attended the Unwind in the woods day yesterday and had the most amazing day! What an asset all of your lovely team are-friendly, encouraging, informative and inspirational. A fantastic experience! Thank you to all involved in making it such a lovely day!'* Feedback from participant

*'Thanks again for another brilliant day. You always make everyone feel at ease and are a such great teacher.'* Feedback from participant



Supported by a grant from Petroc College we were also able to provide rural craft courses to people who were unemployed. 14 people attended these courses. Many of these individuals came from challenging circumstances, including several people who had been homeless for long periods. The courses were a chance to spend time in an inclusive space and to learn craft skills such as basket making, willow weaving, and pottery.

*'The course has made me feel so much more optimistic about the future. To be able to spend time learning new things in such a welcoming environment has been so good for the soul. Thank you!'* A participant from one of our rural skills courses

## **2023-24**

We will need to continue to adapt our services to meet our community's needs. We are planning a range of new schools outreach sessions and experiences for adults and families which we hope will help to offset the reduction in income from school visits at our site. These sessions will provide fantastic experiences which also help to increase our financial independence going forward.

We are also looking to support more disadvantaged groups (families and adults with learning disabilities in particular) through grant funded work. Carymoor's work has never felt more in need than in current times and we want to provide therapeutic experiences to support people's wellbeing and to inspire our community to live more sustainably.

**Thank you for supporting our work.**