

# GATTON PARK

The Gatton Trust

Trees for Future Project 2022-2023

Final Report



## **Summary**

This project, brought around 200 primary school children aged 5-11 from local schools to Gatton Park. Over two days each class took part in mixture of curriculum-linked sessions and tree planting. The project took place between September 2022 and February 2023.

## What did we do?

Four Primary schools local to Gatton Park were invited to bring a year group of up to 60 children to take part in the two-day project.

The full cost of the trip was covered by funding from the Netherby Trust, Toyota Fund for a Better Tomorrow and The Nineveh Trust. This included transport from their schools, which is often the most costly factor for schools.

Each class took part in four different sessions. The first day of the project the schools explored our Forest School area and had a campfire, followed by going on a seed scavenger hunt. After the seed hunt the groups learned how to plant their seeds. The seeds were collected from ancient trees on the park to start a seed nursery. These seeds will be planted to reduce the need to import plants - thereby lowering Gatton's carbon footprint, reduce risk of importing disease and to maintain the genetic heritage of our trees.



*Year 6 group, planting seeds.*

On the second day the classes took part in a magical tree trail, where they undertook various activities including bark rubbing, willow bending and tree hugging, which led them to a wizard's wand. The older children also learnt how to calculate the amount of carbon the ancient trees store. The final part of the project included planting different trees in the park, including a disease resistant elm. Smaller native trees were also planted to create a woodland understorey for wildlife.

### Project aims

- To engage young people in the understanding about trees, their benefits to people and wildlife.
- Involve young people in tree planting and collecting tree seeds and seedlings to preserve the heritage of the ancient trees on site.
- To ensure the continuing parkland landscape of Gatton Park
- To continue to provide the habitats of ancient trees and parkland
- To play our part in tree planting needed to combat our climate crisis

## Budget and Numbers

Table 1 Budget

Costs	Budget	Expenditure
Staff time – running school activities, planning, reporting, etc	£3600	£6784
Transport – coaches	£4800	£1820
Materials – educational supplies	£100	£433
Materials - Trees	£1826.4	£1463
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10336.4</b>	<b>£10,500</b>

Although our total spend was similar to our budget, the breakdown was different. We were able to save a significant amount of money on transport, thanks to a new community transport scheme which uses minibuses. This saving allowed more flexibility with our materials budget.

We did use more staff time to plan and organise the trips that was expected. This will be incorporated into our project planning in the future.

We had the opportunity to run an extra session as part of the project, with a group of visitors with dementia and their carers. They used different art techniques, such as printing and leaf hammering to create a display, incorporating some of the children's work too. As part of their session we ran golf buggy tours around the park to see the variety of our ancient and interesting trees.

The table below summarises the schools, year groups and numbers.

Table 2: Summary of school, year groups and numbers.

Primary School	Number of classes	Year group	Number of children
Royal Alexandra & Albert School	2	6	60
Lime Tree Primary	2	1	60
Furzefield Primary	2	1	48
Merstham Primary	2	2&3	44



## Feedback from the Schools

We asked all schools to fill out an evaluation form after their visit. All the feedback we received was very positive. Below are comments made by visiting teachers.

“Thank you so much for the visits to Gatton! We all had a fantastic time, we hope other schools enjoyed it as much as us.” Furzeffield Primary

“All the children absolutely loved it, especially getting muddy and jumping in the huge puddles! We learnt so much in such a short space of time and we are grateful to Gatton educational trust for having us and teaching us so much.” Furzeffield Primary

‘Well organised and interactive.’ Royal Alexandra & Albert School

“Thank you to Jess and you for yesterday, we had a wonderful day and the kids can't stop talking about it.” Lime Tree Primary

## Children’s comments

‘I really loved the days at Gatton – when are we going again?’ *Merstham Primary*

‘It was great fun building dens and climbing the tree.’ *Merstham Primary*

‘I like planting trees and it was fun putting the clay in. The staff were very enthusiastic.’ *Royal Alexandra & Albert School*

‘I loved digging and planting the trees.’ *Merstham Primary*



Thank you letters, written by the children from Furzeffield School.

## Volunteering

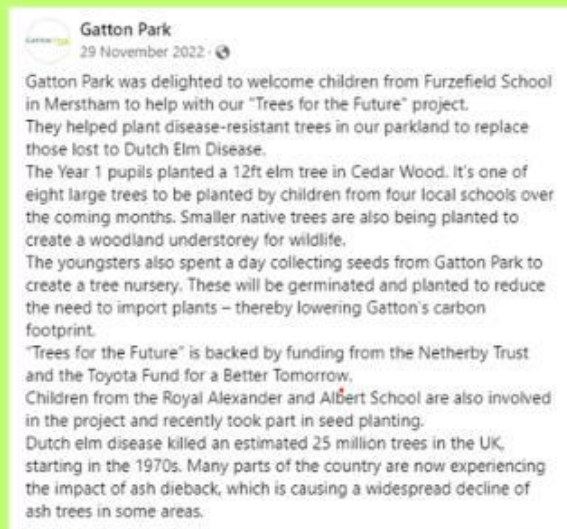
The project was supported by our dedicated education volunteers that assisted with the preparation of resources and running of the visits. Our Dementia Adventure group were supported by volunteers to create art for our display board. They used a variety of different techniques including leaf



hammering. The display board pictured below is up in our cabin, where we host toddler sessions, birthday parties and school groups.

## Publicity

The project was shared with the public in a variety of different ways. Gatton Park shared information using social media platforms. The trust sent out newsletters to all the schools who took part, so that the project could be shared with parents/guardians. Below are some examples.





## Developments for Future Projects

Points to consider for potential future projects:

- Future projects could offer repeated trips through different seasons, enabling the children to see the progress of their seeds and trees.
- Limiting the project to set year groups to avoid writing new material for each group.

## Conclusion

This funding not only enabled children to get outside and experience nature, but it also helped to create new habitats for wildlife, while conserving the heritage of the trees at the park. The benefits to children's learning when outdoors are abundant. Many studies highlight the significance of the outdoors and connectedness with nature on wellbeing. Primary schools love the opportunity to come to Gatton Park for an immersive day of outdoor learning and the children thrive given the opportunity in the beautiful parkland with its diverse offering of activities and landscapes. By helping to restore the Elm tree populations, tree planting and collecting seeds this project is helping to protect Gatton's heritage for the future.

