School pupils get a taste of nature in Cardiff's



Pupils from Cardiff's Thornhill Primary School experienced the Gwern-y-Bendy and Rhydypennau woodlands as part of a conservation project funded by a Community Woodlands grant.

About the project

The woodlands in north-east Cardiff cover 6.2 hectares of the Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs site. Welsh Water has been running the site since 2016, and is working to restore the area as a conservation zone.

The site is not currently open to the public but the aim is to become a hub for recreation, health and wellbeing for local ? mainly urban ? residents.

Thanks to a Community Woodlands grant, volunteers will be trained to work alongside conservation groups to manage the ancient forests. This includes clearing non-native species to help native plant-life such as bluebells thrive.

They will also restore an historic fishpond to encourage more wildlife into the woodlands. New walking paths and boardwalks will help make the site accessible to the public.



Lisvane Reservoir

Outdoor learning

Part of the project is engaging the local community through educational activities. Year 5 pupils from Cardiff's Thornhill Primary School recently visited the area and learned about local wildlife such as otters, bats, foxes and the great crested grebe. They also enjoyed a mindfulness and wellbeing workshop.

Rachel Antoniazzi, Deputy Head of Thornhill Primary School, said: "Our conservation club has been working with Cardiff Metropolitan University to develop learning materials for children who will visit the Gwern-y-Bendy and Rhydypennau woodlands and so it was nice for the pupils to get the chance to visit there. They all thoroughly enjoyed their trip and learnt a great deal."

Alun Shurmer, Welsh Water's Director of Customer Strategy and Engagement, said: "We were delighted to welcome the pupils to our site so that they could get some real hands-on experience of projects which will help protect the woodlands.

"This will hopefully encourage them to take an active interest in the woodland so that they can continue to be involved in its management in a sustainable way."



The Year 5 pupils on their field trip

In their own words

> “I’ve learnt that the trees communicate with each other and I never knew about this place before. It’s very exciting and there are bats, foxes and otters here.” *Oscar, aged 10*

Here’s what some of the children said of their visit:

“I’ve learnt about new species I didn’t know about before and I didn’t even know the reservoirs were here before.” Phoebe, aged 10.

“I’ve learnt that the trees communicate with each other and I never knew about this place before. It’s very exciting and there are bats, foxes and otters here.” Oscar, aged 10.

“I like how the water moves differently to the sea and I’ve liked learning about all the different animals here.” Amelia, aged 10.

“I was really surprised by how big the reservoirs are and that there are otters here.” Immie, aged 10.

Community Woodlands grants available

We are distributing Community Woodlands grants as part of the Welsh Government’s National Forests programme. Grants of £10,000-£250,000 are available for not-for-profit organisations looking to manage or create new woodlands in Wales. Projects funded by the scheme must promote community involvement.

Find out how to apply for a Community Woodlands grant.





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