

YOUTH IN NATURE REPORT

SUMMER 2021



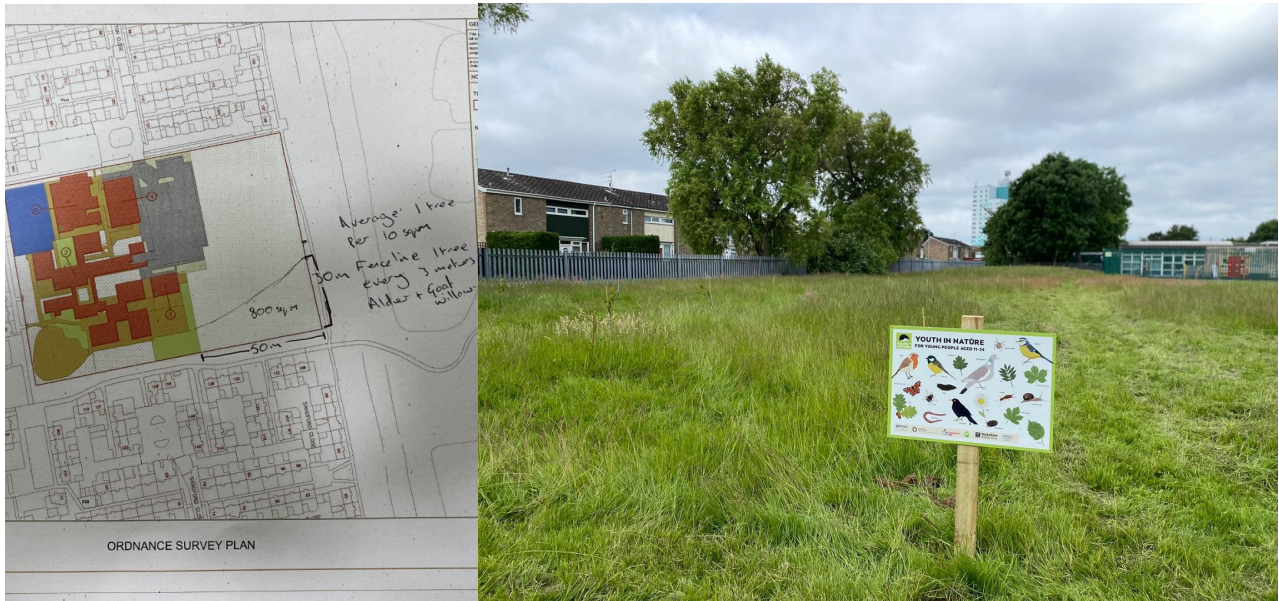
YOUTH ^{IN}
NATURE

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Youth in Nature Project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund as part of the Our Bright Future programme.



NORTHCOTT PRIMARY SCHOOL



Following some marketing to local schools and youth groups, YIN was approached by Northcott Academy to ask if we could provide some outdoor/wildlife activities for their students.

After a number of conversations and meetings YIN staff agreed to deliver a 2 week block of sessions that would focus on replenishing 2 outdoor spaces used by the pupils which would include creating a sensory and growing space for the year 7s and sensory space for the year 8s.

YIN staff also identified that the school was really keen on delivering forest school/outdoor education activities but was limited by the small green spaces they already had existing within the school.

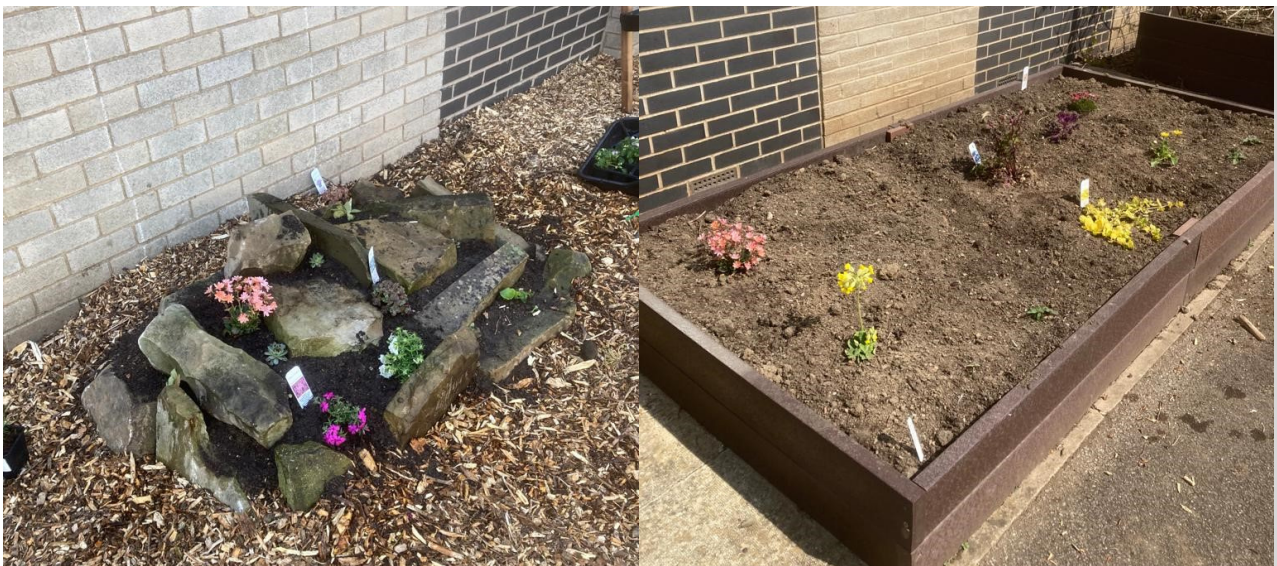
After further conversation within the team it was proposed we could support the school by creating a woodland area on the existing green field. The field was a very large area of mown grass, partly used for sports and recreation, but the south east corner had no formal purpose. The proposal to plant a woodland area was informally agreed and the team set about putting together some designs. The proposal had to be approved by the local authority as well as the school, and after a number of weeks it was agreed that we could go ahead and create this space – with the proviso that we would not encroach on any of the area used for sport activities.

The new woodland will provide an additional 'wild' area for outdoor learning – even while the trees are still small, and also create wildlife habitats for an increasing variety of species as the trees and wildflowers grow and proliferate.

YEAR 7

Year 7 had a series of planters that become unfit for any growing purposes and were pretty dull to the eye. Over 4 weeks working with the year 7 pupils we transformed the space adding edible fruit shrubs (Logan Berry, Raspberry, Blackberry) salad, herb and rock garden that would encourage the pupils to use their senses.

We provided the pupils with some additional activities which included making bird feeders and bird food kebabs. The pupils were also involved in planting the trees in the new woodland area. They created wooden plaques with their name and any design they wanted and these plaques were placed in front of the tree each student planted, so that they could identify 'their own' tree and watch it grow.



YEAR 8

Year 8s space had some flowers and bushes but was a bit neglected and lacked some character and colour. We supported the year 8 pupils with replenishing the planting with some native flowers and bulbs, and adding some features, including wooden planters which were filled with flowers and some wall planters (made from recycled pallets) filled with herbs – all of which would encourage wildlife. At the request of the pupils we also installed a water feature – which, as well as being enjoyable for the pupils, would further help to support wildlife.

YEAR 8 (CONTINUED)

The group also designed their own plant pots and were invited to plant and nurture a seed of their choice (sunflower was the popular choice). The year 8s also created some wooden name plaques to identify 'their' tree in the new woodland area.



WOODLAND

The YIN team spent weeks planning a space that would be of real benefit not only to the school but also to wildlife. We decided we would try and replicate an ancient British woodland and set about ordering over 110 native trees which included Oak, Hazel, Alder, Elder, Hornbeam and Scots pine. This also included some Black Alder and Goat Willow which would also help to reduce flooding issues on the field during periods of heavy rain.

We were in a race against time as the tree planting season was due to end during the first week of delivery and even mid planting season many trees are lost due to natural causes. However, with the help of the pupils we succeeded in getting all the trees planted. Each pupil placed their name plaque next to the tree they planted so they could take care of 'their' tree and have a legacy which they could revisit for years to come.

WOODLAND

Some wet weather helped to get the trees bedded in after the first few weeks – but we also provided the school with an extra long hosepipe and some watering cans!

We also planted over 600 native flowers which included snow drops, ransom, blue bell and lots more that would enable the area to have bursts of colour during different times of the year and give this a real woodland feel as well as encourage more wildlife to the area for pupils to observe.

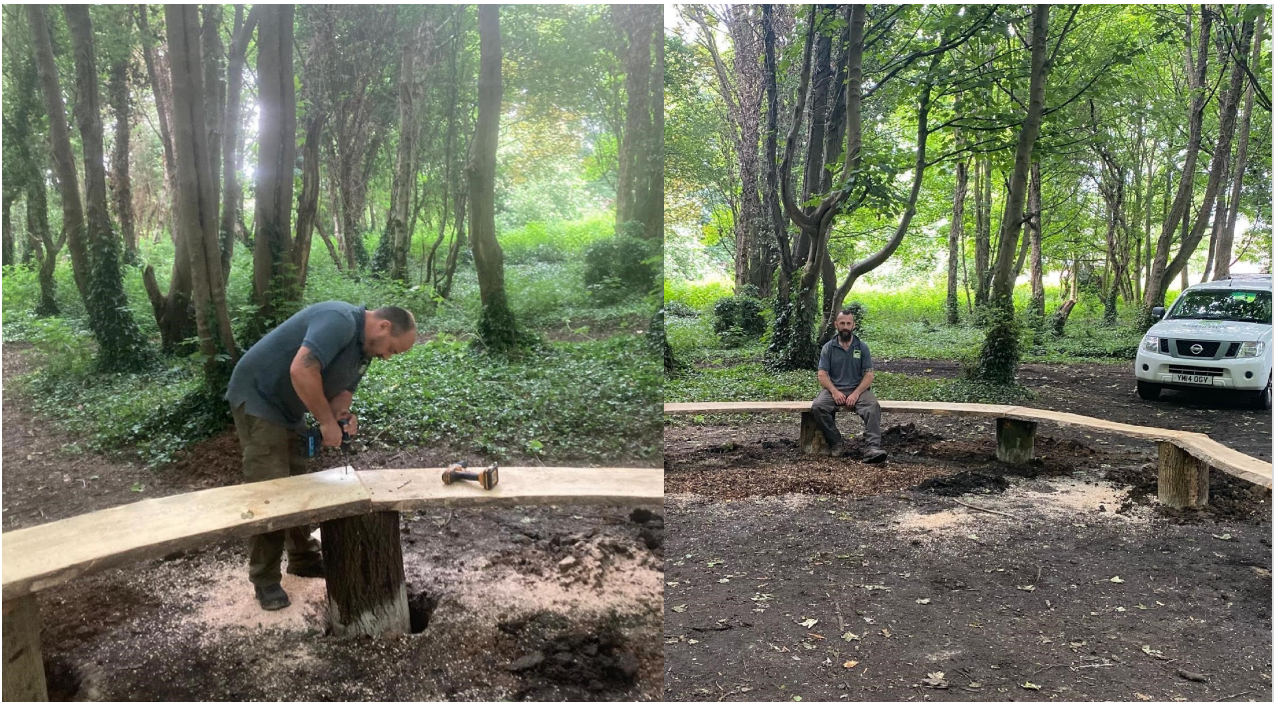
To help the school to create a space that their pupils could partake in outdoor activities we also created a space for simple conversation and reflection as well as a space for delivering fire lighting and outdoor cooking sessions.

After many hours and weeks of hard labour we finally completed our goals. We are really proud of the effort the team put into this as well the time and effort of the pupils and the teachers.

To date we have only lost 6 trees which is a testament to the time and effort the YIN team put in in the early period of ensuring the saplings were sufficiently watered.



LOZENGE WOODLAND



After 3 years of meetings it was finally agreed that a space on the edges of Preston road would be opened up for use which would enable the Youth in Nature project and Child Dynamix to deliver outdoor education sessions providing a new and exciting offer for young people and the wider community.

Locally known as 7 alleys or the Lozenge, this woodland has had lots of bad publicity including drug use and anti-social behaviour. Building on from the work that was undertaken by a lone local resident who managed to create pathways for the general public, the YIN team with the help of local young people have created a space that will hopefully encourage local people to use this space more often.

Over several weeks we have created a 'BUG TRAIL' which has included bug hotels and seating areas called 'Mothers Rest' and 'Hideaway'. There are Bug and Wildlife I.D boards for children to recognise any creatures they may see on their adventure. There is also a series of animal placards located on different trees which also adds to the fun of exploring the bug trail from one end to the other.

With local folklore in mind we created a 'white lady way' section – to reflect the ghost story which for many generations has been echoed by many local residents who dare to summon this mythical legend.

However we didn't tempt fate!!

LOZENGE WOODLAND

We've planted lots of wildflowers which will thrive and spread throughout the woodland – enhancing the space for local people to enjoy, and increasing biodiversity by providing a food source for insects and bees.

We have also created a conversation circle called 'FING' Circle (named after the Viking meeting circles known as 'THING' Circle but us Hullensians like to pronounce it 'Fing'!) which will have many uses. As well as providing a space for us to deliver more outdoor sessions to local young people including bush craft and forest school sessions, it can also be used to have open and honest conversations with young people and support them with any issues they may have, or simply for them to use to socialise with their friends, or for the general public to take a rest and tune in to the many birds and animals that call this beautiful space home.



REWILDING READING



One of our first events in The Lozenge was a very successful Easter holiday program called 'Rewilding Reading'. This event was a partnership between Youth In Nature, University of Hull and Hull Libraries.

The Rewilding Reading project engaged young people from disadvantaged areas of Hull in their local wooded spaces to take part in bush crafting, local history, storytelling, campfire cooking etc. The aim is to a) connect young people to their local woodlands which are often seen by young people/parents etc. as dangerous places to go and b) inspire young people to pick up and read some of the books that have inspired (or in Mike Covell's case - been written by) some of the 'wild' educators we are working with.

The young people really enjoyed the local stories and historical facts of the area brilliantly delivered by local author and historian Mike Covill (<https://www.facebook.com/amazinghulltours/>)

The full two weeks was filmed by local film makers 'Fly-girl Films' which will help us to create a documentary/narrative of the project so we can then share it with schools in the hope that they can bring a little 'wild' education into the classroom.

Further information on the rewilding reading please see links below:

Short film of Rewilding Reading project:
www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3921406174619332

BBC Radio Humberside Interview: www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p09fswq1

NORTHCOTT AND THE LOZENGE ARE THE LATEST, AND LAST, WILDLIFE ZONES CREATED BY YOUTH IN NATURE



Over the 5 years project delivery we have created or improved another 25 areas including gardens, woodlands, and allotments. Together with existing green areas, these create a wildlife corridor across the city which will contribute to improved biodiversity and wildlife numbers in Hull.

While doing this we have

- Engaged nearly 3,000 young people
- Of which 800 attended regular sessions
- Taken 260 young people on trips
- Enabled 175 young people to achieve a qualification or external certificate of achievement

Those young people have created wildlife habitats, grown their own food on our allotment – and contributed crops to Hull Festival, visited forests, coast, moorland and caves. Learned about biodiversity, wildlife, recycling, food miles, plastic pollution, and how to protect and improve our environment. We've visited Parliament, been to conferences in London, Belfast and Lancashire to meet other young people, and visited other OBF projects in Wales and Lincolnshire.

In 2017 over 50 young people took part in a beach clean that stretched 8 miles along the East Coast from Withernsea to Kilnsea resulting in us winning the Humber Nature Partnership Award.

www.humbournature.co.uk/news/post.php?s=2017-11-30-youth-in-nature-wins-the-2017-humber-nature-partnership-award

In 2019 a group of young people were runners up in the RHS Gardening Group of the Year www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPzGH0xP6II

YOUTH IN NATURE ACHIEVEMENTS

Also throughout 2019/2020 our steering group worked in partnership with the University of Hull on the Plastic Citizens Citizen Project producing a fantastic online resource [HOME | All About Plastics \(wixsite.com\)](https://www.wixsite.com/all-about-plastics). One of the highlights was a music video around plastic pollution and the 4 Rs that the steering group produced. The group designed some characters that was brilliantly brought to life by My Pockets (www.mypockets.co.uk/) which enabled the brilliant skills of lyric writing by Paul Clark (www.childdynamix.co.uk/meet-the-youth-team/) to support the group to put together a meaningful and powerful video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KFan1vhgO4.

Over the past 5 years we've learned to use tools and equipment, camped and cooked our own food, gained qualifications and made friends.

We've seen how outdoor activities can create a positive opportunity for all young people - including some of the most challenging, and those who, through differing ability or circumstance, might be struggling to find their place.

Through Youth in Nature young people have challenged themselves in many ways, made a significant contribution to the local environment, and proved just how capable they are.

We have created long lasting experiences for hundreds of young people that have been a part of and have influenced the success of the Youth In Nature journey. We have a huge number of outdoor session activity plans which can be called on by youth groups to deliver in the Lozenge or other locations in the city (and beyond)

We hope to see more families using this space over the coming years and helping us to protect this space for future generations and for our local wildlife. And don't be alarmed if you see a group of young people and adults running around picking nettles - that will be us making nettle tea!!

