

South Shropshire Youth Forum

Taste for Adventure & Clee Young Rangers programme 2016/17

Final Project Report for Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund



South Shropshire Youth Forum (SSYF) has been delivering youth provision in Church Stretton since 2007 and on Clee Hill since 2013. This has included the delivery of a youth club at the Mayfair Centre in Church Stretton over 4 years and projects in Church Stretton School. SSYF piloted their first outdoor activities in Clee in 2010 and piloted the first heritage project with a summer programme over 2013.

What we said we'd deliver in 2016/17

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, landscape, wildlife or heritage of the Shropshire Hills AONB.
- Offer educational and awareness-raising activities relating to the AONB and its conservation, especially involving young people.

Specific outcomes

- Recruit 35 young people, aged 10-16 to get actively involved in a series of conservation tasks, outdoor adventure activities and in turn gain an understanding and appreciation of the natural landscape.
- Education elements will include learning about the historical context of the landscape, the impact of social and business use on the landscape and the work that is involved to protect and conserve it. We will do this by working with the National Trust and other local partners such as Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, Farafoot, Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust (TCHT), Hawkeye Falconry, Long Mynd Walking and Live the Adventure.

The project would be run in 2 geographical areas:

- Taste for Adventure (Church Stretton): continue to develop natural heritage and outdoor adventure activities for young people aged 10-16 with the National Trust and other local partners (Plush, Long Mynd Walking) Activities will take place in the school holiday periods.
- Clee Young Rangers (Clee Hill and surrounding area): continuation of natural heritage and outdoor adventure activities for young people in the Clee Hills area with local partners such as TCHT, Farafoot, Hawkeye, Clee Wardens, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership and Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

In total SSYF will recruit 35 young people aged 10-16 onto the combined programme of activities.

The full programme will consist of the following:

Taste for Adventure (Church Stretton) – 6 activity days. With at least 5 natural heritage based activity days.

Clee Hill – 2 days' natural heritage based activity days.

What happened?

One of the major factors this year was the successful outcome of the Young Roots grant awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the Clee Young Rangers. This extended programme now meant that natural heritage and outdoor adventure activities could be provided all year round. The Clee Young Rangers programme runs in partnership with South Shropshire Youth Forum, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust.

From June 2016 we have been able to extend the amount of delivery we can offer this group. The programme will run for 2 years.

The Conservation Fund now helps to match fund this programme.

Taste for Adventure delivery

Since July 2016 we have delivered 5 activities for 17 young people with the National Trust and local providers. Activities included footpath maintenance at Cardingmill Valley, bush craft session at Womerton Farm and sessions on Wenlock Edge including mammal trapping, den building, bird and insect identification. We also organised a local walk in Church Stretton where young people helped to choose the route and did some navigation and woodland activities. One activity was cancelled due to lack of numbers. Activities are being planned with Church Stretton Secondary School in Spring 2017

Clee Young Rangers delivery

The Clee Young Rangers programme has delivered 9 activity days for 18 young people. Natural heritage based activities included rebuilding the Mesolithic camp in the Novers woodland, Mesolithic hunting, camping out in the woods, exploring a Shropshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve on Catherton Common and learning about the management of the site, removal of silver birch whips with the Wildlife Trust, making pottery (with a ground fired kiln on the overnight camp). Outdoor adventure activities included a laser tag session in the Novers woodland.

Feedback on sessions

Verbal feedback has been encouraged by participants at the end of each session. A full evaluation will take place for both projects at the end of the financial year.

Feedback from Taste for Adventure sessions

- Popular activities – bush craft and den building.
- Feedback from participants during wild walk – *‘the woods are peaceful, makes us feel calm’*

Feedback from Clee Young Rangers sessions

- Young people loved having the freedom to explore the Novers and other outdoor spaces.
- The overnight camp proved once again very popular.
- Laser tag is still extremely popular.
- Physical work was once again seen as a bit laborious.

Feedback from parents

One parent was particularly keen to help recruit more interest in Church Stretton as she loved the idea of the project. Feedback from parents has been very good. Young people don't always feedback to us – having more time to reflect they pass a lot of information onto parents.

Projects from SSYF perspective

Church Stretton has had problems with recruitment and getting sessions advertised in the appropriate places (the half term session at Wenlock during October half term was cancelled due to lack of numbers). Holiday periods seem to be a busy time for young people in the Stretton area. We did try to run activities a bit later into the summer holidays but it didn't really make much difference. As last year's programme discovered sessions seem to be better attended at weekends. The problem of recruitment should be alleviated with a new programme and project ideas being offered by SSYF to Church Stretton Secondary School.

Taste for Adventure struggles to maintain young people unlike the Clee Young Rangers who tend to come back each year. Just 4 young people came back from the previous 15-16 programme. Clee had 9 young people who had previously been involved.

The Taste for Adventure project was dominated by boys. Just 2 of the 18 participants were girls while the Clee Young Rangers project had 10 girls of the 17. This was pleasing as we had only 3 girls participating on the Clee Young Rangers project the previous year.

The Clee project had a lot of new interest in the area. The sessions were also better attended with an average of 6.6 young people attending sessions as opposed to 4.2 attending Taste for Adventure sessions. The project is well supported by Lacon Childe School and the local youth club who are happy for us to contact and recruit young people during their time.

Overall young people have enjoyed both projects. We have had a few challenges along the way, particularly with recruitment in Stretton. Benefits seem to be around being outside, learning new skills, making new friends,

gaining confidence and having fun and learning to play while learning about how the landscape is managed.

Proposing a way forward

The Clee Young Rangers now has Young Roots support until June 2018 and activities are being planned now for February half-term, Easter and the summer holidays. A promotional film is in production following the filming of sessions throughout the summer, autumn and winter. This will help us to develop an interest in the locality further.

SSYF are trying to find new ways of working in Church Stretton. For 2 years we have been piloting sessions with some success in the area. Church Stretton Secondary School are now keen to work with us and taster sessions could lead to an alternative curriculum programme being developed with support of the Town Council and the National Trust.

Pictures Top L to R

Preparing to lit the pottery kiln in the Novers

Members of the Clee Young Rangers with staff from the Wildlife trust having just completed a days tree management on Catherton Common

Bottom

Identifying birds on Wenlock Edge with staff from the National Trust

