

South Shropshire Youth Forum

Church Stretton School REACH project



What we said we'd deliver in 2019/20

Work with Church Stretton Secondary school and Church Stretton Town Council.

Delivery of 2 Church Stretton Outdoor **REACH** projects, both having 6 days of practical activity with the support of the National Trust. Up to 20 young people aged 13-16 referred onto programme in total. Pupils will be referred onto an alternative curriculum learning experience from Church Stretton Secondary School – these pupils will not be achieving their potential because of:

- bullying or other emotional issues
- poor/non-attendance at school, work or college
- risk of exclusion from school, college or society.

All activities will take place during School/term time on the Long Mynd (Cardingmill) and/or Rectory Woods.

What happened?

The first group was recruited in Autumn (October 2019) with 10 young people referred from Church Stretton School, 8 pupils from this cohort participated on the practical skills days. A second group started in February 2020, 11 pupils were referred, 9 of which participated in the 3 sessions delivered to date.

NOTE- because of Coronavirus outbreak the National trust and the School have closed down for the foreseeable future. The last scheduled practical delivery day is now on hold and will take once the group can resume its activities.

Sessions included health and safety talk, tool use demonstration, practical tasks included, clearance of scrub, cutting back and the management of small trees, and the burning of gorse and bracken.

These practical sessions followed a series of lead in sessions which included team building activities, developing individual pupil action plans, risk assessments and a one day first aid course.

Practical Session 1 REACH GROUP 1

Scrub and tree clearance at Rectory Woods with National Trust staff and a team of adult volunteers. Pupils worked in pairs and worked with adults.

Practical Session 2 REACH GROUP 1 Gorse burn at the Wern

The Wern is an area owned by the National Trust just outside Little Stretton. The land is used to burn waste materials from the NT land including gorse and bracken.

Practical Session 3 REACH GROUP 1

Tree coppicing and burn at the Wern. Finished burning off the pile of gorse.

Practical Session 4 REACH GROUP 2

Gorse and bracken burning at the Wern. Tree maintenance.

Practical Session 5 REACH GROUP 2

Tree coppicing and bramble clearance

Practical Session 6 REACH GROUP 2

Yet to be delivered

6 of the 10 pupils completed the **REACH 1** course which ran over 10 weeks and ended with the delivery of a community project.

To date we have delivered 4 sessions of 10 of the **REACH 2** group. The last (3rd) practical session was due to be delivered in Thursday 19th March.

Feedback from REACH 1 pupils

5 pupils attended the debriefing session at School. The following feedback resulted.

Best thing about the project

Working with people, having fun
Working with others
Getting out of lessons
Everything
Learning new things

Worst thing

Nothing (x4)
One of the staff was mean

What else would you have liked to have done?

Den building
More different – more outdoors
Would like to do another REACH project

More work with National Trust

Did the group meet its aims?

Have fun - Yes 5 votes

Learning practical things – Yes 5 votes

Get out of lessons – Yes 5 votes

Build confidence – Yes 5 votes

First Aid – Yes 5 votes

Activities rated out of 5

Induction day/health and safety and risk assessment training – score 15 out of 4 participants (average **4.5** out of 5)

First aid score 19 out of 5 (average **3.8**)

Working with the National Trust 24 out of 5 (average **4.8**)

Community project preparation (**4.2** average)

Tech – away cafe session/Community project (**4.2** average)

Working with adults (**4** average)

Training centre and transport rated out of 5

General facilities - **4.2**

Training equipment/resources – **4.6**

Travel during the project (school minibus) – **3.8**

Team Leaders rated out of 5

Providing support as & when required – **4.6**

Proving the right kind of support when asked – **4.4**

Project organisation – **4.2**

The projects main outcome was to use practical activities to engage pupils struggling to cope with more academic methods. Each pupil did their own SWOYT analysis, action plan and a personal statement at the end of the project.

Here are 5 statements given at the end of the project.

'In REACH I have achieved a lot of things I wanted to do. I learnt how to talk to people I have never talked to before and I sent an email to the newspapers and I went to the local shops and asked to put up posters'

'I have taken part in the REACH project. I have learned teamwork skills when working with the National Trust. We helped them cut down trees and I worked well with a member of the team to do this. I also helped some people that I didn't know on the phones and computers (at our tech away event). One of them didn't know who to attach emails so I helped her. I also learned first aid and I have learnt to manage my anger'.

'I did the REACH project and I learned about teamwork and we did first aid and I learned how to be sensible in the town. I learned new skills like helping other people. I feel more confident about doing things'

'I did the REACH project. I learnt first aid and did some woodland management. It helped my self-esteem and other stuff. I attended every session on the course and it has been better than School'.

'I took charge and completed my first aid course. I am proud of myself as I helped people in the community. I improved my behaviour and skills and I worked well within the team'.

Discussion of results & thoughts on the project

To date we only have the first REACH project pupil's feedback.

The Pupils who finished the course were motivated by being out of School. They loved being outdoors and it's no surprise that working with the National Trust was the best scored activity and the one of the participants fed back that they would like to have done more work with them. Interestingly we reduced the number of practical days based on the feedback we had from the last group.

The 6 pupils who completed the course all agreed that the course was beneficial to them. For the workers the improvement in the change in behaviour, attitude and self-esteem was noticeable.

Unlike the previous group (last year), there seemed to be no issue with the remoteness of the 'Wern' as a base for the practical activities.

The community project went well and it was a good idea by the group to come up with a technology help session. It would have been good if someone representing the School could have come down to see the group and support what they were doing. It was good to see the project through from start to finish. Everybody played a part.