



# Stepping into Nature

2022 – 2023 Progress Update

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# Our story



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# Opportunities to engage with nature: **Group Activities**

## **Walk for Wellbeing** - (Shaftesbury, weekly)

- Run by Dorset Forest Bathing (Lindsey Death). Total of 40 walks with average of 8 people per walk.
- A strong sociable group has formed who are keen to find a way to continue the walk when our funding stops. With our support, Lindsey is exploring options with the group to facilitate the transition.

## **Dorset History Walks** (Various locations, monthly)

- Run by Dorset Council (Steve Wallis) with attendees as keen as ever! Total of 11 walks (monthly) with average of 12- 16 per walk (fully booked).
- We (and Steve) have been sharing the model of how we run these inclusive walks using the postcards at conferences and other history orientated community event. Other organisations have been using this model in practise and so the learning has been valuable.
- Steve is much more confident leading sessions for this audience and would not hesitate to use this model in future projects.

## **Wild Writing** (Various locations, 3 courses of 6 sessions)

- Run by Black Ven Poetry (Sarah Acton) in partnership with libraries at Blandford Forum (April 22), Sherborne (Oct 22) and Wimborne (Nov 22). There were 3 courses of 6 sessions with 2 - 8 people booked on.
- The groups at Sherborne and Wimborne were very keen to continue the sessions but needed the support from Sarah to facilitate this. We supported Sarah to mentor volunteers in the group to plan, organise and lead in person workshops. The groups are now self sustaining.



# Opportunities to engage with nature: Group Activities Feedback

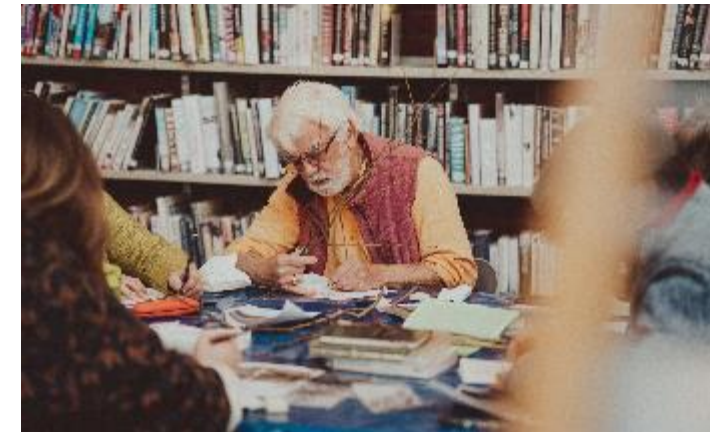


*" Liked the chance to make contact with nature, slow down and experience the sounds and smells"*

*"Its all wonderful. The inclusiveness is amazing, it's for anyone – unusual and so enjoyable"*

*"excellent activity to help you de-stress and relax"*

*"Liked tapping into my mind - didn't know I could write poetry! Loved the walk too"*



Collected from  
post activity  
questionnaire.

# Opportunities to engage with nature: Group Activities Feedback



Attendees asked to rate the following, here's their responses:

	Good	Fair
The activity overall	100%	
Opportunities to participate	100%	
The chance to meet new people	100%	
The opportunity to socialise	85%	15%
The opportunities provided to learn a new skill	85%	15%
The opportunity to share my knowledge and skills	100%	
The extent to which the activity met my expectations	100%	
The opportunity to connect to nature	94%	6%
The opportunities provided to be creative	98%	2%
The quality of support provided by activity leaders	100%	

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I enjoyed the activity	100%		
I felt included	100%		
I learnt something new	96%	4%	
I refreshed an existing skill	94%	6%	
I met new people that I intend to meet with again	83%	15%	2%
I intend to return and do more activities with Stepping i..	85%	15%	
I intend to spend more time in the outdoors	77%	23%	
I will tell someone else about this activity	94%	6%	

Collected from  
48 post activity  
questionnaires.



# Opportunities to engage with nature: Self led Activities

[Picnic in the Parks](#) activity pages continually added and promoted.

- Home page views 1925 (last year 2890), Individual activity page views 10, 595 (last year 7113).

[Self-lead 'Walk Dorset's History' guides promoted.](#)

- 6 new location guides are being created which will be available in print and online in Spring/summer 2023.

**Seasons of Stories [Summer](#) & [Winter](#) & [Autumn](#)**

- 500 of each Summer and Winter were created in 2022 and 500 of Autumn was a reprinted. These are very popular and all the books have been donated.

[Seasons of Stories Audiobooks](#)

- Each of the seasonal book are being made into audiobooks, available for free. This will help more people access the book. So far winter has been released and the other seasons will follow.

[Explore Dorset's Natural Beauty](#)

- Beautiful short films showcasing the beauty of the landscape to help people know what expect when visiting new places, inspire a connection and simply relax.

[Dorset Tales](#)

- Martin Maudsley re-tells stories animated to hand drawn imagery (viewed 231 times) captivating the history and uniqueness of Dorset's landscape.

## Top 10 Picnic in the Parks activity pages viewed

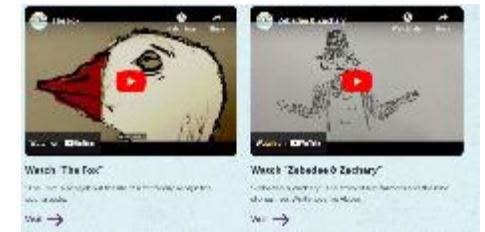
	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews
Your Seasons of Stories	2723	2231
Walk Dorset's History	777	604
Seasons of Stories Spring	712	552
Naturally Beautiful Places (videos)	538	489
Seasons of Stories Winter	523	423
Sea Swimming	439	375
Woodland Wellbeing Walks	416	363
Seasons of Stories Summer	390	306
Seasons of Stories Autumn	347	288
Geocaching	250	208

# Opportunities to engage with nature: Self led Feedback



## Feedback on Seasons of Stories [Summer](#) & [Winter](#) & [Autumn](#)

- *“Liz is in the advanced stages of Huntington's Disease - the dementia side of the condition makes it difficult for her to concentrate for long periods and the physical side makes it difficult for her to get out - she has limited simulation and this would be really welcome.”*
- *“With the onset of darker shorter days my mood saddens and I find it hard to find the joy of winter.. . Longing for brighter sunny days. I cannot walk very well so find it difficult to get out into nature and enjoy forests & woodlands, I miss it terribly so to read and imagine helps alot.”*
- *“This would complete my collection that I will cherish. I lived in Dorset and stepping into nature helped me deal with loneliness and Anxiety. At the time I was grieving and didn't have anyone to talk to. The books reminded me of my childhood and brought back memories of going into the woods, walking for miles, getting lost on purpose”*



## Explore Dorset's Natural Beauty videos feedback

- *“The videos are so beautiful and relaxing, thank you for creating these”*



## Tales of Dorset Feedback

- *“Thank you so much for the Tales of Dorset, those are wonderful!”*



# Opportunities to engage with nature: Upskilling the sector



- Held a Stepping into Nature conference (Nov 22) with over 24 speakers representing a range of organisations across Dorset. Over 100 passionate, talented, and influential people attended with the common goal to improve the lives of people in Dorset by connecting them with nature, people and supportive services.
- Feedback from attendees:
  - *'Stepping into Nature's diverse range of activities and network is ground breaking'*
  - *'Amazing work -all delivered with such good humour, warmth, care and dedication. Huge congratulations and a thank you for all that you do!'*
- Provided 2 dementia awareness sessions for 10 people working or volunteering in the environment sector.
- Held a tailored behaviour change workshop for the Dorset AONB team to increase engagement with nature for wellbeing.

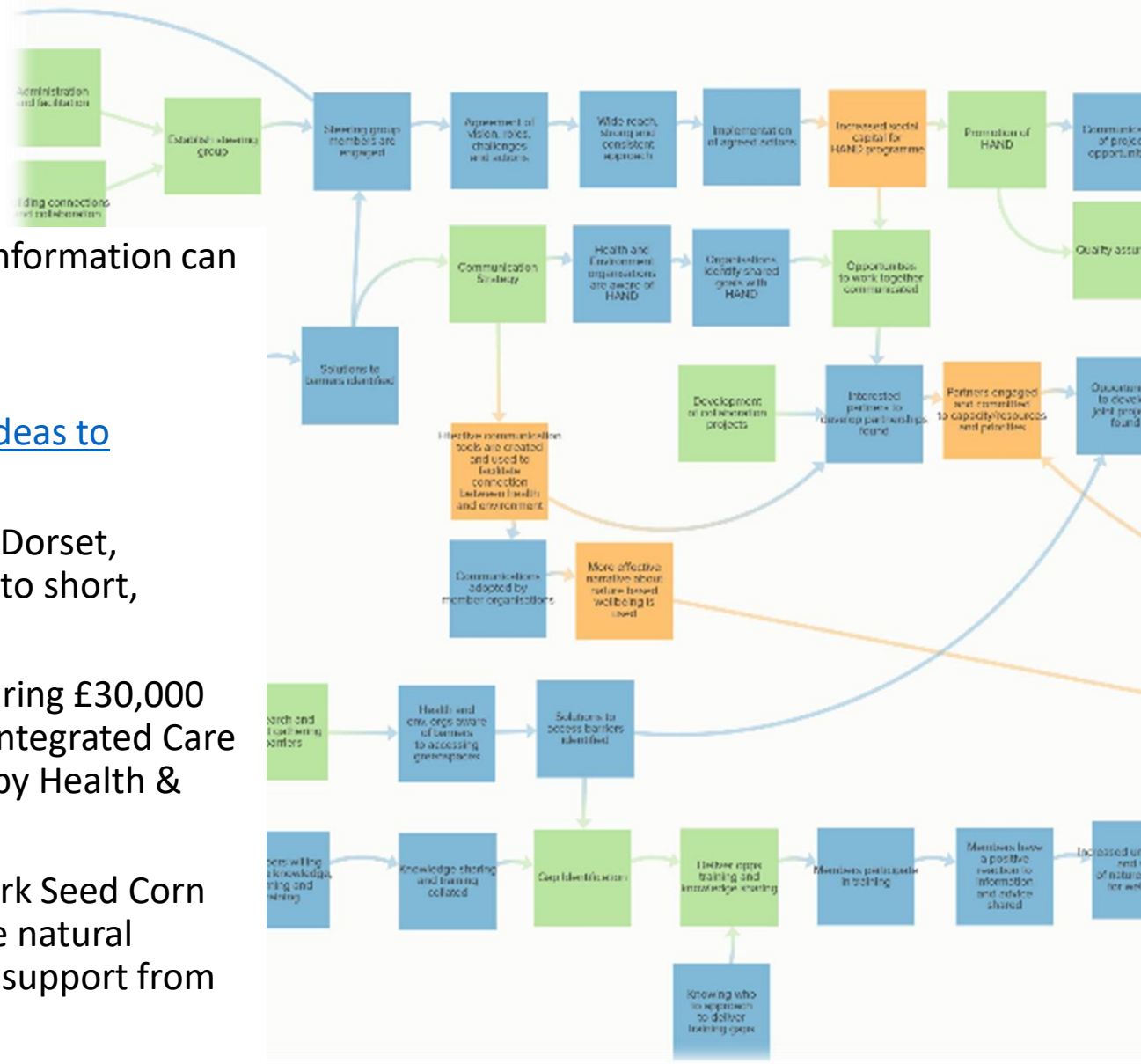




# Increasing Capacity – Health & Nature Dorset

HAND was officially launched in May 2021, webinar and other information can be found [here](#)

- Part Time Project Assistant position recruited
- Successful at being awarded a place on the Design Council [‘Ideas to Change’](#) programme.
- Theory of Change workshops ran supported by Public Health Dorset, aiming to describe how the HAND Programme activities lead to short, medium and long term outcomes.
- In March 2022 we submitted a bid and was successful in securing £30,000 from NHS ‘Our Dorset’ to support staff wellbeing across the Integrated Care System using nature based activity – Give Nature a Go. Lead by Health & Nature Dorset with support from the SiN team.
- Awarded £10K from Natural England Nature Recovery Network Seed Corn Fund to explore barriers to accessing and connecting with the natural environment in Dorset. Lead by Health & Nature Dorset with support from the SiN team.



# Increasing Capacity – Health & Nature Dorset

## Give Nature a Go:

- Supported the running of a staff wellbeing programme for the Dorset Integrated Care Staff members (those from NHS Trusts, social care, primary care, and the unitary councils - BCP and Dorset Councils). Between June 22 and March 23:
- Number of sessions planned – 104
- Number of sessions held – 55 (sadly due to low or no bookings of half of activities many had to be cancelled – feedback has shown people have limited capacity to attend during work time as originally expected)
- Numbers of people attending – 348
- Participant Quote: *“As soon as I smelt the woodsmoke from the bell tent, saw the view and the two lovely ponies my shoulders relaxed and felt the tension that fulfils my life melt away within seconds. It was a rare moment in time for me to be able to do something for me, and to hear there was no expectation of me to have to do anything was amazing and if all I wanted to do was sit and just gaze at the view and watch the ponies, this was also OK.”*
- Range of sessions: park yoga, tai chi, pony handling, archaeological walks, wellbeing walks across 7 nature reserves.
- NLHF matched funded in-kind staff time for this project.



# Increasing Capacity – Health & Nature Dorset



## **Natural England Nature Recovery Network Seed Corn Fund - Barriers Insight Gathering:**

- £10,000 secured from Natural England's Nature Recovery Network Seedcorn Fund in Autumn 2022 to undertake some insight gathering on local barriers to accessing nature for people with long-term health needs (using design research tools gained from the Ideas to Action programme)
- 5 focus groups held (2 in person and 4 online), with the following groups: the Macular Society, Stroke Association, Diabetes Group, Patient Participation Groups and Social Prescribers
- Art-based organisation CoCreate was commissioned to run workshop sessions to discuss local barriers and ways to connect. Groups engaged included Dorset Mental Health Forum, Macular Society and open sessions across Dorset.
- Survey circulated on barriers to accessing nature.
- Results are still being analysed.
- NLHF matched funded in-kind time for this project.

# Increasing capacity

## Thriving Communities – Nature Buddies



Nature Buddies was due to finish in March 2022 but due to a number of reasons it was (along with many other Thriving Communities projects) extended until the end of June 2022.

**There are a number of factors we feel that have led to a delay in uptake of project elements including:**

- Lack of capacity in partner organisations to commit to promoting and coordinating the Nature Buddy volunteers
  - But we have created strong links with Age UK who have been delivering nature Buddies as part of their befriending offer and are keen to continue trailing this over the coming year to see if can be extended across their services in Dorset.
- Lack of take up by local community groups on the training element and community pot.
  - This is now being promoted via the Nature, Art, and Wellbeing funding pot
- Changes in staff within partner organisations leading to missed communications in some cases
- Increased pressure on social prescribers and decreased capacity due to Covid, winter illness etc
- World events needing to be priorities for many of the volunteer organisations and so limiting possibilities of piloting new initiatives.
- We are hoping to continue our work on the Nature Buddy Network with Age UK to gather evidence of the benefits with a view to build a new funding opportunity if this pilot work proves successful .
- There will be an external evaluator feeding back about the project as a whole.

# Your Seasons of Stories

In summer of 2022 we completed the 'Your Seasons of Stories' project which began in Autumn 2021 after a successful bid to Arts Council England for £45.5K of National Lottery Funding.

This project enabled people, including adults with learning disabilities, older adults living with long term health conditions including dementia and carers to create their own seasonal stories, poetry and art through the co-production of 1000 physical creative resources and online tools .

To further promote and demonstrate the use of the boxes we delivered a further 22 of workshops, each co-facilitated by 2 artists which were very well received. 577 participants

All of the boxes have now been distributed and website continues to get viewed.

[Watch the professionally created Your Seasons of Stories Project Evaluation on YouTube](#) (7 mins)



# Your Seasons of Stories Feedback

“I'm 69, with COPD, heart failure and body wide osteoarthritis, so my ability to get out and enjoy natural treasures is very limited, and I miss that so much. Your box would be welcomed and treasured (and shared)”

“Betty has very high anxiety levels and art and nature are both ways that help to calm and settle her racing mind and worries”.



# The Nature, Art and Wellbeing Community Fund



Via collaborative work we pulled together three projects to create a wider community pot that was available for communities, organisations to apply to.

The fund aims to increase engagement with nature, art and movement for wellbeing, tackle inequalities and enable people to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of their local area and is a collaborations between:

- Ourselves at Stepping into Nature with a reallocation of budget\* that was in danger of not being spent.
- National Academy for Social Prescribing Fund via the Thriving Communities Nature Buddies project: re-connecting to nature & art through activity.
- Contain Outbreak Management Fund via the Your Nature project: Dorset Council Better Days, Coast and Greenspace Teams

\*The Stepping into Nature Community Pot allocation is included in this amount.

The total allocated budget and current spend is show in the table on the following slide. The remaining fund will all be allocated by September 2023.

In total 34 projects were supported engaging with over 6200 people



The Cow Shed goes wild: a community growing space

# The Nature, Art and Wellbeing Community Fund



Additional Nature, Art and Wellbeing Funding	
Stepping into Nature Community Pot	£ 15,000
Thriving Communities - Nature Buddies	£ 20,000
Better Days - COMF Funding	£ 25,000
Active Dorset	£ 1,965
<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>£ 61,965</b>
Total Funding Awarded	£ 60,157
Total In kind/Matched	£ 161,753
<b>Overall Value of NAW</b>	<b>£ 221,910</b>
<b>Total number of volunteers</b>	<b>1312</b>
<b>Total number of volunteer hours</b>	<b>6529</b>



Hands Together art for BSL – © Co-Create

Participants enjoyed the social contact, supportive atmosphere and the opportunity to do something which is normally inaccessible to them.

*“Art & Wellbeing for the visually impaired”*





# 2022/23 Budget



The total available budget for 2022/23 including the previous years underspend and AONB match was...

<b>Stepping into Nature 2022/23</b>			
	<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>Underspend</b>
Revenue	142,424.00	£ 155,393	£ 12,969
Overheads	£ 5,700	£ 5,700	£ -
<b>Total Lottery Costs</b>	<b>£ 148,124</b>	<b>£ 161,093</b>	<b>£ 12,969</b>

As agreed in our meeting with our grants officer, we will allocate the underspend for 2022/23 to staff salaries which will enable us to stay in post to around September 2023 to develop the legacy of the Stepping into Nature project .

We will give a light touch final project update in September 2023

# Looking Forward

We have been very lucky to have been supported by the National Community Lottery over the last 6 years and given the chance to develop a network of partners that go beyond the current project, and we will use the extension of our roles to:

- Support the transition of any activities and communications that are currently receiving funding into a more sustainable and effective position.
- Explore ways to increase equality, diversity and inclusion through the nature-based wellbeing offer in Dorset, particularly for people living with long term health conditions.
- Continue to build on our relationships and partnerships to explore collaborative opportunities both to support the delivery and promotion of the natural environment for wellbeing

