



Kent
HIGH WEALD
protect / explore / enjoy

Kent High Weald Partnership

Annual Report

April 2025 – March 2026



Kent High Weald Partnership aims to connect people and nature through conservation, education, and wellbeing. Through our work we support the development of resilient communities and resilient ecosystems that mean people and wildlife can thrive together.

“No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.” (Sir David Attenborough)

Summary

Not only is Britain one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, it is also one of the least nature-connected nations. **Looking after our greenspaces, our nature, and our individual and community wellbeing has never been so important.** This is what the Kent High Weald Partnership works hard to do each year, to achieve the best outcomes for nature and for people in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells and the Kent High Weald area. In 2025/6 our team of staff and volunteers have accomplished some amazing achievements in conservation, education, and wellbeing, with highlights summarized in the following pages. And we do this with very limited resources – and by quadrupling our core funding through continuous grant seeking and income generating initiatives.

The work we do as a local organisation provides people with the **opportunity to make a meaningful difference and gain a sense of connection in one's own community and landscape.** And small actions can have very satisfying results – from planting a new tree, enjoying a cuppa with your fellow volunteers whilst admiring the steps you just built, harvesting a courgette on the community allotment that you grew from seed, or witnessing one of your students who struggles in class, thrive in an outdoor setting. **Local people, local nature, local action!**

Working in partnership with councils, schools, and community organisations, we have continued to focus our efforts this year on improving access to greenspaces, provide opportunities to enhance and engage with nature, educate and inspire children and young people, tackle loneliness and isolation, and support people to provide space for nature in their own homes. Read on to find out more....



KHWP – Building Connections in Nature Since 1991!

Conservation Highlights

KHWP works hard to ensure our valuable local greenspaces are managed sustainably and sensitively to support biodiversity and community access and enjoyment. This work includes community engagement, volunteer management, and wider landscape projects.

This year KHWP:

- 🌱 Improved **25 greenspaces** for biodiversity and people by **managing habitats and improving access** with the help of our team of volunteers who built new steps, boardwalks, paths, fences, benches, and a pollinator friendly flower bed whilst also tackling invasive plants and enhancing meadows, wetlands and woodlands.
- 🌱 Delivered over **100 volunteer tasks**, clocking up **840 volunteer days**, equal to an economic contribution of over **£126,000** of work hours.
- 🌱 Supported Tunbridge Wells In Bloom to win **9 South and South East in Bloom awards** including Gold in the Champion of Champions award!
- 🌱 Created and **restored 9 ponds** to help provide habitat for great crested newts and **surveyed 34 ponds** recently created and restored for great crested newts.
- 🌱 **Planted over 2400 trees** and **planted and restored 270metres of hedgerow** with the help of volunteers, schools, and community groups.
- 🌱 Hosted over **400 attendees** to our **nature events** including guided bat walks, survey training, free tree giveaway, seasonal walks including the High Weald Walking Festival, and our volunteer walk and talk events.
- 🌱 Launched the **Tunbridge Wells Community Nature Reserve** initiative in partnership with TWBC to help and inspire residents to create **space for nature**
- 🌱 Hosted a landowner meeting in Pembury to explore opportunities for **landscape scale nature recovery**
- 🌱 Helped Forestry England to carry out a **BioBlitz** at Bedgebury Pinetum
- 🌱 Co-hosted with TWBC a **volunteer thank-you event** and BBQ for over 50 volunteers.
- 🌱 Supported the **Woodland Trust** in managing their Tunbridge Wells sites by providing volunteer power to help **tackle the spread of invasive plants**.
- 🌱 Provided a **conservation traineeship** to a recent graduate who was able to gain successful full time employment as a result of her experience and training.
- 🌱 Attended and spoke at the very first **Tunbridge Wells Climate and Nature Fair**

“Thank you for improving the mapping and paths at Sherwood Lake - it made a massive difference to my enjoyment. So much so that I took the family back there at the weekend so they could enjoy it too. The children loved it and we will certainly be visiting again.” (local resident)



Hedgelaying



Sustainable Planting



Meadow Management



Beaver Dam Creation



Harvest Mice Training



Access Improvements



Site Management

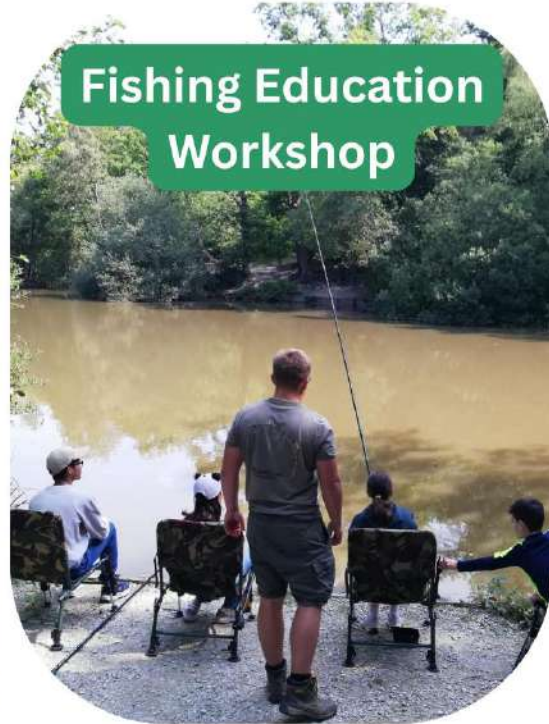
Education Highlights

Children are the future guardians of our natural world, and KHWP works to inspire, educate, train, and connect young people with nature. We also provide work experience and training for adults looking to learn new skills or progress their careers.

This year KHWP:

- 🌱 Delivered a total of over **300 nature-based education** and **forest school** sessions to over **3000 children**, and providing support or activities for **33 different schools**.
- 🌱 Provided forest school provision to **30 disadvantaged primary school children**, including special educational needs and English as additional language students.
- 🌱 Provided **758 primary school children** with fun and inspirational nature based education activities at Bedgebury Pinetum
- 🌱 Provided **Teambuilding activities** at Bedgebury for **212 children**.
- 🌱 Delivered **4 forest school holiday camp days** for young children including a session specifically for disadvantaged children.
- 🌱 **Trained over 40 people in new skills or qualifications** including Forest School leadership, chainsaw operation, species ID and surveying, tree planting, and hedge laying.
- 🌱 Delivered **2 Forest School Experience Days** to the Kent Virtual School for children who are or have been in care.
- 🌱 Provided **work experience** opportunities for young people and students.
- 🌱 Hosted **2 fishing workshops** at Sherwood Lake for children and young people
- 🌱 Provided **23 pre-school children** with Forest School inspired nature activities in their nursery garden
- 🌱 Provided local scout and guide groups with **guided bat walks and pond dipping** in Tunbridge Wells
- 🌱 Attended local college and school **careers fairs** to inform young people of career opportunities in nature and conservation.
- 🌱 **Engaged 120 art students** from St Martins College with a **nature-based workshop** at Bedgebury Pinetum.

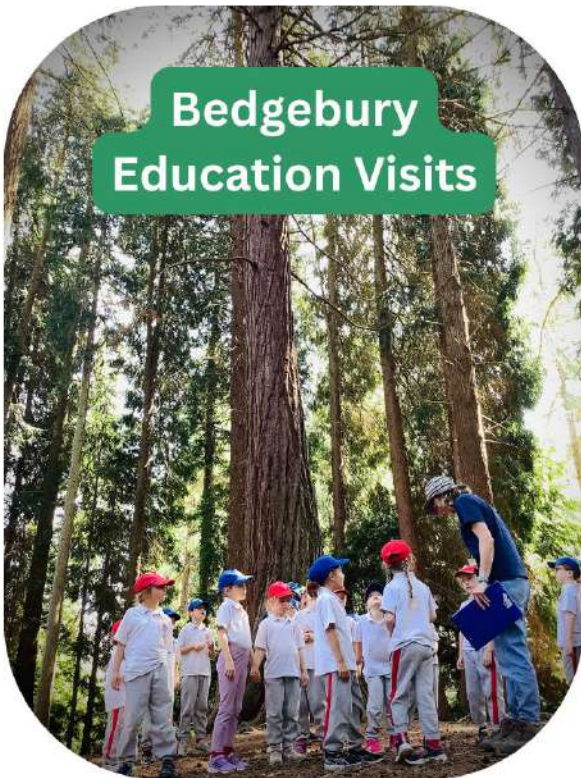
To have been given the chance to work alongside such an amazing group of people is an experience I will always feel extremely grateful for, and I can't urge others enough to give it a go and give it your all – you never know what you might discover! (Sophie, KHWP Trainee)



Fishing Education Workshop



Forest School



Bedgebury Education Visits



Wellbeing Highlights

It is well known that spending time in nature is good for us – KHWP works to improve the health and wellbeing of local people by offering accessible nature connection opportunities through our volunteer programme, community allotment space, and professionally designed and delivered wellbeing programmes.

This year KHWP:

- 🌱 Delivered **124 nature-based wellbeing sessions** – the funding of which provided a social return worth **£215,000**.
- 🌱 Provided over **40 horticultural therapy sessions** at our wildlife friendly community allotment site for adults with poor mental health, physical health issues, and learning difficulties.
- 🌱 **Improved the wellbeing of 37 adults** suffering poor mental health and social isolation via our online Connect with Nature programme.
- 🌱 Delivered **2 programmes of Green Wellbeing**, offering nature connection activities, including arts and crafts and woodwork, to adults with poor mental health at our community allotment.
- 🌱 Piloted a successful **Green Wellbeing for Women** programme that provided a safe, calm and nurturing space that enhanced the wellbeing of a local group of women.
- 🌱 Provided **over 30 adults with social inclusion** and a sense of purpose and belonging through our weekly volunteer programme.
- 🌱 Hosted **6 Welcome to Forest sessions** at Bedgebury Pinetum in partnership with Forestry England, providing accessible woodland wellbeing for young carers and groups of adults with learning and physical disabilities.
- 🌱 Successfully raised the funds (thanks to the generosity of Councillor Colin Sefton, the Rotary Club of Tunbridge Wells, Tunbridge Wells Soroptomists, and local residents) to purchase a shed for our upcoming **Women's Shed** Project.
- 🌱 Supported **4 families experiencing challenges** through our **therapeutic family forest school** intervention, Forest Time, with Southborough Primary School.
- 🌱 Provided **local businesses and organisations** with opportunities for team or individual volunteering.

“The Women’s Wellbeing group has got me into a really good place where I am able to give myself permission to slow down a bit in life, and give myself permission to enjoy things and enjoy feeling safe and comfortable around others and has honestly been a hugely appreciated milestone in finally getting out there and being able to start living life.”



Forest Time



Women's Group



Green Wellbeing



Community Allotment

Financial Summary

KHWP is a non-profit organisation hosted administratively by Kent County Council. In 2025/26 our turnover was **£364,851** with an end of year reserves fund of £80k (some of which is allocated to projects to carry forward). 23% of our income was core funding, 53% was funding and grants for conservation, 9% for wellbeing grants and contracts, and 15% was education and training grants and income. Through our fundraising activities, **for every £1 of core funding given to KHWP we bring in an additional £4 to spend on local nature and community.**

The core funding KHWP received from TWBC towards our nature volunteering programme has generated a Social Return on Investment of **£647,649**, which is the value of the wellbeing benefits the nature volunteering provides, reducing pressure on local health services.

Find Out More...

Get in touch...Contact KHWP Manager, Cally Fiddimore, by emailing cally.fiddimore@kent.gov.uk or call 07545 743416. We would be very happy to provide presentations on our work to your groups or organisations.

Follow us online...You can find us online at www.khwp.org.uk , on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Come and join us! We always need volunteers and we welcome groups of volunteers (or individuals) from organisations and businesses looking to get involved – we have plenty to do year round. Tea, coffee, biscuits and great banter guaranteed!

thank you!

A massive thank you to our core funders, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council, and to all our partners and funders – you enable us to carry out this important work making a real difference to people and nature.

And thank you to our fantastic volunteers and supporters – we could not operate without you!



Forestry England



**High Weald
National
Landscape**