

KHWP UnderStory

STORIES, UPDATES AND INSIGHTS FROM THE
KENT HIGH WEALD PARTNERSHIP

SUMMER 2026

Welcome to KHWP UnderStory -
Summer Edition!

Inside this issue you'll find:

- Volunteer Highlights
- Summer Meadow Work
- KHWP Community Allotment
- Women's Shed Launch
- Trainee Spotlight
- Upcoming Work and Events

► IMPACT SNAPSHOT

Our Summer At A Glance



24

Volunteer Task Days

On sites across the Tunbridge Wells Borough



1,424

Volunteers Hours

Generous time donated by our brilliant volunteer team.



14

Greenspaces

Habitat management and access improvements completed



Kent
HIGH WEALD
protect / explore / enjoy

► COMMUNITY UPDATES

Our First Seasonal Newsletter Edition!

At the Kent High Weald Partnership, we are passionate about connecting people with nature and helping more people to discover, enjoy and care for the natural world.

Through our work we support the development of resilient communities and ecosystems that mean people and wildlife can thrive together.

Our work provides people with the opportunity to make a meaningful difference and gain a sense of connection in one's own community and landscape. And we couldn't do it without you!

This seasonal newsletter will therefore celebrate this fantastic work of our staff and volunteer team as well as providing information on how to get involved!



KHWP Volunteers Love Where We Live Nomination!

Our brilliant volunteer group was nominated for the 2026 Community Group of the Year Category at the Tunbridge Wells Love Where We Live Awards!

This category recognises the individuals, groups, businesses, and organisations who are dedicated to helping others in the community, benefiting the environment, or accomplishing personal goals. KHWP Woodland Officer Scott wrote the following fantastic awards entry:

“At a practical level, the group delivers hands-on conservation work that has a visible impact across the borough. From restoring habitats and managing woodlands, to improving access routes and tackling invasive species, their efforts help protect and enhance the distinctive landscape of the High Weald.

But what really stands out is the way they bring people together. The group is welcoming, friendly, and open to anyone who wants to get involved, regardless of experience or background. For many volunteers, it's more than just a day out, it's a chance to meet others, learn new skills, and feel part of something worthwhile.

Overall, the Kent High Weald Volunteers represent community spirit at its best. They care for the landscape, support each other, and contribute quietly but meaningfully to the borough.”

So, a huge thanks to you all, we couldn't do the great work we do without you!





► TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Caroline: Our wonderful New Trainee!

We're delighted to welcome Caroline to KHWP, who'll be joining us for the next year and getting involved in all the different areas of work we do.

We asked her a few questions to help introduce her...

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO JOIN?

“I was at a time of change in life and dreaming of developing my understanding of conservation methods when this amazing opportunity came along. Having spent recent years volunteering on Ashdown Forest in my spare time, to be given the opportunity to develop, formalise and deepen this learning with KHWP feels a great privilege.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE OR THE OUTDOORS?

My earliest memories were of watching grass snakes in the pond, hedgehogs snuffling in the garden and bees buzzing on the Cotoneaster, hunting for caterpillars and being happiest in nature.

I've also been involved in conservation projects in Sumatra and Malaysia, and more recently helping undertake nightjar surveys on Ashdown Forest. Most of my favourite memories over the years have been nature-related.”

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE HABITAT, SPECIES OR PLACE IN KENT?

“Having been mostly an East Sussex adventurer up to now, I'm really looking forward to exploring what habitats and wildlife treasures Kent has to offer. Anything wooded, water-based or heathland are my favourite habitats. There are treasures to be found everywhere.”



AND AN INTERESTING FACT?

“I've climbed a live volcano in Guatemala at dawn, with lava running down the side of it, and then bumped into Bruce Parry and played pool that evening.”



Welcome to KHWP, Caroline! 🌱❤️

Summertime in the Meadow

This summer our volunteers have been busy carrying out meadow management across several of the sites we look after, including St John's Meadow (Reynold's Lane), Crane Valley, and the community orchard and wetland area at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park.

Once the main flowering period has passed, cutting and removing the vegetation is an important part of maintaining these grassland habitats. Keeping fertility relatively low helps to prevent vigorous grasses and other competitive plants from dominating, allowing a greater diversity of grasses and wildflowers to coexist.

The work also gives us an opportunity to see how these habitats are developing over time. At the Grosvenor & Hilbert community orchard, we were particularly pleased to see an increase in yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) this year. Yellow rattle is a semi-parasitic plant that takes nutrients and water from surrounding grasses, helping to reduce their vigour and creating opportunities for other meadow plants. The species was sown at the orchard several years ago, and its continued establishment and increasing presence is an encouraging sign that the meadow management is helping to create suitable conditions for it to thrive.



KHWP VOLUNTEERS HAVING A WELL DESERVED LUNCH BREAK AT THE GROSVENOR AND HILBERT'S WETLAND

The cutting and, importantly, removing of the arisings across our sites is part of that longer-term process. Each year's management contributes to gradually influencing the composition of the sward and maintaining the conditions for species-rich grassland.

Although the work may seem repetitive, its value is in its consistency, and the cumulative effect is helping to shape and maintain some of the valuable grassland habitats across the sites we care for.

Thank you to everyone that came along, got stuck in and inevitably left with some sore elbows!

KHWP Community Allotment

We have had a great summer over at the KHWP community allotment, with some undeniable heat wave challenges but our bumper crops of tomatoes and beans did very well!

Every Monday, our lovely group meet for a morning of jobs such as weeding, watering, and at this time of year, lots and lots of harvesting! This group is open to everyone and is a beautiful quiet spot to meet other people, with all tools and guidance provided as well as lots of tea and biscuits – yum!

Heading into autumn, we will be busy giving the growing and outdoor seating areas a bit of a refresh as well as starting to plan next year's growing season.



We are always looking for new members to come and join the group. So if you fancy getting stuck in to some allotment jobs this autumn or just spending some more time out in nature, it is a relaxed and flexible set up where anyone is welcome to join, whatever your age or ability.

For more information, you can email the KHWP team at cmp@khwp.org.uk

The launch of the Women's Shed!

A few weeks ago at the end of the summer we had our first ever Breathe and Bloom - Women's Shed session!

A lovely group of ladies gathered and we chatted, drank tea and shared a lot of ideas about what the shed sessions might look like over the coming months.

We have also completed another successful Breathe and Bloom women's programme this summer. Funded by Live Well Kent, these 8 week programmes are aimed at connecting women with nature through enjoyable activities outdoors. Set on our beautiful allotment, participants take part in weekly 2 hour sessions involving enjoyable and relaxing activities such as woodwork, natural crafts, gentle gardening, and bushcraft skills. The programme and activities are designed to improve mental wellbeing and the site provides a calm and nurturing setting.



Starting in November 2026 our regular Breathe and Bloom Women's Shed will be open on the first and third Tuesday of every month from 10:30am to 1pm.

If you would like to get involved or receive more information, please email cally.fiddimore@kent.gov.uk

► FIND OUT MORE



Interested in joining us?

Scan the QR code to head to our website where you can find more information on our volunteering opportunities, upcoming events and other projects.



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