

CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL-KINGS WORTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT REPORT

2026-2027



Forest School Leader: Emma Clode

Site: Kings Worthy Primary School
Kings Worthy, Winchester SO23 7QS

WHAT IS A ECOLOGICAL REPORT?

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An ecological Impact assessment (EIA) is an assessment that looks at the possible consequences of human activity on a site. This assessment gives us an idea of the possible impact on the ecosystem that running a Forest School may have.

This is a formal system which identifies and creates an inventory of all the flora and fauna that exist in an area, the topography and substratum (soils, geology, wetness), site history/antiquity, site ownership, management and protection. This process evaluates the factors which will support and enhance our interactions with this space. Knowing what the baseline conditions are of a site will also help the Forest School Leader to assess and determine which activities could possibly harm the area and what measures or mitigations can be put in place to support it.

To create this inventory maps, historical records and first-hand observations or field surveys have been used to create a picture/evaluation of the site. There are of course limitations to this information as field studies only show the flora and fauna present at one snapshot moment in time so seasonal variations may be missed. Some species lists may not be complete, and rarities may have been overlooked and changes can also occur since the survey took place.

As a Forest School leader, you have two levels of responsibility: the care of the children who attend sessions and the care of the environment and ecosystem that you are using.

In an online article, entitled "The Symbolic Relationship of Child and Woods-Are you sustaining Both?" (Blackwell, 2015) Sarah Blackwell discusses the importance of nurturing and sustaining both children and nature. In this article she examines the symbiotic relationship between humans and the natural world and writes:

"You can't have a child growing up in isolation of the elements, the natural cycles, the trees, grass, mountains or rivers without a part of that child's inner most being as a human losing a part of its self that is essential to life.

In the same way you can not have woodlands and wild spaces growing up in isolation of the love, care, compassion and respect of children, because nature without children will in the future be destroyed completely and habitats die."
(Blackwell, 2015)

Sarah Blackwell goes onto explain that:

"When we understand our role in the process as conduits for learning and love of nature with our children, we can begin to put an emphasis on learning species and relationships and how the natural systems depend on each other"

(Blackwell), 2015),

Producing sustainability plans, ecological impact assessments and Three-Year Management Plans are all essential aspects of building and developing a relationship with the environment where the Forest School will take place. The understanding that comes from developing these plans and the care that we give to this eco-system will be transferred to the children and will lead onto Environmental Identity for the future.





This document describes the impact of the operation of a Forest School Provision in the physical environment in the grounds of Kings Worthy Primary School. It describes what is in place to mitigate any negative effects. It will consider the land, water, air, structures and living organisms and the environmental values of **Canopy Forest School**.

Canopy Forest School will be working initially with 4 students from the school as part of their enhanced provision. The sessions will be run by Sarah Perrin and Emma Clode who are both experienced Level 3 trained Forest School Leaders and they will be supported by one member of staff.

Our Ethos

To provide a classroom with no walls.

Where the sky is the limit. Nature is the teacher and imagination, play and discovery the curriculum. Self-esteem, wellbeing, deep connections and a sense of wholeness and joy are the learning outcomes.

Our Mission

To create a transformative learning experience in a natural setting where play, exploration and supported risk taking inspires personal growth and meaningful connections to the world, self, and others.

Our Core Values

Connection

To connect to the natural world, self, and others

Growth

To undergo natural development socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and intellectually over a period of time. To nurture reflection, innovation, and creativity.

Exploration

To enjoy new discoveries, adventures and take supported risks.

Sustainability

To use methods that do not harm the environment so that natural resources are still available in the future. To be able to support eco-systems so they can continue over a period of time

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL |



Grid Reference: 51°05'37"N , 001°17'54"W W3W:jammy.kicks.basic

The Canopy Forest School site is situated within the grounds of Kings Worthy Primary School in Kings Worthy, Winchester. The site is owned by Hampshire County Council. Kings Worthy Primary School opened in 1953 and when the school expanded it included Hinton House, a nearby Victorian house, which housed five classrooms. In September 2008, Hinton House was sold, allowing for the construction of a new building containing five modern classrooms and purpose-built technology rooms. While some land was utilized for the new buildings, the school retains a spacious site, including a large outdoor area, woodland and a pond.

The area which we are using is approximately four acres of natural woodland. The site is situated at the back, South Western side of the school. It is located behind a Victorian walled garden and has housing on the western side of its grounds, a playing field which is also owned by the school to the south and fields to the east. Access to the site is gained through the school. The site is enclosed within the school grounds and is therefore safe as only people who have signed in at the Primary School office can access it. A perimeter fence acts as a divider around the site. Kings Worthy is a village in the civil parish of Kings Worthy in Hampshire. There are several nature reserves and secondary woodlands nearby and the understory of these echo the flora and fauna found at this Canopy Forest School site.

Grid Reference: 51°05'37"N , 001°17'54"W

What3words:////////jammy.kicks.basic

**Address: Kings Worthy Primary School
Kings Worthy, Winchester SO23 7QS**

Size: 4 acres

Flora of main Forest School area: Nettles, Dandelion, Herb Robert, Cleavers, wood Aven, Brambles, Primrose, Birdock ,Plantain, Dock , Sycamore Saplings Ivy, Garlic Mustard , Dogs Mercy, Bluebells , Lords and Ladies , Daffodils, Green Alkanet , Ground Ivy, Cranesbill geranium, Silver Birch Saplings, Oak saplings, Hawthorn, Sycamore, Yew, Holly, Hazel, Field Maple, Rowan, Silver Birch, Oak, Goat Willow

Fauna of main Forest School area: Woodlouse, Earwigs, centipedes, shield bug, Dor beetle, silverfish, land hopper, harvestman, pill woodlouse, slow worm, common earthworm, brown lipped snail, cabbage seed weevil, devil coach horse beetle, garden spider, blackbird, robin, blue tits, gold chest, sparrows, wood pigeon, great tits, Jackdaw, dunnoek, song thrush, fox, hedgehog, mice, rats, grey squirrels, mole, shrew



CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL |



DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

Local wildlife sites in Hampshire referred to as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) together with statutorily protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) form the foundation of a coherent and resilient ecological network. These areas have been identified using SINC criteria's and if a three-point scale is applied to the **Canopy Forest School** site at Kings Worthy it is graded as a (one) a site of high priority for conservation. This is due to the fact that it lies on the edge of the chalk lands of the Hampshire Downs and the river Itchen flows along the south-eastern border of the parish. This area is one of the best examples of a chalk river habitat in Europe and it is identified as a candidate Special Area for Conservation (cSAC). Looking at the Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy village design statement (2024) in a map of the area very near to the site it has been graded as having important vegetation (figure 1). Although as far as I know this area has not officially been given this grade we will respect and treat it as such.

1. Site of high conservation value (HCV);
 2. Site of lower priority for conservation;(LPC)
 3. Site of limited wildlife interest (LWI)."
- (Wilson, 2021)

The proposed area at Kings Worthy Primary School lies within the grounds of the School. The site is near to a couple of nature reserves including: Barton Meadows, Winnall Moors, St Catherine Hills, all owned and managed by Hampshire Wildlife Trust

Historically the area was part of the gardens of a Victorian Villa. The site has a number of fruit trees from the old orchard and many old Beech, Sycamore, Hawthorn and Yew trees from the original house. The grounds today are extensive and award-winning and are centered around a 4-acre "Woodland Walk" which was designed for outdoor learning. The school has worked really hard on a number of projects since 2011 and these have been supported by various community groups since it began and a talented site manager Mr C Carr

Kings Worthy is set within the upper Itchen Valley on the north western side of the floodplain. The river Itchen is a chalk stream and has a wide flood plain with a shallow profile, grassland, water meadows, carr and reed beds. However, despite its proximity to the River Itchen, today Kings Worthy is separated from the watercourse as the A33, forms an abrupt barrier.

The habitat of this area is unique due to the chalk stream which is characterised by clear water and a diverse flora, invertebrates and fish. The countryside in this area is mainly given over to arable farming, mostly cereal crops and some pasture grazed by cattle. Stands and groups of mature trees can be found along drives, lanes and patches of woodland. The area has a strong ethos towards conservation with a group of volunteers conducting regular local projects around the village.



Using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) field guide to woodland this site has many of the features of W13 (Taxus baccata woodland) also known as Yew woodland and W12 (Fagus sylvatica – Mercurialis perennis woodland) due to the fact that a lot of dog's mercury grows in this woodland and this category is often found on shallower chalk soils and escarpments. The trees that grow here have probably been planted when the garden was created and is semi-natural woodland. The predominant species in the grounds are Sycamore and Hawthorn alongside Yew and silver birch.

In the Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal Document (2013) the landscape is described as:

"Landscape Types for Kings Worthy and surrounding area In addition to the identification of landscape character areas, the HICA and WCLA documents describe the characteristics of each landscape type in detail. This includes the distribution of areas, typical soils and geology, topography, archaeological and historic features and field patterns, vegetation, land use, settlement pattern, building materials, routes and degree of tranquillity. WCLA also outlines key issues affecting landscape features typical of the area. The landscape types (WLCA classification) for Kings Worthy are - a. Open arable west, north and east of Kings Worthy b. River valley side to south west c. River Valley floor to south and south east" (p3, 2013)

Kings Worthy lays close to the river Itchen and its many tributaries. Lakes and ponds can provide valuable habitat for waterbirds, amphibians, insects and plants. The chalk stream alkaline water is important for both recreation and biodiversity with species such as kingfishers, otters and little egrets and trout are found in the area. Established paths provide access for informal recreation along the valley, although there are no walks immediately adjacent to the riverside. The permeable nature of the underlying chalk in the area generally leads to a lack of water on the surface, but can result in flooding after periods of exceptional rainfall when the water table reaches the surface.

The soil in Kings Worthy is chalk and loam soil. Large expanses of the land is gently sloping and undulating topography (50-110m OD). The soil is well drained upper chalk geology with pockets of clay/flint deposits and is around 0.4-0.5 m in depth. It is phaeozem soil which means it is characterized by a humus-rich surface layer covered in the natural state with abundant grass or deciduous forest vegetation. The land is predominantly used for medium to large arable fields but there are also areas of sparse woodland character. The ph level of the soil is 6.5-7.2 within the grounds but nearer to the river Itchen it is a pH > 8.0 and alkaline due to the chalk steam.

As far as I am aware there are no active conservation management plans for this site and this is something that **Canopy Forest School** will introduce and adhere to. There are no special protection or status such as SSSI or NNR or TPO's on any of the trees.

Abiotic Elements

Water

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Soil

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Bedrock and Surface rock

Kings Worthy lies is situated within the broader geological and geographical region known as the Hampshire Basin, specifically on the edge of the northern chalk lands of the Hampshire Downs, sitting along the Itchen Valley. The chalk is late Cretaceous sedimentary rock which is white, porous and composed of calcium carbonate, formed from the accumulation of microscopic plankton skeletons on the sea floor during the Cretaceous period.. It is a form of limestone. The chalk rock is mixed with loamy soil in Kings Worthy.

Archaeological Considerations

The site used to be part of a 19th Victorian Villa gardens built known as a result of the arrival of the railway. It has walled garden features and an orchard along with 4 arches of woodland. None of these features will be disturbed or changed by our work as a Forest School within these grounds.

Kings Worthy, has a rich array of old buildings which are located in close proximity to the River Itchen an example of chalk river habitat and it is identified as a candidate Special Area for Conservation (cSAC) because of this.

Near by the school there are also a number of archaeological sites as documented by Historic England and Archaeological sites and Historic Maps Index (Archi). These include; A Prehistoric finds site, A Bronze Age site near Abbots Worthy, an Anglo Saxon church and cemetery, Medieval 13th century sites included in the Domesday Book, a post medieval bridge and site of water mill, a collection of Victorian villas, a Victorian railway bridge and many historical thatched cottages.

Management history of site

This site has been part of Kings Worthy Primary School since 1969 so it is owned by Hampshire County Council and is managed by Mr C Carr and Mr E Barnes. The school has worked with a number of organisations to nurture and care for the site including; Kings Worthy Conservation Volunteers, Hampshire Gardens Trust, The Forestry Commission, Hilliers Education Centre, Sparshot and Hampshire Probation Trust as part of their rehabilitation programme for low-risk offenders.

FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE SITE

CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL |

Flora inventory-Trees and Shrubs

KINGS WORTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE

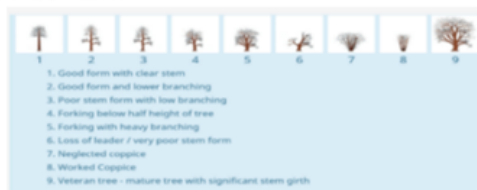
Forest School Area

SPECIES	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TREES	ESTIMATED YEAR PLANTED	CROWN CLASS	TREE FORM
Hawthorn	21	150+yrs	5	co-dominant
Sycamore	50	150+yrs	1	Dominant
Yew	8	150+yrs	6	Dominant
Holly	1	150+yrs	3	Dominant
Elder	10	50yrs	7	shrub
Hazel	16	30yrs	7/3	Dominant
Field Maple	5	150yrs	3	co-dominant
Rowan	5	10yrs	3	intermediate
Silver Birch	4	50yrs	1	Dominant
Buddlea	1	30yrs	7	shrub
Oak	1	2yrs	3	intermediate
Dogwood	8	8yrs	8	shrub
Elm	1	3yrs	2	intermediate
Goat Willow	1	150yrs	6	Dominant

*There are a lot of sycamore and silver birch samplings in this area due to amount count not taken

Key

Tree Form



Crown Cover

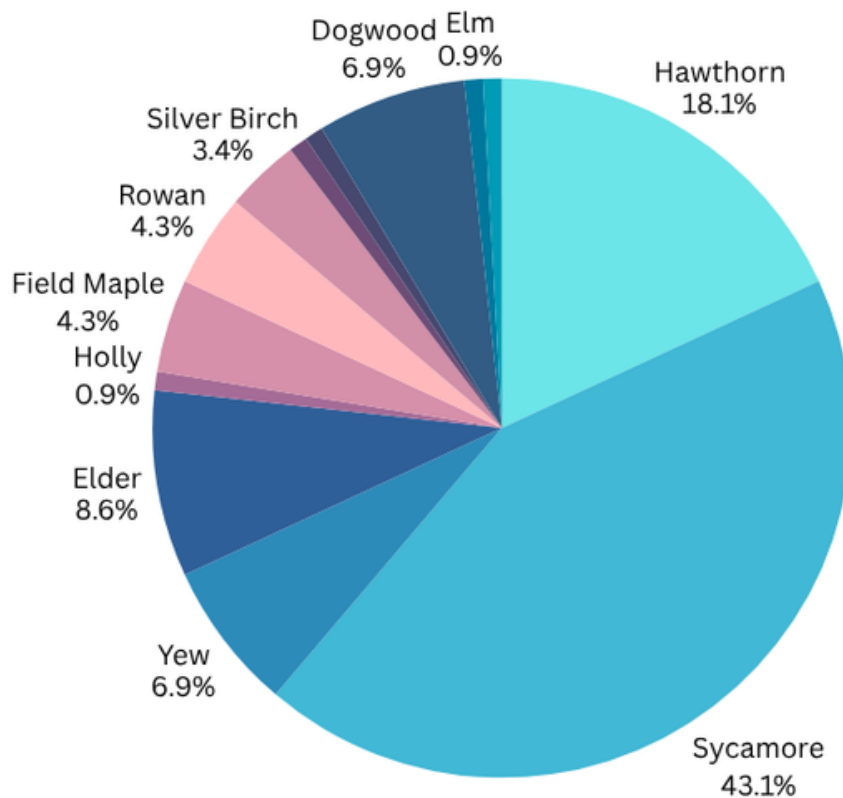


FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE SITE

Flora inventory-Trees and Shrubs

KINGS WORTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE

FOREST SCHOOL AREA



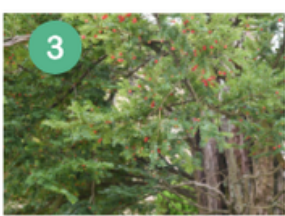
FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE SITE

Flora inventory-Plants and Ground cover

KINGS WORTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE

FOREST SCHOOL AREA

SPECIES
Hawthorn (1)
Sycamore (2)
Yew (3)
Holly (4)
Elder (5)
Hazel (6)
Field Maple (7)
Rowan (8)
Beech (9)

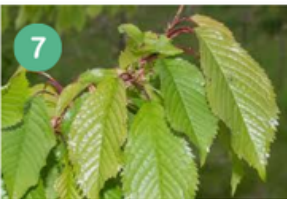


Flora inventory-Plants and Ground cover

KINGS WORTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE

FOREST SCHOOL AREA

SPECIES
Silver Birch (1)
Buddleia (2)
Oak (3)
Dogwood (4)
Elm (5)
Goat Willow (6)
Wild Cherry (7)



FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE SITE

Flora inventory-Plants and Ground cover

KINGS WORTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE

FOREST SCHOOL AREA

SPECIES
Nettles (1)
Dandelion (2)
Herb Robert (3)
Clevers (4)
Dogwood (5)
Wood Aven (6)
Brambles (7)
Primrose (8)
Birddock (9)
Plantain (10)
Dock (11)
Sycamore Sapplings (12)

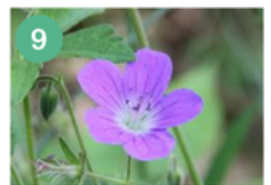
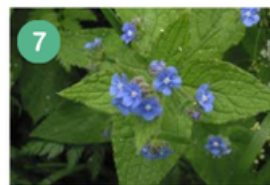


Flora inventory-Plants and Ground cover

KINGS WORTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE

FOREST SCHOOL AREA

SPECIES
Ivy (1)
Jack in the Hedge/Garlic Mustard (2)
Dogs Mercy (3)
Bluebells (4)
Lords and Ladies (5)
Daffodils (6)
Green Alkanet (7)
Ground Ivy (8)
Cranesbill geranium (9)
Silver Birch Sapplings (10)
Oak sapplings (11)



FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE SITE

Flora inventory-Fungi and Lichen

FOREST SCHOOL AREA

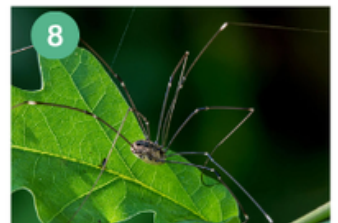
SPECIES
White crustose lichen (1)
White polypore crust fungus (2)
common tamarisk moss (3)
Common green shield lichen (4)



Fauna inventory-Invertebrates and Isopods

FOREST SCHOOL AREA

SPECIES
Woodlouse (1)
Earwigs (2)
centipede (3)
Shield bug (4)
Dor Beetle (5)
Silverfish (6)
Land hopper (7)
Harvestman (8)
Pill Woodlouse(9)

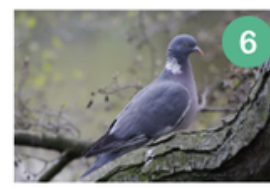


FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE SITE

Fauna inventory-Birds

Forest School Area

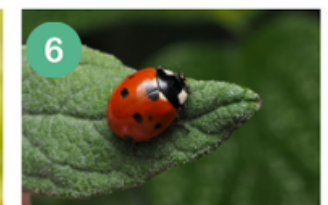
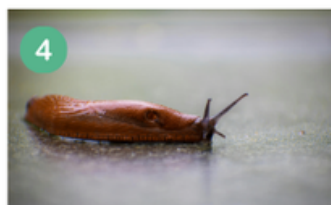
SPECIES
Blackbird (1)
Robin (2)
Bluetits (3)
Goldcrest (4)
sparrows (5)
Wood pigeon (6)
Great tits (7)
Jackdaw (8)
Magpie (9)
Dunnock(10)
song thrush (11)



Fauna-Invertabrates and gastropods

Forest School Area

SPECIES
Slow Worm (1)
Common Earth Worm (2)
The Brown-lipped Snail (3)
Large Red Slug (4)
Cabbage seed weevil (5)
7 spot lady bird (6)
Devil's Coach horse beetle(7)
Buff tail Bumblebee (8)
Garden Spider (9)



FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE SITE

Fauna inventory-Mammals

FOREST SCHOOL AREA

SPECIES
Fox (1)
Hedgehog (2)
Mice (3)
Rats (4)
Grey Squirrel (5)
Mole (6)
Shrew (7)

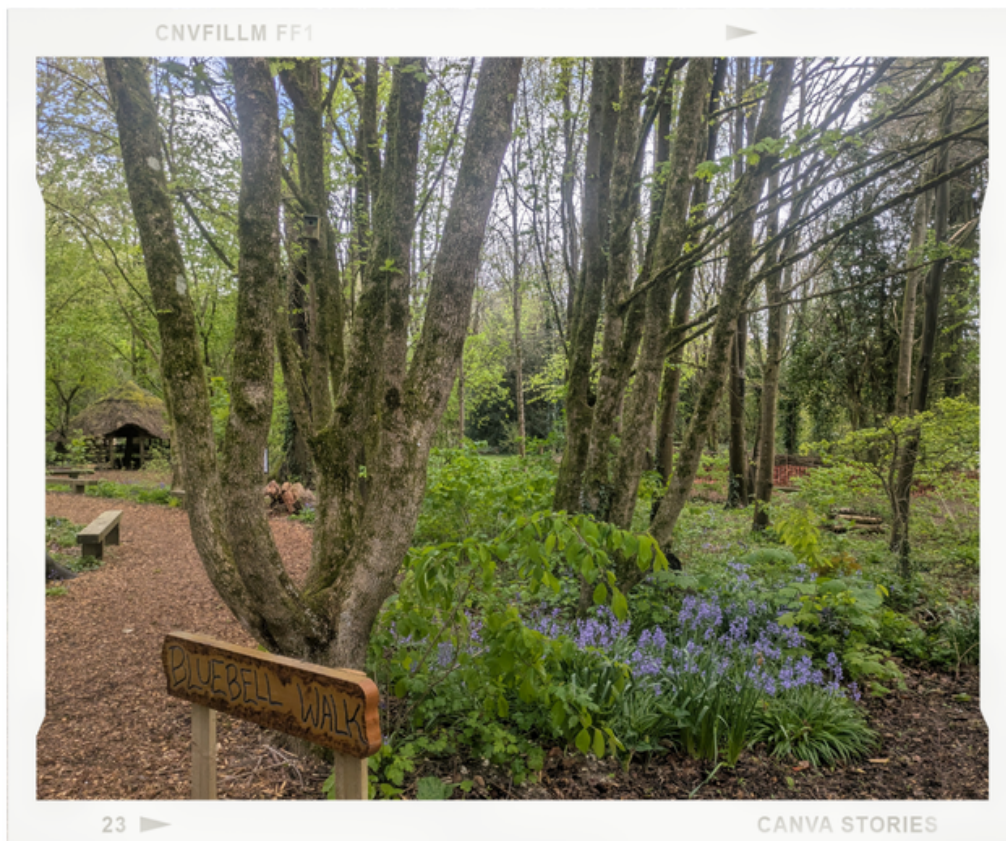


Long Term Vision

The long-term vision for this site is to use it for Forest School nurture groups and alternative provision firstly for the children at the school and then maybe branching out to other local schools. The site is already well established and maintained as a beautiful conservation area for native Flora and Fauna. It is a valuable educational resource to the school and they would like it to be used more regularly as a place where the children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) can interact and learn from nature. Canopy Forest School has a genuine desire to make a positive impact for those in need of the therapeutic benefits of nature. The Forest School client base will be primary aged children. The sessions will initially be run every Wednesday morning 10.00-12.00 am, with the hope to extend the sessions once we have become more established.

The children will take part in a carefully planned child centered Forest School programme which will allow them to connect to each other and the natural world. The activities will be developing their relationship to the Forest School site and they will actively take part in sustainable woodland management techniques such as, sowing wildflower seeds putting up houses and boxes for wildlife and taking part in simple flora and fauna conservation surveys.

From the field surveys that have taken place on this site this area does not contain anything of local/national or international importance. The purpose will be to minimise any adverse impacts of this Forest School on the environment and a range of baseline assessments have been conducted to ensure that any direct/indirect or cumulative impacts are accounted for. Mitigation measures have been put in place to minimize negative short, medium- or long-term impacts and these will continue to be measured throughout the course of the Forest School programme. There are no conflicts of interests, legislative limits or public concerns linked to Canopy Forest School use of this site.



IMPACT AND IMITIGATION MEASURES

After completing a site survey, it is important to assess how Forest School activities might have an impact on this area.



Canopy Forest School Impact Assessment

This guide provides information of the positive and negative impacts of Forest School activities.

Negative Impact on site ecology



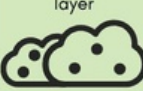
Activity and Impact	Ecological Layer	Photos	Management Actions
Fire pits, leading to burnt vegetation and change in chemical composition of soil	soil layer 		Enclose fire pit so fires are well contained, or use a fire bowl. • Limit the frequency of fires to allow soil to recover. • If the site is large enough, rotate fire locations. Fires should be at least 4 metres from surrounding trees.
Digging soil / mud kitchens that can damage soil structure and tree roots	soil layer 		Contain area of digging and reduce frequency of activity. • Move areas of digging away from tree roots. • Replant/resow areas of digging to allow plants to regrow. • Talk to children about how to look after bug life in the soil and any plants that they find. • Identify tree roots and talk to children about the role of roots and how we can protect them.
Footfall in popular areas of the site, leading to erosion and compaction of soil.	soil layer 		Divert or create new paths. • Woodchip paths to reduce soil erosion – but beware importing woodchip from other sites, due to the risk of introducing pests and diseases. • Rotate popular play areas and allow areas to recover. • Use multiple paths through sites to spread impact.
Woodland play that can lead to trampling of plants / young trees.	field/understory layer 		• Identify young plants with children • Mark them with a stake/tube or other method. • Agree a plan with the children a plan to avoid damaging plants through play. • Put brash (branches) or logs around young plants to protect them. Consider fencing for large areas of young trees (> 20 trees).

IMPACT AND MITIGATION MEASURES



Negative Impact on site ecology



Activity and Impact	Ecological Layer	Photos	Management Actions
Den building, which removes dead wood from field layer reducing available insect fodder and habitat.	Field layer 		Reduce size and number of dens built. • Create a pile of den building wood that children know is OK to use. • Create other dead wood piles on site, and agree with the children that these are for wildlife habitat, not den building.
Collecting fire wood and kindling, reducing available deadwood habitat.	Field layer 		• Reduce amount of firewood collected. • Consider buying local firewood from sustainably harvested sources instead, or ask for donations. • Encourage the creation of new dead wood habitats on site and agree with the children that these are for wildlife, not firewood
Breaking tree branches through play, tree swings, ropes and slack lines.	understorey layer 		• Talk with children about how to care for and look after the tree and why. • Remove swings from any damaged branches and engage a tree surgeon/ arboriculturist to advise on tree health. • Take down ropes at the end of each session for the safety of other users of the site, and protection of the tree
Bark damage: bark stripping through play, and/or damage through tree swings, ropes and slack lines	understorey layer 		• Talk with children about how to care for and look after the tree. • Engage a tree surgeon / arboriculturist to advise on tree health. • Buy or make tree protectors that pad between the tree and the rope/slack line. • Take down ropes at the end of sessions for safety and tree protection.
Tree guards breaking / plastic waste from tree guards which can harm wildlife	understorey layer 		Remove tree guards once the cover becomes a tight fit on the tree. • Periodically remove guards if mortality has occurred. • Engage children with activities about reducing plastic waste and recycling. • Use other natural materials to protect tree such as brash, bramble and nettle.
Heat from fire damaging tree canopy	Canopy layer 		Light fires at least 4 metres away from large trees and any overhanging branches. • Reduce frequency of fires / spread locations to reduce impact

IMPACT AND IMITIGATION MEASURES



Positive Impact on site ecology



Activity and Impact	Ecological Layer	Photos	Management Actions
Creating new deadwood habitats for insects including bees, small mammals including hedgehogs, and other animal life	Field layer 		Engage children with creating new habitats from deadwood piles and old wood. • Research how to encourage different types of wildlife through habitat creation on your site. • Survey wildlife with the children to show the positive impact the new habitats are bringing
Promoting plant diversity by clearing brambles and invasive plant species such as rhododendron, Japanese knotweed etc.* *ensure that all invasive plant material is disposed of in accordance with government regulations.	Field layer 		Identify any invasive species on your site. • Organise a day for parents and volunteers (or even older children) to clear overgrown areas. • Ensure some overgrown areas of brambles, nettles etc are left for wildlife.
Sowing wildflower seeds, promoting biodiverse meadow habitat.	Field layer 		Sow new wildflower meadows with the children. • Talk with children about caring for meadows, not pulling up flowers etc. • Create a plant identification activity once the wildflowers emerge in Spring. Survey the nature present with children regularly to show the positive impact meadows can bring
Pruning trees to promote new growth, more blossom for insects Planting new fruit trees to increase food for pollinators, birds and other wildlife	Canopy layer 		Engage with local volunteer groups who may have knowledge to share. • Attend pruning training days or employ an arboriculturist to prune trees on your site. • Harvest a share of the fruit (leaving some for the birds!) and share amongst school community or use in Forest School activities

IMPACT AND IMITIGATION MEASURES



Positive Impact on site ecology



Activity and Impact	Ecological Layer	Photos	Management Actions
Minimise the spread of tree pests and diseases on your site.	Canopy layer 		Employ an arboriculturist or tree surgeon to remove diseased trees where appropriate, to slow spread of diseases that are spread via root contact between trees, such as honey fungus and Dutch elm disease. • Practice good biosecurity such as cleaning boots and equipment after site visits. Install a boot washing station for yourself and the children. • Report sightings of pests and diseases to the relevant authority (in the UK, the online Forestry Commission TreeAlert service).
Coppicing and pollarding tree species such as willow and hazel, increasing light to forest floor, promoting ground flora diversity and creating valuable insect, bird and mammal habitat	Canopy layer 		Engage with local volunteer groups who may have knowledge to share, or employ an arboriculturist to coppice/pollard trees on your site. • Retain wood harvested for creative projects / firewood / deadwood habitat. • Fence newly coppiced areas to protect trees from rabbits / deer.
Creating new habitats for birds.	Canopy layer 		Plan a bird box creation and monitoring activity with the children. • Create activities to identify birds, observe their behaviour and chart biodiversity change over the seasons. • Make bird feeders with children and ensure bird feeders are available during the winter for birds.
Rejuvenating the pond area	Soil layer/field layer 		Engage children with helping to rejuvenate the pond area on site. • Introduce pond plants and make ponds frog friendly. • Survey the wildlife in your pond regularly with children. Ponds are one of the most biodiversity enhancing features you can add to a site! • Remove excess leaves from pond regularly to prevent build up

IMPACT AND IMITIGATION MATRIX

WHEN CONSIDERING THE IMPACT OF FOREST SCHOOL ACTIVITIES IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER THE DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE FOREST AND TO DO THIS CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL WILL CONSIDER THE VERTICAL STRUCTURES OF THE WOODLAND.

Impact Matrix to Assess the Ecological Effects of Forest School Activities When Considering the impact of your Forest School activities it is important to consider the different areas of the Forest/woodland Key for Impact Matrix: P – Positive, N – Negative, S – Short Term, M – Medium Term, L – Long Term, Per – Permanent (100+years) Temp – Temporary (0+ decades), R - Reversible				
Activity	Ground layer	Field layer	Shrub layer	Canopy Layer
1.Fire	<i>Ground Layer: N, M, P/R</i> *Logs/twigs burnt; ash left on ground layer. *Burnt wood will replenish. If fire area cleared correctly ash should be unnoticeable and eventually will degrade. * Lighting a fire on the ground will damage the soil and its chemistry, changing the way it behaves. *Risk of setting woodland on fire. *Soil compaction from regular use. *Fire can travel underground to roots even after extinguished	<i>Field Layer: N, M, R</i> *Field Layer Areas may be cleared for fire. Area would recover in time *Use a sustainable source for buying in wood, rather than using the woodlands resources *All fires should be lit in the fire trays and not in or on the ground. *Designate a fixed location for fires, leaving other areas free to grow as normal. *Ensure that all fires are fully extinguished before leaving the site *Using wood from our woodland would destroy habitats and diminish our supplies.	<i>Shrub Layers: N,M,R</i> *Fires lit under tree cover may mark trees or damage above branches. *These areas will recover in time	<i>Canopy Layers: N,M,R</i> *Fires lit under tree cover may damage leaves of overhanging trees. *These areas will recover in time
2.Cooking	<i>Ground Layer Food: N, S, R</i> *Waste may attract animals to the site or increase the numbers of certain species, leading to adverse changes in biodiversity *Make sure left-over food goes back into school and placed in the bin.	<i>Field Layer</i>	<i>Shrub Layer</i>	<i>Canopy Layer</i>
3.Tree climbing and shelter building	<i>Ground Layer: N,S, R</i> *Trampling of Flora/Fauna as site is used. *Wearing of soil, soil compaction from regular use *Area should recover	<i>Field Layer: N,S, R</i> *Trampling of Flora/Fauna as site is used. *Breaking leaves and sticks off Flora for building use would deplete resources and could destroy habitats * Damage to plants that are more sensitive to losing leaves or flowers.	<i>Shrub Layer: N, S, R</i> *Braking of leaves and branches during building. *Area should recover *Tampering with trees by climbing/ hanging things on them etc	<i>Canopy Layer: N, S, R</i> * Braking of leaves and branches during building. *Tampering with trees by climbing/ tying things on etc *Damage to trees that aren't as strong as others.

		* Area should recover when left.	*Designate a fixed location for den building, leaving other areas free to grow as normal. *Have a selection of resources available for the children to use each time, rather than creating new ones	* Restrict activities to tree that are suitable and can tolerate the activity *Designate a fixed location for den building, leaving other areas free to grow as normal. *Have a selection of resources available for the children to use each time, rather than creating new ones
4.Collecting wood	<i>Ground Layer: N, M, P/R</i> *Collection of wood for cutting, would replenish in time. *Movement of ground layer for cutting area.	<i>Field Layer N/P, M, T</i> *When collecting wood for cutting some branches, trees maybe felled. *Although this is negative ground layer will receive more sunlight allowing new plants to thrive.	<i>Shrub Layer N/P, M, T</i> *Taking wood from the woodland for activities *Limit the frequency and evaluate the amount of dry, dead wood around the woodland before removing any. *Collect only the minimum amount needed. *Reserve specific areas for deadwood conservation	<i>Canopy Layer N/P, M, T</i> *Taking wood from the woodland for activities *Limit the frequency and evaluate the amount of dry, dead wood around the woodland before removing any. *Collect only the minimum amount needed. *Reserve specific areas for deadwood conservation
5.Collecting natural materials	<i>Ground Layer N, M, P/R</i> * Collection of wood for cutting, would replenish in time. *Movement of ground layer for cutting area.	<i>Field Layers N/P, M, T</i> *When collecting wood for cutting some branches, trees maybe felled. *Although this is negative ground layer will receive more sunlight allowing new plants to thrive.	<i>Shrub Layer N/P, M, T</i> *Damage to plants, Leaves, sticks *Using sticks, leaves, flowers etc for activities *Ensure that only fallen leaves or flowers are collected.	<i>Canopy Layer N/P, M, T</i> *Damage to plants, Leaves, sticks *Using sticks, leaves, flowers etc for activities *Ensure that only fallen leaves or flowers are collected.
6.Woodland Circle Sitting Area	<i>Ground Layer N,S, R</i> *Trampling of Flora/Fauna as site is used. *Wearing of soil, soil compaction from regular use *Allocated area	<i>Field Layer N,S, R</i> *Trampling of Flora/Fauna as site is used. *Allocated area	<i>Shrub Layer N,S, R</i> *Trampling of Flora/Fauna as site is used. *Allocated area	<i>Canopy Layer</i>
7.Pathways	<i>Ground Layer N, S, R</i> *Plants may be lost. *However, some wild growing areas will be left. * If left to regrow should recover.	<i>Field Layer: N, S, R</i> *Plants may be lost. *However, some wild growing areas will be left. * If left to regrow should recover.	<i>Shrub Layer: N, S, R</i> *Plants may be lost. *However, some wild growing areas will be left. * If left to regrow should recover.	<i>Canopy Layer</i>

IMPACT AND IMITIGATION MATRIX CONTINUED

8.Using tools i.e. bow saw/hand drill	Ground Layer: N, M, P/R *Movement of ground layer for cutting area. *Collection of wood for cutting, would replenish in time.	Field Layer: N/P. M, T *When collecting wood for cutting some branches, trees maybe felled. *Although this is negative ground layer will receive more sunlight allowing new plants to thrive.	Shrub Layer: N/P. M, T *When collecting wood for cutting some branches, trees maybe felled. *Although this is negative the ground layer will receive more sunlight allowing new plants to thrive.	Canopy Layer: N/P. M, T *When collecting wood for cutting some branches, trees maybe felled. *Although this is negative ground layer will receive more sunlight allowing new plants to thrive.
9.Deadwood	Ground Layer: N, M, P/R *Dead wood is both homes to mini beasts and beds for fungi so removing too much would be bad for the habitat.	Field Layer: N/P. M, T *Dead wood is both homes to mini beasts and beds for fungi so removing too much would be bad for the habitat.	Shrub Layer: N *Dead wood is both homes to mini beasts and beds for fungi so removing too much would be bad for the habitat.	Canopy Layer

MONITORING

Observing, identifying and classifying the biodiversity of a site allows us to develop an understanding of a site and ensures that we help to keep it healthy and resilient. At **Canopy Forest School** a monitoring regime will be established and this will be completed annually. This will ensure that our ecological management practices are effective and maintain or enhance our Ecological Impact over time. The monitoring regime that we will use will take place in the same month in the same location and use the same recording format. It will also be linked to and influence our 3 Year Development Plan objectives. This survey will be used as an indicator which will provide details about species, habitat and will be evaluated to assess the value of the conservation achieved and the impacts on the site. It will also be an interesting indicator to show trends over time.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL

PAGE 07

CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL

OUR FOREST SCHOOL SITE
PROVISION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT: 1

OUR FOREST SCHOOL SITE: PROVISION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: 1

CONNECTION, GROWTH, EXPLORATION, SUSTAINABILITY

Canopy Forest School takes place in a woodland area at the back of Merdon Junior School in Chandler's Ford. It is made up of a mixture of coniferous and deciduous trees. The majority of the trees on the site are Yew and this is common on chalk sites in southern England. Yew trees form a dense canopy and are slow growing but long lived. They let little light in so other plants struggle to grow beneath them. These trees may have been planted as hedging as many appear on the parameter of the site. Holly trees grow amongst the Yew and this is probably because it tolerates shade well. Other trees that form a canopy layer are Birch, Hazel, Alder, Cherry and Laurel.

These species echo those found in Valley Park Woods and Hiltingbury Lakes. Both of these local conservation areas are sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) due to the ancient woodland and have over 19 species of ancient woodland plants. Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly and Alder-Buckthorn. Part of the Forest School role is to promote and teach sustainable woodland management to the children.

The ground layer of the site consists of decaying matter, dead wood, logs, leaf litter and twigs. The soil layer it is dark, loamy clay and the school lies within an area that is characteristically London Clay with a ph. level of 6.5 so it is slightly acidic.

In places there is little ground layer due to the enclosed canopy which has only allowed a small amount of light to penetrate down to the ground layer. The site is also constantly used by school children and consequently the soil has become very compacted in places.

There is a water source, a tributary of "Monks Brook", that flows through Hiltingbury to become part of Hiltingbury Lakes:

"It then continues near to the site both under and above ground and can be seen as it rises at the lower end of Kingsway and south of Brownhill Road. It then flows down to the main stream near to Chandler's Ford Train station." (Clark C, August 2021, Our-river-the-monks-brook)

It is here that the river begins to flow into sands, silt and clay. From maps produced by the National Rivers Authority, Chandlers Ford and the surrounding area lies on Barton, Bracklesham and Bagshot beds. This area is part of the Hampshire basin which is a geological basin of Palaeogene age in southern England.

Near to the edges of the site where more light penetrates Wild Garlic, Herb Robert, Wood Anemones, Wild Garlic, Foxgloves, and Wild Carrot can be found. There are elements of a shrub layer consisting mainly of laurel, holly, brambles and nettles.

OUR FOREST SCHOOL SITE: PROVISION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT 2

CONNECTION, GROWTH, EXPLORATION, SUSTAINABILITY

The older trees on the site consist of Yew, Hazel, Silver Birch, Oak and Alder. The most established layer of the area is the canopy and grey squirrels and a variety of birds are found here. In terms of fauna there is evidence of mice, rats, hedgehogs and foxes using this site. The likely impacts of the project will not impact significantly on the woodland habitat but instead we would like to introduce nesting boxes, feeders and more wild woodland flowers that will encourage more insects and animals to the site.

As far as I am aware there are no active conservation management plans for this site and this is something that **Canopy Forest School** will introduce and adhere to. However, the grounds at Merton Junior School are being developed through a number of different projects. The woodland is not under any kind of special protection or status such as SSSI or NNR.

Our woodland area is managed carefully and as our Forest School progresses we hope to allow the site to go a little wilder and develop a deeper diversity. The site is within school grounds and is not accessible to the public. It is enclosed within the grounds and is therefore safe as only people who have signed in at the school office can access it. The area backs onto residential gardens with fencing acting as a divider. Access to the site is only gained through the school.

Chandler's Ford is a town with a population of over 21,000 people and is a largely residential, urban area that lies between Winchester and Southampton. The site at Merton Junior School is owned and managed by Hampshire LEA and other shareholders are Merton Junior School's Governing Body.

Merton Junior school opened in 1956 and the school expanded rapidly in the 1970s. Chandler's Ford is a residential area but there are several nature reserves and secondary woodlands nearby and the understory of these echo the flora and fauna found at the **Canopy Forest School** site.

Canopy Forest School would like to develop and enhance the natural diversity of the space and at the same time use it as a learning resource. The purpose will be to minimise any adverse impacts of this Forest School on the environment and a range of baseline assessments have been conducted to ensure that any direct/indirect or cumulative impacts are accounted for. Mitigation measures have been put in place to minimize negative short, medium- or long-term impacts and these will continue to be measured throughout the course of the Forest School programme. There are no conflicts of interests, legislative limits or public concerns linked to **The Canopy Forest School** use of this site.

The long-term vision for this site is to use and develop it as a Forest School area which is both a conservation area for native Flora and Fauna and a place where the children of the school can interact and learn from nature. Throughout the course of the year the children will take part in a carefully planned child centred Forest School programme which will allow them to connect to each other and the natural world. The activities will be developing their relationship to the Forest School site and they will actively take part in sustainable woodland management techniques such as coppicing hazel, sowing wildflower seeds putting up houses and boxes for wildlife and taking part in flora and fauna conservation surveys.

Please also refer to our Sustainability Policy p38, appendix 1- Ecological Impact, appendix 2-Sustainable Action Plan, appendix 3-Three Year Sustainable Woodland Management Action plan.

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

CONNECTION, GROWTH, EXPLORATION, SUSTAINABILITY

"Take only memories and leave only footprints" Chief Seattle

Canopy Forest School aims to educate children and adults in the benefits of sustainability and therefore endeavours to thread this through learning and playing. At the start of each sessions there will be a brief talk with the group about the expectations for the day. Within this will be an expectation around looking after our environment linked to the sessions theme.

Any waste that is created from **Canopy Forest School** sessions will either be recycled or composted. Waste will be collected in a recyclable paper bag. Re-usable cups will be issued each session which will be washed each week and re-used, existing plastic bottles will be re-used for juice or drinking water. Healthily compostable snacks will be offered during each session. During cooking activities we will ensure that all food is taken away from the site and any dishes washed on site will use hot water with a biodegradable camp soap. Any dish water will then be strained through a fine mesh or fabric into a container. The strainer catches all but the tiniest of food bits which will be put in the designated rubbish area. The resulting water 'grey water' will be disposed of by broadcasting it over a wide area. Please also refer to our the ecological impact (appendix 1, 2, 3). The site will be cleared of any trace of litter each week and "leave only footprints" is a phrase that we reinforce and teach the children. (Sustainability Policy p38 and .Provision and Environmental Impact p6-7).

During our long term programme children will be taught about sustainable woodland management and as part of this they will discover more about the benefits of coppicing trees such as hazel and then using the harvested wood to make objects, putting the wood to good use. All the equipment at Forest School is re-used, repaired, cleaned to make sure it is used for as long as

possible. Please see pg 6 & 7 for more information on Provision and Environmental Impact and appendix 1, 2&3 for our Eco-logical Impact Assessment and Management Plan.

Canopy Forest School is fully and totally committed to sustainability and protecting the environment. We strive to provide exciting and adventurous forest school activities whilst contributing to a sustainable future through the resources, activities and actions that we take. We think it is important that every element of our business is true to our vision, ethos and mission. We therefore promote sustainability, through our own practices, through using green products and working with other green organisations. We have chosen to run our business through an ethical bank account as we believe that this is one of the most powerful tools that any of us can use to change the world for the better.

Our Forest School recognises that there is a multiplicity of linked social, economic, political, cultural and technological elements that impact on actual sustainable and environmentally safe activities. In an increasingly complex world for young people and young adults **Canopy Forest School** will strive to be an educator of small actions and steps that are quick, simple and easy to achieve by anyone regardless of their background, income, health or employment status. We are committed to our green values and support the charity **Hampshire Wildlife Trust**. We make a 5% donation to this charity for every child enrolled on our books

CLIMATE CHANGE

"Climate change is now indisputable and it is widely accepted that as a result of past emissions of greenhouse gases, the earth is committed to continued warming during the 21st century. This warming alone may have profound consequences for global ecosystems and people's lives. The actual rate of warming will depend on future emissions and concentrations of greenhouse gases, which is dependent on the actions of governments over the next few years on curbing greenhouse gas emissions. It is projected that summers in Britain will get warmer, and winters milder. Wales, parts of Scotland and the South East may have drier summers, and wetter winters. Climate change is also expected to cause changes to the seasons, increase the frequency of extreme weather events such as storms and cause a rise in sea levels. For more detailed information on projected climate change in Britain, the UK Climate Projections (UKCP) " (Managing Your Woodland for Wildlife, p82, Blakesleigh D and Buckley P, 2010)

Woodland communities are already being affected by climate change, this can be seen for example in the timings of bud breaks, migration and weather changes. This trend could see a change in the balance of tree communities; affect early flowering woodland plants and inevitably the composition of woodland communities will change.

In June 2019 Hampshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency and as a result it created two targets which have been set for the County Council and Hampshire as a whole:

- 2050 Carbon neutral
- 2°C preparing to be resilient to the impacts of temperature rise.

(Hampshire County council)

Canopy Forest School is committed to educating and sharing sustainable, natural, environmentally friendly ways of working. This is reflected in every element of our business. We therefore promote sustainability, through our own practices, through using green products and working with other green organisations. We run our business through an ethical bank account as we believe that this is one of the most powerful tools that any of us can use to change the world for the better. **Canopy Forest School** has made a declaration that there is a climate emergency and acknowledges the significant impact climate change is having on the world, and is committed to taking meaningful action to reduce our environmental impact.

This Ecological Impact report is an important part of the process of ensuring that our activities in and around the site do not have any negative impacts upon the site.

CLIMATE CHANGE

AT CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL WE BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF ACKNOWLEDGING THE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE WORLD, AND COMMIT TO TAKING MEANINGFUL ACTION TO REDUCE OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

CANOPY FOREST SCHOOL



DECLARES A CLIMATE EMERGENCY

By making this declaration Canopy Forest School acknowledge the significant impact climate change is having on the world, and commit to taking meaningful action to reduce our environmental impact.



TO US A CLIMATE EMERGENCY MEANS THAT WE:

- Acknowledge the scientific indicators e.g., IPCC reports on warming and UN reports on loss of biodiversity and consequences of economic growth.
- Accept the urgency of the situation: if we have a real chance of tackling these issues, we must take urgent and immediate action within the next few years.
- Acknowledge that our purpose as educators is to connect the communities we work with to the natural world, model sustainable education practices and teach about the great importance of taking action to support of the minimisation of climate change.

Our Climate Action Route Map



Planting Trees



Sowing wildflower seeds



Bird Boxes



Composting Waste



Teaching Nature Connectiveness



Reuse Recyclable Items



Running our business through a sustainable green bank



Donating to local wildlife charities

The Aims of our Climate Action Route Map



1. To communicate the facts regarding climate change with our Forest School community and beyond



2. To review our coverage of climate change within our sessions in meaningful ways



3. To refine the processes, we use on our Forest School sites to minimize the effects of climate change



4. To involve our students in the planning and implementation of a sustainable educational approach



CONCLUSION

In conclusion this ecological impact report will feed into our woodland management and is a big part of the success of developing a biodiverse area. This is a working document that will be reviewed every year as the group and the site change and evolve. The Forest School Leader will constantly consider and strive to balance the health of the site with the socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts of its participants.

Community engagement is an essential part of **Canopy Forest School** and this is reflected in our ethos, mission and values. Bringing people to nature is a fundamental part of our work as is teaching others to love and care for the natural world.

Educating members of the local community about the unique habitats within the school ground will be a big part of the Forest School experience as will taking part in woodland management activities. All the Forest School activities that will take place aim to get the children caring and feeling the unique magic of this space. Involving and teaching children and adults about the important role we have as care takers or woodman of an area will not only provide them with skills that they can pass on and use in the future but it will also help them to develop a deep understanding of why it is important to establish a relationship with a natural space. Like most things in nature we both rely on each other, it is a symbiotic relationship- nature needs human help and humans need natures help for a healthy existence.

Last reviewed:
Responsible for Review: Emma Clode
Next Date of review: 2027

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