

Planting Report

NOVEMBER 2022

WILD EAST CHILTINGTON

The East Chiltington Trust (TECT)

East Chiltington, East Sussex





Children and Local Community involvement:

38 children aged 2-12 yrs

34 parents, grandparents, carers and members of the local community

Guardianship

Land Guardian
Hannah Deacon & Andy Gattiker

Community Guardian:
Jess Duggan

Facilitator Guardian:
Sarah Mclaughlin-Marlow

Facilitation:

Facilitators:
Anna Richardson, Sarah Mclaughlin-Marlow, Hannah Deacon



Our Children's Forest was run over four days. We had two groups of children on the 13th and 20th November where we spent golden autumnal days experiencing and imagining our future Children's Forest.

The Children came back to plant their forest on the beautiful East Chiltington Trust Land on the 27th November and we held a further community planting day on the 4th December. In total over 70 children and adults came together to plant over 160 trees.

THE CHILDREN'S FOREST APPROACH

A four step journey that supports a meaningful connection to tree planting and the existing ecosystem; that activates future generational thinking and supports children to take hopeful action in the face of climate change.





1.EXPERIENCING

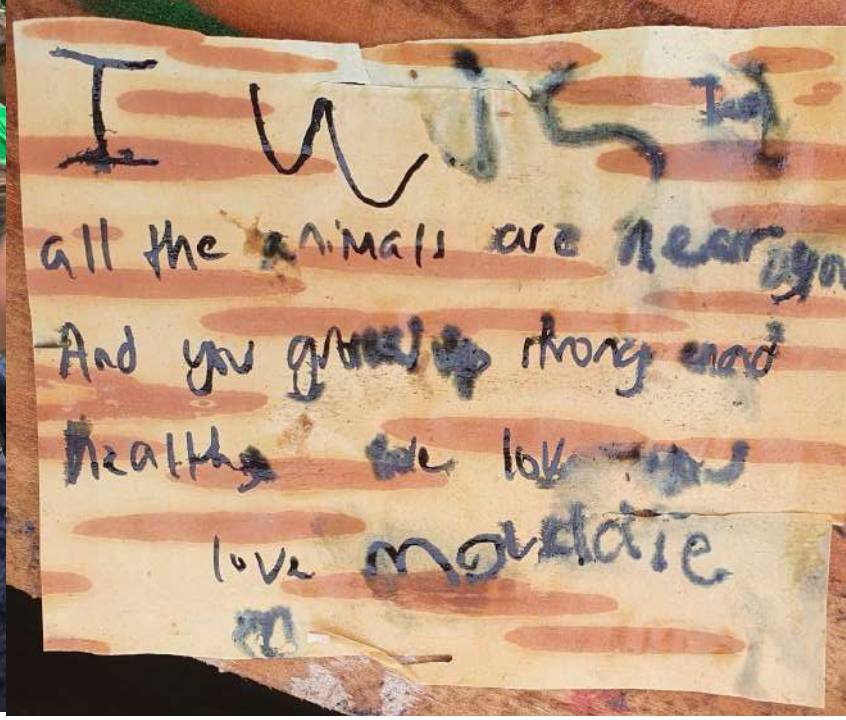
We spent time in the woods connecting to the trees and the life they support. The children contributed their sparks and sticks to light our central fire and each choose a special animal name. Pretending to be Jays we hid and tried to find our acorns whilst keeping a watchful eye for squirrels and foxes. The children made a miniature forest world with clay animals to represent the forest we would plant whilst listening to a story about the gifts trees offer us and the care we can give them in return. The children found their own special sit spot and enjoyed time quietly listening, feeling, smelling and seeing the world around them.

2.IMAGINING

After lunch we walked to the Children's Forest site where the trees would be planted. We imagined what it would feel like to be a seed growing into a tree and what our planted forest would be like in years to come. Together the children wrote a group poem about their forest. We enjoyed time painting rocks from the local stream and carving local chalk. These were the children's blessing stones which they would later place by their planted trees. We finished the day by remembering our animal names and playing 'Spirit of the Forest'.







The imagination is one of our greatest doorways for connection and opportunity for future generational thinking. This is vitally important for the responsible action and true feelings of care for the natural world.









3.PLANTING

We joined together again on a wetter day to plant the trees. But little tree seedlings love the rain!

As the children planted the trees they made wishes for the future forest. They wished for the" trees to grow big", that "lots of animals would live" in the forest and that they could "come and play" in the forest. The children wrote their wishes on Silver Birch bark scrolls and pressed leaves to plant with their trees.

The children learnt how to plant and protect the trees to give them the best start. Each tree was planted with a handful of forest soil, full of mycelium, to help the trees and create connection to the adjoining wood.

The trees were protected with a guard and mulched with cardboard, woodchip and sheeps wool from local Ashurst Farm.

We ended our planting by celebrating and dancing around our trees to the sounds of the bagpipes!





TREES

With two groups planting on the 27th November and a further community planting afternoon on the 3rd December we have planted over 160 trees. Over 70 people from the local community were involved in the planting.

We planted a wide variety of trees suitable for the site. These included: Field Maple, Holly, Hornbeam, Crab Apple, Willow, Oak, Alder, Aspen, Hazel, Rowan, Elder, Wild Plum, Sweet Chestnut, Scots Pine, Small Leaf Lime, Wild Cherry, Silver Birch, Hawthorn and Blackthorn





4.TENDING

The children can come and visit their trees whenever they wish.

In addition, we will be running tending days throughout the year. The children will help tend the Children's Forest by topping up mulch and replacing any trees that do not survive. In tending the land, the children will experience what it is to be caretakers of the natural world. The children will know that, as people, we can be a beneficial species and a part of the forest ecosystem.

When we return we will light the Children's Fire to remember our wish for the children of all species to have a bright future












The Children's Poem

There is a lovely forest.
The sun shines and the moon is lovely
Gold, yellow and orange leaves sway in the air
Snails climb smoothly up the trees
Animals tread the soft earth
Finding lovely shiny conkers
Trees falling down and clattering
I love my mud heart

In the golden green forest
I stand in a group
Singing my very own song
Together
Roots entwined

I love the fire – it's warm and bright
I love the noise of the rustling leaves
Calm and safe from harm
We love the sounds and colours of the woods.

Here is a home for all.
Seeding dreams of future lives
The buzz of the bees hum with ease
The key to the giant thief
My branches reaching to the sky
My roots dig deep into the ground
and hold the world up
I dream of a sunlit day full of emerald green leaves
From the ground to the sky, from the sky to the ground, the dance goes on
The floor is alive with an army of beasts
Wild wind sounds of the rustling leaves and trees dance together in harmony

Here we will gather again in golden green light

13th Nov









The Children's Poem

A canopy of leaves that rustles and sway
The seeds flutter down from the great sycamore tree
As my leaves fall in the winter they come back in the summer

To climb so high to feel the sun on my face
Birds tweeting
The fragrance of the bluebells
The holly is beautiful

The grass sways beautifully
and the leaves sway beautifully on the trees
A badger snuffling and a woodpecker pecking happily around a tree
A deer munches the young tree leaves
Red squirrel, red squirrel, where is your nut?
Otter, otter, juggling your rocks

Bumblebees in the trees, all in threes, buzzing away in the trees
Bright red ladybird dancing in the sun
I help the woodlice

A tiny leaf falls down and softly lands on the ground
The trees sway in the breeze as the sun shines on to their leaves

20th Nov



BENEFITING CHILDREN & THE LAND

Land Guardian & Trustee - Andy Gattiker

”As a parent and Trustee of The East Chiltington Trust (TECT), I am delighted at the establishment of the Children's Forest on the TECT land. Improving the wildlife value of land in our care is critically important to help reduce the loss of biodiversity and to address the climate crisis. It is also fantastic to involve children at all stages in the development so they have both an understanding of the importance of our natural environment and have ownership of this important new habitat.”

Quotes from the children

“ I planted an Oak tree and it will grow big” Lennie 4

“It makes everyone feel they are part of the woods” Nelson 9

“It’s really fun and really good for the environment and our futures” Daisy 12

“I like doing the digging and putting the tree in” Ezra 6

“It was really fun. You can plant any tree you like. I liked the wish because it will come true” Tom 9

“ I want to come back and collect a fir cone from the Pine tree I planted” Joe 10

“It was amazing. I want it to beautiful and be there a long time. I can’t wait until I’m old and I visit it” Jack 8

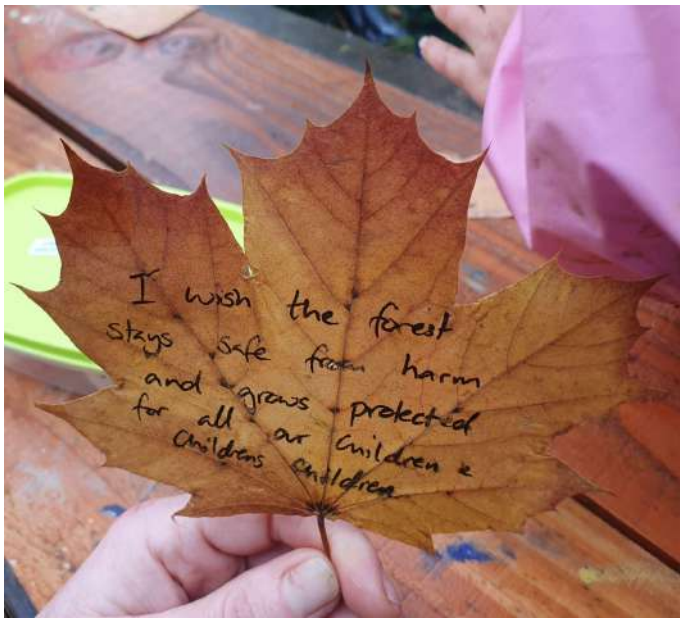














We want to celebrate the energy, enthusiasm and hard work of the children and the community who have truly brought the Children's Forest alive. The children and their families are always welcome on the land and we look forward to ongoing fun, connection and tending of the young forest over the years to come.

With thanks to the National Lottery for funding this project

THE EAST CHILTINGTON TRUST



CONTACT INFO

Children's Forest:
www.childrensforet.earth
connect@childrensforetearth

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Many Thanks for Your Support!

Special thanks to all those who worked behind the scenes to make this happen.

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Wild Aligned

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