



PRESS RELEASE

October 2023

Summer of activities helps connect young people with nature

A packed programme of summer activities has been helping young people living in the Forest of Bowland and its urban fringes to enjoy the benefits of getting outdoors.

Delivered as part of the Connecting People & Nature (CPAN) programme, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) sessions have seen young people taking part in fun outdoor activities, such as minibeast hunting, and a healthy eating orienteering course in green spaces within towns.

Family Friendly Community Days have also been staged, showcasing local green spaces within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Families enjoyed taking part in den building, a nature trail and natural art.

Connecting People & Nature (CPAN) is a three-year collaboration between national education charity The Ernest Cook Trust and the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust.

The project's focus is on promoting nature, wellbeing and Outdoor Learning. It has three elements: engaging with communities to get people involved; supporting schools to establish the foundations for Outdoor Learning; and training community leaders in how to plan and run their own outdoor activities.

Feedback for the summer activities has been very positive. Kats Club in Burnley took part in the HAF programme, and manager Katrina Hill said: "This is the second time that Kats Club have been able to experience Forrest School. The children all love learning new things."

Nazya Khalid, who organised a group taking part in a Family Friendly Community Day in Gisburn Forest, said: "It was an educational and informative family friendly session enjoyed by all ages. Learning about nature informally."

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The family friendly community sessions have included countryside, nature and heritage walks, plug planting, invasive species plant removal work, meadow restoration and farm visits. They have also taken part in nature initiatives like the Big Butterfly Count and river surveying with Ribble Rivers Trust. Community sessions have included similar activities, but been tailored to each group.

The Ernest Cook Trust's Alison Cross and Deborah Woods, from Forest of Bowland AONB working in partnership with Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust, are working together on the project.

They have now been joined by Outdoor Learning trainee, Abbie Hampshire, who said: "I feel extremely grateful to be given this opportunity, to learn more about Outdoor Learning and community work in regards to connecting people to nature. I have always loved wildlife and the outdoors, so I am looking forward to new experiences within this different career."

The Ernest Cook Trust devises and delivers programmes that promote Outdoor Learning for young people, families and communities. Through grant-giving, it supports other organisations in the field of Outdoor Learning, and awards some £2m in grants each year. The Trust prioritises working with young people from underserved communities.

For more information about CPAN, visit [Connecting People and Nature | Forest of Bowland AONB](#)

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Ernest Cook Trust

[The Ernest Cook Trust](https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/) offers children and young people, their families and communities, the chance to learn from the land through hands-on Outdoor Learning activities.

The Ernest Cook Trust is a charity limited by guarantee with the sole charitable objective of education.

The Trust places education at its very heart by offering children and young people a chance to connect with nature and to take action on the environment in a meaningful and positive way.

The Trust awards around £2m per year in grants based on relevance and impact against organisational objectives. Grants are given to schools or charitable organisations for activities in the UK with a particular focus on areas where there are fewer opportunities to experience the outdoors.

For more information about The Ernest Cook Trust visit <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/> or contact press officer Jo Smyth - email media@ernestcooktrust.org.uk.

The Forest of Bowland AONB

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/>

The Forest of Bowland was designated as an AONB in 1964. The AONB legislation (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) was designed to protect areas of unspoiled natural beauty for future generations.

13% of the AONB is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its extensive habitats of wet and dry heathland, particularly heather moor and blanket bog. A major part of the AONB's fells is designated as a Special Protection Area under the European Birds Directive.

The Connecting People & Nature project is one of the ways in which the AONB Partnership enables people to enjoy, learn, and give back to the outstanding landscape and heritage on their doorstep.

For more information, please contact cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk or visit www.forestofbowland.com.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by The National Lottery, we inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. www.heritagefund.org.uk

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