

ANNUAL REPORT



May 2021 - April 2022

Conservation | Education | Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, we have been restoring the arboretum which had become overgrown, inaccessible and unsafe for the public to visit. We mobilised hundreds of volunteers from the local community in South Glos and Bristol to learn wellbeing, conservation and heritage skills.

A highlight of 2021-22 was our successful crowdfunding campaign which saw 40 supporters club together to raise £3,000 in 28 days. This funded woodland management which is vital to ensure a safe space for our wellbeing groups. This core cost is becoming increasingly expensive and difficult to fund through grants, so we will be exploring more ways that our supporters can help secure the future of the woods for generations to come.

This year we launched our new Woodland Wellbeing Project which enables people who live in South Glos to access the arboretum to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Our wellbeing projects continue to have a huge impact on people's lives and we are always listening to continually improve our support.

We have been re-discovering the names and stories of more of our 600+ trees, a special thanks to our volunteer metal detectorist for finding many of the old tree labels buried in the soil.

Our team has expanded, bringing more capacity and fresh ideas. We have welcomed Katy, our Event Manager, to bring a sparkle to Tortworth's events calendar which is vital for helping us to raise funds. Our Monitoring & Evaluation Lead, Amy Stone, is currently on maternity leave and has left her work in the capable hands of Sally, a regular Sunday volunteer. And thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund we have a new Operations Manager, Amy Walsh, to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of our growing team.

We have reviewed and expanded our Governance by recruiting Non-executive Directors to drive forward the next phase of our development, you can read more about them on page 5.

In 2022-23 we look forward to welcoming back more of our community to the woods, helping to create special memories with families and friends. We will be planting some new trees and piloting a range of new events where you can learn heritage skills and look after your wellbeing amongst our exotic tree collection.

We look forward to seeing you in the woods soon!

Best wishes,

Bec, Amy
& the Tortworth team



OUR WORK

Our Vision is a welcoming woodland, accessible to all, where people and nature thrive alongside our botanic tree collection.



"Brings back memories of coming 20 years ago. The team have done a great job restoring the woodland"

Our Mission is to nurture the symbiosis between people and trees by:

- restoring and managing the exotic tree collection at Tortworth, with and for the community,
- creating an inspiring and inclusive community space where people nurture themselves and nature through learning heritage, conservation and wellbeing skills.

The overall impact of our work expands across 4 key areas:

TREES A restored, varied and thriving tree collection available for visitors to learn about and enjoy today and in the future



NATURE Varied flora and fauna thrive alongside the trees, providing inspiration and nourishment for the community

COMMUNITY People's physical and mental health and overall wellbeing have been improved through nature connection



TORTWORTH FOREST CENTRE CIC
A flourishing, sustainable organisation with a strong local profile and a varied income stream providing resilience

OUR IMPACT

TREES

A year of active maintenance by regular volunteers has seen great improvements to both tree health and visitor experience across the site. Building on previous years we were able to maintain and push into new areas of the site, creating new views and pathways. Good progress has been made improving accessibility and infrastructure. We added new interpretation, with visitor signs, information plaques and maps. Exciting new trees were added to the collection, whilst existing specimens were identified and labelled. Some highlights include:

- Volunteers discovered old tree plaques buried underground;
- Inspected our veteran trees with a visit from an ancient tree specialist;
- Collected seeds and cuttings for propagation;
- Began surveying specimen trees, recording new data to submit to The Tree Register;
- Used our new tree mapping software to highlight and record details of the unidentified specimen trees.

5

new
information
plaques



2800

volunteer
hours



29

new trees
planted



We are excited to share news of our **Woodland Wellbeing Project** starting later in the year - a new, pilot mental health programme for local people. More on this in next years report!

COMMUNITY

Our **Woodland Wellbeing Programme** continues to thrive by supporting adults who are struggling with low self-esteem, social isolation and poor wellbeing: our projects have provided much needed support for people emerging from the pandemic through providing a safe space where they learn nature conversation, heritage and wellbeing skills, alongside others who have shared experiences

People continue to attend the **Hawthorn Project** regularly; for some it has been life changing. People try new crafts; experiment with tools; forage for food; as well as leading walks and welcoming newcomers.

We frequently hear how participants experience the space as safe and as a place where they can be themselves.

"I feel great to be a part of a community of strong women"

People use the project both as an opportunity to socialise and to spend some time in quiet contemplation by themselves in nature, it is a chance to slow down.

"being surrounded by the woods is comforting, like having a big hug"



15

participants



42

Hawthorn
Project
sessions



60%

increase in
agencies
referring

Volunteer Days and Woodland Management Days continued to provide much needed support for people as we emerged from the pandemic; under the umbrella of our hugely successful Woodland Heritage Project

Highlights included:

- Tree plaques, visitor signs and improved interpretation on site
- Creating a trail with fairy houses made by women from a local prison
- Hosting visits from local tree enthusiasts and the Arboricultural Association

Sunday Volunteer Community Group

"I love being in the woods, the combination of physical exertion and natural mindfulness leaves me physically exhausted and mentally rejuvenated"

11
Sunday
volunteer
days



179
volunteers
over the year



97%
of volunteers
rate experience
as FANTASTIC



Woodland Management Tuesdays

"Being in the woods with others and being physical is a really important part of my recovery. It helps me to stay grounded and present"

48
Tuesday
volunteer
days



100%
of volunteers
report
wellbeing
improvement

"My mental and physical health is hugely improved from coming here. It has been an essential lifeline."

NATURE

At Tortworth we have large variety of flora and fauna that thrive alongside our tree collection, providing inspiration and nourishment for the community.

This year the highlights include:

- foraging and cooking sweet chestnuts on the open fire;
- inviting our local community to fungi and butterfly surveys;
- continuing our efforts for ID flora and fauna, submitting our findings to iNaturalist;
- expanding our scything and clearing new areas



tapping and trying sap from our birch trees



picking nettles and cleavers to make tea



looking after our woodland friends by protecting their habitat

TORTWORTH FOREST CENTRE CIC

After another year of community engagement, restoration work and events, we have increased the positive impact of the organisation both for people and for the health of the arboretum in the future.



NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Meet our new team of Directors who will be supporting the staff team with strategic development as we head towards our tenth anniversary in 2025. You can read their full bios on our website.



Kathryn Neri has experience across AI, Technology and the Energy markets with a focus on streamlining operations. She is skilled in putting structure around start-ups and scale ups. Her first experience within conservation was working alongside with the Welsh government '10 Millions trees' initiative, sparking a passion to consciously improve the world around us.

A graduate in Rural Resource Management, **Mark Goodman** works as a consultant, supporting not for profit organisations and local authorities in a range of services, including governance, business planning, funding and community engagement. As well as helping others set up charities and not-for-profit organisations, he has been a founder and Director of a number of others.



Dorian Zanker has worked in a wide range of businesses – from our local water company to an overseas environmental engineering business. With sustainability never far from his heart, Dorian has been involved in programmes with the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership and Forum for the Future and now spends a reasonable amount of his time helping start-up businesses.

Sarah Martin works with the community voluntary sector across a range of roles and has a passion for the outdoors. She is an advocate for social justice and climate emergency issues. Local to the area, Sarah has been involved in community action in South Gloucestershire for the past 18 years.



Emily Hazell is passionate about connecting people to trees and the natural environment. Having trained at RBG Kew, graduating with Honours in the Diploma in Horticulture in 2022, Emily now works as a Botanical Horticulturist caring for the Living Collection of Temperate Plants. Prior to Kew, she worked as a Horticultural Training officer at a small city farm, training vulnerable adults in the cultivation of vegetables and ornamentals.

After graduating with a BSc in Arboriculture **Phil Dye** worked as a Local Authority tree officer for 11 years, overseeing trees on development sites as well as managing a large and diverse tree stock. Having previously co-run a recreational tree climbing company Phil now runs his own arboricultural consultancy.



FINANCE

INCOME

As in previous years, we have continued to enjoy grant success receiving funding of £84,639, down £4,490 on last year.

As the organisation starts to make a concerted move to increase its resilience we are pleased to report less of a reliance on grant funding, with the following income raised:

£805 from **courses**;

£5,758 from **venue hire** (up from £1,258);
and;

£1,460 from **sale of goods**

In addition, thanks to ongoing contributions from our supporters, we have received our highest figure yet of **£4,282** in donations (up £1,652 from last year).

£96,944

Turnover, increased from £93,017 last year

OVERVIEW

Our financial year is 1st May 2021 to 30th April 2022.

Turnover: £96,944

Expenditure: £95,287

We have a small surplus of £1,657 at the end of the financial year, and a reserve of £2,166.





Our THANKS

To the following individuals, businesses, and charity partners for their ongoing financial or in-kind support:



DONATE HERE

<https://tortwortharboretum.org/>

