

## Media Release from Alderney Wildlife Trust

Date: 11.09.23

### The AWT's held a Woodland Explorer Week to inspire the island's youth!

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For the last week of the summer holidays, the Alderney Wildlife Trust (AWT) launched a new programme for children aged 7 – 13, with thanks to funding from the Youth Commission for Guernsey & Alderney and the 2023 Guernsey Insurance Corporation's Conservation Award. The 'Woodland Explorer Week' led by Team Wilder Community Support Officer, Abigail de Castella was dedicated to providing a space for Alderney's children in which to explore the Alderney Community Woodland (ACW), increasing nature connectivity and raising awareness of the natural environment.

To look after our planet, it's important to become more confident and resilient in the outdoors. Research highlights that nature disconnection directly correlates to a lack of interest in nature conservation - without this, we are less likely to take care of our surroundings or to appreciate the benefits that the natural world provides. To ensure that they can reconnect with the environment in adult life, it is imperative that children have the opportunity to build a foundation before the age of eight.

The Woodland Explorers will be the first stage in the AWT's programme to inspire Alderney's youth to explore their own relationship with nature, supporting children to become curious, enjoying how it feels to play with natural resources and finding joy beneath the woodland canopy.

Nestled within the ACW is an almost flat area within a Sycamore copse, a perfect location! The protection provided by the trees' branches makes the area cooler, and with a circular placement of trees just the right size, our Wildlife Volunteers and the local tree surgeon set to work clearing the site, ready to hoist a parachute shelter from the tree canopy.

This provided our classroom. Underneath the parachute we placed a log circle ready to welcome twenty enthusiastic Woodland Explorers ready to discover a range of activities that supports their curiosity and imagination.

A full list of the weeks activities are as follows;

- Day 1 Sycamore wood introduction and eco-painting
- Day 2 Hammock hang out and den building
- Day 3 Woodland crafts
- Day 4 Butterfly Transect, minibeasts, dens and make your own Jenga set
- Day 5 Campfire and Certificate Ceremony (with outdoor games and woodland crafts)

The week finished with a Certificate and Campfire Ceremony to award the attendees for all their creativity and imagination. The log circle was transported to Essex Farm ready for our finale, with thanks to The Georgian House for lending their fire bowl to such a great cause. The weekend Moth trap had provided us with 3 large moths, a Blue Underwing, and two Hawk Moths. The children loved holding these gentle giants and were fascinated by the way Moths warm their bodies up before flight. Nature mobiles were made from driftwood, pinecones and foraged leaves before cooking delicious green flatbreads on the open fire. We made sure to discuss the importance of keeping safe when working around a flame which they modelled perfectly by collecting dry grass and safely toasting their vegan marshmallows. The session ended with a well-earned hot cacao, woodland explorer certificates and a thank you to the resources, woodland and staff for such a fantastic wild woodland week.

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## Background

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To read our Team Wilder Community Support Officer's full blog on the Woodland Explorer Week, [click here](#).

### **About the Alderney Wildlife Trust**

The Alderney Wildlife Trust is one of the 46 Wildlife Trusts working across the British Isles. We are the youngest of the Wildlife Trust, forming 21 years ago and since then the AWT has received incredible support from a dedicated team of wildlife enthusiasts, what we like to think of as the 'TeamWilder'. This team isn't just limited to residents and AWT members, it includes people from all walks of life who have an interest in our island's wildlife, as well as supporters and organizations from around the world. We work with the local community to engage them with their natural environment in order to protect Alderney's wildlife for the future.

[Our mission is to study, protect and champion Alderney's wildlife. We wish to see a thriving natural island where wildlife and natural habitats play a valued role in addressing our island's future and the climate and ecological emergencies that face us.](#)

***Alderney is a very special place and by helping the work of the Alderney Wildlife Trust you can make a difference. After all, if you love where you live, you'll want to look after it - Dr. George McGavin, Patron AWT***

### **About the Alderney Community Woodland**

The Alderney Community Woodland (ACW) was established by the AWT in 2009, with the designing of what was to become the largest community woodland in the Channel Islands (it covers 2% of Alderney). This was followed by mass plantings between 2010 and 2013 with more than 11,000 trees planted, the creation of three miles of woodland trail and interpretational features. In 2022, supported by the States of Alderney, the AWT were able to provide every resident of Alderney with a free tree! These were either planted at home by residents or in the ACW. Today, the site is a popular spot for walkers, and it regularly welcomes schools' groups to come and explore.

## Notes to Media

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