

Carymoor Volunteer Newsletter

AUTUMN 2025

It has been another busy season for the volunteers. I hope you enjoy looking back at all that has been achieved over the past 3 months.

"Come, little leaves," said the wind one day
"Come to the meadows with me and play.
Put on your dresses of red and gold;
For summer is past, and the days grow cold"

Soon as the leaves heard the wind's loud call,
Down they came fluttering, one and all;
Over the brown fields they danced and flew,
Singing the sweet little songs they knew.

"Cricket, goodbye, we've been friends so long,
Little brook, sing us your farewell songs;
Say you are sorry to see us go;
Ah, you will miss us, right well we know"

Dancing and whirling, the little leaves went,
Winter had called them and they were content;
Soon, fast asleep in their earthy beds,
The snow laid a coverlid over their heads.

George Cooper

Thank you again for your continued support, hard work and enthusiasm.

Chrissie

MONDAY VOLUNTEERS

GARDENING TEAM September

With the arrival of autumn and the first frost (Monday 22nd September!) the gardening team were hard at work preparing the gardens for the autumn. Some of the vegetable beds were cleared ready for digging, the sensory garden was trimmed and tidied and many of the dead wildflowers were cut back whilst still ensuring the birds and insects had enough coverage for the winter months.



Meanwhile, Nate, Barb, Di and Deborah mowed and scythed the bank behind the carpark.



GARDENING TEAM - October

The fine weather at the start of October enabled the gardeners to plant onions sets and garlic in the veg garden.



The new DofE group worked hard in the Polytunnels and wildflower garden to build some new compost bins (leaf mould and general compost) and to dig the new bed along the other side of the polytunnel.



They sieved the compost to add to this new bed in readiness for planting up over the winter.

The team were able to concentrate their efforts on tidying up the sensory garden during October. The bushes were clipped and the beds weeded.



Meanwhile, Ros tackled the burdock in the wildflower garden. It was quite a battle!



GARDENING TEAM - November

The unseasonably warm weather at the start of November enabled the gardeners to really get on top of clearing, tidying and preparing the gardens for next year.

Roz continued her onslaught in the wildflower garden, even managing to make it down to clear the far tyres , a feat that was not achievable this time last year.



The DofE boys topped up the tyres with compost . They also continued to fill the leaf litter compost bin with leaves ready for the gardeners to use in the future once the leaves have decomposed.

Sue, Sue and Viv weeded and planted around the sensory garden, bringing in new plants from home to add variety and colour to this area .

Sadie and Sarah planted more veg in the polytunnel and tended to the dye plants in the tyres.



Weeding and planting continued in the Sensory Garden alongside the pond reconstruction.

MAINTAINANCE TEAM - September

Nick, Fred and Jake were hard at work in early September preparing Nightingale Woods for the new school term. Parts of the mud kitchen had collapsed so the rotten wood was cut out and the sink supported and reinforced. Hopefully the children will get a lot more life out of this fantastic resource in the months ahead.



Fred started to investigate ways of re-rigging the woodland shelter. The existing rope has been there so long that it is starting to cut into the tree bark. John went on to complete the shelter by rigging up a new framework system which is strong and robust and won't damage the trees.



John and Neil spent time rigging this amazing parachute in Lindon Copse. This is a new space that is being developed as an additional learning space for school groups. The parachute creates a lovely undercover area for the children to sit under.

MAINTAINANCE TEAM - October

Fred and Nick were tasked with building shelves in the newly designated 'kindling shed'. These will store the paints, sprays and oils that are used across the site in a central location as well as keeping our kindling supply dry.



Neil was delighted when Fred managed to fix the chainsaw. This will be very useful around the site this season.

Nick removed the last of the eco grid in the polytunnel and extended the bed out to create a bigger growing space. Sadie and Sarah were delighted with their extended veg beds.

Nick and Fred worked together to replace the roof on the tool store. This now allows much more light in as well as being water tight. A huge improvement!

MAINTAINANCE TEAM - November

When cutting back the intruding blackthorn bushes around the Newt Tank we discovered that the wooden structure protecting the overflow vent had rotted. Nick loved the opportunity to problem solve and came up with an ingenious way to make the area safe whilst reusing materials already on site.



Nick and Fred were excited to discover a lovely mouse nesting in the base of the life ring.

Nick and Jake started to tidy up the wooden borders around the Sensory Garden. This involved sourcing and cutting some rounds and half rounds to size and hammering them into place. It looks a lot tidier already!



The team then turned their attention to making much needed repairs to the Strawbale Room. The doors were adjusted in order to open and close more easily. The building was jacked up to allow wedges to be placed under the front veranda structure to help provide much needed extra support. Mark helped by sawing the sleeper supports to size.



ORIENTEERING COURSES IN DAUNCEY

In September Nick made 24 orienteering controls for use around Dauncey with school groups and DofE groups. This ingenious design incorporates answers from 4 or 5 different courses, allowing the education team flexibility and variety when setting their orienteering courses for different activities. Some of the answers can be hidden under the lid whilst other markers are displayed on the top.



What a fantastic design—thanks Nick!

These controls have had permanent orienteering markers attached to their lids. These are about to be placed out across Dauncey.



APPLES @ CARYMOOR

It was a bumper harvest in the Carymoor orchard! In early September and again in early October the volunteers harvested and processed many of the apples from our heritage orchard. We were very grateful to Dave and Helen Boyer for the loan of the apple press and equipment.

Initially the volunteers picked the apples. These included a good mix of varieties as well as cider apples, dessert apples as well as eaters. This combination was then juiced to create a delicious concoction that was enjoyed by everyone.

Much of this first batch had to be consumed immediately due to its short longevity, however, in October when the process was repeated, we had the additional use of a pasteuriser and were able to bottle the juice.



LONG POND

After the hot summer, Long Pond was at its lowest level in September . The Tuesday team took advantage of these conditions to enter the water and cut back the encroaching reeds. Previously Peter had repaired the boat which was successfully launched and proved to be a valuable asset for this difficult task. The boat was used to reach the reeds growing in the more awkward places. A raft (pallet) was rigged up behind it to collect the cut reeds.

In the more accessible places the volunteers donned waders and bravely entered the water . It was a mammoth task!



The areas surrounding both Long Pond and Adam's Pond were scythed cleared and tidied. It was lovely to see Duncan back to full fitness and back outside enjoying working with the Tuesday group.

SCYTHING

Scything has continued across the site throughout the autumn. Nigel, Barb and Di worked hard to cut the translocated bank, Nigel doing much of this on his own!

As ever we are all on the lookout for wildlife, especially while scything. Nigel and Julie have been scouring the site in search of harvest mouse nests. So far we have only found three but the search continues....



By November the focus had moved to the Dragon. Nigel, Duncan and Kirsten scythed whilst the rest of the team worked to rake and clear the area.



Meanwhile Nate has been mowing around the main centre and around the Roundhouse each week. So many people have commented on how tidy it looks! In November he started to scythe the wildflower area at the front of the Centre.



SENSORY GARDEN POND

Last winter the small pond in the Sensory Garden overflowed regularly, however, water levels quickly dropped once the rain stopped. By the summer it became apparent that the pond had a serious leak. By August it had dried out completely. Our task this winter is to repair, redesign and reline the pond.

After seed collecting and transplanting some of the pond plants to other locations throughout the summer and autumn, work on the pond began in November. Initially, we cut back all of the vegetation. Next we then dug out the turfs covering the liner, storing these to one side. Neil attached the old pond liner to the tractor and dragged it out.

The tractor was also used to remove the willow tree whose roots had spread under the entire liner.

The task now will be to deepen the pond and add some shelves around the edges to help the marginal plants. We will hope to complete and refill the new pond over the winter, ready for next spring.



POLLINATOR PROJECT

Barb, Deborah and Di spent time planting up the new tyre avenue with pollinator plants in a bid to link the wildflower garden with the orchards and up to the Mump. Hopefully this wildlife corridor will help our pollinators move easily between these different habitats.

Many of the plants have been brought on from seed by our A2A group. These have been potted on ready to be planted out in a variety of locations across the site, including the tyre avenue.



On a wet Monday morning in October, Harriet and Barb spent time sorting the wildflower seeds that have been collected from around the site. Many of these will be sown in the spring and later planted out across the site. Hopefully these will aid our pollinators.



A2A have been out sowing and planting wildflowers across the site, collecting the seeds over many months, sowing them and transplanting them before finally planting them out in the wild.

POLLINATOR PROJECT – Meadow plots

Graham was busy over the autumn creating the meadow plots for the pollinator project. We aim to create 3000m² of diverse wildflower for pollinator forage in cpt 16, 17 and 18. The areas were surveyed prior to rotovating, those containing low diversity were selected for the project. The Mon team, A2A and South Somerset Environmental Forum were all involved in broadcasting the seed, picking stones, and raking over. The weather has been perfect so far and the meadow grasses have already begun germinating, fingers crossed the wildflowers follow suit!



Before: area dominated by Tall Fescue, Fleabane, Hoary Ragwort, Wavy Hair Grass, and a few thugs like Pendulous sedge and various rushes.



A2A sowing seeds after Graham had rotovated. The mix contained Birds foot trefoil, Knapweed, Betony, Agrimony, Corky fruited water dropwort, Self heal, Cat's ear, Oxeye daisy, Sorrel, and more including some nice meadow grasses red fescue, sheep fescue, sweet vernal, crested dogs tail, etc...

In the absence of a roller we raked the seed to help bed them down. Hard work! The next step will be weeding out any thugs in Spring, controlling the grasses through the summer with hay cuts, then plug planting into the gaps next autumn. Exciting to see how they turn out!



A2A - Summer and Autumn update

The Able to Achieve team entered the 3rd year of their project in June and we have used the anniversary as an opportunity to focus their efforts. We are aiming to increase plug plant production this year and have had interest from Yeovil Town Council in purchasing some plants for a project in Ninesprings. So the team have been busy potting up plug plants, planting wildflowers in the Bee Meadow, and sowing seed in trays to start the cycle all over again.



This project is doing really well with our pollinator project and we have been able to buy in some seeds from Emorsgate to supplement what we have collected onsite. This will see us not only increase the number of plants but also the diversity of plants. In the past we have only produced meadow flowers but now we will expand to include margin/hedgerow wildflowers like comfrey, hedge woundwort, red campion, garlic mustard, great mullein, dark mullein, burdock, teasel, etc... This will help contribute to improving 1000m of field margin over the next 2 years.

A2A - Willow work

Willow work is also going to see an increase in production. We had a practice run at building willow spirals and hurdles over the summer and were delighted to see all of the work was sold in the A2A shop on Princes St, Yeovil and at the Green Scythe Fair. So the team have been busy harvesting and processing willow uprights for hurdles and spirals. We will start building hurdles over the winter in the improved wood working area. The plan to build a workshop for woodworking is still in hand. Rupert has been busy fundraising to cover the costs of construction. In the meantime, John and I have been working to improve the shelters by the tool stores to make them more weather proof.



We hope to develop their woodworking skills over the next year. In particular we'd like to start making hay rakes and maybe even rustic benches. Watch this space!

EDUCATION VOLUNTEERS

As usual our team of education volunteers have been busy beavering away behind the scenes getting everything ready for our school and group visits. This term it's been all about willow prep, with hundreds of 'rounds' needing to be twisted into shape and 'weavers' cut, ready for groups to weave their own simple willow plates on our various history days and with our D of E groups too.

Alison, Jane and Gillian have also been stringing up weaving frames, developing new 'post-toppers' for our improved orienteering course, balling clay for hedgehog-making, prepping kite-making kits, whittling marshmallow roasting sticks and lots more! Thanks for all your help as always ladies!

Liz has also been helping us with education prep over the past couple of years (thanks so much Liz!), but is now having a well-deserved break at the moment for her long awaited knee-op, we wish her well with this and hope to see her again in the new year when she's up and about again.

Duncan is now back with the conservation volunteer group after many months of 'light duties' with our prep team- thanks for all of your help over the past few months Duncan, it's much appreciated! Thanks to Izzy for helping to support our Wild Tots Parent and Toddler course this Autumn too, it was great to have an extra pair of hands to help these sessions run smoothly! Beth



WOODWORKING AREA

In September Mark and Bill started to cut the wooden disc for use later in the year for weaving willow reindeer. This was hard work but they managed a few each week until they had cut enough.



Mark and Bill have managed to fill the woodstore in time for autumn. Once dried and seasoned, this fuel supply should see us through the winter months for a few years to come.

In October they cut wood to size to make the frames for new nature looms for the children to weave natural materials through. Bill later worked hard to remove stapled enabling the wood to be re-purposed and re used in true Carymoor style.

Mark has also helped Fred and Nick by sawing through thick sleepers to create some supports for the Strawbale Room repairs.

John and Neil have constructed an elaborate new woodworking shelter using parts from the old marquees, for A2A to use during the wetter winter months.



This provides much needed shelter from the elements, allowing more groups to work under cover.



COGITATION BENCH AND SIGNS

John has been hard at work making a beautiful bespoke bench. This creation will take pride-of-place close to the carpark—the first things our visitors will see when they arrive.



His pyrography skills will send calming and supportive messages to everyone who uses the bench.

Volunteer social - Tuesday 30th September

On Thursday 30th September, after a morning working hard around the site, our volunteers met for cream tea and a number of apple themed cakes and desserts. It was lovely to see so many Carymoor friends socialising together in the warm September sunshine.

A huge thank you to everyone who baked and brought in so many delicious goodies.

They were greatly enjoyed by everyone!



A huge thank you to all of our volunteers. Carymoor is always so grateful for everyone's help, support and enthusiasm. The Centre could not exist without your support

Nature in Focus - September

At the end of September Adrian walked the site in search of wildlife, colour and interest. As ever he was rewarded with some beauties...

With all the summer flowers withered away for the year, by the end of September the landfill site was looking like a blank canvas of greens and browns.

Standing solitary upon a chalky dragon's egg, a musk mallow, bright pink with a musky scent. This is certainly late in the year for this one. Usually to be seen flowering July to August.



Patches of purple-blue, the devil's bit scabious. A favourite for many an insect at this time of year, usually flowering between July and October. It is essential for the marsh fritillary butterfly, as it is the food source for their caterpillars. The underwing of a red admiral butterfly, up close, it is not just a plain and boring brown colour, it is a masterpiece of art by nature. The beauty is within the detail and the use of colour.



An autumnal garland showing the bounty of the season picked from the local hedgerows.

Butterfly Report 2025 - Adrian

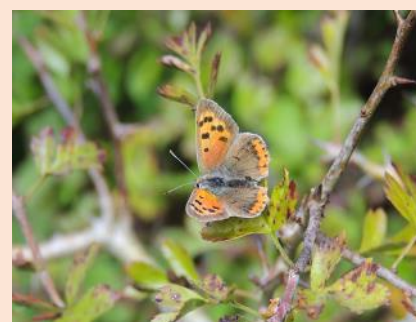
The pollinators survey season came to an end at the end of October with Adrian and Julie walking their final transect. Adrian's full butterfly report can be found on our website;

<https://www.carymoor.org.uk/2025-carymoor-butterfly-report/>

Butterflies are one of the key indicators for biodiversity and environmental health. Nationally the butterflies and bees are sadly on the trend of decline. This makes havens like Carymoor an even more valuable resource, providing a safe and sustainable habitat which is being managed and maintained to suit their needs.

With the added pollinator programme, more planting and several plots being seeded with suitable wildflowers up on the cap, it is all continuous improvements at Carymoor. Adrian is optimistic and looking forward to future surveys in 2026.

Butterflies at Carymoor – 2025							
Average target		2500		Grand total for all species recorded		2406	
Total expected species target		26		Total species recorded		27	
Performed above average		Performed within average				Performed below average	
Species	Total	Species	Total	Species	Total	Species	Total
Speckled Wood	296	Gatekeeper	317	Orange Tip	34	Meadow Brown	277
Small white	264	Common blue	226	Comma	34	Brimstone	42
Large White	200	Ringlet	175	Brown Argus	25	Small Tortoiseshell	19
Small Copper	40	Marbled White	115	Painted Lady	12	Green Veined White	14
Clouded Yellow	34	Peacock	68	Essex Skipper	8	Holly Blue	1
		Red Admiral	68	Grizzled skipper	4		
		Small skipper	55	Brown Hairstreak	4		
		Dingy Skipper	36	Marsh fritillary	4		
		Large skipper	34				



Forthcoming Events

We have once again been given a contract with Somerset Council to run funded Health and Wellbeing courses here at Carymoor. This year they are through Step up Somerset website rather than the previous Somerset Skills and Learning that you may be familiar with.

All the courses are on this website although you need to search by Provider for Carymoor for all our events to appear. www.stepupsomerset.org.uk/findcourses

In the New Year we will have a Hedgelaying course and a 3 day Green Workout. In the spring there will be three Wild Tots courses on offer for any little people you know.

Coming up next week are some Eco Friendly Christmas Craft days on Weds, Thurs and a family day for any home-schooled children on Friday.

On Saturday 6th we are running a Willow Christmas Tree course as part of our Experience range. This course is £40 per person and there is one space left! www.carymoor.org.uk/whatson

After Christmas we have an incredible looking Rope Coil basket course with Karen and a number of other fabulous basket courses over the year.

We are more than happy to provide Gift Vouchers for any of our Experience courses to any amount. It would make a great eco friendly present!



Finally, next year Carymoor will be celebrating its 30th year. We hope you can join us throughout the year for various celebration events and activities. We'd love to hear any of your memories from over the years too, and any photos that you may have. We have decided to do a #FunFactFriday social media post every week so any Fun Facts you have about Carymoor please let me know.

Wishing everyone a lovely Christmas break and sending best wishes for the New Year. We will be back after the break on **Monday 5th January**.

Katie

Please pass on the word...



VOLUNTEERING

Is well known to help boost mental and physical health. Why not give it a go?



CARYMOOR OFFERS A RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEND TIME IN NATURE WITH OUR FRIENDLY AND SUPPORTIVE VOLUNTEER GROUPS.

- Meet like minded people
- Help support wildlife
- Learn new skills
- Improve your fitness
- Social events
- Enjoy our beautiful nature reserve



'I felt so welcome and there was an amazing atmosphere at Carymoor. I felt a wonderful sense of belonging, and I was so encouraged and inspired. My life has changed beyond anything I could have imagined since I came along and became a volunteer. I could never thank you enough.'

Current volunteer.

**CONSERVATION AND GARDENING VOLUNTEER GROUPS
EVERY MONDAY 10 - 1PM**

To find out more about volunteering at Carymoor drop us an email, give us a call, take look at the volunteering page on our website or read our recent volunteer newsletter on our news page to see the variety of activities on offer.

www.carymoor.org.uk/getinvolved

T. 01963 350143

Carymoor Environmental Trust, Dimmer Lane, Castle Cary, BA7 7NR

Monday 15th

and / or

Tuesday 16th December

As a small token of our appreciation for all your hard work and support this year we would like to invite you to our Christmas meal on Monday 15th and / or Tuesday 16th December at 1.00 in Craig Hall.

Carymoor Christmas

MENU

Vegetarian Chilli

Jacket potatoes

• •

Mince pies (GF options available)

Cakes

• • •

Mulled apple juice



MERRY CHRISTMAS