

Go Wild In Porlock

Wildlife Weekend

Interview with: Ruth Hyett, volunteer

Name of project: Go Wild in Porlock Wildlife Weekend

Location: Porlock Village and surrounds

Aims:

- Promoting the area
- Raising Awareness of local wildlife
- Attracting and involving families and the community with the wildlife that can be discovered in the local area

How:

- Small grant from Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership
- Helpers were volunteers – free
- Prizes and materials were mostly donated
- Organised by Porlock Visitor Centre

How long has the project been running for:

The event ran for 2 days from the 2nd - 3rd August 2014

How and why did you get involved with the project?

- Through the Exmoor National Park Authority volunteers
- Was already working at Porlock Visitor Centre
- Wildlife is my main interest

How long were you involved and how much time did you spend volunteering?

- Helped to set it up
- 20+ hours

Who was involved in the event:

- Porlock Visitor Centre
- Exmoor National Park Authority
- Lynmouth Pavilion
- Porlock Community Orchard Group
- Exmoor Natural History Society
- Frances Harrison – storyteller
- Local woodcarvers
- Local Businesses
- Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership
- National Trust
- Crown Estate
- Local bee group
- Local volunteers

Partnership work and sources of advice:

Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership (David Rolls); Exmoor National Park Authority; Exmoor Natural History Society; National Trust; Crown Estate.

Main considerations:

- Health & Safety, Insurance and Risk assessments especially for the village event where people were moving between several venues.
- Involving the community and local organisations
- Keeping costs low
- Getting enough volunteers with suitable skills

How was it undertaken:

- Regular meetings
- Liaising with partners

A typical day in action:

- I was based in the Orchard doing a BioBlitz – only had a few people but those that came were interested. Got very wet!
- Enjoyed leading walk – meeting and involving participants

Constraints and limitations:

- Money
- Venues
- Availability of participants

Outcomes and recommendations:

- Disappointing attendance on the 1st day but all participants enjoyed the event
- Walks on the second day were very well supported
- Change format/day of the week if event is repeated

Key considerations when managing volunteers:

- Match skills with requirements
- Enough volunteers to cover for breaks etc.
- Motivation
- Health & Safety awareness

As a volunteer, what are the most important things for an organiser to be aware of?

- Using skills appropriately
- H & S
- Risk Assess all sites
- Promotion
- Enough volunteers are needed so that all can have a break at some point during the event

Example of something you're pleased with:

- Village involvement – e.g. Wildlife sausages!
- Children's Art
- Walks – good interest and good weather

Are there any downsides to being involved?

- Time constraints
- Limits enjoyment of the whole event as stuck in one place

When something didn't go to plan:

- Bioblitz in orchard – there was little interest and heavy showers. The venue was possibly too far from the other venues and activities
- Lack of interest by local families in the event

Advice for anyone looking to set up a project:

- Involve the local community and volunteers
- Plan well in advance

Any advice for those looking to get involved?

- Need to know exactly what your involvement will be
- Equipment needed
- Suitable clothing

Other comments:

- A lot of work for not great results. Good feedback but limited
- Small profit made
- A similar event in the future will need to be rethought