

Green Scythe Fair Grants 2025

All Reports

1. **SUSTAINABLE CHUMLEIGH**

Green Craft Projects Using Green Scythes Grant – Chulmleigh and surrounding area.

Green Scythes kindly gave us a grant of £400 to put towards craft displays connected to wildlife and sustainability.

It didn't turn out exactly as we thought it would as when we chatted to members of the community they also wanted to do other things too which were to do with crafting so we have helped to fund other projects too which are similar / in keeping with the grant.

Wildlife Embroidery for a Display

This is still work in progress but it is coming to shape very nicely indeed. It was very well received idea and embraced by the crafters of the area.... This project will rumble on into other parishes I do believe, which is nice. Here are some made so far:



Tote Bag Making

We recently had a session which was really well run to make as many tote bags from recycled fabrics. These are lined with strong handles, built to last. These are going to be distributed in the shops in Chulmleigh as the "Borrow a Bag" scheme.

We had lots of helpers turn up to the event and this included 3 residents from the local Amber Foundation (residential home for young people who are getting over addictions).



Hedgehog Project

We have been embracing a local hedgehog campaign.. Making knitted hedgehogs to sell at a Xmas fair to then raise money for a chap who saves and regularly has to take them to the vets.



These projects are ongoing and the money you gave us has enabled us to hire the halls , buy certain materials and refreshments.

It has been and will be very useful for these projects which will continue over the next few months.

We hope to have more panels made by the end of the winter which we will be able to display. I am thinking of asking Barnstaple Museum if they will do a week display of local green craftivism.

Report by Amy Roberts amyroony@hotmail.com

2.THE HANDLOOM ROOM Report to the Green Scythe Fair

Summary

The support of the Green Scythe Fair has been very helpful in furthering my employment through handweaving project this year. This project enables local people with learning disabilities to become handweaving co-facilitators and deliver rigid heddle loom weaving workshops in the community. I would like to thank the Green Scythe Fair very much for your support.

What happened

The grant enabled me to purchase two new rigid heddle looms to add to the four I had already, which I use for workshops in the local community, meaning that I can now offer spaces to six people at a time. It has helped my employment through handweaving project, where I create paid employment opportunities for learning disabled people as co-facilitators. Having six participants means that there are more people that need supporting during a session, warranting the need for a co-facilitator. The project that I ran this summer was funded, however with six looms it would now be viable to run a session that would cover its own costs, including paying the co-facilitator – which is fantastic.

I ran two handweaving on rigid heddle loom workshops for people with learning disabilities – one in Wookey and one in Midsomer Norton – reaching 8 learning disabled people in total. These workshops were enjoyed enormously by participants. One individual in particular who has high support needs, picked up the process quite quickly and began weaving independently of her one-to-one support worker. I believe that this was a huge achievement for her as she often requires a high level of support to do craft activities. This is testament to the accessibility of weaving on these looms and the sense of independence that it can facilitate.

From these sessions, there were two participants who were very keen to start helping other people to learn to weave. They became my two co-facilitators and were able to work and get paid for two workshops each, delivering to six participants per workshop, in Shepton Mallet.

There were a total of 21 participants on the community workshops, including a range of ages from 7 all the way up to 84! It was lovely to see people of all ages enjoying the process, including some teenagers as well. We had conversations about sustainability and the importance of natural fibres and most people were interested in using sheep wool.



We gave participants a very simple feedback form, to which 100% said they had enjoyed weaving, 100% said they found it relaxing and 100% said they would like to do more weaving. The majority of participants said that weaving was something new for them, while a few had done it before. Some comments included:

'Wonderful workshop – really well taught, very nice and helpful.'

'I loved this workshop, it was a moment of relaxation and enjoyment. I'd love to learn more about weaving –

thank you.'

'I was completely new to weaving and I have enjoyed every minute – look forward to the next time!'

What's next

Having had a little time to reflect on the project, speaking to participants and speaking to my co-facilitators, I have some ideas of how to improve and develop the project. I believe that the co-facilitators would benefit from more weaving training to help them to become fully acquainted with the process, so that they feel even more confident to help others. I appreciated that it was a quick

turnaround from one workshop to then helping others. The more they learn, the more they can improve others' experience too. I plan to build this additional training into the next stage of the project.

It was interesting to hear from participants that some were keen to know exactly what they would come away from the workshops with (rather than just an unspecified length of woven fabric). This has got me thinking of offering a suite of workshops, each with a different outcome – for example woven coasters, working with pattern, making a table runner etc. This will also allow for more opportunity for assistance from the co- facilitators during the workshops, benefitting everyone involved.



3.LANGPORT REPAIR CAFÉ

Grant funding from Green Scythe Fair

Thank you for supporting Langport Repair Cafe.

Over the past few years you have kindly given us two grants to purchase a PAT tester and a soldering station.

The PAT tester protects our fixers before they attempt to repair any electrical appliance by testing whether the item is safe to work on.

The soldering station allows us to repair circuit boards that are shorting an appliance because of a poor or worn connection.

We will be using both items at a Nature and Energy Day at Long Sutton Village Hall in two days time on Saturday 25 October.

They will also be used next month at an Environment Day in Curry Rivel.

Since the repair cafe launched in April 2022, we have looked at more than 500 items.

We repaired 66 per cent on the day and diagnosed what needed fixing for a further 23 per cent, giving the item's owner guidance on where to source spare parts.

Only 11 per cent of the items were beyond repair.

Since we started, we have raised £2,000 after costs such as the hall hire and refreshments.

Our ambition is to pay for the installation of a solar battery at the Ridgeway Hall to complement the solar panels that are already on the roof. It is the most used community space in the area. A battery would help reduce the venue's energy costs and keep hire fees at a price affordable to all.

Langport Repair Cafe meets at All Saints Hall every fourth Saturday of the month from 12.30pm-2.30pm, except December.

We provide homemade cakes and savoury dishes for visitors while they wait to see a fixer.

The repair cafe would not be possible without committed volunteers. A big thank you to Matt, Grace, David, Gill, Robert, Sian, Sandra, Liam, Karl and Althea.

Thanks finally to the Green Scythe Fair for generously assisting our endeavours.

Stephen Tate October 2025

4. MADEBYTHE MOOR

Willow Glade Farm- Maxine Heard

Ashwater

Beaworthy

EX21 5DL

Green Scythe Fair Grant Report

With the grant, that I was lucky enough to receive, I bulk bought willow from a supplier in Somerset.

This helped me in various ways. Firstly I was able to compare my home grown willow to commercial willow, which let me compare quality and assess different types of willow.

Secondly, I had a lot of willow whips which let me 'play' and build, make and experiment, without the worrying that I was using up a resource that I would potentially be able to sell.

And thirdly it allowed me to incorporate some willow into

products which I was able to sell.

In turn this has lead to me

- being able to sell different products
- offering more workshops for people to take part in
- I have also been asked to demo my skills at a couple of local markets

This have enabled me to turn the grant into more money than I was given which led to me buying new willow types, which will give me a greater range of willow to grow here on site and eventually become even more sustainable in my creative practice. I have also taken part in on-line tutorials which has enhanced my skills as a weaver. I will also now be able to afford to join the Basket makers association-which means I can access more willow based tuition and UK wide network of makers.

I have attached a few photos so you can see what I have been up to this summer.

Along side the willow , I would like to add that this year we opened our smallholding to the public for the first time, through the National Garden Scheme, and had nearly two hundred people visit during a very hot weekend in July. We had a vintage tractor display as well as the open garden. There was lots of really positive comments from the public, and lots of interest from them in the way we are gardening and living, next year we are hoping to expand on our open day and have hopefully got Adrian Thomas demonstrating scything (very excited about this).

We have opened our farm shop every Saturday throughout the summer, which is where I sell my willow products and surplus plants, we also had private garden visits and workshops happening on site at various times of the year. All of these elements are helping us to develop our smallholding into a very small scale environmentally aware business, which helps us to sustain our lifestyle.





5.SKOOL BEANZ- LARA HONNOR

Thank you so much for your kind donation towards our pizza oven. We spent the whole summer building it (see pic attached). It's still a work in progress as we want to mosaic it in the style of a ladybird. We also want to build a tin roof over it along with an outdoor kitchen next to it. It has been a backbreaking labour of love building it but will be so worth it when we can make pizzas with the children and our lovely volunteers.



6. TRANSITION LANGPORT/THE ANGEL

Green Scythe Fair Grant 2025

The Angel, Bow Street, Langport

The Angel has been able to expand its activities, thanks to a grant from the Green Scythe Fair. This grant enabled the purchase of black out blinds for the upstairs community area.

Transition Langport had organised a season of environmental films, screening one programme a month, from October 2024 to April 2025. Through the darker winter months, the Angel provided a suitable venue, but with lighter evenings a darker environment was needed. The successful application to the Green Scythe Fair enabled Transition Langport to extend their screening into lighter months.

Most recently, the blinds have enabled a daytime screening of 'The Langport River Project' – a short film commissioned by the Inland Waterways Association.

<https://waterways.org.uk/about-us/news/langports-river-regeneration-celebrated-in-new-film>

Transition Langport is planning another season of environmental films for 2025-26, at the Angel. The first film is planned for Thursday 16th October – '6.5 Inches of Soil'.

With many thanks

John Ford

The Angel, Langport



7. Wild rootS, central SomerSet outdoor learninG PartnerShiP

Thanks to the GSF grant we were able to buy 2 scythes, sharpening and maintenance equipment. We have used some Wild Roots funds to purchase easier to use blade guards and will be buying a ditch blade. Additionally a scythe safe storage area has been fashioned in our toolshed to accommodate our new equipment.

What have we done differently?

The grant has encouraged us to make the bold decision to get rid of the sit and ride mower and manage our meadow area purely by scything.

Why are we doing this?

We want to teach our group participants rural skills, move away from the use of heavy machinery and establish and maintain a wildflower meadow with the aim to improve biodiversity on the site.

What are our plans for the future?

We want to teach more volunteers, particularly our female volunteers, how to use & maintain scythes. The purchase of a smaller sized scythe was done to accommodate women learning to scythe. We are starting to undertake wildlife surveys of the meadow to track if our move to scything helps to improve biodiversity.

How has this benefitted Wild Roots?

We have skilled volunteers who can use scythes. We have opportunities for wildlife enthusiast volunteers to undertake surveys of our meadow. Trained volunteers who attend both Wild Roots and Hallr Wood, our sister site, can use their skills to manage grass areas at Hallr Wood.



A volunteer's story

'Beginning to use a scythe has furthered the connection I have begun to have for the land we care for at the Wild Roots Field. Not only is it the trees and wildlife that I work with, thanks to the training I've been given in scything it's now the meadow that I feel is partly my domain.

The use of the scythe has taught me also a lot about how best to keep myself healthy as it provides a good way to keep active.

Above all though, it had been an ambition of mine for quite a while to have a chance to learn this skill and it's a pleasure to be able to use a traditional skill and follow in the footsteps of the skilled people of the past' *Crosby Casey, volunteer at Wild Roots.*



8. RED BRICK BUILDING COMMUNITY GARDEN- Beverley Smith

Here is a brief outline of how the Green Scythe grant supported the community garden (which has just won two RHS awards - Best Community Garden and Britain in Bloom level 3 advancing)

We received from the Green Scythe Fayre £500, which the garden team has used for native plants and seeds, materials for workshops - Some of which will be beginning of the year such as pruning, and renovation of the dome.

The garden team successfully ran a native plant micro-nursery by growing from seed and plugs a range of plants to sell to the public to raise extra funds. A sum of £500 was raised! We have also purchased some bulbs for volunteering activities and volunteer groups have been creating pots of plants.

We also put some of the money towards dome renovations allowing us to create the little shop in the dome to house the nursery and a small contribution towards a speedy composter to provide compost for activities.

The remaining money used for mini-workshops on: composting, plant health and identifying plants. We are also developing a green roof using natives grasses and seeds.

Thank you so much for your help, it really helped us kickstart our little enterprise



ARK at Egwood Green Sycthe Fair Grant Report

Acts of Random Kindness (ARK) at Egwood CIC, received a grant for the sum of £400 towards the purchase of equipment to support the growth of Willow Weaving workshops at ARK and the upskilling of individuals in this rural craft.

The funding was used to purchase the following items:

- Trough for soaking willow £259.90
- Hessian for mellowing willow (10m) £39.99
- Willow brakes for stripping willow (4) £140

Warren, one of ARK's volunteers who initially came to ARK for support with his mental health, attended a one-day willow weaving course at ARK, loved it and over time has progressed to setting up his own business running willow workshops, making bespoke products and supporting individuals to learn this craft.

This extra equipment has enabled ARK to have greater resources to prepare the willow for more workshops and 1:1 learning. As a land-based project we are always looking for ways to encourage our attendees to interact with nature. One of our most successful projects has been willow weaving.

The expansion of willow teaching at ARK has also recently culminated in ARK being asked to submit an installation in Wells Cathedral (currently on display) which is a willow structure (see photos) and many people that attend ARK have contributed to this.

Thank you! For supporting ARK to expand this much-loved rural craft.



ARK at Egwood CIC

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10. HONESTY JAR & BEARCAT COLLECTIVE

Thank you so much for supporting The Honesty Jar community reuse project with a grant of £250 in the spring. We are deeply grateful for your contribution, which has helped us develop and improve the craft workshops we're able to offer.

Over the summer, we experienced a short transition period as our main admin person moved on to a new role, and we focused on some external events, volunteer training, and recruiting a replacement. We're delighted to share that Amy, our new administrator, joined the team in July and has made an incredible start. With five children who have grown up in the village and strong local connections through the school PTA, she has already strengthened links with families and individuals facing medical or financial challenges, helping us reach those most in need, also

connecting with local people with skills to share through our community workshops; including using a drop spindle, jewellery making, peg loom weaving, book folding, mosaics, wet felting, soldering and electrical repair.

Thanks to your support, we've been able to purchase new craft tools including a box full of small pliers for intricate work, additional pairs of decent fabric scissors, professional servicing of our three sewing machines, and importantly a set of new sturdy, stackable chairs — replacing our previous rickety mismatched ones. We've also invested in posters and new laminating supplies to promote workshops across our site at Grassroots Garden Centre, where The Honesty Jar sits alongside several local small businesses.

Workshops are always offered at an affordable suggested donation, with some open to the public advertised online, some promoted through our reuse shop, and others run for referred groups, including those supported by local safeguarding teams. Providing these sessions in a familiar, non-public setting allows people who struggle to socialise to take part comfortably and build confidence through creativity.

The grant has had a meaningful impact on our ability to deliver inclusive, skill-building workshops that bring people together, reduce isolation, and encourage creativity within our rural community. We sincerely thank the Green Scythe Fair Committee for their continued support.

Photos to follow.

With heartfelt thanks,
Sam

Samantha Flounders
BearCat Collective
The Honesty Jar
www.bearcatcollective.co.uk

11. FRIENDS OF LANGPORT LIBRARY- Jane Edge- gave presentation

12. ABLE TO ACHIEVE- Joe knights- gave presentation