



Newsletter Spring 2026



River Wye, Symonds Yat (left) & pig at the Grange Farm (right)

Contents:

Welcome

Welcome to the Monmouthshire LNP Spring 2026 newsletter and welcome to Ella Grundy, MCC's new Nature Recovery Assistant who will be helping to coordinate the LNP. This quarters' newsletter is packed full of great success stories from our members, and details of our new Community Action Plan.

Kate, Sali and Ella

Page 2: BioTapestry

Page 3: Celebrating Stump Up for Trees' 500,000th tree planted

Page 4: Wilder Connections: Gwent Green Grid helps fund a new Charity focused on Nature Connection in Young People

Page 5-6: New hedgehog haven 'The Prickly Patch' opens

Page 7: News and Events





Helen Kent, Sian Burns, Louise Soale, Jordie Sallis, Beth Lewis, Evan Elisas, Cath Cains and Lousie Tolcher-Goldwyn



Members of the County Council holding the Monmouthshire grassland panel



Drone footage of entire 70 m tapestry in front of the Riverfront Theatre

BioTapestry

Ella Grundy, MCC Nature Recovery Assistant



On Friday 6th of March, the Gwent Green Grid Partnership were delighted to launch the completed BioTapestry at a showcase event in the Riverfront Theatre, Newport. TV wildlife presenter Dr Rhys Jones attended as guest speaker, and all participants were photographed by drone holding their panel over the River Usk.

The BioTapestry is a staggering 70-metre-long celebration of the key species in each area, highlighting the amazing diversity we see across our counties and emphasizing the importance of our wetlands, grasslands, woodlands and urban areas in supporting nature.

This creative, mixed-media artwork was the collaborative effort of community groups across all five local authorities of Gwent, each contributing four different habitat panels to create a total of 20 unique ecosystems. This was accomplished through quilting, embroidery, needle felting, fabric painting, crocheting, sewing, and a variety of

other artistic techniques and materials - bringing together community members in their passion for their local habitats, their individual skills and talents being themselves a homage to diversity in all its forms.



Celebrating Stump Up for Trees' 500,000th tree planted

Ella Grundy, MCC Nature Recovery Assistant

Stump Up for Trees have now planted half a million trees in 5 years, a major milestone signifying they're halfway to completing their goal of planting one million native broadleaved trees across South Wales and Bannau Brycheiniog. They celebrated this achievement on Friday 3rd April, hosting an Open Day Walk up Bryn Arw, where volunteers and community members could learn more about how Stump Up for Trees began and revisit some of the trees that have been established over the last 5 years.



The Stump up for trees team at the entrance to their nursery

Rob Penn, author and co-founder, said: "What started with a conversation in a local pub with my neighbour has grown into something far bigger than we ever imagined. Reaching this milestone of 500,000 trees is a display of the power of people when they come together—but it's also just the beginning."



Their admirable work with volunteers creating and restoring hedgerows, woodlands and shelter belts across 250 farms has been so important in increasing habitat connectivity for wildlife, carbon sequestration, natural flood management and supporting biodiversity. For example, instead of placing tree protectors around saplings to prevent grazing, they plant 30% more trees to account for it so deer and other fauna can benefit from their efforts too.

Dr Jenny Knight, General Manager, added: "This milestone belongs to our volunteers and our farmers. It shows that local, community-driven action can deliver real, measurable impact. Half a million trees is not just a number—it represents habitats restored, flood risks reduced and a more resilient landscape for the future."



Volunteers planting trees and hedgerows

To get involved or learn more about Stump Up for Trees' work in restoring our landscapes, please visit: <https://stumpupfortrees.org/>





Wilder Connections: Gwent Green Grid helps fund a new Charity focused on Nature Connection in Young People

Chloe Constable, Grange Project

Wilder Connections is a newly registered charity with a straightforward but systemic thesis: nature connection increases wellbeing, belonging and care for the environment. Reconnecting young people with nature therefore addresses two crises simultaneously: deteriorating mental health and the poor state of our natural world.

The charity works across three strands. They provide immersive experiences for young people in wilder natural spaces. They conduct participatory research that amplifies young people's voices, sharing findings through academic publications, policy-facing insight reports and as practical suggestions for nature recovery sites. They also resource the adults around young people: teachers, youth workers, families, so they're better able to nurture this relationship in everyday life.

Wilder Connections is based at the Grange Project rewilding site between Monmouth and Abergavenny, and Gwent Green Grid helped fund their initial co-design phase with 80 adolescents from across Monmouthshire. Young people participated in focus groups exploring their current relationship with nature and took part in a series of nature connection activities.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the adults supporting the groups: 'Students returned buzzing with happiness', 'Thanks so much for today. D had such a lovely time and can't wait for the next one!' and 'What we saw and learned has already begun to shape how we think about incorporating more outdoor learning into our schemes of work.'

The Charity are looking forward to its summer pilot phase, where they're hoping to welcome another 200 young people to the site, subject to funding. If you'd like to find out more, please go to

www.wilderconnections.charity

Top: Young people engaging with nature

Centre: Wilder Connections team

Bottom: Young people taking part in nature connection activities



New hedgehog haven 'The Prickly Patch' opens

Ella Grundy, MCC Nature Recovery Assistant



During Hedgehog Awareness Week 2026, a new hedgehog rehabilitation hospital in the Wye Valley National Landscape called *The Prickly Patch* celebrated its official opening on 8th May, with a host of volunteers, supporters, funders, Gwent Wildlife Trust representatives and Catherine Fookes MP.

The Prickly Patch is a volunteer-run centre providing a dedicated base for care, recovery and release for wild hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) which remain on the red list as a species at risk of extinction.

Funded by the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and commercial sponsorship from Stark Building Materials UK Ltd., the centre ensures hedgehogs from across Monmouth and the Wye Valley receive timely, specialist support rather than enduring considerable travel time to other rescues out of area which can affect their chances of recovery. The project also thanks Emily, Joe and Hattie Ryder, on whose land the centre is based.



Images (page 6 & 7) from The Prickly Patch launch event. Copyright Richard Stanton.



The work follows on from the Monmouth area's Hedgehog First Response Unit (FRU) founded by The Prickly Patch Lead Trustee Dylan Allman in January 2024, whose trained volunteers have taken over 260 calls and carried out over 220 rescues thus far.

Dylan Allman said: "After discovering hedgehogs in my garden and learning about their decline, I was determined to help make a difference. Setting up the Monmouth First Response Unit showed me how many hedgehogs there were in the area, and how important it was to act quickly when they needed help. I was travelling a long way to other centres and realised there was a huge gap here for a specialist hedgehog hospital. The Prickly Patch means we can give local hedgehogs the best chance to recover and be released safely back into the wild. Opening during Hedgehog Aware-



ness Week makes this even more meaningful, because it's exactly the moment when we want people to notice hedgehogs, care about them, and take action. I am so grateful to our funders and volunteers for making this project a reality, and am excited to see the impact we make through improving the outcomes and awareness of hedgehogs and wider biodiversity."

If you find an injured hedgehog, please get in touch with the FRU by calling 01600 605125.



News and Events

Community Action Plan

The Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership have recently published their Community Action Plan – this is a page on the Monlife website which builds upon the goals set out in the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) and breaks them down into actions we can all do on a community scale to help protect our wildlife and green spaces. The page features advice on maximising your garden for pollinators, recycling, creating habitats for wildlife (from bird boxes and bug hotels to ponds), and how to take part in volunteering and citizen science opportunities for nature. Specialised advice for schools and businesses is also provided, with helpful resources provided under each section so all relevant information is accessible from one place.

Visit the Monlife website or click on the link below to see the Community Action Plan for yourself: [Community Action Plan – Monlife](#)



Wales Nature Week

This year Wales Nature Week takes place 4th to 12th July. An annual celebration of nature, including species, habitats, and importantly the people and organisations that carry out nature recovery work. Let us know if you have an event in mind which the LNP can support you with.

Mill Common Bioblitz event

A bioblitz to record species in the restored woodland.
27th June, 10am at Mill Common, meet at Undy School.

Social Media Links



If you have any news, stories or photographs you would like to include in the next LNP newsletter please get in touch.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be an in-person meeting in Summer. Please let us know if you have any ideas for site visits.



Bluebells along River Gavenny

If you would like to learn more, or get involved with any of the projects in the newsletter, please email us :

LocalNature@Monmouthshire.gov.uk

**WcVA
CgGC**

