

## Example of a Young Roots project



**Project title:** Warrington Wildlife Detectives  
**Applicant:** Groundwork Mersey Valley  
**Grant awarded:** £24,432 (62%)  
**Project length:** 16 months



**Anna and Rhiannan bird watching**

### 1. Summary

The Warrington Wildlife Detectives project was developed to enable young people in Warrington to learn wildlife recording methods and to explore the reasons why wildlife may have changed in the area over time. The project was delivered in partnership with Warrington Museum and Art Gallery and linked to the 'Natural Curiosities' exhibition that was jointly staged between the museum and the Natural History Museum, which explored the heritage of wildlife surveying and local 19<sup>th</sup> century amateur naturalists. The young people worked alongside Friends groups at local nature reserves to conduct ecological surveys and sent their findings about local biodiversity to the county records centre. The young people were strongly involved in the project and initiated a video and web page to record their achievements.

### 2. The aims of the project

The project, planned to take place over one year, had three main aims:

- to create opportunities for young people to volunteer in their local community;
- to update local ecology information and help people to learn about the ecological heritage of Warrington; and
- to promote understanding of heritage and the environment and to encourage involvement with museums and other heritage organisations.

### 3. Benefits for heritage

- New biological records were created about the wildlife in Warrington.
- Warrington Museum screened the DVD of the project as part of a wider exhibition.

#### 4. Benefits for people

- Young people gained skills in habitat surveying, film making and photography.
- A new out-of-school club was founded for young people to learn more about the natural environment in their local area.
- According to the project evaluation, 90% of participants prior to the project knew 'nothing or little' about wildlife conservation and thought Warrington had no wildlife. After the project, the entire group had 'seen species they had never heard of before' and all enjoyed the project activities.

#### 5. Lessons learnt

- The original idea for the project came from a group of young people involved in Millennium Volunteers, however, by the time the application had been approved, many of them had moved on, and a new group of young people had to be recruited to be involved with the project. This delayed the start of the project.
- The project evolved overtime because the involvement of young people. The original plan was to use display banners to show the results of the project, but the young people preferred to use film and photography, which they thought would 'much more interesting' (Rhiannon), and would be something they could use on websites and in presentations and share with the family and friends. The outcomes of the project need to be flexible to allow for the ideas and interests of the young people involved.
- The number of young people who attended each session varied depending on which site they were visiting and due to conflicts with other out-of-school activities. It took time and effort on the part of the project officer to get a group together for each session.
- Communication with young people could be a challenge as they often changed their mobile phone numbers.
- The project officer left to take up a new role towards the end of the project, which disrupted the activities. With agreement from her new employer, she continued to be involved in the project to organise the final celebration event. The budget for the project needs to have some built in contingency.

#### 6. Long term benefits

- The young people's accounts of the project and some of the videos they made are on rECOrd's web page: [www.record-lrc.co.uk/?Mod=Article&ArticleID=WWD](http://www.record-lrc.co.uk/?Mod=Article&ArticleID=WWD)

#### 7. The budget

<b>Main project costs</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>£</b>
Equipment/materials	3,000	Cash from organisation	6,370
Staff/recruitment	15,045	Non-cash contributions	8,700
Training	300	<b>HLF grant (62%)</b>	24,430
Travel	224	<b>Total costs</b>	<b>39,500</b>