

inside **OUT** connecting creatively
with the landscape

wye valley dyffryn gwy
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol





inside OUT

Arts and Health Project

inside OUT is a project developed in partnership with the Forestry Commission and designed to allow under represented groups access to the landscape environment where they can work through relevant health issues creatively.

It will be produced in negotiation with community, health, art and voluntary organisations to tailor specific workshops to individual needs

Background

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an internationally important protected landscape containing some of the most beautiful lowland scenery in Britain. The 44 mile/72km stretch of the River Wye winds down through the valley through spectacular limestone gorge scenery and dense ravine woodlands. Superb wildlife, intriguing archaeological and industrial remains and impressive geological features all make it into one of the most fascinating Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Designated in 1971, this unique landscape straddles the border between England and Wales. It includes areas within Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire.

The AONB works in partnership with many organisations to promote, conserve and enhance the natural landscape and promote quiet enjoyment of it. Funded by Local Authorities, Natural England and CCW it has worked in successful partnership with The Forestry Commission England, The Forestry Commission Wales, Woodland Trust, RSPB, CPRE and local landowners and communities in working with a wide range of projects, events and activities.



Aims and Objectives

Aims

- To establish landscape areas within the Wye Valley AONB suitable for use by a range of under represented groups
- To develop innovative community arts projects to connect people with the landscape environment
- To allow exploration of health issues specific to user groups through a creative experience
- To provide inspirational creative learning and experiences
- To identify and employ local arts practitioners who will use their skills in creative workshops

Objectives

- To strengthen the connections between under represented groups and the landscape of the Wye Valley
- To explore health issues through outdoor creativity



Our Goals

The natural landscape of the Wye Valley has long been instrumental in providing enjoyment, relaxation and outdoor opportunities to residents and visitors alike. It is also well served by the creative section of the community with many arts and crafts practitioners living and working in the area.

There are however large sections of the community who, for various reasons, do not or are unable to access the natural landscape. These groups could benefit from access to natural areas and from working in a creative way to address health issues .



Inside OUT is working with the Forestry Commission and local government Arts Development Officers to do the following:

- Arrange for woodland space to be set aside for inside OUT path where usage has low impact on the environment.
- To arrange for volunteer and forestry staff to :
 - a) clear the area and set down a surface which allows all season usage
 - b) make path safe for user groups in terms of health and safety features
- To implement signage and interpretation to direct and inform participants and visitors about the aims and objectives of the area.
- To monitor and carry out regular maintenance of path/area
- To arrange for creative workshops for under represented groups to access the path/area for working in or displaying artwork.
- To work with creative partners including artists, writers, musicians and performers in producing a range of workshops for under represented groups working through health themed issues and access to the environment.



Groups who could benefit

The range of under represented groups will be wide ranging. Initially we would wish to engage with people with various health issues which would include:

Mental issues, stress, depression

Obesity, healthy eating and exercise

Physical and mobility issues

Visual and hearing impairments

Drugs and alcohol abuse

Violence, domestic violence and bullying

Smoking cessation

Age related problems

Carers

We envisage close working with community organisations and primary care trusts to develop an **inside OUT** programme where participants benefit from expressing their opinions and views through the medium of art either during outdoor workshops or within their community areas.

The artwork produced would be displayed within the **inside OUT** path/area and would be able to be accessed by participants and their families as well as visitors to the area.



Our Schedule



The initial area has been established at Bracelands, Forest of Dean Gloucestershire in partnership with the Forestry Commission. Initial clearance and maintenance was funded and carried out by contractors and volunteers.

We provided several group activity workshops throughout the Summer 2009 which involved over 100 participants. Future workshops on a new site in Monmouthshire in 2010 and the development of a Herefordshire site will allow evaluation and monitoring of the success of project and enable us to establish the way forward.

Throughout 2010 it is intended to form partnerships with community groups and individuals in Wales and England who would benefit from the arts for health project and together with health officials and arts practitioners establish a comprehensive programme for 2010.

We are holding an **inside OUT** information workshop at Whitestone where possible partners, practitioners and other interested groups can visit and view the site and join in a creative activity in the forest area.

The development of contacts between the **inside OUT** project within the Wye Valley AONB and Health, Government and Community organisations is essential for the successful establishment of such a project and we would invite any interested parties to contact us to register interest as soon as possible to ensure the project's success.

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