

Diocesan Education Newsletter Special Edition

Celebrating the Bee Inspired project



Our Vision : Deeply Christian, Serving The Common Good

A message from Director of Education, Jeff Williams

It was this time last year when I did some serious planting in my garden to redress the Autumn savaging of some bee-friendly bushes with a newly acquired strimmer; pondered then on the possibility of 160 similar plants in each of our schools; and subsequently took some of the team to The Hive at Kew – where the Bee Inspired project was born. You enjoyed the launch with our drumming sessions, and the rest is history..... or not, I hope – more on that shortly.

As ever, our schools did far more than commit to planting one bush or pollinator plant, and we have seen the amazing impact on our environment. Thank you for the ways in which you not just embraced the ideas we suggested, but went much further. Stewardship of creation in real and tangible practice speaks much louder than words.

A key and important point from this year's project, is that it is sustainable, and we therefore encourage you to continue to embed the ideas from this project for years to come. The environmental crisis remains – so should our positive commitment to doing something about it.

I've been excited to see, and share similar ideas with a number of schools, around the provision of Spiritual Gardens. Not only are these conducive to reflection, personal time out and helpful in promoting mental health, but can be combined with our Bee Inspired project. We will highlight some existing Spiritual Gardens in our schools in future editions of the Newsletter, but do get in touch if you're interested in setting one up. It's also a great opportunity for engaging the wider community and local church.

If you haven't already signed up to receive the fantastic Bee Canvases that are on a travelling exhibition around schools and churches this Autumn, please contact us! Again, a great opportunity to spread the Bee Inspired message, and celebrate some amazing creativity and art.

I have already shared with schools, clergy and governors the focus for 2019-20, and look forward to seeing your participation in the 75 Flames project (in conjunction with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust) as well as our Peace Pole project. I'm already seeing in my mind's eye the forest of poles outside the Cathedrals and Priory, then permanently in our schools: with creative but deep and significant messages for the hundreds of people who will walk past in the public areas. If you're interested, but didn't receive my email, please get in touch. Our full project document will be circulated at the start of next term.

With best wishes for a restful summer break.

Jeff



Bee Inspired, the diocesan schools project that has captured the imagination of children across Portsmouth and Winchester dioceses, has been celebrated in exciting cathedral days.



Services have been held to rejoice in the plethora of creative schemes that diocesan schools have embarked upon to protect and promote wildlife throughout the year.

Year Six Leavers Services are held in Portsmouth Cathedral, Winchester Cathedral and Christchurch Priory over seven days every year. More than 3,000 children and staff attend the popular service days that have become the highlight of the year for many. This year's theme, 'Bee Inspired' focused on stewardship and caring for God's creation. The project centred primarily on the vital need to protect bees and the key role that they play in the world's ecosystem.

School involvement in ecology projects in parishes is now having a demonstrable and tangible effect on the lives of our communities. Schools across the dioceses have created bee-friendly gardens to attract the insects and teach children about the important role of bees. One school has won several national awards for their commitment to wildlife.

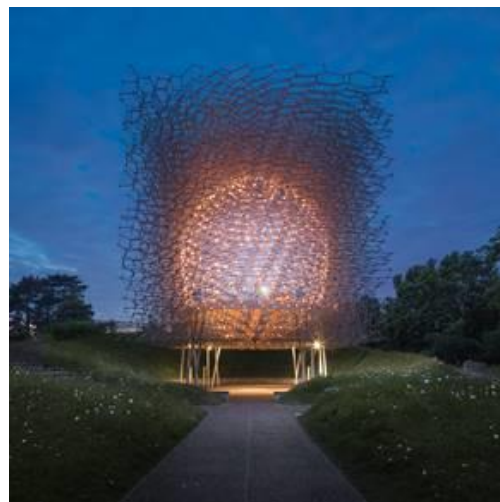


The cathedral services, which mark the end of the pupils' time in primary school, began this year with a series of ecology workshops. Pupils planted thousands of pollinator plants and seeds around both cathedrals as part of their work in encouraging the declining bee population. Huge bee pictures, one from each school, were displayed inside the cathedrals and later in the windows of city shops, alerting the public to the part pupils are playing in serving the Common Good.

Some schools have linked with churches and parishes to inform their communities about the need to protect the planet for the future. Many have linked this learning to their school Christian values and the Church of England Vision for Education which speaks of the importance of teaching children about the individual part that they can play in the environmental crisis.

One of the prompts for this year's theme was a visit that the Diocesan Education Team made to Kew Gardens to see 'The Hive', Wolfgang Buttress' amazing interactive art installation. The structure is linked to the movement of bees in a real hive, producing sound & light as the bees move. Diocesan Director of Education Jeff Williams said: 'If all our 160 schools planted just one bee/insect friendly plant, we would immediately have a positive effect on our environment across six local authority areas! The potential impact is enormous.'

And so began a year of planting, nurturing and growing. Schools have transformed their grounds, adapted lessons to include learning about ecology and delivered worship focussed on creation. Children have enjoyed 'bee days', had visits from forest rangers, wildlife specialists and conservationists. They have engaged in litter picks, ground clearance and gardening. Some pupils have implored their schools to eradicate single use plastic, made their own plastic free sandwich wrapping for packed lunches and held information events for parents – all in their quest to care for God's world.



Children's efforts were celebrated in the leavers services as pupils were invited to speak about the large canvas artwork each school created to reflect what they had learnt about bees. The canvases (a selection of which can be seen at the end of this booklet) drew a lot of attention from cathedral visitors and tourists and stayed in the cathedrals as an exhibition for several weeks. Some have since been placed into Portsmouth and Winchester shop windows forming 'bee trails' around the cities. Many of the pictures will be displayed during Winchester Green Week (29th September – 6th October) and will form a travelling exhibition in schools and churches.



Where's our canvas?

Below are the current locations of the canvases for the Winchester Diocese:

Open House Deli, Middle Brook Street

Projects, Middle Brook Street

Cloisters, Kings Walk

Elephant Independent Record Shop, Kings Walk

Café Winchester, St Thomas Street

Chococo, High Street

C & H Fabrics coffee shop, High Street

Winchester Framing, Bridge Street

Tourist Information Centre, High Street

St Bede's

Sherborne

Crawford Park

Barton Stacey

Hyde

St James, West End

Whitchurch

Western

Twyford

A selection of Portsmouth school canvases are in shop and café windows surrounding the cathedral in Old Portsmouth and are clearly visible.

The remaining canvases have been taken to the diocesan office in Alresford and are ready to go on tour. Many bookings have already been received.

If you would like to book a selection of canvases for an art exhibition in your school, church or parish please contact Sam Powell at the address below:

Sam.powell@portsmouth.anglican.org



Buzzing workshops



Richard Pollard, Grow Wild South England Engagement Manager based at Kew, ran one of the most popular workshops at Winchester Cathedral. Children donned special headsets to enjoy a virtual reality trip to Kew and to experience being in the middle of a real bee hive. One pupil said: 'This is the best day ever, I was scared of bees before. Now I know what they do, how clever they are at working together in a team, I really want to help them. It is great that children can do this in their schools and homes.'



Children were asked to bring a selection of pollinator plants to the services and planted them in specially created flower beds in Winchester Cathedral grounds. At Portsmouth children planted recycled wooden crates with bee friendly plants to display at the entrance of the cathedral.



The ground staff at Winchester Cathedral dug a 50 metre long border around the front of the building for the children's pollinator plants. The flowers can be enjoyed by visitors in the coming months and years.



Many of the plants had been sown from seed and nurtured by pupils in the months prior to the services. Pictured below are children from Oakfield Church of England Primary School on the Isle of Wight preparing their bee-friendly plants to bring to Portsmouth Cathedral.



Polinator flower boxes adorn Portsmouth Cathedral.





Members of the National Bumblebee Conservation Trust ran a workshop helping children to identify bumblebees. Pupils enjoyed looking at the insects under a microscope. The children used an ultraviolet light box to investigate how a bumblebee sees, before playing a card game to learn the difference between honey bees and bumblebees.

Schools can join the Trust by logging on to the website below:

<https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/join/>

Outside Portsmouth cathedral, pupils enjoyed 'well dressing' – creating pictures of trees and plants using seeds, beans and petals. A large depiction of the front of the cathedral was also made by children from a selection of diocesan schools.





Hundreds of concertina bees were made by pupils.

Children also learned to make 'bee bombs' – small pellets of seeds, clay and compost that can be carefully thrown on to waste land where they burst open and scatter the flower seeds that then germinate.

The music workshops are always some of the most popular activities on leavers' days. Children at the Winchester Cathedral were treated to drumming sessions led by Reverend Mike Griffiths who has been working with diocesan headteachers, promoting good mental health through drumming. Children and teachers fell about laughing as they tried to keep up with a samba beat.

Pupils also enjoyed singing workshops at Pilgrims School next to Winchester Cathedral. The school is world famous as a musical centre for cathedral choristers. The school's Assistant Director of Music Chris Burton spoke to pupils about building confidence to project their voices.

A sing school workshop with staff from the cathedral choir was also one of the most popular activities of the day at Portsmouth. The cathedral offers an outreach service to schools finishing with a concert for parents. Children from different schools broke into groups to sing songs in parts and rounds led by cathedral choir leaders.



The Services

The same service was held at all leavers days in Winchester, Portsmouth and Christchurch. Children read prayers and some schools shared how they had designed their school canvas. Each venue had its own special contribution to make to the day.

In Christchurch Priory and Winchester Cathedral worship bands accompanied some traditional and some modern worship songs.



Children attending the cathedrals were given an individual packet of wildflower seeds to take home and plant at home. Each school was presented with a special candle to light when prayers are said in school over the next academic year.



Bee models from Oakley Junior School near Basingstoke provide decoration at Winchester Cathedral.



A host of cathedral volunteers made the occasions special for the children. At Christchurch Priory students from The Bishop of Winchester Academy joined in leading the activities. Local headteachers organised a thorough tour of the historic Priory and children enjoyed making clay gargoyles.



A giant bee adorns the canvas made by pupils at St Luke's School, Bournemouth.



There are nine Church of England Infant schools within the Portsmouth and Winchester dioceses that are not directly paired with a Church of England Junior school. The children who attend these schools traditionally missed out on the opportunity to take part in a leavers service until last year when a special Key Stage One leavers service was held in Romsey Abbey.

Six of the schools were able to attend this year for a celebration of their time at their Church schools. Children thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the day and staff described the day as 'amazing'. The children read their own prayers and spoke about their bee canvases before proudly processing out of the abbey with their amazing school banners.





Jeff Williams and schools advisor Sue Bowen of the Diocesan Education Team are working towards deepening reciprocal learning for schools and parishes in Winchester church schools and Winchester's link dioceses in Rwanda, Central Africa. The work is driven by the Church of England's Vision for Education: 'Deeply Christian: Serving The Common Good'; the requirements of the updated school inspection schedule and a diocesan commitment to the Christian Aid 'Global Neighbours' project.

On a recent visit to Rwanda, members of the education team asked trainee teachers to create their own bee canvas to be displayed in Winchester Cathedral. Their artwork was flown 6000 miles back to Britain. The completed canvas can be seen above displayed in the cathedral.

The end of a successful year

This year diocesan schools have linked with churches to inform their communities about the need to protect the planet for the future. This work reflects the Church of England Vision for Education which speaks of the importance of teaching children about the part that they can play in the environmental crisis that threatens God's beautiful world. The leavers services were the culmination of a year of activity in our schools. Below are just a few examples of the work being done under the 'Bee Inspired' project.

All Saints Pollinators Project

All Saints Church of England Primary School in Freshwater on the Isle of Wight sits on a five acre site. One of the first measures to enhance pollinators on the site was undertaken several years ago. School grounds contractors were asked to leave a significant buffer strip around the edge of the sports field to enable the grasses to grow tall and to give wildflowers the opportunity to germinate. The additional habitat supports the pollinators and increases the outdoor educational provision of the site as a nature trail now follows the tall grasses and flowers around the edge of the sports field.



No less than 130 native trees, donated by the Woodland Trust, were planted this year to extend the adjacent ancient woodland. Dead wood is left on the school site and the log piles make another beneficial habitat which can be explored and appreciated by the children.

The old swimming pool site was converted into an allotment garden and Forest School area. Beneficial plants have been sown by the gardening club for a year-round provision of habitat for pollinators which, it is hoped, will in turn pollinate the food crops grown.



Hedges around the area have been laid by parents and local community using the traditional hedge laying style to improve the density of cover and stimulate greater growth. This will promote flowering and reduce the need for hedge cutting which used to be carried out on an annual basis. The pollinators benefit from the blossom and additional habitat provided by the thicker hedges.



Children enjoyed a talk from the Isle of Wight Bee Keepers Association who brought in a colony of bees to share with the children. Pupils dressed up in protective clothing and tasted some honey!



The school gardening club held pollinator focussed sessions in which the children experienced 'being a bee', used natural materials to build bee houses and make bee drinkers that

enable bees to drink without getting stuck in the water.

Staff were delighted to round off the final session by showing the children that the bees had been receptive to their efforts to encourage pollinators and had moved in to the school bird box!



Breamore Bee Day



Pupils at Breamore Church of England Primary School in the New Forest held their own 'Bee Day'.



Children and staff dressed as bees and took part in a range of activities from making bee bombs to creating their own sandwich wraps. The wraps are made by melting beeswax and are a sustainable alternative to one-use plastic wrapping.

Pupils dressed as beekeepers and learn how to look after a hive.

Staff have involved the local community in lessons and planting pollinator plants. Children have enjoyed opportunities to learn about bees throughout the curriculum.

St Bede School - Alresford Show Countryside Education Project

Building on the interest in bees from the cathedral services, pupils from Year 1 and 2 at St Bede Church of England Primary School in Winchester, decided to become bee experts too and entered work in the Alresford Show Countryside Education Project.

The children were awarded first place in the 'extraordinary' category for this year's countryside project. The children were visited by three judges who viewed their work on bees and pollination. They listened to the children talking about their experiences as part of their project and were amazed by how much the children knew about every aspect of bees and their role within pollination!

The children's work will be on show in the education tent at this year's Alresford Show on the 7th September.

Children in Years 3 and 4 have also been writing letters to headteacher Sarah Duck campaigning to plant flowering plants in an underused area of the school site. 'The impact of the stewardship project has spread right across the school leaving us all buzzing with excitement,' she said.



Green Weekend

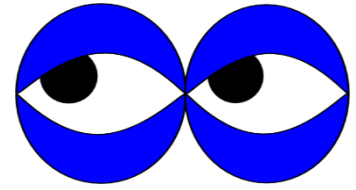
The work of diocesan church schools will be on display during Green Hampshire Harvest Weekend (5th and 6th October). A variety of activities are planned for inside a big top in the grounds of the cathedral, including film loops and mini lectures. Some pupils from diocesan schools will speak at the event and a stall will showcase the childrens' work.

The event, between 10am and 5pm on both days is free and includes stalls manned by local producers, wildlife displays and ecology talks and information.

There is a special harvest evensong in the cathedral at 3.30pm on the Sunday.

Bee Inspired: From My Perspective

A look at church schools through the eyes of people
working in the school community.



Cheryl Bryan, Director of Learning, Winchester Cathedral

Ah, June! Flowers are in bloom, the air is heavy with the expectation of a glorious summer, and the Cathedral is adorned with art work on the theme of bees! Year 6 children from church schools have spent weeks researching and putting together the most creative and often beautiful pieces of art work to be seen in the Cathedral.

The theme for the leavers services this year focussed on what we can do to look after God's creation so lovingly given to us. The children's work reminds us that the humble bee, in its many forms (over 200 species in the UK alone!), has a vital role to play in both our natural and human-made environments. Busily collecting nectar to make delicious, sweet honey, bees, along with other insects, also pollinate plants to support bio-diversity and food crops and therefore us!

The children also brought scores of wild flowers attractive to bees, to plant around The Paddock on the north side of the Cathedral for all to see. They make a colourful and important statement. We can all do something, however small, to cherish and protect what God has freely given, by setting aside a patch in our gardens, pots or window boxes, to plant wild flowers. Nature will do the rest. Wild flowers make the ugliest patch of ground beautiful and grow where other plants fail. With their bright colours and pollen, they encourage bees to visit in increasing numbers, safeguarding our food supply for the future. I give thanks to God for this small, furry creature, busily going about its business making our world a better place. Now, you must excuse me. I'm off to the garden centre to buy a packet of wild flower seeds so that I'm ready for the next season of planting

How to get involved

If you want to help bees, consider signing up to the Polli Promise, Created by pupils at St. Alban's Church of England Primary School in Havant, the Promise is a pledge to plant a pot or put aside a 1 x 1 metre area in your garden, school or business to grow pollinator-friendly plants. The Promise has won support from schools, churches, businesses and MPs. The school has been recognised by Defra, winning several national awards. Make a promise using the website below:

www.opalexplorenature.org/polli-promise

<http://www.ecoschools.global/>

Eco-Schools is the largest global sustainable schools programme – it starts in the classroom and expands to the community by engaging the next generation in action-based learning.

It is hoped that children will carry the behavioural patterns they uptake under Eco-Schools with them through life, in turn teaching the next generation the habits to make a difference.

<http://www.polli-nation.co.uk/>

This cross-curricula secondary and primary school project will give pupils direct hands-on experiences; from creating vertical green walls and night-blooming flower beds to lobbying to change school maintenance regimes and debating pesticide use. Pupils will learn about the role pollinating insects play in eco system services and be able to contextualize this in the choices and actions they take.

Schools who would like a visit from a beekeeper can contact Portsmouth Beekeepers Association. There is no charge for visits to schools.

Portsmouth Beekeepers: <http://portsmouthbeekeepers.co.uk/cms/index.php/contact-us>

Schools can see a bee hive in action all year round at Cumberland House Natural History Museum in Portsmouth. The museum has an observational hive (glass on both sides) and the bees go in and out of the museum through a hole in the wall. For all enquiries and group visits please telephone the Museum's admin team on 023 9283 4744 / 4737.

lfl.org.uk – Learning Through Landscapes offers courses and a host of free resources for schools. This includes how to maintain wildlife areas into the future, as well as a range of excellent lesson ideas. Schools can apply for a nature grant which provides resources and free training for staff.



A selection of the bee canvases can be seen on the following pages.







