

Case Study

JOHN
MUIR
AWARD

wild places:
DISCOVER
EXPLORE
CONSERVE
SHARE

Into the Woods

Women's wellbeing project at the Green Light Trust

The Green Light Trust is a charity dedicated to providing equitable opportunities for people to access the power of nature. They are a long standing Provider of the John Muir Award and deliver a range of projects, including the Women's Wellbeing Project. They use the woods and nature to provide a safe space for women to let their minds be freer, banish negative thoughts and leave trauma behind.



Each participant's story is different. Some are faced with the pressures of looking after elderly and ill parents whilst balancing the responsibilities of teenagers; for many the only time away, the only time to be is in the woods and gives them something to look forward to each week.

"A little bit of space to look after me and my wellbeing before returning to the unrelenting pressures of daily life."

– Pippa (Green Light Trust Participant)

Adding structure with the John Muir Award

The Green Light Trust value the John Muir Award as a way to help their participants realise how far they have come on their individual journey's away from substance misuse or the trauma of abuse. On completion of their Awards, participants have contributed towards the preservation of natural woodlands, but have also worked on themselves; undertaking what is, at times, a

painful and difficult road as they improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Bryony (John Muir Award leader) says “it is amazing to watch participants develop throughout the programme. It is difficult to prioritise the benefits of a John Muir Award and what it means to our participants; there are so many elements which make it valuable. We all know that our natural landscape is under increasing pressure and that we must preserve it for future generations. For me, though, it was watching those participants - who have been through so much - just growing and healing week by week. Step by step the green of Frithy wood provided them with a safe space, free from stress and anxiety. They could put the trauma behind them and reconnect with nature.”

“I do not want it to end. I am physically stronger. Connecting with nature and people in a safe space has helped me broaden my boundaries and taught me that everyone has something to offer and something to strive for, even me.”

- Sally (Green Light Trust Participant)

You can't deny the numbers; success from the Into the Woods Project

The Green Light Trust have demonstrated their success, with 85% of participants who complete a course continuing to engage and develop, by joining them on another course, by feeling able to continue their education or gain employment. Research conducted by Professor Jules Pretty (University of Essex) on the impact of the Green Light Trust's programmes demonstrated that “the contribution to the public purse through savings in statutory services was on average £14,000 per person per year. This amounted to a 28% reduction in visits to GP surgery's and a 24% decrease in

attendance at A & E departments, with fewer interventions by both the police and probation services. This is all achieved at a cost of just £473 per person per year”.

Not only does the evidence demonstrate value at a national level but also at an individual level. The programmes (as measured on Rosenberg's self-esteem scale) showed an improvement of 1.4 on the 10-point scale. To put this into context, significant life events such as a marriage, the birth of a child, divorce, or unemployment, have an impact of +/- 0.6.

The Green Light Trust are providing meaningful experiences for people; they demonstrate the positive impact that nature can have in terms of both self-development as well as the ripple effect this has on the wider society.

“I have made friends. Connected with both people and nature and realised that other people do enjoy having me around. I have been accepted for being me.”

- Green Light Trust participant

- Find out more about the [Green Light Trust](#)
- Find out more about the [John Muir Award](#)
- Help connect more people with wild places by donating to our [Wild Action Fund](#).

