

1. Contestant Profile

Contestant name:	Jane Rampin
Contestant occupation:	Land Manager
University / Organisation	Earthwatch Europe
Number of people in your team:	4

2. Project overview

Title:	Transform a village playground with “Tytherington’s Tiny Forest” for nature recovery and education
Contest: (Research/Community)	Community
Quarry name:	Tytherington

Abstract

Hanson has leased various pockets of land to Tytherington village Parish Council for many years. These areas of land have great community value and are also areas of wildlife and environmental value. With the arrival of ash die back and the current and future loss of tree cover in the village, this project sought to understand how Hanson-owned sites are viewed, used and accessed by the village and what enhancements to biodiversity and replacement of tree loss most villagers wanted to see.

Hanson staff, having seen successful Tiny Forest projects flourish in other areas, recommended that part of this consultation process could be used to assess how appropriate a Tiny Forest would be for Tytherington, as one option in restoring biodiversity loss. [Tiny Forest | Super Tiny. Super Powerful \(earthwatch.org.uk\)](https://www.earthwatch.org.uk/tiny-forest-super-tiny-super-powerful)

The project falls into 2 phases – Phase 1 (within this Award) is the consultation and assessment period and Phase 2 would be the implementation of Phase 1 outcomes.

A Tiny Forest consists of 200m² of densely planted native trees that replicate the natural establishment of a forest. The Tiny Forest programme developed by Earthwatch is designed to involve the community at all stages, starting with information giving and consultation around site choice and planting methodology. It can be applied in many different settings. If successful Phase 2 could involve the planting and the ongoing monitoring of the Tiny Forest using citizen science.

Introduction

Hanson has leased various pockets of land to Tytherington village Parish Council for many years. These areas of land have great community value and are also areas of wildlife and environmental value. Tytherington is a village in South Gloucestershire, England, situated 2 miles south east of Thornbury. The parish population taken at the 2011 census was 666. To the west of the village is Tytherington Quarry. The village and the quarry have a strong link in terms of land ownership, access, employment and traffic (both people and cars).

Over the last few years trees across a number of the leased sites, including the Jubilee Field playground and Coronation Gardens, have succumbed to ash die back. Many of the ash trees will need to be felled because of the risks posed to users of the village sites, as the disease progresses.

This presented an opportunity to replace the diseased trees and to engage the community in deciding what, where and how the wildlife and tree coverage of the village could be maintained. Hanson was looking for a community led project that will enhance biodiversity, assist nature recovery and mitigate the loss of the ash trees. Earthwatch, an environmental charity with science at its heart, has been working with communities on a number of biodiversity projects including the Tiny Forest project, and was approached to support a community consultation.

The project falls into 2 phases – Phase 1 is the consultation and assessment and Phase 2 is the implementation of Phase 1 outcomes.

During Phase 1 a consultation process with the village was carried out. This was led by Earthwatch and explored a variety of options, including the potential to plant Tytherington's own Tiny Forest. Earthwatch sought to understand local feelings around the Hanson owned sites, how the sites are currently used and by whom, and what important features, designs or considerations would be needed to implement a community project to enhance biodiversity, assist nature recovery and mitigate for the loss of the ash trees.

The Tiny Forest model is designed to maximize community engagement and “ownership” of the trees planted, creating a place where the community and local schools and groups can meet to monitor the positive impacts of their actions in terms of biodiversity enhancement and other markers. If a Tiny Forest was planted, the village would become part of the Tiny Forest network with access to educational material, training in citizen science and the data platform.

Objectives

The key objectives were to:

- Find out how the Hanson owned sites are perceived and used locally
- Understand how appropriate each site is, in terms of location, use, suitability and access
- Promote the concept of a Tiny Forest for Tytherington and understand which, if any of the sites would be most appropriate to host a Tiny Forest
- Understand how biodiversity is perceived by the local village, and what examples of and improvements to biodiversity they would like to see

Description

4 Hanson owned sites were identified as having potential for developing a community project which addressed the loss of biodiversity due to ash die back. These were:

- Jubilee Field
- Coronation Gardens
- 2 sites on Tytherington Hill

A working group of Andrew Duncan from Hanson, Matthew Lipton, Tytherington Parish Counsellor and member of local nature groups and Sarah Staunton-Lamb, Communities and Engagement lead for Earthwatch Europe, visited each of the sites and assessed for:

- Viability
- Access
- Size
- How they are currently used



During this process both the Jubilee Field and the Coronation Garden sites were identified as having too many challenges around lack of space, current use as a village amenity, proximity to road, services and already containing historic features and potential archeology. It was agreed to leave both sites in the consultation process to get a wider perspective of how the sites are valued and used, and to collect data to support this.

The next step was to promote the idea of replacing the trees lost through ash die back and introduce the concept of a Tiny Forest. We were keen for the whole village to be able to respond and so created 3 channels to collect / share information:

1. On-line Presence

- a. Background information about the proposal and the Tiny Forest idea was shared on the village web page and Facebook group
- b. An on-line survey form was created – using a QR code. This was included on posters, placed around the village and on the village Facebook group and village website

2. Face to Face consultation

- a. A paper version of the form was produced and copies left in the village shop
- b. An open evening was hosted at the village hall. All community members were invited to join a drop in Q & a session hosted by Earthwatch.

3. Pre-School Engagement

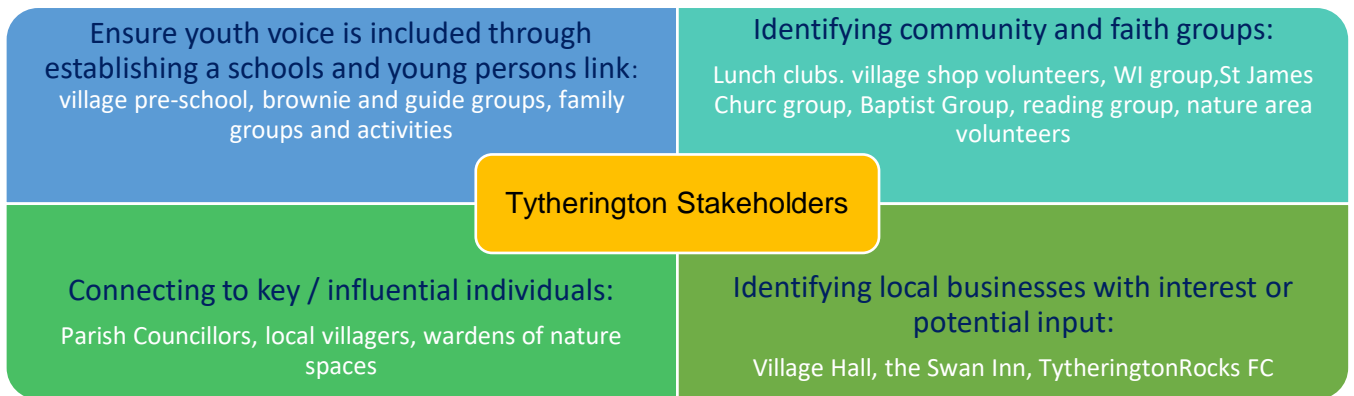
- a. The local pre-school was provided with a set of resources to enable the teachers to ask the pre-schools about what they would like to see in a Tiny Forest.

The aim of the consultation was to gather as wide a perspective as possible and hear from of all members of the local community in Tytherington. It provided an opportunity to understand how areas of land were being used, what was important to villagers and what they felt was missing. The consultation also allowed us to gauge interest in supporting local initiatives, volunteering and practical activities.

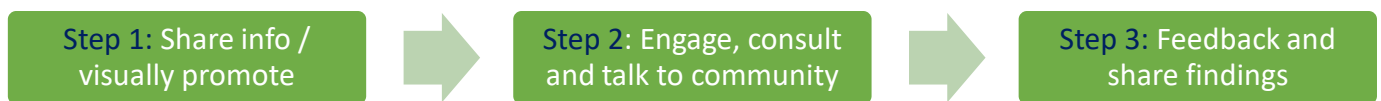
Actions and Activities

The community engagement and consultation of Phase 1 of this project involved getting to know the community in Tytherington, sharing information about the potential projects which could be undertaken, listening to community opinion and having a clear understanding of what is important to the village and why.

We started the process by undertaking a **stakeholder mapping exercise** to ensure we were targeting all potential members of the community. Using tried and tested models which combined desk based research and visiting the village we were able to understand who the stakeholders were.



Once we understood better who in the village we wanted to reach out to, we moved through three steps to engage with them



Step 1: Share information and promote

This was achieved through:

- Information posted on village Facebook group and village website
- Presentation to Parish Council at Council meeting
- Promotion on Facebook and website
- Posters put up around the village
- Display in village shop
- Sharing of resources and materials with local pre-school



Jubilee Field and Coronation Gardens



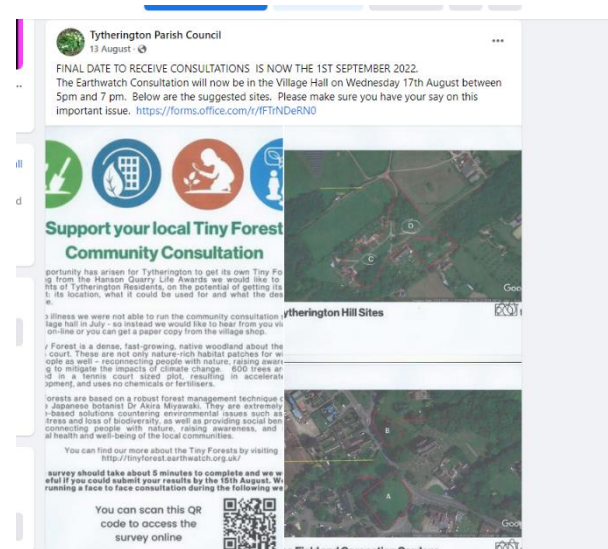
Tytherington Hill Sites

Step 2: Engage, consult and talk to community

Once information had been shared, we moved to the next phase of engaging directly with the community and understanding their opinions. This included:

- Sharing an online survey (QR code on posters)
- Providing paper copies of the survey at the village shop for those without internet access to complete
- Producing a selection of resource materials for use in the pre-school to engage the children with the idea of a Tiny Forest, where it might be, how it might be used and what design and features it should have. Due to covid restrictions the resources were shared with the pre-school but the activities have not yet taken place. This will take place later this month.

- Residents invited to join a 2 hour drop-in community consultation session (this was postponed once due to project members having Covid)



A Tiny Forest for Tytherington

Join us on Wednesday 17th August 5-7pm at the Village Hall to find out more about a Tiny Forest for Tytherington

What is a Tiny Forest?

A Tiny Forest is a dense, fast-growing, native woodland about the size of a tennis court. These are not only nature-rich habitat patches for wildlife, but for people as well – reconnecting people with nature, raising awareness and helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

How can you be involved?

- Complete the on-line survey (using the QR code) or paper version of the survey in the village shop
- Join us for a drop in session at Tytherington Village Hall on Wednesday 17th August from 5-7pm
- Help decide where the Tiny Forest will be planted, share ideas about how it can be used and input into the design.

Hanson



earthwatch EUROPE

For more information, please visit www.tinyforest.earthwatch.org.uk

TINY FORESTS FOR CLIMATE PROOF, NATURE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



Support your local Tiny Forest Community Consultation

An opportunity has arisen for Tytherington to get its own Tiny Forest. With funding from the Hanson Quarry Life Awards we would like to know the thoughts of Tytherington Residents, on the potential of getting its own Tiny Forest: its location, what it could be used for and what the design might include.

Due to illness we were not able to run the community consultation session at the village hall in July – so instead we would like to hear from you via a survey either on-line or you can get a paper copy from the village shop.

A Tiny Forest is a dense, fast-growing, native woodland about the size of a tennis court. These are not only nature-rich habitat patches for wildlife, but for people as well – reconnecting people with nature, raising awareness and helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change. 600 trees are densely planted in a tennis court sized plot, resulting in accelerated forest development, and uses no chemicals or fertilisers.

Tiny Forests are based on a robust forest management technique developed by the Japanese botanist Dr Akira Miyawaki. They are extremely effective nature-based solutions countering environmental issues such as flooding, heat stress and loss of biodiversity, as well as providing social benefits such as reconnecting people with nature, raising awareness, and improving general health and well-being of the local communities.

You can find out more about the Tiny Forests by visiting <http://tinyforest.earthwatch.org.uk/>

The survey should take about 5 minutes to complete and we would be grateful if you could submit your results by the 15th August. We will be running a face to face consultation during the following week.

You can scan this QR code to access the survey online



earthwatch EUROPE

For more information, please visit www.tinyforest.earthwatch.org.uk

Hanson

Step 3: Share findings and feedback

Sharing findings and lessons learned are key to successful community engagement. This will happen later this month and the community will be given the opportunity to comment on the feedback and recommendations. This will include:

- Producing a summary report which will be available online and in paper format
- Providing a mechanism for the community to add further thoughts and comments to the process
- Sharing of report and findings with Hanson employees to facilitate CSR opportunities.
- Follow up with local pre-school and youth groups to ensure educational materials and free resources are shared and used.



- Pre-school teachers and youth group leaders will be invited to visit a website hosting resources and invited to join training webinars which explain more about Tiny Forests, how the educational resources can be used and ideas for other activities to support the young people to engage with nature.

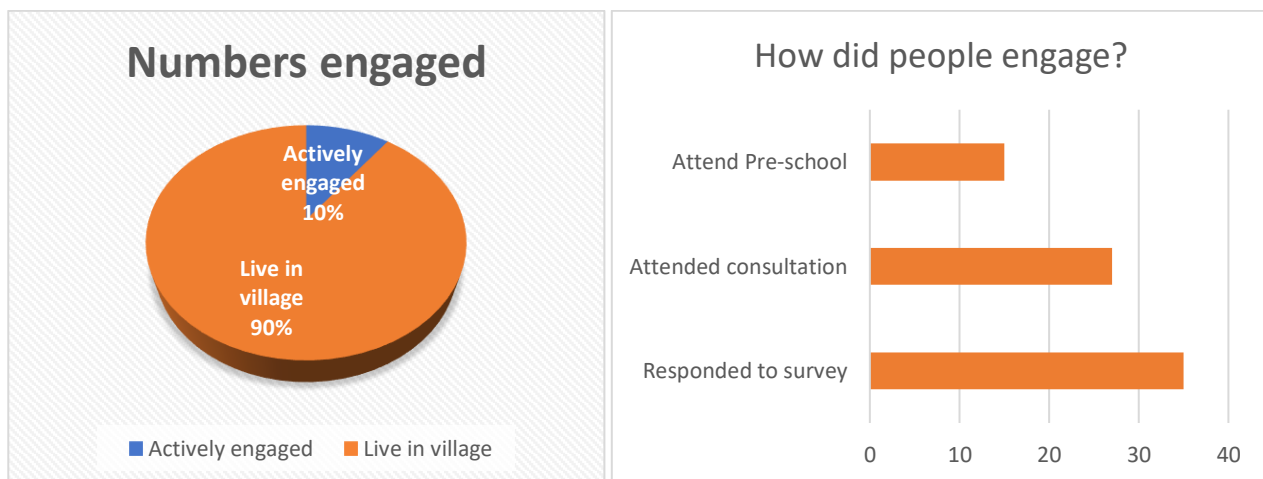
Phase 1 has been designed to inform and engage the local community, creating a sense of ownership of the Tiny Forest, should that be an option chosen and a desire to be involved in the citizen science research and ongoing maintenance of any site developed. Should the village decide that a Tiny Forest is wanted and appropriate for Tytherington we will move onto Phase 2.

A Phase 2 for a Tiny Forest would involve Earthwatch hosting a community day where a baseline ecological survey will be undertaken alongside the Tiny Forest site survey. This will include: site mapping, digging soil pits for soil analysis and site ground conditions, bug counts and species identification, consultation with community groups who have recorded village verge wildflowers. The community would also be involved in the naming and design options.

Discussion

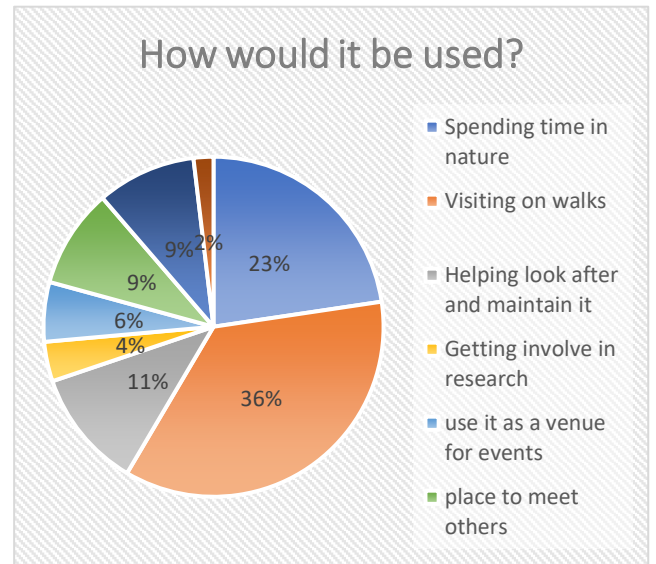
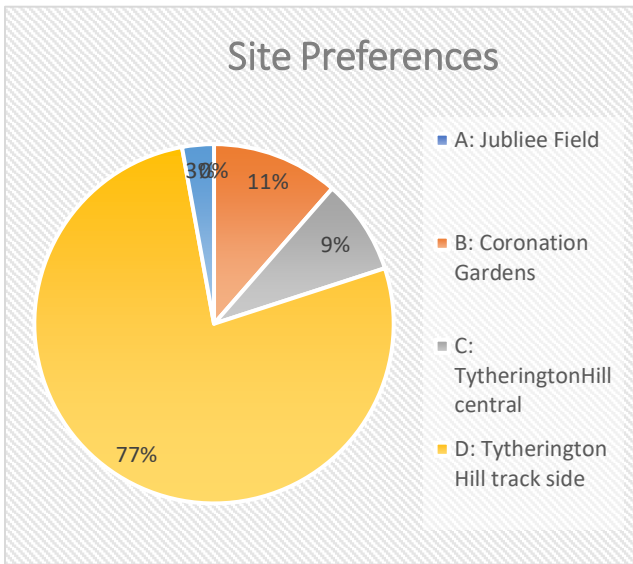
The main focus of this project has been to engage with the local community in Tytherington and understand how the concept of a Tiny Forest, or other environmental initiatives could benefit both the people and wildlife of this village. It has enabled Earthwatch to develop its community engagement model, particularly around Tiny Forest projects, and provide Hanson with a better understanding of how the community see and use Hanson owned land, what is important to the community in terms of access to space and what actions could be taken to support biodiversity in the village. At the start of this project there was an expectation that it would produce a decision on what site a Tiny Forest would be planted, how it would be used and what the design of the site might be. However, it became very clear during the process that green spaces are highly valued by the community, any changes or developments which happen need to be done in partnership with and not to the village and that the community themselves have some excellent ideas about actions and activities which could be taken to support wildlife and prevent biodiversity loss, beyond just a Tiny Forest option. From a village of approximately 666, we were able to directly engage with 76 community members. Posters were placed around the village and in the village shop to enable a wider awareness raising.

Feedback from the consultation



Tiny Forest specific Feedback

From the 35 survey responses we gathered the following information

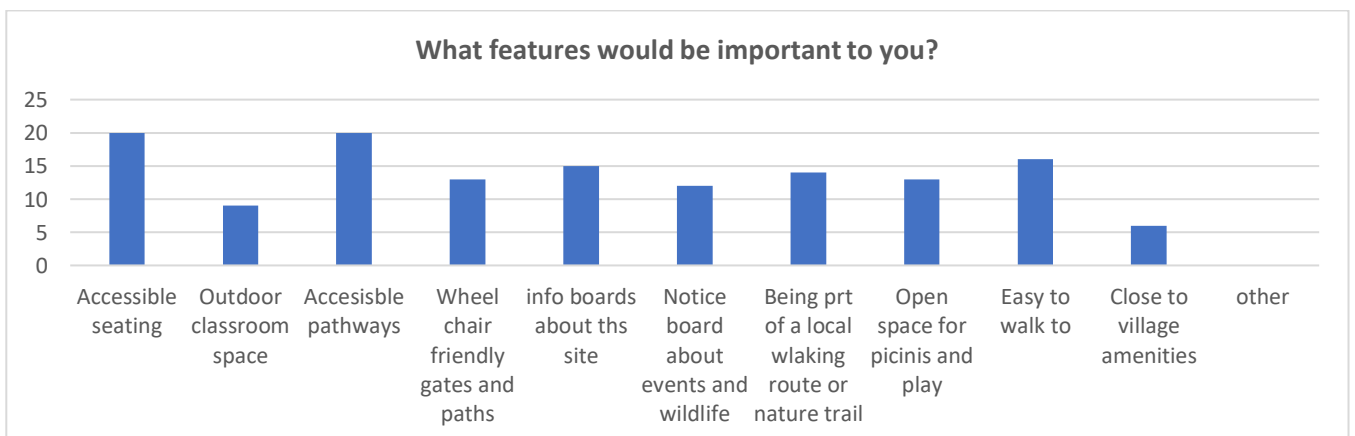


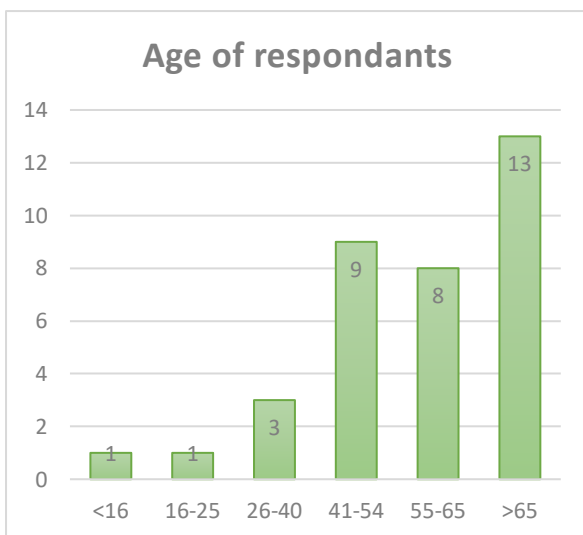
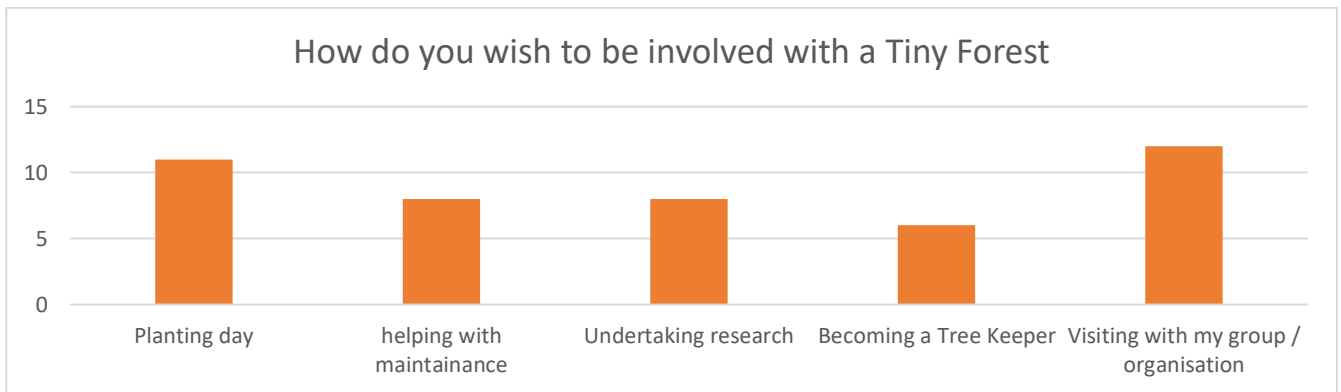
Specific comments about location:

- “Central village location ie, Jubilee Field or Coronation Gardens is not viable. These locations are already fully used for the important functions they fulfil”
- “I cannot see the point in planting a tiny forest next to where you already have vast areas of woodland already if people want to connect with nature they can already do that easily anyway”
- “The sites that have been suggested are already in use in their current state and I would prefer to see land that is not currently used by the community for this purpose. “
- “It will integrate well into surrounding woodland landscape on Tytherington Hill”
- “C & D have more space to accommodate the forest”
- “I agree ash trees need to be replaced but use existing woodland”
- “There is a need for more trees”

Comments on how it would be used

- It would be another place to enjoy nature and to extend walking routes with our dog as lots of the village has now been built on so safe, buggy friendly walking routes are limited.
- Could the village preschool use it for forest school sessions.
- I not sure as it is a rural area with many trees already but watching a new 'forest' grow may be of interest and beneficial for children of the village and local area
- Preschool children would enjoy the area
- This could bring the village together
- Would it be better to give this to a more urban community that doesn't already have easy access to nature, perhaps somewhere in Thornbury?





In addition to the survey all villagers were invited to attend a drop-in session at the village hall in order to ask questions, raise concerns and learn more about the project. During the session villagers were encouraged to share ideas on post it notes or raise as questions. We asked specifically about concerns, alternative sites for a Tiny Forest and other actions the village could take to enhance wildlife and biodiversity.

Concerns

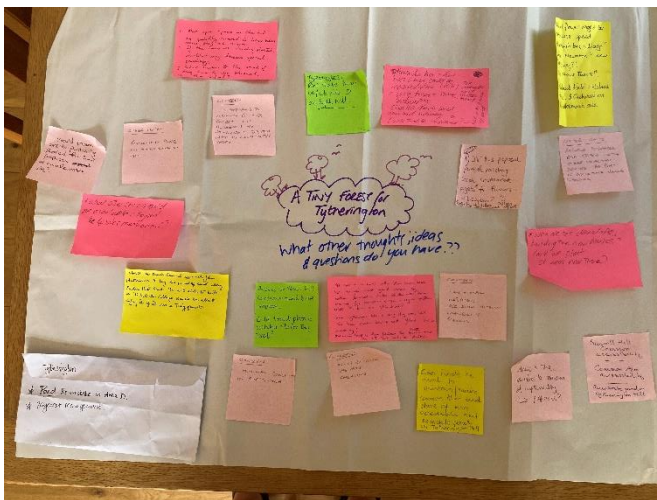
- *As this is a rural rather than an urban area, how do you guard against invasion by nettles, brambles, docks, thistles etc blown across from roadside verges and organic pasture whilst the trees are still small?*
- *Tytherington Hill is a very dry area, will these trees survive with global warming?*
- *Will it not take 20 years of management and maintenance?*
- *What is the benefit to Hanson of implementing this proposal?*
- *Concern: Loss of existing habitats and amenities*
- *If the trees are densely planted wouldn't disease spread quickly*
- *What happens to the wood if they have to be thinned?*
- *What is in place for fire control?*
- *Is this proposal part of meeting local environmental targets for Hanson Tytherington? Eg carbon offset*
- *It is difficult to get volunteers to help with things like the village shop. How would we get volunteers to help look after the Tiny Forest?*

Alternative sites for a Tiny Forest

- *Land along Baden Hill Road*
- *Land between the south stone and the M5*
- *Who are the developers building the new housing? Could we plant on areas near there?*
- *Could Stidcot Platt be a suitable site for a Tiny Forest?*
- *Would Hanson consider purchasing farmland for this proposal as an alternative site?*

Other actions to enhance wildlife and biodiversity

- Wildflower verges to reduce speed of traffic through the village
- Walnut Field and Walnut Tree and Orchard on allotment site
- Replace diseased ash trees with other healthy species as part of existing varied planting.
- Can funds be used to maintain / make Common Alm and Stowe Hill more accessible and re-instate the pond on Tytherington Hill
- Tytherington already has some sites which could be improved upon – with some additional trees and landscaping.
- Stowe Hill is parish land – could that be improved? You could get the community to volunteer to help



Deliverables

Phase 1 of this project has allowed Earthwatch to understand the motivations, concerns and interests of the community in Tytherington. It has demonstrated that in order for community projects to be successful, especially those which rely on community engagement and volunteering, the community needs to be involved from the start.

It has given Earthwatch the opportunity to test established methods of community engagement, develop survey models and approaches and specifically test these approaches around a Tiny Forest project. 35 surveys were completed, 27 villagers attended the community drop in and activities were shared with the pre-school. Posters and flyers were circulated but it is hard to collect data on how many people saw or read these. If more time had been available and the drop-in session planned for a Saturday afternoon, not cancelled due to covid, we may have been able to engage some of the missing demographics and stakeholders.

Providing a meaningful mechanism for villagers to share concerns and raise questions as part of the community engagement process is vital if any future project is to be taken on by the village. Members of the Parish Council and a Hanson employee joined the community drop-in session and were able to hear first-hand the village's responses to a Tiny Forest.

Providing feedback to the community on the survey and results will be vital to ensure trust is established for any further activities. The outreach and engagement activities were designed to involve as many of the community as possible. Some members of the community were not well represented in the consultation process and this will need to be addressed in future activities. This should include families, young professionals and those who access the sports and youth clubs.

Final Conclusions

Key findings from this process

This project has provided a great opportunity to engage meaningfully with the village of Tytherington, use established methods of community engagement and consultation and provided a list of potential next steps and opportunities. Sites which are leased from Hanson to the Parish Council are valued and well used by the village. They provided spaces for recreation, walking and wildlife which are also used by visitors to the area.

Whilst the village selected their preferred site for a Tiny Forest, the overwhelming feeling was that there were other steps which could be taken to mitigate the loss of trees through ash die back, which wouldn't impact on the sites which are already well used.

The most popular site chosen (Site D: Track side Tytherington Hill) still has some challenges associated with it and a soil sample and assessment would still need to be completed as part of the Tiny Forest site selection process.

Villagers were very positive about taking steps to improve the biodiversity in the village and were able to make suggestions which have been passed on to the Parish Council. There was also interest in better understanding the biodiversity present in the village and in applying some of Earthwatch's Citizen Science techniques and methods at established wildlife sites. There was a lot of interest in ensuring that other wildlife sites were maintained or improved.

There was a general feeling that whilst Tiny Forests were a great concept, the village location of Tytherington was perhaps not the most suitable and suggestions were made about locating a forest in nearby Thornbury or on other sites in the village, including areas closer to new housing developments. A next step could be approaching one of the Thornbury schools, particularly one where children from the village attend, as a potential Tiny Forest location.

The survey and engagement activities involved 10% of the village. Future community work needs to ensure that the remaining 90% are engaged in a meaningful way. Anecdotally, at the community drop-in session, there was concern that the village had become a commuter village, that few of those moving into the village were volunteering and engaging with existing projects (eg the village shop) and that it was left to the same villagers to support local initiatives. There was a desire therefore for projects to be developed which could be supported by organisations like Earthwatch. Initiatives like a Tiny Forest would give extra support and focus to those who already volunteer and could help with increasing the number and variety of those involved.

Nearly 75% of those who responded to the survey have lived in the village for more than 10 years (many of these over 20 years). They are proud and protective of their home. Much could be done to capture the stories of the proposed sites and how the village has been shaped and changed by the quarry.