

Come Outside! Case study

Alternative ways of working with wood that get a group outside, no matter what the weather

Area

Wrexham

The group

Green Woodworking
Group

Supported by

Caia Park Partnership

Start date

February 2015

Total participants

34

Number of sessions

42

Session types

Green woodworking

ABOUT THE GROUP

The Green Woodworking Group was established as part of the wood workshop at Caia Park Partnership. The workshop had an existing group that met on a Wednesday morning and did carving activities, but not using green wood which is cheaper and more available.

There was a lead for the carving but he took a break after Christmas 2014 and there was a gap in the activities the group could get involved with.

Most of the group are older and require some kind of support in their lives. They enjoy being in the woodshop and working with wood and the session provides some regular structure in their lives.

COME OUTSIDE! ACTIVITIES

Come Outside! supported the group in several ways. It was set up to be sustainable from day one. The first few weeks the group focused on making the green woodworking tools they would need. This included a lathe.

The first session also saw the Regional Coordinator showcase how quick it was to work with green wood and he started to make legs for milk stools as well as showing the group how to make spoons and spatulas.

The group now has an outdoor area dedicated to green wood working. It is covered by a Tarpaulin meaning they are able to use the tools outdoors, no matter what the weather.

The Regional Coordinator has been attending weekly to help build the skills and confidence of the group and to teach them new tools and techniques. Everyone involved in the group works at their own pace and is able to work on their own projects.



What the participants said

“The sessions are definitely different with Doug. To be honest I am not very good at carving. With this you just have to be sensible. I love the work”

“Doug is a very good teacher. I have no complaints at all”

“I’ve just started making a spoon. I’m making it for my grandson as he likes cooking”

“I don’t like it when it is cold but I have my coat”

“It is very interesting as he is using methods that have been used for hundreds of years so it is really interesting”

“It is a different set of skills we are learning working with green wood. When your using wood for carving it has to be seasoned and at my age it means you have to buy it”

“It’s been really good to develop our skills”

“We have been out in the fresh air more”

“It’s the speed of it that is making the difference”

“Doug is a great guy. He is one in a million. Doesn’t put any pressure on you at all”

The wood shop does produce things for sale into the wider community and given time the Green Woodworking group will contribute to this. They are already making legs that will be used on milk stools that will be sold.

The sessions will continue long after the Regional Coordinator input ends. They have the tools and equipment they need to work with green wood and the Regional Coordinator has equipped them with the skills they need. The group works together and they are happy to help each other with the different tools and tasks. If new people join the group they will be given the same support to help them make things from green wood.

IMPACT ON THE GROUP

The impact on the group has been quite subtle. They were already engaged in carving and moving to green wood working has provided them with a new set of skills and a new way of working.

The group are more enthusiastic about the work as green woodworking requires a different set of skills. At the early stages of making something it is easier to do and requires less precision, although the precision ‘kicks in’ the closer you get to the piece being completed.

Because the work is easier to start and to develop it means they can produce more within the same time frame. Everyone looks forward to the sessions and all really rate Doug as a fantastic teacher.

Come Outside! is playing a valuable role in the group’s sustainability. When the original carving sessions stopped after Christmas 2014 it was unclear what the group would focus on. The group really values the regular session they have together and it would be a loss to them as individuals and as a group if the sessions came to an end. It is a relaxed, informal group but provides structure to people who have difficulties in their lives.

What the organisation said

“Little Mo loves doing it – it’s therapeutic”

“Everyone looks forward to the sessions”

“Having Doug here every week is a godsend”

“You get the reward from this – you see the results with a few hours”

“I certainly didn’t expect it take off the way it has”

“you get enjoyment out of it. Everything is relaxed. Look at these people. That is the winner for me”

“They are getting confidence from doing the activities”

Come Outside! have provided the group with a new set of skills. This means regardless of what happens with the carving, they have a set of skills they can use to work with wood and to make things the wood shop can potentially sell. They are also making things for themselves and their wider families.

In addition to improved skills, Come Outside! have also been able to connect the group to the Natural Resources Wales’ foresters who have been able to provide free timber for their activities. Reducing the cost of what they do was a big incentive for the group to engage in the programme, and the subsequent reduction in the cost of obtaining raw materials has had a big impact on the group’s sustainability.

March 2016

