

Come Outside! Case study

Bringing communities together to get outdoors

Rhyl, Denbighshire

The group

Roundhouse Project

Supported by

North Denbighshire
Communities First Cluster

Start date

April 2014

Total participants

145

Number of sessions

39

Session types

Site visits, multi-activity
days, woodland
management, self-build

ABOUT THE GROUP

Come Outside! has been working closely with North Denbighshire Communities First, Rhyl Adventure Playground Association (RAPA) and North Wales Wildlife Trust to support projects that get people, both young and old, outside.

The focus of the group was to build a Roundhouse on Denbighshire Countryside Service land. Glen Y Morfa is an old tip covering 86 acres adjacent to some of the most deprived communities in Wales. The Countryside Service has been working for a number of years to get more people using the site. When they first started working on the site it was used by a lot of illegal motorbikes and people wouldn't come and use it.

The Countryside Service have already done a substantial amount of work on the site, including creating a Mountain Bike and road track. This has led to more people using the site.

However, it is a big and complex site and the Roundhouse project is the next phase of bringing more of the site back into use and getting more of the community to use it.

The project is being led by the North Wales Wildlife Trust who have received funding through the Co-op and are the project managers for the delivery. As well as building the Roundhouse they are also developing the biodiversity of the site including tree planting. This is part of the commitment Denbighshire Countryside Service have for the site, in that all developments will lead to an increase in biodiversity, rather than reducing it.

The ambition is the Roundhouse will be the first of many. It will act as a pilot for other Roundhouses in the area that will be managed by the community.



What the support organisations said

“Come Outside has been key to making this project happen. They have provided a range of activities on days like to day to help us engage the community”

“The value of getting people outside is massive. It is helping them engage with the environment in which they live. Kids have stopped playing outdoors and this helps address that”

“This project is all about community cohesion – it is getting people working with people they didn’t know, different ages and breaking down pre-conceptions”

“By encouraging more positive use we can push some of the bad stuff away and provide people in West Rhyl with a clean safe place to visit”

What the participants (and their parents) said

“Rhyl’s quite boring and being part of this gives you something to do”

“He’d just be running around on the streets if he wasn’t here”

“We’ve learned a lot already like how to use the tools”

“I love being outdoors and it helps keep us out of trouble”

The Roundhouse projects aim to be intergenerational and as well as providing opportunities for young people to be outdoors, they will also provide a forum for older people and younger people to work together helping to break down barriers and remove preconceptions about each other.

COME OUTSIDE! ACTIVITIES

Come Outside! has been an integral part of the project’s development. In late 2014 they arranged for a group of young people to visit an existing Roundhouse development in North Wales organised by Felin Uchaf. This helped act as an inspiration for the project and helped get young people enthused about the opportunities of the Roundhouse project.

As well as this early visit to help inspire the group, Come Outside! arranged a series of fun days. These took place in February and April 2015. They were designed to engage the community in outdoor activities. This included geocaching, Bushcraft skills, hedge planting and crafts. The most popular activity was the Bushcraft skills, which included giving the young people an opportunity to eat chocolate biscuits and marshmallows warmed on an open fire!

Once funding for the Roundhouse project was in place, Come Outside! then supported the launch day. This saw around 80 people visit the site to take part in a wide range of activities, including the Opal scientific survey. It also provided an opportunity for people to find out about the history of the site and how the project has developed.

Come Outside! then supported the build phase of the Roundhouse. The project and site development is ongoing but Come Outside! played a key role in helping the site development happen and providing a range of outdoor activities to engage the wider community.

“We don’t want anyone to wreck it – when we have built things before people have ruined it”

“If there is nothing to do we are out finding something to do and that ends up with us getting into trouble – doing this through the summer holidays will keep us busy”

“We will learn how to operate as a team and help each other”

“Doing things like this gets them off the streets and making new friends as well as using skills”

“It gets the kids involved in productive stuff”

“I love bushcraft it is my favourite thing”

“We saw the event advertised and came along – we have come to the others as it gives them activities and gets them to learn stuff as well as being outdoors”

“This kind of activity is a bit different. It is connecting people to their natural resources”

IMPACT ON THE GROUP

The impact on the group has happened as part of the wider work taking place through the Communities First and RAPA teams.

As a team they have been engaging with the community and in particular some of the young people who have a local ‘reputation’. This project is giving them something positive to engage with. As it ran over the summer it helped give them things to do and positive activities when they could have been getting into trouble.

For the families living in West Rhyl having this project to coalesce around has provided them with regular opportunities to get their younger children outdoors. The weather, on the days when the sessions have taken place has been poor, but the sessions are still busy with families attending to get the kids outdoors and to give them something positive to do.

The overall impact has been to provide families with more opportunities to get outdoors and to take part in activities they otherwise would not have had the opportunity to. The sessions provide a safe and structured environment helping to keep young people engaged in positive activities and ‘off the street’.

IMPACT ON THE ORGANISATION

Working with the Come Outside! Regional Coordinators has been a substantial benefit to the Roundhouses project. It has provided a range of skills and expertise that otherwise would have been missing from the team.

In particular they have been able to provide the activities that have been so appealing to the local community to get involved and become engaged with the project. The bushcraft skills and woodland crafts have been appealing to the younger people who have attended the events.

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