



MEC NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2023



Y5 FROM THORNTREE ACADEMY ENJOYING A FOREST SCHOOL SESSION IN OUR FOREST SCHOOL AREA WITH LEWIS WHITEWOOD (CENTRE) OVERSEEING MARSHMALLOW TOASTING

FOREST SCHOOLS INSPIRING THE NEW GENERATION

Our Forest Schools team have worked diligently with Y5 from Thorntree Academy over the past month or so, and they have loved having the team come to work with them for Forest Schools this year! Not only have our Forest Schools team visited them and worked on outdoor activities, but we've also hosted them in our own little copse too: They've done everything from toasting marshmallows to rescuing an injured hedgehog!

We would also like to introduce a new member of the Forest Schools team as Rebecca 'Becky' Robson has joined onto the team, moving over from the Active Travel team!

CONNECTING AND LEARNING WITH HEALTH CHAMPIONS

We attended the Health Champions Connecting and Learning Event, held at Middlesbrough Town Hall, on 6th June, with a number of organisations in attendance alongside guest speakers. It allowed us to showcase our various projects, including Affordable Warmth and Eco Shops, to various organisations across the area!

We were happy to attend and show what we do to a huge range of organisations, and to enjoy rubbing shoulders with some hard-working people!



CHRISTINE FEARON, LEFT, AND DAVE SCRIVEN, RIGHT, IN ATTENDANCE AT THE HEALTH CHAMPIONS CONNECTING AND LEARNING EVENT

A DAY IN WESTMINSTER FOR JOE DUNNE

On June 14th at the Sustainable Food Places conference in London, Middlesbrough Food Partnership Co-ordinator Joe Dunne met up with our local MP Andy McDonald MP. The conference was a call for a food bill in every nation, a food partnership in every area and government investment for healthy communities and a good food economy! Andy McDonald talked about local communities needing to be central to developing and delivering the healthy, sustainable and accessible food initiatives to tackle food system issues which, of course, we agree with wholeheartedly.

It was a fantastic event, and we're glad Joe was there to represent MEC, our values, and the values and hard work of the Middlesbrough Food Partnership!

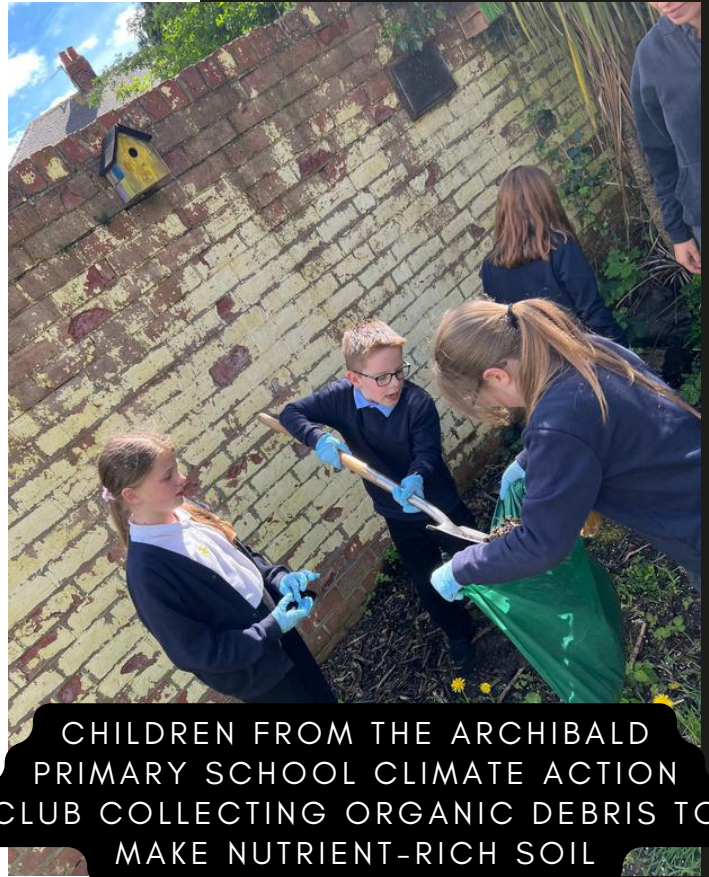


MIDDLESBROUGH FOOD PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR JOE DUNNE, LEFT, WITH LOCAL MP ANDY MCDONALD, RIGHT, AT THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLACES CONFERENCE.

CLUBBING TOGETHER FOR CLIMATE ACTION AT ARCHIBALD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Climate Action Middlesbrough have been working diligently with the wonderful children at Archibald Primary School and their Climate Action Club session: The club covers various actions to get out and about with nature and to encourage climate-friendly living. A recent session focused on composting and the best way to learn about composting is, of course, to roll those sleeves up and get stuck in with composting!

The climate action heroes collected organic debris (such as old leaves and dirt) and mixed this with old newspaper, fruit and veg peels, and rainwater to make their very own soil-arium, and to create a mixture of organic matter that will turn into a nutrient-rich soil in about 12 weeks: Perfect for making plants grow big and healthy! And even better: It's something they'd be able to do at home as well! Well done to the Climate Action Club for getting stuck in and making their own compost, and helping make the planet that little bit greener!



CHILDREN FROM THE ARCHIBALD PRIMARY SCHOOL CLIMATE ACTION CLUB COLLECTING ORGANIC DEBRIS TO MAKE NUTRIENT-RICH SOIL

BRIGHT UNIFORMS FOR A BRIGHT TEAM

Our Active Travel team recently received a new uniform just in time for Summer.

Clothing like this isn't a mere fashion statement, but has a double function especially for this team: For one, as you can tell by the picture to the left, it keeps them highly visible to road users, which is paramount when teaching children to cross the road! Secondly, it is especially useful during the Summer when something lighter is needed for the warmer weather, and is certainly better for this purpose than hi-vis jackets and vests!

If you see them out and about (You can't miss them now), give them a wave and remember, when crossing the road: Stop, Look, Listen, Think!



OUR ACTIVE TRAVEL TEAM (LEFT TO RIGHT: DAN GILL, RACHAEL PROUD, CONNOR MULLAN, JAMES WALTON AND JULIE BROWN) IN THEIR NEW UNIFORMS!

ROOTED IN NATURE GROWS TOGETHER

A couple of lovely photos from the Rooted in Nature gardening activity held at Newham Farm yesterday: Things are growing well, and the potatoes are certainly doing well (As you can see in the photo), with two regular participants enjoying the planting and socialising aspects of the activity!

This activity provides the service users with growing skills, as well as exercise from tending the plants, and is a great, simple way to get out, about and connected with nature!



TWO SERVICE USERS FROM ROOTED IN NATURE TENDING TO THEIR HOMEGROWN POTATOES



ROOTED IN NATURE ENGAGEMENT OFFICER PAUL ROBINSON, LEFT, WITH A SERVICE USER UNDERTAKING MEASUREMENT OF EELS AT THE TEES BARRAGE!

The Rooted in Nature project has also seen service users attend regular external events, including eel counting and walks around the Tees Barrage, as well as walks around Ormesby Hall and Stewart Park, to name just a few!

One of the highlights of the week for the service users and for Paul, our Rooted in Nature Engagement Officer, is the eel counting at Tees Barrage, which is done at the invitation of Jackie at the River & Canal Trust: A sample size of eels is dredged up from the waterways, and are then measured by a sample of volunteers as a means of checking the health of the eel population! This is often followed by a walk around the barrage, or litter picking around the barrage, both of which make for entertaining exercise!

If you're interested in Rooted in Nature, helmed by [Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind](https://www.middlesbroughandstocktonmind.org.uk) in partnership with various organisations including ourselves, you can find out more on Mind's website at <https://www.middlesbroughandstocktonmind.org.uk/how-we-can-support-you/our-services/rooted-in-nature>



DAVE SCRIVEN, ON THE FAR RIGHT, PICTURED WITH THE NHS PRE-NATAL TEAM AS WELL AS STAFF FROM TEES VALLEY WILDLIFE TRUSTS, SHOWING OFF THEIR WALK LEADER CERTIFICATION.

RAMBLERS ON THE MOVE

Dave Scriven, a man of many talents, also hosts Ramblers Wellbeing Walk Leader Training, ran at MEC. Over the past couple of months, Dave has delivered training to a number of staff from various organisations including the NHS Pre-Natal Team, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, You've Got This!, Age UK Teesside and many others.

This walk training covers how to plan and carry out safe walks to encourage those who do little or no walking at present to start walking, which is beneficial their physical and mental wellbeing and also helps increase their social contact. To top off the sessions, practice walks are usually held in the local area, with recent practice taking place in Acklam and around Hemlington Lake.

For those interested in running their own walks, Dave regularly holds Walk Leader Training here at MEC: To book your space, contact Dave on david.scriven@mencity.org.uk!



CONTRACTORS FROM STORY CONTRACTING WORKING ON THE BRAND NEW COMPOST TOILET, HERE ON THE GROUNDS OF MIDDLESBROUGH ENVIRONMENT CITY OFFICES

BOOTS ON THE GROUND WITH STORY CONTRACTING

A very productive morning was had when 10 volunteers from Story Contracting Ltd joined MEC's Joe Dunne to put together a compost toilet on site. In the last couple of years, Story Contracting had provided much needed supported to commUNITY Action projects at Jellystone Park and Friends of Arty Path, and they provided their expertise and know-how once more to help construct the unit for a compost toilet on the grounds of our offices. In the hot May sun, the team drew on their engineering background to work out how the frame and cladding went together, and also did some landscaping around the toilet.

Despite 4 hours of work, the job is not yet finished, and we are hoping Story Contracting can come back and help us finish it off: Once finished, we will have a fully functioning compost toilet for other projects to use!

We would also like to thank Francis, who regularly works on the site, for his help in getting the area ready.



ANOTHER WELL ATTENDED CLIMATE ACTION FORUM FROM MAY, WITH GUEST SPEAKER AND BEEKEEPER JIM TURNBULL ADDRESSING THE ROOM

BUZZING IN THE CLIMATE ACTION FORUM

May was a great month for Climate Action Middlesbrough, as they celebrated their 20th Climate Forum with local beekeeper Jim Turnbull, providing a presentation on bees and beekeeping. There was also some amazing refreshments, including a flapjack made with local honey and a cake made with local rhubarb! It was an entertaining talk for sure:

Thank you to all those who attended, and to Jim for the talk!

We have recently held our June forum, with the next forum on July 12th with guest speaker Paul Bamber from Flatts Lane Country Park.

STAFF FAREWELLS

Aurianna Najah - Climate Action Middlesbrough Project Officer

Kenneth Hiscock - Gardening Services

Tabby Michelin - Forest School Practitioner