

## **Report of the Health and Wellbeing Team Leader**

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### **Subject: Routes to Discovery Partnership Project**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

To provide members with a review of the work of the Roots to Discovery Project and how present and planned activity in this area is being developed to meet the needs of project participants.

#### **2. Project Overview**

Routes to Discovery is a people led wellbeing project that connects people to nature in the local area helping the individual, community and natural environment. The project is run in partnership with Mind Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.



*Participants learn about birds of prey and owl flying at the Birds of Prey Centre Carmarthen.*

#### **3. Project Goals**

- Enhance Wellbeing- through meaningful connection with nature.
- Empower communities through people-led and collaborative approach
- Deliver diverse, accessible nature-based activities, including guided walks of varying difficulty, creative workshops, and community volunteering such as conservation, gardening, litter-picking).
- Lower accessibility barriers.
- Sustain long-term community and volunteer engagement.

#### **4. Target Audience**

- Young carers.
- Young people.
- Unpaid carers.
- People whose mobility reduces opportunities for them to benefit from the outdoors.
- People who identify as having poor mental health.
- Previous participants from the Roots for Recovery project have joined the team as mentors and supporters so they continue to benefit from the project and give back to others.

#### **5. Team/Resources**

- The project can access PCNPA, Mind and local community resources.
- The project is delivered by 4 officers over varying hours based in both PCNPA and Mind staff teams.
- The team offers sessions across Pembrokeshire either as the lead group or joining other established groups, for example young carers.

#### **6. Progress to date**

- The project commenced on 1 August 2025.
- Delivery commenced immediately with established groups as well as supporting longer-term participants with the project transition.
- The project was launched to the public in September 2025.
- Volunteer mentors have logged 290 hours of their time to date.
- 41 sessions have been offered, a mix of walks, practical tasks, litter picks and activities or a combination. These include coastal exploration, work in primary schools to improve their outdoor learning areas and visits to outdoor attractions such as an alpaca farm and bird of prey centre.
- The sessions to date have offered opportunities to people with barriers due to mental health, physical disability and carers duties.
- 5 sessions have had to be cancelled due to weather warnings.
- The project has reached on average 80 individuals a month, creating accessible and inclusive opportunities for participants to explore and learn new practical conservation skills.
- Project staff work with outside organisations to develop relationships and create new opportunities for participants based on participant feedback in sessions

Early results show that the project is making a difference, building trust, and engaging the right target audience.

## NOVEMBER 2025 – MAY 2026



*Session locations*

### **7. Communications**

The project communication plan is designed to be flexible and inclusive, ensuring accessibility for a wide range of audiences, including professionals, community members, and individuals with varying needs, capacities, and interests. The team has recently received training in accessible audio communications.



*Participants preparing the outdoor accessible garden at Tenby Primary School for the new season*

The Routes to Discovery Facebook page run by Mind: [Facebook](#), continues to have a strong following, the staff team when talking to new participants have found that people often follow the Facebook page and start interacting prior to attendance, so this is a key marketing tool. Statistics over the last 90 days show posts have received over 50,000 views, with 13,000 viewers interacting. We have 1686 followers to date and around 60% of those viewing are non-followers.

The project continues to attract positive local press and media coverage.



*The Children and Young People Group listening to local storyteller Phil Okwedy as part of their winter craft session and lantern making at Oriol y Parc*

## **8. Participant Feedback**

“Thank you for letting me be a part of this and making me feel so welcome! So interesting and inspiring! Look forward to many more adventures with this lovely group!” Feb 2026

“Thanks for the chat today. I think everyone tries to get me talking... it’s a hard job I know because I am quite a solitary person. I do appreciate everything you guys do for me” Jan 2026

“I’m so glad you got me involved in Routes, it has changed my life so much and has giving me more confidence and amazing opportunities and meet so many lovely people.” Jan 2026

“I feel confident that the support I need will be there when I go on these walks, for me and for my mum with our walkers (wheeled walking frames). The walks are suitable and not too hard for me, I look forward to going, it’s nice to meet new people and have company. I get low with depression, and it helps to have something else to focus on, the depression lifts with company and fresh air”

Children and Young People event group feedback:

Person 1 – “I love the outdoor trips, being outside and just taking a break from everything makes me feel lighter”.

Person 2 – “Thanks for today, I didn’t realise how much a walk and some fresh air could clear my head until now”.

Person 3 – “Just want to say thanks for today, honestly helped me so much, when is the next one?!!!”

Person 4 – “Thank you for a brilliant day, I would do this every day if I could.”



*Children and Young People's group feedback session*

## **9. Professional Feedback**

"The Routes to Discovery project have been incredibly important and beneficial for the CYP (children and young people) I support. Many of these young people have previously found socialising to be a significant barrier, but the project has provided meaning for them with new opportunities to bond, make friends, and participate in group activities in a welcoming environment. As a result, there have been marked improvements in their confidence and mental wellbeing, with many now choosing to spend more time outdoors independently, something that was rarely seen before, even if not always frequent, it is a meaningful change. I've witnessed firsthand the excitement and sense of anticipation among the CYP when these trips are announced, many of whom have never had the chance to visit woodlands or beaches before. For several participants, these experiences have been truly life changing. The power of nature, alongside the sense of community fostered by the project, has supported better mental health outcomes, including reduced anxiety and increased happiness while empowering young people to take steps towards social connection and personal growth. Being part of Routes to Discovery has undoubtedly helped remove barriers and created lasting, positive impacts in the lives of the CYP involved." *Mind Children and Young People Coordinator*



*A rainy day walk at Rosebush*



*One of the History sessions offered by PCNPA Community Archaeologist*

## **10. Overview of progress against schedule**

After some initial issues with project branding a local artist has been commissioned to deliver some creative sessions to the group as participation and collaborative exercise prior to designing the project brand, this is scheduled for May with a June delivery.

Winter has been a difficult period for project participants and has impacted on their health and wellbeing. Project staff have provided check ins with individuals and worked with the wider Mind support team and this approach seems to have helped those at risk of isolation and ill-health.

Poor weather has also hampered the delivery of activities and identifying a wet weather base is a priority for the project team.

Young carers & young people activities take place monthly, and other regular activity groups meet weekly. A relationship has been established with the new young carers' provider Media Academy Cymru from April 2026.

So far, much of the focus of the project has been around the larger towns in the county but the team have recognised a need for more project participation and activity in North Pembrokeshire which will be a focus over the coming months.

## **11. Financial considerations**

The project grant from the National Lottery Community Fund is £343,584 over 3 years with PCNPA contributing £22,000 per year as matched funding for project co-ordination and administration.

There is some underspend against this budget due to the transition from a leased diesel minibus to an Authority-owned electric minibus which has significantly reduced

costs. The Project lead will explore options to re-profile the budget with the National Lottery Community Fund.



*Participants working on Tenby Cottage Hospital gardens / Alpaca education and walking session*

## **12. Risk considerations**

The Routes to Discovery Project relies on external funding to support its activity. The project works collaboratively with many community organisations and public sector settings around Pembrokeshire and addresses key issues of health and wellbeing which are a priority for the Public Service Board and have an impact across communities in Pembrokeshire. Sustaining this impact in the long term in an increasingly competitive grant funding climate will be a challenge for the Authority.

## **13. Compliance**

The project supports the NPA's duty to 'foster the social and economic well-being of local communities' and the National Park Authority's Corporate Wellbeing Objectives relating to Connection and Communities. The project also supports PCNPA's commitments with regard to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the PSB's Wellbeing Plan for Pembrokeshire.

## **14. Human Rights/Equality issues**

The Routes to Discovery Project activity addresses key equality issues in terms of access to the natural heritage of Wales and contributes to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's own Equality Plan.

## **15. Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal**

The project has no discernible negative impact on biodiversity in the National Park. The activity programmes contribute to increased awareness of biodiversity in Pembrokeshire (amongst new audiences) and directly supports nature recovery through practical conservation work.

## **16. Welsh Language statement**

Project communications are fully bilingual, and the team can deliver Welsh Language activities when required.

## **Recommendation**

Receive the report and note for future consideration.

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