

South Shropshire Youth Forum

Youth Forum Rangers project 2025/26



What we said we'd deliver in 2025/26

We will recruit up to 20 young people (aged 11-18) within the south east of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape area. Delivery of 6 natural heritage based activities that could include:

- Further development of Novers Wood (home of the Youth Forum Rangers group). . Potential for wild camping, bushcraft, tree planting, coppicing, improving access, and green wood working.
- Potential to successfully work with Shropshire Council Rights of Way team to identify areas that need better access or improvements and do practical work.
- Continue supporting the woodland restoration project at Wild About Westhope.
- Exploration of the landscape through walking (including night walks).
- A core group of young people involved in the Young Rangers will help to design the programme.

Recruitment will be done through our existing networks and we will advertise online through Social Media. All activities provided will be FREE of charge.

What happened?

We delivered 6 full activity days including:

In 2025, we delivered 4 days in the Novers woodland managed by Titterstone Clee Heritage Trust (TCHT).
1 day on the Onny meadows at the Shropshire Hills Discovery centre with the Muslim Youth group.

An additional day was delivered during February half term, 2026. A group of 12 young people did some coppicing and built a frame for the new Mesolithic hut at the Novers.

25 young people, aged between 9-17 participated on the project. 9 young people represented the Muslim community, and a total of 8 females participated (32% of the total). We had 6 young people attend multiple days.

Summary of activities included:

Bushcraft – tracking games. This took place on the Onny meadows at the start of the school summer holidays with the Muslim Youth group. Activities included looking at different kinds of wild camping gear including setting up a hammock/tarp camp. We also did tracking games using natural items to mark routes, while others had to follow them.

Preparation of woodland camp – Prior to the night camp at the Novers woodland we had a small group help prepare the ground and the area in preparation. We had agreed to help maintain the lower section of public footpath in the Novers (by the camp area), and so we spent some time clearing the pathway of small branches, and tons of bramble.

2 day/1 night wild camp experience including night walk – we met up in the early afternoon and set up the equipment necessary for a wild camp in the woods. Foraging and preparing wood we then built up a fire to cook a vegetable stew. When it was dark we went on a night walk for a couple of hours. We had some night vision goggles, after exploring the woods for short while we ended up walking down to Hope Bagot church to explore the surrounding countryside and church yard at night. We didn't see much wild life apart bats in the Novers tunnel, and lots of sheep!

Footpath clearance and installation of waymarks on public footpath in Novers woodland –We had arranged to install waymark posts and work on clearing the pathway of fallen branches and brambles. Posts were dropped off by Shropshire Council public rights of way team. We found a sheep in the woodland, and after speaking to the woods owners we tried to 'shepherd' the sheep out to the fields. Quite a challenge and a good teambuilding exercise!

Coppicing and building frame for Mesolithic hut. Based on discussions with young people over the Summer we decided to try and spend time rebuilding a base in the Novers, starting with rebuilding the Mesolithic hut, which would be ideal for sleeping in and using as a base. We coppicing a lot of hazel and also had to clear the camp area with fallen branches.

Proposing a way forward

It's been quite a challenge getting activities organised and enough young people recruited onto some of the events. Summer 2025 was particularly challenging, the wild camp had more young people signed up to it but in the end we had 3 attend. The camp itself

was a success, and the young people loved it. Feedback from the parents was also pleasing. One parent in particular was delighted at how the activity was run and was perfect for her child who suffers from working in large groups. Possibly one of the reasons for struggling to find enough interest at times is the lack of activity we can put on during the year, we will aim to try and find more resources so we can offer more sessions throughout the year.

We feel we need to develop stronger links to existing groups, including local schools. We have approached Clee Hill Primary, with focus on getting some year 6's interested in what we do locally. They seem keen to get us into school to talk to their pupils.

Developing the camp area is also a priority. We need to develop a sense of place and have a base to operate from. Young people are also keen to help reconstruct the Mesolithic camp area. We have started to build the frame which we can add to and cover over the warmer months. It seems that working in this area and developing it has captured the imagination of young people. Our last session was oversubscribed. There is so much potential at that camp area, including bushcraft, learning about history, managing the woodlands, while developing practical skills and knowledge.

The Muslim youth group are keen to get involved with the Young R programme so we shall continue to try and develop activities with them.

Pictures L to R – bushcraft day with the Muslim youth group, footpath maintenance at the Novers, wild camp in the summer



**Installing a frame for the
Mesolithic hut.**



**Coppicing hazel for
the build.**

