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# Project Rejuvenate

Evaluating pilots for heritage and archaeology-led wellbeing programmes for young people

Leigh Chalmers, Linda Monckton, Annie Partridge, Andrew Richardson, Chloe Tayali, Paul Vitty and Ruth Yoxon



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**Front cover image:** Day 1 of test pit digs at Coombe Bissett Down. Analysing a find.  
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## Summary

Rejuvenate is the culmination of four years' work looking at how Historic England might work collaboratively with other organisations to use heritage and archaeology as a tool for building self-determination and resilience in vulnerable young people. Within Historic England, the project brings together the expertise of the Head of Wellbeing and Heritage and the Head of Heritage Crime.

A feasibility stage was undertaken in 2021 followed by a development year of maintain partnerships and seeking funding. The two parallel pilot projects were carried out in 2023.

The pilot project takes the form of a working partnership between archaeological and heritage organisations alongside a state secondary school in Wiltshire and the youth justice team in Kent. Together we worked to create interventions that will help young people and children who are encountering significant barriers to reaching their full potential. The goal of the project is to expand the capacity of vulnerable young people to appreciate and realise their own potential where it is suppressed by circumstance or self-belief.

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## Archive location

Historic England Archive, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EH

## Date of project

The pilot of Project Rejuvenate commenced in February 2023 and was completed in September 2023. The activity programme at the heart of the Kent pilot project took place on eight Wednesdays between 10th May and 28th June 2023. This report was written in August to September 2023 and compiled and edited between June and September 2024.

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## Glossary and Abbreviations

| <b>Abbreviation</b> | <b>Full name</b>   |
|---------------------|--|
| A, B, C             | Anonymous identifiers for participating young people in Kent pilot     |
| AP                  | Achievement Points   |
| AONB                | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty                                     |
| BP                  | Behaviour Points   |
| HE                  | Historic England   |
| IHCIC               | Isle Heritage CIC  |
| KYJT                | Kent Youth Justice Team  |
| NT                  | National Trust   |
| SJCS                | St Joseph's Catholic School Salisbury                                  |
| SLT                 | Senior Leadership Team   |
| WA                  | Wessex Archaeology   |
| WA Project          | Project Rejuvenate: Wiltshire  |
| WCCP                | White Cliffs Countryside Partnership                                   |
| WWT                 | Wiltshire Wildlife Trust   |
| YP                  | Young person from the cohort of either the Kent or the Wiltshire pilot |

# Part 1: Background and context

By Chloe Tayali, Linda Monckton and Paul Vitty

## Introduction

Across heritage and wellbeing interventions there remains limited research that considers what programme characteristics are needed to ensure specific social outcomes.

Rejuvenate Stage Four and this document seek to provide evidence and analysis of how heritage-led activities can be delivered as a programme to achieve a desired positive impact in the lives of children and young people struggling with engagement with education or vulnerable to the influences of crime.

This report is part of a larger document that analyses the impacts of the Rejuvenate pilot projects. It acts as an introduction to the evaluation reports written by the two pilot delivery partners and supplements the [2021 feasibility report](#) in giving them context. It then reviews the pilots' delivery to consider the next stage for Rejuvenate's development.

## Project Rejuvenate

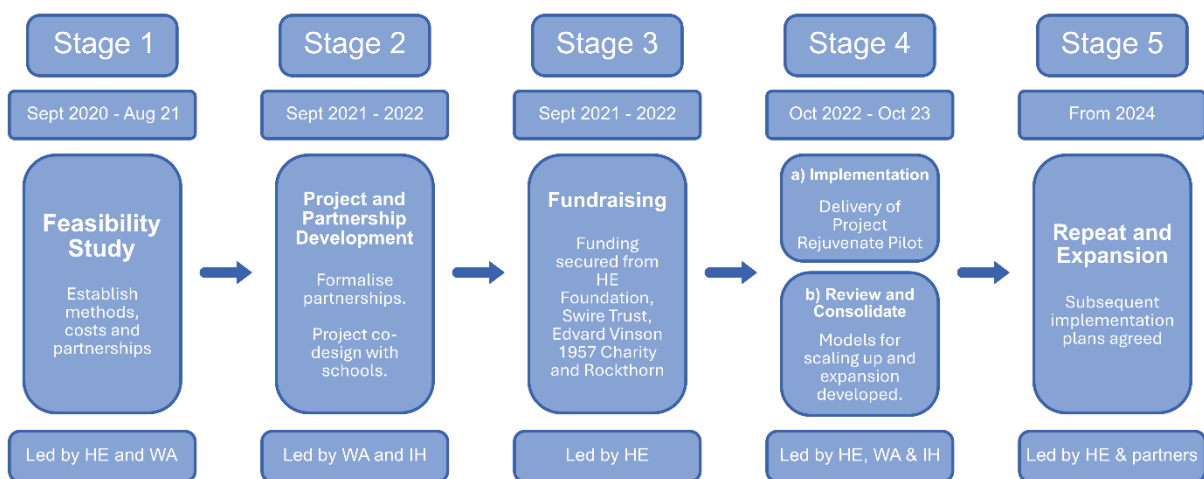
Rejuvenate is the culmination of four years' work looking at how Historic England might work collaboratively with other organisations to use heritage and archaeology as a tool for building self-determination and resilience in vulnerable young people. Within Historic England, the project brings together the expertise of the Head of Wellbeing and Heritage and the Head of Heritage Crime.

The pilot project takes the form of a working partnership between archaeological and heritage organisations alongside a state secondary school in Wiltshire and the youth justice team in Kent. Together we worked to create interventions that will help young people and children who are encountering significant barriers to reaching their full potential. The goal of the project is to expand the capacity of vulnerable young people to appreciate and realise their own potential where it is suppressed by circumstance or self-belief.

The root causes of individual children's disengagement from school or of an increase in their vulnerability to crime can be both diverse and complex. Rejuvenate, at this stage, does not seek to address the root causes of the individual disengagements but instead to provide a programme focused on their emotional wellbeing. Our intention is to provide an alternative environment from school and new experiences that reinvigorate children's emotional wellbeing.

## Project timeline

The project began with detailed feasibility and planning (Stage One, 2019-20) which looked at self-determination theory and its components in order to address some of the causal factors behind young offending and to promote wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by a development year in each location (Stage Two, 2021-22). The development year tested out logistics and practicalities, enabled feedback from participants, and maintained and developed local partnerships and enabled external fund raising to take place (Stage Three). The learnings from those projects fed directly into the details for the planning and delivery for the current and first full year pilot (Stage Four, 2023).



**Figure 1:** The 5 stage delivery plan for Rejuvenate.

## Project aims

Rejuvenate brings together the expertise of Historic England’s Heritage Crime and Wellbeing teams to explore if history and heritage inspired activities can reduce the risk factors to reoffending.

The 2023 pilot acted as a proof of concept of an intervention that combines practical, physical and intellectually engaging activities whilst utilising established social care best practise in enhancing wellbeing, cognitive and emotional development.

Prior to Stage Four, the project acknowledged that there was limited data and research on programmes utilising heritage’s ability to have a positive impact on children’s wellbeing and skill development. Numerous reports have shown the potential positive impact of

<sup>1</sup> Wessex Archaeology (2021) *Project Rejuvenate Feasibility Report*

access to heritage<sup>2</sup>, culture<sup>3</sup> and the natural environment<sup>4</sup> but there remains a lack of evidence on how to deliver such interventions.

As such, the pilot also sought to establish research and evidence on how heritage-based activities can be a conduit for achieving positive change in children's lives. To achieve this, observation of the children's conduct was built into the project, as well as any changes in their behaviour and engagement beyond the project. There were clear evaluation aims and an interim report targeted recognised metrics for evaluating wellbeing and skills development.

As proof of concept, the pilot aimed to establish a model for heritage and wellbeing intervention that moves beyond giving children a temporary positive exposure to heritage. A programme following this model would make a sustainable positive impact upon the direction of the children's lives and their ability to manage their own emotional wellbeing. We believe that while a singular workshop or visit can have an inspirational impact, it doesn't provide the opportunity for self-discovery and skills development needed to overcome an established pattern of negative emotions or entrenched lack of self-belief.

Equally, though the project aims to be holistic and has a therapeutic element, it does not seek to address the root causes of any adverse childhood experiences. It seeks to empower the children to develop their self-belief, practical skills, and emotional skills to be able to reengage with school. The project aims to help them to overcome emotional barriers that may continue to exacerbate disengagement from education and potential vulnerability to crime.

## Pilot format

Stage Four delivered two parallel projects which collectively sought to pilot the most effective ways to improve the lives of vulnerable young people. Through the implementation of a heritage-themed participatory intervention, it had a particular view to enhancing life opportunities for those at risk of falling out of the mainstream school system and those at risk of or already involved with the criminal justice system. Both projects were carried out with an integrated team of professionals operating in local schools and local wildlife, nature, archaeological and heritage settings.

One pilot (with the Youth Justice team) lasted 8 weeks and the other (with the School) lasted 12. Across these sessions, participants visited local heritage sites and took part in archaeological and creative activities. These were designed to immerse the children in

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<sup>2</sup> University of Wolverhampton (2023) *Tackling Inequality & Other Opportunities for Public Policy*

<sup>3</sup> CASE (2015) *A review of the Social Impacts of Culture and Sport*

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government (2021) *Systematic literature review of nature-based Early Learning and Childcare on children's health, wellbeing and development*

their historical settings and build their capabilities. The two delivery organisations worked together to oversee evaluation and to ensure consistency across the two projects.

### The Kent pilot

In Spring 2023, Isle Heritage delivered an 8-week programme of heritage-based activities in partnership with the Kent Youth Justice team. The children were aged between 14 and 18 years old and attended as part of their reparations order by the court. Their attendance on this specific project was voluntary and their case workers attended alongside them.

### The Wessex pilot

Wessex Archaeology delivered a 12-week programme in partnership with St Joseph's School, Salisbury for children in Year 9. The school was responsible for the student selection process, choosing based on attendance (below 90%), known Special Education Needs, known mental health issues and pupil premium. The selection process was delivered by the school's Safeguarding and Welfare Officer and the Year 9 Director of Learning.

## Context for intervention

Rejuvenate aims to expand the capacity of vulnerable young people to appreciate their own potential where it is suppressed by circumstance or self-belief. In practice it is working to intervene with children that are justice-involved and with children who are disengaged from school. Both are national issues which lead to the disempowerment of young people and reduce their opportunities for reaching their own potential. Historic England aims to contribute to supporting the wellbeing of young people and mental health through its published *Wellbeing and Heritage Strategy (2022)*<sup>5</sup> and this project is an important step to reaching this goal. While originally focused on justice-involved children, feasibility showed the Rejuvenate programme to be equally applicable to children disengaged from school. Both pilots had the same intent of building capacity for the participants, but they were naturally implemented differently in response to participant needs, the skill bases of the partner organisations, and the local heritage of the selected locations.

## Theoretical Underpinning

### Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The impact of ACEs are significant on a child's life chances and their emotional wellbeing. "Aside from its immediate negative impact, early child maltreatment interrupts normal child development, especially the processes through which emotions are managed."<sup>6</sup> ACEs increase the likelihood that a child will disengage from school and become vulnerable to the influences of crime. Many children have such experiences, but there is evidence that "creative processes offer new perspectives, personalised options and choice"<sup>7</sup> that can enable children to overcome the negative impact of their experiences.

Professor Kam Bhui explains:<sup>8</sup>

"Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can refer to a range of experiences from verbal, sexual, or physical abuse; to neglect; substance misuse, or family mental illness. It can also include bullying, poverty, racism, traumatic losses, food shortages, harsh experiences in care, poor academic performance, and living in unsafe environments.

"By the age of eight, 7 in 10 children report at least one such experience. These can have significant impacts on children's lives, even reducing life expectancy by up to 20 years and causing social, emotional, and cognitive impairment, risky behaviours, disability, social exclusion, poor health. Three in four ACE-exposed adolescents

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<sup>5</sup> Historic England (2022) *A Strategy for Wellbeing and Heritage, 2022-2025*

<sup>6</sup> HM Inspectorate of Probation (no date) *Adversity and trauma*

<sup>7</sup> Kam Bhui (2021) *We must tackle the mental health consequences of Adverse Childhood Experiences*

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

develop mental health problems by the age of 18, including self-harm, suicide attempts, and post-traumatic stress disorders.”

## Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-determination theory says that people are inherently and individually motivated, but that this motivation is easily derailed by societal factors. SDT sees a supportive external environment as complementary and necessary to self-motivation, and it is this very environment that Rejuvenate aims to create. A deeper explanation of SDT and its relationship to Rejuvenate can be read in the feasibility report.<sup>9</sup>

## Trauma-informed practice

The government advocates a trauma-informed response to justice-involved children, as HM Inspectorate of Probation tell us:

“The increase in diversionary measures in England and Wales has reduced the number of children entering the youth justice system for the first time. Those children remaining within the system are more likely to present with adversity, trauma and complex needs. Many of the effects of trauma develop as a way to help the child survive stressful experiences. However, some of the same traits can increase the risk of anti-social or offending behaviour, which helps to explain why there is a strong link between involvement in the youth justice system and adversity and trauma.

“Due to this prevalence, youth offending teams (YOTs) are increasingly working in a ‘trauma-informed’ way, with a focus on establishing a sense of safety for the children they work with, avoiding practices which might inadvertently cause further trauma, and staff being aware of how trauma can impact upon a child’s behaviour.”<sup>10</sup>

While we aren’t working as therapists, we are aiming to work therapeutically in this context. The difference can be understood from the ‘Valuing Youth Diversion’ toolkit, where therapeutic interventions are defined in contrast to interventions that use punishment and control.<sup>11</sup> So that Rejuvenate is an appropriate therapeutic intervention, we are following the Government in operating in a ‘trauma-aware’ way, facilitated by staff attendance at a Trauma Informed Training course.<sup>12</sup>

HM Inspectorate of Probation recognises that “[j]ustice-involved children have experienced higher levels of adversity and trauma compared to children in the general population.”<sup>13</sup> So

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<sup>9</sup> Wessex Archaeology (2021) *Project Rejuvenate Feasibility Report*, pp. 27-29

<sup>10</sup> HM Inspectorate of Probation (no date) *Adversity and trauma*

<sup>11</sup> The Centre for Justice Innovation (2019) *Valuing youth diversion: a toolkit for practitioners* [accessed 12 March 2024]

<sup>12</sup> Wessex Archaeology (2021) *Project Rejuvenate Feasibility Report*, 22

<sup>13</sup> HM Inspectorate of Probation (no date) *Adversity and trauma*

that such children can properly participate in interventions, the Inspectorate recommends a sequential approach where the initial focus is on establishing basic routines and safety before trauma is addressed. As Rejuvenate aims to build confidence and wellbeing in participants, it would be appropriate at a later stage in the sequence.

## Theory implementation

The project designs were underpinned by SDT as set out above and explored in the feasibility report. In the delivery stage this was further expanded to embrace best practice models for understanding and supporting child development. Giving children a safe space and an increase in confidence needs to be accompanied by the opportunity for them to develop and achieve a self-awareness in both emotional and practical skills. In Stage Four the project relied upon the case worker or school family support worker to provide support in any moments of emotional vulnerability that occurred.

## Children's wellbeing

There are myriad factors that have influenced young people's wellbeing in recent years, including rising social media use and the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Voices of England's Missing Children' (2022), an assessment of national attendance statistics by the Children's Commissioner, states that

"Over the last two years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of children experiencing mental health problems. NHS surveys show that before the pandemic, in 2017, 1 in 9 children had a probable mental health disorder. That has now jumped to 1 in 6.8. Inclusion managers and learning support workers interviewed as part of the deep dive said that they have noticed this increased prevalence of mental health need in their work."<sup>14</sup>

The current generation of children is showing a record level of mental health concerns, with anxiety being especially prevalent. Anxiety, depression, lack of self-worth, and ACEs impact a child's behaviour and engagement in school. Children then become locked in a cycle of disengagement that can further exacerbate the challenges facing their emotional wellbeing. Though all generations of children experience challenges and there can be parallels through different generations, the prevalence of social media has exacerbated the natural insecurities, peer pressures and expectations of childhood. Growing poverty and economic pressure have seen a long-term shift in the parent/child relationship, reducing the level of interaction a child has with their primary carer.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Children's Commissioner (2022) *Voices of England's Missing Children: The findings of the Children's Commissioner's Attendance Audit*

<sup>15</sup> Acquah, D Sellers, R Stock, L and Harold G 'Inter-parental conflict and outcomes for children in the contexts of poverty and economic pressure' April 2017, Early Intervention Foundation.

Some commentators have suggested that education reforms from 2010 have placed a significant additional pressure on children from the age of four onwards; identifying that many children are now dealing with large amounts of homework, as part of a more vigorous approach to learning that has been implemented in a “move from the espoused child-centredness of the 1960s to the ‘Standards’ agenda prevalent in recent years.”<sup>16</sup> Though many schools may seek to soften that pressure, and some children may thrive under it, there is limited data on how it is impacting the emotional wellbeing of children who do not. What has been shown is that “the peak age of onset for any mental disorders is 14.5 years”.<sup>17</sup> In this context the ‘disorders’ are identified as emotional or behavioural. There is evidence that poorer outcomes in adulthood are more common for those with emotional and behavioural problems in childhood.<sup>18</sup>

The Government’s 2018 publication ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’<sup>19</sup> reminds us “No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances” and that “providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later... Early help can also prevent further problems arising”. Despite this, in recent years the demand for children’s services has risen dramatically: The number of child protection enquiries has increased 139 per cent in 10 years”.<sup>20</sup> With such a rise in demand for support despite the clear aspiration for early intervention, enacting that aspiration faces complex challenges. In this context we should understand that Rejuvenate can play a role within both the context of early help and in giving practical support for those who may have had ACEs.

Although our project works with Key Stage 3 children this background is important in understanding the general context for children’s experience of school. Set alongside the evidence of the value of creative engagement we designed a programme that brings creativity without academic pressure in the expectation that this will have an impact on other elements of emotional and cognitive development.

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<sup>16</sup> Sturrock, S, (2022) [Primary teachers’ experiences of neo-liberal education reform in England: ‘Nothing is ever good enough’](#), *Research Papers in Education*, 37(6), 1214-1240, 1216

<sup>17</sup> Clarke, A et al ‘Adolescent Mental Health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions’, July 2021, Early Intervention Foundation, page 4 citing Solmi et al 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Clarke, A et al ‘Adolescent Mental Health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions’, July 2021, Early Intervention Foundation, page 4 citing Clarke & Lovewell, 2021

<sup>19</sup> HM Government (2018) [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children](#)

<sup>20</sup> Local Government Association (no date) [Children’s services funding – facts and figures](#)

## Wellbeing and school disengagement

School absence has been identified as a major national issue impacting children. The Children’s Commissioner tells us that

“Last year, the school absence rate stood at 7.5%, compared to 4.7% pre-pandemic. An increasing number of children have started to regularly miss school. A child is known as “persistently absent” when they miss 10% or more of possible sessions in school. In 2022/23, nearly a quarter (22.3%) of all children were persistently absent. Absence levels have remained stuck at unprecedented highs.”<sup>21</sup>

Absence from school doesn’t necessarily indicate that a child has issues with school itself. The Department for Education recognises that “persistent absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues in a pupil’s life, and barriers to attendance are often specific to local contexts.”<sup>22</sup> These reasons can include mental, physical and emotional health issues, neglect, abuse, and vulnerability to or engagement in crime, including county lines.<sup>23</sup> Particularly with justice-involved teens, absence from school can lead to further offending or criminal exploitation.<sup>24</sup>

The Department for Education has published a wellbeing-focused state of the nation every year since 2019. This reports on available evidence such as Office of National Statistics (ONS) data and as such is a robust source of information. Below is one key finding from the 2021 edition:

“Supporting a link between attendance and wellbeing, pupils with higher wellbeing ratings were more likely to have regularly attended school (DfE, 2021b); further analyses showed that this link remained when controlling for demographic factors such as gender, year group, free school meal eligibility, SEN-status [special educational needs], and ethnicity.

“Pupils’ wellbeing was also linked to their experiences at school: in October 2020, pupils with higher happiness ratings and lower anxiousness ratings found it easier to concentrate in class, were less concerned about catching-up on their learning and were happier to be back at school than those with lower happiness and higher anxiousness scores (DfE, 2021a).”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Children’s Commissioner (2023) [The importance of attendance](#)

<sup>22</sup> Department for Education (2022) [Working together to improve school attendance](#), 25 [accessed 4 March 2024]

<sup>23</sup> Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures (2024) [8.7 Safeguarding children who are absent from education](#) [accessed 4 March 2024]

<sup>24</sup> Department for Education (2023) [Keeping children safe in education 2023](#) [accessed 4 March 2024]

<sup>25</sup> Department for Education (2022) [State of the Nation 2021: children and young people’s wellbeing](#), 20

Our project is about wellbeing and not specifically school attendance, however, school attendance is a useful metric because it has a direct correlation to wellbeing and it is easy to measure. While there are multiple possible reasons for low attendance, each of these potential causes comes with its own wellbeing deficits.

Beyond the benefits of an education, improving school attendance allows children to receive the safeguarding benefits of regular observation and allows school to fulfil their “statutory duty to promote the welfare of their pupils and students, which includes preventing impairment of children’s health or development and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.”<sup>26</sup>

### Later impact of low wellbeing

Improving wellbeing is crucial to children in and beyond school as ‘[i]t is widely recognised that a child’s emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood.’<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, children whose wellbeing levels remain low over time are more likely to have low mental health as time passes.<sup>28</sup>

This can be seen across all backgrounds and levels of academic engagement, including children who have been academically successful within mainstream education. There has been a 450% rise in the number of students declaring their mental health conditions on UCAS applications in the last decade.<sup>29</sup>

This tells us that an increasing number of young people are not flourishing at the end of their school career. Working with school-age children is a way to address this and informs the age at which we choose to intervene.

### School disengagement and vulnerability to the influence of crime

It is extremely important to make clear that not all children who struggle at school end up involved with criminal or anti-social behaviour. However, for the young people who do become involved in criminal behaviour, disengagement with school is a common factor: “early school refusal behaviours [sic], such as school disengagement, increases the risk for later criminal activity”.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Public Health England (2015) *Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing: A whole school or college approach*, 5 [accessed 26 February 2024]

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 4

<sup>28</sup> The Children’s Society (2016) *The Good Childhood Report 2016*, 34 [accessed 28 February 2024]

<sup>29</sup> UCAS (2021) *Starting the Conversation: UCAS Report on Student Mental Health*

<sup>30</sup> Klassen, JA, Stewart, SL and Lapshina, N, (2021) School Disengagement and Mental Health Service Intensity Need Among Clinically Referred Students Utilizing the Interrail Child and Youth Mental Health Assessment Instrument, *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12(2021)

In a report studying the effect of education on an individual's life chances and likelihood of effecting, the Home Office noted that "studies have shown that the relationship between truancy and crime is complex but that if schools can influence truancy, indirect effects on crime may occur".<sup>31</sup> The same report contrasts effective and ineffective schools, with the former acting as the supportive external environment that is central to SDT and that Rejuvenate aims to enable. These categorisations can be viewed as subjective to the student, rather than absolute, as a school that is effective for the majority of students can be ineffective for a subset. Rejuvenate looks to act as a supportive environment for the subset.

Here it is useful to distinguish between student-initiated and school-initiated absences (exclusions). While a student-initiated absence indicates lack of an effective supportive environment, research shows exclusion to have a strong, if not causal, relationship to vulnerability to crime. This can be because a child is already vulnerable, leading to behaviour that is seen to justify exclusion. Once outside of school, they lose the safeguarding benefits of being in a supervised environment. This can go on for a long time: excluded students are meant to be provided with full-time education from the 6<sup>th</sup> day of exclusion, but this is often not the case. Professionals believe that gangs are aware of the results of exclusions and even engineer them to increase child vulnerability.<sup>32</sup>

## Youth crime

In 2021, 50,784 children were arrested. The actual number of children involved with criminal behaviour is likely to be substantially higher as this statistic does not include the number of children diverted from formally entering the youth justice system through Community Resolutions. Around 15,800 children received a caution or sentence in the year ending March 2021. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) calculates that "[c]hildren aged 15-17 made up 82% of the offending (?child) population, while making up 35% of the 10-17 population in England and Wales. Boys made up 87% of the offending population compared with 51% of the 10-17 population in England and Wales."<sup>33</sup>

## Costs of youth crime

The MoJ technical paper 'The cost of a cohort of young offenders to the criminal justice system' tell us that in 2009 it was estimated that offending by all young people cost the economy £8.5-£11 billion. Young offenders, like adults, are most commonly convicted of theft and violence. The youth justice system spends some £800 million annually on dealing

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<sup>31</sup> Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (2004) *The role of education in enhancing life chances and preventing offending*, 6 [Accessed 7 April 2024]

<sup>32</sup> APPG on Knife Crime (2019) *Back to School? Breaking the link between school exclusions and knife crime* [accessed 18 April 2024]

<sup>33</sup> Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice, (2022) *Youth Justice Statistics 2020/21: England and Wales*, 32

with youth crime.<sup>34</sup> Allowing for inflation in the 10 years since these figures, the current costs are likely to be significantly higher.

In 2021/22, the average cost of an adult prison place in England and Wales was £45,516.<sup>35</sup> If we are able to reduce the likelihood a child will become adult offenders, then the societal and economic impact is significant. The MoJ states that “[a]round 80 percent of prolific adult offenders begin committing crimes as children, and the estimated cost of late intervention to the economy is nearly £17 billion per year”.<sup>36</sup> “Of this, £850 million is attributed to anti-social behaviour (2023/24 prices).”<sup>37</sup> On 19th July 2021, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice confirmed the cost per child in the criminal justice system as £271,000 at a Secure Children’s Home, £201,000 at a Secure Training Centre, and £119,000 at a Young Offender Institution.<sup>38</sup>

### Community benefits of early intervention

It is widely accepted that harm perpetrated by crime extends beyond the individual victim. Crime harm is defined by the ONS,<sup>39</sup> who identify harms as impacting many levels of society: the directly affected individuals, communities through antisocial behaviour and perceptions of safety, institutions – businesses and third sector orgs – through fraud and theft, and broader, societal-level harms such as the allocation of public funds to deal with the impact of crime. Although difficult to calculate, this means that any reduction in repeat offending has a much broader wellbeing benefit for society.

Speaking on a funding package announced in 2022, the Minister for Youth Justice, Victoria Atkins, articulated the benefits of early interventions that target justice-involved youth in “ensuring these children stay in education and rebuild ties with their families, helping us build safer, more prosperous communities.”<sup>40</sup> Many young offenders will have more than one victim, so any work we do to prevent reoffending not only benefits their wellbeing but will also create fewer victims within a community. This in itself is a community wellbeing gain.

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<sup>34</sup> National Audit Office (2010) *The youth justice system in England and Wales: Reducing offending by young people*

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Justice (2023) *Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison*

<sup>36</sup> Ministry of Justice et al. (2022) *£300 million to cut youth crime and make streets safer*

<sup>37</sup> HM Government (2023) *Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan*

<sup>38</sup> *Youth Custody: Costs* (2021)

<sup>39</sup> Office for National Statistics (2022) *The impact of crime on victims and society: March 2022*

<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Justice et al. (2022) *£300 million to cut youth crime and make streets safer*

## Importance of youth wellbeing to government

Both the government and the NHS have a keen interest in young people's mental health. The government sees it as a cross-departmental issue and is working across health and education to improve conditions.<sup>41</sup>

Mental health is one of the areas of work within the NHS Long Term Plan.<sup>42</sup> Special focus has been placed on children and young people through ambitious funding, waiting time, and access goals.

With regard to schools, the government says that "All schools are under a statutory duty to promote the welfare of their pupils and students, which includes preventing impairment of children's health or development and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes."<sup>43</sup> Wellbeing is central to this as "[i]t is widely recognised that a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning as well as their physical and social health and their mental wellbeing in adulthood."<sup>44</sup>

## Rejuvenate and wellbeing at Historic England

Rejuvenate aligns with two of our corporate priorities: 'Levelling Up' and 'Inclusion, Diversity and Equality'. Within those, it aims to achieve the outcomes of a positive impact on individual and community wellbeing, improving people's pride in their local place, and engaging a greater diversity of people with the historic environment.<sup>45</sup>

Within Historic England's Wellbeing and Heritage Strategy four priority groups have been identified, each with specific social needs. One of these groups is young people and we aim to elevate individuals' wellbeing through three levels of need, from struggling to survive to thriving, providing targeted support along the way. Historic England currently does a lot of work to support those who are already surviving or thriving; Rejuvenate is our first committed attempt to address inequity for young people who are demonstrably struggling.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> UK Parliament (2024) [Children and young people's mental health: policy and services \(England\)](#) [accessed 8 April 2024]

<sup>42</sup> NHS (no date) [Children and young people's mental health](#) [accessed 17 April 2024]

<sup>43</sup> Public Health England (2015) [Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing: A whole school or college approach](#), 5

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 3

<sup>45</sup> Historic England (2023) [Corporate Plan 2023-26](#), 5

<sup>46</sup> Historic England (2022) [A Strategy for Wellbeing and Heritage, 2022-2025](#), 11-13

## Evaluation

Rejuvenate seeks to explore if history and heritage inspired activities can reduce the risk factors to reoffending. Stage Four Rejuvenate sought to establish an intervention that combines practical, physical and intellectually engaging activities whilst utilising established social care best practise in enhancing wellbeing, cognitive and emotional development.

Therefore, the objective of Stage Four Rejuvenate is to not only provide evidence of whether such interventions can have a positive impact but also to understand if there is a key characteristic of the programme that achieves positive impact for the participants. The programme's potential positive impact has been measured against five desired outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them.

**Outcome 2:** Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy).

**Outcome 3:** Young people will have tried new skills (competence).

**Outcome 4:** Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness).

**Outcome 5:** Young People will have improved wellbeing.

## Data sources and collection

After five to six sessions, Kent and Wessex each delivered an interim Impact Report. In September 2023 they delivered their final evaluations<sup>47</sup> which constitute sections 2 and 3 of this document. Both pilots' written evaluations included detailed information about the content of their programme, data, evaluation, and case studies. Following their submission, the data within both was scrutinised by the Project Board and supplemented by further information.

This section of the report does not seek to recreate that evidence but to highlight the crucial findings and offer an analysis on the key factors relevant to considering a continuation and possible expansion of the project. It seeks to explain the key components that led to the successes of Stage Four and explore the challenges and learnings that should be considered in preparation for any possible expansion or repetition of the project.

For both pilots, feedback opportunities were given to the children in each session. Children participating in the Kent pilot would reflect during the sessions and give feedback to their case workers after each session. In the Wessex pilot, a variety of methods were used for recording the children's self-reflections. Teachers, case workers and session leads would all record their observations after each individual session. At the half-way point, the local delivery partners completed an impact report to formally capture a variety of metrics

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<sup>47</sup> The evaluations, the Historic England Wellbeing Strategy, and further reports can be viewed at <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/social-and-economic-research/wellbeing/>.

designed to monitor if their targeted outcomes were being achieved. The local delivery partners also provided formal feedback at Project Board meetings.

The Project Manager attended both projects on site, speaking directly with the young people, observing their interactions and informally gathering their views. This also enabled them to speak with those present from the school, Youth Justice team, and the local delivery partners. This has enabled some supplementary observations. The impact of the project on the children outside of the sessions was provided by the school and Youth Justice team.

## Constraints

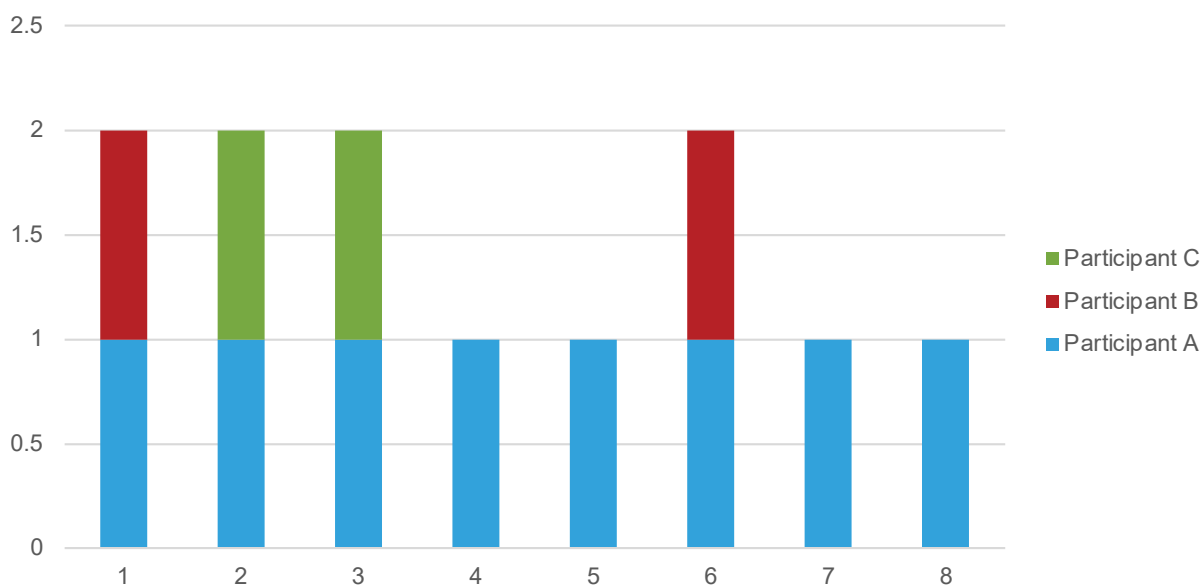
Adapting the variety of methods used within social care to record the projects outcomes proved effective. However, the project’s timelines limited the breadth of longitudinal data and the project’s ability to offer a comprehensive analysis of data.

## Key data from evaluation reports

### Kent pilot data<sup>48</sup>

#### Participant attendance

One participant attended all events. The others each attended sporadically for reasons extrinsic to the programme.



**Figure 2:** Attendance for the Youth Justice pilot.

<sup>48</sup> Isle Heritage (2023) *Project Rejuvenate: Final Report on Kent Pilot Project*

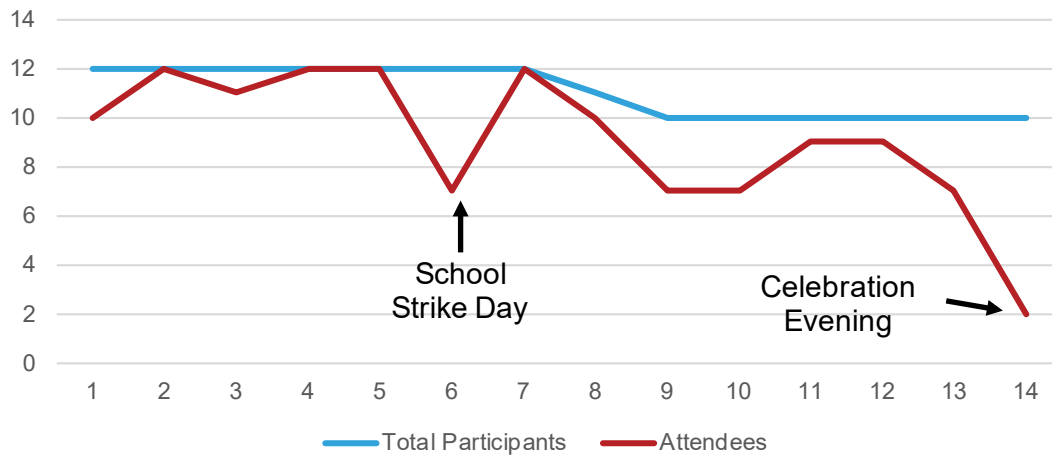
## Participant change

**Table 1:** Participant change.

| <b>Area of potential change</b>  | <b>Decrease, no difference, improvement, or significant improvement?</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>Rate how it improved their ability to interact with others and communicate with adults</b>                | Improvement   |
| <b>Did participating in the project have a positive impact on their relationship with their case worker?</b> | No difference   |
| <b>How do you feel Rejuvenate has helped them to manage emotions and feel positive?</b>                      | I don't feel I can comment on managing emotions as of yet but, following the sessions, there did seem to be an improvement in their positivity                      |
| <b>Ability to demonstrate positive attributes such as perseverance, openness to learning</b>                 | Improvement   |
| <b>Ability to complete a task or follow instructions</b>   | Improvement   |
| <b>Ability to manage their safety whilst undertaking an activity</b>   | No difference – although they showed the ability to work safely in various activities, they would still benefit with support and supervision to ensure their safety |
| <b>Motivation to build a positive future</b>   | Improvement – particularly the young person who attended every session  |
| <b>Confidence/ sense of achievement gained at participating in work/training</b>                             | Improvement   |
| <b>Sense of connection to local heritage and desire to see it protected</b>                                  | Significant improvement for the young person who attended every session and knew of sites that were spoken about.   |

## Wessex pilot data<sup>49</sup>

### Participant attendance



**Figure 3:** Attendance for the Wessex pilot.

### Participant change



**Figure 4:** School pilot participant change graph showing overall mean % change to Wellbeing Star scores following engagement in the project.

<sup>49</sup> Wessex Archaeology (2023) *Project Pilot: Wiltshire, Evaluation Report*

## Impact

The evaluation of Stage Four provides us with compelling evidence that is it not just the activities themselves but the manner in which they are delivered that proves crucial in achieving a successful intervention. This section reviews the elements that proved integral to the programme's success.

The Rejuvenate pilot has established a powerful model of how practical explorations of our country's past can make a significant positive intervention in the lives of children who are disengaged from school or who are within the criminal justice system. The two pilots have gathered considerable data that demonstrates that combining an exploration of local heritage sites and cultural landscapes, archaeological discovery, creative practice and the development of practical skills – largely undertaken outside – has had a demonstrable positive impact on the children's emotional wellbeing. Participants have built a range of transferable skills such as resilience, critical thinking, communication, and cooperation, all through a stronger connection to the historic environment.

All children had shown a significant impact by session five. In Kent, the project focused on engaging with young people within the youth justice system. Their case worker described it as "the best reparations programme they had ever been on". In Wiltshire the project was delivered in partnership with a high school for children at risk of falling out of or underachieving their potential within mainstream education. They recorded a significant reengagement with school.

Though Rejuvenate is a programme outside of a normal school setting, the importance to the children of having an alternative regular structure in their lives that is delivered by trusted adults should not be underestimated. It provides a consistency from which the child can explore and feel empowered. Experiencing a safe structure and witnessing a group of adults modelling positive behaviour both played crucial roles in providing the foundations for positive engagement.

An important element in curating a positive and open environment for the participants was the positivity and clear personal and professional commitment from all the adults involved in providing the sessions.

Stage Four has considerably added to the available research on heritage-based intervention programmes by providing clear evidence of the characteristics and outcomes of a successful intervention.

## Whole pilot impact summary

- When young people feel their views and ideas are valued, they are empowered to make a meaningful contribution to the group activity, display an openness to learning and a greater willingness to follow instructions.
- When children feel they are a valued part of a team, they become inquisitive learners and display higher levels of initiative and perseverance.
- Practical heritage-based activities provide a positive catalyst for enhancing children's emotional wellbeing and assisting them in developing a positive attitude toward learning new skills.
- A cross-curricular approach to learning enables children to increase their knowledge and skills.
- The children continued to speak about the positive impact of the project after its completion.
- Positive recognition by adults and their peers is a vital factor in motivating young people and achieving active participation.

## Kent pilot impact summary

- Young people themselves quickly recognised that being part of “this project could really turn a kid's life around”.
- A youth justice worker described it as the best reparations project he had seen in his 40-year career.
- The opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to archeologic work inspired a greater sense of ownership and relatability to their area's heritage.
- All the young people exhibited an interest in the heritage sites visited and in the histories connected with them.
- Being a valued part of a team with a common goal was integral to successfully engaging and motivating the young people.
- There was a significant improvement in the children's sense of connection to local heritage and their desire to see it protected.
- AQA modules gave formal recognition to their learning. Up to 10-unit modules were achieved by participants.
- All children recorded an improvement in six areas:
- Their ability to interact with others and communicate with adults,
  - Positivity,
  - Ability to demonstrate positive attributes such as perseverance and openness to learning,
  - Ability to complete a task or follow instructions,
  - Motivation to build a positive future,
  - Confidence.

- The fully attending participant demonstrated a positive improvement in all of the 5 wellbeing categories.
- The participant who attended all sessions themselves recognised their experience on the project was helpful in changing their mindset.
- The young people said the programme had helped them have a different perspective on life and that they had moved away from negativity and negative thoughts.

## Wessex pilot impact summary

- 89% had shown signs of being more in control of their behaviour within school.
- The project had a significant impact on the children's attendance at school, with the group sustaining 90% attendance by the end of the programme. This was an increase of 4.5% compared to their attendance at the start and 6.9% ahead of the control group that started with a similar average attendance.
- Delivery partners and learning providers both felt that the project had a significant positive impact upon participant mental health.
- Form tutors agreed that for 67% of those evaluated, engagement within lessons had increased.
- After only 5 sessions all student recorded an improvement in their attitude and enjoyment of learning. At the end of the project, they recorded positive change in 9 out of 10 wellbeing statements, with a mean average positive change of +15% in wellbeing scores:
  - 28% increase in feeling proud,
  - 22% increase in feeling recognised for their achievement,
  - 24% increase in feeling their voice heard.
- A non-school environment and practical approach to learning enabled the children to acquire and retain new knowledge.
- A cross-sector multi-agency approach was a vital component in the sessions' ability to engage with the variety of the children's individual personalities and needs.
- Some children clearly identified the power of feeling as though they belonged to a group, felt safe and were not alienated within that group.

## Project characteristics that contributed to Rejuvenate's success

- Positive encouragement and a sense of feeling safe and accepted enabled the children to take risks, display perseverance, and develop skills.
- Developing interpersonal skills and a sense of belonging within a communal environment was the foundation for re-engagement with learning.
- A mutually respectful relationship with a small team of knowledgeable adults who model positive behaviour.

- Quality one-to-one interactions with adults, with small group sizes allowing adequate attention to be paid to each child.
- A personalised approach empowered children to achieve when learning in a group dynamic.
- A cross-curricular and practical approach to learning.
- Encouraging creative and practical responses to the pursuit of knowledge empowers curious and dedicated learners.
- Exposure to the natural environment had a positive impact on children's wellbeing.
- Widening the children's exposure to experiences and places outside their normal environment raised their aspirations and created a greater sense of belonging with the wider community and its heritage.
- The stability of at least two of the same adults attending every session was crucial for the children to overcome their anxieties and build a relationship of trust with the adults and each other.
- To achieve enthusiastic confident learners, there needs to be frequent unpressured opportunities to apply and demonstrate their new skills, use their initiative, and receive consistent positive recognition.
- Boosting children's confidence is vital for assisting them overcome a reluctance to engage.

## Rejuvenate's approach to learning

One of the key characteristics of the project is that it utilises practical learning and a cross-curricular approach to learning. Cross-curricular approaches enable children of varying skillsets and learning styles to engage in the topic and the pursuit of knowledge. Practical engagement in the topic enhances their active listening and their ability to assimilate knowledge which they were then able to share through creative means and unthreatening small group activities. The project's multi-learning methodology enables the adults and heritage themes to connect with the young people, leading to positive wellbeing and behaviour outcomes.

Framing their acquired learning through creative responses or informal conversations built the children's confidence in expressing the knowledge they had acquired. For example, while demonstrating how to make a clay pot they could explain the science behind it, or, using sketches or photos of evidence, they could explain structures and their military purpose. The validation they felt from the encouragement and the positive responses they received from adults were crucial for raising their self-esteem and positive attitude toward learning, two of the project's key wellbeing and behaviour outcomes. This resulted in an increased desire to learn and a growing sense of perseverance and excitement in engaging with instructions and active learning.

## Looking forward

It is important for Stage Five that the key learnings from the previous stages are consolidated and expanded upon. The recommendations below are based on our findings and learnings from Stage Four.

### Programme referral

The Kent project provided the structure and a model for delivering intervention for those vulnerable to the influences of crime, however the number of children attending was lower than anticipated. A future pilot should seek to deliver multiple programmes, each with around six children attending, in order to provide an increased evidence-base to show how the project can be a nationally applicable model.

The project should consolidate its learning in Kent through a repeat of the project and trial in other areas of the country. This will enable the new data to demonstrate how such interventions can impact children growing up in a more diverse range of circumstances and areas. There should also be thought on how to increase the number of children referred into the programme and how a crime deterrent or re-offending reduction programme can interlink with the current third sectors and police work being delivered within the area. As crime priorities are set locally it would be advantageous to explore how the model could be delivered in a manner that is responsive to the local or regional need. Such an approach would benefit from a vigorous independent analysis of data; an academic partner such as the criminology or social care research department within a university may be best placed to collect and evaluate the data provided by a scaling up of the project.

There remains a gap between children disengaging with school and them being charged within the formal criminal justice system. A model that could provide a more community-based approach should be explored to ensure that these children can also access the project. Vulnerable children's needs may at that time be widely recognised, but they will struggle to receive the support they need if 'gateholders' to the support have strict criteria or they have limited capacity to engage with the child and their family. A model between the school and youth offending team model could be explored to enable a more open form of referral into the project. This will help to deliver a more preventative approach to children vulnerable to the influences of crime, rather than them needing to have been formerly charged to access the project.

As the government has recognised, "no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in

identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.”<sup>50</sup> As this clearly acknowledges that schools alone may not always be able to identify need, by diversifying the organisations that can refer into the project we increase our ability to meet the needs of a wider group of children. This model may also consider being open to self or family referrals.

## Working with children

In addition to SDT, incorporating an understanding of Child Development Theory into project planning will allow Rejuvenate to operate in a way that acknowledges and respects the workings of the developing mind, working with the developmental processes rather than against them. Incorporating this social sciences context will give Rejuvenate a stronger evaluation framework.

The project seeks to encourage children’s autonomy, their sense of confidence, and the freedom to be themselves, but that confidence and curiosity needs to then be able to readapt back within the more formal setting of school, college or the workplace. In the next phase particular thought should be given on how to ensure that, by the end of the programme, the children are able to confidently apply their newfound confidence within existing environments such as school. The majority of the children did so successfully but in the next phase of research the project should be able to evidence how it does so. Thought should be given to how to ensure that the children understand the balance of how to have their voice heard and feel that autonomy whilst succeeding within the hieratical setting of the teacher/pupil relationship.

If the project could become a sustained offer in a particular setting or location the opportunity for carrying forward learnings would be greater, embedding it within existing systems and enabling students of one cohort to mentor or support students of subsequent years might also be a possibility.

Though a wide range of research suggests that interventions of this kind achieved a positive impact on children from a range of backgrounds and circumstances, we recognise that targeting and adapting the core delivery model to the specific individual characteristics of different groups could significantly enhance and increase the level of improvement in the children’s wellbeing and skills, and their ability to sustain those achievements.

We would like to further explore a pathways approach that would enable participants in the Rejuvenate programme to be signposted to local activities and opportunities that could build upon the new skills and approaches developed.

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<sup>50</sup> HM Government (2018) *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*

## Programme staff and partners

The self-reflection element within the project may result in children sharing previous negative experiences. The project should ensure it is delivered in partnership with organisations who have experience in key working and supporting children whose lives have had challenging experiences or circumstance.

A basic understanding of these experiences is helpful for the delivery of this project but must not distract from Rejuvenate being a practical intervention. As the project explores potential models for a further personalised approach, it should consider partnerships or referral routes being established for the children to access any deeper therapeutic or mental health support.

## Programme format and evaluation

One-year projects, by their nature, have short timelines due to the available funding. To build upon this research and for an adequate analysis, the next stage should consider a two-to-three-year period of research. A three-year period would also enable the project to take a phased approach within each area, enabling effective local partnerships to grow and develop and for the programme to hone its content and delivery. Data from multiple cohorts will enable us more comprehensive evidence base to secure support for a national roll-out.

Attempts were made to create evaluation approaches that would align where possible between both pilots. To this end both organisations were advised by a common evaluator. The way of collecting wellbeing data needs to be responsive to context, so the two pilots had different evaluation methods that were appropriate to participants of different ages and joining from different formal settings.

Each proposal had key adults whose observations on the young person's behaviour were part of the evaluation. Because of the characteristics of each partner organisation, the way of seeking information from these adults varied slightly. The Kent pilot solicited open observations while the school pilot had Likert scale options; both have benefits. The Likert scale enables more comparable and clearer analysis. Open feedback suited the small numbers of Kent project and accommodated for the nature of employment of the adults that made post-event questionnaires difficult.

A balanced evaluation scheme will contribute to more targeted and efficient programme improvement, particularly of any outcomes that didn't show improvement or of any unexpected negative impacts of the programme.

The final evaluations were written by and included contributions from adults invested in ensuring the project's success. Though the evaluation is thorough and enlightening, Stage Five would benefit from more delivery observations from professionals not involved in the weekly delivery. In Stage Four, the priority was to protect the safe group dynamic the

children felt and so a conscious decision was made to keep observations fairly minimal. However, an observer skilled in youth interventions could offer an additional perspective which would aid the project's development.

## Rejuvenate celebration event

In October 2023, Historic England hosted an event to review and celebrate the results of the pilot. A workshop element was included so that participants could help to design ways to think about Rejuvenate going forwards. The event was attended by 36 people<sup>51</sup> who gave their thoughts on the topics of 'engaging the disengaged' and 'legacy and sustainability'. Several ideas emerged that may be incorporated into Stage Five.

## Engaging the disengaged

The strongest takeaway from the workshop was that it was the role of the programme to make heritage more interesting and relevant to participants, with the first suggestion being not to use the word heritage at all. Instead, the programme could start by introducing the concept of heritage. This would avoid the trap of participants not thinking that heritage was for them, but instead finding aspects of heritage that they related to or connected with before understanding them as heritage. While archaeological fieldwork may unfold over long periods and be quite static, the Rejuvenate projects should incorporate tasks where participants can see a short-term change so that they get immediate feedback on the impact of their actions. These projects could contribute to a larger goal and form a journey for participants to go on that is situated across multiple environments.

After the programme format, engagement suggestions focused on empowering participants. To this end, providers might change their language and think of participants as 'under-served' instead of 'disengaged' so that the onus of engagement is with the provider rather than the participant. In activities, expectations should be set that allow for participant agency so that results are co-created instead of predefined.

## Legacy and sustainability

Legacy was understood to be the long-term benefits of the programme for participants. The first strand of this is skills development and career-building, with Rejuvenate being start of progression through either traditional or non-traditional education. To facilitate this, the programme could include a process of identifying the support needed for participants to define the journey in which they are interested. Both skills development and career-building would be enacted by inter-generational cohorts where previous participants take part in the training of a new cohort. The second strand is personal growth. A longer

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<sup>51</sup> Representing the National Trust, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Home Office, University College London, Museum of London Archaeology, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Sevenoaks District Council, National Centre for Creative Health, Coney HQ, Youth United Foundation, Benefact Trust, STREETS, Isle Heritage, Wessex Archaeology, the Historic England Foundation, TC & Friends, Basildon Council and the Renaissance Foundation.

programme would permit more embedded growth and the inter-generational interactions might provide a sense of purpose to older generations as they share their skills. It could be further extended by post-project support in achieving goals, and access to expert staff as mentors.

Sustainability was understood to mean ensuring that the programme can continue for the longest time. This can be seen as a change in mindset, so that Rejuvenate is seen as the delivery of a service, rather than the running of a series of projects. Multiple participants recognised the necessity of longer-term funding and suggested sustained rather than short-term partnerships, alternative funding models such as rolling funds and matching funds. More effective signposting could benefit the programme, with the result of broadening the network of potential partners and funders to which it has access. A strand of the programme could be dedicated to current partners, so that the programme may inform their wider work.

## Conclusions

The Rejuvenate pilot has established a powerful potential model of how practical explorations of our country's past can make a significant positive intervention in the lives of children that are disengaged from school or who are within the criminal justice system.

The bespoke character of the programme is an essential and integral part of the project's ability to deliver change for the children. From archaeological excavations and unearthing WW2 structures to exploring outdoor survival skills, the Rejuvenate project has empowered young people by immersing them in inspiring historical sites to the benefit of their physical and mental wellbeing whilst they develop a range of skills.

History and heritage-based activities have shown themselves as an effective and diverse conduit for engaging children and young people. The delivery of the programme and its achievements reaffirmed the role history can play in assisting children to overcome the challenges they face.

Rejuvenate adds to an established and wide body of research that evidences the key factors children need to thrive. The Urban Institute's research explains that children "thrive in stable and nurturing environments where they have a routine and know what to expect." and further elaborates that instability "can have deep and lasting impacts on children's physical, emotional, and cognitive development."<sup>52</sup>

In this context, Stage Four Rejuvenate sought to provide the children participating with a structured and nurturing environment, over 8 to 12 workshops, where the children could challenge themselves and reassert a sense of control over the direction of their lives. Rejuvenate cannot change or fully comprehend the path their lives had led that resulted in their disengagement, but it can offer and did deliver an experience that allowed participants to develop a renewed perspective, self-belief, and the confidence to reassert their potential.

Understanding the factors needed for a child to thrive helps us understand the characteristics of Rejuvenate that enable it to achieve a positive impact.

Rejuvenate provided an alternative structure to school, and a stable consistency; it was an opportunity for the children to step outside of their current environment and experiences. They were challenged to learn new skills and become part of a mutually respectful team with adults. The combination of one-to-one time to engage with adults and a sense of collective identity and purpose within a small team were crucial for reinvigorating their wellbeing.

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<sup>52</sup> Urban Institute (2013) *The Negative Effects of Instability on Child Development: A Research Synthesis*

In the school's programme, 89% of participant showed signs of being more in control of their behaviour within school and the project. At the end of the project, they recorded positive change in 9 out of 10 wellbeing statements. The youth justice pilot was described by the youth justice worker as the best reparations project he had seen in his 40-year career, with the participants achieving 10 AQA modules. After participating, young people within the justice system not only felt a significant improvement in their connection with local heritage and local community but it enhanced their ability to communicate with adults and feel positive about their futures.

Rejuvenate has delivered two programmes of intervention. For the project to realise its potential, it needs to build upon the current experiences and maintain a clear sense of purpose and momentum. As we successfully challenged the children to realise their potential, Rejuvenate should now challenge itself to realise its potential. Establishing pilots in multiple regions across a longer period would build upon the learning of Stage Four, present the opportunity for deeper cross-sector collaboration, and enable a more comprehensive testing of the most impactful and sustainable delivery characteristics and models.

Stage Four sought to make a meaningful intervention in the lives of the young participants. By participating they have made a meaningful intervention in the heritage sector. They have demonstrated that when given the opportunity children can thrive in heritage interventions. Our challenge now is to ensure the perseverance and risk taken by children participating can inspire us to show that same perseverance in establishing a model of intervention that can be applied to all communities across the nation. Historic England's vision "is for a heritage that is valued, celebrated and shared by everyone."<sup>53</sup> Rejuvenate confirmed not only 'that championing heritage can improve lives.' but that by championing the wellbeing of children we can strengthen how our heritage can make a powerful contribution to our communities.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/about/what-we-do/strategy/>

## Part 2: Kent Pilot

By Andrew Richardson and Annie Partridge



## Summary of Kent pilot

This report details the Kent pilot of 'Project Rejuvenate', funded via Historic England's philanthropy programme. The pilot involved young people on restorative justice programmes who were given the opportunity to visit and interact with heritage sites and landscapes in Kent. The project was led by Isle Heritage CIC working in partnership with the Kent Youth Justice Team and several local delivery partners. The primary aim of the pilot was to explore how engagement with heritage could help improve the behaviour, well-being and life-chances of the young people involved in the youth justice system and to reduce the chances that they would fall back into crime. A specific aim of the Kent pilot was to establish a collaborative network in the county that could form the basis for future heritage interventions to increase the wellbeing of vulnerable young people in the county.

The programme of activities took place over eight weeks, at multiple locations. Based on the findings to-date, participation was a universally positive experience, both for the young people and for the adults accompanying them. Overall, the Kent pilot demonstrated that Project Rejuvenate has the potential to make a positive difference in the lives of vulnerable young people whatever their background.

## Contributors

This report was co-authored by Andrew Richardson and Annie Partridge of Isle Heritage CIC. It includes written and photographic contributions from staff members of the Kent Youth Justice Team, the National Trust, Historic England and Timescapes.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Linda Monckton, Mark Harrison and Paul Vitty of Historic England for their encouragement and support throughout the project. Instrumental in the delivery of the project were Helen Dignam and her colleagues at the Kent Youth Justice Team, and their enthusiasm throughout was a major factor in its success. The landowners, staff and volunteers of the local delivery partnership, including the National Trust, Land Trust, White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, Timescapes and Godmersham Park Heritage Centre and Estate, are warmly thanked for allowing access to their properties, and for their support and help during the activity sessions. The staff of Wessex Archaeology, who were leading the delivery of the Wessex Rejuvenate Pilot, were also great source of help and advice throughout. Dover District Council are thanked for providing meeting facilities.

Most importantly, thanks are also extended to the young people who took part in the pilot programme. Without their willingness to engage and get actively involved, the pilot could not have been the success that it was. It was a pleasure to meet them all, and the project team wish them well for the future.

This pilot was generously funded by The Historic England Foundation, The Swire Trust, Edward Vinson 1957 Charity and Rockthorn.

## Introduction

### Background

This project is the culmination of three years' work looking at how Historic England might work collectively to use archaeology and heritage as a tool for building self-determination and resilience in vulnerable young people. The project takes the form of a working partnership between archaeological and heritage organisations, state secondary schools in Wiltshire, and youth justice teams in Kent, both working to create interventions that will help students encountering significant disadvantage to reach their full potential.

There is clear evidence that vulnerable and disadvantaged students (whether related to poverty, learning style or other similar factors) are significantly more likely to face expulsion and/or are at greater risk of becoming involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour. There is also evidence that being exposed to a creative environment and working with heritage can support many aspects of wellbeing and confidence.

Drawing upon such evidence, Project Rejuvenate aimed to providing meaningful change in the lives of disadvantaged students through heritage. The project began with detailed feasibility and planning (2019-20) and then a development year (2021-22) which tested out logistics and practicalities, enabled feedback from participants and maintained and development local partnerships. The learnings from those projects fed directly into the details for the current main pilot.

The development phase was funded by Historic England and Wessex Archaeology. The pilot project that is the subject of this report was generously funded by The Historic England Foundation, The Swire Trust, Edward Vinson 1957 Charity and Rockthorn.

The pilot comprised two projects, one in Wiltshire and one in Kent, led by Wessex Archaeology and Isle Heritage CIC respectively. Both projects were inter-related and were fully co-ordinated throughout under the Rejuvenate umbrella, directed by a common project board.

### Feasibility study (summary)

A feasibility study for Project Rejuvenate was carried out in 2022. The Kent study was funded by Historic England, whilst the Wiltshire study was funded by Wessex Archaeology. The Kent study was undertaken by Isle Heritage CIC and was completed on 29th September 2022 (Partridge 2022).

The feasibility study was undertaken to further develop and test approaches to creating and running heritage-based interventions with young people who are at risk of coming, or have come, into contact with the criminal justice system. In Kent, this development stage

saw the establishment of a partnership with the Kent Youth Justice Team (KYJT) to undertake two feasibility sessions in which a number of young people participated.

From the conclusion drawn from the feasibility study it was possible to re-evaluate and adjust the design of the forthcoming pilot program to ensure it was tailored to provide the best opportunities for the young people involved.

In this early stage, the establishment and creation of working partnerships was critical to the future of the project. The success of this project was linked to the enthusiasm for the realisation of the project aims by all the partners. The lessons learned by all those involved in the Kent feasibility study directly contributed to the successful delivery of the Kent Rejuvenate pilot.

## Project Rejuvenate: Kent

The Kent Rejuvenate Pilot was based around a model of eight half-day activity sessions, held at five different locations in east Kent. In this regard it differed from the Wessex pilot by taking place at multiple sites. The other major difference with the Wessex pilot was the source of referrals for young people to take part. In Kent, young people were referred to the Rejuvenate Pilot through the Kent Youth Justice Team. These young people had been directed by a court to undertake a programme of restorative justice with the Kent Youth Justice Team.

The Historic England Project Brief set out the over-arching aims of Rejuvenate. These relate both to direct impacts on the young people participating, and to the learning and development aims that Historic England are hoping to achieve. Isle Heritage CIC was committed to help deliver the over-arching aims of the project. Isle Heritage CIC, like Historic England and Wessex Archaeology, also aimed to develop an understanding of how heritage interventions can assist and support well-being, especially for young people as well as other vulnerable groups, and to learn what works and what does not in this regard.

A specific aim of the Kent pilot was to establish a collaborative network in the county that could form the basis for future projects which use heritage interventions to increase the wellbeing of vulnerable young people in Kent.

## Project delivery

### Project managers and resourcing

The overall Project Rejuvenate pilot was project managed by Paul Vitty of Historic England. Historic England's Project Assurance Officer was Mark Harrison, whilst Linda Monckton, Head of Wellbeing and Inclusion Strategy at Historic England, acted as Project Executive and Budget Holder. Within Isle Heritage CIC the Kent pilot was jointly project managed by Andrew Richardson and Annie Partridge. The budget allocated for the delivery of the Kent pilot project was £30,641.50 (excluding VAT).

### Delivery partners

#### Isle Heritage CIC (project development, liaison, delivery and reporting)

The Isle Heritage team consists of three full-time staff, Andrew Richardson, Annie Partridge and Paul-Samual Armour, all of whom are experienced professional archaeologists with a solid track record in community archaeology and public engagement. Andrew and Annie were the primary staff assigned to this project and had been involved with the design and development of the Kent pilot since the early stages of Rejuvenate. Paul-Samual provided additional support and capacity when required, particularly in the delivery of the activity sessions.

<https://www.facebook.com/IsleHeritage>

#### Kent Youth Justice Team (recruitment, supervision and welfare of young people)

Recruitment of young people to participate in the project was fundamental to its success. The partner in the Kent pilot project was the Kent Youth Justice Team, based within the Children, Young People and Education Service of Kent County Council. This team works across the county of Kent with young people who have become involved with the youth justice system. The team includes case and session workers who accompany and supervise young people undertaking a range of out-of-court disposals and reparations activities. The Kent Youth Justice Team support the young people they work with in undertaking simple formal qualifications as part of their activities.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/young-people/youth-justice/support-for-young-offenders>

#### Land Trust- Fort Burgoyne, Dover (site owner)

The Land Trust owns and manages public open spaces, such as country parks, nature reserves and woodlands for community benefit. They own and manage a major late nineteenth century fortification, Fort Burgoyne, located to the northeast of Dover Castle. This fort was in the hands of the Ministry of Defence until purchased by the Land Trust

within the last decade. The fort continued to be modified during its use by the army and includes First and Second World War and Cold War structures and features.

<https://thelandtrust.org.uk/>

### **White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (site management and assistance with activity, Fort Burgoyne)**

The White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) was established in 1989 to help landowners to care for the special coast and countryside of Dover and Folkestone & Hythe Districts. Funded by 23 organisations, the main partners are Dover District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Kent Country Council, Eurotunnel and Natural England. The Partnership runs an education shelter at Samphire Hoe, and WCCP staff are very experienced at working with volunteers and young people from across the local community. Within Rejuvenate, the main role of the WCCP was to assist with the activity session at Fort Burgoyne.

<https://www.whitecliffscountryside.org.uk/>

### **National Trust – White Cliffs & Winchelsea Portfolio (site owner and assistance with activities, White Cliffs of Dover)**

One of the most iconic landscapes in England, the White Cliffs of Dover occupy both a symbolic and actual role in the history of the British Isles. The National Trust recently acquired a larger landholding behind the cliffs, including very significant historic defence sites associated with the First and Second World Wars in particular. An active cohort of National Trust volunteers assist with the conservation of the natural and historic environment at the site. National Trust staff and volunteers are well-used to running community engagement activities, including with young people. Within the Kent pilot of Rejuvenate, four of the eight activity sessions were held on the National Trust property at the White Cliffs.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-white-cliffs-of-dover>

### **Whitstable Castle Trust (site owner)**

Whitstable Castle Trust manages Whitstable Castle, or Tankerton Towers as it was first known. The castle started life as a residence for the Pearson Family in the late 1790s. The castle received a £3m refurbishment in 2010 and now provides a unique and special venue for weddings, private parties, local classes, corporate and community events. The final activity session within the Kent Rejuvenate pilot commenced at Whitstable Castle.

<https://www.whitstablecastle.co.uk/>

### **Timescapes Kent (assistance with activity, Whitstable Castle and foreshore)**

Timescapes Kent is a community-led group who seek to record and celebrate the diverse archaeology and history of the north Kent coastline, particularly of Seasalter, Whitstable

and Tankerton. They work with a wide range of local and national partners to bring this fragile and eroding past to as wide an audience as possible.

<https://timescapeskent.wordpress.com/>

### Godmersham Park Heritage Centre (site owner)

Godmersham Park Estate occupies a stunningly scenic location in the Stour Valley, within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The landscape is a mixture of woodland, arable land and pasture, with a number of archaeological and historic features to investigate.

Godmersham Park Heritage Centre was opened to the public in 2008, by kind permission of the late Mr John Sunley, of Godmersham Park. The Heritage Centre holds the records of the parishes of Godmersham and Crundale, as well as The Godmersham Park Estate. A small exhibition hall documents the history of the two villages.

Godmersham Park itself was built in 1732 and was once the home of Edward Knight (née Austen), brother to the novelist Jane Austen. The house itself is closed to the public. However, a public footpath runs through part of the estate, offering views of the House and Folly. During the Kent Rejuvenate pilot, access was granted to the wider estate grounds.

<https://godmershamheritage.webs.com/>

### Programme delivery

The Kent pilot programme was delivered over an eight-week period between 10th May and 28th June 2023, with activities taking place every Wednesday between 10:00 to 14:00. All sessions were delivered as planned with no interruptions or cancellations. A minor amendment to the running order was made in order to fit in with low tide at Whitstable.

Table 2 (below) lists the dates, locations and local partners for each of the Kent pilot activity sessions, as delivered. Sessions 2, 4, 5 and 6 took place on the National Trust property at the White Cliffs of Dover, whilst session 7 was planned as a flexible session where the young people participating in the pilot could choose to return to one of the other sites, or to visit a different site. In the event, the decision was taken to visit the Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge for this session. Each session is summarised below.

**Table 2:** Kent Rejuvenate pilot activity sessions.

| <b>Session</b> | <b>Date</b>                     | <b>Location</b>                                 | <b>Local Partners</b>                               |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>1</b>       | Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> May  | Fort Burgoyne                                   | Land Trust/<br>White Cliffs Countryside Partnership |
| <b>2</b>       | Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> May  | White Cliffs                                    | National Trust                                      |
| <b>3</b>       | Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> May  | Godmersham Park                                 | Godmersham Park Heritage Centre                     |
| <b>4</b>       | Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> May  | White Cliffs                                    | National Trust                                      |
| <b>5</b>       | Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> June  | White Cliffs                                    | National Trust                                      |
| <b>6</b>       | Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> June | White Cliffs                                    | National Trust                                      |
| <b>7</b>       | Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> June | Battle of Britain Museum and cemetery, Hawkinge | Not applicable                                      |
| <b>8</b>       | Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> June | Whitstable Castle and Tankerton Slopes          | Whitstable Castle/Timescapes                        |

A total of three young people, anonymised as individuals 'A', 'B' and 'C', participated over the eight weeks. Individuals A, B and C were aged between 14 to 17 years, and all were male. All were resident in urban locations in east Kent. Individuals A and C spoke English as an additional language.

Participant A attended all eight sessions whilst participants B and C attended two sessions each. A least two additional young individuals were due to take part in the pilot but in the event did not make an appearance at any of the sessions. The reasons for not participating ranged from citing illness or injury, disinterest in the session and going on holiday. There was no direct adverse consequence for not participating in a session, but the length of the sessions did mean those who did attend could finish their reparations programs quicker.

## Session 1: Fort Burgoyne

The Kent pilot commenced at Fort Burgoyne, Dover, on Wednesday 10th May with two young people in attendance. Fort Burgoyne (Figure 5) is a late nineteenth-century fort, overlooking the town of Dover and Dover Castle, which lies a short distance to the south-west. The complex includes structures and modifications dating to the twentieth century, especially the Second World War, but also including First World War, inter-war, post-war/Cold War phases.

Isle Heritage CIC and Kent Youth Justice Team staff were accompanied by a member of the White Cliffs Countryside Project, who guided the party around the exterior and interior of the main fort, as well as the West Wing Battery and land to the north.

The primary objective for this session was to introduce the young people participating to the general concept of 'heritage', through the medium of a very large and impressive historic complex, set within a wider landscape of considerable historic significance. A secondary objective was to explore the past from both a collective and individual perspective; asking the question "what does the past mean to you?". The session involved exploration of the fort and its surroundings.

Another important outcome of the session was for the project team and young people to get to know each other, and to start building mutual trust and respect.



**Figure 5:** View across the main parade ground, Fort Burgoyne, Dover.

A key aim was to start to help the young people relate heritage, and the things they were discovering and learning about, to their own or their family's experiences. The relatively recent history of Fort Burgoyne, which was an operational army base into the twenty first century, and with a strong dimension of Second World War history, made this an easier task. Contemporary events such as the war in Ukraine perhaps made the story of past conflicts and threats of invasion evident at Fort Burgoyne especially relevant to everyone in attendance. This certainly helped the young people relate what they were observing and learning to their own lives and times.

The fort also provided very good vantage points, with fine views across Dover towards the Harbour and Western Height, from which to discuss the past of the surrounding landscape, from prehistoric to the Roman, Anglo-Saxon through the medieval, post-medieval and modern periods (Figure 6).



**Figure 6:** View from Fort Burgoyne West Wing, looking towards Dover Harbour.

Two young people, A and B, attended Session 1 at Fort Burgoyne. Both engaged and responded well to the session; A was very enthusiastic, B a less so, both were very positive. The military themes seemed to resonate with them: both asked and answered questions, and proved to be very observant about points of detail, often interpreting the reasons for the construction of defensive features correctly. The vast scale of the complex is impressive, especially features such as the main moat (Figure 7), and the site clearly made a positive impression on the young people attending, and the adults accompanying them.

A range of food was provided for lunch, including snacks such as crisps. Both young people did eat some food, but at this stage their confidence and familiarity with the project team was still developing; in later sessions, they would be eat more and talk more over lunch.



**Figure 7:** The main moat at Fort Burgoyne.

The session concluded with a walk across the open pasture to the north of the fort, which provided an opportunity to talk about and explore the wider setting and view the surrounding landscape. Although close to the urban edge of Dover, this area presents a very rural aspect, and it became clear that the young people were not used to such an environment. When a herd of cattle were encountered, this provoked much interest, and it appears that neither of the young people present had been close to grazing cows before. Overall, the session passed off smoothly without any issues and provided a good start and introduction to the Rejuvenate programme, as planned.

## Session 2: White Cliffs of Dover

This session is summarised below. See [Sessions 2, 4, 5 and 6](#).

## Session 3: Godmersham Park Estate

The third Rejuvenate activity session took place at Godmersham Park Estate on 24th May (the second session at the White Cliffs of Dover is discussed together with sessions 4-6 below). The session was attended by two young people, A and C. A third young person was due to attend but was a no-show and did not subsequently attend any sessions.



**Figure 8:** View looking east across Godmersham Park and the Stour Valley, 24th May 2023.

Godmersham Park Estate is an extensive rural estate situated in the Kent Downs AONB, and featuring areas of arable land, pasture and woodland (Figure 8). Godmersham Park itself is a Grade I listed house, built in 1732, which later became associated with the writer Jane Austen, and it is depicted alongside her on the current Bank of England £10 note. The house is now home to the Association of British Dispensing Opticians and is not open to the public. The Godmersham Park Heritage Centre is housed in a converted farm building on the estate and holds the records of the parishes of Godmersham and Crundale, as well as the records of the Godmersham Park Estate itself, and several other records collections. The Heritage Centre also features an exhibition on the archaeology, history, and natural history of the area.

The Estate features archaeological sites and features dating from the prehistoric through to modern eras. A particularly unusual site is a First World War airship sub-station (known as 'The Airship hole'), which survives as a large sunken feature on one of the fields of the estate. During the WWII a Home Guard auxiliary hide was constructed in this feature by a unit commanded by Peter Fleming, the brother of James Bond author Ian Fleming.

Isle Heritage CIC carried out an exploratory excavation at Godmersham Park in May 2023, in which the Project Rejuvenate group were able to participate. This included the discovery and partial excavation of a building identified by geophysical survey. The current interpretation of this structure is that it is military, possibly First World War, and perhaps associated with the Royal Naval Air Service (later Royal Air Force) presence on the estate.

The session at Godmersham began with a visit to the Heritage Centre, and a brief discussion about the history of the estate. Both young people looked at the exhibits, and a taxidermised display of a white-tailed eagle provoked particular interest (and the question "is it real?"), especially when they were informed that such birds can be seen over southern England today, following a release programme. The young people and the Kent Youth Justice Team staff then joined in the excavation of the possible First World War structure (Figure 9). This was their first experience involving hands-on archaeological work, including the use of hand tools such as trowels, hand shovels and brushes.

Both young people immediately took to this task with great enthusiasm, rapidly exposing and cleaning an area of brick flooring to a high standard (Figure 10) before moving on to complete the excavation of an area of concrete floor (Figure 11).

Following their work on the excavation, both young people then received some introductory instruction on how to operate surveying equipment, before having a lesson on flying a UAV (drone), which they greatly enjoyed (Figure 12).



**Figure 9:** Excavation of the possible military building, Godmersham.  
[Image: Kent Youth Justice Team]



**Figure 10:** Drone image showing an area of brickwork excavated and cleaned up by the young people.



**Figure 11:** Drone image showing an L-shaped section of the excavated WWI building, Godmersham Park.



**Figure 12:** Participants learning to fly a drone, Godmersham Park.  
[Image: Kent Youth Justice Team]

Lunch was eaten outside, with both young people eating and talking in a relaxed way with the rest of the team. It was clear that by this session, their social confidence had increased. After lunch, the young people were led on a walk up to the Airship Hole. This walk lasted approximately 30 minutes each way and provided excellent views of a stunning rural landscape.

It rapidly became clear on the walk that the young people had not been in this kind of rural setting before, and C asked their case worker if the animals in one field were sheep. This starkly underlined the relatively limited and narrow life experience that these young people had had.

The Airship Hole, which is located at the upper end of a valley on the western part of the estate, provided a key feature of interest on the walk. A vertical shaft nearby originally provided access to the Second World War auxiliary hide constructed in the base of the airship hole. One of the young people asked if it was possible to descend this shaft. For obvious safety reasons the answer was 'no', but the request demonstrated clear interest in exploring the structure.

The walk back from the Airship Hole, descending towards Godmersham Park itself, provided a spectacular view of the landscape. Young person A commented, "man, this is a beautiful place" and also "I can't believe I'm at the place on the £10 note". The route passed paddocks with horses, and both young people were delighted to be able to feed grass to them, something they had never done before, eliciting the comment, "I could stand here all day and do this!"

The walk provided a good opportunity for relaxed conversation with both young people. This included discussion with A about the impact the project was having, and had the potential to have, A commenting, "this project could really turn a kid's life around".

On the car journey home, C expressed surprise to their case worker that it was possible for people to own a property as large as that at Godmersham Park, and that people were able to keep and ride horses, again underlining the narrow life experience of these young people from an urban background, living in rented accommodation. There is no doubt that the visit to Godmersham Park had provided a view of a world beyond their experience to-date, but which existed within only a few miles of their homes.

## Sessions 2, 4, 5 and 6: The White Cliffs of Dover

Four of the sessions (half of the total) were held on the National Trust property at the White Cliffs of Dover. The White Cliffs themselves are amongst the most famous landscapes in the world, with stunning views across the Straits of Dover to the French coast. The National Trust estate here includes the South Foreland Lighthouse, as well as an extensive range of military remains, of which the most notable are the Second World War coastal gun batteries at Wanstone (with positions for two 15inch guns) and Fan Bay (positions for three 6inch guns), as well as the D2 Heavy Anti-Aircraft (HAA) battery.

The first session at the White Cliffs, which took place on 17th May, was purely exploratory, as at Fort Burgoyne. Two young people, A and C, attended. The Isle Heritage CIC and Kent Youth Justice Team staff were accompanied by a National Trust staff member, and several National Trust volunteers. Together the group explored the D2 HAA battery, the position of 'Jane', one of the 15inch guns at Wanstone battery, and Fan Bay. The latter included a guided tour into the tunnels of the Fan Bay Deep shelter, with the associated concrete Sound Mirrors that date to the interwar period. Both young people present fully engaged with these activities, and expressed a lot of interest in the sites, structures and general landscape. They exhibited string interest in themes of military history and conflict archaeology, and greatly enjoyed exploring the underground and interior spaces at the White Cliffs. The tour into the Fan Bay Deep shelter also enabled an opportunity to discuss much deeper timescales, with a discussion about the formation of the Chalk, 100 to 60 million years before present.

The second session at the White Cliffs (and fourth in the overall activity programme) took place on 31st May. This was attended by A, but unfortunately B was unable to attend due to an injury (unrelated to the project) and C due to illness. This session saw the commencement of one of the main project activities, the clearance and partial excavation of a collapsed air raid shelter (one of several referred to by the National Trust as an 'elephant hut') associated with the D2 HAA battery. This would have taken the form of a concrete and brick structure, with an arched corrugated iron roof, which would originally have been covered with soil and turfed. In the post-war period, the roof had collapsed into the interior, which had then become heavily overgrown (Figure 13).

The first task was to clear vegetation from the entrance and interior, and to begin exposing the remains of the end walls and excavating soil over the collapsed roof. Young person A took to this work with great energy and enthusiasm, using a spade, trowel and brush (Figure 14). Unfortunately, the session had to be cut short at 13:00 after A was stung on the face by a wasp. First aid was administered, and a follow-up via the Kent Youth Justice Team confirmed no adverse effects beyond the initial pain of the sting. This did not deter A from returning for all future sessions.



**Figure 13:** View looking west into collapsed shelter, D2 HAA battery, 31st May 2023.



**Figure 14:** Young person A clearing shelter D2, 31st May 2023.

Clearance of the shelter at D2 continued during session 5, with A again in attendance. Good progress was made, with A working enthusiastically alongside Isle Heritage CIC, Kent Youth Justice Team and National Trust staff. Again, a range of hand tools were used. Young person A suggested that if spoil was used to fill the entrance slope, then it would be possible to get a wheelbarrow into the shelter interior, thus speeding up the work. This was a sensible suggestion and was adopted by the team.

Session 6, on 14th June, was attended by young people A and B; the second session to be attended by B, who had missed previous sessions due to an unrelated injury. Isle Heritage CIC staff were made aware that B was 'having a bad week', due to being expelled from school two days before. Along with Isle Heritage CIC, Kent Youth Justice Team and National Trust staff, the Historic England project manager attended, taking in the activity.

Clearance of the D2 shelter continued and constituted most of the session, although the 'Jane' and 'Clem' gun positions and magazines at Wanstone battery were also visited. Young person A resumed digging and clearance of the D2 shelter with enthusiasm. Young person B chose to clear vegetation from the west end of the shelter, using clippers and a spade. This task they undertook enthusiastically and effectively, despite the considerable heat of the day. After a while, B paused and remarked "if I was paid to do this I could do it every day". This resulted in a conversation about career prospects in outdoor jobs and B expressed an interest in such a path, musing that it would be good to be a self-employed gardener or engineer and saying, "I don't want a boss". At the conclusion of the work activity, good progress had been made on the clearance of the D2 shelter (Figures 15-16).



**Figure 15:** D2 shelter looking west, 14th June 2023.



**Figure 16:** D2 shelter looking east, 14th June 2023.

The session ended with lunch in the crew shelter of 'Jane'. In contrast to the lunch on session 1 at Fort Burgoyne, the available food was eagerly consumed, and there was plenty of conversation, in which the young people fully participated. The crew shelter holds displays and exhibits, including a dummy 3.7inc anti-aircraft shell, of the type that would have been used at the D2 HAA battery. Both A and B expressed interest and lifted it to test its weight.

Overall, the four sessions at the White Cliffs were very successful, building the confidence, skills and knowledge of the young people who participated, and growing the sense of trust and mutual respect between them and the project team.

### Session 7: Battle of Britain Museum and Hawkinge cemetery

This session, which took place on 21st June, comprised a visit to the Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge, followed by a visit to the neighbouring cemetery to view war graves dating to the Second World War. This idea for this session developed during the activity programme in consultation with the young people and responded to their interest in the Second World War, which had become very apparent during the earlier sessions.

The Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge occupies part of the former RAF Hawkinge station, the nearest fighter station to enemy-occupied France during the Second World War. The museum, operated by the Kent Battle of Britain Museum Trust, has been based at this site since 1980, and includes the world's largest collection of Battle of Britain

memorabilia, with parts of over 700 crashed aircraft on display ([www.kbobm.org](http://www.kbobm.org)). For security reasons no photography by visitors is permitted at museum.

This session was attended by young person A, who had not visited the site before and indeed had no idea it existed, despite a grandparent living very nearby (“just around the corner”). Young person A engaged extremely well with the museum, and clearly enjoyed the visit, spending a lot of time looking at the many exhibits and reading the accompanying text. Indeed, A appeared to become very immersed, and steadily worked around the entire museum, viewing and reading most if not all exhibits. Eventually, A had to be hurried along as it was time for lunch in the museum café; had time allowed, A would clearly have remained longer, which was a very positive result. After lunch, the group visited the war graves in neighbouring Hawkinge cemetery, many of which dated to the Battle of Britain; some being those of pilots mentioned in the museum (Figure 17).



**Figure 17:** British, Commonwealth and German war graves at Hawkinge cemetery showing rows of white stone war graves.

The visit to the cemetery helped to bring home the reality of war and provided opportunity for reflection and conversation about the cost of human conflict, as well as more general themes around life, death and family. Young person A talked about his family and noted the youth of many of those buried in the war graves, and that some of the graves bore surnames that were in his own recent ancestry. These included some amongst the German war dead at Hawkinge (Figure 18). The presence of some eastern European nationals amongst the allied graves also had personal resonance.



**Figure 18:** German war graves at Hawkinge in a dedicated section of the cemetery.

## Session 8: Whitstable Castle and Tankerton Slopes

The final activity session of the Kent Rejuvenate pilot took place on 28th June at Whitstable Castle and the near-by Tankerton Slopes. It was attended by Young Person A. The session began with an illustrated talk in the castle grounds by Mark Harrison, on the history of the area, highlighting evidence for an extensive network of WWII anti-invasion defences along the north Kent coast. This was followed by a short visit to the castle, including a rooftop view towards the Isle of Sheppey. Thereafter, the party walked along Tankerton Slopes, looking for evidence of defensive and other historic structures on land and out to sea (Figure 19).

Young Person A was clearly interested in the castle and the evidence of military defences at Tankerton, actively engaging in identifying and pointing out evidence of defence archaeology, both in the form of crop marks and surviving features/structures and joined in comparing the area with historic maps and photographs.



**Figure 19:** Looking out to sea from Tankerton Slopes.

Following the walk along Tankerton Slopes, the group visited a local café for lunch. This provided an opportunity for conversation and reflection about the Kent pilot. Young Person A had attended all eight sessions, and they talked openly, in a relaxed setting, about their experiences on the project, the impact it had made on them, and its potential for the future and for helping other young people. The rest of the project team who were present, including Isle Heritage CIC and Kent Youth Justice Team staff, as well as Mark Harrison, also reflected on their experience of the pilot, and all agreed it was had been a success, and that it would be well worth continuing Rejuvenate, and the model piloted in Kent. The detailed evaluation of the Kent pilot is covered below.

## Evaluation

### What does this evaluation process seek to find out?

Evaluation of the project and its impact took place during and after the delivery of the activity programme. The evaluation process sought out the opinions of the young people on the programme, their wellbeing, as well of those of the adults participating.

As part of the project development, self-determination theory has been used by Wessex Archaeology to create a project specific framework for evaluation. For the Kent pilot, Isle Heritage CIC intended to adopt a similar approach to project evaluation. Self-determination theory is based on the idea that people are naturally curious and self-motivated, and this plays an important role in well-being. However, this natural state can be reduced by the social environment people live in. It is argued that people have greater self-determination when they have three basic psychological needs met. These are autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

**Autonomy** – people being able to take direct action that will result in change and being in control of their own behaviour

**Competence** – people learning different skills and feeling they have the skills needed to achieve their goals

**Relatedness** – people experiencing a sense of belonging and attachment to other people

The observations and informal questions asked during the evaluation were framed to gather this information.

### How was the evaluation undertaken?

The evaluation was supported by Heritage Insider Ltd. The evaluation method proposed in the Project Design had to be adapted to factor in changes to the planned schedule and in response to the audience reaction to what was asked of them. The proposed evaluation method is summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3:** Evaluation methods used.

| <b>Measure</b>      | <b>Evaluation method</b>   | <b>When/How often</b>  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| <b>Quantitative</b> | Statistics from Kent Youth Justice Team – to include data on those taking part plus a control group, will include attendance data, achievement and behaviour points and feedback from KYJT caseworkers | Statistics for participants and control group will be gathered Pre, during and post project in conjunction with the KYJT |
| <b>Quantitative</b> | Recording of number of sessions and numbers taking part including young people, staff and facilitators   | Each session   |
| <b>Quantitative</b> | Recognised, ethically approved wellbeing evaluation toolkit to be used to enable project to be compared with other national/regional projects e.g. UCL Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit               | Pre and post 8 sessions  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Photos and film footage if possible, but this must be agreed in advance with KYJT and must maintain the young peoples' anonymity   | Each session   |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Evaluation form for staff accompanying YP on sessions  | Each session   |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Evaluation form for KYJT lead  | After 8th session  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | General notes on each session including any quotes from the young people   | End of each session  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Informal interviews with some staff or facilitators  | Throughout   |

## Evaluation of young people

A casual, informal, approach was adopted to data collection from the young people. An attempt was made to follow the Wessex model of using an evaluation star but this was not successful. The reasons behind this are discussed below in limitations.

When designing the data collection process, it became clear that the young people who would be coming to the sessions might not be able to understand certain terms, such as the concepts of 'heritage', or 'wellbeing'. English was also a second language for the majority of participants.

Another consideration was that deep questions about emotional state might not be welcome, especially by those individuals who may be going through other forms of support through the Kent Youth Justice Team or social services. There was a concern about question fatigue or that the answers may be unrealistic because those asking them were strangers. Therefore, it was designed to record the thoughts and feelings of the

participants through observation and non-intrusive questioning, kept in note form at the end of each session.

A deeper discussion was conducted with young person A who attended all the sessions at the final session.

## Evaluation of project partners and adults

The adults participating were also informally questioned during and at the end of each session. Helen Dingham, the lead from Kent Youth Justice Team, attended a Project Learning Review with Heritage Insider Ltd (Appendix 1) and answered follow up questions. An interview and further questioning with the National Trust followed the final session, while the other project partners were informally interviewed on the day and surveyed after the event.

## Limitations and adaptations

The limitations in the evaluation methodology were:

- Access to the young people before the sessions was not possible. The Kent Youth Justice Team had invited the young people to come to the sessions but did not know for certain who would engage until the day. Therefore, pre-session evaluation was not possible.
- An attempt at the Wessex Evaluation Star was unsuccessful and abandoned. The initial problem was that there was no access to the participants before the sessions, so the star had to be completed at the start of the second session and the participants felt like they were holding up the activity. Despite the excellent support of the Kent Youth Justice Team there was a problem with one participant's focus on the activity, their understanding of what was being asked (English was their second language), and the fact they simply did not want to do it. The second participant filled in the star with maximum positive scores from the outset because they were excited about the program and enjoyed being on it.
- Access to the young people after they leave the Kent Youth Justice Team reparations program is limited to non-existent. Once the reparations program is completed the young people leave the program and are no longer part of the Kent Youth Justice Team system. Therefore, follow up contact is impossible with two of the participants.
- The case workers accompanying the young people were the same for each session, so evaluation was done informally as the sessions went along rather than through formalised evaluation sheets. The case workers are employed on zero-hours contracts on a casual basis, so keeping the evaluation in-session put less pressure on them to work outside of hours and increased the chances of gaining feedback.

- The small number of participating young people (x3) limited the potential for quantitative evaluation. Only one young person was able to attend all eight sessions and was available for discussion and reflection on the final session.

## Key Findings

### Delivering intended outcomes

There were five intended outcomes for young people participating in the project. These draw upon self-determination theory. They were:

**Outcome 1:** Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them.

**Outcome 2:** Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy).

**Outcome 3:** Young people will have tried new skills (competence).

**Outcome 4:** Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness).

**Outcome 5:** Young People will have improved wellbeing.

The overall intended impact of participation in the project was that young people will be more motivated to attend school/college and engage with educational provision.

Progress against these outcomes is summarised and discussed below.

### Outcome 1 – Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them

#### Outputs

- Meaningful and high-quality heritage engagement
- Connecting young people to tangible local heritage
- Immersive heritage experiences

#### Evidence

Before the sessions none of the young people had been to any of the sites visited, or indeed had been to any sites they recognised as being historic. The KYJT staff had visited, or were aware of, some of the sites through their own leisure interests. By using the overarching theme of twentieth-century military archaeology, the sites were linked by a common thread, and therefore allowed the build-up of knowledge and a bigger picture of the landscape in the past.

Through conversation, IHCIC staff were able to demonstrate to the group that heritage and historic sites are all around us. One particular example was a young person living near the memorial park to the Tontine Street Air Raid in Folkestone who had no idea about why the park existed. They were interested in hearing the story and promised to go and visit the site outside of the program.

Deeper conversations took place at the Hawkinge Cemetery (containing Commonwealth War Graves, Session 7) around the Battle of Britain, especially focussing on the Eastern

European connection due to the participant's heritage. This visit, in particular, was enjoyed by a case worker who liked having the conversations about family history and interconnectivity.

The enthusiasm for local history and landscape shown by the KYJT helped in bringing the sessions to life. Their engagement in the activities set a positive tone for the sessions and their questions encouraged the young people to ask their own.

**Observations in sessions:**

**Young Person Reflection:** The young person who attended the Battle of Britain Museum in Hawkinge loved it so much they didn't want to leave and cited it as their favourite activity out of the whole program. They stated that they had no idea that any of 'this stuff' existed and the program gave them a fresh interest in history.

**KYJT Staff Reflection:** The staff at the KYJT were very excited about being involved the project. Two of the case workers had an interest in local history and walked the area regularly with their families. They were impressed with the 'hidden history' aspect of the sessions and spoke of looking out for open days etc so they could bring their families to the sites. The young person who attended every session had a noticeable sense of connection to local heritage sites.

**IHCIC Staff Reflection:** All three young people, but especially A, exhibited an interest in the heritage sites visited, and in the histories connected with them. Where these touched on their own lives or that of their families, this created additional interest and response. The sense of personal relevance of the local (east Kent) heritage was increased by the global aspect of events such as the Second World War, which meant that it was possible to draw strands of connection to the young peoples' family history, even where their ancestry was not British.

**Outcome 2 – Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy)**

**Outputs**

- Young person agency – project outputs will be co-designed with participants
- Provision of 'safe space' – an environment for young people to engage in the activity free from threat
- Young people offered freedom of choice in activities they engage with, alternative activities always available to suit individual needs

## Evidence

Part of the success of the program was its adaptability. Whilst the young people had not had a chance to design the project from the outset, they had a say in the session timetabling and activities run during each session. After the end of each session the next session would be clearly discussed with the team so any alterations could be planned for in advance.

Being open and clear with this audience was absolutely necessary. It was clearly explained to them at the start of each session what would happen and broadly when, and at the end of each session an outline of the next session would be explained. Any new people were introduced fully as soon as possible, and their role in the session was made clear to all. This was intended to alleviate anxieties around unfamiliar circumstances, locations, or people.

Within the sessions breaks and lunch were a team decision with flexibility in the schedule to allow for changes in the weather, energy and engagement levels, and to reflect on the activity being undertaken. End times were flexible, but were not earlier than 13.30. It was noted by the KYJT that given the opportunity the young people would choose to go home earlier so this was used on a session-by-session basis depending on how the participants were managing within the activity.

Session 7 was a 'free session' whereby the participants had a choice of where to go. The Battle of Britain Museum and the Commonwealth War Graves at Hawkinge Cemetery were selected as they connected with the conflict archaeology aspect of the project.

## Observations in sessions

**Young Person Reflection:** In the final interview young person A mentioned that they thought the program should be designed in consultation with young people. They suggested they could help in the future as they had been on the project and had an idea of what young people like. They are interested in mentoring other young people.

**IHCIC Staff Reflection:** Throughout the activity sessions, the young people were kept informed, consulted, and their views and ideas listened to and often acted upon. This helped underpin the positive relationship that developed between the project team and the young people, which undoubtedly made the entire project easier to run. It is very important to develop trust and mutual respect when working with young people, even more so when working with those from troubled backgrounds. This was achieved during the Kent pilot.

**KYJT observation:** The young people felt they were a valued member of the team thanks to everyone always giving them various opportunities and trusting them to get involved with each activity, as well as being given opportunities to give their opinions and feel they were listened to. All partners were patient with us and provided excellent support whenever it was needed.

## Outcome 3 – Young people will have tried new skills (competence)

### Outputs

- Archaeological excavation and recording/observational skills (reading the landscape/buildings)/outdoor working and living

### Evidence

The project successfully introduced the participants to a variety of new skills and experiences. The main focus was on archaeological excavation and using tools, but there were also opportunities to fly a drone, use 3D scanning on a phone, and take photographs. The walks in the landscape afforded the opportunity to think about what lies beneath our feet and how land-scapes change over time.

**AQA modules.** The KYJT said 'The participants were really pleased with their AQA certificates. For one in particular, who had felt he got a lot out of the project, the certificates were proof that he had achieved something by participating in the project. For another, he was pleased to receive certificates as his AQAs (from this and other projects) are the only certificates he has ever received, and he felt his mum would be proud.'

### Observations in sessions

**KYJT observation:** I believe this project has shown the young people that they can accomplish a variety of tasks if they put their mind to it and have the capability to learn new skills as well as develop those they may already have.

**IHCIC Staff Reflection:** Learning new skills, even the basics of how to use tools correctly, allowed the participants to contribute to the overall aims of the project (the excavation of the Second World War hut) and gave them a sense of purpose as the team worked towards a common goal.

## Outcome 4 – Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness)

### Outputs

- Socialisation opportunities
- Celebration and recognition of achievements

### Evidence

Socialisation opportunities were available throughout the sessions. Fostering a sense of community through team building was essential in allowing conversations to start and flow. It also permitted individuals to take a step back if needed and listen to others talk. There was no pressure to join in and people could enter and leave conversations with ease. The relaxed, positive, nature of the adult conversations were designed to make the participants feel at ease in the group even if they did not want to join in with the conversation.

Achievements were celebrated on an individual basis. The KYJT had advised that this audience do not necessarily enjoy a lot of public focus, so it was decided to keep celebrations of achievements to a quieter, individual level. This had the added bonus of giving meaningful feedback on an individual level.

The building of relationships was particularly prevalent within this project due to the small group size and the repeated attendance of the same individuals.

### **Observations in sessions**

**KYJT reflection:** the opportunity to meet and socialise with a variety of people the participants would not normally have contact with in their day to day lives had a positive impact widening their world to new, positive opportunities.

**IHCIC Staff Reflection:** The fact that everyone involved in the project worked together on the archaeological tasks (including excavation) contributed to a sense of togetherness and the development of a team spirit. The young people seemed to respond very well to this and to enjoy being part of the whole group, rather than feeling that they were a separate group supervised by adults.

## **Outcome 5 – Young People will have improved wellbeing**

### **Outputs**

5 ways to wellbeing:

**Connect:** socialisation opportunities

**Be active:** outdoor activity and active tasks (building/walking etc.)

**Take notice:** time for reflection

**Learn:** Opportunities to learn new skills, creative and practical - activity that is engaging, enjoyable and mood enhancing

**Give:** Team building activities, opportunities to support each other with tricky tasks

The wellbeing of the participants was noted to have generally improved in the sessions, even for those who attended only two sessions. All participants were able to demonstrate a willingness to participate, or a positive improvement, in all of the 5 ways to wellbeing categories. This was observed in a marked change in their behaviour from the first time they came to the time that they left, being more relaxed, open, and enjoying themselves through the activity. Conversations with the KYJT on the way home were positive and they conveyed to the team that they had enjoyed the experience.

Wellbeing outside of the sessions was challenging to track. The participant who attended all sessions reflected on their experience in Session 8 (recorded below) but the two that came to two sessions could only be charted through reports via the KYJT. Neither showed any marked improvement in wellbeing, although both had recently been through challenging times outside of the program.

### **Observations in sessions**

**Young person feedback:** Throughout the program there had been comments about how the sessions had really helped change their mindset. They said the program had helped them have a different perspective on life and that they had moved away from negativity and negative thoughts. The sessions had inspired them to look into history more deeply, but also consider teaching/mentoring others.

**KYJT observation:** This project took young people out of their comfort zones but showed them they could make a difference which has helped build confidence and boost self-esteem.

**IHCIC Staff Reflection:** The young people certainly showed increased confidence and willingness to engage in conversation through the course of the project. Young person A, who attended all activity sessions, appeared to grow more self-assured and spoke in very positive terms about their hopes and aspirations for the future. Young person B, though experiencing very recent difficulties including expulsion from school, improved in temperament during the course of their second activity session, and expressed ambitions about a future career working outdoors. This is evidence of activity sessions contributing to developing more positive mindsets, and taking the young peoples' minds off sources of stress and anxiety, by providing them with focussed activities that they enjoyed.

**Impact – Young people will be more motivated to attend school/college and engage with educational provision**

### **Evidence**

The two participants that attended only two sessions each showed no difference in their motivation to attend, or remain, in education. One of the participants had recently entered a new school but then been expelled during the Rejuvenate program. After the expulsion they attended Session 6, on the encouragement of the KYJT, and seemed to enjoy the informal, physical and outdoor nature of the session. The KYJT stated that they wanted this person to attend the session because they thought the positivity and physical activity would distract them from the negative start to the week.

The participant who attended all of the sessions was looking forward to starting afresh at college. They saw the college course as a way to start anew and bring a positive mindset to possible futures, instead of dwelling on negative choices made in the past. They also commented that they would consider a Historic England apprenticeship.

**Young person feedback:** Throughout the program there had been comments about how the sessions had really helped their mindset (see also Outcome 5 – Improved Wellbeing). They had shared that they were starting a new college course and were excited to start afresh with a positive mindset. They were looking forward to their future and could see a way out of the negativity from the past.

## Key Stakeholder Observations

### Kent Youth Justice Team

The Kent Youth Justice Team were the main partner of this project. Helen Dignam, Restorative Justice Practitioner for South & East Kent, was the main point of contact through this phase of the project and attended every session with the young people. Helen was able to feedback on how the project worked for the Kent team, and how they observed an impact on the young people who participated.

### Evaluation of the project

The evaluation of the project as a whole was undertaken through informal questioning at the sessions, a formal Project Learning Review (Appendix 1), and follow up questions via digital means.

The results of the evaluation were overwhelmingly positive. During the first session the case workers commented on how much they had enjoyed themselves, and by Session 3 they had said this was the best reparations program they had ever been on. It is worth noting that one of the commenters had been involved in social services and the penal system for over 40 years. The enjoyment of the sessions stemmed from interest in the topic and locations visited, the welcoming nature of the sessions, and the comradery of the team. They all fed back on how much the participants enjoyed the sessions from conversations on the way home. They felt the experience was of a high quality for all involved, and they were pleased they were able to give the young people experiences they don't usually have access too.

Helen commented that getting young people to attend sessions is always an issue for the Kent Youth Justice Team. The reasons vary but include anxiety about trying new things, leaving familiar spaces, meeting new adults, and generally being out of their safe spaces. She said to have two participants come back for multiple sessions and one for all eight sessions was a positive bonus.

From a practical perspective the sessions were well-planned, and the meetings held between Isle Heritage CIC and the Kent Youth Justice Team were critical in setting expectations and planning. The flexibility to change the activities and timings of the day was seen as a positive as it allowed for adaptable responses to the participants' circumstances on the day. External factors play a huge part in how the young people behave and engage, so having multiple options and a casual feel to the sessions made the project less intimidating for all involved. Having the sessions at multiple locations had a mixed reaction as the progress in one location was exciting to see, but the variety of places visited kept the project interesting and widened the experience. Perhaps there could be a visit off site on alternative weeks, rather than visiting the same place multiple weeks in a row.

Finally, the low numbers in the group allowed for a better individual experience for the young people taking part. Large groups do not work well for this audience and the Kent Youth Justice Team has had experience of negative responses to large group activities in the past. The young people had more individual attention from the adults, something that they were clearly in need of, and they were not distracted by the behaviour or attitudes of their peers.

### **Impact on the participants**

The audience this project was aimed at is a challenging one. These young people have complex lives and external issues often resulting in a perceived lack of focus, disinterest, or even session refusal. The fact that there was a participant that came to all eight sessions, and two that came to two each is testament to the strength of this project.

As part of the project evaluation, the Kent Youth Justice Team were asked a number of questions about Rejuvenate's impact on the participants. The questions and answers that they elicited are as follows:

How has the experience of being part of the project reduced the likelihood of reoffending?

The project was a great experience for those who participated and really opened their eyes to what goes on in the world and what positive opportunities there are for them; this was not only through the activities, but also through socialising with a variety of people and having discussions that they may not usually have in their day-to-day lives.

Was being part of a team a positive factor in the young peoples' experience on the project, did they feel valued, and what impact did that have on them?

Everyone on the project enjoyed being part of the team. The participants were welcomed on to the project and built up a good rapport and working relationship with everyone they came across. They felt comfortable enough to initiate conversations and speak freely; this applies to the participant who attended every session as well as those who attended less often. They felt they were a valued member of the team thanks to everyone always giving them various opportunities and trusting them to get involved with each activity, as well as being given opportunities to give their opinions and feel they were listened to. All partners were patient with us and provided excellent support whenever it was needed. Everyone on the project made the participants feel they had achieved something, that they had done something worthwhile and they had made a real difference.

Has the project given the young people emotional and practical skills that will help them build a positive future that reduces their vulnerability to the influence of crime?

I believe this project has shown the young people that they can accomplish a variety of tasks if they put their mind to it and have the capability to learn new skills as well as develop those they may already have. This project took young people out of their comfort zones but showed them they could make a difference which has helped build confidence

and boost self-esteem. This has potential to help reduce their vulnerability to the influence of crime.

Have you noticed more positive outcomes or attitudes from the young people who participated in Rejuvenate, compared to those who did not take part, or in comparison to their behaviours/attitudes before they took part?

This is a difficult one to answer! There is only one participant that I personally have had continued involvement with so I can't personally comment on a change in behaviour/attitude with each young person, but I can tell you that Youth Justice Practitioners have contacted me to say how positive their young people have been when speaking about the project. From discussions with the workers, I know there have been several positive discussions since the project with a couple of the participants and they have spoken very highly of the project which has shown an improvement in their attitude regarding what they can accomplish and what they are willing to try. One in particular has been more open minded as to what he will have a go at as it gave him a confidence boost. It would be great if we have the opportunity for you and Annie to work with our young people again because I feel that being introduced to you both and learning something completely different really helped to bring them out of their shells and although I can't really compare it with those who didn't participate, I do think we have some young people that would really have benefitted from the project and would also come out of their shells with you.

The Kent Youth Justice Team were also asked to measure improvement, or lack of it, against a number of criteria. Their response is set out in Table 4 below.

**Table 4:** Measurement of improvement

| <b>Area of potential change</b>   | <b>Decrease, no difference, improvement, or significant improvement?</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>Rate how it improved their ability to interact with others and communicate with adults</b>               | Improvement   |
| <b>Did participating in the project have a positive impact on their relationship with their case worker</b> | No difference   |
| <b>How do you feel Rejuvenate has helped them to manage emotions and feel positive?</b>                     | I don't feel I can comment on managing emotions as of yet but, following the sessions, there did seem to be an improvement in their positivity                      |
| <b>Ability to demonstrate positive attributes such as perseverance, openness to learning</b>                | Improvement   |
| <b>Ability to complete a task or follow instructions</b>  | Improvement   |
| <b>Ability to manage their safety whilst undertaking an activity</b>  | No difference – although they showed the ability to work safely in various activities, they would still benefit with support and supervision to ensure their safety |
| <b>Motivation to build a positive future</b>  | Improvement – particularly the young person who attended every session  |
| <b>Confidence/ sense of achievement gained at participating in work/training</b>                            | Improvement   |
| <b>Sense of connection to local heritage and desire to see it protected</b>                                 | Significant improvement for the young person who attended every session and knew of sites that were spoken about.   |

## Historic England

Paul Vitty, the project manager of Project Rejuvenate provided responses to the questions below in regard to the project.

### **Why is the program so important to Historic England?**

Historic England's mission is to improve people's lives by championing and protecting the historic environment. Historic England Corporate Strategy 2023 - 2026 sets out six key areas of focus. Project Rejuvenate is an integral part of delivering the first two:

1. Through heritage we help improve civic pride, prosperity, wellbeing and opportunity for the people and places in most need of our support.
2. Everyone can connect with, enjoy, and benefit from the historic environment.

The project provides both Historic England and the wider sector with important knowledge, research and evidence of how heritage-based activities can be used to deliver meaningful positive intervention in young peoples' lives.

We strongly believe in the role the historic environment can play in making a positive difference to people's lives.

We hope the project provided key learning and a potentially scalable model that could be adapted into a nationally curated collaboration that can enhance the wellbeing and skills of vulnerable young people.

### **What do you see as the benefits of running this project?**

History and heritage activities have a unique power to engage and empower people. The core focus must remain the benefit the project has to the children participating. A pilot is about learning and, ultimately, we hope the learning from this will be used to expand how the heritage sector is able to have a positive impact on the life chances and wellbeing of children. Engaging and providing positive activities to young people vulnerable to the influence of crime also has a wider impact on the communities in which they live.

A correctly delivered intervention with a young person involved in anti-social behaviour or criminal activities on a first offence drastically reduces the likelihood they will continue with such activities.

Historic England as a national body is uniquely placed to help empower and embolden organisations across civil society to work together for the benefit of the wider community.

### **What one thing would you change?**

I would like any future project to have pathways in place for the children to sustain the positive change and to empower them to continue their personal and skills development.

### **How does this fit into next steps for Historic England?**

As set out in my first answer, Historic England's future strategy aims to evolve the way in which it can empower the heritage sector to collaborate and widen the potential benefit of heritage-based activities to the widest range of people.

The children's participation and dedication to the project has enabled us to research and explore how archaeology and an exploration of local and national history can make a positive contribution to the lives of children. This evidence will now enable us to seek to scale up the project and, I hope, embolden the organisation and wider sector to be confident and ambitious in the role it should be playing in the lives of children currently disengaged with education and society. History and heritage-based activities have a unique power to engage and inspire.

### **National Trust**

The National Trust was a key partner in this project allowing open access over four sessions to their property at the White Cliffs of Dover. An early career member of staff, Beatrice Hayley, was allocated to support the team during the activity sessions at the White Cliffs, and she was the predominant voice in the evaluation of the project. The National Trust also provided feedback on the project in general.

### **How does this project fit in with the Trust's wider work?**

This project helped future proof the aims set out in the National Trust's 'Everyone Welcome' scheme, part of their 'For everyone, for ever' five-year strategy. 'Everyone Welcome' intends to welcome everyone of all backgrounds, faiths, and ages, with no barriers to involvement. Everyone is to feel welcome and part of a team. In addition, the National Trust were undertaking a National Lottery Heritage Funded project 'Bringing Back the Big Guns', which allowed for additional support to the Rejuvenate project as both projects had shared aims.

### **What has worked well?**

Everyone was treated as equals and set out as part of a team. The partnership (IHCIC, NT, KYJT) was successful in terms of leading by example which led to the participants opening up because they were comfortable with the dynamic. The KYJT were excellent at engaging, getting involved, and bringing the right energy to the sessions. The small group size helped because there was less peer pressure to knock on positive influences or actions.

The young people enjoyed realising their own progress. Repeated attendance was beneficial for self-reflection, charting progress, and relationship building.

This project gave the opportunity for someone to feel welcome in a space they were not familiar with.

### **What was challenging?**

Initially the biggest challenge was holding their attention. The first session on site (Session 2; tour of Fan Bay and Wanstone Battery) was too long and too much information in a short space of time. The other sessions (Sessions 4, 5, & 6; excavation) were broken down better with more flexibility in break times. The participants need space to process and reacted better to being involved and not lectured to. There needs to be a balance between the planned timetable of activities and their individual focus.

### **Where did you see it make a difference?**

In how to plan futures and careers, with a change in attitudes to jobs, employments, and futures. Interactions with adults and accessing the countryside became less intimidating or scary. With the expansion of horizons came the change in ideas about career paths.

In Beatrice's own career she says that she had never worked with young people before. She recognised that she can over plan and overthink when organising her own projects but having worked on this project has realised that there is a benefit to taking a step back, being more relaxed, and building in flexibility to adapt to the audience. Being adaptable and allowing for organic growth that works is going to help her become successful in the future. For her, it has been a brilliant experience.

### **If you ran it again, what changes would you make?**

Intersperse the tours and educational lectures with physical activities so there's not too much information at once and there is space to relax and ask questions. Some of the tours may have felt a bit like being at school.

Add in a short session with one of the volunteers to explain what volunteering is and what they do. There is potential to add in a work experience or work shadowing day where the participants can meet other volunteers and staff members to see the sorts of jobs available at the NT. There is scope to offer mentoring or job Q&A's for some individuals too. This would help move in a positive direction.

### **Is this audience an important one for your organisation to engage with? If so, why?**

Dover has some of the worst areas of social deprivation in country. Access and wellbeing are key parts of the National Trust's core strategy and we are always looking for new ways to engage with local neighbours, those who are marginalised and users of our sites. For the NLHF funded Wanstone Rediscovered Project, volunteering, training and wellbeing support are all key aims of the project and the property was particularly keen to work with Rejuvenate and the Youth Justice team given our shared aims. Local youth can sometimes have a negative effect on the heritage which can often lead to a cycle of vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Helping to install interest and pride within our local youth was a key aim for the National Trust.

### **What benefits does it have?**

Apart from the clear benefit of acquiring new skills, the program has helped develop the soft skills of the candidates. Working within a team of volunteers in an informal setting can help progress social skills and confidence for the individuals. It also brings the benefit of working with a large team of people with different expertise and experiences, as well as promotes networking. It can also highlight a different social or career path that they may not have originally considered. The informal and relaxed atmosphere can be important in getting young people to thrive in a different setting.

The scheme also provides benefits to volunteers who receive a sense of pride by helping to develop and support young people with additional needs. This can help with the volunteers' wellbeing but it also fosters a legacy and creates a volunteer structure which can benefit other candidates in the future.

Fostering interest and pride in the importance of local heritage can also help to reduce the issues of antisocial behaviour, litter and vandalism which historic sites often face with regularity.

### **Would you be interested in participating in a future program?**

The National Trust is keen to continue working with Isle Heritage and Project Rejuvenate, throughout the duration of the Wanstone project and beyond.

## Timescapes, Whitstable

The Timescapes evaluation questions were answered by Mark Harrison who was the session leader at the final session, Session 8. Mark was an integral part to the interview with the young person in the final session.

### **Is this audience an important one for your organisation to engage with? If so, why?**

Yes. Evidence has shown that a correctly delivered intervention will result in reduced levels of reoffending.

### **What benefits does it have?**

Reduced levels of reoffending, which in turn will result in enhanced feelings of confidence and well-being within our local communities.

### **What one thing would you change about the program?**

We are at a very early stage in the process. I can see a range of opportunities to develop a range of delivery models to meet local and national need.

## Lessons learned and recommendations

### Successes

- Two of the participants returned to the sessions even though they had finished, or were close to finishing, their reparation hours.
- The building of partnership networks between the Kent Youth Justice Team and local heritage organisations has been a tremendous success. The Kent Youth Justice Team have gone ahead to set up meetings with the National Trust to continue with the connection started in the project.
- Two of the participants showed notable changes in attitude towards career paths and their futures. One participant was using entry to college as a fresh start and another younger participant had enjoyed the experience of working outside so much that he said he wanted to set up his own business.
- Giving the young people new experiences outside of their comfort zones widened their horizons giving them a different perspective on life. Many of the participants had never left their towns, or even the local streets they lived on, so just being in the countryside was a new experience. Widening those experiences has had a positive impact on their wellbeing.

### AQA Modules

The Youth Justice Service are registered with the AQA Unit Aware Scheme, a unit-based learning scheme that allows the learner to build up a portfolio of certificates to evidence their skills, knowledge and experience. As such it was possible to offer AQA qualifications as part of this programme.

Annie Partridge and Helen Dingham gained approval for the adaption of a few of the modules to provide a better fit for the programme. One individual achieved nine certificates, whilst two achieved one each. Collectively, the units achieved were:

- History: A Site Study
- Visiting an historic monument
- Using Archaeological Tools
- Exploring an historic ruin
- Discovering Local History
- Introduction to World War Two Defences
- World War Two Defences
- Work and Service in the Community: Environment
- Basic Teamwork Skills

Feedback from the Kent Youth Justice Team tells us that these AQA modules were well received by the participants.

## Blockers and challenges

- The young people were often not appropriately equipped for the outdoors, particularly in their choice of footwear. Despite reminders from the Kent Youth Justice Team and participation in earlier sessions they preferred wearing sliders. Wellington boots were available, and their availability for use was communicated clearly by Isle Heritage CIC and Kent Youth Justice Team staff, but the young people preferred to wear their sliders or trainers. Whilst on this occasion Isle Heritage CIC and Kent Youth Justice Team did not feel participation should be hindered by choice of footwear, it is a factor that may need addressing on future projects.
- The young people were not used to having to be physically or mentally engaged for long periods of time. The sessions were set to last four hours but often finished slightly sooner due to fatigue. Extending the sessions on future projects beyond four hours with this type of audience would be ill-advised.
- The fluid nature of the Kent Youth Justice Team system had to be taken into consideration when planning the project and expectations on data gathering beyond the immediate session should be factored into evaluation plans. Young people enter and leave the system regularly, with the length of time dictated by the number of reparation hours they need to complete, so securing an individual for a set period of time is purely down to chance. There are opportunities for the young people to continue participating in the project once their reparation hours are completed, but this is down to the individual.

- The limiting beliefs of the participants in their own abilities and their anxieties about trying new experiences is a barrier to participation. When the participants did attend the sessions, they enjoyed themselves and all returned for one or more additional sessions.
- Once the young people have finished their reparation hours they are no longer part of the Youth Justice system, and therefore not contactable by the Kent Youth Justice Team. This means that longitudinal data on their experiences will not be obtainable.

## Legacy and recommendations

The Kent Rejuvenate pilot shows strong potential for the development of an enduring legacy. Firstly, the staff of Isle Heritage CIC have demonstrated a capability and affinity for this kind of work, and are willing, and intend, to undertake similar work with young people in the future. A strong and positive relationship has been established with the Kent Youth Justice Team, who have also expressed a desire to work in future with Isle Heritage CIC, as well as with other project partners such as the National Trust.

The Rejuvenate approach piloted in Kent works and does not require significant refinement. It is worth repeating, ideally on a sustainable annual basis. With adaptation the project could also be run in other parts of the country partnering with other local Youth Justice Teams.

## Conclusions from the Kent Pilot

In conclusion, the Kent pilot scheme for Project Rejuvenate was a success. The project demonstrates that engaging young people at risk of falling into, or already involved with, the criminal justice system within the historic environment has clear and defined benefits for them and subsequently for society as a whole. The pilot also demonstrated that there is potential for a wider application of the approach, both locally (within Kent) and regionally. Specifically, the project demonstrated:

- The potential of heritage to change the mindsets of young people for the better.
- That there is a desire for this type of project amongst Youth Justice Teams.
- That there are a wide range of partners willing and able to support and work with this audience of young people.
- The wellbeing benefits extend to the adults supporting and participating in the project and are not limited to the younger participants.

In short, the Kent Rejuvenate pilot developed a local network of partner organisations that have demonstrated their ability to work together to successfully deliver Rejuvenate. The pilot demonstrated that the Rejuvenate approach works for some young people who have had very challenging starts to life with positive benefits through engagement with their local historic environment. It showed that an approach which respected and actively

involved the young people as part of a wider team, and gave them a sense of autonomy, was the right one. Finally, the Kent Rejuvenate pilot showed that many young peoples' lives are lived within surprisingly narrow boundaries of space and time, but by giving them the opportunity to experience new places, and to learn about the past that is evidenced all around them, their lives can be enriched, their minds can be broadened, and their chances of living a better life, away from crime improved. The Rejuvenate model works, and merits repeating.

## Part 3: Wiltshire Pilot



## Summary of Wiltshire project

This report details the Wiltshire pilot of 'Project Rejuvenate', funded via Historic England's philanthropy programme. This pilot involved young people from a state secondary school in Wiltshire who took part in child-led outdoor activities and experiences guided by archaeologists and outdoor learning specialists. The project was led by Wessex Archaeology in partnership with St Joseph's Catholic School in Salisbury, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and artist, Emma Kerr. The primary aim of the pilot was to explore how engagement with heritage could help improve the behaviour, wellbeing and life-chances of the young people and to positively impact their engagement with learning provision.

The programme of activities took place over twelve weeks, at multiple locations. The Wiltshire pilot adopted a pedagogical approach to learning by purposely diluting the hierarchy so that facilitators, experts and young people could learn from each other. The programme encouraged the development of life skills, nurtured independent interests and boosted participant confidence. Whilst this project was time and resource intensive, it delivered clear benefits for the individuals involved. Based on the findings to-date, participation was a universally positive experience, both for the young people and for the project facilitators.

"My parents were disappointed in my grades, but I feel proud and happy of what I've achieved here." – **Participant**

"Making a piece of land an owned piece of land is by buying it, but to make it important to someone or some people is by spending important and valuable time on that land. That's what makes it our place. Not by buying it but caring for it." – **Participant**

"I've grown in confidence and my family have noticed this too. It makes me feel good, people want to listen." – **Participant**

"I feel more capable in what I can do. I'm revising more for tests, and I want to know more stuff, I feel my confidence has increased." – **Participant**

Overall, this evaluation reveals a positive, promising set of findings from the Wiltshire Rejuvenate pilot. Findings demonstrate that the young people who took part in the pilot:

**Were more motivated to attend school:** Average attendance rates for participating students increased from 85.5% to 89.8% after taking part in the pilot project.

**Felt that local heritage is something for them:** Young people appreciated and valued the power of holding and understanding a piece of history that hasn't been held by another human for thousands of years. The young people demonstrated a deep connection to the settlement and community that they collectively built. This space became a part of their shared heritage, and they recognised that they were leaving evidence behind for future generations to find.

**Felt that their views and ideas are valued:** The young people's self-belief and self-confidence greatly increased over the duration of the project. The young people's improved skills may have contributed to their sense of empowerment and increased their sense of feeling useful and like valued members of the group.

**Tried new skills:** The young people developed considerable confidence in trying out and developing both practical and life skills. In particular, young people gained confidence in communicating with new people, working as a team, working independently, perseverance and creativity.

**Enjoyed spending time with other people:** The young people benefitted from the peer to peer approach from learning, they felt relaxed and accepted by the group, which encouraged them to step outside of their comfort zones and engage in more social interactions.

**Have improved wellbeing:** There is clear evidence for improvements to wellbeing for those engaged with the pilot, ranging from new social connections through finding friendship, to noticing nature, feeling welcome and accepted, feeling proud, feeling recognised for their achievements and having a more positive outlook.

## Introduction

### Background

The Project Rejuvenate Pilot is the culmination of three years' work looking at how Historic England might work collectively to use heritage and archaeology as a tool for building self-determination and resilience in vulnerable young people. The project takes the form of a working partnership between archaeological and heritage organisations, a state secondary school in Wiltshire and youth justice team in Kent, both working to create interventions that will help students encountering significant disadvantage to reach their full potential.

There is clear evidence that vulnerable and disadvantaged young people are significantly more likely to face expulsion and/or are at greater risk of becoming involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour<sup>54</sup> There is also evidence that being exposed to a collaborative and creative environment and working with heritage can support many aspects of wellbeing and confidence<sup>55</sup>

This project brings together these two sets of knowledge, and work at providing meaningful change in the lives of vulnerable young people through heritage. The project began with a detailed feasibility study<sup>56</sup> setting out a comprehensive theoretical underpinning for the pilot programmes in terms of addressing some of the causal factors behind young offending and in promoting wellbeing. Following this, trial sessions were conducted in 2022 to test and develop ideas and local partnerships. The learnings from these projects feed directly into the details for this main pilot stage project (stage four), delivered in 2023.

The development phase was funded by Historic England and Wessex Archaeology. This pilot is generously funded by The Historic England Foundation, The Swire Trust, Edward Vinson 1957 Charity and Rockthorn.

### Feasibility Study (Summary)

In the feasibility study, six design criteria were established as core components of the young person participant experience in the conceptual model, and they are:

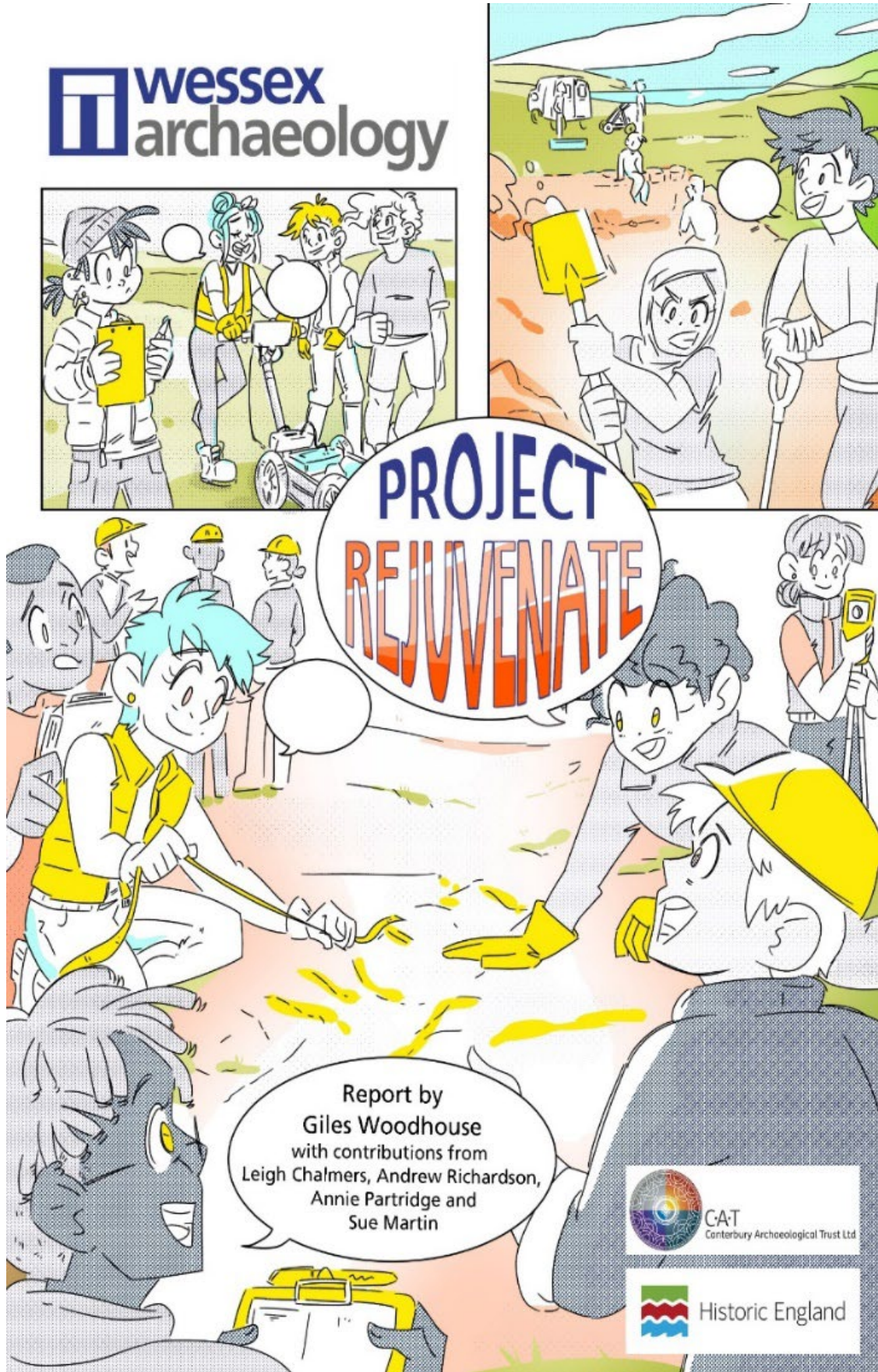
- Outdoor activity
- Socialisation opportunities
- Young person agency
- Creative activity
- Meaningful and high-quality engagement
- Celebration and recognition of achievements

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<sup>54</sup> Woodhouse et al. (2021) *Project Rejuvenate Final Report*.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*



**Figure 20:** Project Rejuvenate cover image from feasibility study report. Wessex Archaeology, 2021

It also outlined that this heritage intervention has the potential to support:

- Engagement with education,
- Skills development for employment,
- The promotion of physical and mental health,
- Developing life skills and has scope to provide role models for promoting pro-social behaviours,
- Building self-efficacy and a positive outlook in young people.

Trial sessions (3 online and 3 onsite) were conducted by Wessex Archaeology in early 2022 and positively highlighted the short-term impact on the wellbeing of the young people taking part and the potential impact should the delivery period be extended. It offered practical/logistical considerations to make for a longer-term pilot project and offered an opportunity to develop good working relationships with our project partners; St Joseph's Catholic School, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Emma Kerr and begin building potential archaeology related activities alongside team members at Wessex Archaeology.

Key learnings from the Trial period for the pilot:

- This trial period emphasised the importance of ensuring that the young people taking part have autonomy over the activities that they take part in.
- Difficult weather conditions on an exposed landscape during this trial project (delivered February-March at Coombe Bissett) majorly influenced the time period and locations chosen for the pilot (March-July – at Langford Lakes during the colder months and Coombe Bissett on warmer months). It was also ensured that budget was allocated to protective equipment/clothing for each young person taking part.
- It highlighted the importance of building a strong and carefully recruited project team.
- A clear MoU for the learning provider is essential in ensuring that we are supplied with the evaluation and data that we need.
- The trial sessions also highlighted that some wellbeing activities can lead to young people opening up about issues and it is essential that a school staff member who is responsible for wellbeing takes an active part in the project.

## Project Rejuvenate: Wiltshire

This report is the culmination of an evaluation undertaken of the Wiltshire arm of the Project Rejuvenate Pilot ('the WA project'), led by Wessex Archaeology, and delivered in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust ('WWT'), St Joseph's Catholic School in Salisbury ('SJCS') and artist Emma Kerr.



**Figure 21:** Test pit dig at Coombe Bissett Down.

The WA Project delivered a 12-week programme of child-led outdoor activities and experiences guided by archaeologists and outdoor learning specialists for a group of 12, year 9 pupils (aged 13-14) from March to July 2023. Sessions were delivered across 3 sites: Langford Lakes Nature Reserve (WWT), Butser Ancient Farm, and Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve (WWT), with an aim to explore the ability of archaeology and heritage activities, combined with outdoor learning, to promote the wellbeing of young people facing challenges engaging with school and reduced attendance. It encouraged the development of new skills and nurtured opportunities for young people to build relationships, trust and confidence in trying out new things

The project evaluation aimed to evidence the difference that this project has made to 5 areas of outcome:

**Outcome 1:** Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them.

**Outcome 2:** Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy).

**Outcome 3:** Young people will have tried new skills (competence).

**Outcome 4:** Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness).

**Outcome 5:** Young People will have improved wellbeing.

**Impact:** Young people will be more motivated to engage with educational provision.



**Figure 22:** Using foraged materials to build a miniature round house.

The sessions were designed as a mini project in themselves with an overriding theme of prehistoric living and creating a shared settlement. Experts from the Wessex Archaeology team ran the archaeology activities which explored environmental archaeology, geoarchaeology and fieldwork. The activities delivered by WWT included primitive skills-based learning such as building temporary structures, fire lighting, cooking over an open fire and using tools. Artist, Emma Kerr led creative activities to complement those led by WWT and WA and provide opportunities for reflection. The activities were designed to be collaborative and flexible, and the project team worked together to make connections between the activities of the sessions and respond to the interests of the young people.

Evaluation was a key part of the project both to measure the impact on the young people and enable useful learning to take place which can then be used to inform future projects.

## Project delivery

### Working in Partnership

#### Wessex Archaeology (WA)

The WA Project was managed by Wessex Archaeology. Bringing together archaeologists, researchers and educators with digital creators, and film makers, Wessex Archaeology use the value and understanding of archaeology and heritage to design meaningful and effective engagement activities and connect people with learning, with each other and with their environment.

#### St Joseph's Catholic school (SJCS)

SJCS were chosen following a successful partnership during the test phase of the project. We worked directly with the Safeguarding and Pastoral team and the Year 9 Director of Learning to select students and support the delivery of every session. Each session was attended by a member of the pastoral team, and the school's Data and Media Manager.



**Figure 23:** A supervised young person learning how to ignite fire using a tinder bundle.

## Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT)

WWT were chosen as the main delivery partner due to their extensive work providing positive outdoor experiences and enriching learning opportunities for young people struggling in a formal school setting, or who require additional support. Through task focussed outdoor activities and forest school, they provide young people with the opportunity to develop social skills and build self-esteem which can stimulate re-engagement with school learning.



**Figure 24:** A young person handling and illustrating prehistoric artefacts from Wessex Archaeology's handling collection.

## Emma Kerr, artist

Emma Kerr is a freelance art educator. Since 2009 she has enjoyed working with individuals and communities by leading projects and workshops in art galleries, museums, and schools. Emma's purpose is to find ways of engaging everyone's creative potential, which drives her passion for art education. Activities delivered by Emma included making natural paints, mini sketchbook making, pottery, writing stories, using ink made from alder cones and dyeing fabrics with natural materials.

## Programme Delivery

### Student selection

The school were made responsible for the student selection process, students were selected based on attendance (below 90%), known Special Education Needs, known mental health issues and pupil premium. The selection process was delivered by the schools' Safeguarding and Welfare Officer and the Year 9 Director of Learning. The school were given a deadline of January 31<sup>st</sup> to have completed the student selection process (both the participating and control group) to allow time for planning and form completion, unfortunately this was delayed by over a month which greatly impacted on project timings and the student welcome experience.

The initial plan was to make two visits to the school for project initiation to meet the students and explain the project, in the end it was only possible to complete one session in school the week before the project start date. None of the students at this point knew what they had been signed up for. To give them a sense of the project they were met by two of the key delivery partners (WA and WWT) and were shown the highlight film from the trial sessions. The film was very successful in easing anxieties and aiding understanding of the project.



**Figure 25:** A young boy building a prehistoric style round house using foraged wood.

## Project locations

**Table 5:** Project locations

| Location                             | Description  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>St Joseph’s Catholic School</b>   | Co-educational 11-16 secondary school in Salisbury   |
| <b>Langford Lakes Nature Reserve</b> | Nature reserve in the Wylde Valley between Salisbury and Warminster. This site has a visitor centre, where WWT runs educational activities.  |
| <b>Coombe Bissett Down</b>           | Located south-west of Salisbury, encompassing rolling downland, steep slopes and a dry valley. Chalk downland with a rich diversity of plants, insects and birds. People have had a close relationship with this site for millennia. Artefacts from the Iron Age and Roman period have been found here.                          |
| <b>Butser Ancient Farm</b>           | Butser Ancient Farm is an open-air experimental archaeology museum and active research centre, learning about the past by recreating it. Wessex Archaeology worked with Butser Ancient Farm to design and build an ancient Neolithic building – Horton House - based on original excavations delivered by the WA fieldwork team. |



**Figure 26:** A cohort at Coombe Bissett Down.

## Staff engaged in delivery

**Table 6:** Staff engaged in delivery.

| <b>Company</b>   | <b>Name</b>                   | <b>Job Title</b>  | <b>Role</b>   | <b>Sessions delivered</b> |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| <b>WA</b>        | Ruth Yoxon                    | Heritage Inclusion Officer                                  | Project Manager   | All                       |
| <b>WWT</b>       | Sarah Tribe                   | Youth Education and Wellbeing (YEW) Team Leader             | Delivery partner<br>Location, first aid and forest school lead                                  | All                       |
| <b>WWT</b>       | Russell Brookes               | Forest School Assistant                                     | Assisting on forest school elements and fire management   | 6/14                      |
| <b>Freelance</b> | Emma Kerr                     | Artist  | Delivery partner<br>Led on creative activities alongside project delivery                       | 10/14                     |
| <b>WA</b>        | Leigh Chalmers                | Heritage Inclusion Manager                                  | Evaluation Lead   | 3/14                      |
| <b>WA</b>        | Tom Westhead / Liza Sinkevich | Photographer and Videographer / multimedia content producer | Filming and photography of project. Demonstrating and supporting use of cameras/go pros with YP | 11/14                     |
| <b>WA</b>        | Megan Scantlebury             | Environmental Archaeologist                                 | Session 2 – Foraging  | 1/14                      |
| <b>WA</b>        | Ines Lopez Doriga             | Environmental Officer                                       | Sessions 3 and 6 – Dyes and prehistoric cooking   | 2/14                      |
| <b>WA</b>        | Callum Nye                    | Fieldwork Archaeologist                                     | Sessions 7 and 8 – Test pitting   | 2/14                      |
| <b>WA</b>        | Steve Legg                    | Fieldwork Archaeologist                                     | Test pitting and geoarchaeology   | 4/14                      |
| <b>WA</b>        | Miriam Weinbren               | Geoarchaeologist  | Supporting test pitting   | 1/14                      |
| <b>WA</b>        | Daniel Young                  | Geoarchaeologist  | Geoarchaeology (augering)   | 1/14                      |
| <b>WA</b>        | Gareth Chaffey                | Assistant Regional Manager South and West                   | Butser Ancient Farm (Talk about the Neolithic house that Wessex helped to build)                | 1/14                      |

N.B. Sessions delivered includes the welcome session at school and the celebration evening.

## School project support staff

**Table 7:** School project support staff.

| <b>Name</b>          | <b>Job Title</b>                          | <b>Role</b>   | <b>Sessions attended</b> |
|----------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Mrs Rose</b>      | Safeguarding and Welfare Officer          | Lead school contact<br>Wellbeing and safeguarding lead (alternate days) | 10/14                    |
| <b>Miss Brignall</b> | Pastoral Manager                          | Wellbeing and safeguarding lead (alternate days)                        | 5/14                     |
| <b>Miss Clark</b>    | Data and Media Manager                    | Student support   | 13/14                    |
| <b>Mr Ford</b>       | Senior Leader of Behaviour and Attendance | School support (for Butser trip)  | 1/14                     |
| <b>Miss Moss</b>     | Year 9 Director of Learning               | Evaluation support  | 2/14                     |

## Activities delivered

**Table 8:** Locations and activities

| <b>Session</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Location</b>             | <b>Student attendance</b> | <b>Reasons for Absence</b>   | <b>Core activities delivered</b>   |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| <b>1</b>       | 17/03/23    | St Joseph's Catholic School | 10/12                     | Unknown  | Introductions to project and delivery partners. Watched film from trial sessions. Q&A. Completed student referral forms. |
| <b>2</b>       | 21/03/23    | Langford Lakes              | 12/12                     | x1 student swapped from student who attended welcome session in school | Welcome session – explore site, introductions, discuss the idea of a settlement  |
| <b>3</b>       | 29/03/23    | Langford Lakes              | 11/12                     | Sickness   | Environmental Archaeology – foraging, building structures. Wellbeing check in.   |
| <b>4</b>       | 18/04/23    | Langford Lakes              | 12/12                     | N/A  | Environmental Archaeology – making dyes, storytelling, building structures   |
| <b>5</b>       | 25/04/23    | Langford Lakes              | 12/12                     | N/A  | Continue building, whittling, making fire  |

| <b>Session</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Location</b>             | <b>Student attendance</b> | <b>Reasons for Absence</b>   | <b>Core activities delivered</b>  |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| 6              | 02/05/23    | Langford Lakes              | 7/12                      | Strike day – school not open. Some decided not to join by choice, some listed sickness                           | Continue building, mapping their settlement, wading and in the river – mid project evaluation                         |
| 7              | 09/05/23    | Langford Lakes              | 12/12                     | N/A  | Environmental archaeology – prehistoric food, cooking in an underground pit. Continued building structures            |
| 8              | 16/05/23    | Coombe Bissett              | 10/11                     | x1 left project (moved house), x1 no return following unauthorised absence, sickness and difficulties at home    | Fieldwork – first test pit day  |
| 9              | 23/05/23    | Coombe Bissett              | 7/10                      | x1 on school trip, x2 sickness   | Fieldwork and Geoarchaeology – second test pit day  |
| 10             | 06/06/23    | Coombe Bissett              | 7/10                      | x1 no return, x2 sickness, x1 unauthorised   | Geoarchaeology – augering / walking and mapping the landscape   |
| 11             | 13/06/23    | Coombe Bissett              | 9/10                      | x1 no return, x1 sickness  | Group choice day – creative activities: pottery, needle felting, weaving, cordage                                     |
| 12             | 20/06/23    | Butser Ancient Farm         | 9/10                      | x1 no return, x1 unauthorised  | Trip to see the Neolithic house that Wessex helped to build – tour of site, exploring building materials through time |
| 13             | 27/06/23    | Langford Lakes              | 7/10                      | x3 Mock exams – confusion, x1 no return  | Final celebratory session – talking heads for film/pond dipping/project reflections                                   |
| 14             | 12/07/23    | St Joseph's Catholic School | 2/10                      | Whole year event. All invited, low attendance across the year group. x1 attended with parents, x1 attended alone | Celebration evening – at Year 9 Awards Ceremony   |

## Project outputs

Below gives an overview of delivered outputs against the intended outcomes.

### **Outcome 1 – Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them.**

To deliver this outcome the young people:

- Learnt how to live outside, inspired by the lives of our ancestors
- Built temporary structures to create a ‘settlement’ at Langford Lakes
- Practiced experimental archaeology with environmental archaeologists:
  - Foraged for natural materials for cooking, dyeing and artwork; Made natural dyes using prehistoric techniques; Cooked hazelnuts and tubers in an underground pit; Made Neolithic style flatbread and cheese; Made fire using different methods (modern and prehistoric)
- Tried out geoarchaeology on site using an auger and examined LiDAR photography to better understand the landscape at Coombe Bissett
- Dug test pits with fieldwork archaeologists at Coombe Bissett
- Handled real archaeological finds to better understand their own finds
- Learnt about how to examine flint to understand how humans might have used it in the past
- Visited an open-air experimental archaeology museum to explore reconstructed prehistoric buildings and learn ancient building techniques
- Took part in creative activities inspired by prehistoric examples:
  - Carved chalk pendants; clay pots; nettle cordage; used flint as a scraper to prepare hazel; weaving using natural materials; whittled totems

### **Outcome 2 – Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy)**

To deliver this outcome young people:

- Had the chance to reflect on each session
- Taken part in a creative activity
- Been involved in the creation of a display/celebration event to celebrate the project
- Young person agency – project outputs will be co-designed with participants
- Provision of ‘safe space’ – an environment for young people to engage in the activity free from threat
- Young people offered freedom of choice in activities they engage with, alternative activities always available to suit individual needs

### **Outcome 3 – Young people will have tried new skills (competence)**

To deliver this outcome young people will have:

- Taken part in a creative activity
- Take part in a practical archaeology activities
- Take part in outdoor activities such as fire lighting and cooking over the fire

### **Outcome 4 – Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness)**

To deliver this outcome young people will have:

- Taken part in practical activities as part of a team
- Spent time together relaxing around the fire
- Socialisation opportunities
- Celebration and recognition of achievements

### **Outcome 5 – Young People will have improved wellbeing**

To deliver this outcome young people will have:

- Young people will have completed the project
- **Connect:** socialisation opportunities
- **Be active:** outdoor activity and active tasks (building/walking etc.)
- **Take notice:** activities and time for reflection (walking, framing landscape, journaling)
- **Learn:** Opportunities to learn new skills, creative and practical - activity that is engaging, enjoyable and mood enhancing
- **Give:** Team building activities, opportunities to support each other with tricky tasks

## Evaluation

Evaluation of the WA Project was delivered by the WA Heritage Inclusion Team, with specialist mentoring support from independent evaluator Heritage Insider Ltd. Both monitoring and evaluation can be used to demonstrate what the project delivered, what difference it made and to gather lessons learnt to inform future projects. This report provides an overview of the results of an evaluation of the WA Project.

### What does this evaluation process seek to find out?

#### Project Aims

The project evaluation framework is designed to address the following three aims:

- **Efficacy in prevention and promoting wellbeing** – Demonstrate that heritage themed interventions can support vulnerable young people in relation to satisfying basic psychological needs as described in self-determination theory that may work towards prevention of youth offending, increase engagement with educational provision and contribute to wellbeing.
- **Longitudinal impact** – To determine whether the impact of an intervention has a lasting effect, i.e., endures beyond the duration of the intervention (longitudinal).
- **Distinctive heritage causal factors** – Identify what parts of a heritage themed intervention are effective in building autonomy, competence and relatedness and understand why they have that effect in the young person. Moreover, it seeks to determine:
  - what the heritage intervention directly contributes towards intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (i.e., exclusively related to the heritage component of the activity)
  - and how the non-heritage factors/elements contribute to motivation (e.g. effect of facilitators as role models).

Overall, this evaluation report aims to demonstrate whether this type of heritage intervention is a good model and has potential to be scaled up in the future.

#### Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory has been used to create a project specific framework for evaluation, this is based on the idea that people are naturally curious and self-motivated, and this plays an important role in well-being. However, this natural state can be reduced by the social environment people live in. It is argued that people have greater self-determination when they have three basic psychological needs met. These are autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

**Autonomy** – people being able to take direct action that will result in change and being in control of their own behaviour.

**Competence** – people learning different skills and feeling they have the skills needed to achieve their goals.

**Relatedness** – people experiencing a sense of belonging and attachment to other people.

This evaluation framework aims to measure whether young people’s autonomy, competence and relatedness increased as a result of taking part in the trial sessions and therefore whether their wellbeing increased.



**Figure 27:** Chalk bashing at Butser Ancient Farm using a wooden mallet to make clunch, a prehistoric building material.

To meet these aims, Project Rejuvenate has employed a mixed methods evaluation framework comprising both quantitative and qualitative measures. Additionally, the project evaluation approach has included measures to assess any longer-term benefits of the intervention. Furthermore, in addressing potential causes of bias in evaluating a new programme intervention, alongside the school, a control group has been identified.

## Intended Outcomes

The 5 intended outcomes for the project, in relation to self-determination theory were as follows:

**Outcome 1:** Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them.

**Outcome 2:** Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy).

**Outcome 3:** Young people will have tried new skills (competence).

**Outcome 4:** Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness).

**Outcome 5:** Young People will have improved wellbeing.



**Figure 28:** Whittling a mini tote at Langford Lakes.

## How was the evaluation undertaken?

A range of data collected by the Project team has been drawn upon to create a robust and rounded view of the project's journey including what has been delivered (outputs) and what difference it has made (outcomes and impact). This approach also enabled investigation into the extent to which the aims and objectives has been met, and the success of key project activities. It also allows us to explore challenges the project encountered and opportunities it created.



**Figure 29:** Contributing to a group map of the settlement.



**Figure 30:** Creative activity at Coombe Bissett, with caption 'It's hard to capture emotion unless you are really present to experience it'.

## Data collection methods

**Table 9:** Data collection methods

| <b>Measure</b>      | <b>Evaluation method</b>  | <b>When/How often</b>  |
|---------------------|---|--|
| <b>Quantitative</b> | Participant wellbeing statements  | Beginning, middle and end  |
| <b>Quantitative</b> | Session register  | Every session  |
| <b>Quantitative</b> | Longitudinal data – for the study and control group. Collected daily by the school, recording attendance, BPs and APs | The duration of the project, plus 10 weeks prior and until the end of term |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Photographic/Film records of activity – including talking heads from young people and staff involved                  | Most sessions  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Participant interviews  | Beginning, middle and end  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Participant thinking books/thinking out loud  | Every session  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Participant heritage and creativity questionnaire   | Beginning and end  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Review of original project plans and documents, and reports created by the project                                    | End  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Ad-hoc qualitative quotes from participants and stakeholders  | Ad hoc   |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Reflective journal for staff engaged in delivery  | Every session  |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Feedback forms from leaders and form tutors   | End of project   |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Informal interviews with staff and facilitators   | Ad hoc   |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | End of project evaluation session with delivery partners to discuss key findings and lessons learn                    | End of project   |
| <b>Qualitative</b>  | Jar of Awesome – anonymous participant and facilitator qualitative quotes, shared with the group                      | From session 5 – collected at the end of the day                           |

## Limitations

There are always factors which limit an evaluation. The WA team have worked to minimise the impact of limitations and bias on the evaluation process and findings. A few specific examples of limitations on the evaluation of the WA project are outlined below:

### Planning

- The external evaluators were appointed partway through the funded project and there was therefore limited time available in which to collect additional data.
- Mid-term evaluation was pushed forward by one week to session 5 to allow time to produce the mid-term evaluation report, unfortunately this day coincided with strike day and only 7 participants were present.

### Attendance

Attendance varied on the weeks that evaluation was delivered with participants. 12 participants completed the first set of evaluation questions and the wellbeing star (this includes one participant that arrived on session 2 and does not include one participant that left after session 1), then only 7 participants were present for both the mid-term evaluations on session 5 and end of project evaluation on session 12. The participants present on sessions 5 and 12 were different, only 4 participants were present for both.

### Understanding project long-term impacts

Some impacts cannot be fully investigated during this summative evaluation. This is because either there is not yet enough information available to fully assess what difference the project may have made or because the outcomes have not yet fully been realised. For example: Finishing the project 4 weeks before the end of term and delivering the evaluation report mid-September has meant that it hasn't been possible to gather the amount of longitudinal data intended. A tight end-of-term timeline has meant that one 2 weeks of post project data has been made available from the school. This has meant that clear outcomes relating to changes in attendance and accrument of behaviour and achievement points cannot be established.

### Rigour and trustworthiness

Every effort was made to ensure that the young people were not influenced by their perceptions of how the school or project staff might have wanted them to respond, although this is always a risk. The qualitative and the quantitative data collection for the participants was administered either independently (wellbeing stars) or by a colleague from Wessex Archaeology who was not part of the main project team (interviews), this was so that the evaluator collecting feedback from the young people could remain as impartial as possible.

Participants were engaged in giving feedback about findings. As findings were emerging, ideas were checked out with participants in informal interviews.

The themes from the interviews, observations and questionnaires have been collated and synthesised into themes within the intended outcomes. All these themes have been published as part of the evaluation report and contribute to an audit trail of how the findings, conclusions and recommendations were developed.

## Key Findings

### Delivering intended outcomes – Qualitative Data

Outcome 1: Young people will feel that local heritage is something for them

Selected example of how the WA Project has achieved against this outcome.

#### **Variety (in both activities and people)**

The WA Project involved delivering a range of opportunities for the young people to learn about the natural and cultural heritage of their local area, helping them to better understand how their ancestors would have used the natural environment to build settlements and community and gain a deeper connection with the natural world.

The project was designed in 4 parts:

- Building a settlement inspired by our prehistoric ancestors at Langford Lakes
- Researching and digging up evidence of our ancestors at Coombe Bissett
- Visiting reconstructed prehistoric buildings based on real evidence at Butser Ancient Farm
- Returning to our settlement to celebrate and reflect – in 1000 years, what evidence might people find of our settlement?



**Figure 31:** Proudly holding up two sherds of pottery found on the test pit dig, session 8.

The young people had the unique opportunity to engage with outdoor learning specialists, an artist, environmental archaeologists, geoarchaeologists, fieldwork archaeologists' and experimental archaeologists. Feedback from the young people demonstrates that the programme of activities delivered, and breadth of expertise called upon has been engaging and impactful for participants, clearly leading to altered perceptions of and deeper connections to the natural environment, their local heritage and themselves.

Feedback shows that the young people have really enjoyed engaging with people who are passionate about what they do. Working with the fieldwork team on the test pit dig was a particularly strong example of this. One archaeologist delivering the test pitting activity specialises in flint and their enthusiasm for the smallest of finds quickly brushed off on the young people. They displayed joy, pride, confidence and enthusiasm when discussing what they had found. When questioned, they demonstrated that they had retained knowledge e.g., identifying signs that flint had been worked by a human, and confidently used language that the experts had modelled. During the test pit dig, the experts understood the need to 'empower' rather than 'impart'.

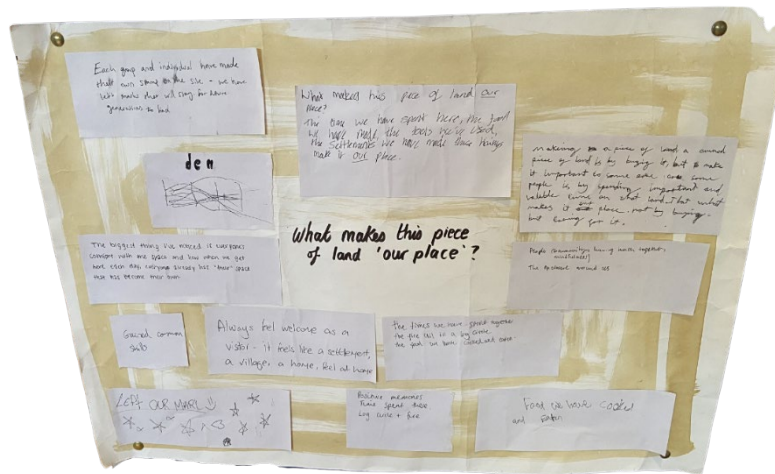
After having an archaeologist confirm that a found piece of flint had definitely been worked by a human, one young person said: "I can't believe that I'm holding something that hasn't been held for hundreds of years" when corrected that the worked flint had in fact been underground for thousands of years, they were beside themselves.



**Figure 32:** Analysing finds with archaeologist Steve, session 7.

## ‘Our Place’

Mid and final session interviews with the young people clearly show that they felt safe and connected to the spaces where the project took place, especially Langford Lakes where they built their settlement. The young people regularly referred to this space as ‘Our Place’ demonstrating a deep connection to the settlement and community that they had collectively built there. This space became a part of their shared heritage, and they recognised that what they were leaving behind in that landscape was much like the physical remains that had been left behind by their ancestors thousands of years ago at Coombe Bissett. This comparison offered discussions around what people in the future would/wouldn’t be able to decipher about them, purely based on the material remains that they had left behind at their settlement.



**Figure 33:** Collective written contributions to the provocation 'What makes this piece of land 'Our Place'?' delivered at Langford Lakes, session 5.

## Supporting evidential quotes

“Here I’ve been able to explore more, and I have an awareness of what’s around me. I feel like I’ve grown into the place, what tools to use. It’s not just a place, it’s home.” –

**Participant**

“Finding the pottery made me feel good.” – **Participant**

“As our settlement grew and as a group we developed a stronger bond with each other, the young people began to refer to the site as ‘Our Place’. It became clear that this had become a safe and welcoming space where the young people felt confident to learn, communicate and take risks. Beginning with this was very important, it created a wonderful foundation for growth and meant that the young people were open to new challenges when we moved site.” – **Delivery partner**

“Each group and individual have made their own stamp on the site – we have left marks that will stay for future generations to find” – **Delivery partner**

In response to the question: “what are you finding out about archaeology?”:

“How things have evolved from what they used to be, wherever you go there could have been someone else there thousands of years ago.” – **Participant**

Jar of Awesome responses (something that was awesome that day):

“The thought of being the first person to hold something for thousands of years” – **Participant**

“Sitting in the round house” (Butser trip) – **Participant**

“People have been keen to listen, to seek and to share. The joy of finding is universal!” – **Delivery partner**

“What makes this piece of land our place? The time we have spent here, the tools we have made, the tools we’ve used, the settlements we made. These things make it our place” – **Participant**

“Making a piece of land an owned piece of land is by buying it, but to make it important to someone or some people is by spending important and valuable time on that land. That’s what makes it our place. Not by buying it but caring for it.” – **Participant**

**Outcome 2: Young people will feel their views and ideas are a valued part of the project and its development (autonomy)**

Selected example of how the WA Project has achieved against this outcome.

### **Autonomy**

Every session the young people were given opportunities to choose from multiple activities and decide which activities they wanted to spend more time on. New people were introduced to the group and modelled new concepts most sessions but overall, facilitators were guided by their interests and curiosities and the structure of each day was flexible to accommodate this. This ensured that the young people were given freedom to make their own choices in activities. They were regularly encouraged to try out unfamiliar activities and given the confidence to make their own decisions.

Moments for reflection and feedback were scheduled into every session. All sessions began or ended with a group ‘check in’ where both adults and young people rated their day so far out of 10, giving a reason as to why if they wished. This enabled delivery partners to gauge the overall mood of the group and ascertain whether this was due to the project or external factors. It also helped us to adjust the activities or tempo of the day to suit the groups’ needs.

The results of the evaluation and informal interviews completed with the young people demonstrate that they felt that their voice was heard and that they felt welcomed and accepted on the project.



**Figure 34:** Session 6 at Langford Lakes, with environmental archaeologist Ines tending to the fire for the underground pit.



**Figure 35:** Participants tending to their own fire and whittling outside one of the group's buildings.

### **Welcoming and safe spaces**

The young people took part in an introductory session at school before coming on site, they were introduced to the delivery partners and watched the film from the trial sessions delivered early 2023. At this session the young people were asked what they were looking forward to and anything they were concerned about regarding the project. They were looking forward to having the opportunity to relax, lighting fires, spending time with friends and learning new skills. The following anxieties were expressed (either orally or in writing –

some of these were concerns that the students kept to themselves and reflected on later on in the project):

- Concerns around missing lessons every week (the school operates on a 2-week timetable, so over the course of the project they missed 6 lessons over 2 subjects).
- Wearing weather appropriate clothing (Both worries about not having access to appropriate clothing and about it not being very fashionable!).
- Food (some students were picky about certain foods).
- Feeling lonely (for example, for some students, the group did not contain members of their usual friendship circle).



**Figure 36:** Participant painting WA lead, Ruth's face with paint made from crushed chalk.

Appropriate clothing was provided for all students as part of the project. Sometimes these items were refused but were readily accepted when their own clothing hindered them from joining in on an activity. As trust was built, the young people chose these items and recognised the importance of appropriate clothing in providing comfort.

The young people decided together what the menu would be for each week. Healthy options and variety were always offered to ensure that no one left hungry. Preparing and eating food together became an essential element of the project and a source of much joy, the routine also contributed to ensuring that the site was a safe space. Some of the most prevalent memories (for both participants and partners) of the project centred around food. Young people were proud to talk about and share with the group recipes they cooked at home. Sharing food together led to more relaxed interactions with the young people and opened up space for conversations that wouldn't usually occur.

Encouraging the young people to work together and introducing them to a wide variety of experts from different professions built confidence in their ability to communicate and build

relationships. It became apparent that having 3 constant members of the delivery team (Ruth, Sarah and Emma) was important for the young people as it provided structure and a variety of personalities for the young people to relate to.



**Figure 37:** Participants preparing lunch with project artist, Emma in the rain on session 2.

### **Supporting evidential quotes**

“I feel I’ve been recognised for the whole experience, being part of a team, doing a build and getting praise.” – **Participant**

“I’m involved a lot more.” – **Participant**

“I feel like a welcomed part of the team.” – **Participant**

“I now know I can speak and be listened to.” – **Participant**

“The settlement at Langford Lakes was the best conduit for relationship building and building trust” – **Delivery partner**

“I’m more aware. I can see differences and how they affect me, it’s made me feel happy.” – **Participant**

“I’d like to live here.” – **Participant**

“It feels good to get good feedback, it makes me want to do more.” – **Participant**

“I felt pleased when I got praise from the professionals on my test pitting.” – **Participant**

“All of my tutees that have participated greatly enjoyed the various activities and I have seen a noticeable growth in their day-to-day confidence and willingness to participate in and around school.” – **Form Tutor**

### Outcome 3: Young people will have tried new skills (competence)

Selected example of how the WA Project has achieved against this outcome.

#### **Practical skills**

A key feature of the WA Project was to continuously provide opportunities for the young people to develop new practical skills in archaeology, creativity and outdoor craft. The activities chosen were selected due to their similarities with how our ancestors would have lived and built a settlement and community in the past.

Informal interviews delivered on both session 5 and 12 with the young people demonstrate that they believe they have been given the opportunity to try out new skills in all 3 areas.

They particularly enjoyed learning how to develop the following practical skills:

- Dig a test pit
- Cook new foods – Lunch also offered the opportunity for the young people to take ownership of a range of tasks and learn new skills. Many of the young people were keen to practice their cutting skills when preparing food.
- Make fire
- Use flint
- Construct buildings with natural materials
- Make clay pots
- Whittle sticks
- Document their experiences with film and photographs (led by the project photographer)
- Carve chalk pendants

A number of the young people spoke about positive activities that they were initiating outside of the project. These included:

- Building a fire pit at home – new skills
- Sharing photos of finds with family – pride
- Attempting to knap flint at home – curiosity
- Bringing families to see their settlements – connection



**Figure 38:** Making fire using a tinder bundle.

### **Soft Skills**

The project also offered opportunities for the young people to learn, develop and practice soft skills. Delivery partners were conscious of modelling these skills and the language to identify and praise when skills were being demonstrated. Conversations with the young people and written evaluation demonstrate an understanding of and recognition of the soft skills that they have developed from taking part in the project.

The learning provider and tutors agreed that the young people had developed skills in these areas. Testimonials from parents via the learning provider and at the celebration event also agreed that they had seen a considerable improvement in their child's confidence and communication skills.

Skills mentioned included:

- Communication
- Social
- Practical
- Working as a team
- Working independently
- Creativity
- Confidence



**Figure 39:** Participants working as a team to set up the fire for the underground pit.

### **Developing confidence**

A number of the YP were very quiet and reserved at the beginning of the project. Learning providers, delivery partners, form tutors and parents all noticed a marked difference in most of the young people's confidence when approaching new challenges, trying out new skills and communicating with new people. The delivery partners were also active participants in the project, they modelled all of the activities to gently encourage participation and ease anxieties. Interviews with the young people demonstrate an increase in self-belief, they often surprised themselves by enjoying activities that they were initially unsure about. They were pleased that they had tried and were subsequently motivated to be more open to new activities in the future.

Most of the activities were new to the young people on the project, but for some, particular activities such as making fire, whittling and cooking new foods that were available during the first 6 sessions of the project were the catalyst for this boost in confidence. For the delivery partners, they felt that giving the young people the chance to build their confidence in their safe space at Langford Lakes played an important role in making them more open to new challenges when they moved to Coombe Bissett on session 7.

### **Perseverance**

The young people have demonstrated perseverance when taking part in various activities:

**Whittling** – this became a well-received activity that encouraged deep concentration, reflection and creativity (whether they like to admit it or not!)

**Making fire** – in session 3, a group of students decided that they wanted to build a fire, they were given the permission and the tools to do so but left to work out how on their own. They persevered and managed to make sparks but struggled to maintain it. The following week they were given further instruction and time to practice. By week 6, they were competent

enough to dig the underground pit and build the fire over it, as a team but independently from adult support, for the environmental activity that week

**Building shelter** – The group was split into 3 groups for shelter building at the start of the project and out of these 3, 1 group persevered for the first 6 weeks, with significant determination, and completed their structure (complete with windows, an arched doorway, a table, bench, coat hook and water collection point!). They demonstrated excellent leadership skills and worked confidently as a team. This shelter became the ‘hub’ for the settlement, where groups would gather and spend time together. There was a real sense of achievement in the completion of this settlement. The groups took pride in their shelters. Even if the structures weren’t successful, they tried again, worked together and learnt new skills through the ones demonstrated by the delivery partners.

**Test pits** – some students took their lunch down to their pit so that they could continue as soon as they finished eating and discuss next steps together.



**Figure 40:** Participant using a mattock to dig a test pit on a chalk bed.



**Figure 41:** Participants sharpening sticks for building their shelter.

## Supporting evidential quotes

“I was oblivious to what I was capable of, now I know what I can achieve.” –

**Participant**

I am developing skills in.. “Building things because of the opportunities I have here and being shown how to do things” – **Participant**

The skills I am developing are.... “Basic practical skills, being more appreciative of nature and feeling more relaxed, I feel proud of my new skills.” – **Participant**

“I learn better when I’m outside.” – **Participant**

“I’m excited to be here because I am able to do things that I’ve never been able to do before.” – **Participant**

I am developing skills in... “being independent and learning how to do new things.” – **Participant**

“Finding the pottery made me feel good. It felt good to get recognition for something I put effort into.” – **Participant**

“My parents were disappointed in my grades, but I feel proud and happy of what I’ve achieved here.” – **Participant**

“I’m able to do more with my imagination with a wider range of tools and resources.” – **Participant**

“I feel I’ve been recognised by the whole experience, being part of a team, doing a build and getting praise” – **Participant**

Stand out memories included:

“Finding pottery (on the test pit dig)”

“Enjoying food together”

“Digging the test pits”

“Being with my friends”

“Using flint”

“Making a den”

“Trying new foods”

“Holding history”

“Good teamwork when constructing buildings”

“Sharpening sticks”

“I feel more capable in what I can do. I’m revising more for tests, and I want to know more stuff, I feel my confidence has increased.” – **Participant**

“Being here makes me more confident, I can show and share the creative things I’ve done.” – **Participant**

“All of my tutees that have participated greatly enjoyed the various activities and I have seen a noticeable growth in their day-to-day confidence and willingness to participate in and around school.” – **Form Tutor**

#### Outcome 4: Young People will have enjoyed spending time with other people (relatedness)

Selected example of how the WA project has achieved against this outcome.

##### **Working as a team**

The young people taking part in the project all took part in practical activities as part of a team and spent time together working on a mixture of individual and team activities at each site.

The young people enjoyed working together as a team when building their structures, digging their test pits, preparing and cooking food and creating communal artworks. They had plenty of opportunities to engage with both peers and new adults – this variety helped the young people to develop social skills and gain confidence in communicating with different people. They formed new partnerships with peers and adults alike and surprised themselves with finding the social element of the project more enjoyable than they had initially thought they would.



**Figure 42:** Digging a test pit alongside WWT lead, Sarah.



**Figure 43:** Analysing a flint find with fieldwork archaeologist, Callum.

Coming together each day to share food, hear from a new expert, take part in a creative activity and practice reflective exercises offered an important space to socialise and build trust and connection.

Digging test pits together, whilst monotonous at times, offered a perfect opportunity for conversation. Both the young people, the delivery partners, the WA experts and the SJCS team mentioned the value of doing this. Time and space to just be together is valuable and all stakeholders agreed that digging together was the perfect activity to encourage this.



**Figure 44:** The group wellbeing check in at the beginning of session 5.



**Figure 45:** Creating a leaving gift for a student that left the project early due to a house move.

### **Communication and social skills**

All stakeholders, including the young people themselves, noted that their communication had improved, trust had been built and new friendships forged through the opportunity to learn outside and with fewer people present than at school. Delivery partners and the young people both agreed that the unique opportunity to engage with a wide variety of heritage professionals offered the young people new perspectives, aided connection and understanding and boosted their confidence and self-belief.

### **Supporting evidential quotes**

“Being part of a team makes me happy.” – **Participant**

“I feel like a welcomed part of the team.” – **Participant**

“It’s made me more relaxed being part of a team as we’re all responsible.” – **Participant**

“It’s been good to have lots of talks with the adults and I’ve enjoyed being outside. It’s easier to learn outside than when I’m putting pen to paper.” – **Participant**

“I used to be nervous talking to people, but now I can be myself around people.” – **Participant**

“I’ve grown in confidence and my family have noticed this too. It makes me feel good, people want to listen.” – **Participant**

“I’m more social, fewer people makes it easier than school. I have social anxiety so being here makes me feel like I’ve achieved something” – **Participant**

“I’m more used to sharing my opinions with everyone, I’ve never really spoken to anyone before, and it feels good to do this.” – **Participant**

“The increased confidence has meant they are far more sociable with a wider group of friends” – **Form Tutor**

“While my tutees that attended have always been pretty sociable, I would comment that their social interactions have improved and developed/matured a lot lately. Any moments where friendships have been stressed or challenged have also been resolved with much greater ease/success” – **Form Tutor**

## Outcome 5: Young people will have improved wellbeing

Selected example of how the WA Project has achieved against this outcome.

### Five Ways to Wellbeing

All of the engagement activity in this project has contributed towards positive wellbeing and to increasing connection to heritage and nature. Delivery partners and learning providers both felt that the project had a significant positive impact upon participant mental health.

Evaluation data shows that engagement activities delivered by the project supported the Five Ways to Wellbeing:

**Give** – Regular opportunity to reflect and provide feedback to peers, there are many examples of students praising peers in the jar of awesome. A big part of the project was also about building community by encouraging teamwork and supporting each other through new challenges.

**Be active** – many of the project’s activities have involved getting out into nature and being active, for example digging, walking and building shelters.



**Figure 46:** Participants standing proudly in front of their settlement.

**Learn** – the activities and opportunities offered on the project have supported participants to learn about the heritage of their local landscape and engage in practical and creative outdoor activities with the theme of life, settlements and community in the Stone Age.



**Figure 47:** Analysing LiDAR images at Coombe Bissett with geoaarchaeologist, Dan.

**Connect** – Both in terms of connecting with each other and connecting with their surroundings, this was a very strong element of the project, particularly for young people. Delivery partners and school staff felt the project helped the young people to develop trust, build friendships and improve their communication skills.



**Figure 48:** Drawing the landscape at Coombe Bissett.

**Take notice** – Young people mentioned that the project had helped them to take notice of the nature and heritage that surrounds them. The school felt that this helped students to ‘get off their phones’; with some also feeling that some of this would influence future behaviours and propensity to notice nature. Noticing their surroundings, engaging in activities with history and nature, and celebrating the good things in the landscape are key to developing a stronger connection with heritage and nature.



**Figure 49:** Sketching a Bronze Age dagger from the WA handling box.

### Reflective Practices

From session 5, the 'the jar of awesome' was incorporated to the end of day reflections each session. Both adults and young people were given a slip of paper to write down something or someone that was awesome that day and add it to the jar. A selection of anonymous submissions were then read out to the group and celebrated together. Each week the jar was full of examples of positive action, behaviour or learning, which was referred to as a reminder of the progress that they were making and encouraged them to continue.

The table below demonstrates how taking the time to write down a positive from each week helped to promote a healthy mindset and encouraged the young people to focus on the positive experiences in their lives, with a view to cultivating positive habits. The jar served as a space to:

- Celebrate each other's successes as well as their own.
- Share positive memories and encourage communication.
- Acknowledge peers.
- Recognise new skills.
- Celebrate each other's successes as well as their own (one participant decided to put their own name down following a breakthrough in confidence after session 5).

From session 5, once the young people were comfortable in the space, sessions opened or closed with a reflection exercise. The young people were given journaling style prompts to write or draw in their 'thinking books'. These books were for their eyes only, and they had a choice of whether to keep what they have written or offer the page up to the fire. The fact these were honoured spaces that weren't looked at or judged delineated this as a new activity, unlike school, affording a new freedom for some students. Whilst some of the group found the thinking books difficult to engage with, for others, they offered therapeutic value



“The sessions make me feel more relaxed.” – **Participant**

“All of my tutees that have participated have seen improvements in various areas such as self-confidence and self-esteem, confidence in interacting with others, pushing themselves out of their comfort zones (e.g., putting themselves in somewhat unfamiliar situations) and so much more. I have been really impressed with their growth this year, especially recently, and a big part of that has been this project.” – **Form Tutor**

“Really nice to see them so happy and confident” – **Form Tutor**

“He is a lot more confident around school. He is more chatty, approachable and better dressed.” – **Form Tutor**

Selected quotes from the jar in response to the provocation: “write down something or someone that has been awesome today and why”:

“\_\_ for being really determined”

“\_\_ because he brightened my day up”

“\_\_ was good at making a fire”

“I made fire!”

“\_\_, \_\_ and I all created a good den and performed good teamwork”

“The metal piece I found with the metal detector”

“\_\_’s awesome photos”

“I think I have been very awesome because I am me.”

“Being somewhere new/different” (Butser trip)

“Sitting in the round house” (Butser trip)

“The thought of being the first person to hold something for thousands of years”

“\_\_ and \_\_ for keeping me happy!”

“Miriam and Russell for having a nice chat with me while I was digging a pit”

“Emma because she helps a lot and is a nice person”

“Tom for being so patient”

“Steve (archaeologist) because he taught me cool information about rocks”

## Delivering Intended Outcomes – Quantitative Data

### Wellbeing

To determine whether involvement in the WA Project might have had an effect on the subjective wellbeing of those who attended, at intake, during and upon completion of the project, the participants were invited to respond to 10 wellbeing statements relating to the project outcomes and wellbeing measures. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, they rated how much they agreed with each statement on session 1 and session 12 in order to analyse change.

Outcome data pertaining to the subjective wellbeing of participants was collected on sessions 1, 5 and 12 by the Wessex evaluation lead. Informal interviews were held with each individual participant on sessions 1, 5 and 12, participants were encouraged to continue whatever activity they were doing (e.g. whittling) to allow for a more relaxed interview. These interviews were essential in understanding the reasons behind individual wellbeing scores and any changes. They provided a safe space to openly share their thoughts on the project.

#### Data considerations:

- 13 young people completed the evaluation at the start of the project (12 on session 1; 1 on session 2 following early drop out).
- 7 young people reviewed their evaluation with the Wessex evaluation lead and responded to selected questions on session 5, the sample size for this data is too small to use for comparison purposes.
- 2 young people dropped out of the project on session 6.
- 7 young people completed the evaluation on session 12.
- Project completion evaluation is unavailable for 3 participants, due to not attending the final session.
- 18% of the statements on session 1 were rated 10/10. Young people were given the option to place their dot outside of the star on session 12 if they felt that they had exceeded their initial score of 10. One student chose to do this for one statement, so this was given a score of 11.

## Session 5

On session 5, students reviewed a select sample of wellbeing statements during the mid-project interviews, dependant on where they had placed themselves during the first evaluation session, with the Wessex evaluation lead. The 7 young people interviewed expressed positive gains in the following statements, with average scores out of 10 increasing by the following amount:

- I feel recognised for my achievements **+2**
- I feel welcome and accepted for who I am. **+2**
- I feel my voice is heard. **+3**
- I feel positive about my future. **+3**
- I feel proud of myself. **+1**
- I feel that I am active and have get up and go. **+3**
- I like to learn. **+3**

## Session 12

On the final session, participants recorded positive change in 9 out of 10 wellbeing statements. We have averaged the individual wellbeing scores (using the mean) recorded on sessions 1 and 12 for each wellbeing statement to give average wellbeing scores (AWS) against each statement for the study group. We've used this data to calculate the **average percentage change (APC) in wellbeing score**.

The wellbeing data suggests that taking part in the WA Project has **positively impacted participant personal and social wellbeing**. The average percentage change in wellbeing score across all statements for participants increased over the course of the project by **15%**.

Scores indicate that the WA Project was effective in impacting autonomy, competence, supportive relationships, self-belief and relatedness.

The biggest changes in average wellbeing scores included (see figure 51):

- Feeling proud **(28% increase)**
- Feeling like their voice is heard **(24% increase)**
- Feeling welcome and accepted **(23% increase)**
- Feeling recognised for their achievements **(22% increase)**



**Figure 51:** Average wellbeing score percent (%) change after engagement.

**“I like to learn”**

“I like to learn” was the only statement where the average wellbeing score decreased in change by -1%.

2 out of 7 participants scored this statement lower on session 12 than in session 1, all other participants maintained the same score. One of the 2 participants that rated this statement lower on session 12 expressed a positive gain of +3 points for the same statement on session 5.

The same student said this on session 12 in response to the question ‘How would you describe the project to someone else?’: “It’s a fun place where you can spend time with nature and friends and learn.”

It could be argued that the wording of this statement affected these individuals’ scores due to negative connotations with the learning done at school.

Both students still expressed positive increase with the statement “I am curious” which still demonstrates an interest in learning.

It could also be argued that completing the wellbeing forms on the final session negatively impacted some scores as several students felt a sadness that the project was ending.

It is unknown whether the negative rating of this statement on session 12 was impacted by wording reminiscent of school, the end of the project or other external factors. This was not further investigated.

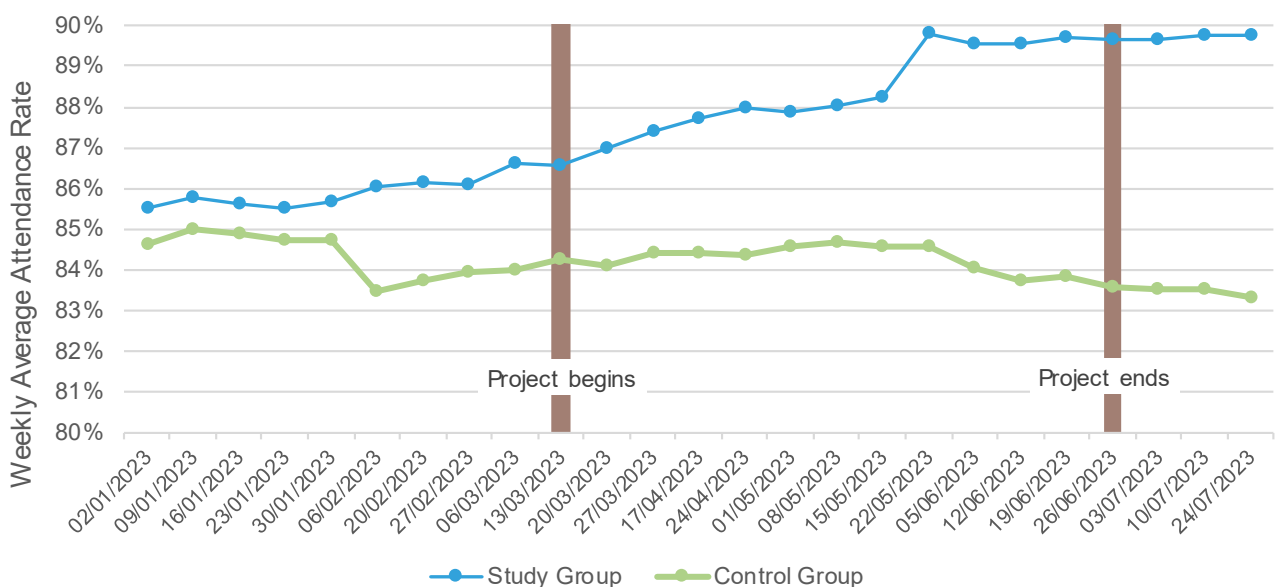
### Group Attendance

We have been provided with anonymised weekly attendance rates for each student in the dataset for a 10 week period prior to the project beginning, throughout the 12 week duration of the project and for 3 weeks following the last project session.

This data has been collected for the 10 continuous participants (**study group**) and for a comparative set of 12 students in school (**control group**). The control group were selected by the school during the student selection stage, the selection criteria stipulated that the control students be in the same year group as the study group and with similar attendance rates, APs and BPs logged at the beginning of the year.

We have averaged the individual attendance rates (using the mean) to give a weekly average attendance rate (AAR) for both the control and study group of students. The attendance data suggests that taking part in the WA Project has **encouraged an increase** in attendance in the study group.

The average attendance rate for participants in the study group increased over the course of the project by 3.1 percentage points (pp), **from 86.6% when the project began to 89.7% at the end of the project**. When taking longitudinal data into account, the average attendance rate for participants in the study group increased by 4.2pp, **from 85.5% at the beginning of the calendar year to 89.8%** at the end of the academic year.



**Figure 52:** Weekly AAR for control and study groups before, during and after the WA project.

Conversely, the average attendance rate for the control group fell by -0.8pp, from 84.3% at project start to 83.6% at project end. When taking longitudinal project data into account, the average attendance rate for the control group fell by -1.3pp, from 84.6% at the beginning of the calendar year to 83.3% at the end of the academic year.

### Data omissions/missing data

- 1 data set has been omitted due to early departure from the project (only attended session 1).
- 1 data set is missing due to moving school, the school no longer holds data relating to this student. This student was present for 6 sessions.
- 1 data set has been used up to the point of early departure (session 6), data from week 7 has been omitted.

We had hoped to gain access to 1 months' worth of legacy data but the proximity of the project end to the end of the summer term has meant that the final 3 weeks of data are not sufficient for comparison.

### Individual attendance

We've also examined how individual student attendance rates changed over the course of their involvement in the project. Table 10 gives the difference (in percentage points) between a student's attendance rate from the beginning of the calendar year to the end of the academic year. Table 11 gives the difference (in percentage points) between a student's attendance rate during the course of the project from week 0 to week 12.

This data has been used to calculate the **average individual change (AIC) in attendance rate** using the **mean difference**.

Again, this data indicates that individuals in the study group saw a greater increase in attendance rate than those in the control group.

The average individual change in attendance rate for the study group is 2.5pp. In other words, on average the attendance rate for a student in the study group increased by **2.5pp** from the beginning of the calendar year to the end of the academic year. In comparison, the average attendance rate for individuals in the control group decreased by **-1.3pp** over the same period.

**Table 10:** The different in percentage points between a student’s average individual attendance rate from week 0 to week 12 of the project.

| <b>Study Group Participant number</b> | <b>Percentage point (pp) difference</b> | <b>Control Group Participant number</b> | <b>Percentage point (pp) difference</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1                                     | 2.8                                     | C1                                      | 0.6                                     |
| 2                                     | 2.2                                     | C2                                      | 3.6                                     |
| 3                                     | 0.4                                     | C3                                      | 5.4                                     |
| 4                                     | 3.1                                     | C4                                      | -21.6                                   |
| 5                                     | 8.7                                     | C5                                      | -3.0                                    |
| 6                                     | 8.5                                     | C6                                      | -1.3                                    |
| 7                                     | N/A                                     | C7                                      | 1.8                                     |
| 8                                     | 6.8                                     | C8                                      | -12.4                                   |
| 9                                     | 4.7                                     | C9                                      | 1.4                                     |
| 10                                    | -6.2                                    | C10                                     | 5.1                                     |
| 11                                    | 4.1                                     | C11                                     | -1.4                                    |
| 12                                    | -5.6                                    | C12                                     | 6.0                                     |

**Table 11:** The different in percentage points between a student’s average individual attendance rate from the beginning of the calendar year to the end of the academic year.

| <b>Study Group Participant number</b> | <b>Percentage point (pp) difference</b> | <b>Control Group Participant number</b> | <b>Percentage point (pp) difference</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1                                     | 1.6                                     | C1                                      | 0.8                                     |
| 2                                     | 0.8                                     | C2                                      | 1.7                                     |
| 3                                     | 1.6                                     | C3                                      | 0.9                                     |
| 4                                     | 2.0                                     | C4                                      | -7.7                                    |
| 5                                     | 4.4                                     | C5                                      | -5.2                                    |
| 6                                     | 3.4                                     | C6                                      | -0.7                                    |
| 7                                     | N/A                                     | C7                                      | 2.9                                     |
| 8                                     | 3.1                                     | C8                                      | -11.2                                   |
| 9                                     | 3.6                                     | C9                                      | 3.5                                     |
| 10                                    | -3.5                                    | C10                                     | 2.1                                     |
| 11                                    | 0.4                                     | C11                                     | 0.5                                     |
| 12                                    | -0.5                                    | C12                                     | 4.1                                     |

## Achievement Points and Behaviour Points

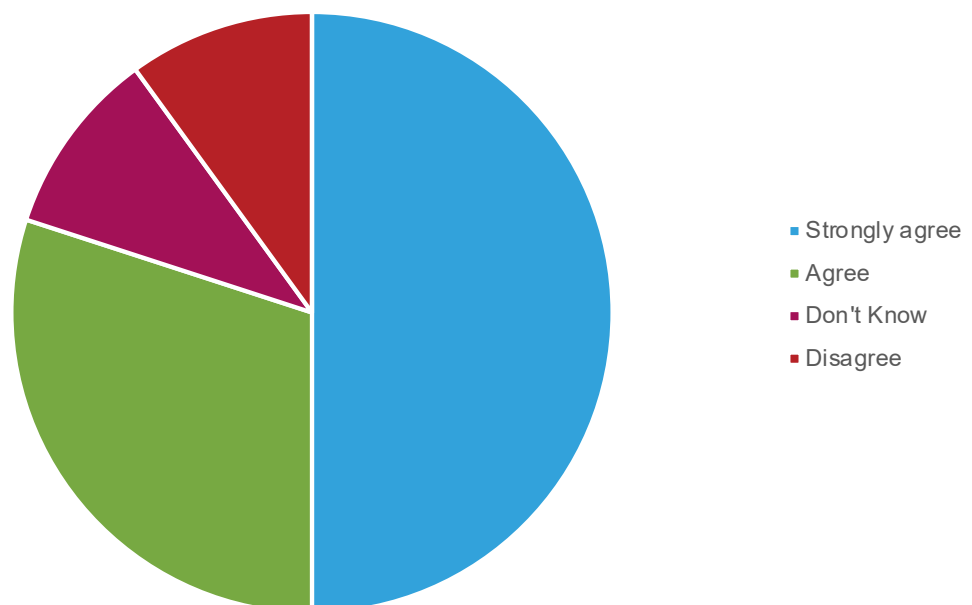
“While their behaviour is not perfect, there has been a big decrease in behaviour points and issues in school since beginning the sessions” – **Form Tutor**

Learning providers agreed that most participating students (89%) had shown signs of being more in control of their behaviour. One form tutor said that while their student had experienced a significant boost in confidence, their BPs had actually increased as a result. This participant struggled in later sessions of the project due to their friend’s fluctuating attendance on the project. They showed more signs of enjoyment and improvement when these friends were present.

We have been provided with anonymised weekly records of Behaviour Points (BPs) and Achievements Points (APs) logged for each student in the dataset. We have then averaged the individual points logged (using the mean) to give a weekly average BP rate (ABPR) and weekly average AP rate (AAPR) for both the control and study group of students.

“[This student has shown] A big increase in confidence, in eye contact and sometimes fighting their case if they feel there has been an injustice. Unfortunately, as a result of this increased confidence the student is now much more vocal and appears to be getting themselves an increase in behaviour points (BP's) for being outspoken and answering back.” – **Form Tutor**

The young person seems more in control of their behaviour



**Figure 53:** Form tutor post-project behaviour feedback.



Figure 54: Mean average % study and control group BPs with weekly markers pre, during and post project.

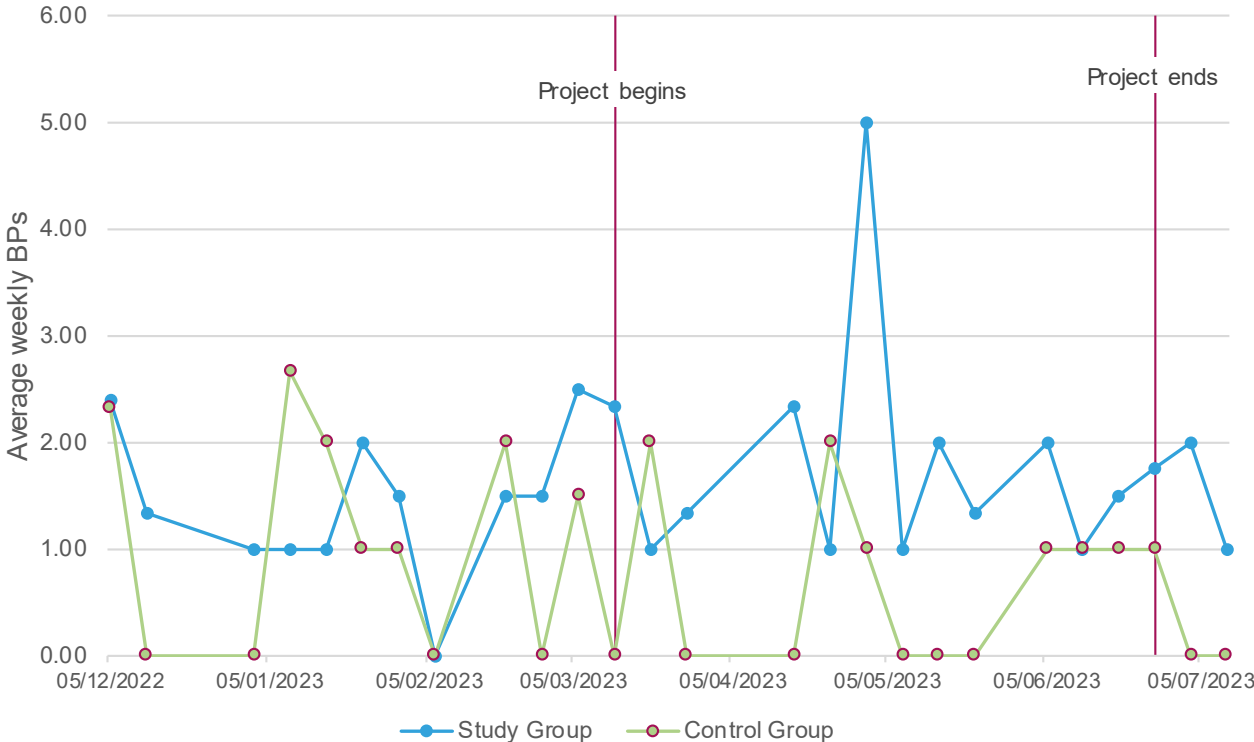


Figure 55: Mean average % study and control group APs with weekly markers pre, during and post project.

It should be acknowledged that APs and BPs were not given to project participants (the study group) whilst on the project, equally, it cannot be guaranteed that individual teachers are using the same methods for determining point distribution, so these cannot be considered a reliable data source when compared with the control group.

Analysis of weekly average APs and weekly average BPs for both the study and control groups generally show a similar trajectory from the beginning of the calendar year to the end of the academic year. Despite this, over the course of the project from week 0 to week 12, on average the control group received more APs and fewer BPs than the study group.

External factors beyond project control have affected the data, for example, the spike in behaviour points around May can be attributed to one student’s change in medication.

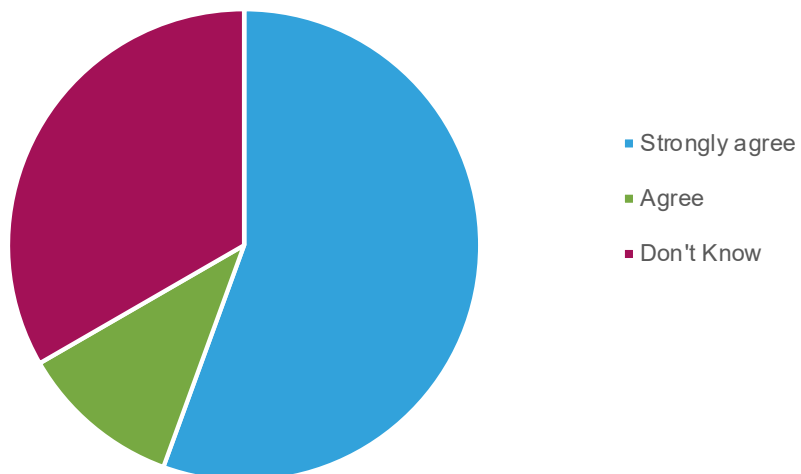
**Form tutor evaluation**

3 out of 4 form tutors completed evaluation forms for their students that participated in the project – 9 out of the 12 young people in total. Out of the 3 young people that are missing data, 1 attended every session.

**Engagement with lessons**

Form tutors agreed that for 67% of those evaluated, engagement with lessons had increased. For 56% of the participants, this was considered a positive improvement. For 1 participant, increased confidence had resulted in an increase in negative engagement in lessons (see BPs). One form tutor responded that they couldn’t be certain of any change as the 3 students in question were not in their lessons.

The young person has been more engaged with their lessons

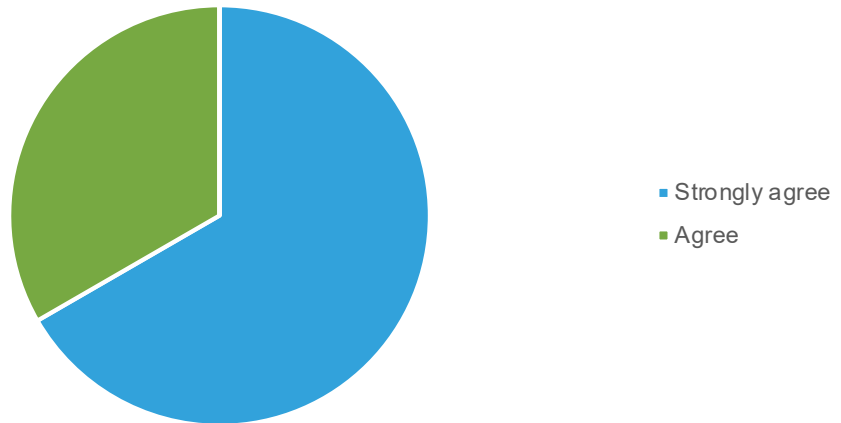


**Figure 56:** Form tutor post project feedback on other signs of improvement.

### Socialisation

Form tutors that completed the end of project evaluation, agreed that all participants have socialised more following engagement with the WA Project.

The young person has socialised with others more



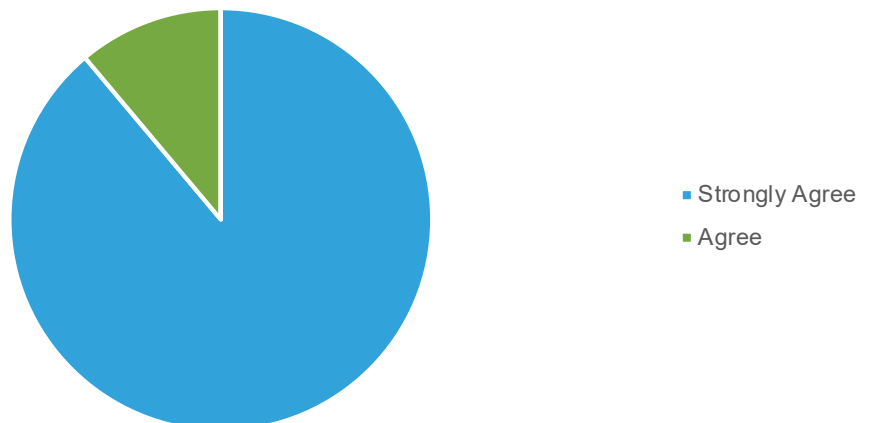
**Figure 57:** Form tutor post project feedback on socialisation.

### Confidence

It is clear from project findings, as many of the quotes we have cited reveal, that the project increased the confidence for those involved. Confidence was the result cited most by the learning providers. With form tutors in agreement that all participants have shown signs of increased confidence following participation.

“Feedback from other staff has included comments regarding improved engagement and effort in lessons. While not always perfect, things have definitely improved.” – **Form Tutor**

The young person has shown signs of increased confidence



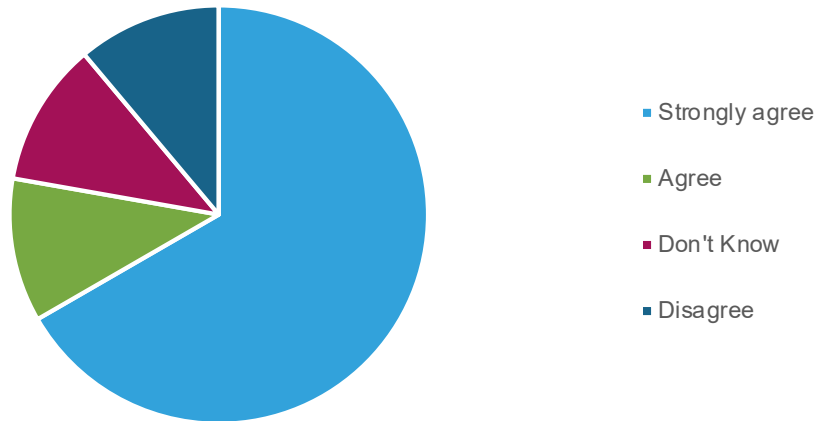
**Figure 58:** Form tutor post project feedback on confidence.

### Other positive signs of improvement

One form tutor selected ‘I don’t know’ for this question as the student in question left the school part way through the project. Another disagreed as they felt that an increase in confidence had sparked negative change rather than improvement. For the other 7 participating students included in this evaluation, form tutors agreed that they had shown improvement in many areas, such as self-belief and taking risks.

“All of my tutees that have participated have seen improvements in various areas such as self-confidence and self-esteem, confidence in interacting with others, pushing themselves out of their comfort zones (e.g., putting themselves in somewhat unfamiliar situations) and so much more. I have been really impressed with their growth this year, especially recently, and a big part of that has been this project.” – **Form Tutor**

The young person has shown other positive signs of improvement



**Figure 59:** Form tutor post project feedback on other signs of improvement.

### Case Study 1: Participant A

Participant A has thrived in the relaxed outdoor learning environment – much more than they or the school had expected. They expressed hesitation towards the project at first and a reluctance to wear appropriate clothing, anxious about looking different or ‘uncool’. They quickly overcame this and got stuck in with enthusiasm and pride. During a foraging walk with an environmental archaeologist on session 2 they stated, “I am actually really enjoying this”. They discovered new interests, such as photography and they enjoyed being given the space to reflect and relax, particularly enjoying spending time going on walks and visiting the bird hides at Langford Lakes. They enjoyed sharing the experience with family by sending them photos, describing the experience and encouraging family to visit the settlement at Langford Lakes. They were so inspired by photography that they had hoped to borrow their grandad’s camera to take more professional (than their phone) photos. They were unable to bring the camera but was delighted when Tom (the WA photographer) lent them one of his professional cameras and taught them how to use it.

They displayed autonomy and confidence in joining and participating in the project – particularly on week 5 when they had a GP appointment in the morning that meant that they missed the minibus from school. Instead of missing that week’s session entirely, they asked their parent to drive them to the project following their appointment and independently joined the group part way through the morning. Visibly, you could see that they were excited to be back.

**How would you describe Project Rejuvenate to someone else?**

“It’s a fun place where you can spend time with nature and friends and learn.” –

**Participant A**

They lacked confidence and expressed hesitancy towards the test pitting activity initially, but during the second session they displayed determination and perseverance when deciding to dig their pit independently. This young person has ADHD and can become easily distracted, yet they confidently followed instructions when digging the test pit, modelled language used by the experts and demonstrated that they had retained information.

The variety of different adult personalities with passion for what they do on the project was of huge benefit to this participant, they connected especially well with the project artist, Emma and one of the fieldwork archaeologists, Steve. Steve was very open about being autistic and explained how archaeology has helped him to understand what he’s really good at. Steve’s enthusiasm for flint quickly rubbed off on Participant A and they enjoyed getting to know Steve, asking him questions and becoming an expert themselves.



**Figure 60:** Photograph of lake at Langford Lakes captured by Participant A.



**Figure 61:** Photograph of archaeologist Steve analysing flint captured by Participant A.

This participant attended the final project exhibition, despite their parents not showing up. They were excited to see the project partners again and revisit what they had been a part of. Some of their photographs were displayed in the exhibition and they were proud to curate and share these with friends.

“The more the adults talked to me, the more confident I became, especially ‘flint Steve’ [archaeologist].” – **Participant A [I like to meet new people]**

What’s the biggest thing that’s changed for your student? “Self-belief” – **Form tutor**

## Case Study 2: Participant B

When Participant B started Project Rejuvenate, they were very withdrawn and lacked confidence. Their hair was swept over their face, and they wore dark clothes, keeping their head down and shoulders slumped. Initially an outsider to the rest of the group, they consciously continued to exclude themselves to work alone and appeared more introverted than their peers. They immediately expressed enjoyment in the creative activities and natural environment and a sadness that this would inevitably end.

“It’s already going by too quickly” – **Participant B on week 1**

Gradually they began to open up about themselves and their love for art. Alongside the project artist, they took every opportunity to produce creative responses to activities that they could, relishing in the opportunity to share their work with people who genuinely expressed an interest and gave praise.

“Being here makes me more confident, I can show and share the creative things I’ve done.” – **Participant B**



**Figure 62:** A flint handaxe drawn by Participant B.

Over the course of the project and with the support of the delivery partners, Participant B became more confident in themselves. They were chatty and visibly more open to trying new things and communicating with new people. Their hair was out of their face, they were wearing brighter clothing and they were smiling and making eye contact. They worked hard and became more comfortable around their peers despite socialising mainly with the adults. Their confidence continued to grow and their whole demeanour seemed brighter, excited to share what they had made and experienced.

“Speaking to people isn’t a terrifying experience. I’ve grown in confidence, and I feel happy and accepted, my family have noticed this too. [This project] made me more comfortable to be me. Everyone is really kind. It makes me feel good, people want to listen. I’ve felt so welcome, this is a safe space to be.” – **Participant B**

Participant B returned on the day of the exhibition with their parents to accept their certificate with pride and a positive attitude. Their parents expressed their thanks stating that Tuesdays were their favourite day of the week and that they had designated a wall of their bedroom to Project Rejuvenate where they proudly displayed all the artwork that they had created on the project.

“The student appeared happier within and more confident” – **Form Tutor**

## Lessons learned and recommendations

### Successes

#### What went well

##### **Building connection to space – ‘our place’**

- Archaeology is about people and place and this project was designed to reflect that. Building a safe space, forming a community and working together as a team were all essential elements for the project’s success.
- The young people became very connected to their settlement at Langford Lakes and by session 5 they were referring to the space as ‘Our Place’. This was a successful step in building a foundation of trust between the young people and the adults.

“We created a place that felt like theirs, ‘home’.” – **Delivery partner**

“I’d like to live here” – **Participant**

##### **Planning time for nothing**

- The fire was at the heart of the settlement, offering not only a space to cook, but also a meditative space to sit and just be together.

“Sitting around the fire and engaging in an activity alongside a young person, such as whittling, was a useful way to create ‘side-by-side’ chats” – **Delivery partner**

- The practice of finding and digging was both physically and intellectually challenging, whilst also being a meditative and mindful process.

“Moments of relaxation after physical exertion were some of the best moments for building relationships with the young people and encouraged some of the quieter participants to open up more” – **Delivery partner**

“There were so many magic moments of looking around at the group and seeing everyone totally focussed on their activity (but doing different things)” – **Delivery partner**

##### **Group size**

- The group engaged better in smaller groups; distractions led to dips in concentration when being addressed as a group.
- There was more engagement in archaeology and exploring finds when approached in smaller groups
- The group size allowed everyone to be themselves and supported an individualised approach
- Whenever someone wasn’t there, they were noticed and missed. When they returned, they were celebrated.

“Some of the best days were when there were fewer children present (e.g. the test pit day with 7 young people)” – **Delivery partner**

“The group now naturally organises themselves into groups or feels comfortable when choosing to work independently, there is a real sense of respect for what each person chooses to do and an affection for people’s differences” – **Delivery partner**

### **Creating a buzz in school**

- Enthusiasm for the project both amongst participating students, teachers and student peers, was clear
- The project created a buzz amongst peers and parents of other students in school
- Students would come into the pastoral office to ask if they could join the project following student dropouts. Parents were calling to ask if their child could join and expressed curiosity and interest in the project at the exhibition.

### **Impartial evaluator**

- The Wessex Evaluation lead acted as a trusted and impartial member of staff, by joining the group at limited points through the project they were able to identify change that was less visible to project partners.
- This member of staff guided participants through individual informal interviews (participants were encouraged to continue with an activity such as whittling during these interviews to keep them as relaxed as possible) to discuss how they had scored against individual wellbeing statements, this provided invaluable insight into why participants felt that their wellbeing had changed and how the project was making a difference in their lives.
- Most of the participant quotes were gathered during conversations with the Wessex evaluation lead.

### **Sharing food**

- Giving the young people autonomy over what they ate each week offered opportunities to share memories and stories related to their recipes.
- Sharing food together built a level of comfort amongst the group that would have been difficult to achieve in other ways.

“Food became a focus, brought people together. Adults ate the food. Young people learnt valuable life skills” – **Delivery partner**

### **Thinking differently about creativity**

- There was initially limited confidence in and take up of arts based activities.
- There was a fear of traditional drawing and getting it right. A large piece of paper seemed daunting for many and most students needed a second or third invitation to contribute to the creation of a map. Bar one student, everyone said similar to the following ‘I can’t draw’ ‘you don’t want to see my drawing’- confidence in mark making was very low.

- Gradually, as barriers were broken down and trust was built, students were so much more open to creativity. By week 9, participants were approaching Emma for arts materials and approached creative activities with a relaxed and curious demeanour.

“It has been important to keep reinforcing a more holistic idea of what art is, how everyone is creative and nurture confidence in creative contributions. Creativity is the committed application of passion and thought. This is already happening through the building project.” – **Delivery partner**

“The creative stuff worked really well despite negative perceptions by young people of ‘art’. At the exhibition at the school, we could see all the amazing art that they had created without feeling like they did ‘art’” – **Delivery partner**

### **Peer to peer learning**

- The WA Project was unique in bringing together a collective of adult experts who had diverse skills and passion for learning which created the foundation for establishing a communal and open atmosphere that was integral to the children engaging and thriving within the WA Project.
- Opening a dialogue between the professionals and the young people allowed for the development of confidence and communication skills
- It promotes cumulative learning by enabling the young people to build upon their own natural skills and learning styles.
- Being accepted and trusted by the adults enabled the young people to feel empowered to be themselves and accepted by their peers
- Young people were empowered to take a real ownership of their engagement and accumulation and expression of knowledge and skills
- The environment met the young people’s needs, offering a relaxed approach that was different from school, this encouraged creativity, risk taking and the development of skills.

“If I was explaining Project Rejuvenate to someone else, I’d say it was a learning project where the dynamics have changed and the hierarchy purposely diluted so that everybody learns from each other” – **Delivery partner**

“Big bonus to have difference adults with different skills to nurture the young people” – **Delivery partner**

“Lots of life skills, nurturing independent interests, boost in confidence, environment being different to school allowed the young people to see how they might fit into wider society. It enabled a ‘world view’ with no hierarchy where emphasis was placed on your personal meanings. For some young people, the experience will stay with them for life.” – **Delivery partner**

“Project Rejuvenate is something that’s fun, allows you to be creative, be the best you with no restriction like school. Everyone should be able to do it.” – **Participant**

### **Familiar activities**

- Offering varied activities enabled a more accessible learning environment and allowed information to be more accessible, adapt to different learning styles and build confidence.
- Whilst pushing the young people out of their comfort zone was key, familiar activities that involved skills that had been nurtured during the early stages of the project were also made available at later points. This set a framework that allowed participants to feel secure at a skill and in turn enabled them to push themselves and discover new things that they could be good at.
- Delivery remained responsive to participant comfort zones, especially following a change in location.

### **Timeframe**

- The project timeframe (12 weeks) was the perfect length to allow time to build confidence and trust amongst the group and afforded time to develop and sustain relationships.
- This timeframe also allowed us to watch the seasons change, individual character growth followed the growth of the landscape.

“Contemplative, slowing down, time between activity, reflective. Whittling, photography, side-by-side moments. Longer length of project allowed for this” –

### **Delivery partner**

- Took the group full circle – Building a settlement – looking for a settlement – visiting a settlement – returning to our settlement

“Creating a settlement needed time and patience” – **Delivery partner**

### **Partnership**

- The partnership between three people created reliable constants, it was noticeable when one was missing. Each delivery partner offered unique skills and a different approach to engaging with the young people. This allowed participants to form bonds and build trust.
- The team management approach was non-hierarchical, where we were ‘all in it together’ and allowed members the space and confidence to take risks, experiment, develop skills and make decisions.
- The end-of-project exhibition and evaluation event helped draw the partners together to reflect on achievements.
- The project underlined the importance of shared ownership from the start and highlighted what it takes to embed a project like this. The involvement of a (consistent) delivery team to understand and respond to changing needs was key.

## Sharing the project film

- A 'highlight' reel of footage from early sessions was shared with the school partway through project delivery. This supported in school communication and understanding of what the students were getting up to.

"It looked amazing and really enjoyable. The video was great, enabling us to see what the event was all about." – **Form Tutor**

"It's been really good and to see the students on video completing the project. it was a real eye opener as to what they were doing" – **Form Tutor**

"Having seen the video that was sent out as well as other visuals I was able to communicate with them on the tasks they were doing and build a positive relationship with praise. This and the response from peers improved confidence significantly." – **Form Tutor**

## Blockers and challenges

Every project encounters challenges or 'blockers' that slow or stop progress of the intended project plans and has things that don't go to plan. This section comprises examples of challenges encountered during the WA Project.

### What could have gone better

#### Student selection

- Students were selected too late which had a knock on effect with gathering forms and communicating with both students and other school staff.
- This delay also meant that we weren't as prepared for supporting neurodivergent pupils as we had hoped to be.
  - Some students on project were autistic/ADHD – sufficient supports were not in place to help these students effectively access the project by school staff as the staff on the project were not aware. One student in particular struggled with the change in location when we moved from Langford Lakes to Coombe Bissett and found the lack of clear structure to each day difficult to manage. They also struggle to process verbal information without visual prompts and struggle with too much choice. Following this, the school reviewed participant files and necessary measures were put in place to support particular students. E.g. visual prompts for activities and 1:1 support during activities without clear start and finish points.
- The school were very cautious about who they chose to go on the project, possibly resulting in fewer students with behavioural challenges due to fears around how participants would interact with each other. This process requires

careful thought, and it possibly would have been better to get the ball rolling sooner, with more support from the project team.

### **School staff engagement**

- Staff present on the project were not teachers, but part of the pastoral team. Whilst this offered benefits (e.g. students felt more relaxed around these members of staff), it was a continuous struggle to engage other members of school staff in the project. They were unable to encourage form tutors to respond to requests for evaluation or set up interviews with teachers. This has meant that the qualitative data from the school is not as robust as we would have hoped.
- This also resulted in a perceived lack of senior leadership buy-in from the school, resulting in an inconsistent approach to gathering evaluation.
- School staff also didn't participate in activities as we had hoped that they would until the test pitting days.
- There wasn't a senior person from school present on the project as a reliable constant (the pastoral team had to alternate weeks due to workload) – the data and media manager was present for every session but did not have the seniority which could have demonstrated more of a school buy-in for both the students on the project and the teachers in school.

### **Timing of evaluation**

- It was difficult to obtain timely and reliable evaluation from the school due to the project finishing so close to the end of term.
- It was difficult to ensure that evaluation forms were sent to the correct people without the contact details necessary.
- Parent evaluation hadn't been considered until the end of the project; this would have been a useful tool for analysing project impact on behaviour outside of school.

### **Logistics of organising and preparing food**

- Although an important element, the logistics of ensuring project food was planned, purchased, stored correctly and cooked over fire were difficult – originally a responsibility of WWT, this was shared between WA and took more project time than planned.
- The fire took a lot of time and energy to manage, especially if activities that day were also reliant on the fire (e.g. making dyes).
- When activities would require fire use, we ensured that another WWT member of staff would be present, but even with an extra pair of hands, the main WWT delivery partner felt that their attention at Langford Lakes was mostly limited to keeping an eye on the fire and observing tool use. They felt that they didn't get the opportunity to build genuine connection with the participants until we moved to Coombe Bissett, where we chose to not cook over a fire at lunch.

## Session order

- Getting the structure and content of the courses right is particularly important with this group. It relates to things like the level of challenge, the inspiration provided by facilitated access to heritage objects and activities, the consistency of the environment, and a general feeling of being welcomed, and a little privileged, to be working in a unique setting. Although the overall circular structure of the project theme worked well, specific activities could have been timed more appropriately.
- Upon reflection, the order of archaeology activities could have been improved. Prior to test pitting, it would have been beneficial to try out flint knapping in order to aid understanding of flint discoveries during the dig.
- Ideally, the landscape would have been analysed alongside the geoarchaeologists prior to the test pit digs as this would have created ripple effects in understanding – this was the original plan but wasn't possible due to the availability of the Coombe Bissett site for test pitting.
- The trip to Butser would have fit in better earlier in the project to provide inspiration for building their settlement. The staff on site at the farm didn't add as much value near the end of the project as was hoped.

## Archaeology

- Archaeology activities delivered at Langford Lakes were challenging to manage alongside the other activities available:
  - **Foraging – Environmental Archaeology** – There was a general lack of focus/engagement during this activity, the weather and limited flowering plants at time of year made it difficult and it required more structure than WA had originally planned. Delivered at an early point in the project (session 2), this activity was competing with an overwhelming desire from the majority of participants to continue building their structures. Students should have been given more space to do this before delivering whole group activities.
  - **Making dyes/dyeing fabrics** – Again, student engagement with dyeing was a bit uneven, it is possible that there were too many things going on at once and structure building was more appealing. The process of making the dyes requires a huge amount of manpower and resources (three fires continually burning). The result/ reveal of the dye on the fabric was underwhelming. Perhaps in future all the chosen dye techniques could be tested in advance to ensure a spectrum of success. The willow dye is a subtle result, having some mordanted fabrics ready to allow for a second dye that is more visible would have helped.
  - **Cooking in an underground pit** – A small selection of young people engaged with this activity, whilst others were determined to finish their shelters or assist with other cooking techniques throughout the day. It

has been difficult to balance a child-led approach with individual tasks that have long wait times built into their delivery. Maintaining focus and interest when other activities are available did not work well in this instance.

- Visiting archaeologists to Langford Lakes have had a desire to revert to traditional teaching styles that would be delivered at school and have struggled to adapt to a child-led approach. These activities have demonstrated occasions where it would be more beneficial if the accuracy of the pre-historic detail was superseded by boosting the confidence of the group through creative or new activities. Providing training and clear briefings for visiting archaeologists and encouraging them to relax their desire for accuracy is imperative.
- The response to visiting experts at Coombe Bissett was very different, possibly partially due to the absence of settlement building to distract participants.

### **Celebration event**

- As part of the Year 9 Awards ceremony, delivery partners set up an exhibition displaying artwork, collaborative maps, photography and finds from the project for participants to share with their parents and peers. A film of the project was also shown at this event.
- The whole year group was invited but roughly 50% of the cohort turned up. Only 2 out of 10 project participants turned up to the event. One came alone and helped to set up and one came with their parents. Only 1 of the 4 form tutors for that year group attended
- The two students that attended were given a certificate, a box of sweets and a photobook of memories from the project to take home. All other participating students received these items at a later date.
- It was a shame to not have the opportunity to celebrate the project with all participants, another approach would need to be explored next time.

### **Weather**

- We experienced some very hot weather during the latter half of the project which highlighted the need to ensure that plenty of water is available.
- It was noted that most of the young people forgot to bring water/sun hats or use sun cream/antihistamines for hay fever.
- Providing shade to keep participants and perishables cool at Coombe Bissett was tricky.

## Dropout rates

- We had 3 participants dropout over the course of the project
  1. Dropped out after session 1 due to anxieties over not being able to complete schoolwork if being taken out of school 1 day a week – this student was promptly replaced by another student.
  2. Moved school after session 6 so couldn't continue – this was out of our control.
  3. Following a string of confidential incidents at school and unauthorised absences, this participant was told by their parents that they couldn't continue. They were given the option to stay by the school, but they didn't take it.

## Events affecting attendance

- A school trip abroad meant 1 student couldn't attend session 8.
- Strikes coincided with session 5 which resulted in low attendance – it was easier for students to decide not to attend on this day due to school not being open. Some students listed illness as a reason for nonattendance on this day.
- 3 students were absent on session 8 due to sickness.
- One student couldn't join in for 3 weeks because he got into a fight outside of school.



**Figure 63:** De-turfing a test pit.

## Lessons Learnt

### Evaluation

- Longer lead in to enable more robust evaluative systems to be in place.
- Clear evaluation plan sent to school in advance with plenty of time for reminders.
- Have an impartial evaluator join the group at several points during the project to witness change over time.
- Important to include open opportunities for comment (e.g. jar of awesome).
- Include opportunities for parents/guardians to evaluate change in child.

### Communicating with the school

- Ensure buy-in from senior members of staff right from the beginning
- Sharing films and photos periodically with form tutors helps them to understand the project better

### Activities

- More digging!
- Order activities better – make more chronological sense in the archaeological process, e.g. Do flint knapping before the test-pits so they understand what they're looking for.
- Provide more thorough briefings for visiting archaeologists and encourage them to relax their desire for accuracy.
  - Side by side moments are gold dust. Plan these in, e.g., more time for nothing. Be patient and allow space for the magic to happen.
  - Creativity comes in many different forms.
  - When activities require more fire and tool use, ensure two forest school trained people are present to share responsibility for the fire/tools and health and safety.

### Partnership

- Partnership is key to the successful delivery of this project, consider how this could translate to other locations.
- Plan in time for trust (between partners, between group members).



**Figure 64:** A selection of finds from the test pits.



**Figure 65:** De-turfing test pit.

## Recommendations

An important element of the evaluation was to gather evidence that could inform work beyond the life of the pilot project. As a result of these findings, the following recommendations have been made in order to enhance the future project development and offer for young people:

- Work with schools where it is possible to engage with Senior Leadership Teams early on to demonstrate value, aid understanding, and ensure whole school buy-in.
- Peer Mentoring
  - Consider the potential for participants to give talks about/share their experiences of engaging with the programme to other young people in Year 2 – this could help with easing future participant anxieties and remove some barriers to participation.
  - Provide opportunities for young people who participated in Year 1 to continue with the programme in Year 2.
- Allow time to evaluate the progression of young people 3-6 months after the first year of the programme.
- An evaluation plan and theory of change should be formulated before or very early on in the project which would set out:
  - Project milestones (as well as when and how often they would be reviewed to monitor progress),
  - Project outcomes and how these would be evidenced,
  - Clear and consistent definitions of what outputs are to be counted and how across the whole project,
  - The responsibilities of certain stakeholders to assist in the collection of this information – e.g. include an impartial person to dip in and out of the project at key points to collect wellbeing statements and conduct informal participant interviews.
- Consider changing the project name to: 'Our Place'.
- Look into recognition for skills learned – e.g. AQA awards?

## Conclusions from the Wiltshire pilot

The evaluation clearly evidences that, despite some challenges, the WA Project was successful and met the intended programme aims and objectives by:

- Supporting young people to experience the positive psychological benefits of engaging with archaeology and nature.
- Increasing young people's wellbeing, confidence, self-esteem and social skills (as individuals and having worked collectively in groups).
- Enabling young people to take control of their learning, communicate confidently and contribute as a valued member of a team.
- Emboldening young people to try new skills.
- Improving school attendance.

The pilot also demonstrated that there is potential for a wider application of the approach, both locally (within Wiltshire) and nationally. Specifically, the project demonstrated:

- The potential of archaeology to increase young people's connection to places and people
- That there is a desire for this type of project amongst schools, specifically in relation to pupil attendance
- That there are a wide range of partners willing and able to support and work with young people in this way.
- The wellbeing benefits extend to the adults supporting and participating in the project and are not limited to the younger participants.

Participants can be seen to have gained new skills and knowledge throughout the project, to have grown in confidence and resilience and to have enjoyed a greater interaction with adults and their peers. Evidence demonstrates that a pedagogical approach with a diluted sense of hierarchy where participants, facilitators and experts learn alongside each other is important in building trust and empowering young people to take control of their learning. Allowing time and space for reflection, and exploration encouraged the development of problem solving skills and creativity.

The variety of activities on offer and peer to peer approach gave the young people a holistic experience and a chance to explore the sites in different ways and from different perspectives, culminating in meaningful engagement with heritage and connection to spaces. While the project was resource-intensive, it provides substantial insight and the success of the project suggests that building on its implications would be a good starting point for future efforts of Historic England.



**Figure 66:** Session 1, the fire circle.



**Figure 67:** Session 6, a completed round house.



**Figure 68:** Session 11, exploring buildings at Butser Ancient Farm.



**Figure 69:** Session 8, digging up the past.

# Appendices

## Wellbeing Statements

Participant initials: .....

Today's Date: .....

### Questions:

1. **I feel recognised for my achievements**  
(People see what I can achieve and have achieved)
2. **I feel welcome and accepted for who I am.**  
(I can be myself)
3. **I feel my voice is heard** (I feel valued, I can express ideas and opinions)
4. **I feel positive about my future.**
5. **I feel proud of myself.**
6. **I like to meet new people and make friends**  
(feel I can connect to others / other people and to things around me)
7. **I feel that I am active and have get up and go.**
8. **I like to learn** (This could be new skills, reading about something or going to places that interest you)
9. **I like to help others.**
10. **I am curious** (I take notice of the things around me and of my thoughts and emotions)

# End of project feedback form for form tutors

## Project Rejuvenate – Evaluation

Your pupil has undertaken a series of workshops as part of Project Rejuvenate. The project has been organised by Wessex Archaeology in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and aims to increase the wellbeing of young people through enabling them to engage with local archaeology by taking part in a range of practical and creative sessions. The sessions ran from March – June 2023, contact Ruth Yoxon, [r.yoxon@wessexarch.co.uk](mailto:r.yoxon@wessexarch.co.uk) if you would like any more information about the project.

Please could you answer the following questions about your pupil, your insight is invaluable to add context to what we have seen in sessions.

**Please focus on the period between March and June 2023 when answering the questions.**

### 1. How much do you agree with the following statements about your pupil?

| Statement   | Strongly agree           | Agree                    | Don't know               | Disagree                            | Strongly disagree        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The young person has shown signs of increased confidence        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tell us why you chose that response                             |                          |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
| The young person seems more in control of their behaviour       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tell us why you chose that response                             |                          |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
| The young person has socialized with others more                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tell us why you chose that response                             |                          |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
| The young person has been more engaged with their lessons       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tell us why you chose that response                             |                          |                          |                          |                                     |                          |
| The young person has showed other positive signs of improvement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tell us why you chose that response                             |                          |                          |                          |                                     |                          |

(cont.)

**2. Have you observed any changes in this student? What is the biggest thing that's changed for them?**

**3. Did the student have any barriers to taking part in this project?**

**4. Do you have any other comments about the student?**

**5. Do you have any other comments about the project?**

## Summary of Sessions

| Session | Date  | Location       | Core activities delivered  |
|---------|-------|----------------|--|
| 1       | 17/03 | School         | <p>Ten young people attended this introductory session, two were not in school. One young person decided afterwards that they didn't want to take part because they would miss too many dance classes, so they were swapped with another who began on session 1.</p> <p>This session was led by Wessex Archaeology Heritage Inclusion Officer Ruth Yoxon and aimed to be an informal introduction to Project Rejuvenate and give the young people an idea of what to expect. An introduction was given to Wessex Archaeology and Sarah Tribe introduced Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the project locations.</p> <p>It was intended that each young person would have a chat with the pastoral team prior to this session to fill out their referral forms but this was delayed due to complications with student selection and the completion of parent forms. This meant that the young people didn't know anything about the project, or why they had been invited to the session on arrival.</p> <p>We began by playing a 'web of connections' ice breaker game to get to know each other's names and a little bit about them. The group enjoyed playing this game and requested to play it later on in the project. We then played the film from the trial sessions which gave the young people a much clearer idea of what to expect and a better understanding of what they will get up to. Young people commented that they were looking forward to having time to relax and learn new skills. Only one student said that they were interested in art. Some students expressed concern about the weather and wearing waterproofs.</p> <p>Practical aspects of the sessions including food and protective clothing were discussed and the young people were given a chance to discuss preferred food options, this was used to inform the meal choices for session one.</p> <p>Students filled out their referral forms at the session, some needed considerable help with this, and it would have been better to do this in private as planned.</p> |
| 2       | 21/03 | Langford Lakes | <p>12 young people attended this session. After a welcome, health and safety and discussion about expectations the young people helped to carry the equipment over to set up the 'camp'. We began by sitting around the firepit to discuss what archaeology is and what activities they will be taking part in to build their own settlement over the next 12 weeks. The rest of the team were introduced, and we repeated some ice breaker activities that we had played in school.</p> <p>After a hot drink and snack, Sarah led group demos on wood cutting (using billhooks to sharpen the ends of hazel poles) and fire lighting, with some of the group giving the new skills a go. For most young people it was their first experience of trying these</p>  |

| Session | Date  | Location       | Core activities delivered   |
|---------|-------|----------------|---|
|         |       |                | <p>types of skills. The group were also given a chance to explore the site independently.</p> <p>The group then prepared and made toasties over the fire for lunch (group choice).</p> <p>After lunch Emma taught the group how to make a sketchbook and we explored the site together following creative prompts. Participants led us to spaces that they had found and enjoyed spending time in.</p> <p>After the walk Leigh introduced the group to the evaluation questions and we all completed our wellbeing stars and heritage questionnaires. The group were given some time to continue exploring and relax in the hammock then we finished with reflections on the day.</p>   |
| 3       | 29/03 | Langford Lakes | <p>10 young people attended this session. One person left the project due to anxiety over missing lessons and was replaced with another student. This was the rainiest day on the project, most of the young people chose to wear the waterproofs supplied, despite it not feeling 'cool'. Sarah (WWT) was not present on this day, so we had 2 other members of WWT staff helping out. This was a slight disruption in the consistency of people and the combination of staff change and bad weather meant that the session lost some of its intended structure. We met in the car park and again everyone helped to carry all of the kit to our site.</p> <p>Due to the weather, our first priority was to make structures to provide some cover. The group was given refresher demonstrations for using billhooks and tying knots, then the group was split into 3 teams to choose an area and build a simple tarp structure practicing their new skills.</p> <p>After a snack break, we settled around the fire for our first introduction to Environmental Archaeology. Flint, waterlogged Hazelnut samples, coprolite (fossilised poo), clay pipes, pottery and bones were passed around the circle for the group to handle. Concentration was mixed, it was difficult to hear Meg through the wind and rain, and discussions worked much better in small groups. Several students asked questions and demonstrated an interest in the objects shown.</p> <p>The group cooked soup and hotdogs for lunch and students helped to prepare vegetables with houmous for snacking. The rain eased off around midday.</p> <p>After lunch the young people continued briefly with their structures, then they prepared journey sticks with Emma and began a foraging walk around one of the lakes with the Environmental Archaeologist. Young people collected items from the ground to add to their journey stick and discussed plants and fungi around the lake. Concentration was mixed on the walk and it was decided that it would have been better to split the group in two to aid engagement with the Environmental Archaeologist.</p> <p>The group then returned to camp, deconstructed their tarp shelters and carried equipment back to the car park. The group</p> |

| Session | Date  | Location       | Core activities delivered   |
|---------|-------|----------------|---|
|         |       |                | collected alder cones for Emma to make ink with over Easter, this ink was used for lots of creative projects over the following weeks.  |
| 4       | 18/04 | Langford Lakes | <p>This session followed a 2 week break for Easter. 12 young people attended the session.</p> <p>The group seemed tired, so the session began with a ball game to get the group going. They then sat around the fire and were introduced to Ines, another environmental archaeologist. The group discussed how and why people in the past made dyes, and how we know about this from archaeological evidence. They discussed plants that could be used for dyeing and why a mortar is needed. Emma prepared some of the fabric with iron mortar over the Easter break. The young people helped to prepare 3 fires for boiling willow bark (doesn't require a mordant) and nettles (requires mordant) to use as dyes. After this discussion, the group naturally split into 2, half of the group wanted to continue building their structures, whilst the other half helped to collect nettles and strip willow bark using flint. With it being a fairly long and arduous process, young people dipped in and out of the dyeing process throughout the day.</p> <p>Whilst stripping willow bark, some of the group began discussing how people in the past spent their leisure time and played story telling games around the fire.</p> <p>With many fires being used for the dye making process, lunch was sandwiches. Young people helped to prepare and chop fillings for the sandwiches and vegetables for snacking. For some of the young people this was the first time that they had prepared food. After lunch the group came together to prepare their fabrics with string and elastic bands to be put into the dye pot. In the afternoon, the group continued with various activities and visibly began to settle into the space. Some were taught how to use go pros by Tom and filmed the process of buildings structures and preparing food, one group used their go pro to interview the environmental archaeologist. Some went on walks to the bird hides and took photos of the lake. One participant took themselves away from the group to sketch artefacts.</p> |
| 5       | 25/04 | Langford Lakes | <p>All 12 young people attended this session. The weather was sunny and dry. We started with exploring the fabrics that had been sat in the nettle and willow bark dyes all week. Results and interest were varied. The young people helped to hang the fabric up to dry.</p> <p>The group did a sensory check in and were introduced to the thinking books and responded to prompts from Emma whilst Sarah set up camp. The young people were taught how to make fire using various methods and most young people gave it a go, rejoicing in individual successes. Most young people were surprised that their efforts had been successful and other young people demonstrated determination when using the flint and steel method.</p>  |

| Session | Date  | Location       | Core activities delivered  |
|---------|-------|----------------|--|
|         |       |                | <p>Building groups were given names: the leaf group (a group decision), the 'Ikea' group (this group prioritised building furniture) and the hedgehog group (making a house for a hedgehog) which added to the collective tribal feeling. The leaf group decided to try making their own fire and Sarah decided to give them minimal instruction to see if they could work as a team to do this. They persevered for a considerable length of time before having to ask for further help.</p> <p>The group were introduced to whittling and began making decorations for their settlements, such as totems, mushrooms and swords/javelins. All three groups continued to add to their buildings, the 'Ikea' group started to add windows and doors, the leaf group decided to redesign their structure entirely and the hedgehog group continued to weave their walls.</p> <p>The group requested ramen for lunch and prepared this together with Sarah. This meal was fondly remembered by the group as the best meal of the project.</p> <p>A handling box from Wessex archaeology was available to explore and draw sketches from. One student enjoyed producing accurate sketches of the flint and copper dagger. Other students enjoyed exploring tools from the past and comparing them to their own. Emma taught the group how to make face paints using chalk and half of the group got stuck in with painting faces and creating pictures using alder ink and chalk. The 'Ikea' group continued to build their structure, the leaf group designed a collaborative flag and filmed with the go pros.</p> <p>The session ended with the jar of awesome and a group check in (score out of 10), with the group collectively ending on a high. Participants enjoyed the variety of activities; they felt much more settled into the space and loved the ramen at lunch.</p> |
| 6       | 02/05 | Langford Lakes | <p>Just 7 participants attended this session, due to a strike day coinciding. The school asked all participants to come to the session as planned, but some chose not to. Weather was dry and cloudy.</p> <p>This session started with the thinking books; the group responded to prompts from Emma. Trust was growing amongst the group and journaling worked well at the beginning of the session. The group then responded to the prompt 'what makes this piece of land 'Our Place'?', most young people offered their own perspective on this, no one was confident enough to read their response aloud but were happy for them to be shared and read by the group. Time in the space, time together, shared food and connectivity all featured as important factors to change land to 'our place'. Emma introduced a mind map of the settlement, and the group added their own contribution to this throughout the day.</p> <p>Half of the group continued to enjoy the mindful act of whittling and chatting around the fire, this offered good opportunities for facilitators to get to know the participants, giving them something else to focus on.</p>  |

| Session | Date  | Location       | Core activities delivered   |
|---------|-------|----------------|---|
|         |       |                | <p>Knowing that one member of the 'Ikea' group would be leaving after the next session, the group were determined to complete their settlement and continued to add furnishings to make it homely. This included a table and a bench. Over lunch the group played card games brought from home on their table.</p> <p>The leaf group helped to prepare the fire for lunch and enjoyed knowing how to succeed.</p> <p>Lunch was quesadillas with eggs prepared by the group following a participant's own recipe, this young person was proud to share their recipe with the group.</p> <p>Over lunch, mid-project evaluation was completed with each participant in the form of individual interviews to review their wellbeing scores from session 1.</p> <p>Young people continued to add to a collection of 'finds' from around the site and share them with Emma, including fish bones and a goose skull. One of the participants enjoyed sketching these items and drawing connections between their sketches and the professional archaeological illustrations done by the Wessex illustrator.</p> <p>The afternoon was spent pond dipping in a chalk stream nearby the settlement. The group loved exploring underwater with the go pros and identifying finds.</p> <p>The session ended with the jar of awesome. Everyone contributed to the jar of awesome and selected quotes were read out to the group.</p>   |
| 7       | 09/05 | Langford Lakes | <p>All 12 participants attended this session. For one student it was their last day due to moving house, this session culminated in a celebration of their achievements over the course of the past 6 weeks, all participants and facilitators wrote a note to say goodbye on a plank of wood for this participant to commemorate their involvement in the project.</p> <p>This session started again with the thinking books; the group responded to prompts from Emma. The leaving participant decided to take their thinking book home with them after the session. Whilst sat around the fire, the Environmental Archaeologist, Ines, explained the food related activities for the day. We discussed what the group thought that people would have eaten in the past. Ines explained how we have evidence for what people ate in the past and how we would be taking part in experimental archaeology, to recreate cooking techniques used by prehistoric people.</p> <p>The group was split into 3, the first group prepared the underground pit and fire for cooking hazelnuts and tubers. The second group was responsible for preparing Neolithic style bread and cheese and the third group was responsible for collecting nettles for nettle tea. Unfortunately, the third group were so determined to finish their building before their friend left the project that they didn't complete their task. The underground pit group got on well practicing what they had learned over past weeks to work</p> |

| Session | Date  | Location       | Core activities delivered  |
|---------|-------|----------------|--|
|         |       |                | <p>as a team to make a successful fire. The second group engaged at different levels with preparing the other ingredients and all enjoyed trying the different foods.</p> <p>As this was the final day at Langford lakes until the final session, participants were given the chance to finish their settlements and practice their new skills in whittling, preparing wood, making fire and taking part in creative activities.</p> <p>For lunch everyone tried the different prehistoric foods and contributed to making a carbonara as requested the previous week.</p> <p>The afternoon was spent exploring and enjoying the settlement they had created. The group reflected on how it had changed since they arrived, and how it felt more like home. The group visited each building to discuss how it had started and how they felt about the finished product. The 'Ikea' group was most proud of their building, they were pleased to have completed all of the elements that they had designed.</p> <p>The move to Coombe Bissett was discussed with group to prepare participants for what to expect. The group decided what they would like for lunch the next week.</p> <p>The session ended with a check out score of 10 and the jar of awesome. Everyone contributed to the jar of awesome and selected quotes were read out to the group.</p>   |
| 8       | 16/05 | Coombe Bissett | <p>This was our first session at Coombe Bissett, 10 young people attended this session. The weather was clear and warm, the young people enjoyed wearing the different protective equipment for test pit digging.</p> <p>After a welcome, health and safety and discussion about expectations the young people helped to carry the equipment over to set up their new temporary 'camp'.</p> <p>The group were given a demo by the fieldwork experts on how to select an area for test pitting with a CAT and Jenny, how to measure and de-turf a test pit and how to use the equipment provided safely. The group split into smaller groups, while some chose to dig independently and decided whether they wanted to dig at the top of the chalk hill (where test pits would be shallower, hitting the chalk bed sooner) or at the bottom (where test pits could be dug down to 1 metre but would be more labour intensive).</p> <p>A facilitator was designated to support at each test pit and the groups began de-turfing and digging. Once the area was de-turfed, participants were given separate duties of trowelling, sieving and recording. Participants swapped roles throughout the day. Fieldwork officers were on hand to provide advice and help to identify finds.</p> <p>Participants chose sandwiches for lunch and helped to prepare fillings and healthy snacks.</p> <p>Some participants found the changing of setting difficult, so familiar activities such as whittling, and shelter building were</p> |

| Session | Date  | Location       | Core activities delivered  |
|---------|-------|----------------|--|
|         |       |                | <p>made available when needed. These were good activities to provide for when participants needed a break from digging. The day ended with their thinking books, following prompts from Ruth and a discussion about the day. Everyone contributed to the jar of awesome and selected quotes were read out to the group.</p>  |
| 9       | 23/05 | Coombe Bissett | <p>Just 7 participants attended this session, we were also due to have a visit from the Guardian on this session so communications officers were present from both Historic England and Wessex Archaeology.</p> <p>We began with an introduction to geoarchaeology and explored flint, fossil and pottery artefacts to compare with the participants finds from the previous week. Participants learnt more about how to identify whether a flint had been knapped by a human and used this knowledge to help identify flint finds from their test pits.</p> <p>Participants continued digging their test pits with support from fieldwork and geoarchaeology experts. They were also given the opportunity to try using a metal detector in order to identify good digging spots.</p> <p>The group were much more settled this week, perhaps due to being more used to the site, or being part of a smaller group.</p> <p>The group enjoyed a lunch of sandwiches together, including spam sandwiches as requested by one the participants. This participant enjoyed sharing how they enjoy spam sandwiches with their grandad and wanted to share this with the group.</p> <p>Emma helped the young people to creatively record and artistically respond to their finds. Participants made labels for finds and contributed to a simple finds recording booklet. Tom helped students to record their finds using cameras.</p> <p>The session concluded with their thinking books and the jar of awesome.</p> |
| 10      | 06/06 | Coombe Bissett | <p>7 participants attended this session. We began by creating sketchbooks with Emma to take on a walk. The walk was led by a geoarchaeologist expert and explored how we can analyse the landscape to discover how people used it in the past.</p> <p>During the walk through the wildflower meadow, the group collected grasses and enjoyed exploring the plants, they added sketches to their sketchbooks and took photographs using the go pros.</p> <p>The group analysed LiDAR photography and did the augering activity. Students enjoyed trying to push the auger into the hard ground and some were interested in seeing the soil change colour.</p> <p>We repeated the augering activity at the bottom of the hill to notice any changes.</p> <p>We walked back to camp to make a 'picky' lunch as requested, then in the afternoon, participants were given the option to continue with their test pits, record finds or take part in various creative activities led by Emma.</p>   |

| Session | Date  | Location            | Core activities delivered   |
|---------|-------|---------------------|---|
|         |       |                     | The session ended with their thinking books and the jar of awesome.   |
| 11      | 13/06 | Coombe Bissett      | <p>This session was a group choice day, 9 participants were present. It was the hottest day of the project, so activities were more limited to stay under a shelter.</p> <p>The session began with building a shelter to provide shade from the sun and writing in their thinking books following creative prompts from Emma. Students discussed their favourite finds and produced a sketch and record of them.</p> <p>Various creative activities were on offer throughout the day, such as making prehistoric style clay pots, painting grasses with alder ink, making cordage, needle felting, or making Neolithic style chalk pendants. This was the most successful uptake of creative activities in the project, participants were visibly more comfortable in trying out new techniques and choosing creative activities over more physical ones. They particularly enjoyed making clay pots and were excited to do it again the following week at Butser Ancient Farm.</p> <p>Another picky lunch was prepared by the group and they expressed excitement for the field trip planned for the following week.</p> <p>A fieldwork expert was present for part of the day to backfill the test pits and some students chose to help with this.</p> <p>This was a much slower day than other weeks and would have benefitted from more physical activities, however this was made difficult due to the weather.</p> <p>The day concluded with a group check in and the jar of awesome.</p> |
| 12      | 20/06 | Butser Ancient Farm | <p>This session was a field trip to Butser Ancient Farm to explore the Neolithic House that Wessex Archaeology helped to build using evidence from excavations carried out by the Wessex Fieldwork team. This was a shorter day on account of a longer journey to the site.</p> <p>We began in the Neolithic house and the group enjoyed the sensory element of being in the building and imagining its past. Talks were delivered by a member of staff from the farm and an archaeologist that excavated the building that inspired the one that they were sat in. The group explored images of the original excavation and asked questions about how the building was built. This talk could have been shorter and more active, some participants quickly began to lose interest.</p> <p>We then explored some of the other buildings on the site led by a member of staff at the farm. Students enjoyed exploring rooms and asking questions while walking but were less interested when sitting and listening.</p> <p>After lunch the group tried out making a wattle fence, clunch (a prehistoric building material) and clay beads. They enjoyed the practical aspect of these activities, especially making the clunch.</p>  |

| Session | Date  | Location       | Core activities delivered  |
|---------|-------|----------------|--|
|         |       |                | There wasn't time for the jar of awesome at the end of the sessions so the students wrote theirs on the minibus back to school.  |
| 13      | 27/06 | Langford Lakes | <p>Just seven participants were present for the final session back at Langford Lakes. The session began with 'thinking out loud' instead of writing in thinking books we added to the settlement map that the group created on session 6, they shared quotes, memories and photographs to be added to the map. Students enjoyed seeing how the landscape had changed from when they were last at the settlement, nature had taken over and the grasses had grown considerably.</p> <p>The rest of the morning was spent enjoyed the settlement, taking part in creative activities and preparing a celebratory lunch of spaghetti carbonara. Throughout the course of the day, participants and facilitators were taken away from the group to be interviewed in front of the camera for the final project film.</p> <p>Evaluation was also carried out with each participant, they responded to the wellbeing statements as a group and throughout the day each participant was interviewed separately to expand on their wellbeing scores and respond to further questions about their thoughts on the project.</p> <p>After lunch, the group requested pond dipping as their final activity. After a joyous dip in the stream, the group added their final comments to the jar of awesome and these were shared with the group.</p> |
| 14      | 12/07 | School         | <p>Celebration evening – at Year 9 Awards Ceremony</p> <p>Although all participants had been reminded about this whole year event, only two of the project participants attended. One participant helped to set up the displays and the other proudly attended with their parents and collected their certificate.</p> <p>We had a table and 4 stands showcasing participant photography, test pit finds, quotes and art made by participants over the course of the project. We showed a highlight film of the project to all attendees and gave out certificates to the participants in attendance.</p> <p>Each student was given a photobook of memories from the project and could take their artwork home with them. Photobooks and certificates for other students were given out separately later in the week.</p>  |

# Project Learning Review by Heritage Insider



## Introduction

Isle Heritage is undertaking evaluation of their Rejuvenate project. As part of this process Heritage Insider are providing technical support which includes facilitating a reflective practice Project Learning Review session.

A Project Learning Review is a form of group reflective practice. Reflective practice is a way of studying our own experiences to improve the way in which we work, and how the project performs. It can help us to deal with real, complex, and difficult situations as well as helping the team to recognise and capture successes.

Kate Measures (Technical Lead for Research and Evaluation, Heritage Insider) facilitated a virtual summative Project Learning Review on 16th August 2023 with members of the project and Youth Justice teams.

The purpose of this session was three-fold to support the Project Manager and team by:

- Give individuals an opportunity to recognise and discuss successes and challenges of project delivery.
- Provide dedicated 'space' for the project team to step-back from delivery and to consider lessons learnt through the project.

And also to:

- Provide information to feed into the project evaluation process and reporting.
- Discussion and responses are anonymous, and all views given in the session are attributed to the team but not individuals. This document comprises high-level summary notes from this session for the benefit of the Project Manager in undertaking the evaluation process.

## Session outline

This formative reflection session took the format of the team answering four questions concerning their involvement with the project:

- What are you most proud of?
- What difference did you see it make to a young person?
- How to improve the experience for young people?
- Logistics and programme, what would you keep and what would you change?

The notes from these responses are summarised in the remainder of the document.

### 1. What are you most proud of?

The team were asked to consider what they were most proud of concerning the project.

The responses are below:

- So pleased we got to give the young people a new experience that they won't get at school and appointments etc.
- It became apparent they all have had very narrow life experience, especially places they've been and from urban backgrounds, they hadn't been able to access any of it even when on their doorstep. Rewarding to see their reactions to buildings, landscapes and rural settings they hadn't been exposed to before. One of the most rewarding things I've done professionally.
- The way partners worked together and worked smoothly. Everyone very enthusiastic about access.

### 2. What difference did you see the project make to the young people?

- On the trip to Godmersham – A young person never knew that a person could own a mansion, hadn't seen sheep and horses in real life and was amazed by it all. He loved it, didn't realise you could ride a horse.
- At the White Cliffs clearing a WWII raid shelter on a very hot day, I asked 'What do you want to do?' and was given the response 'I could clear those stinging nettles and brambles', he was given the tools and went off. He wasn't enthusiastic at the start of the session but had had a tough week as expelled from school. After an hour he was half way round and said 'If I was paid to do this, I could do it every day.' Talked about how it could be a career and start his own business.
- One of the young people started eating lunch with us on session four. He felt comfortable enough to be able to do this – comfort, trust, relaxation. We find in most projects they don't want to eat.

### 3. How to improve the experience for young people

- All worked together really well. Met with Annie in advance and talked through session plans, need to tell young people in advance. Need a clear idea e.g. a list of clear activities, a photo pack would help to show what they would be doing.
- Would need to get statement from a young person.
- Was worried how they would take to doing archaeology work. First two sessions were introductory, third session put tools in their hands – done with great enthusiasm. Introduction, practical hands on stuff earlier on.
- Their enthusiasm can be great but stamina/attention span is limited. Sessions were 10am-2pm, but often cut it short due to them running out of ‘mental steam’. Need to be realistic and in the final hour ran out of energy. Be flexible about the end time, read the body language, don’t try to do a whole day. It depends on who you have.
- Good excavation, fly drone and walk across the estate. When starting up didn’t want to overdo things. Knew the audience so could add stuff.
- Did build trust.
- Four model is good with flexibility, would refine if doing it again.
- Young people got a really high quality experience and got a lot out of it, bring in other activities they could do themselves so they.... Overwhelmingly positive.
- Nothing extra, generally in youth justice it takes a lot to get young people to do anything at all. They all have complex lives and issues and do didn’t join. Getting them to come once or twice was a real bonus, getting one to come to all was very positive and all came to more than one session.
- Five to six every session would have been great and group dynamic could be challenging. Allows them to be themselves. Justice team wouldn’t want to do ten as it would cause issues, have had another project with larger numbers that ended in emergency situations.

### 4. Logistics and programme – what would you keep and what would you change?

- Use ‘What Three Words’ for finding locations.
- Attitude of people (adults) using terminology about these young people and misconceptions. Lots of anxiety about allowing these young people onto sites, there was a lot of prejudice. It’s a big issue for the Justice team – love to get involved or are horrified.
- Using multiple sites made it logistically harder. Was worth it as exposed them to a range of landscapes and different heritage. Would be good to have a similar approach again.

- Was anxious about it and don't want to do the something that gets a negative response and sets them back.
- Historic England central logistics.
- Keep flexibility e.g. in length of sessions and different locations and might get bored going to same site.
- Keep the team, it has been a pleasure working with Helen and colleagues.
- Was a shame no girls attended. The boys got a lot out of it – lots of military stuff but it would be interesting to see the girls' reaction to it.

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