

Churchwood Chronicle

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PLANTING FOR OUR FUTURE

Youngsters help replace diseased trees in woodland

Our Tree Surveyor had bad news – one of our woodlands, Ashy Plot, was riddled with Ash Dieback disease and many trees needed to be felled.

Ashy Plot is a lovely small woodland that runs from the High Road entrance down to the riding school. It borders a Site of Special Scientific Interest, which was not affected, but we would still have to replace the lost trees elsewhere in the woods.

In addition to the ash, many elm trees had succumbed to disease and died. As we removed the old dying trees we needed to make sure there was a new generation of saplings ready to fill the gaps.

But where to find the trees and the people to help us in this vital job?

The trees were kindly provided by Devon Wildlife Trust as part of their Saving Devon's Treescapes Project. The scheme aims to replace the region's ash trees being lost to dieback with native alternatives. Our bundle of trees included lime, rowan, maple, elm, cherry, oak and aspen.

As to people, our Forest School Kindergarten had plenty of children who were happy to run about in the woods and dig holes for the saplings, all under close supervision of course!

We had a fun day planting trees with the kids from the Forest School. The little ones managed to create homes for over 20 saplings at the top of the woods and we're pleased to report that almost all are thriving.



We plan to make the day an annual event as we replace our ash and elm trees and also remove unwanted non-native trees. It's great to teach the little ones about woodland management and the wider reasons for planting.



Find out more about this beautiful moth on page 3!



It's also nice to have a little free labour!

Who knows, perhaps in a few decades, the kids will return as adults and smile to themselves and say 'I planted that'.

Tom Higgins, Deputy General Manager



Visit our web site at: www.churchwoodvalley.com



What have you seen?

Last year we installed a wildlife board outside our office so visitors could highlight what they'd seen on site and in the surrounding area. The response continues to be fantastic and we look forward each month to sharing the results on Facebook. Reports of feathered and furry friends, flora and fauna have really delighted us... although we should stress that the sighting of a zebra is a work of fiction!

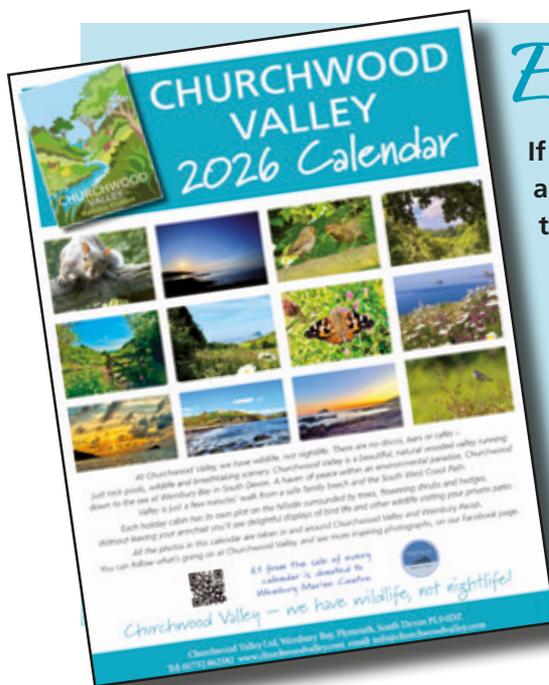
We work hard at Churchwood not only to conserve the natural environment but to encourage new and diverse wildlife. Spending time here we often witness some amazing sights and it's great to know that our guests are also seeing the likes of osprey, dolphins, deer, woodpeckers, owls and snakes and much else besides. 📷



A SIGN OF THE TIMES!

It's amazing how many people don't know that Churchwood Valley exists just a stone's throw from Wembury beach. While it's testament to how well our cabins blend into the landscape, it also means that we are missing a prime opportunity to promote ourselves to the many visitors to the beach throughout the year.

To fix this oversight, we have installed a promotional sign at the back of the beach highlighting Churchwood's many delights. 📷



Enjoy the view all year round

If you know anyone who is a Churchwood Valley fan, or who just likes a calendar full of gorgeous photos... then make sure you buy a copy of the 2026 Churchwood Valley Calendar!

If we say so ourselves, we think this is our best yet. The calendar features 12 glorious colour photos taken in and around Churchwood Valley and Wembury parish.

The calendar costs £6.00 for one copy or £11 for two with £1 from every calendar sold being donated to Wembury Marine Centre.

If you'd like us to post one to you, the postage is £3.60 first class and £2.00 for second class for one calendar. Call us on 01752 862382 or email info@churchwoodvalley.com to arrange. 📷

PS. Don't forget that the calendar makes a wonderful Christmas present for family, friends and all fans of Churchwood!

THE NIGHTLIFE'S AMAZING!

Who knew? It seems our slogan 'We have wildlife, not nightlife' might need to change! Mike Bailey, who visited with his wife Tamzin, is a keen moth trapper and, thanks to his efforts, it appears Churchwood Valley is actually a hotbed of nocturnal goings on...

"There are about 2,500 species of moth in the UK, and they come in an amazing variety of shapes and colours. However, the majority are rarely seen as they are mostly active at night. Many species of moths will readily come to light traps and this is by far the best way to see them.

As a keen moth trapper at home in Northamptonshire I was really looking forward to running my moth trap at Churchwood Valley this summer. On a previous visit in October (the tail-end of moth season) I had recorded 17 species, a relatively good number. But given the fabulous location – a sheltered woodland valley in rural South Devon – I had very high hopes for my visit during prime moth season in June. The omens were good as on arrival we found a Hummingbird Hawk Moth in our cabin!



Above: Hummingbird Hawk Moth.

Below: Twigs or moths? Two birch twig mimicking Buff-tip Moths.



Above: White Ermine Moth.

I was not disappointed. Over three nights I recorded a total of 79 species -more than twice the number of a typical June week at home. The range of moths caught was dazzling, including the brightly coloured (and big) Elephant Hawk, plus Brimstone, the tiny but stunning small Orange Pine-twist and the birch twig mimicking Buff-tip. There were too many to list here but if you're really interested I have provided a full list to Churchwood Valley for their records.



Above: Brimstone Moth.

Below: A delicate Blood Vein Moth.



Above: The magnificent Elephant Hawk Moth.

As well as being a fascinating hobby there are practical reasons for moth trapping too. It is essential for studying their populations and monitoring which species are doing well, or otherwise. Because of their species diversity and ability to respond to environmental change, they are an excellent indicator of habitat/ecosystem health.

The light trap does not harm moths. All the guests were released after being recorded with the exception of one a cheeky Robin nobbled right in front of me! All my moth records from the week were logged on the UK Biological Records Centre's iRecords system for the County Moth Recorder.



Above: A Small Magpie Moth

Thanks to Churchwood Valley for indulging me and giving me a cabin in a perfect location where I could run the trap without dazzling other guests. I'm looking forward to my next visit – hopefully at the absolute high peak of mothing season in July."

Mike Bailey 

A YEAR OF GROWTH & GREEN ADVENTURES!

The past year has been a vibrant and exciting one for Churchwood Forest School CIC, reports Emma Draper, the Forest School Leader. An organisation dedicated to connecting children with nature through immersive outdoor learning experiences, the school has continued to blossom.

Responding to growing demand and a desire to reach a wider age range, the school successfully launched several new initiatives, including:

Toddler Forest Fun Sessions which is designed for the youngest adventurers! These sessions provide a gentle introduction to the forest environment, encouraging sensory exploration and early social development for children aged 18 months to 3 years and their caregivers.

Churchwood Kindergarten has successfully integrated outdoor learning into their daily curriculum, seeing a marked increase in children's engagement with nature, improved physical development, and enhanced social-emotional skills.

Extended Holiday Clubs now cover more school breaks, providing a much-needed service for working parents and a fantastic opportunity for children to enjoy the outdoors during school holidays.



The team at Churchwood has also been hard at work enhancing the forest school site. New weather-proof shelters have been put up, providing greater comfort and flexibility for sessions, whatever the weather. Compost toilets



have also been upgraded, in line with the school's commitment to eco-friendly practices.

The Forest School has undertaken several projects to boost biodiversity

within its woodland. These include planting native trees and wildflowers, creating log piles for insects and establishing a new pond area for aquatic studies. These initiatives not only enhance the learning environment but also help the local ecosystem.



Beyond its educational programmes, Churchwood Forest School CIC plays a vital role as a community hub. In the past year, a lot of effort has gone into fostering stronger connections with families and the wider local community.

Looking ahead, the dedicated team remains



committed to its mission: to inspire a love of nature, foster resilience, and empower children to discover their full potential in the wonderful classroom of the great outdoors. 🌲

Mewstone Mutts

Chloe O'Donnell's business, Mewstone Mutts, ensures your dog enjoys as great a holiday as you do!

Chloe offers dog walks of varying lengths of time including solo or group walks. She also offers pop in pet visits and a pet sitting service.



Chloe O'Donnell

She is fully insured, has completed a Canine First Aid course and has an up-to-date DBS check that she brings with her to show owners at the first meeting with them and their pets. Her working hours are Monday – Friday, 8.30 to 1700 and she can do weekend and evenings.

Mewstone Mutts prices are:

Solo Dog Walk (60mins)	£19
Solo Dog Walk (30mins)	£16
Pet Visit (30mins)	£13-16
Group Dog Walk (60mins)	£14

For more information go to: www.mewstonemutts.co.uk 🌐