

Story Sacks

Great Western Community Forest



The Great Western Community Forest has been involved in many projects over the years designed to stimulate local communities to use and care for their woodlands. One of the most successful has been the Story Sack project.

Story Sacks are a cloth bag containing a fiction book, a related non-fiction book, a CD of the story, a game, learning notes and props with which to tell the story. They were developed originally by an ex-head teacher as part of a Swindon literacy project and are now available to buy ready-made or can be specially created to support any book. Story Sacks are often made by groups of parents from a school to provide a learning resource to be used by teachers and parents alike.

In September 2004, the Forest formed a partnership with Story Sacks Ltd and Goddard Park

Primary School in Swindon to develop a Story Sack to encourage the use of the school wood. Funding to support this project was received from the Forestry Education Initiative.

Following initial discussions, a group of parents got together to form the Story Sack group and have since designed and made props and scenery to tell the stories. They have presented the stories to every class in the school and to their own children. They were runners up in the Swindon Quality of Life Awards organised through Local Agenda 21 and have presented the 'Harry's Hazelnut' story to various audiences.

The Story Sacks Company will be publishing the 'Harry's Hazelnut' Story Sack and book later this year and they will be available for purchase from November 2005 onwards. The Story Sack will be officially launched at this year's FEI Conference and Networking Day to be hosted by the Forest in Swindon on November 3rd.

This project has been enormously successful in terms of engaging the school community in using their wood, developing the skills and confidence of the group members and spreading the word about using woodland for learning. The model will be copied in another Swindon school from September in conjunction with a Forest School project. The next stage is to raise funds and develop links to enable Story Sacks, Family Learning and Forest School packages to be available to more schools in the Forest area.



For more details, contact:
Alison Bruce
abruce@swindon.gov.uk
01793 466324

For more details, contact:
Susannah Podmore (FEI)
fei.english@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
01604 882610