

Fitzwaryn School and Letcombe Project Partnership 2022

A group of sixth formers have been volunteering as litter pickers for the Letcombe Brook Project since January 2022 and their work will continue into the warmer summer months! They are working for the Volunteering section of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards and also using the experience to complete a unit of their accredited work. Every week they patrol the town stretches of Letcombe Brook as well as the Willow Walk Nature Reserve collecting litter and noting any changes in the brook that may need reporting to the Project Management Team. After an initial session with the Project Officer, Mark Bradfield, the students have stepped up to take responsibility for the equipment and leadership of the sessions. They have developed their employability skills through the work and have shown resilience in chilly weather conditions!



Their efforts have been rewarded by a river dipping session led by Mark Bradfield, when students had the opportunity to see the wildlife they are working to help protect up close! They used wildlife identification guides to observe crayfish, Bullhead fish and different invertebrates.



Mark Bradfield commented:

" The greenspace alongside Letcombe Brook in Wantage can be a bit of a litter hotspot, especially in Willow Walk. It's been great to see that over the last few months things have improved noticeably and I have no doubt the hard work of Fitzwaryn School students have contributed greatly to that improvement. Many thanks for deciding to do your Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteering with the Letcombe Brook Project. It was a pleasure to have your students out for a river dipping session and great to see the students engaged and treating the wildlife we found with care and respect."

Students have reflected on the river dipping session:

'It was cool looking at all the fishes moving around in the water, just seemed nice watching'

'I was looking forward to seeing what was living in the brook'

'Everything was interesting, the sounds of the Chiff Chaff, to the look of the crayfish and the Bullhead'

We are looking forward to developing this partnership further as the students benefit from the social and emotional benefits of volunteering in the local community, as well as doing their bit for the environment and we'll be inviting Mark to join us for lunch in the Student Centre to thank him for his ongoing support.