



Bulwell Community Toy Library launches new project to help children enjoy the great outdoors

Nottingham-based charity the Bulwell Community Toy Library is launching a new project on Friday 1st April to give children and young people the chance to play safely outdoors whilst enjoying and learning about the natural world around them.

The project is called Play on the Wildside and it's being funded by the Big Lottery Fund, through Natural England's Access to Nature programme.

Access to Nature is a £28.75 million grant scheme set up to encourage people from all backgrounds to understand, access and enjoy our natural environment.

The toy library has been awarded £76,792 to run the Play on the Wildside project for 2.5 years.

The project will give children aged from 0 to 13 the chance to take part in free nature-based play sessions on Bulwell Hall Park in Nottingham, run by trained playworkers from the toy library.

Shockingly, only 21% of children play outside in the street or an area close to their homes now, compared to 71% of children from the last generation - according to research commissioned by the organisation Play England.

Steve Parkinson from the toy library feels that this lack of adventurous outdoor play is affecting children's future health, development and happiness.

He explains:

"There are many reasons why children don't play outside as much anymore, such as the increase in traffic, parents' concerns over their children's safety if they're left unsupervised or the attractions of indoor activities for children including computers and electronic games.

We've launched the Play on the Wildside project to give children a safe, healthy and exciting way to play outdoors. The project will build on the work we've been doing for years in terms of encouraging children to get outside and play, whilst enjoying and finding out more about nature."

From 1st April, children aged from 5 to 13 years can come along to 'drop-in' nature-inspired outdoor play sessions at Bulwell Hall Park.



Bulwell Community toy library

During school term time, the sessions will be held on Wednesdays and Fridays from 4pm to 6pm and on Saturdays from 11am to 3pm.

In the school holidays, the sessions will run from 11am to 3pm on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Activities will include lots of adventurous outdoor fun including woodland and nature crafts and games and campfire cooking. All sessions will be run by experienced play workers from the toy library.

The toy library will also be launching Play on the Wildside sessions for children aged under 5 from Wednesday 4th May. These sessions will run on Wednesdays from 1pm to 2.30pm at Bulwell Hall Park.

In addition, the project will include monthly sessions for all the family, which will be held on every second Saturday in the month starting on Saturday 14th May.

The sessions will give families the chance to get outside and have fun whilst spending time together. Activities on offer will include exploring Bulwell Hall Park and other nature-rich venues around Nottingham, making bird boxes, family challenges, nature trails and arts and crafts to take home.

To find out more about Play on the Wildside or the toy library please call Steve Parkinson on 0115 975 3898 or email steve@toy-library.co.uk

For press enquiries please call Stephanie Robertson on 0115 924 4304 or email stephanie@13souls.com

Notes to Editors:

1. For further information about the Bulwell Community Toy Library please visit www.toy-library.co.uk
2. Access to Nature is run by Natural England and is part of the The Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme launched in November 2005 to help communities enjoy and improve their local environments.
3. Natural England manages this £28.75 million Lottery-funded programme on behalf of a consortium of twelve national environmental organisations comprising BTCV, British Waterways, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Greenspace, Groundwork UK, Land Restoration Trust, The National Trust, Natural England, RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust.
4. Through this programme, it is Natural England's ambition to create opportunities for people from all backgrounds to have greater access to our natural environment and bring a lasting change to their awareness and understanding as well as improved links to the natural world, which many of us can take for granted.
5. Access to Nature closed to applications in May 2010 but for further information about the programme visit www.naturalengland.org.uk/accesstonature
6. For further information about the Big Lottery Fund, its programmes and awards visit www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

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