



## Then....



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At close to £10,000 (including £2,000 from **Tesco Bags of Help** and a £1,000 grant from the **Persimmon Homes Community Champions** scheme), our ambitious project to revamp the Forest School area is one of the largest BPSCA has ever invested in. Your tremendous support in the fundraising effort has been crucial and we're delighted to share this progress update with you.

Due to perennial surface water drainage issues, the area had not been used to its full potential for a long time and had been overrun by weeds and self-seeded vegetation. This was frustrating for the children, most of whom absolutely love their Forest School sessions; and for the teachers who want to maximise opportunities for outdoor learning in the curriculum.

At the time of writing, the sun is shining brightly in a virtually clear blue sky. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the time spent on site by the **Arbour Landscapes** team who throughout both Easter and the recent Half Term experienced the most horrific downpours we have seen in a long time. Undeterred, they battled through the Sussex mud!

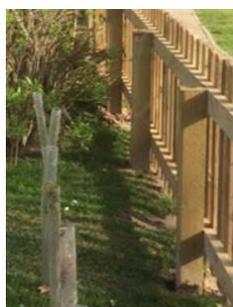


Ironically, a long conversation was had prior to work commencing about how best we could manage the drainage issues. Whilst not the cheapest option, we decided to install a substantial new drain at the top of the site. We could not have made a better decision as it turned out!



The new camp fire is now re-located to where the old pond used to be. Once the area has dried out, we will rake to level and apply a surround of shingle in front of the log stools. Almost ready to toast marshmallows!

A brand new picket fence now safely contains the whole Forest School area with lockable gates at both the top and bottom of the site.



Sixty hedgerow plants and saplings donated by the **Woodland Trust** have been planted along the fence line and within the small woodland copse next to the 'mound' on the field.





The overgrown pond was drained, filled in and a new raised pond created at the bottom of the site. Five frogs and all viable water plants were relocated. Since this photograph was taken, with the support of **Maidenhead Aquatics** additional oxygenator and marginal plants have been added and we hope to include more.

The new pond has stepped sides and a rockery of "geologically interesting boulders" to one side which we hope will help amphibians get in and out of the water. Rockery, alpine and woodland plants donated by **Billingshurst Horticultural Society** and **Cannons Nursery** will be planted by the children in the coming days.

The existing boundary fence to our neighbours seen in this photograph has also been repaired.

The children cannot wait to go pond dipping!



Separated by fencing from the camp fire and pond, the existing willow den and sand pit can be safely used by children at playtimes.

The living den has been pruned and shaped with further interweaving; whilst the sandpit has received two tonnes of new play sand and a revamped cover to prevent nocturnal animals visiting.



15 Cubic Metres of wood chip have been spread over the existing paths to reduce muddy footprints.



500g of wild flower seeds have been sown to create new colourful meadow grassland areas to help encourage visiting butterflies, bees and other wildlife.

## What next?

- A new shed is arriving in July to replace the current one which is no longer fit for purpose. Thank you to **Skidders Sheds** for their support in providing this.
- We are planning to install several work tables under the trees.
- The existing log store will be moved further up the site for ease of use.
- Extra log stools will be added around the fire pit.
- We would love to add an old sink and draining board for a mud kitchen!

To complete the project, we still need bird feeders, nest boxes, bug homes, log stools, work benches/picnic tables, guttering, water butt, basic hand tools for the children to use, nails, wood glue, goggles, waterproof backed picnic rugs, children's overalls/aprons, gloves, hooks and new signage on the gates ready for the official grand re-opening later this year.



Please contact **BPSCA, Mrs Footer or Mrs Hattrick** if you are able to help, have any comments, suggestions or ideas.

