



# AVON GORGE AND DOWNS WILDLIFE ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING PROGRAMME ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

*Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife is a partnership:*



## Overview

Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife (AGDW) biggest **achievement** this year has been the **publication** of a peer reviewed scientific **'Human Impact Assessment'** focusing objectively on human influence on Clifton Down's ecology and the effects on the connective landscape of the Avon Gorge. This report found a **highly significant relationship** between **high human impact** and the **diversity** of **pollinators**, an ecological indicator group. This in turn was found to be potentially detrimental to Avon Gorge rare botanical species. This year, the assessment has **informed Downs managers** making key decisions regarding the long term ecological health of this Bristol landscape and its ongoing longevity as a vital green space for the people of Bristol.

The engagement team were very happy to be **funded** by the **Nisbet Trust**, the **Pople Trust**, **Bristol Zoological Society**, the **Society of Merchant Venturers** and the **Basil Brown Trust** in 2025, following the withdrawal of funding by Bristol City Council. We are delighted that our funders recognise the **value** of the **engagement** and **ecological activities** we carry out within the AGDW conservation project and we have now been pledged **three further years** of funding between 2026-2028 to continue with and expand this work. Our funders over the next three years will be the **Nisbet Trust**, the **Society of Merchant Venturers** and the **Pople Trust**, alongside our employers **Bristol Zoological Society**. In addition, this year our **'Love your Living Downs'** campaign was generously funded by the **Triodos Foundation**, **Bristol City Council** and **Bristol Venues and Events Ltd**.

## Highlights



**6,759 people** actively **engaged** with Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife in 2025.

**1,602 school** and **higher education** students visited us for formal learning engagement.

Our **human impact assessment** for the Downs and Avon Gorge resulted in **concrete management action** taken by Bristol City Council.

**269 people** **took part** in one of our **discovery** sessions, talks, workshops, children's or family events.

We engaged with **4,643 people** through guided sessions and talks to **community groups** and at **community** or outreach events.



**18 volunteers** donated **540 hours** of their time.

**227 young people** joined us in **playscheme**, special **youth groups** or uniformed groups.

We **expanded** our **surveying** and **monitoring** activities throughout the year.

Photo credits: Martin Booth-sheep grazing ceremony, Bristol City Council-sheep grazing ceremony, University of Bristol-sheep grazing ceremony, Denice Stout-various wildlife, Kathi Held-various wildlife, Cathy Mayne-in torpor, Hugh Welford-small blue, Libby Houston-fly orchid, Bristol rock-cress, Avon whitebeam, spiked speedwell, Helen Hall-common blue, peregrine.

## Formal Learning Sessions

Overall, in 2025 AGDW taught **1,602 primary, secondary children and higher education students** in **72** learning sessions – the vast majority of those sessions being for a full day. We have expanded our collaboration with Steering group partner, the University of Bristol (UoB) Botanic Gardens, to enhance and enable children’s learning experiences with the project. This has meant that we have used the Durdham Down section of the Downs on numerous occasions when Clifton Down was not available to us due to various groups or individuals living on the site, deeming it unsafe. Despite the many challenges and a reduction in tutor hours available this year, our **formal engagement numbers** have nevertheless **increased** on 2024.

### Primary

We are delighted, as always, to work with schools from all over Bristol, in particular schools within areas which Bristol City Council records hosting the most deprived neighbourhoods in Bristol, as measured in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2025 Indices of Deprivation for England<sup>1</sup>. This year we have been able to offer engagement **free of charge** to **local primary schools** which enables those schools finding it difficult to pay for trips to visit the most important, iconic, natural green space in their city – the Downs and Avon Gorge. In total we had **26 primary** school which booked one or more sessions with us over the year: **Whitehall, Mary Elton, Christ Church CofE, St Augustines, St Peter and St Paul, Hotwells, Perry Court, Badock’s Wood, Westbury Park, Avonmouth CofE, Stoke Park, Shirenewton, Ilminster E-act Academy, Holymead, Brunel Fields, Fair Furlong, Westbury-on-Trym, Cotham Gardens, Chester Park, Hanna More, St Mary’s Catholic, Fairlawn, Shirehampton, Wansdyke, St Josephs, Victoria Park.**

Unfortunately, 7 schools cancelled before their visit. There are several reasons why schools cancelled with us (‘industrial action’ and ‘very hot weather’ on one occasion each) but the reason we are **most concerned** about was the **impression** given in the Press of **unsafe conditions** on the Downs, relating to the impacts of multiple travelling communities. It goes without saying that AGDW engagement will **always ensure** that school groups are in a **safe space** for their activities and will **never** operate within a potentially unsafe environment, whether this relates to hot weather or travelling groups on the Downs. It is vital that **Bristol City Council acts early** enough in **2026** to prevent these **potentially unsafe conditions** pervading the Downs again, possibly depriving hundreds of children from around Bristol of their right to a broad curriculum education again.

Using the **Botanic Gardens** as our main base this year allowed us to follow safe protocol, and we will continue to use the space in 2026 with great thanks to our Botanic Gardens hosts. We worked with schools and playschemes from the following postcodes this year: **BS11, BS10, BS6, BS8, BS48, BS2, BS4, BS14, BS16, BS9, BS32, NP16, BS15, BS13, BS7, BS3, BS5, BS21.**

*These FREE sessions are incredibly valuable to schools like ours. Budgets are incredibly tight at the moment and educational trips out such as these are vital in widening the horizons of children. They also celebrate and encourage the use of the Avon Gorge & Downs.*

Shirehampton Primary

*..our children often lack time in nature so having free sessions so close to school is amazing. It was a well-planned day by yourselves and so informative, thank you so much.*

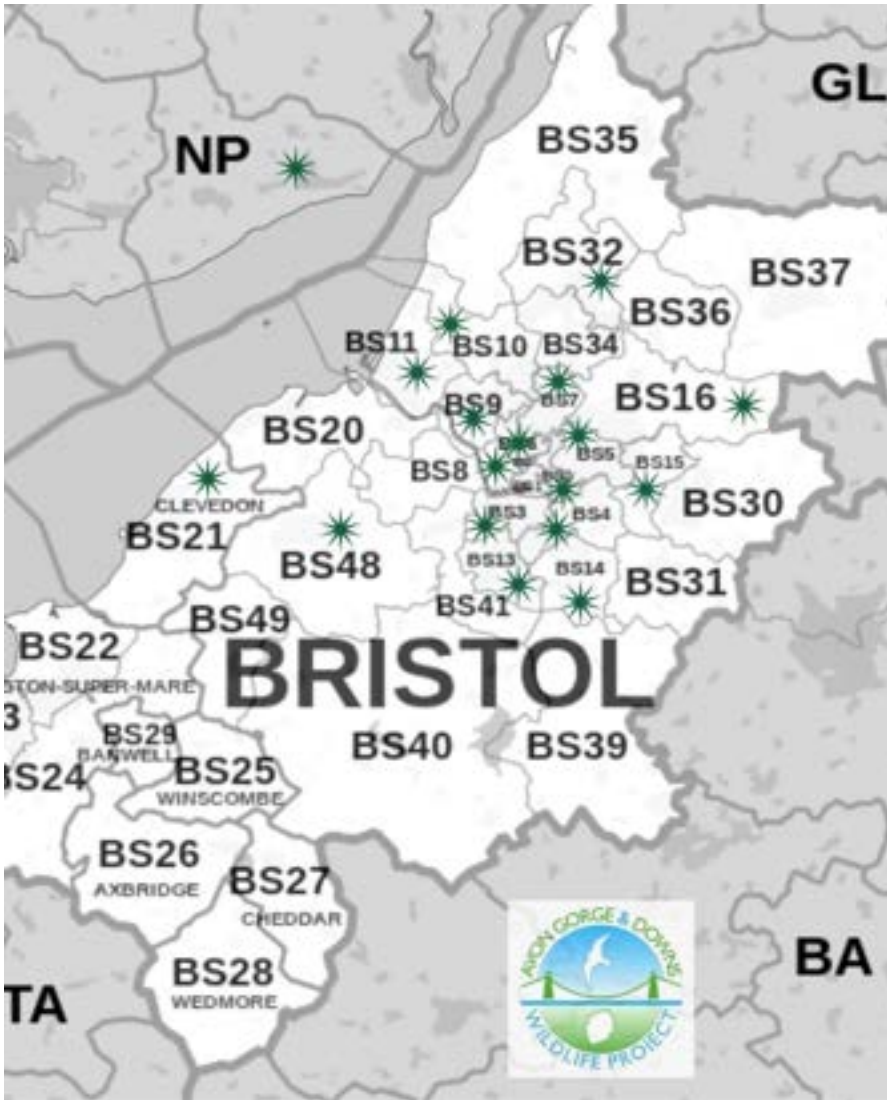
Badock’s Wood E-act Academy

*The adaptability to deliver an engaging outdoor day, even in tricky conditions was brilliant. All the children remained engaged and excited all day, and really undertook a great learning experience.*

St Josephs Catholic Primary

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<sup>1</sup> [The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(MHCLG\)](#)



*Distribution of booking schools*

In 2025 **100%** of teachers who responded to our **feedback** survey **agreed** that:

- as a result of their visit to the Downs and Avon Gorge, the children now had a better understanding of the natural world;
- the programme met the needs of and complemented the curriculum studied at school;
- teaching was of ‘very high’ (>85%) or ‘high’ quality.



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1 [The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(MHCLG\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government)

## Secondary and higher education

We have enjoyed delivering to **years 10 and 12** who practised sampling activities on the Downs, as well as choosing the locations on site for our 'Love your Living Downs' summer campaign messaging.

AGDW delivered **lectures** and **fieldwork** on several occasions to **undergraduate** degree students at the University of the West of England, focussing on their local Avon Gorge wildlife conservation project and discovering something of the challenging realities of human / wildlife conflict present in conservation projects worldwide.

*The students are always very engaged in the discussions of human impacts on the Downs and the conflicting priorities of local stakeholders, which fits perfectly with the themes of the module.*

## University of West of England



## Events Programme

In total **269** attended our engagement events programme this year in a mix of **discovery sessions, talks, workshops** and **family** or **children's** events. In addition to delivering focus on the different fascinating aspects of the Downs and Avon Gorge, our events are designed to bring **income** into the project. This income helps us to provide engagement to schools and other groups free of charge or subsidised throughout the year.

In 2025 we delivered many AGDW regular **discovery sessions** designed to attract people from all backgrounds and interests on: our herd of **wild goats** in the Gully, the Avon Gorge **rare botanical** flowering plant species, our **dawn chorus birds**, the **Granny Downs trees**, the Downs **historical heritage**, **Leigh Woods woodland** management and **tree identification**, local and **UK bats** and **winter tree** identification. This year sessions were led by a mix of in-house and visiting experts. **Wildlife talks** were given by experts on the dreamy **dormice** of Leigh Woods, **peregrines** of the **Avon Gorge** and the incredible array of **rare invertebrates** of the Avon Gorge. We enjoyed two **in-depth workshops** on **birdsong** and **winter bird identification** in spring and in autumn. AGDW ran three fabulous **family** and **holiday events** on the Downs – our **owl prowl** and pellet dissection session was a hit for families, along with our **Spring into Easter** and family **Crafting** holiday sessions.

Attendees to our events and sessions came from the following postcodes: **BS23, BA4, BS39, BA1, BA15, BA2, BS48, OX12, BS6, BS8, BS9, BN17, BS3, TA1, BS16, BS20, BS41, BS7, TA19, GL50, BS10, BS5, GL12, EX16, BS34, NP20, CF71, BS2, BS30, BS1, GL5, GL53, BS40, SN15, BS4, CF24, NP25, BS14**. This year we attracted people from all over Bristol and well beyond the locality to our events, which shows how interesting and important the Avon Gorge and Downs are to such a variety of people around the country.

Photo credits: Martin Booth-sheep grazing ceremony, Bristol City Council-sheep grazing ceremony, University of Bristol-sheep grazing ceremony, Denice Stout-various wildlife, Kathi Held-various wildlife, Cathy Mayne-in torpor, Hugh Welford-small blue, Libby Houston-fly orchid, Bristol rock-cress, Avon whitebeam, spiked speedwell, Helen Hall-common blue, peregrine.

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The use of stories and characters brought the history to life. For example hearing about the racing through the eyes of the artist was far more interesting than a simple description of the event.

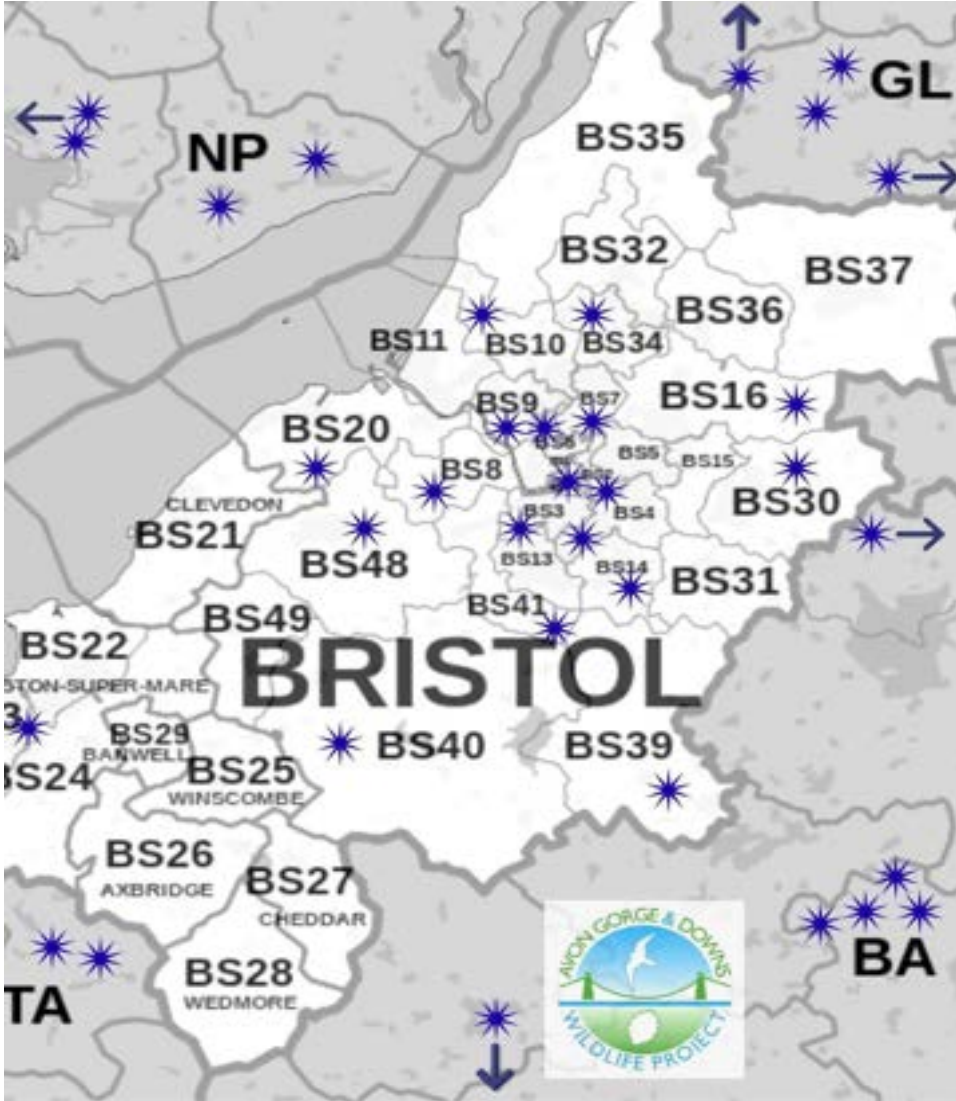
*Saints, sinners and false diamonds*

I thought that Ed and Anna complemented each other very well in the way they interacted.

*Birds of a feather workshop*

Learning to see the natural environment with fresh eyes, learning deeper appreciation of nature around me. This was all helped by very warm and friendly facilitation by Anna! It was really valuable to have in-person, 'in the field' learning.

*Winter tree identification*



*Distribution of event attendees*

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## Summer playschemes, uniformed groups and special groups

Our summer **playschemes, special and uniformed groups** included a visit from children living with heart conditions and two visits to a Knowle youth club for young people living with Downs Syndrome. We are delighted that next year we will welcome the 'Ups and Downs' youth club to visit us on the Downs instead of us visiting them in situ.

Once again we welcomed children in **playschemes** from around Bristol who visited us as part of their summer holiday activities and on two occasions we visited a playscheme in a park local to their base. Many playschemes cater for children who do not have access to summer activities and/or adequate food provision at home during the holiday period. AGDW is currently able to offer children a **free session** on the Downs, or where transport is too expensive for them, at a park in their locality. This engages children with the **natural world** as well as bringing them outside into a green space, having fun with other children. In total we engaged with **227** children through these activities plus many more supporting adults. Our numbers for these activities are reduced this year due to much reduced Learning officer hours for the year, and hence reduced tutor capacity.

Our **pre-schoolers nature club** sadly was not able to run this year due to the conditions on the Downs resulting from the multiple travelling communities in residence on site. Following positive action on this by Bristol City Council in 2025 we are hopeful to restart this group again in 2026.

*Thank you for tonight, it was very successful. We all had a great time, thank you.*

*Ups and Downs youth club*

*Exceeded my expectations, the knowledge, way it was presented way engaging and appropriate for the vast age range I had. Bea was amazing with supporting the children throughout.*

*Torwood House out of school club*

*We have been coming to these sessions for a few years now and the sessions are always brilliant. Children loved them, very positive feedback from them.*

*Oldbury Court playscheme*



In 2025 **100%** of respondents to the AGDW **feedback** survey for all playschemes and other groups **agreed** that:

- as a result of their activity with Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife, they felt that children had a better understanding of the Downs, Avon Gorge and the natural world;
- the programmes met the needs of the children;
- the leadership was of very high quality.

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1 [The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(MHCLG\)](#)

## Community events, activities and actions

### Talks and walks to local groups

In 2025 **four talks** and **walks** were delivered to interested groups locally and community groups in Patchway and Keynsham. Furthermore, we explored the Downs and Avon Gorge with several local **Bristol Councillors** and our **2025 funders** in a '**Deep Dive**' exploration. In total the number of people who attended was **117**.

### Public engagement campaign - Love your Living Downs

Once the majority of the travelling communities had left the Downs it was appropriate to launch the '**Love your Living Downs**' campaign in July - aimed at those few members of the public who use the green space irresponsibly and without valuing the natural site. The campaign aims to engage people with the concepts that leaving **litter on the ground**, or in bags by full bins or roadsides, and that **lighting fires** and **barbecues**, are **damaging** to nature and wildlife. This in turn ecologically degrades the site and the connective Avon Gorge causing long term impact and harm to the ecosystem. The sites are looked after and managed **for Bristol people**, as well as being intrinsically important habitats, and the **long-term natural heritage** resource is under threat.

The campaign will pause during the winter months, and be re-ignited in **spring 2026** as we aim to normalise responsible behaviour and change damaging behaviour patterns. There are already some exciting results – in particular with a **reduction** in the number of **barbecues** and **fires** being lit on the Downs. With huge thanks to the **Triodos Foundation** and **Bristol City Council** for funding banners (for walkers) and lamp-post wraps (for walkers and drivers). **Bristol Venues and Events Ltd** have also donated funding to be used in the campaign during 2026.



### Treeburt family tree trail

During the Easter holidays we ran our second morning for the public at the Observatory playground, start of the **Treeburt family tree trail**, engaging with families about AGDW and helping them to discover the tree trail using the QR codes. The event ran for three hours and during that time around **129 children** and **adults** set off to complete the trail with their phone or passport and stickers. Children also took part in plenty of fun spring nature activities with us at the playground where we had set up our gazebo.

### Sheep grazing ceremony

The five-yearly **sheep grazing ceremony** took place on 20th May as a celebration of and requirement for the **Commoners of Durdham Down** to retain their rights to graze sheep on the site. Commoners' sheep grazing rights were first granted in an Anglo Saxon charter in 883 by the medieval Manors of Henbury and Clifton. The modern day version of the medieval grazing right to pasturage was retained by BCC in 1859, following its purchase in 1857 of two properties in Stoke Bishop which held the right to graze sheep. Two sheep were turned out to graze with BC stamped on them.

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The sheep grazing ceremony in 2025 was a fabulous sunny affair, with ewes and their lambs visiting and grazing with shepherdess Melinda Baker. **Avonmouth primary** school and **Badminton School** children visited and touched the sheep, **made felt** from wool and learnt about the **importance of grazing** today in the Avon Gorge, as a means of managing the valuable calcareous grassland habitat. A wonderful wool spinner was present to show the children and other visitors how the spinning wheel works. Many inhabitants of **St Monica's residential** care home also visited on the day. Links to press coverage can be found here: [BBC website](#), [Bristol Post](#), [University of Bristol](#), [Bristol 24/7](#), [Bristol Live](#).



### Your Living Downs day

A **family community day** on the Ladies Mile ran in May, organised by FoDAG and supported by AGDW and Paula O'Rourke, Councillor for Clifton. AGDW was delighted to be involved in the planning and implementation of this day which saw the Ladies Mile closed for the day to cars. Our engagement team created a fun **chalk drawing competition** on the road and pavement– kindly judged by the Lord Mayor; provided **minibeasting** activities in the wildflower meadow; provided dressing up; created a story of chance **nature trail** to be followed; and helped the public craft beautiful **mandalas**; organised **goat discoveries** in the Gully; and of course, encouraged **cycling up** and down the closed road. In all we engaged with **120** people in our activities over the day. By complete lucky chance, and not design, the day fell in approximately four days between two groups from the travelling community being resident on the Ladies Mile. As such, the entirety of the Ladies Mile was safe to use on both sides, beautifully clear of litter and waste and a joy for families of Bristol to be able to use safely.

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## Festival of Nature

The **Festival of Nature** at Millenium Square is always a special opportunity to highlight our **local native wildlife** and surprise locals with what they can do to help local wildlife as they discover what an incredible site the Avon Gorge is. The Gorge lent itself to the water theme of the Festival this year, and AGDW spent two solid days with the public – a mixture of adults and children - creating **water themed mandalas** and guessing the weight of '**baby peregrine falcons**' in the Bristol Zoological Society marquee. In all we interacted with **3504** people; an enormous number and a fantastic way to spread the word about the wonderful biodiversity in the Avon Gorge.



## Festivals and fayres on the Downs

Over two days in late August AGDW enjoyed a presence in the children's zone at the **Forwards Festival** and engaged with a huge **variety of age groups**, crafting with and chatting to families from Bristol and beyond, about Downs wildlife. Our mandala activity was hugely popular giving children and adults alike the opportunity for some calm, mindful activity amidst the business of the festival. In all we made mandalas with **214** children, teens and adults. In September AGDW took part once again in the **Student Fayre** on the Downs, chatting to **230** students at our stand about **volunteering** opportunities with us and the '**Love your living Downs**' campaign, which focuses on **no fires or bbqs** and **taking litter home**. This is always an exceptional opportunity to engage with the student age group and altogether we welcomed a record **230** under- and postgraduate students to our stand.

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## Media

During 2025 AGDW **filmed** with **ITV** for a piece on the climbers in the Avon Gorge, and also with **Bristol Waste** and **Team Love** sustainability team for their socials. Our piece on **ITVX online streaming** service, on the conservation efforts of the goats in the Gully and the value of rare botanical species on this site, was released this year and can be found [here](#). The Engagement manager gave a **live radio interview** in person with **BBC Radio Bristol's breakfast Joe Simms** to talk about the 'Love your Living Downs' campaign prior to the Forwards Festival in August.

AGDW uses analytics for its **website** and social media. AGDW continues to receive traffic to its website through other site links and also through organic searches, with a total of **55,671 page views** since it was built in 2019, **up around 20,000** in the past year alone. The AGDW website is cumbersome and is still due for a renewal!

AGDW continues to use Facebook and Instagram to reach its audience. During 2025 our **Facebook** posts had **115,368 views** and its **audience** currently stands at **2,684**, whilst our **Instagram** reach is **632 followers** with **4,825 views**. Our Facebook page can be found [here](#), our Instagram page [here](#) and our website can be found [here](#).

## Ecology focus - surveying, monitoring and reporting

Surveys allow us to assess the **ecological health** of the Downs over the long term and help to determine the management plan and the scrub management plan accordingly. In particular, pollinators and birds are very sensitive to changes in habitat and the health of an ecosystem, and are seen worldwide as excellent **ecological indicators**. Changes in species richness and abundance highlight where **site management** is working well or falling short, particularly in terms of ecosystem health.

### Bird surveys

Bird surveys continue **monthly** wherever time permits to monitor the long-term diversity of species on the Downs and whilst trends cannot be established in a short time period, over time it is possible to see how management of the Downs is affecting species populations. We have now been running these surveys for three years. This year we were delighted to record a **spotted fly-catcher** for the first time in August and again in September. Other highlights are: **firecrest**, which continue to impress around the Downs; **chaffinch**, which has been suffering nationwide from trichomonosis; **bullfinch**, a particularly shy species; **redwing**, a winter migratory species; **sparrowhawk** and **kestrel**, showing that food supplies in the form of small birds, voles and mice are readily available. Bird populations reflect how important the **exemplary habitat** of the Downs and Avon Gorge is. Data is recorded on the **BTO BirdTrack** system.

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*Chaffinch*



*Ringing a firecrest*



*Sparrowhawk*

### National Plant Monitoring Survey (NPMS)

On two occasions this summer the Engagement manager and Learning officer joined the Wildlife officer at Bristol City Council to carry out **plant surveys** on the Downs for the NPMS. We were joined by several volunteers on each occasion. This is the first year we have officially carried out this particular survey and we will continue to do so as a joint enterprise annually. It will be useful to note any **changes** to **flowering plant** and **grasses populations** in the **calcareous wildflower meadow** and **tussocky grassland** herb layer, the two richest and most diverse habitats on the Downs. In an aside to these surveys, we are pleased to find that the bee orchid and the autumn lady's tresses flowered in the wildflower meadow once again this year.



*Autumn lady's-tresses*



*Bee orchid*

### Silky wave moth surveys

We were pleased to be able to join in the **silky wave moth** survey again this year alongside the native species team from Bristol Zoological Society, as this gives us a good insight as to the ongoing **population health** of this **rare invertebrate**. In turn the data gives us an indication of **ecological health** in the **Avon Gorge** slopes on both the **north** and **south** sides of the river, and whether the habitat and scrub management regimes are effective.



### *Silky wave moths from the 2025 survey*

Photo credits: Martin Booth-sheep grazing ceremony, Bristol City Council-sheep grazing ceremony, University of Bristol-sheep grazing ceremony, Denice Stout-various wildlife, Kathi Held-various wildlife, Cathy Mayne-in torpor, Hugh Welford-small blue, Libby Houston-fly orchid, Bristol rock-cress, Avon whitebeam, spiked speedwell, Helen Hall-common blue, peregrine.

## Pollinator surveys

Following on from our 'Human Impact Assessment' report which recorded pollinator diversity in 2024, this year we built **pollinator surveys** into our timetable over the **summer months** to continue monitoring their **diversity** and **foodplants**. Volunteers aided us with these surveys. 2025 surveys were carried out to establish what **methodology** will produce the most **relevant datasets** to monitor the **ecological health** of the Downs and Avon Gorge. Next year and beyond, seasonal monitoring will continue to build up a picture of the pollinator community and trends in populations. Pollinators are particularly **sensitive to human impact** and **changes in habitat**.



*Wasp*



*Ichneumon wasp*



*Bee fly*



*Common carder bee*

## Dormice surveys

**Dormice monitoring** is carried out in **Leigh Woods** to establish **population dynamics** of this endangered species on Forestry England and National Trust land. Whilst monitoring is carried out in sections of the woodland which are not in the AGDW SSSI/SAC, it is assumed that dormice will find corridors into the steeper and inaccessible sections, which are. The **Engagement manager** and **Learning officer** have been **involved** with this monitoring for many years, and attend surveys when they are able.



*in torpor*



*hibernating*

## Avon Gorge rare plants

This year funding from Natural England (NE) was obtained by the Steering Group and an external partner to carry out an **up-to-date mapping survey** of the **rare botanical species** in the **Avon Gorge SSSI/SAC**. The results of this will be published in due course and will be used to inform and formulate the AGDW Steering Group **Action Plan** going forwards.

Further to this, an AGDW '**call for ideas**' has been submitted to **Natural England** as a precursor to a full funding bid, targeting **specific species** in the **Gorge** and on the **Downs** on the **UK red list**. This tranche of NE funding forms

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part of the **Species Recovery Programme** and runs from **2026-2029**. Funding is available to manage very specific threatened species in-situ and ex-situ. The list of threatened species AGDW will target comprises: **silky wave moth, small blue butterfly, chalk carpet moth, chalk hill blue butterfly, green-winged orchid, Bristol rock-cress, basil thyme, Bristol onion, English whitebeam, White's whitebeam, fly orchid, autumn lady's-tresses**. If a bid is successful in 2026 the AGDW engagement team will be heavily involved in the planning and management of the implementation and reporting of actions.



*Small blue*



*Silky wave moth*



*English whitebeam*



*Fly orchid*



*Green-winged orchid*



*Bristol rock-cress*

## Partnerships

AGDW continues to build and extend partnerships with other **local organisations**, and members of the **Steering Group**, to further the ability of the project to **reach as many people as possible** and achieve a successful and ongoing **positive biodiversity outcome** for the Downs and Avon Gorge.

### Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol (MVs)

We are grateful to the MVs for their ongoing support both in terms of **funding** and **recognition** of the value we bring to Bristol. AGDW engagement offers **ecological advice** and **action** to the MVs for Clifton Down and the Avon Gorge wherever possible, and **schools engagement** across the wider city. We have been delighted to take Merchant Venturers and associated Trusts on 'Deep Dive' **tours** of the **Downs** and **Avon Gorge** to reveal the incredible biodiversity which thrives in this urban space, making it **one of the top three botanical sites in England**.

### UoB Botanic Gardens

During 2025 the **Botanic Gardens team** have been fully accommodating and supportive to AGDW, allowing us to use their **facilities throughout the year** with school groups. Without this opportunity, many school visits will have been cancelled due to the conditions on the Downs in certain locations, and many hundreds of children will have lost out in their curriculum linked learning. We are **incredibly grateful** to the Gardens for their help this year, and look forward to working together in **2026**.

Photo credits: Martin Booth-sheep grazing ceremony, Bristol City Council-sheep grazing ceremony, University of Bristol-sheep grazing ceremony, Denice Stout-various wildlife, Kathi Held-various wildlife, Cathy Mayne-in torpor, Hugh Welford-small blue, Libby Houston-fly orchid, Bristol rock-cress, Avon whitebeam, spiked speedwell, Helen Hall-common blue, peregrine.

1 [The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(MHCLG\)](#)

## Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust (CSBT)

AGDW actively encourages schools to investigate **workshops** and **events** with **CSBT** on our website and through email contact. A visit to both the Downs with AGDW and the Suspension Bridge on the same day works well to give children a rounded **perspective** of the value of the **Avon Gorge**. As organisations we actively **support** one another's engagement offers in many ways.

## FoDAG

AGDW has been delighted to sit on the **Downs Advisory Panel** throughout 2025, to **represent biodiversity** and **engagement**. This provides the opportunity to bring a sometimes overlooked **ecological perspective** to many of the variety of topics discussed in relation to the Downs, which are then in turn brought to the Downs Committee. A focus on wildlife helps to maintain the Downs in a **healthy ecological state**, providing a **better experience** for all those **people** benefitting from this **green space**.

## Bristol City Council

We continue to share a strong partnership with the Council, its officers and the Councillors themselves. This year we have worked with the **Ranger** of the Downs and the **Wildlife officer** to focus on **scrub management**, **plant monitoring** and the **'Love your Living Downs'** campaign amongst other activities. We are *always* in debt to the Ranger and his team for their huge support in ensuring the Downs is a safe space for the public, including schools and other groups, to enjoy and benefit from. We have been pleased to take various **Councillors** on a **tour** of the Downs to show them the importance of ecological health.



## Steering group

Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife is a native species project of **Bristol Zoological Society** and the engagement team continues to be hosted and fully supported by the Society in all aspects of their employment. We continue to work collaboratively with all other **partners** in the Steering group and look forward to continuing fruitful partnerships over the next year.

## Volunteer Support

This year, with a smaller engagement team, we have relied heavily on our volunteers to help us deliver a full programme of **engagement** and **ecological activities**. In all we have called on **18 volunteers**, some of whom have given many, many hours of their time to our project, and totalling **540 hours** in all. We cannot thank them enough for the support they provide us with and the joy they bring us and the public with their good humour.

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1 [The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(MHCLG\)](#)



## Project Funding

AGDW gives its utmost thanks to **all its funders** in **2025** for their financial and other support in our efforts to enhance awareness and understanding of the unique Avon Gorge and Downs and its importance for Bristol and regional wildlife, people and local habitat. Organisations which funded the project in 2025 are: **Bristol Zoological Society**, the **Society of Merchant Venturers**, the **Nisbet Trust**, the **Pople Trust**, the **Basil Brown Foundation**, **Commoners of Durdham Down and Durdham Downs Charity**, the **Triodos Foundation**, **Natural England**, **Bristol Venues and Events Ltd**. Thank you also to all those **individual donors** for their kind support. Your funding really does make a difference to Bristol and national conservation.



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