

A Tamar Valley AONB Case Study – July 2022

Deer Park Farm, Luckett, Callington

Nestled in the Tamar Valley near Kit Hill, Deer Park Farm has just over 110 hectares of traditional Westcountry mixed farming, with cattle, sheep and arable. The current custodians of the farm the Howlett family, farm it with an emphasis on protecting the environment and allowing access to the public for them to learn about food and farming.

Having already established an on-farm education centre to facilitate visits by schools and other groups and a permissive path, the Apple Way, that connected the public footpaths between the Luckett Mine site and Kit Hill the family were looking at what else could be done to encourage more wildlife and people safely onto their land.

Their idea for their FIPL project to do just that was focused on a two-hectare site set around a large spring fed pond that had become very overgrown. It was one of the favourite spots on the farm of Brian Howlett who had sadly died in July 2021. Inspired by Brian’s approach to the land, their aim was to improve the access to the site on foot from the village, by making an old green lane permissive path safer and easier to walk through and to connect it to the Apple Way permissive path that was already being enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.



Interpretation board of the site

In the pond field the project involved clearing and restoring around the pond, reducing the brambles and bracken scrub to allow safe access around and to the pond and planting 12 new local variety apple trees for a community orchard. The

trees have fantastic names such as Luscombe Pine, Colloggatt Pipin and Sack and Sugar. Strategically placed picnic benches to allow school groups to carry out activities or have their lunches and an interpretation board to share the features of the site completed the works in the area around the pond.



Pond in March 22 following restoration work



The pond in July 22 heatwave

On the Apple way the crossing of the spring stream above the ponds was improved through the addition of a short boardwalk and the path was diverted to come past the heritage feature of the old butter well that would have served the farmhouse.



Apple Way spring crossing and butter well (top right corner with grill)

The site has already hosted school groups from local primary schools as well as a group of disadvantaged young people from local charity Battling-On who helped to re-paint the field shelter above the pond. The young people from the Tavy Youth Café group who visited got creative using natural clay, leaving delightful temporary sculptures to be discovered around the site. The variety of habitats around the pond will be a haven for children to explore at any time of the year. Ongoing maintenance during the FIPL project timeline will see further selective scrub management and activities to ensure the fruit trees establish well.



Tavy Youth Café art work hidden in a tree

The project was named Brian's Peace in memory of Brian Howlett and on the 17th of July 2022 it was dedicated to him over a wonderful traditional Cornish cream tea attended by his family and friends.



The Howlett family at the dedication of the site as 'Brian's Peace' in memory of Brian Howlett who died in July 2021 whose approach to farming and the land inspired the project