
Update #23: Active Hope

1 message

Grange Project <hello@updates.grangeproject.co.uk>

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GRANGE PROJECT



Even as the green has returned to the landscape here, there are still signs across the project of the dry summer we've had: the standing grass is brown, the ponds are at the lowest level we can remember and the blackberries have shrivelled on the bushes.

As the smoke from the Welsh wildfires drifted across the project and the signs of our changing climate became increasingly apparent, it was hard not to feel despair at times. But alongside the grief for some of the choices that have been and are being made, we have an opportunity to choose our own response. The response we're choosing here at the Grange Project is active hope.

What does active hope look like for us? In this newsletter we're celebrating all of the positive action that has happened here since June, and what we're looking forward to as autumn settles in. If you'd like to support the project, please consider [our unique space for your next workshop, gathering or retreat](#), or an unforgettable team away day.

We're also excited to launch our first seasonal supper club with the incredible chef Jane Alty. Come and explore the rewilding project at dusk, then settle in for a hedgerow cocktail and a beautiful three-course meal inspired by the produce from the land. [Details and booking here](#).



Wilder Connections

Following our March co-design phase, we were delighted to welcome a further 200 young people to the Grange Project this summer. The mission of the Wilder Connections charity is to grow a movement for nature connection in young people. We deliver this through three pillars: unforgettable experiences in wild nature, research to evidence the impact of those experiences, and work with the adults who can help facilitate the critical relationship between young people and the natural world. Nature connection is more than just time in nature; it's about emotion. So our

programmes focus on helping young people slow down, notice, play and create in community.

Young people joined us from across South Wales, from mainstream education, specialist provision and the home education community. We kept developing both programmes, Wilder Days and Wilder Camps, in response to their feedback. The headline: at the end of each workshop or camp, young people felt more connected to nature, calmer, happier and interested in caring for the natural world.

We're looking forward to developing our plans for 2027, which will include outreach into local schools, work with urban communities and programmes with more of a therapeutic focus. If you'd like to see the full evaluation report, or to keep up to date with our work, please [sign up to the Wilder Connections newsletter here](#).



Changes on the Land

Arguably some of the most visibly striking changes on the project have happened this summer. Youngwilders have been busy creating two ponds, which we hope will get the chance to hold some water when the rains finally come, and rotavating and seeding three areas with wildflower seed from Gwent Wildlife Trust. As with many of

the interventions we've experimented with here, we'll watch with interest to see the effects on the wider ecosystem.

Partly in response to the dreadful flooding in Monmouthshire in the autumn of 2025, we have also increased the number of natural flood management installations across the project with the help of We Are Nature Based CIC. We are now effectively a demonstration site for a number of different approaches to 'slowing the flow', including stepped ponds and a vast array of different styles of leaky woody debris. It was fantastic to welcome a group of local landowners at the end of August, who got an introduction to the world of natural flood management from the fantastic Tom Johnstone and the chance to see the installations in situ.

Finally, it would be remiss of us not to mention the rest of the rewilding team. The ground has at last softened enough for the pigs to start rootling (hooray!) and we're excited to see where they choose to focus their efforts this winter. Lady the horse is shaping the landscape too, grazing the shorter areas and creating paths through the longer grass, and her manure is a fantastic food source for invertebrates. For those surprised by our equine addition, she's here for her retirement after a previous career as an event horse. We know she's not fully comparable to the two or three cows that were our original plan for 2026, but she's a more straightforward option at this stage (when she's not chasing the pigs!).



Summer Events at the Project

It's always a joy to welcome people to the project and we're loving the diversity of guests joining us. Whether it's learning to cultivate mushrooms on one of our growing courses or a tour of the rewilding site at one of our **monthly open mornings**, it feels right that the site is so often humming with people.

We're also loving curating bespoke experiences for different groups. One day we're cooking for forty on an MSc in Science Communications for a Better Planet retreat; another we're taking twenty corporate guests out for a nature connection walk and a creative foraging activity. If you'd like to support both the Grange Project and our work with Wilder Connections, telling people about **our venue** and what we're able to offer is the best way to do it.



Upcoming Events

Before January and February invite us to slow down and 'winter', do consider joining us for our first seasonal supper club on **Saturday 14 November**. Join us from 3pm for a guided wander around the rewilding project as the light goes, before the indulgence of a long-table feast at the heart of the land, finishing around 8pm. Tickets are £65 and there are just 25 seats. We would love to welcome you, and as

many friends as can be persuaded to join you(!), for what we hope will be a very special evening.

Book your seat



THE GRANGE PROJECT

AUTUMN · SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER

WILDER SUPPER CLUB

A dusk walk across the rewilding project, then a long-table feast cooked by award-winning chef Jane Alty.

Wilder Gin and rose hip to start. Grilled bavette steak with saffron and burnt leek orzo, with squash, roots and greens from our own market garden. Ginger loaf, roasted plums and zabaglione to finish.

WHEN	WHERE	TICKETS
3pm till 8pm	The Grange Project, Monmouthshire	£65 per person Just 25 seats

BOOK VIA THE LINK IN BIO / GRANCEPROJECT.CO.UK



Also coming up:

- **Open Morning, Tuesday 3 November** and **Tuesday 1 December**, 10am to 12:30pm. A guided tour of the rewilding project and the best way to see what's changed for yourself.

Wilder Podcast

Wildfires - What's Actually Burning, and What Can Be Done

Back in August, a hill 13 miles from the Grange Project had been burning for two weeks. Wales had just gone into drought after receiving 8% of its average July rainfall, the driest July in 190 years, and just under 22,000 hectares had already burnt across the UK, more than the whole of 2022. We recorded this special episode quickly to try to understand what was actually happening.

Tom is joined by James Hitchcock, Rewilding Advocacy and Policy Lead for Rewilding Britain in Wales, and Alex Crawley, co-director of Grazing Management and a Nuffield scholar who studied wildfire in France and California. They discuss why not all fuel loads are equal, how rewilding sites are genuinely more vulnerable during their transition years, and how almost every wildfire in Britain starts with a person. Chloe joins Tom afterwards to pick over what the interview left out, including the effect on people, the standing grass on our own land, and whether "wildfire" is even the right word.

Right to Roam - Who Is the Countryside Actually For? With Jon Moses

Jon Moses lives five minutes from the River Monnow. He had lived beside it for twenty years and barely knew it, because almost none of it could legally be reached. In the first lockdown he pretended for a day that he lived in Scotland, and walked up it anyway. That walk is the whole argument of this episode. Jon is co-director of the Right to Roam campaign and co-editor of Wild Service: Why Nature Needs You, and he joins Chloe and Tom to explain what the campaign is actually asking for.

Thank you so much as ever for your time and engagement with the project,

All the best,
Chloe & Tom

Grange Project | Monmouthshire, Wales

[Visit our website](#)