

The Lost Words – Draft Mission Statement - 23/7/18

The Mission

Lost Words in the Garden of England is a Kent-wide crowdfunding campaign to raise money to donate a copy of 'The Lost Words' to every primary and special school in the county and so reseed the magic of the countryside in the imaginations of children in our classrooms.

Alongside the book, we will provide materials to support its creative and inspirational use by teachers and students beyond the classroom so that 'The Lost Words' can become a catalyst for hands-on reconnection with the natural world.

If we exceed our target, additional money will be used to donate copies of the book and resources to libraries, children's wards in hospitals and other organisations whose members would benefit from the book.

The Reason

The Oxford Junior Dictionary reflects children's everyday language, as demonstrated by established algorithms. In 2007, all of the words featured in 'The Lost Words' failed to make the grade. Children aren't talking about the natural world around them.

'Once upon a time, words began to vanish from the language of children. They disappeared so quietly that at first almost no one noticed – fading away like water on stone. The words were those that used to name the natural world around them: acorn, adder, bluebell, bramble, conker - gone! Fern, heather, kingfisher, otter, raven, willow, wren... all of them gone! The words were becoming lost: no longer vivid in children's voices, no longer alive in their stories.'

Introduction to 'The Lost Words,' by Robert MacFarlane and Jackie Morris

The aim of 'The Lost Words' is to give the words and the objects that they represent back to children in the hope that this will reawaken their interest in nature. Spell-poems by the award-winning writer Robert Macfarlane and hand-painted illustrations by Jackie Morris capture the enticing combination – the magic – of language and nature.

The Challenge

In Kent, we need to raise £6,100 to spread the magic across the county by giving each of our 509 primary schools and special schools a copy of 'The Lost Words' and 'Exploring the Lost Words' – an activity and ideas resource written by Eva John and published by the John Muir Trust and potentially touching the lives of hundreds of children across the county, offering them the chance to connect back to nature and enjoy its proven benefits*. It could also inspire the new generation to work towards a better future for our planet. As Chaucer put it centuries ago *'Tall oaks from little acorns grow.'*

How you can help?

Anyone donating any amount to the campaign and/or helping to spread the word will have helped reseed Lost Words in the Garden of England. Thank you.

Anyone donating £10 or more will be entered into a draw. We hope the prize will be an original illustration by Jackie Morris, created especially for the Lost Words in the Garden of England campaign. (to be confirmed)

Anyone donating £100 – a wonderful ten books for schools – will be invited to become a named patron of the campaign.

Those donating £500 – enabling a fantastic 50 schools to benefit – will receive a special signed copy of ‘The Lost Words.’ (to be confirmed)

Please donate here if you would like to contribute to this county wide campaign to help children in the Garden of England. Thank you in advance for any support you can offer

It works

As part of a pilot project a copy of the book was given to primary schools in the heart of Kent and provided a starting point for some inspired teaching.

‘It was a gorgeous, warm day and as we trundled through field after field it became clear to me that there was a wealth of knowledge that certain children could share. We discussed wild flowers, how farmers bale the hay, birdsong we heard, the different crops, the clouds and so much more. My favourite part of the whole day (apart from the children saying that it was their best day ever) was that we just stopped from time to time, sat down where we were and observed what we were in the midst of. We felt the silence of being surrounded by nature and we sketched what we could see/hear/feel. It really did get the children in touch with nature.’

Kent Primary School Teacher

It’s do-able

Similar campaigns are happening – and succeeding – in other parts of the country. All want to bring the language of nature back to the children of their communities.

The Scottish Crowdfunder raised Scotland £25,076 pounds from 502 supporters in 70 days.

In North London, 80 schools in the borough of Haringey received the book after Crowdfunding raised £1000 in less than four days.

All 81 schools on the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust’s list for The Lost Words received a copy of the book.

Other campaigns include Dorset, Sheffield, Norfolk, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, York & North Yorkshire, Hull & East Yorkshire. Let’s give the children of the Garden of England their chance to join this campaign and re-engage with the language of the outdoors, the countryside and nature.

Above and Beyond

If we raise extra funds we would like to go further by providing a book and resources to secondary schools, as well as to libraries, museums and other learning hubs. This would enable access for families in school holidays and on weekends and for children who are educated outside mainstream schools; children like Charlie, who is autistic.

'Nature means peace, calm and solitude on the one hand, and exercise, learning and companionship on the other. Charlie escapes the un-natural demands of the online existence that so dominates his life and that of his peers. Exercise takes the form of a cycle to the park where he has developed a strong affinity for the bird life – learning from their breeding cycles and hierarchies. He has made strong acquaintances with the park wardens...Nature nurtures Charlie.

Charlie's Dad

We expect to include sharing links to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using the hash-tag #LostWordsKent

** 'The Impact of Children's Connection to Nature'. A Report for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) by Dr Miles Richardson, Prof. David Sheffield, Dr Caroline Harvey & Dominic Petronzi, University of Derby, November 2015*