



PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Holy Trinity C of E School Cuckfield

GROUNDS TEAM NEWS – Spring 2019

The Grounds Team is a sub-group of your PTA and our main aim is to help support the teachers to use the school grounds as a learning environment. West Sussex Council maintain the school playing fields, however it is the school's responsibility to fund the maintenance of additional areas, such as the mud kitchen, sensory garden, story oak, forest school area, woodland, open grassland, pond and stream. Much of this maintenance is carried out by volunteers on our Grounds Days. Your PTA also funds a regular gardener to keep the path access through the woods clear, cut the willow/hedges and keep some of the blackthorn under control!

What have we been up to?

During our Grounds Day in early March we:

- filled the planters outside the Year 2 classrooms (donated by Year 6 Leavers 2018)
- carried out maintenance work around the pond
- installed the base for the greenhouse
- built some outside storage
- refurbished some raised beds
- put up the polytunnel for the gardening club

Children remain the responsibility of their grown-ups on Grounds Days. These days are a fantastic opportunity for children to explore the grounds - they're welcome to bring bikes/scooters to use on the playgrounds, build dens in the woods, play in the mud kitchen, explore the undergrowth or even help out with some tasks! Of course, we always finish our grounds days with a campfire and toasting marshmallows!

Later in March we ran a stall at the Cuckfield Local Market, where we sold many plants and children decorated pond-themed biscuits. This raised £144 to go towards the renovation of the school pond (see below) and was a great opportunity to talk to the local community about the school grounds.



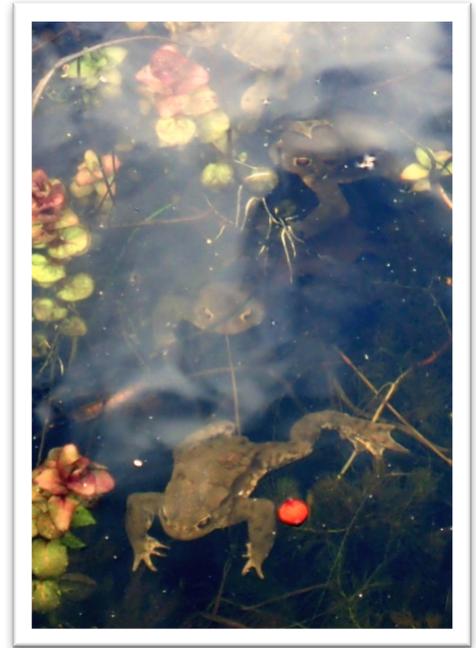
What's happening in the grounds now?

Too much wildlife for one pond!!

Springtime is an active time in the grounds - especially in the pond. Earlier this term we were fortunate to see 11 toads all in one go and 20 newts! Can you spot the toad spawn in the picture below? Toads lay their spawn in long strings unlike frogs spawn, which is laid in clumps. The pond is home to lots of other wildlife too, including horse leeches and dragonfly larvae as well as other invertebrate life. Can we find 100 different species within a year?



*Toad spawn in the pond
(look for the black lines draped over pond plants)*



Some of the 11 toads we saw...



Pond Life!



Newts! We saw 20!

Have you noticed the new fencing around the pond?

Previously there wasn't quite enough room for a class to get around the pond safely - we would love more children to be able to explore this aquatic habitat. Your PTA have helped fund a new fence around a larger area and a pond dipping platform will be installed shortly. We're also thankful for some additional funding from Cuckfield Local and are currently applying for funding to be able to extend this area further - to add an additional smaller pond, planting, a raised walkway and a boardwalk, to be able to provide sustainable access to the area.



The pond in its current state...

What's next?

Easter Egg hunt - 4th April

The ever-popular Grounds Team Easter Egg hunt through the school woodland will take place on 4th April. While you're waiting for your time slot, we'd encourage you to play in the mud kitchen - bring your children too! Or come along and look at the photos of our pond life near the yurt and talk to one of us about the plans for the grounds.



Grounds Day - 27th April 1pm to 4pm. All welcome!!

We will be making sure the grounds are ready for the children to use during the summer term. This will include putting wood chippings down around the outdoor seating areas and pathways, relocating another fence, doing some tip runs (see the sign-up link below), sorting out a woodpile for the campfire, generally having a tidy up, as well as enjoying hot chocolate and marshmallows around the fire – do come and join us - no previous skills required!

Could you help take some rubbish to the tip? Please sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080e4aafaa29a1fd0-rubbish>



How you can help?

- For starters - we'd love to see you at a Grounds Day!
- Or perhaps you have some spare compost to top up our raised beds for the very popular school gardening club? The gardening club also welcome any donations of flowerpots as well as spoons (small metal or plastic ones).
- If you can't make it to a Grounds Day, but would like to help us support the grounds in other ways, then we'd also love to hear from you.
- Perhaps the company you work for are looking for projects for staff volunteers to support?

Hope to see you all around the campfire soon 😊

Sharon & Fraser Stewart, Paulina Hechenleitner, Susie Hall, Kirsten Abbott & Nicola Brewerton