

CG0009 Nature Celebration

Irene Evison of Nearly Wild Weaving, Shropshire, a weaver and tapestry maker, submitted her funding application in early 2021.



She described her planned project as follows:

"A grassroots project involving local people working with me to design and weave a unique tapestry which celebrates the special qualities of the nature and biodiversity of the place we call home – Llanymynech Rocks Nature Reserve, Llanymynech Heritage Area and our stretch of the Montgomery Canal. To be displayed locally."

There were many reasons behind her project including:

"Creating meaningful new work: meeting a long-held desire to create a significant work focussed on the place I call home."

"Sharing my love of tapestry weaving: spreading the joy of weaving outdoors, experiencing the sights, smells and feels of nature."

She explained the motivations behind her art and her experiences with encouraging people to participate in the decorative arts and crafts.



She wrote of weaving:

"Traditionally a studio-based art, I often take a different direction, taking a portable loom outside to weave my own small glimpse of nature. It's a full sensory experience where the resulting tapestry forever evokes the sounds, smells and feel of the day."

I also get people weaving outdoors. Sometimes it's weavers and artists who don't tend to leave their studios. Sometimes it's outdoors people who don't tend to do any art. Sometimes it's passers-by who are willing to try it out."

This project combines all



this and more: my love of tapestry weaving; my enthusiasm to get other people weaving; my passion for connecting people and nature; the enjoyment I get out of seeing people's creativity and wellbeing blossom; my sense of belonging in my local community.

The end-product will be a single work of woven tapestry, displayed at local venues. Local people will be integral to its creation. At best, this will be hands-on at the loom outdoors on-site; if Covid restrictions continue, it could be contributing ideas via local social media.

The tapestry's design will come from the participants, filtered through my own experience, and inspired by weavers such as Line Dufour, Joan Baxter and Sylvia Heyden."



The plan was to involve the residents of Pant and Llanymynech and encourage them to be creative and to show their appreciation of natural world around them.

The project started in Summer 2021 with workshops at Carreghofa primary school and an outdoors weaving workshop for Year 6 pupils.

This was followed by

- ♦ two nature guided walks by staff from Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the Canal & River Trust;
- ♦ three 'have a go as you pass by' weaving sessions at busy spots in the nature reserve and alongside the canal; and
- ♦ an afternoon introduction to weaving workshop for beginners.

During Autumn 2021 Irene worked up the designs based on ideas suggested by the school children and adult participants over the summer, all inspired by the landscape and plants.

Winter 2021-22 saw Irene creating the final tapestry piece





incorporating the children's contributions.

The tapestry piece went on display in the window of the village shop in Summer 2022. The piece will also be shown in the village pub and in the Willow Gallery, Oswestry.

Irene summed up the project:

"I'm delighted to be able to show the tapestry in the place where it has most relevance and meaning, and particularly to have the support of the village shop and a local pub to do so. This makes art really accessible, seeing it as part of daily life, including for the children and other local people who contributed to it."

She emphasised the benefits of securing funding for the Nature Celebration project:

"The funding has enabled me to work over an extended period, which has made it possible to give dedicated time to the design stage, which is fundamental to creating a meaningful piece of work. Also, it gave me time to focus first on the community participation, and then on my own weaving. It felt right to be able to launch the piece for exhibition at the same time of year when local people were contributing to its design and creation, when many of the species that became part of it are readily on view, e.g. the orchids, butterflies and dragonfly."



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