



Urban Heaths Partnership Heathland Mitigation Delivery Report April 2021 – March 2022



1	Introduction	3
2	Background	3
3	Co-ordination, management and core engagement of UHP	6
4	Education	8
5	Dorset Dogs Project	11
6	Firewise Communities Project	16
7	Monitoring	18
8	Budget	20
9	Wardening	22
13	Further Information	22
1	Appendix 1	23
2	Appendix 2	24

1.0 Introduction

The Local Planning Authorities continue to take a partnership approach to heathland mitigation. The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020 -2025 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was prepared and adopted jointly between BCP and Dorset Councils with advice from Natural England. Further information regarding the SPD is available on the Dorset Council website: [Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework - Dorset Council](#)

Since 2014 the Urban Heaths Partnership (UHP) has delivered heathland mitigation on behalf of partner organisations under this and previous SPDs. Currently 10 partner organisations make up the partnership as below:

- ◆ Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust
- ◆ Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole Council
- ◆ Dorset Council
- ◆ Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
- ◆ Dorset Police
- ◆ Dorset Wildlife Trust
- ◆ Natural England
- ◆ National Trust
- ◆ Forestry England
- ◆ Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

While reporting on delivery during 2021/22 this report also provides some data for comparison back to 2007.

During the 12-month period covered by this report the Covid pandemic meant that England was placed under changing restrictions, at the beginning of the period total lockdown was in place with restrictions gradually lifted from 12th April 2021 when non-essential shops re-opened and pubs and restaurants were allowed to serve customers outside, further relaxation of rules followed on 19th July 2021 with the eventual lifting of legislation requiring facemasks to be worn in indoor public areas being lifted in January 2022.

This again had a profound effect on heathland mitigation delivery for the second year in a row. This report reflects the delivery techniques employed to allow continuation of message delivery in-line with legislation and public perception.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Heathland SPD

Under the SPD the Local Planning Authorities collect developer contributions from development within 5kms of heathland sites. These contributions are used to fund heathland mitigation in the form of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring

(SAMM) and Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs) which include development of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs).

The UHP team of core staff is responsible for co-ordinating and delivering elements of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). This team continues to be employed by Dorset Council on behalf of the UHP – see Appendix 1, page 26 for team structure in place March 2022.

The wardening element of SAMM is delivered and funded by the Local Planning Authorities along with HIPs and SANGs.

This report concentrates on the SAMM elements of heathland mitigation delivered by the UHP Core Team.

2.2 Structure and governance of UHP

The current working and reporting mechanism for UHP is as follows, however a review of terms of reference for the UHP Implementation Group is planned following the outcome of the review of Heathland Mitigation delivery:

- **Heathland Mitigation Steering Group** - this Group has the key role of overseeing the delivery of Heathland Mitigation in Dorset, this includes:
 - Understanding and complying with current legal and planning policy related to heathland mitigation.
 - Establishing policies and practices to enable partner organisations to successfully sustain lowland heath habitat in the face of development pressure.
 - Reviewing the effectiveness of policy, practice, implementation measures and monitoring of heathland mitigation.
 - Suggesting improvement and changes to ensure that mitigation remains both current and effective.
 - Having oversight of a work programme for the UHP Team and the UHP Implementation Group.
 - Advising and identifying projects to deliver heathland mitigation.
- **UHP Implementation Group** - This Group Co-ordinates and oversees delivery of an agreed work programme for the mitigation required under the SPD for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM), this includes:
 - Monitoring delivery of mitigation to better understand effectiveness.
 - Applying appropriate new technology to ensure that measuring and monitoring remain current.
 - Identifying supplementary funding opportunities to link with this work.
 - Implementing improvements and changes as recommended by the Heathland Mitigation Steering Group.
 - Researching and suggesting best practice to enable mitigation measures to deliver continuous improvement to partners.

- Supporting Planning Departments by providing technical information relating to the SPD as required at Local Plan examinations, planning enquiries etc.
- Ensuring that staff and financial resources are deployed effectively to deliver appropriate mitigation in line with strategic objectives.
- Suggesting new projects
- **UHP Staff Management** - The core team is managed within the Coast and Countryside Service, with line management provided by the Environment Advice Team Manager. The twelve members of staff are led by the UHP Team Manager

2.3 Agreements Plans and Strategy

The UHP works to a framework of formal plans, strategies and service level agreements:

- **The UHP Heathland and Mitigation Strategy** - The UHP Heathland Mitigation Strategy was written by the UHP Team Manager in consultation with the Implementation Group and adopted by the Group.
- **UHP Annual Delivery Business Plan** - The UHP Business plan sets out delivery of the strategy and provides the delivery framework for the core team. Progress against the plan is monitored by the UHP Team Manager and reported to the Implementation Group
- **SAMM Wardening Service Level Agreement** - A Service Level Agreement is in place agreed by LPA partners covering delivery of the wardening element of SAMM delivered by themselves.

2.4 Area

The area that is covered by direct UHP mitigation support is over 2500 ha, however much of the education, engagement and project work provides consistent messages for a much wider area of heathland. Figure 1 gives an approximate percentage split of this heathland area between the current Local Authority Areas. Please note that this only includes areas/sites where UHP provide direct mitigation support.

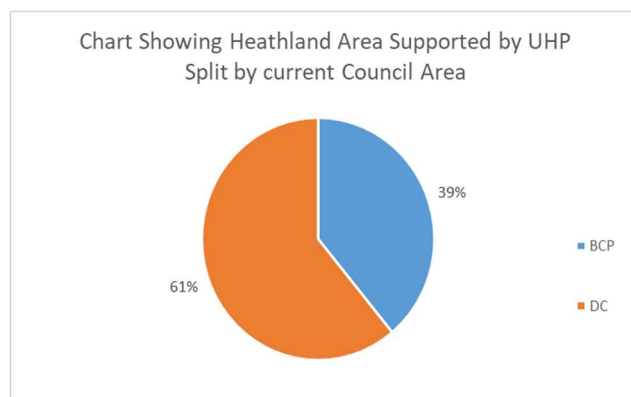


Figure 1 Chart showing heathland area by Local Authority areas

2.5 Work areas of UHP

There are five main strands to the work of the UHP Core Team and they are discussed in detail in sections 3 – 7:

- Co-ordination and management of UHP
- Education and engagement
- Monitoring

- Dorset Dogs Project
- Firewise

3.0 Co-ordination, management and core engagement of UHP

3.1 Context and Aims of UHP Co-ordination, management and core engagement

Key elements of coordination, management and core engagement of the UHP are:

- Develop and monitor the implementation of the UHP Delivery Plan in line with the UHP Heathland Mitigation Strategy.
- Co-ordinate the UHP team delivery of SAMM elements in line with the approved budget. Appendix 1 shows the Core Team structure March 2021
- Support co-ordination of the wardening element of SAMM across the area on all heathland sites.
- Monitor delivery of SAMM and report annually.
- Develop and deliver key messages through a range of media
- Develop the Dorset heaths website working with the UHP team and partners
- Build and develop strategic links with other mitigation delivering bodies.
- Develop strategic campaigns on behalf of partners such as #Operation Heathland campaign

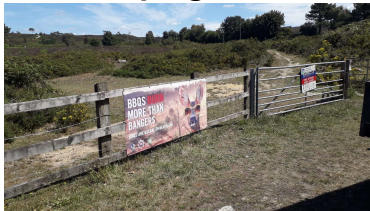
3.2 Results of 2021/22 Co-ordination and management

During the 2021/22 financial year key work has included:

- Facilitated the delivery of the Dorset heaths long term analysis and evidence base review (report by Footprint Ecology) liaising with all partners and BCP and DC planning policy officers
- Work up costed options for future heathland mitigation delivery based on recommendations of the Dorset heaths long term analysis and evidence base. To be presented to the Heathland Mitigation Steering group for discussion.
- Production and monitoring of the UHP Delivery plan -agreed by Implementation Group - progress has been monitored and delivery throughout the year has been on track.
- Coordinated 2 Implementation Group meetings and 6 Heathland Mitigation Steering Group - facilitated progress on delivery and budget reporting .
- Delivered 4wider UHP team meetings -, attended by Core Team and wider mitigation staff maintaining area wide knowledge across all staff.
- Production of the UHP Annual Report for Financial year 2020/2021 produced September 2021.
- Supported staff through changing working environment, managing homeworking and bringing back staff to the office.
- Facilitated Operation Heathland meetings on behalf of the partnership.
- Developed and delivered the #Operation Heathland 2021 campaign to share consistent messages via social media.

3.3 Results of 2021/22 core engagement

- BBQ Campaign** - for the 2021 BBQ campaign the UHP team worked again alongside Litter Free Dorset in delivering the joint BBQ campaign. This year the focus was on getting the key BBQ/wildfire message out to the public, putting up **45**



banners at a range of high-risk sites strategically visible sites. **54** caravan and campsites were visited and provided with posters and leaflets. Social media - Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms were also used to promote the campaign.

- # Operation Heathland Campaign** – as part of the BBQ campaign UHP led the Operation Heathland campaign using social media to raise awareness and profile of the value and importance of the heathland habitat and wildlife. Regular heathland related posts have included celebrities and influencers supporting the campaign with a range of hashtags. The launch video on Facebook reached **28,066** people.

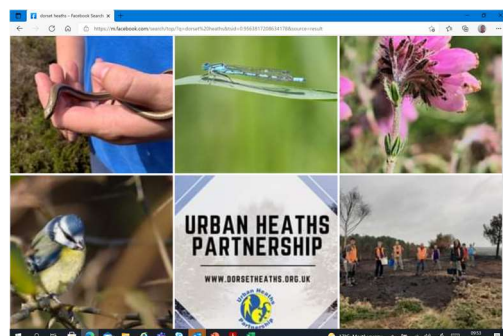
- Heath Week** - is used as a platform to promote our messages using carefully planned events and activities, it is run in co-operation with Thames Basin Heaths and Pebblebed Heaths. The UHP Education Co-ordinator and Project Support Officer put together events and activities for the week 24th – 30th July 2021. Due to the uncertainty around covid restrictions at the time many of the events were online, such as a video Nightjar walk and Leif Bersweden social media takeover. BCP Poole wardens and ARC staff ran some on-site pop-up events. During this week the social media reach was **63,255**. This was **511%** above the figures of an average week.



- Heathland Life newsletter**- **2** newsletters were sent to Councillors and Partners through. The newsletter provided information on events and activities, Partner's heathland projects and information from mitigation staff.

- Engagement through website and social media** - social media channels continued to be used alongside the UHP website to promote and disseminate messages under the Dorset Heaths name.

During this year the website was redeveloped with more functionality and an updated modern feel. UHP run a Dorset Heaths Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms. The team provide a range of articles and posts that cover heathland plants and wildlife, campaign information, fires, and other pressure related stories.



Analytics For Dorset Heath branded social media (1st April 2021-31st March 2022):

- Facebook: **109,939** total post reach
- Instagram: **2457** accounts engaged
- Twitter: Total Impressions **203,425**
- Website: **1760** individual site sessions

These analytics include articles and posts put out under individual campaign titles

4.0 Education – Schools programme

4.1 Context and Aims of UHP Education

The Education programme was delivered by the Education Coordinator and Education Assistant. The Education Co-ordinator also oversees the Dorset Dogs and Firewise projects.

The aims of UHP Education are:

- Deliver a co-ordinated approach to education across the Partnership.
- Identify and contact Target Schools offering heathland related activities tailored to age and subject.
- Increase awareness of the importance of heathlands for their wildlife and biodiversity.
- Increase awareness of the consequences of heathland fires to the wildlife and the community along with other potentially damaging or antisocial activities.
- Encourage individual and community responsibility for the protection of heathlands for the future and provide a sense of ownership.

Target Schools have been agreed with partners as those to offer UHP education activities to as a priority. These are chosen mainly due to proximity to a heathland site and remained unchanged during this time period. See Appendix 2 for the 2021/22 target school list.

Covid 19

While the context and aims of the programme remain the same, delivery of these have adapted in response to the covid-19 pandemic such as delivery of on-line resources and use of digital engagement. In school delivery was not possible for parts of this financial year due to restrictions and school policies in reaction to the pandemic.

The latter part of the financial year did allow for in person delivery with many schools wanting outdoor sessions as many school trips had not taken place for a considerable time and these sessions were safe and easy to organise. This is reflected in the rise in number of students engaged with.

4.2 Results of 2021/22 Education – schools programme

- **Arson Courtroom Drama** – (ACD) was delivered in 1 school to **270** students. Delivered to year 8 students (aged 12 -13 years) to reinforce the importance of heathlands due to their wildlife and biodiversity and highlight the consequences of heathland fires to the wildlife and the community. The sessions are interactive

sessions with students acting out parts within a courtroom setting discussing the issues and crime. Due to Covid restrictions it was difficult for schools to book external educators, going forward these sessions will be given priority once again in the Spring term of 2023.

- **Guided heath walks** – for year 8/9 to investigate burn sites. **153** students took part from Ferndown Upper.
- **Practical tasks** - a 6-week programme of practical tasks was run on Hengistbury Head for hard to reach groups. A total of **60** students took part in these sessions.
- **Fieldwork developed** - under the title 'Threats to the Heath' for KS2 – this was delivered to **149** students from Canford Heath, Haymoor Juniors, Manorside Academy and Broadstone First School.
- **Online- virtual lessons** – online lessons were developed and delivered to 2 schools, a total of **624** students took part in these. Topics covered included: an introduction to wet and dry heath habitats and virtual field trips.
- **Education activity resource development** - resources for short lessons including videos and downloadable material were also made available online - we do not have recorded numbers of people that viewed or downloaded these.
- **Interactive virtual Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) activity** -developed, for Key stage 3 students, to educate about the dangers of Heathland fires to people and wildlife and test the skills and intuition of young people. Made available online for schools and individuals.

Early Years Foundation Stage -Work has continued with this age group at Upton Country Park delivering 'Roots and Shoots' with SMILE Lone Parent Families community group and at Stour Valley delivering the Nature Tots Club. Activities delivered included: sensory nature trails, heath spotter trails, heathland animal talk, nature wreaths, nature bracelets. While activities are aimed at early years, children are always accompanied by adults allowing heathland messages to be delivered to them as well. Roots and Shoots activities attracted an average of 11 children and 12 adults to each of the 23 activities provided - a total of **264** children and **291** adults attending and approximately 10% of these were new attendees each week. Nature Tots activities attracted an average of 15 children and 15 adults to each of the 26 activities - a total of **408** children and **405** adults attending sessions and again approximately 10% of these were new attendees each week. A Booking system and cap on numbers in covid times prevented many more joining on these oversubscribed sessions.

- **Heath Educators Forum** - a Heath Education Forum was created in 2020 to develop links, share good practice in the new covid-19 landscape, discuss resource development and sharing. Building links with our wider partners such as Thames Basin Heaths and Devon Pebble Bed Heaths, this group met every 4 months.
- **Students engagement**- a total of **3098** students took part in activities or lessons delivered by UHP during April 2021- March 2022, figures 2 and 3 shows comparison of the number of students engaged with over the last 8 years in table and graph formats.

Year	2014 -15	2015 -16	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	2019 -20	2020- 21	2021 -22
Total Students	3843	4108	2927	5217	5942	5786	1040	3098

Figure 2, Table showing total number of students engaged with over the last 8 years

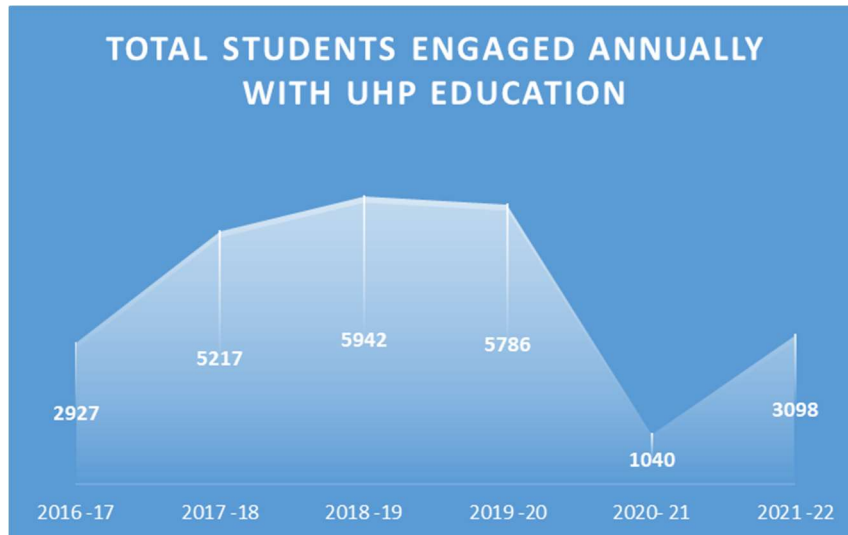


Figure 3, Graph showing total number of students engaged with over the last 8 years

4.3 Feedback on Education Delivery

*What a fantastic walk on the Heath this morning! The children were so engaged in observing the signs of Autumn and making their own observations about what they could see and hear as they took part in fun activities organised by Sophie from the Urban Heath Partnership. Many children had not been to the Heath before and did not realise it was right next to our school! They came away with an increased knowledge and appreciation of how special Our Heathland really is. **Bishop Aldhelms Academy yr1***

*I'd like to make a special mention to Sarah Allen. She was brilliant at explaining and leading the tasks and was very good at adapting the tasks depending on weather conditions and tides. **Year 6 Leader The Educational Alliance of Canford Heath (TEACH Poole)***

*Students really engaged well and said this morning how much they enjoyed it – I think it contextualises their learning well as they can start to see how theory is used in practice! **Brian Heppenstall, Kingston Maurward College***

*My group of students all have varying complex needs and Sarah adapted the session to them perfectly. They were all engaged and had a lovely time! **Linwood SEND School***

*A very interesting morning with constructive activities, lovely to see a slow worm. **Roots and Shoots.***

*We had such a fantastic time with you today! All your knowledge was astounding, of the local Heathland and the park. The facilities were great too! To top it all off, the sun was shining, and the children were happy! **SMILE***

5.0 Dorset Dogs Project

5.1 Context and aims of Dorset Dogs

The Dorset Dogs project was delivered by a Dorset Dogs Officer and Dorset Dogs Assistant (30 hours per week).

The aims of the UHP Dorset Dogs project are to:

- Raise awareness amongst dog owners and others of the important management issues and opportunities in relation to heathlands.
- Provide effective and consistent information on and off site for dog owners to support and promote responsible ownership and behaviour through targeted events, signs, leaflets, and online information.
- Provide support and advice to land managers on positive access management for people with dogs alongside effective engagement and education.
- Work across the project area ensuring that negative impacts are not transferred from one site to another; discouraging management that will displace problems elsewhere.
- Promote existing non-sensitive sites such as SANGs and areas where dogs are allowed off-lead.
- Support the development of new safe areas and SANGs for off-lead exercise, with involvement from the planning stage.
- Provide a broad and balanced coverage of dog owner-related issues, both positive and negative; avoiding a narrow focus to maintain the widest engagement.

Covid -19

While the context and aims of the project remain the same, dissemination of messages had to change in line with the Covid pandemic government restrictions, and public perception of organising events on site. During the second half of the year activities/resources returned to on-site engagement while social media use remained higher than pre pandemic levels, activities began using park and patrol to avoid attracting groups of people to gather, these proved successful and continued. The website, Facebook and Dorset Dogs membership also provides ongoing dialogue and the opportunity for continuing engagement.

5.2 Results of 2021/22 Dorset Dog Engagement

- **Bird nesting season campaign - 55** banners were put up on heathland sites across the partnership area promoting that dogs should be on leads when visiting heathland sites from 1st March – 31st July, this was combined with information posted on social media.
- **Pit stops – 29** pit stops took place between August 2021 and March 2022 at a variety of sites, pit stops returned post covid as they are still effective in targeted engagement and ongoing liaison as people discuss site issues face to face.
- **Park and Patrols – 80** Park and Patrols took place between August 2021 and March 2022 at a variety of sites, where the DD van is parked on or close to site with DD information displayed while the Officer walks around the site engaging with visitors distributing goodie bags which include DD and site information, dog poo bags and dog treats.



- **Guided walks – 1** delivered in collaboration with BARI project
- The split of these face to face engagement activities between BCP and DC Council areas is shown in Figure 4.

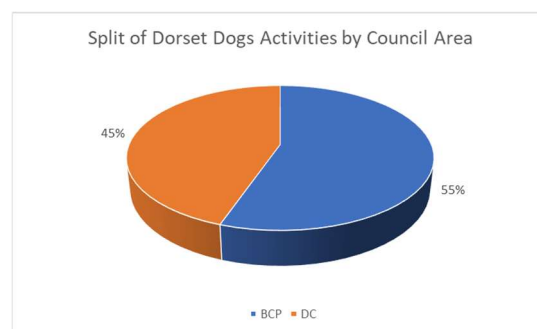
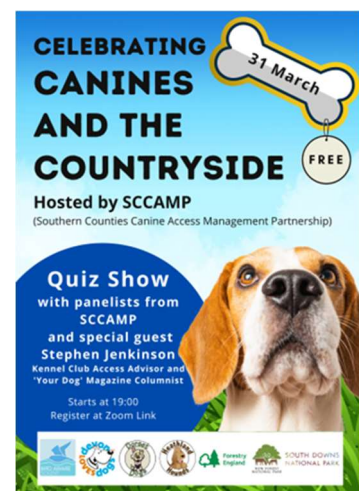


Figure 4 Chart showing the percentage split by Council area of Dorset dogs activities delivered August 2021- March 2022

Please note this chart does not include activities delivered at Hengistbury Head as part of the heathland mitigation funded dog project being delivered there. A separate report is available on work delivered through this project.

- K9 Firewise Volunteers** – K9 Firewise Patrol is a joint partnership project between Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service and Dorset Dogs. The volunteers regularly walk on the heath with their dogs looking out for any signs of fire or suspicious behaviour that may link to wildfires. The volunteers receive a one-hour induction, looking at some basic ecology of the heathland, things to look out for, what to do if you see a fire and some basic safety reminders. Individuals then sign an informal agreement, confirming their attendance and public liability insurance of their pet dog. After each walk, we ask the walkers to complete the online logging tool, that helps us monitor the scheme. Up until 31st March 2022 volunteers have recorded over **343 patrols** on the following heathland sites: Canford, Upton, Avon, Ferndown, St Catherines, Holt, Uddens, Parley. This equates to **377 hours** of patrolling
- SCCAMP** (Southern Counties Canine Access Management Partnership) is a partnership formed at the end of 2020 between Dorset Dogs, Devon Loves Dogs, Heathland Hounds, Forestry England, New Forest National Park, South Downs National Park and Bird Aware Solent. The organisations joined forces to work more closely on a number of dog related projects with the aim of delivering a consistent message across the whole area they cover. These projects included:

A film ‘Love Dogs...Love Nature’ produced in collaboration with Dog Behaviourist, Natalie Light, which highlights how owners and their dogs can enjoy the great outdoors safely, while also helping to protect our countryside and wildlife. There were also five bite size 50 second top tip training videos covering subjects such as recall, dog walking etiquette, dog behaviour around distractions. The main video has had over 3,000 views, while the top tip training videos have had 1,300 views on the Dorset Dogs social media (these videos are also available on YouTube for partners to share with an additional 1,600 views). Dorset Dogs were responsible for the planning, filming and editing and the videos. These were released at a time when on site engagement was still restricted due to Covid 19.
- Canines and the Countryside:** was run over the last week in March 2022 and included pitstops / information stands, guided walks, videos, activities, online and live Q&As, online and virtual quizzes and sharing and cross posting of content on social media. Dorset Dogs produced the Quiz Show



dedicated to dogs and the outdoors with panellists from SCCAMP. During Celebrating Canines and the Countryside week, Dorset Dogs doubled the average reach and engagements on Facebook.

Feedback:

“After visiting wildlife mitigation projects all over the world in the past 15 years, Dorset Dogs has always stood out as globally leading the way. And after seeing what all the SCCAMP partners achieved during Celebrating Canines and the Countryside week, delivering ground-breaking best practice is clearly infectious. It was truly a pleasure to support such an inspiring group of professionals who are passionate about making the outdoors a better place for people, their dogs and nature.”

Stephen Jenkinson: specialist advisor on dogs in the outdoors to Natural England, Wildlife Trusts, The Kennel Club, and Your Dog magazine columnist.

- **#followourlead - Summer Campaign** –to promote responsible dog ownership to visitors to Dorset. With a predicted influx of tourists on dog friendly holidays in Dorset over the summer of 2021, Dorset Dogs developed a campaign, a series of 5 posters, encouraging visitors to follow the Doggy Do Code and targeting areas with high visitor numbers during the summer.
- **Liaison, Promotion and Advice** -The high level of engagement with Dorset Dogs has continued through this year including enquiries and liaison with land managers and staff, dog and countryside organisations, businesses and dog walkers. Dorset Dogs continues working closely with BCP supporting the Dorset Dogs Project Officer to deliver a specific dog related project based at Hengistbury Head.
- **Dorset Dogs Website** continued to be an invaluable tool for sharing information including the constant changing covid-19 information, promoting responsible dog behaviour, promoting positive access for dogs and their owners and raising awareness of issues and opportunities for dog owners in Dorset’s towns, coast and countryside. It also provides the opportunity to engage with local businesses through its dog friendly and Wagipawdia pages, promote events and the Doggy Do Code. From April 2021 to March 2022 the website received **40,235** individual site sessions.

Drilling down further there were:

- **75,060** page views, with 60,753 unique page views, and 88% new visitors to the website in that year.



- **6,595** page views of the 'Out & About' pages providing extensive information about sites.
- **11,253** page views of the home page which always maintains a 'key message' such as ground-nesting birds and links to more detail within the website or Facebook.
- **1671** page views of the Doggy Do Code home page.
- **5,045** page views to 'dog-friendly' pages, these are provided in association with businesses/attractions and help fund the website.
- **4,842** page views of securely-fenced enclosures and fields*

*While there was a reduction in visits to other pages there remained high page views of the securely-fenced enclosures perhaps continuing to reflect the situation post the pandemic.

- **Social Media** Dorset Dogs uses Facebook and Instagram platforms, these have continued to be vital in disseminating messages and engaging with the public with continuing high numbers using these to find information.

Facebook analytics for 2021/22 include:

The total post reach for the year was **182,043** of which there were **8,092** post engagements. Facebook followers peaked at **5,351** during the year. The highest reach was for Christmas Eve dog of the day with a reach of **28,113** and highest post reach for Christmas Eve 'Dog of the Day' with a reach of 6,706. Drilling down further there were:

- **5351** followers as of 31 March 2022 – an increase of 354 new followers (and 300 likes) over the previous year
- The Facebook Page reach of Dorset Dogs was **38,797** people in the year to 31 March 2022
- Facebook video views range from around 200 views to a peak of 3,000 views. A video of a local SANG for the Canines and the Countryside week had 1700 views
- An average of 14 posts are added each month on Facebook, these detail engagement work and key messages.

Instagram analytics for 2021/22:

Dorset Dogs has also continued a strong presence on Instagram and has continued to increase the number of followers to **1,165** at the end of March 2022. An average of 10 posts per month is added.

- **Membership** Through the website people with dogs are asked and encouraged to join as members by signing up to follow the doggy do code. The numbers of members signed up to Dorset Dogs as of 31st March 2022 is **2488**. Figure 5 shows the number of members signed up at the end of each financial year from 2010 to 2022.

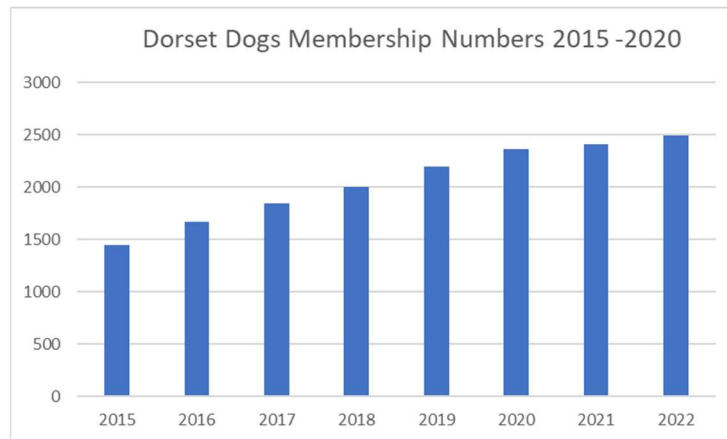


Figure 5 graph showing number of Dorset Dog members signed up to practice responsible behaviour and follow the Doggy Do Code between 2015 and 2022 (membership numbers as at 31st March each year).

- **Collaborative work**

The Bird and Recreation Initiative appointed a Dorset Dogs/BARI warden (part-time covered by 2 staff members) to work around Poole Harbour funded through the Poole Harbour Supplementary Planning Document, supported by Dorset Dogs. The Engagement Wardens delivered on site engagement alongside the full-time seasonal Recreation Mitigation Warden and closely with the Dorset Dogs Team. Engagement included **10** Pitstops, **12** Park and Patrols, **2** Events and **1** Guided Walk across 10 sites identified by Land Managers. 3 videos were created 'Dogs and Birds around our Winter Coasts' and 'Help make a difference' received over **1000** views on Facebook and Instagram collectively. A third video highlighted the partnership work between BARI and Dorset Dogs. A series of graphics highlighting key messages as part of the Doggy Do Code promoting ways to avoid disturbance to the birds under 'Coastwise Canines' were created.



Resources for displays and a new joint leaflet were created.

6.0 Dorset Firewise Communities Project



6.1 Context and aims of Dorset Firewise

The Dorset Firewise Communities Project started in January 2018 works to reduce risk of damage to homes from wildfire through knowledge and practical improvements to reduce hazards. Improving community cohesion and general wellbeing concentrating on building resilience against wildfire damage to residential properties in south east Dorset centred around communities on the urban interface with heathland sites. The project looks to deliver the following aims:

- Raise awareness of the consequences of wildfire and the risk to close by homes from embers
- Make homes and communities more resilient to wildfire
- Encourage communities to learn more about wildfire and their adjacent landscapes
- Create a network of Firewise Communities that can support each other

The Dorset Firewise Project Assistant works 14.8 hours per week with funding agreed until March 2023. Covid-19 meant that the Firewise project continued with no face to face engagements during the first 4 months of the year, as regulations were relaxed public engagement began again. Further information about Dorset Firewise is available at: www.firewiseuk.org

6.2 Results of 2021/22 Dorset Firewise Project

- Firewise postcards were designed and printed and have been used in target areas to promote the Firewise project, provide contact details and encourage communities to join Firewise. Postcards have been delivered to **665** homes in the following areas: Bourne Valley area, Canford Heath area and Stephens Castle area.
- Firewise postcards delivered to Rockley Holiday Park
- A Firewise webinar was organised and delivered with speakers from NFPA USA, DWFRS, Frazer Island Australia and Beacon Rd community. The webinar was attended by **100** people. Land managers engaged well during the Q&A session and we have increased engagement with land managers since
- K9 Firewise volunteers developed and delivered in partnership with Dorset Dogs project and supported by DWFRS
- “Hot strike” information was delivered to **560** homes following a wildfire on Avon Heath including leaflets, advice and a personalised letter with an invitation to attend a webinar.
- A webinar for the Avon Heath area was delivered with speakers from Firewise, DWFRS, and Avon Heath land managers
- Firewise information drop to local campsites (**54** addresses in total)
- Firewise information and leaflets were distributed at local events and Pop up events in partnership with Dorset Dogs in the latter part of the year at Stour Valley, Upton Country Park, Thorncombe Woods, Bog Lane SANG and Bytheway Field. Approximately **100** leaflets handed out.
- Information continued to be posted on-line and on Facebook throughout the year and in particular during the wildfire season, the post reach for the period was **8236**.

7.0 Monitoring

7.1 Context and Aims of UHP Monitoring

The aims of UHP Monitoring are as set out in The Revised Monitoring Strategy for the Dorset Heathlands SPD (Fearnley and Liley 2014), adopted as part of the SPD. They are to:

- Organise the collection and collation of different data sets to be analysed by Footprint Ecology and stored by DERC as part of the Monitoring Strategy.
- Support and advise partners as required in monitoring of Heathland Infrastructure projects (HIPs) including new access management projects or Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG) development.
- Organise and deliver monitoring for HIPs and SANGs as requested by partners.

A review of the Monitoring Framework was carried out by Chris Panter (Footprint Ecology) and Rachel Pearce (UHP) as requested by the Implementation Group in 2016/17. Monitoring continues in line with this report. The report is available on request.

7.2 Methods and results of monitoring

Monitoring is currently conducted using various methodology including:

- **Car Park Counts** - Car park transects provide a robust comparison between car parks over time across the heaths and related sites. This survey method involves 5 or 6 UHP and Partner Mitigation staff recording the number of cars parked at agreed car parking sites across the area. These range from small informal car parks or laybys, through to large car parks accessing or adjacent to heathland sites and a handful of “honeypot” sites. All data was collected and passed to Footprint Ecology for analysis and reporting.
- **Results of 2021/22 car park count surveys - 13** Co-ordinated car park counts were organised by the Monitoring Warden. The car park surveys are carried out over 2-hour periods, either between 7 - 9am, 10am - 12pm or 2 - 4pm on a variety of week, weekend and Bank Holiday days spread across the year.
- **People Counting Sensors** - Remote people counting sensors are installed at entrances across a range of agreed sites. They count the number of passes either by using heat sensing beams that are broken when people pass or pressure pads in the ground that record passes when stepped on. The data provides trends of visitor numbers.



The sensors include pyros, long-range pyros, pressure slabs and one induction loop (used to record bicycles).

The number of project and SANG sensors will continue to vary as new SANGs are created and other mitigation project monitoring is carried out.

The Monitoring Warden collected data from the sensors and maintains the sensors. This includes regular checks and repairs or replacement, due to malfunction, vandalism or theft. Data is collected approximately every three/four months, downloaded and checked before sending to Footprint Ecology for analysis and reporting.

Results of 2021/22 People Counting sensor monitoring

28 core heathland sensors and **37** others have been maintained throughout this year. **32** other sensors are used for SANG sites, Heathland Infrastructure Projects, and at different visitor attractions. Data collection continued throughout the year unaffected by the pandemic restrictions.

- **Incident recording – Dorset Explorer**

The Monitoring Warden coordinates reporting and recording of any illegal or destructive activities which will impact of the heath. 'Incidents 'are recorded by mitigation staff and officers on the Dorset Council's 'Dorset Explorer' system and cover a range of activities including fires, motorcycles/off-roading, fly tipping and vandalism. Fire data is gathered to record the number of fires and area of damage to the heathland SPA. Other incidents such as motorbikes on site, fly-tipping and drones on site for example are recorded to inform and focus the resources for SAMM delivery.

- **Results of 2021/22 incident recording (Fires) –** Figure 6 shows the number of fires recorded on heathland sites across Dorset from 2007/08 – 2021/22 financial years. The trend has shown that fires have decreased significantly since a peak in 2010/11 although there was a spike in this year this still shows a 48% decline in fires recorded in 2021/22 as compared to the 2010/11 high. There has been an average of 103 fires per year over this period, or 81 from 2015/16 to 2021/22.

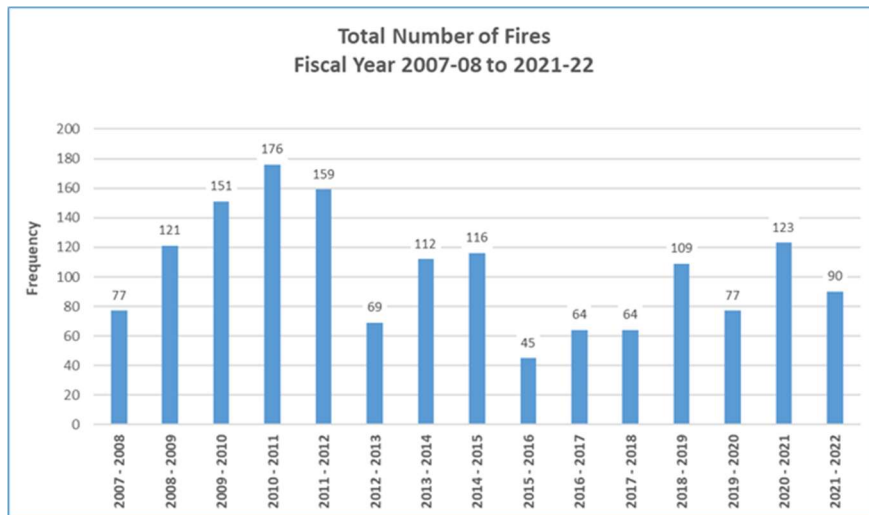


Figure 6 shows the number of fires recorded on heathland sites across south east Dorset from 2007/08 – 2021/22.

Figure 7 shows a large increase in area burnt in 2020/21, due to the Wareham Forest fire which was over 180 hectares in size. This was thought to have been started by disposable a BBQ. There is evidence from wardens and DWFRS that the number of campfires and BBQs on site have increased significantly

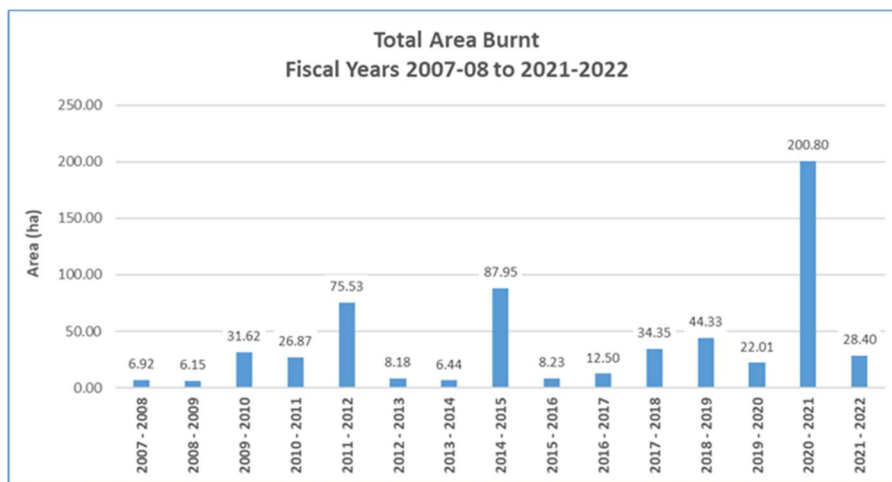


Figure 7 shows the total area of heathland burnt across south east Dorset from 2007/08 – 2020/21

The full 2021 -2022 UHP Monitoring Report produced by Footprint Ecology which reports on and summarises data collected will be available online from the UHP Website <https://www.dorsetheaths.org.uk> or from the UHP Office once completed.

- **Monitoring of SANGs** - Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) are new or enhanced greenspaces of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation for development likely to affect the Dorset Heathland European and internationally protected sites. They are designed to absorb recreation pressure that would otherwise occur on these fragile sites. SANG monitoring methodology follows principles set out in the Dorset Heathlands SPD and may

include onsite tally counts, onsite interviews, installation of automated people counters and car park monitoring in line with the Dorset Heathlands Monitoring Strategy. Advice and consultation regarding SANG monitoring and project monitoring has been given to partners, ecologists and developers working with SANG development within the project area and work with partners and developers continues. During 2021/22 monitoring of SANGs have taken place at:

- The Meridians HIP (Heathland Infrastructure Project) – summary report from this is available at request
 - Cuthbury SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace)
 - Corfe Mullen Barrow Hill SANG – summary report from this is available on request
 - Holmwood SANG
 - Upton Country Park SANG (Phase 3 Round 1)
 - Upton Country Park SANG (Phase 2 – Round 2)
 - Frenches Farm SANG (Round 2)
 - Bog Lane SANG (Round 2)
- **Wildlife Monitoring** - Monitoring of three key heathland indicator bird species, Dartford Warbler, Woodlark and Nightjar is commissioned annually by UHP and carried out by the RSPB. The UHP Annual Monitoring Report includes results from these surveys.

8.0 Budget

The budget for the Core Team agreed for the 2021-2022 financial year was £291,660.43 including monitoring costs listed below, this budget is split between the two Unitary Councils from developer contributions collected from development within 5Km of any heathland site. Dorset Council contributes 27% plus hosting costs and BCP Council contributes 73%.

The monitoring delivery costs are shown in figure 8

Monitoring Revenue Expenditure 2021/22	Amount
Footprint Ecology	£5,200
Dorset Environmental Records Centre	£3,500
Dorset Explorer GIS maintenance	£2,000
Bird Surveys	£11,000
Total	£21,700*

* This total is split equally between the Local Authority Partners
Figure 8 – the monitoring delivery costs for UHP 2021 -2022

9.0 Wardening

The wardening element of SAMM is delivered by the Local Authority partners with Mitigation Staff employed within their own teams where possible.

A Service Level Agreement is in place between the Local Planning Authorities to agree a consistent approach to the wardening element of SAMM. The agreed key elements are:

- Provision of a presence on heathland sites within the Local Authority area including those managed by partners and privately-owned sites to encourage appropriate behaviour and signpost users to alternative open spaces. This may include patrols, educational visits and on-site activities or events where appropriate.
- Attending where deemed appropriate and resources allow local community events to promote responsible use of heathlands and alternative open spaces.
- Respond following agreed Partner or UHP protocol to fire incidents and assist DWFRS and Dorset Police at incidents as necessary.
- Supporting where necessary and resources allow, the UHP Education team in delivering the agreed heathland education programme.
- Supporting where necessary and resources allow, the UHP Monitoring Officer and Warden in contributing to data collection as defined in the Monitoring Strategy for Dorset Heathlands and recording incidents on Dorset Explorer.
- Provide reasonable support for staff working in other areas during emergencies or high incident occurrences.
- Maintain communication with partner staff to ensure consistent service delivery across Partnership area.
- Progress reporting of work to the UHP Team Manager to allow annual reporting to the Dorset Heathland Mitigation Steering Group.

10.0 Further Information

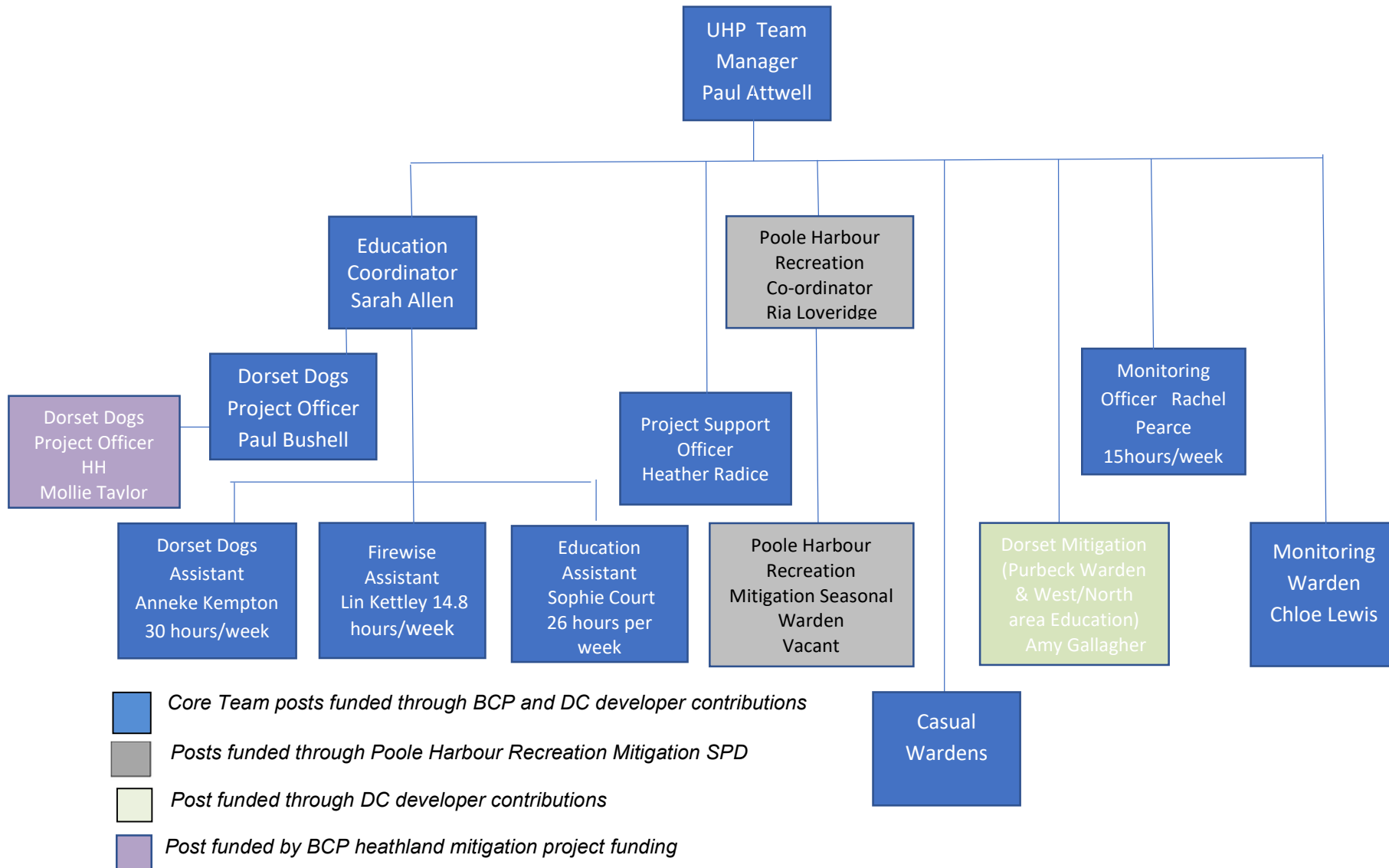
Further information on any of the work within this report is available on-line at:

Website: www.dorsetheaths.org.uk

Email: urbanheaths@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Telephone: 01202 642787.

Appendix 1 –Urban Heaths Partnership Staff Structure as of March 2022



Appendix 2 - UHP Education Target Schools 2020-2021

List showing the UHP target schools as agreed by the Partnership

School	Local Authority for 2019/20	Activity: HHA=Heathland Habitat Awareness. ACD= Arson Courtroom Drama
Heathlands Primary	BCP	HHA
Kingsleigh Primary	BCP	HHA
Christ The King	BCP	HHA
Elm Academy - Leaf	BCP	HHA
Kinson Primary	BCP	HHA
Bourne Academy	BCP	ACD
Oak Academy - Leaf	BCP	ACD
Glenmoor Academy	BCP	ACD
Winton Academy	BCP	ACD
Hamworthy Park Junior	BCP	HHA
Broadstone First	BCP	HHA
Canford Heath Junior	BCP	HHA
Merley First	BCP	HHA
Manorside Primary	BCP	HHA
Talbot Primary	BCP	HHA
Bishop Aldhelms Primary	BCP	HHA
Haymoor Junior	BCP	HHA
Upton Junior	BCP	HHA
Broadstone Middle	BCP	ACD
Carter Community	BCP	ACD
St Aldhelms Academy	BCP	ACD
Magna Academy	BCP	ACD
Highcliffe Primary	BCP	HHA
Highcliffe Comprehensive	BCP	ACD
The Grange	BCP	ACD
Twynham	BCP	ACD
Ferndown Middle	DC	ACD
Lockyers Middle	DC	ACD
West Moors Middle	DC	ACD
Sandford Primary	DC	HHA
Lychett Minster	DC	ACD
The Purbeck	DC	ACD