

Welcome to the forest

**Bedgebury National
Pinetum and Forest**

October 2025 - March 2028



Welcome to the Forest

Introduction

We're excited to introduce Welcome to the Forest, a new pilot programme at Bedgebury, funded by Feel Good in the Forest mini projects until March 2028.

This initiative offers small groups a gentle and supportive introduction to the forest, providing an opportunity to discover what Bedgebury has to offer, take part in a woodland wellbeing session under the canopy of the trees, and enhance their wellbeing.

Sessions are free and include:

- An introduction to Bedgebury and a chance to explore what we have to offer
- A 90min woodland wellbeing session of your choice led by Kent High Weald Partnership
- Time to unwind in the café with free tea and cake, overlooking the peaceful lake

Whether you're looking to connect your group with nature, support wellbeing, or simply enjoy a calm outing in the forest, we'd love to welcome you.

Who is it for?

This programme is open to registered community organisations and charities operating in East Sussex and Kent, working with people who live with long-term health conditions, disabilities or health inequalities.



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Key details:

- Sessions are fully funded by Feel Good in the Forest mini-projects, a supportive programme of activities for people with mild-to-moderate health conditions, or for those who are looking to improve their health and wellbeing, to meet new people and enjoy being outdoors.
- Vehicle admission and refreshments are included in your visit
- Suitable for up to 8 participants (number to include any support staff)
- Sessions are closed, meaning each session is exclusively for your group.
- Sessions take place outdoors, and participants must wear clothing appropriate for the weather and footwear suitable for ground conditions.
- As a funding requirement, participants will be asked to provide feedback after their visit.
- The activity is fully risk assessed, and staff are first aid trained
- Please see the information on page 5 for further information about accessibility
- The service must provide appropriate support staff based upon their service users requirements.

Session format:

You can choose either a morning or an afternoon session. Please see the tables below for approximate timings. We are happy to tweak the format depending upon your group's requirements, please just ask.

Morning session	
10am	Welcome and walk to the forest school area
10.30am	Woodland Wellbeing session with Kent High Weald
12pm	Walk back to café for tea and cake
1pm	Led session ends

Afternoon session	
1pm	Welcome and walk to the forest school area
1.30pm	Woodland Wellbeing session with Kent High Weald
3pm	Walk back to café for tea and cake
4pm	Led session ends

You are more than welcome to stay and explore the Pinetum and forest after your session ends, or if joining an afternoon session, you can arrive earlier.

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Woodland wellbeing

Woodland wellbeing is delivered by Kent High Weald Partnership. Kent High Weald Partnership is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to connect people and nature through conservation, education, and wellbeing. Through their work they aim to support the development of resilient communities and resilient ecosystems that mean people and wildlife can thrive together.

You can choose from one of the following sessions to take part in during your visit, or we can create a bespoke session based on any of the elements below:

Natural Arts and Crafts

Get creative in the woods and enjoy natural arts and crafts, learning to use hand tools such as palm drills, hammers, and whittlers in the process.

Bushcraft Skills

Learn the essential bushcraft skills of fire lighting and shelter building in our beautiful woodland setting and reward yourself with a cup of hot chocolate using water heated on the campfire.



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Whittling

Our whittling session will provide you with the basics of how to whittle (carving shapes and sculptures from wood). Using green wood sourced from Bedgebury, you will soon relax into an almost meditative state whilst learning an ancient craft.

Woodland Bake-Off

Enjoy some campfire cooking with our simple woodland bake off session - we will be making a tasty snack from scratch and cooking it on the campfire.

Connect to nature through the 5 senses

Enjoy the wellbeing benefits of being in the woods with enjoyable nature connection activities that use your five senses - sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste. Get mindful in nature as we explore different sights, smells, textures, and sounds in the woods and enjoy a hot drink made from natural herbs found in the woods.

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Access information:

- The Forest School area where the session takes place is tucked away in the forest off the main paths and is uneven underfoot and muddy in places. This means it's not currently suitable for wheelchairs or those with limited mobility. We're working on expanding the programme to include wellbeing sessions that are more accessible and welcoming for everyone. Service providers are welcome to Bedgebury for a complimentary preliminary visit to assess the area and determine its suitability for their group. If you have any access queries, please get in touch, and we'll be more than happy to assist.
- Logs are provided for seating and we can offer camp chairs at your request.
- The route between the accessible parking bays and visitor centre facilities has no gates, stiles or steps, is 140m and has a moderate gradient.
- The route to the forest school area from the visitor centre is 400m long, has one field gate, no stiles, or steps, comprises of compact stone, and has a moderate gradient for 150m.
- Bedgebury visitor centre has the closest facilities, and has level access, a male toilet block, a female toilet block, an accessible toilet, and a changing places toilet facility (radar key required).
- Participants ideally need to be able to use both hands to fully engage with Natural Arts and Crafts, Whittling, and Bushcraft sessions. Please ask about specific needs and requirements.

How to get involved?

Email the programme lead, Rebecca Dennison, to find out more:

Rebecca.dennison@forestryengland.uk