

# How others see us

What do other organisations think of our work? This column offers an opportunity to hear their views and helps offer insights into our relationship with them. Here, Jill Attenborough, CEO at The Country Trust, gives her opinion



The Country Trust connects disadvantaged children with the land that sustains us all. And it's what we have been doing in partnership with the brilliant team at the GWCT's Allerton Project at Loddington, for 15 years now. More than a thousand children from the surrounding areas have been welcomed on Country Trust visits – children who have huge potential but very limited opportunities. The warm welcome started with Alastair Leake and his former secretary Natalie Augusztynyi, then the baton was passed to Jim Egan and Amelia Woolford and now it's with Saya Harvey and Joe Stanley.

At the Allerton Project, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Soil is the rooftop of another world waiting to be discovered; 'grass' in the fields is the source of breakfast cereals; tangled weeds and shrubs are home to a multitude of insects; molehills are archaeological dig sites (wonderful memories of discussing Jim's 'finds' and trying to work out what on earth they might be and how they got there); the countryside is a beautiful and restorative place to be. You'll even find famous faces at Allerton – JB Gill (formerly of the boy band JLS and now a children's TV Presenter and new entrant farmer) joined a Country Trust/Allerton visit some years ago, to the amazement of the visiting children.

The regular flow of Country Trust children helped to secure a grant for the excellent classroom and learning facilities at Loddington. And beyond being a warm, dry and welcoming space for children (with rainwater flushing toilets), the rooms and the handy adjacent farmland have also seen a steady flow of Country Trust Co-ordinators meeting and training there. We have held training sessions for our Discover Warburtons Wheat host farmers too.

In the time we have been working with the Allerton team, climate change has risen up the agenda and over the last two years Alastair Leake has generously shared

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his knowledge of and passion for soil with our whole team at our annual conference. He is also an expert contributor helping to shape our Climate Change Farm Discovery programme of 20 school visits, including to Loddington, and he contributed to our Climate Action Farm in a Box which was ordered by 1,000 teachers. And the Climate Action live zoom session for more than 5,000 children starred Saya and her drone footage.

Our next big programme is a soil health campaign for children and the wider public – you may be able to guess who is first on our list to talk to.

Here's to the next 30 years of building children's confidence, curiosity and connections together, through food, farming and countryside experiences. 🌱

Jill Attenborough, CEO  
The Country Trust



Since 1978 The Country Trust has been making it possible for hundreds of volunteer farmers and landowners to welcome thousands of disadvantaged young children from all backgrounds and faiths onto their farms to share their passion for food, farming and the countryside. Feedback includes: “A great opportunity for the class, the majority of whom have never before been to a farm. Has brought conversation and interest out of children who are otherwise quiet/uninterested, and an opportunity for lots of new information and knowledge.”  
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