

Living in the woodland

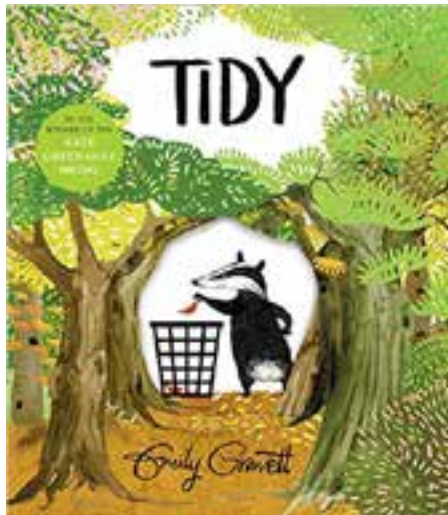
Tidy



Introduction

A Messy Map and A Poem for Pete

This unit will use two formats, map making and poetry, to get the message across to Pete and others who use Yeovil Country Park.



The collected information for the maps and poems can be used for any other format (e.g. leaflets and posters) to deliver the message

The children will investigate three areas of Yeovil Country Park; woods, meadows and water, to discover how 'naturally untidy nature' protects and conserves wildlife. They can complete two main activities, 'A Single Patch of Earth' and Sound Maps, which are common to all three sites and additional tasks that are specific to each

site.

They can complete each of the three areas in rotation or just one, depending on time constraints. The map and poem can be produced individually, in groups or as a whole class.



Introduction

Poem for Pete

“ Pete, do try and remember
Not to tidy away
All the chaotic clutter of nature,
It's good to let it stay ”

Tidy' tells the story of Pete the badger and his need to keep things spick and span.

A Whilst visiting Yeovil Country Park the children can start putting together their own ideas for a collaborative poem encouraging Pete to leave untidy the natural areas of nature to provide food, homes and growing places for all things.

These poems could use similes, alliteration, rhythm and rhyme to create the mood and tone. Alternatively, the poem could conform to a particular poetic style.



Tidy

A Invite children to explore a real, or imaginary, woodland: describe the light, the wind blowing through the trees, perhaps the sun is shining down, creating long shadows on the ground, the leaves, the woodland floor and the sounds.

Ask children to explore the scene with all their senses; they might need to consider their movements, what they might see, what they might touch and how they would feel in this place.

Introduce Pete the Badger, using the picture on the inside cover.

T What do they notice about him and what clues are there to the content of the poem?

Share the reading of 'Tidy'



Photo courtesy of Mr B Mounsher

Helping Pete to keep his promise

“

They put everything back, as it always had been
(But maybe less ordered – and not quite as clean)
And Pete? Well he promised to tidy up less,
But if he succeeded is anyone's guess!

”

A

At the end of the poem the problems caused by Pete being too tidy are resolved but what can we do to remind Pete, and others, that naturally untidy woodland, meadows and water areas in Yeovil Country Park are very beneficial to wildlife?

Posters, leaflets, wall charts, booklets, short films and plays are great ways to get your message across.

You need to show people who and what will benefit from leaving natural areas naturally untidy, this will add strength to your message - people are often more understanding if they can see what might be damaged by careless behaviour.

You will need to discover what lives and grows in the untidy places.



A Single Patch of Earth

ACTIVITY

1

A main activity for woods, meadows and water edges

Set up your patch

Mark out a 100cm x 100cm frame, with sticks or lines of stones, on a chosen area of ground.

Make sure you choose an area of ground that looks interesting, with different things in it.

Find some natural materials; stones, leaves, sticks, to use as tallies.

You will be tallying four groups, so make sure you have enough tallies

Set out four groups on the ground:

Plants

Vertebrates

Invertebrates

Don't know

These are your tally groups.



Identify and Classify

Plants

A plant cannot move from place to place. A plant makes its own food. Plants can be from a tiny seedling to a tree. Fungi are plants and so are mosses.



Vertebrates

A vertebrate is an animal with a backbone and a skeleton. It can move from place to place. Vertebrates include tiny mammals like mice or larger ones like rabbits.



Invertebrates

An invertebrate is an animal without a backbone. An invertebrate can move from place to place. It could be a worm, an insect or a snail.



Don't know

How can you find out what these are?

A Single Patch of Earth

ACTIVITY
1
CONTINUED

A Take a bird's eye view photo of your patch of earth. You will need this to make your map, back in school.

Make sure you record your totals for each of your four groups; plants, vertebrates, invertebrates and 'don't know'.

Take photographs, or draw those things in the 'don't know' group, for identification in school or using identification guides.

You want to amaze Pete, and others, with the range different things there are in just a single patch of earth. You want to astonish them, really make them think. Look again at your patch of earth. How could you describe the different areas and things within your patch?

The toast brown colour of the earth

Stones as smooth as the backs of seals

Green moss like a cushion

A woodlouse armoured like a tank

A The weight of all the living things, plants and creatures, from a 15cm deep area the size of a football field (120 x 90m) would be approximately 20 tonnes. This is as heavy as nearly four elephants, or 1 billion 300 million ants.

You could use this to work out the approximate weight of all the living things in your 1 metre square patch of earth.



It's not just about what you can see.

ACTIVITY 2

A main activity for woods, meadows and water

Slow down - Don't miss anything!

T Listen... What can you hear?

Sometimes we are so busy trying to get somewhere, or too busy thinking, we don't notice what is around us.

We hardly ever take time to stop and listen, but if the sounds around us were to disappear we would notice the silence.

A Find a spot where you can sit, or lean, comfortably. On a piece of card make a mark in the middle - this is you.

Be still and quiet; really focus on the sounds you can hear.

To help you hear sounds make 'fox ears' by cupping your hands behind your ears and moving your head round.

You don't need to draw a detailed picture for each sound; make marks to show the sound and where it is coming from. A few wavy lines could indicate wind in the trees, for example. Focus on listening rather than drawing.

You could use compass directions on your map. You could record the sound as a 'shape' or texture on your map.

If you could touch the sound what would it feel like?



Woodland Messy Map - Part One

ACTIVITY 3

A specific data collecting activity focussing on identification and classification

A Find an area of woodland that is naturally untidy with; twigs and sticks, different plants, soil/mud, evidence of insects, fallen leaves and rotten wood.

To remind Pete, and others who might want to clear up untidy nature, you need to show how many living things depend on all the natural bits and pieces that lie around on the woodland floor.

Using the plant and animal guide sheets and the classification sheet, record the different plants and animals in your chosen area of woodland.

Using the reference books, try and identify each of the living things you find. Sometimes it might be tricky as some of them look very similar. You could photograph them for later identification.



Examples of living things in Yeovil Country Park that need fallen leaves, dead wood, brambles and bushes

The Holly Blue butterfly flies around bushes and trees in the park. It likes holly in the spring and ivy in late summer.

The Holly blue caterpillar needs holly, ivy, spindle trees, dogwood, snowberry, gorse bushes and brambles.

675 species of fungi have been recorded in the park, including bracket fungi growing out of trunks and mushrooms growing on the woodland floor.

There is a very special beetle, named *Melasis Buprestoides*, which lives in Yeovil Country Park. It's been around in Somerset for over 4,500 years.

It is a bark beetle and lives on hazel tree stumps and its larvae especially like the dead branches of broadleaved trees.

Woodland Messy Map - Part One

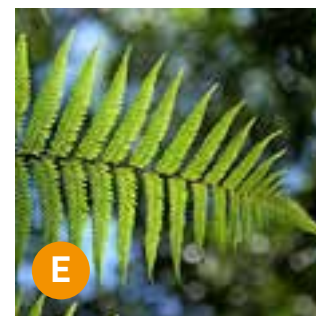
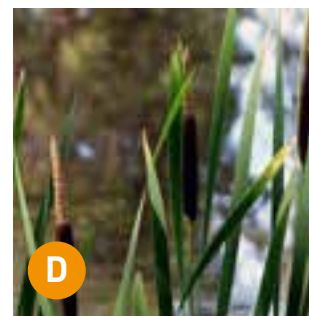
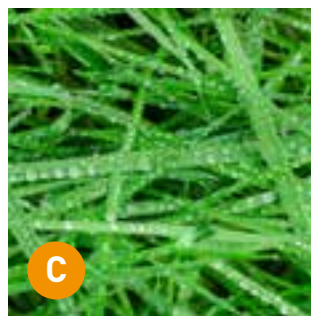
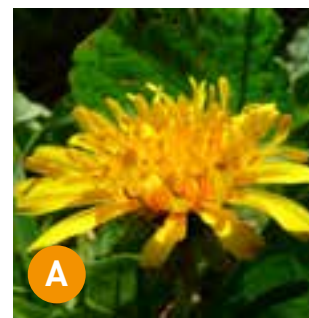
Over 450 species of plants have been recorded in the park

Flowering Plants

- A Plants
- B Trees
- C Grasses
- D Reeds/rushes

Non-flowering Plants

- E Ferns
- F Fungi
- G Lichen
- H Mosses



Animals Guide

Vertebrates (animals with backbones).

Birds



Mammals



Amphibians



Reptiles



Almost 900 species of Invertebrates (animals without backbones) have been recorded

Arachnids



Insects



Molluscs



Worms



Plant classification Table

Plants

Flowering Plants				Non flowering plants			
Plants	Trees	Grasses	Reeds/rushes	Ferns	Fungi	Lichen	Mosses

Things to look out for

There are many butterflies:

Peacock, Red Admiral, Brimstone and Green-Veined White.

See if you can spot the Dock bug munching on dock leaves

The most commonly seen species of dragonflies and damselflies are the Demoiselles, red Damselflies and the Common Darter dragonfly.

Badgers live in the banks at Ninesprings. Large mounds of earth identify their set and you can see their paths through the vegetation. They scuff turf and dig holes looking for earthworms to eat.

Devil's Finger, Coral fungus and Fly Agaric are worth looking out for. Don't touch them.

Why not look out for Lords and Ladies or Ladies Bedstraw?

The rarest mammals in the park are the bats. Nine species of bat have been recorded: Barbastelle, the Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Serotine, Nathusius' Pipistrelle, Noctule, Daubenton's, Brown Long Eared and Lesser Horseshoe Bat.

Hummingbird Hawk moths might be seen feeding on honeysuckle in the summer.



Mammals

The Otter

The brooks, springs, lakes, ponds and the river Yeo provide a good network of waterways that attract the rare otter. You can look to see if otters are around by keeping an eye out for spraints (droppings), footprints and signs of feeding. If you are lucky you might spot a lone dog (male) otter in the river or a female with her kits (young) It is a privilege to have such a rare creature near to the town.

The otters will deter mink from establishing in the waterways. This is good news for the water vole as mink are a voracious predator and will destroy a whole population of water voles in one breeding season to feed their young.



Mammals

The Water Vole

In Dodham Brook and Ninesprings Lake lives the endangered water vole. It is illegal to disturb the water vole and their habitat.

Water Vole populations are under threat from habitat loss. When habitats get split up the water voles are isolated from each other and this has led to the rapid disappearance of the species over recent years.

In Yeovil Country Park surveys are carried out each year to check on the strength of the population. They are very shy and rarely seen in the brook but you can see signs of where they have been feeding and going to the toilet.



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Woodland Messy Map - Part Two

ACTIVITY 3

Making and marking the map

A Mark the position of your chosen woodland area on the Yeovil Country Park map.

Draw a map of your chosen woodland area. Mark on it:

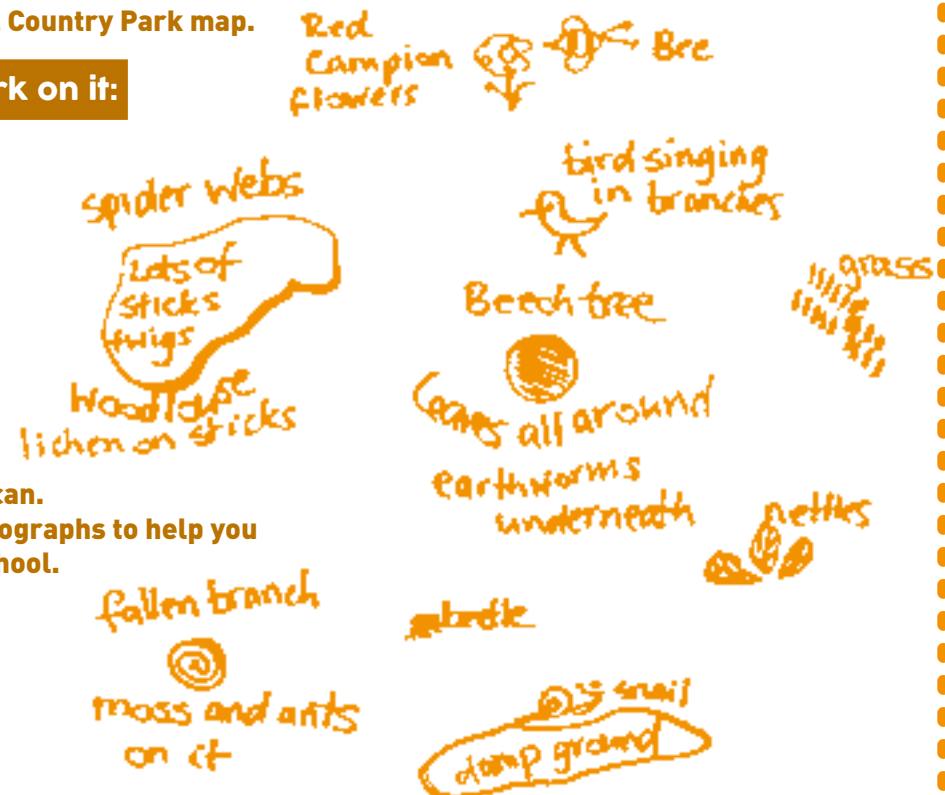
Important areas for wildlife
Important plants
Fallen branches
Tree trunks
Different types of soil
Piles of leaves
...all the untidy stuff!

Don't forget the vertebrates and invertebrates

Make sure you put as much detail on your messy map as you can.
You can include notes and it might be a good idea to take photographs to help you remember some of the things that you can identify back at school.



Photo courtesy of ... TBC



Woodland Messy Map - Part Two

ACTIVITY
3

Making and marking the map



Poem for Pete

Written by a woodlouse

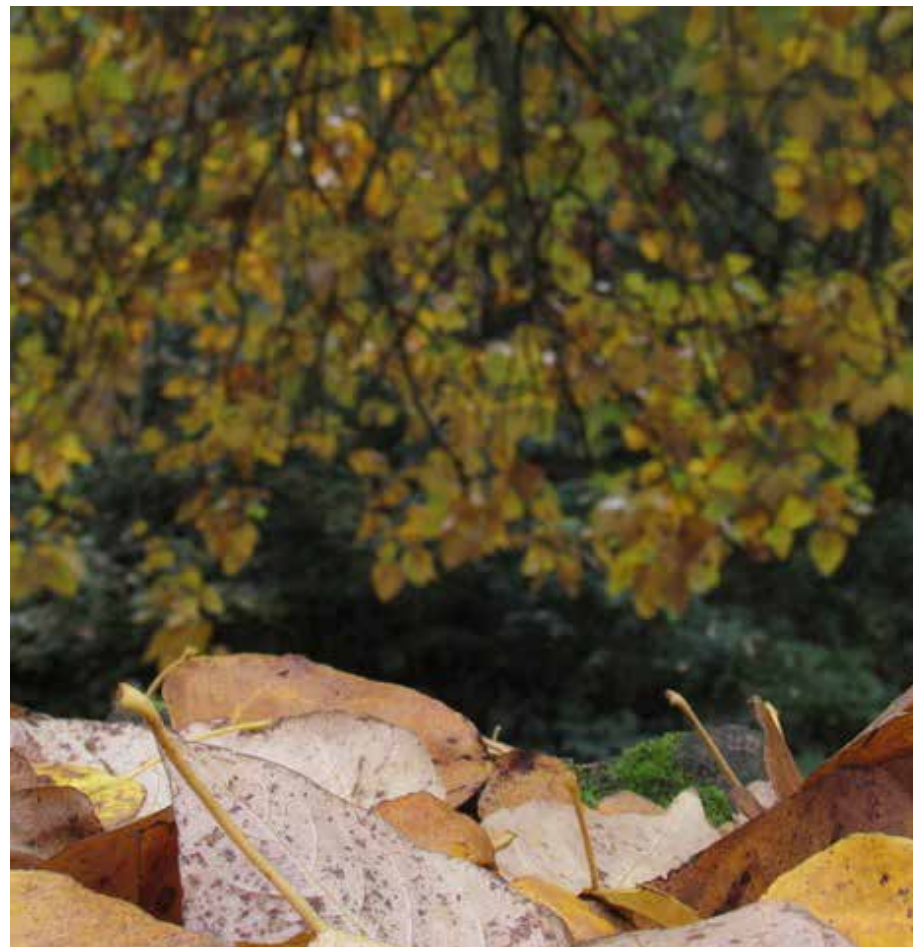
“
As windblown autumn branches
Come crashing down from trees,
Let them lie there gently rotting
Don't drag them away, please”

A Add your own verse to your Pete's Poem

Look at your woodland area. What important things would you point out to Pete; things that shouldn't be tidied up..

Talk together and collect words and phrases. What might an earthworm say to Pete about a pile of leaves? What about a beetle and a tree stump, or a butterfly and a flower?

Why not tell Pete who might suffer if he tidied some of the things away? Where would the moss grow if all the trees and branches went and the ground was covered in concrete?



Messy Meadow Map

ACTIVITY 4

A specific activity focussing on wild flowers and insects

A

Wild flower map

Hand out the wild flower identification sheets and study them together, talking about flower colour and shape. What about the number of petals and the shape of the leaves?

In pairs, pupils explore designated meadow area, identifying plants using the sheets. Guide books can help identify those not on the sheets.

The pupils choose a particular area of the meadow to become their mapping area. It must contain several different plants and flowers.

Make sure there is a mix of meadow areas across the whole group, to include different types of ground; damp/dry, in shade/ full sun, long/short grass.

In pairs the pupils devise symbols for each different plant in their area and map them. Alongside the symbol should be the name of the plant.

The height of the plants should be measured and noted in the plant key. Why might some plants naturally be higher than others?

Do different plants prefer different growing conditions?
Compare maps and note if some plants prefer certain areas.



Watch a Wild Flower

ACTIVITY 5

Talk together: why do insects visit flowers and how do flowers encourage insects to visit?

Identify a meadow area to work in, make sure there is wide range of sample plants across the group; different flower size, shape and colour, and different heights in relation to the ground.

In pairs pupils choose and identify one of the sample plants.

Sketch the shape of the flower/s and note the colour and size of the flower – is it flat and open or is it tube shaped? Are there several small flowers grouped together?

Measure the height of the flower/s from the ground.

Make a note of its smell.

Encourage pupils to sit quietly and still, to encourage the insects to visit.

Make a note of which insects visit their chosen flower.

Use identification sheets and study guides to identify each insect and record them by name, where possible. Tally the number of insects that are the same.

Observe what each insect does when it is on the flower. Is it feeding?
How is it feeding?



Compare their findings across the group.

ACTIVITY 5 CONTINUED

T

Does the shape of the flower mean some insects wouldn't be able to get to the nectar?

Are there any flowers that have more insects visiting them than the others?

Do some plants seem to attract only one type of insect?

Does the height of the flower from the ground make a difference to the types of insects that visit?

Do some insects have a preference for certain colours or shapes of flowers?



Compare their findings across the group.



Open, flat flowers can be visited by many different insects. If they are low to the ground the insects might be different than for higher flowers



Lots of little flowers grouped together make good landing platforms so that heavier insects can visit.

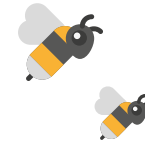


Some open flowers look suitable for lots of insects, but actually are only accessible to insects with tongues as the nectar is down inside the flower.



Bowl shaped flowers can be visited by lots of different insects.

Poem for Pete



ACTIVITY 6

“ Don't snip the heads off floppy flowers,
Nor trample grass beneath your feet;
They're food and homes for creatures,
Don't keep them trimmed and neat. ”

A Why not write a verse about the flower you have been looking at? Perhaps let Pete know how many insects rely on flowers? What about similes; cloud of small white flowers, a primrose as yellow as butter, a dandelion like a sunny smile?

You could use alliteration – a busy beetle, a buzzing bee, a beautiful butterfly or a little ladybird.



Messy Mud

ACTIVITY 7

Water and Wetlands

Messy Mud Art

Collect some mud, or make it with earth and water.

Have prepared a collection of sponges, sticks, feathers, forks and brushes for drawing.

Fingers are good for prints and smearing. For those who don't like mess - disposable gloves are good.

Create water land mud art inspired by the scenery around you.

“

When Pete the badger removed all the trees he created a flood. Then he swept up all the mud and water, to keep everything neat

Water, mud and marsh may sometimes be rather wet, slimy and smelly but they are essential in nature. ”



Water Birds

ACTIVITY 7

Animal adaptation

Water birds are very good for studying adaptations as it is easy to see, between species, the variations in the shape of bills and length of legs and how these link with different feeding behaviour.

Divide the group into pairs and designate watching spots within the chosen area.

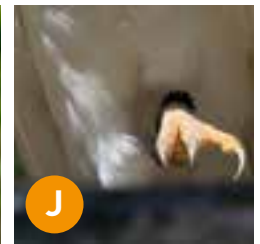
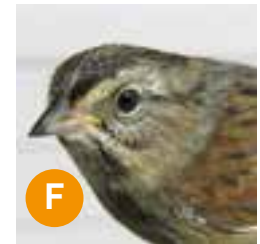
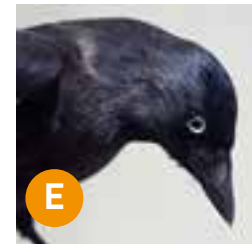
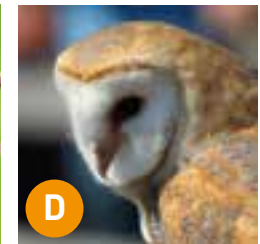
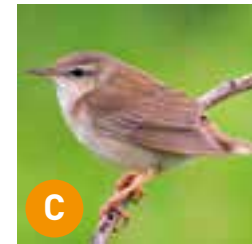
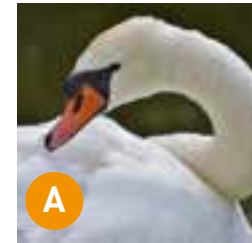
The pairs will watch for birds and take note of different beak shapes and legs/feet, where possible.

Explain to the children that bird spotting requires patience and quiet. The best way to see birds is to stand still and keep quiet!



Water Birds

- A** Some ducks and swans have long, flat bills that strain small plants and animals from the water.
- B** Birds like herons and kingfishers have spear-like bills adapted for fishing.
- C** Insect eaters like warblers have thin, pointed bills.
- D** Birds of prey like hawks and owls have sharp, curved bills for tearing meat.
- E** Crows have a multi-purpose bill. This allows them to eat fruit, seeds, insects, fish and other animals.
- F** Seed eaters like sparrows have short, thick conical bills for cracking seed.
- G** Ducks and other web footed swimming birds use their feet like paddles.
- H** Herons and other wading birds have wide spreading feet for walking on mud.
- I** Perching birds have a long back toe which allows them to grab a perch tightly.
- J** Birds of prey have grasping claws to grab and hold their prey, including fish.



Water Birds

T Compare findings

What bird was spotted more times than any other?

Bring together what you have discovered about this bird. What might it eat (beak shape?)
Is it a water bird?

How many different types of water bird did you see?

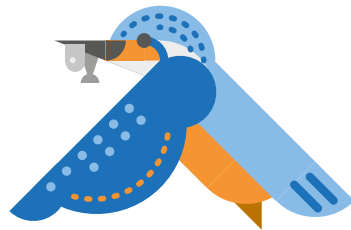
Do all these water birds feed in the same way?

A Make a chart of all the birds spotted.

Mark on a map where the birds were spotted

Hérons and kingfishers both have pointed, spear like beaks for catching fish, but their feet are different.

How does their fish catching method differ?



Water Birds

T Why might ducks have holes in their beaks?

Kingfishers are shy birds and quick to fly off if disturbed.

The Water Rail skulks about in dense waterside vegetation.

The Reed Warbler is difficult to spot.

The Reed Bunting is quite easy to identify with the white ring around its neck.



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Poem for Pete

“

The soggy, sodden stream edge

And the murky, muddy lake

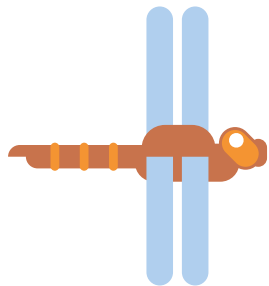
Are not just messy swamplands

But homes for ducks and drakes”

A

In your verse for Pete you might want to mention what rare and special birds would not visit or live in Yeovil Country Park if all the water lands were tidied up.

You could tell Pete how different birds use the water, for homes and food. You could warn him what might happen to other creatures, like dragonflies, if the water and muddy edges were gone.



Bringing it all together

ACTIVITY FINAL

To produce a map to remind Pete, and others, of the importance of naturally untidy nature

A

Working together, decide on which elements of the various maps, art work and gathered data should be used.

- Draw a large copy of the outline of Yeovil Country Park and put up on a display board
- Attach chosen material to relevant areas on the map

Or

- Display the Poem for Pete and attach chosen material to each verse

Or

- Make a large paper version of the map and perform the poem, with additional facts included as the verses progress

Or

- Produce a fold out leaflet map with selected information included.





LOTTERY FUNDED

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