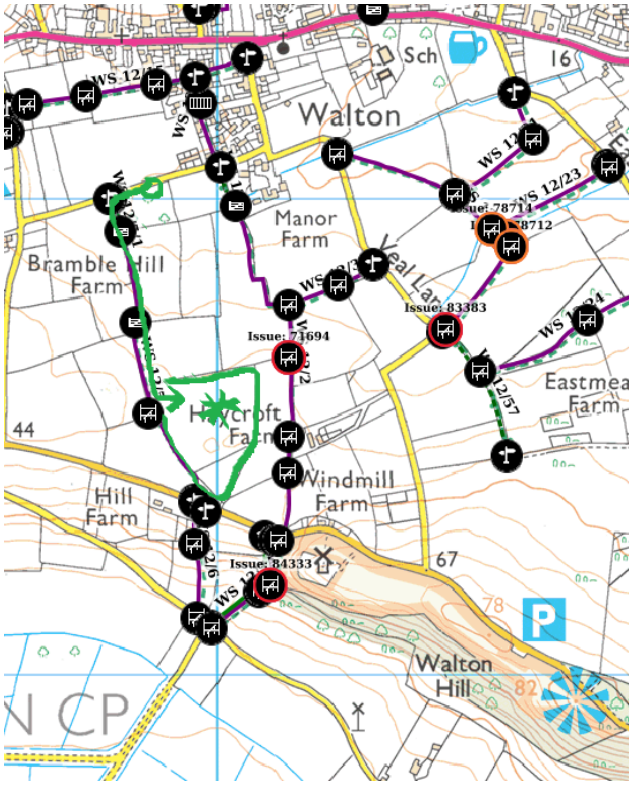
For circulation among Walton Parish Council Members, March 2026

Briefing: Walton Outdoor Classroom – Community Nature Learning Project

Location: Walton Hills, Walton, Somerset



Source: https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map



Above: Image from the land

Project Summary

I am a Walton resident working with Harriet Hall, Peter Hall and Alice Clark (landowners) to develop an Outdoor Classroom and Tree Trail on their land in the Walton Hills to provide a long-term learning and wellbeing resource for the community of Walton.

We seek to work in partnership with the Walton Parish Council to open the reforested land through an event on **Sunday 26th April**, followed by a programme of family-friendly seasonal activities encouraging outdoor learning, environmental awareness, creativity, and community connection.

The project will deliver guided and self-led nature-based activities including insect surveying, tree identification, den building, treasure hunts, and seasonal arts-based events.

This project supports community wellbeing by promoting outdoor activity, learning, and intergenerational engagement, and will create an accessible local resource for residents.

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Project Description

The project will deliver:

1. Outdoor Classroom Assets
A small outdoor classroom area including a wooden seating/bench structure (new style kit), allowing groups to gather safely for activities.

2. Tree Trail
A marked and signposted trail using discs/markers attached to selected trees, supported by simple printed resources. Two signs will be installed to guide residents and explain the purpose of the trail.

3. Community Events Programme
The Tree Trail will be launched with an opening event on 25 April. Following this, Walton will host:

- Two small summer holiday events, such as:
  - insect surveying
  - tree identification
  - den building
  - treasure hunts
- Quarterly seasonal events, including:
  - Winter: Wassail
  - Autumn: Leaf collaging
  - Summer: Flag making / outdoor creative activity

These events will connect children and families to nature while bringing creativity and art into outdoor spaces.

Why the Project is Needed (Local Need and Opportunity)

Walton has limited informal outdoor learning infrastructure, and this project responds to growing interest in accessible outdoor family activities. New housing being built have tiny gardens and social housing often has no grass/garden space for children. There are many neurodivergent children with additional learning needs who could benefit through use of the resource by the Walton C of E primary school as well. The Outdoor Classroom and Tree Trail will provide a lasting community resource that encourages:

- outdoor activity and time in nature
- children's learning and curiosity
- community engagement and volunteering
- increased appreciation of the local natural environment

The trail will be open year-round and available to residents outside of organised events, providing ongoing benefit beyond the initial launch.

Who Will Benefit

The project will benefit:

• families and children living in Walton
• residents seeking gentle outdoor activity and wellbeing opportunities
• volunteers and community groups
• visitors attending community events
• local landowners and environmental knowledge through stewardship and engagement

The trail will be suitable for a wide age range, from young children through to older residents.

Project Outcomes / Expected Impact

We expect the project to achieve the following outcomes:

• increased use of local outdoor space by Walton residents
• improved community wellbeing through outdoor activity and connection
• increased children's understanding of trees, insects, and biodiversity
• stronger community cohesion through shared events and volunteering
• a sustainable programme of seasonal events that can continue year-on-year

Project Timeline

• March–April: Purchase of materials and installation preparation
• 26 April: Opening Event (launch)
• Tree trail design and set-up for self-led activity
• Summer Holidays: 2 x children/family nature events
• Quarterly thereafter: Seasonal events (winter/autumn/summer themes)

Budget / Costs

SALC Grant Costs (SALC request)

Tree Trail design (design and layout): £300
2x activities sun by Skool Beanz CIC over the summer (Steering Group coordination and delivery support) £700
Total SALC request: £1,000

Capital and Materials Costs (Walton PC match funding request)

Metal gate to keep motor crosses and animals out of wood incl. installation: ~£600-
Signs x4: £120
Insurance: ~£150
Tree discs/markers (10): £30
Printing and laminating: £50
Children's activity materials (clipboards, crayons, paper, bags, fabric etc.): £50
Total requested from Walton Parish Council: £1,000

These two funding sources together will allow the full project to be delivered. Note: Some costs may be subject to VAT depending on supplier. Suppliers include farm-signs.co.uk for signage.

Governance and Project Management

A project Steering Group will oversee delivery, governance, and ongoing maintenance. The group will consist of:

- Community member: Zina (Georgina) Roche
- Landowners: Harriet Hall and Alice Clark
- Walton Parish Council representatives: John Harvey and Helen Moore

Meeting schedule:
- Monthly meetings for the first 3 months
- Quarterly meetings thereafter

The Steering Group will oversee purchasing, installation, event planning, risk management, and community communications.

Sustainability and Maintenance

The installed assets (signage, trail discs and map) will be durable and reusable year-on-year, and the tree trail can be added to the Walton PC website perhaps under the 'community' tab, for a self-guided activity. The seasonal programme is designed to be repeatable and volunteer-led, allowing Walton to build a long-term community tradition around outdoor learning and nature-based arts.

Risk and Safeguarding (Brief)

Key risks include weather disruption, wear-and-tear, and ensuring safe supervision during children's activities. These will be mitigated by:

- scheduling flexibility
- safe siting and installation of assets
- appropriate adult supervision at events
- clear signage and simple guidance for self-led trail use

Direct Benefit to Walton Residents

This project provides a visible, practical community asset for Walton residents. The Outdoor Classroom and Tree Trail will create a free-to-use local facility that strengthens community identity, supports families, and enhances the parish environment. The assets funded through the precept grant will remain in Walton for long-term community benefit and will support an ongoing programme of events throughout the year.

This is a low-cost, high-impact project that will create a long-term parish asset and an ongoing programme of inclusive community events. Funding support will enable Walton to launch the Tree Trail successfully in April and establish a sustainable programme of outdoor learning and seasonal celebration.

Note: AI used to summarise and format report.