Hakeford Woods Forest School CIC
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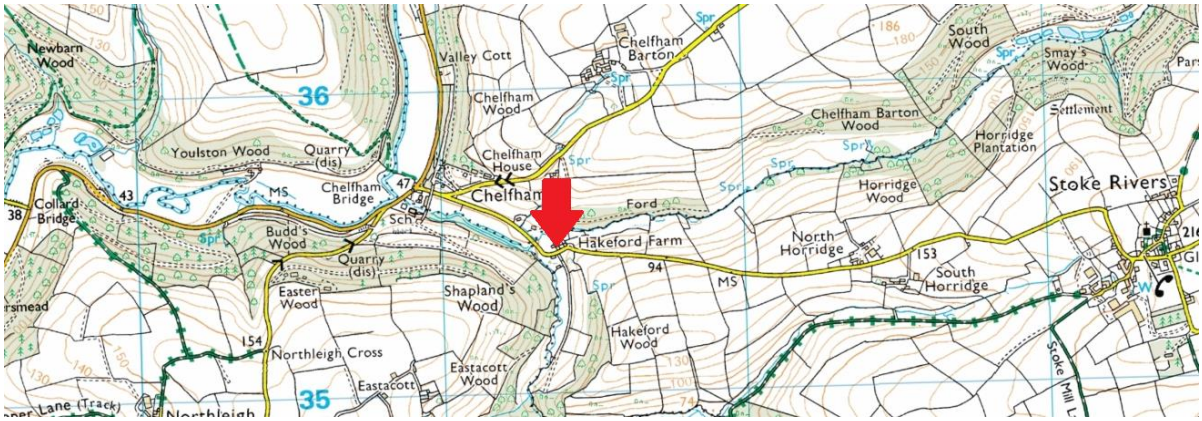
Hakeford Woods Information Pack

Please make sure that you have read this information pack and discussed its contents with all participants. This will ensure that you know what to expect (and what not to expect!) when you and/or your family come and join us for Forest School sessions at Hakeford Woods.

Directions and Access

- Hakeford Woods Forest School site is located in the hamlet of Hakeford in the parish of Stoke Rivers in North Devon.
- To reach the site from Barnstaple you need to head east from Barnstaple on Bear Street towards Goodleigh and Bratton Fleming. Continue on the main road, through Snapper for approximately four miles until you see the Chelfham viaduct on your right.
- Turn right under the viaduct and continue for approximately half a mile. Our entrance is a forestry track opposite Hakeford Farm just after the left hand bend.
- Drive approximately 100m down the track and you are able to park in the parking / log stacking area on the right side of the track.
- Please take care when entering and leaving the Forest School site, as the visibility in both directions is limited.



Basic Site Information

We are extremely lucky to have a fantastic location for our Forest School site. The site consists of a variety of different ecosystems which have been part of a larger area of countryside previously owned by The League Against Cruel Sports. In their ownership the land was kept as a wildlife refuge for animals that may have been at risk from hunting. Until the new Forestry track was installed, very little had been done to this secluded Devon valley for many decades and the plants and animals benefitted enormously.

The Forest School site covers a total area of approximately seventeen acres. This site is split into several areas which have a variety of ecosystems that will be used and studied by students involved in the Forest School activities. These are some of the key features of our site:

- The West of the site is bordered by a stream. In places the stream is 2-3metres wide but it is rarely more than 30cm deep, providing opportunities for sampling and exploring.

- Alongside the stream there is a meadow. This meadow has a fantastic variety of plants, including grasses, flowers and trees that like the damp conditions. There is also a small pond in this meadow providing more habitats for different animals.
- Beyond the riverside meadow there is a small area of riverside wood; this provides wonderful shelter and a really peaceful environment to take part in a variety of different activities.
- The land slopes upwards above the riverside meadow on the other side of a Forestry track and includes three wild meadows, Hazel coppice hedges and a large area of mature woodland.
- The mature woodland is on the hill above the meadows and consists mainly of oak trees but also includes other species such as Holly, Beech, Ash and Birch.
- There is parking for about ten vehicles and as such, we ask parents and visitors to share transport where possible and park considerately to ensure that everyone is able to leave when necessary. Please take care when leaving the site as visibility to the right is limited.

Site Safety

- We have worked hard to ensure that the Forest School site is a safe place for all visitors. This has been a long process and in a site of this type it must understood by all visitors that this is a wild area of countryside that contains a variety of hazards, both natural and manmade. Hakeford Woods has been used for forestry and agriculture in the past and is home to a wide variety of wild species. As such there may be items on the site that could pose hazards for individuals moving around the site. These could include natural or foreign materials, holes in the ground, trip hazards or living species. It is requested that all visitors to the site consider carefully where they are going and be aware of all possible hazards.
- Please be aware that there is a wide variety of plants on site, including many that are toxic to humans. Please make sure that you don't allow anybody to put any plants in or near their mouths without consulting with a member of staff on site.
- The small River on the West of the site is generally shallow, but please keep a close eye on children as it can be fast flowing in places, the stones on the riverbed are slippery underfoot and the riverbanks may be unstable in places.
- The mature woodland on the Eastern slope has been greatly neglected over many years and as such, there is a large amount of dead timber. If you are exploring this area, please check that there are no obvious risks to your safety (such as leaning or hanging dead trees or branches).
- We would be more than happy for you to explore the site and see what you can find. There is a massive variety of wildlife on site. The signs are easy to find but we have found that the noise of the children tends to make seeing the wildlife much more challenging!

Clothing

There are spiky, sharp and stinging plants and insects around the site so please make sure that you have long sleeves and trousers. The riverside meadow is pretty squelchy in places, so some type of boot is definitely recommended if you want to be able to explore this part of the site.

Toileting

We have two compost toilets on site, one of which you'll see along the main track. There is also a nearby enclosure used as a urinal.