



In this edition

Autumn edition 2025



Kurt Jackson Exhibition

New exhibition by renowned artist Kurt Jackson includes Friends of the Fal at the Kurt Jackson Foundation gallery in St Just Penzanze



New Crowdfunder launched

The Fal Landscape Partnership Scheme Crowdfunder launched, an ambitious goal giving long term benefits and a springboard for renovations



Medieval leat discovery

What does an historic watercourse in Grampound and King Henry VIII have in common?



Other News

Cornwall Wildlife nominations and publications

Inside Cornwall Council's Landscape Recovery Strategy 2025

New initiative, Cornwall Council Rivers to Reef project

From woodland pathogens, pests, climate change and actions

Autumn activities for the family

Issues and complaints procedure and much more



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It's been a while...

Dear Friends,

It's been a little while since our last update, and you may have wondered what we've been up to. Behind the scenes, Fran and I have been navigating some personal challenges while also quietly working away in the woodland.

Though things may have seemed quiet, the project has continued to grow and strengthen, and we're now excited to share new developments, including our Crowdfunder, the next steps for the woodland's restoration and the discovery of the Medieval leat.

Contacts



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www.facebook.com/riverfalfriends



friends_of_the_fal



@FriendsoftheFal



@FriendsoftheFal



Nextdoor Friends of the Fal

Sharing is caring!

Once you've read this newsletter, please feel free to share it with friends and family to help spread our message.

If you'd like to become a member, simply email us your name, email, and address, and we'll add you to our mailing list. Members receive our newsletter along with opportunities to get involved.

We also encourage you to support our Crowdfunder, every penny helps us safeguard this special place for wildlife, community, and future generations.

Next issue;

Do you have any material intended for publication like a photo as an example, please send by email to Sarah Roberson

River Fal and Fal Stories



credit Photo by www.MikeNewman.Photography

Background

Kurt Jackson has spent the past four years wandering the River Fal, paintbrush in hand, capturing its many moods, habitats, and hidden corners in his new series, 'River Fal'.

It was on the bridge at Grampound that Fran unexpectedly met Kurt and his wife, Caroline leading to several meetings. We were thrilled to learn that a section of the river cared for by Friends of the Fal is now featured in Kurt's latest exhibition, (seen above) celebrating the work we do to restore and protect this special landscape.

You can view our exhibition contribution on Youtube [here](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/GbPvYXyl-bw)

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/GbPvYXyl-bw>



Contributors

Kurt also extended an offer neither Fran nor Sarah could refuse, an opportunity to showcase our work we have done as Friends of the Fal over the past five years as a contributor to his exhibition. The panels were created and you can view them in his upstairs gallery on display in the Kurt Jackson Foundation until the end of February 2026.

Kurt also added the following text to the wall of his gallery

"Grassroots organisation 'Friends of the Fal' promotes social inclusion, community development, and conservation with the ethos 'If Nature Thrives - we all Thrive" (quote Fran Swanson)

We could not have asked for a better accolade and recognition for the work we do.

Exhibition Details

Kurt Jackson: River Fal Solo Exhibition

August 30 2025 to February 22 2026

*Jackson Foundation
North Row, St Just,
Cornwall, TR19 7LB.*

<https://www.jacksonfoundationgallery.com/>

Medieval Leat Restoration Project

What is a leat?

Leats played a crucial role in supporting the livelihoods of local communities by providing a reliable water supply for milling grain and irrigating fields.

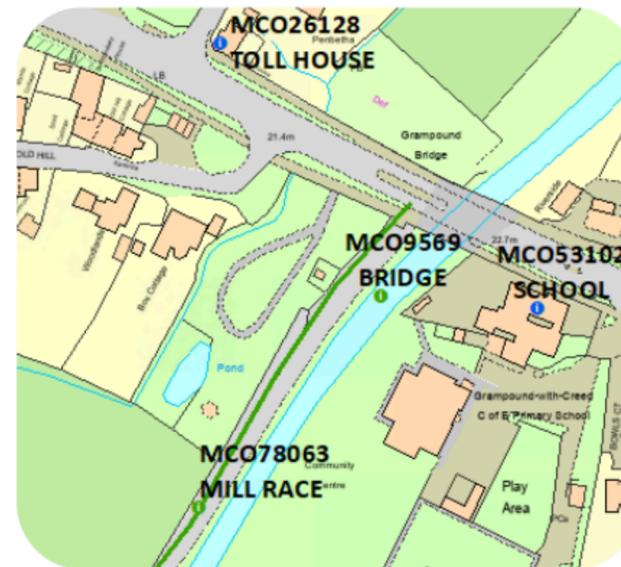
Today, these ancient watercourses offer a glimpse into the ingenuity and practical solutions employed in the past, highlighting the enduring legacy of medieval engineering.



Our leat was constructed in Golden Manor, extending up to Grampond and is a fascinating example of historical engineering to provide water management for the water fed corn mills at **Golden Mill**.



Research has revealed the benefactor of the leat was **King Henry VIII in 1515 to John Tregian**, and it was considered an essential infrastructure project for the area. Designed to channel water from a series of weirs, and managed through a sequence of manual sluices, they controlled the flow of water as a natural source of energy.



In 2024, we identified the Medieval leat, and confirmed by Ann Reynolds from Cornwall Council's Strategic Historic Environment Service. It is now officially recorded in the Historic Environment Record (HER) as "**Mill Race**."

In partnership with Cornwall Rural Education and Skills Trust (CREST), we are developing a 10–15 year restoration project that will offer accredited training in the traditional rural heritage craft of Cornish (stone) hedge laying.

Using modern tools like LiDAR (below) allows us to better understand historical landscapes and guide future conservation efforts. Traditional dry stone walls create microclimates that support biodiversity and strengthen ecosystems. These structures help slow surface water runoff during heavy rainfall and retain moisture during dry spells, an increasingly vital function as the impacts of climate change grow. You can support our efforts to help nature and history thrive by preserving rural skills and education. Visit our Crowdfunder page to see how you can get involved.





Friends of the Fal

ACTION

CLIMATE AND THE CHANGE TO OUR WOODLANDS

Our woodlands are among the most beautiful and important parts of the Fal valley, but like so many natural places, they are under pressure from climate change. Friends of the Fal are seeing first-hand how hotter summers, wetter winters, and shifting weather patterns are reshaping the woodland environment.

Stressed trees become more vulnerable with climate change. Friends of the Fal have already experienced threats linked to changing conditions and must be prepared for challenges ranging from invasive insects to fast-spreading diseases by,

- Diversifying species using drought and disease-resistant species alongside natives
- Monitor tree health by record stress indicators, pests, and dieback.
- Protect soil and water by preventing erosion, maintain riverbanks, and manage flooding through reintroduction of hedges and ditches.
- Plan for extremes through storm resilience, flood risk mitigation, and adaptive planting schemes.
- Engage the community through Tree Wardens, volunteers, schools, organisations like the WI, Guides, etc. can provide crucial monitoring and adaptive responses.

Challenges

Hotter, Drier Summers

In recent years, trees have faced long dry spells that cause drought stress. This makes them weaker, less able to grow, and more vulnerable to pests and disease. Newly planted saplings are particularly at risk without careful watering and aftercare.

Cold, Wet Winters and Extreme Conditions

While summers are drying out, winters are bringing heavier rainfall and flooding. Soils become waterlogged, roots struggle to breathe, and riverbanks erode more quickly. Paths and access points also flood more often. Violent storms, which bring broken branches, uprooted trees further destroying the river banks

Pests and Diseases

Warmer conditions allow pests like the oak processionary moth to expand their range, while diseases spread faster in stressed trees. This threatens some of our most beloved native species. Ash dieback alone could claim millions of the UK's ash trees having already claiming many of ours, while oak trees are suffering from the impact of acute oak decline and powdery mildew.

In a new study by University of Exeter scientists assessed the 636 tree pests and diseases to work out the invasion probability and likely effects on tree growth. Based on recent rates of pest and disease arrival, they estimate that by 2050, more than half of tree growth could be lost (compared to growth if no new pests and diseases arrived from now onwards). *source [new research published in Plants, People, Planet](#).*

RESULT

By thinning out trees and introducing a mosaic woodland with more resilient varieties, will go some way to protect against Plant Pests and Diseases (PDD's). Analysis shows invasion probabilities and potential losses provides a stark reminder that emerging PPDs pose a severe threat to trees in seminatural woodlands, production forests, gardens, and cities, as well as to the biodiversity benefits and ecosystem services they provide. These findings also have direct policy implications, particularly for tree species selection in afforestation, reforestation, and conservation efforts. Given the long lifespan of trees, selecting species that are less vulnerable to multiple PPD will help ensure forest resilience, especially in the context of future climate change.

(source [Plants, People, Planet Potential impacts of plant pests and diseases on trees and forests in the United Kingdom](#))

Explore our [Crowdfunder](#) to see how, together, we can make a difference



The Fal Landscape Partnership Scheme

Funding the future with your support

Through Crowdfunder, we aim to seek **£31,000** to support our vision and goals

Scan our QR code with your mobile phone or follow this link in [Crowdfunder](#) to help us protect wildlife, support community, and inspire children through nature



Leat Restoration Pilot Phase £3,000

- Surveys to identify priority areas for restoration based on historical significance, ecological value (hedge and ditches), and level of degradation
- Develop a restoration plan that includes traditional Cornish hedge building techniques, and training programs for volunteers and workers through the support of CREST.
- Initiate the showcase section by coordinating material sourcing and logistics



Overheads & Organisational Growth £8,000

- To continue our work enhancing landscapes and heritage, we need support not just for projects, but for the essential behind-the-scenes costs that keep our organisation running, like insurances, basic admin, IT domains, volunteer coordination, newsletters and maintaining tools and equipment
- Charity Registration involving legal and professional support
- Trailboard design in conjunction with Parish Council & Trewithen
- Website redesign to reflect our goals and improve user experience with new features like QR codes



Woodland Management and Tree Care Plan £20,000

- Ash Dieback Action Plan (ADAP) & other pest and disease planning as we are experiencing many challenges in this area
- Phase 1 ecological survey (Phase 2 already completed)
- Tree care actions based on identified priorities
- Replanting trees and perpetual monitoring



CORNWALL
COUNCIL
one and all • oen hag oll

**Cornwall &
Isles of Scilly**



NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY 2025



We're grateful to see Friends of the Fal volunteers have been recognised in the CloS Nature Recovery Strategy, and we truly hope this inspires others to make a pledge for conservation, community, and children.

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INSPIRATION



FOREST FOR CORNWALL

Responding to the Climate Action Plan target to plant 8,000 ha of woodland by 2030 and working with land managers and communities, F4C has now planted over 1 million trees since 2019.

Find out more
www.cornwall.gov.uk/countryside/forest-creation-programme



FRIENDS OF THE FAL

Friends of the Fal are a community woodland river conservation project based in Cornwall. They help restore native woodland and help connect the community to the environment.

Find out more
www.friendsofthefal.org



you can read the strategy here:
cornwall.gov.uk/nature-recovery-plan-overview

PLEDGE FOR NATURE

CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY
LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP

CORNWALL
COUNCIL



NATURE NEEDS HELP—WILL YOU MAKE A PLEDGE?

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership's Pledge for Nature campaign is back, rallying residents, businesses, schools, farmers, and community groups to take action for wildlife and biodiversity.

Anyone and everyone can take action to restore nature. It doesn't matter whether you are doing something big or small, we can all make a difference.



CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP

Whether you make a pledge from creating a window box to creating a new woodland, everyone can make a difference.

The Pledge for Nature campaign calls on individuals and communities to commit to what they can do to protect nature in their own way. Friends of the Fal are busy making theirs! Click on the link above and make yours today

Following the release of [Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy](#), Pledgers can enter their support and see it in the new interactive map!



Friends of the Fal: Proud Contributors to the Rivers to Reef Project



CORNWALL COUNCIL
one and all • onen hag oll



FAL RIVERS to REEF

Sarah and Fran have joined Cornwall Council workshops alongside farmers and large landowners to help shape shared objectives for the Fal river catchment. The long-term project over the next 20-30 years (subject to funding) aims to make the area more resilient by increasing water storage, creating ponds and swales, planting Cornish hedges and trees, restoring grassland, managing invasive species, and establishing buffer strips and orchards. The Fal Rivers to Reef team under the Nature Recovery team, are working to support farmers and landowners in the Fal catchment where members will benefit from many opportunities. Follow the link below to see how you can get involved

Recent Updates:



Farm Resilience Plans

Already, more than a dozen farm plans have been commissioned and will be aligned with the wider project objectives. More farmers within the Fal catchment area are needed to take part in the remaining plans. If you are, or know, a farmer who may be interested, please get in touch using the email below



Engagement

The Nature Recovery team at Cornwall Council met with the local Councillors' for the Fal area and they are supportive of the project and the ambitions. Wider public engagement is currently being planned



Communications

The Nature Recovery team are working on communications to support fundraising and to provide information for the wider community shortly. Keep an eye out on the 'Let's talk' site at Cornwall council for updates by using the below link



<https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/fal-rivers-to-reef>



falfarming@cornwall.gov.uk



FREE AUTUMN ACTIVITIES

As the seasons shift and colours change, it's the perfect time to engage both young and old with fun, free activities and resources, just click on the links and see what you can do in Friends of the Fal woodlands

Wildlife Trust Activities

Making a Hedgehog Hotel

Make your own snuggly home for hedgehogs for over the winter

[DELUXE-HEDGEHOG-HOUSE](#)

Make a Bird Feeder

Make your own bird feeder for your garden and see which ones come to visit!

[BIRD-FEEDER](#)

Make Your Own Binoculars

Go wildlife detecting in the woods with your own binoculars

[BINOCULARS](#)

Fungi Spotter

Included in Events

Autumn is a great time of year to spot fungi in the woodlands. Print out this ID sheet and see how many you can tick off or add ones that are missing- let us know!

[FUNGI-IDENTIFICATION](#)

Seed Gathering

Collecting seed guide from native wild trees helps preserve local species and genetic diversity, which is under threat from habitat loss, climate change, and invasive species.

[Tree Council season seed identification guide.pdf](#)

September Foraging

September's great time of year to forage for nuts, berries and seeds. Here's a guide for safe picking from Countryfile.

[Countryfile-how-to-forage](#)

Autumn Leaf Crafts

Woodland Trust fun leaf activities.

[Woodland-trust autumn-leaf-crafts-for-kids](#)

New Complaints and Issues Process



Friends of the Fal

We believe that having a clear complaints and issues process is not about expecting problems, but about building resilience, trust, and accountability. Friends of the Fal operates on private land with a public right of way, which we maintain and manage in partnership with Cornwall Council's CORMAC team. While the Parish Council has a valuable wider role in supporting the community, issues relating to this site are best raised directly with us. This avoids unnecessary delays that may occur if routed indirectly through the Parish Council, and ensures concerns can be addressed promptly and effectively.

- **Accountability & Transparency:** It shows that Friends of the Fal is open to feedback, willing to listen, and committed to addressing concerns fairly.
- **Trust & Credibility:** A formal process reassures our members, volunteers, and partners that issues won't be brushed aside but handled with integrity.
- **Conflict Resolution:** It provides a structured way to resolve problems before they escalate into bigger disputes, safeguarding relationships and reputation.
- **Fairness & Protection:** Everyone is treated equally, with decisions based on procedure rather than personal bias. It also helps protect staff, volunteers, and trustees from unfair criticism or harassment.
- **Learning & Improvement:** Complaints can highlight areas where we can grow, improve its practices, or strengthen policies.

COMPLAINT OR ISSUE?
SEE IT, SAY IT, SORTED!

1 **Fallen branches across the path?**
Message/ WhatsApp Friends of the Fal. This is the fastest course of action and guaranteed to be sorted

2 **Issue about the surface of the footpath**
Either raise an issue using Cornwall Council portal or message Friends of the Fal - may take a longer time to sort

3 **Worried about a fallen branch across the river?**
Either raise an issue using Cornwall Council portal or message Friends of the Fal

4 **Is there an issue with furniture?**
Message/ WhatsApp Friends of the Fal. This is the fastest course of action and guaranteed to be sorted

5 **Vegetation growing over path and blocking route?**
Message/ WhatsApp Friends of the Fal. This is the fastest course of action and guaranteed to be sorted

6 **Is there an issue with a gate?**
Message/ WhatsApp Friends of the Fal. This is the fastest course of action and guaranteed to be sorted

Location - where exactly is the issue? Try using the what3words app

Friends of the Fal Phone Number/ WhatsApp
07774048852
07817730459

Cornwall Council Portal
https://secure.cornwall.gov.uk/form/auto/countryside_issue



working in association with

Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Partnership with Cornwall Wildlife Trust



In this edition, we're excited to share updates from one of our valued partner, Cornwall Wildlife Trust

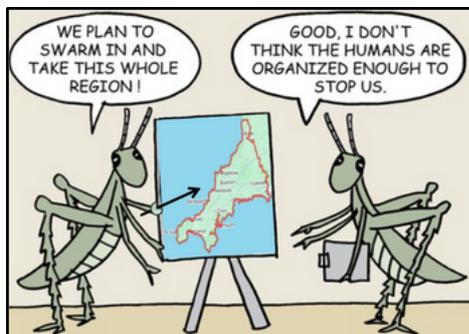
Egyptian locusts

Photo to the right by Friends of the Fal: Fran Swanson, taken on 1st of September and reported in [Grampound](#), a stark reminder of how close new pests are to our very doorstep.



Cornwall Wildlife Trust have recently written an article on this subject with the announcement that others have been now recorded here in Cornwall and are thought to be the result of strong southerly and easterly winds carrying individual insects across the continent. You can read this article here [CWT-egyptian-locust-recorded-cornwall](#)

Experts note that changing **climatic conditions** could create a more suitable environment for this and other non-native species in future. Monitoring such occurrences is therefore of increasing importance. Cornwall Wildlife Trust is encouraging members of the public to log unusual or non-native wildlife sightings here [CWT-wildlife-recording](#) and help to be organised in preventing a future eco-disaster.



These are vital for

- Detecting the arrival of new species
- Assessing potential impacts on native wildlife and ecosystems
- Monitoring changes in Cornwall's biodiversity
- Conservation decision-making, education, and research

Friends of the Fal Case Study

We're delighted to share that Friends of the Fal have been chosen as a case study by Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Our story will feature in the Winter 2025 edition of Wild Magazine (Issue 158).

If you're already a member of Cornwall Wildlife Trust, you'll be able to enjoy the article in your copy of the magazine. If not, you can find out more and access Wild Magazine here [wild-cornwall-magazine](#)

Cornwall Wildlife Trust Volunteering Awards

Cornwall Wildlife Trust is committed to recognising the passion and achievements of people volunteering for wildlife in Cornwall. Awards will be presented at their AGM later in September, and we'll be sure to share the outcome with you. In the meantime, Fran and I want to give heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported us by voting for Friends of the Fal. Your encouragement is the driving force that keeps us going.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust AGM Event

You are invited to attend Cornwall Wildlife Trust AGM on Saturday 27th of September at Hayle Academy. There is an optional wildlife walk at Upton Towans nature reserve (an important sand dune site), during which you'll hear more about work for Cornwall's seas. A free pasty awaits! Follow this link to reserve your tickets and wish us luck for the awards [cornwallwildlifetrust-AGM-2025](#)



Friends of the Fal

Other Updates

Story of River Tree (Gwydhenn Avon)

Every woodland has its stories, and one of ours is 'River Tree'. During the height of Covid, when children needed joy and escape, local schoolchildren in Grampound gave this old tree its special name in Cornish - **Gwydhenn Avon**. Friends of the Fal added swings and climbing grips, and for a time, it became a magical place of laughter, play, and a little respite during such a difficult period.

But like all living things, trees have their natural lifespans. River Tree is now reaching the end of its life. Climate change has placed extra stress on it, and we must recognise that to keep everyone safe in the long term, the time has come to retire this much-loved tree.

This doesn't mean the story ends here. Instead, it opens the door for us to imagine what comes next - new play features inspired by nature, and using natural resources will connect future generations to nature on their doorstep. The schoolchildren have given us preferences of what this future should look like and we will keep you posted as we progress with plans.

A Cut Above the Rest!

At Friends of the Fal, we use only hand tools for woodland management. This gentle approach protects wildlife, preserves soil health, and reduces carbon emissions.

It allows us to carefully thin out vegetation, remove invasive species, and create diverse habitats, without the disruption of heavy machinery. Plus, it gives volunteers a hands-on way to connect with nature and learn about conservation. Slow, steady, and sustainable, that's how we help the woodland thrive. Going back to traditional methods of scything, use of sickles, shears etc. we promote skills that we are only learning about ourselves.

Do you have a scythe, sickle or grind stones you could donate? or come along for a go yourself! It's truly a 'Green Gym' workout!



Celebratory Trees

In our woodland, every tree tells a tale. Recently, we've planted UK native trees as living tributes, celebrations of cherished people both past and present. Soon, each celebratory tree will carry a QR code, linking to a personal story, a memory of those on four legs or two on our new website. It's our way of weaving love, remembrance, and community into the very fabric of the woodland. If you'd like to dedicate a tree, please speak to Fran or Sarah. You can also help us bring this vision to life by supporting our Crowdfunder for the new website here [Friends of the Fal Crowdfunder](#)

Meeting

Have your say and join us for our online meeting

Date 28th October 6:60pm

Meeting link: [Friends of the Fal](#)

Agenda will be distributed 2 weeks prior



EVENTS AROUND CORNWALL



OXFAM SECOND HAND SEPTEMBER

Did you know, each year, up to 40% of all clothing manufactured globally is never sold? In a world of overproduction and overconsumption, Second Hand September is all about challenging yourself to create more sustainable shopping habits for a fairer future – without compromising on style. (source *Oxfam*)

 [Oxfam Second Hand September](#)



Mad about Heat Pumps 24th September

Learn about the benefits of heat pumps, and why they're a great choice for heating your home for **FREE**. An expert will show you how heat pumps can improve your home's heating and reduce your carbon footprint.

 [Mad about Heat Pumps Free Tickets](#)



Multiple free 3 day courses

Climate skills are critical for adapting to career trends, managing risks like flooding, working with nature-based solutions by going through global climate goals and related economics that are making demands for climate change training very real. There is also a personal responsibility, to look after your family and home, the 1:1 session will enable you to accurately assess the risks and formulate a plan to mitigate them

 [Climate-skills-through-creativity](#)

Carbon neutral Cornwall 2030 HIVE.



Cornwall Council's Carbon Neutral 2030 Hub where you can find out how to help Cornwall become carbon neutral. Learn what other people are doing and be inspired by articles from guest bloggers through sharing ideas so we can tackle climate change together. Lots of resources, links to free events, toolkits, reporting, energy tips and much more

 [Carbon Neutral Cornwall Hive](#)

UK FUNGUS DAY 4 October 2025

UK Fungus Day is an annual celebration of our fungal world, offering something for everyone invites everyone to join in - go to our free fungi spotter in the Autumn Activities sheet!

 [UK Fungus Day link](#)



Recycle Week 2025 will run from 22 to 28 of Sept

Check what items you can rescue from the rubbish here

 <https://www.recyclenow.com/>



The results of Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count are in, and while the numbers are a vast improvement on 2024's record lows, experts warn urgent measures are still needed to reverse long-term decline (source *Butterfly Conservation Group*) Read the results here

 [Big-butterfly-count-results-2025](#)

Partnerships

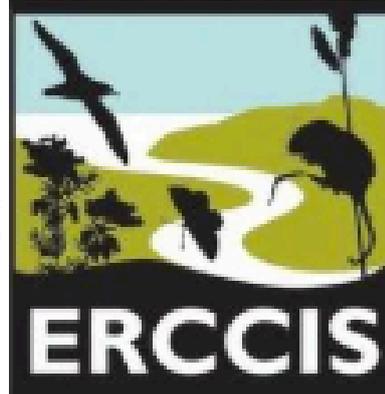


Forest for Cornwall
Help fight climate change

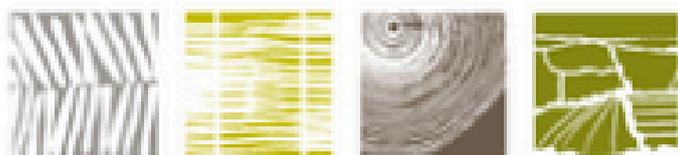
Cornwall National Landscape



Cornwall Climate Action Network



CREST



Cornwall Rural Education & Skills Trust



GREENGYM

VOLUNTEER DAYS 2025

**SUNDAYS:
1ST & 3RD
OF THE MONTH**

**1PM UNTIL 3.30PM
EACH SESSION**

CONTACT FRAN OR SARAH

E: fswanson@friendsofthefal.co.uk

E: sroberson@friendsofthefal.co.uk



***Bring your own tools if you want to, we have tools which you can use**

***Bring your own refreshments, we usually have biscuits or cake if we know folk are coming**

***Wear old clothing and sturdy boots/shoes**

***Please take notice of health & safety information which will be issued to you**