

Students learn by doing



Elizabeth College students, left to right, Charlie Plimley, 17, Lewis Robins, 16, and Brad Norman, 17, working on the wildlife hedge at the GSPCA's animal shelter, a job they have undertaken during their community service afternoons. (Picture by Steve Sarre, 13466581)

YOUNG volunteers swapped their text books for gardening tools as they completed the final stage of a wildlife hedge project at the GSPCA.

Elizabeth College students have been undertaking community activities every Friday afternoon.

They have been working with the Little Tree Project, the educational arm of the charity Guernsey Trees for Life, which aims to enthuse the island's young people about planting trees and creating habitats.

Over the past three weeks, the pupils have been based at the animal shelter.

Lewis Robins, 16, said the first stage involved removing the turf and analysing the soil. The students then improved the soil with organic matter before planting, layering mulching and watering.

'It has been a lot of hard work over the past three weeks but it has been really good.'

Little Trees project coordinator Vanessa Crispini-Adams said the aim of a wildlife hedge was to increase the biodiversity on site as well as being an educational tool for the public, who might be encouraged to plant something similar in their own gardens.

by Nicola Gibbons

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'The species used have been carefully selected for their low allergen score, which seeks to limit the distress caused for people who suffer from hay fever.

'It is great to get the young people active and planting rather than the more theoretical side of conservation.

'A lot of the stuff we do with the students is at school so it's been really good for them to get involved in a community project.'

Mrs Crispini-Adams said Nigel Clarke from Queux Patio Plants helped to select the appropriate species. He is pioneering the Opal biodiversity scoring system in Guernsey.

The GSPCA helps in excess of 3,000 animals every year that come through its doors and has been operating from its St Andrew's base since 1929. The site has been transformed over the years, the most recent addition being a multi-purpose animal welfare building which opened a few months ago.

The GSPCA teamed up with St Andrew's Floral Group last year, which helped to develop the grounds.