

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child has expressed an interest in the concept of a Testwood Lakes Youth Fishing Group and in my role as Wilder Communities Officer at Testwood Lakes Nature Reserve, I am offering to facilitate this with your support.

The idea stems from conversations with the young people I have met fishing on Testwood Lakes and chats we have had about the issues they encounter. There are many knowledgeable and passionate young people who fish on the nature reserve, and I hope to give them their own voice and agency by supporting them to be an independent group that can represent the local youth on fishing matters. In this way they can raise problems and offer their own solutions as well as being part of wider networks for fishing locally to give a youth perspective.

The first step to create the Testwood Lakes Youth Fishing Group is to gather all interested young people together for an opportunity to share experiences and discuss what they would like to see happen next. To achieve this, I would like to host the young people at the Testwood Lakes Education Centre and facilitate their talks. I am keen that any resulting group is led by the young people, but aware that they will need help along the way from adults and am happy support them. As all the young people are under 18 years-old they will be subject to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Safeguarding Policy while attending any event supported by the Trust. As such, to attend an event unaccompanied by a responsible adult the young person must have a completed parental consent form received by the Trust prior to the event starting to allow time for review by staff and any actions taken. Parents or guardians of the young people are more than welcome to attend this initial meeting, while keeping in mind the aim being for the young people to speak for themselves.

I have spoken with Test Valley Angling Club who manage the fishing at Testwood Lakes and on the river Blackwater which borders the Testwood Lakes Nature Reserve, and they are keen to support the young people in their fishing. Test Valley Angling Club are hoping to develop their youth offer and would welcome input from the local young fishers. We also have the Angling Trust on board to advise and help with training to support this.

To begin organising this first meeting please could you register your child's interest in the project by emailing the Testwood Lakes inbox [TestwoodLakes@hiwwt.org.uk](mailto:TestwoodLakes@hiwwt.org.uk) with the subject line Testwood Lakes Youth Fishing Group. I will then create a mailing list for news regarding the group which can be opted out

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of at any time by email request. This email address can also be used for any questions or suggestions related to the project.

In the meantime, for current fishing guidance at Testwood Lakes please see the [Test Valley Angling Club](#) website for their existing youth fishing provision and information on the rules surrounding fishing on the waters they manage. Also, please check the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's website for [Testwood Lakes Nature Reserve](#) specific information. For more general fishing information, the [Angling Trust](#) is a fantastic source of up to date and accurate advice and information.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ellie Gollop

Wilder Communities Officer - Testwood Lakes

**Useful Websites:**

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

<https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/testwood-lakes-nature-reserve>

<https://anglingtrust.net/>

**Ellie Gollop - Wilder Communities Officer - About Me**



I joined the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust in January 2026 in the newly created role of Wilder Communities Officer at Testwood Lakes Nature Reserve. Prior to this I was working as an ecological consultant and still keep my hand in with small projects and as an active Bat Group member. My experience supporting young people goes back to my time as a Guide Leader from when I was 16, all the way through my university life as Mountaineering Club committee and subsequent volunteering with the Wildlife Trust supporting the Blashford Lakes Young Naturalists.

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