



[Click here to listen to an audio recording of this document](#)

Hello, we are The Velcro Collective! A Gloucestershire based performance company.

We are inviting visually impaired children and their families (5-13yrs old and in the Gloucestershire area) to take part in outdoor creative workshops in 2023.

Join us on a unique adventure and:

- Connect with nature at the magical Westonbirt Arboretum
- Have fun with guided walks, activities & interactive performance
- Enjoy creative and mindful time as a family
- Meet other families in safe, supportive environment

Interwoven with audio description, the events are co-designed with Visually Impaired dance artist and facilitator, Holly Thomas. Holly is co-delivering the event on 15th April. 17th June event will be co-delivered with guest artist, Dougie Walker.

Last year, seven families joined us on two event days. Here's a short film showing some of the best bits!

We are inviting more families to join us for our next events on **Saturday 15th April 2023 and Saturday 17th June.**



Image description: A colour photo of a young boy holding a large brown leaf in front of his face and looking over the top of it. He is wearing a blue hat.



What's involved?

You'll do creative things as a family like treasure hunts in the woods, den building, creating artworks and playing movement & music games! There will be different activities on offer which cater for both younger and older children, and activities that the whole family can do together.

Artists will support you to create your own ideas and join in with the group. As well as meeting other children and families, you'll have your own time to explore Westonbirt Arboretum.

Children taking part are invited to:

- Communicate what works / doesn't work for them as a visually impaired participant,
- Interact and engage with the other children (sometimes in smaller groups to cater for different ages)
- Make creative choices independently, with their families and the whole group.



Image description: A colour photo of a group of families walking on a gravel path at Westonbirt Arboretum. They are surrounded by grassy fields, tall green trees and blue sky.



Recent feedback from VI families

"It was great to stop and just focus on spending time together."

"The audio description made the performance come to life more for her (child) but as a dyslexic adult it did the same for me too."

"She has had very limited contact with others who are visually impaired, so this event really reassured her that she isn't the only one!"

"It was a very happy, relaxed day and a lovely opportunity meet other VI families in a pressure free setting."

Venue and practical info

- The events take place 10:30am – 4pm at Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury, GL8 8QS. Information about getting there will be sent to confirmed families. Travel bursaries are available upon request.
- Places are 'pay what you feel' – more information on booking. Payment is not compulsory, and any income raised goes back into the project and future activities.

Background

For the past 4 years we have been working with [Holly](#) to create outdoor experiences in nature for visually impaired and sighted children and their families. Holly's lived experience has been the fundamental starting point when we have been creatively exploring the best way to describe dance performance for visually impaired audiences.

Holly has worked as a lecturer in performing arts for the RNIB and has taught dance to visually impaired adults and young people. She is also a member of the Bristol Sight Loss Council, Arts and Leisure sub-group.

More broadly, our company has over 25 years in working with inclusive groups from children and young people to adults, disabled people, people with mental health conditions and people with complex needs.



Image description: A colour photo of a young girl standing in a forest clearing of brown leaves. Artist Holly Thomas is kneeling by her side. They are looking closely at a clay artwork and tools.

How to get involved

If you and your family are interested, we would love to hear from you and talk more about it! Contact me, Michelle, by phone on 07870 998481 or by email at thevelcrocollective@gmail.com

We'll have an initial discussion about what you can expect from the event so you can make sure it is right for you. For more details, you can visit our website or listen to an audio recording about the project here.

We look forward to hearing from you!

