

A Wild Night In at HMP Kirkham

The BBC Springwatch team has visited the conservation area at HMP Kirkham to film for Wild Night In. The show - that goes out this Sunday night - aims to get Britain to go 'wild for money' and raise as much as possible for wildlife conservation projects around the world.

HMP Kirkham has solid environmental credentials: its rare breeds farm rears Longhorn cattle and Saddleback pigs, the RSPB has found 5 rare bird species on site and a bat house is set up in an old air-raid shelter in partnership with the Bat Conservation Trust. There is close involvement with the local community: gardening clubs, the round table, charity groups, and local schools who regularly visit prison to learn about the impressive work going on.

The BBC saw all of this when they visited. Stephen Horrocks, Head of Sustainable Development at Kirkham, says: "We've got strong links with a number of local schools and arrange lots of visits to show our work. When the BBC filmed they got to see a sponsored animal find and pig count by pupils from Carr Hill school, and a 10k sponsored run by prisoners around the conservation area, as well as visiting the whole site."

Carr Hill is the main secondary school in Kirkham. The links with the prison are now stronger than ever with two sixth form pupils and a teacher sitting on both the prison's sustainable development and conservation committees. The prison is also giving the school advice on improving their waste management and recycling and conservation skills. But the main focus is firmly on the prisoners.

Stephen says: "I involve the prisoners very, very much in everything we do. Four of them are on the environmental committee; and four are on the conservation committee. It builds their confidence up, it gives them a sense of responsibility, and they come up with some fantastic ideas. It's great for the prisoners: you show them that little bit of respect and you get it back."

Talking of one offender bedding down some cattle in the early hours of a cold, rainy, January morning, Stephen says: "It was 8am, it was heaving with rain and he comes over and says to me: 'You know, for the first time in my life I've actually got something to get up for in the morning.' It was throwing it down, it was horrendous, but he was loving it because they were his cows and he'd responded so well."

To find out more about the award winning work at HMP Kirkham catch 'Wild Night In' on Sunday 20 June, 20:00-22:00hrs on BBC Two