



Title

Somerset Sustainable Futures: Inspiring Green and Digital Skills in Primary Schools.

Brief Summary

The Somerset Sustainable Futures event took place at Yeovil Football Club on Thursday 29th January 2026, welcoming 130 KS2 pupils from 13 Somerset Primary Schools that are participating in the “Dream Big Somerset” project, for a day dedicated to green skills, digital innovation, and youth voice. The event was designed to help children explore future career pathways in sustainability and technology, while creating space for them to share their ideas on shaping a greener future.

The wider Somerset Sustainable Futures initiative supports schools and teachers to embed a meaningful green curriculum and highlight emerging green careers. This is achieved by developing relevant, co-created learning experiences and resources in partnership with Somerset businesses, local stakeholders, and—most importantly—the young people of Somerset themselves.

Context

The Somerset Sustainable Futures event brought together employers, educators, and young people to explore emerging career pathways in digital innovation and sustainability. Through interactive exhibitions and student led presentations, exhibitors were able to showcase their industries, spark curiosity in future careers, and build meaningful connections with the next generation of Somerset’s workforce.

To set the scene, pupils were welcomed with an introductory video from **Neil Trevett**, Vice President of NVIDIA, who spoke about sustainable futures and the importance of developing green and digital skills for tomorrow’s world. This was followed by a session led by **Dr Beth Lane**, who introduced children to the fundamentals of artificial intelligence—helping them understand what AI is, what it is not, and how it already shapes the world around them.



Challenge

The central challenge posed to pupils at the Somerset Sustainable Futures event was the thought provoking question: *“Is new technology helping or hurting our planet?”*

Children were asked to prepare and deliver their own presentations exploring this theme, encouraging them to think critically about the role of technology in society. This activity placed young people's voices at the heart of the discussion—celebrating their ideas, creativity, and problem solving skills. By considering both the benefits and potential risks of technological development, pupils were able to explore how innovation can support environmental sustainability while also reflecting on the responsibilities that come with digital advancements.





Solution

In their presentations, children highlighted a range of thoughtful solutions and positive impacts of technology. Many recognised that technology can make jobs quicker and easier, improve efficiency, and support better care for the planet, its water systems, and wildlife.

Pupils also explored how young people can stay safe and healthy when using screens and digital tools, emphasising the importance of responsible use. They discussed the everyday choices individuals can make to help protect the environment and how developing future focused skills—particularly digital and green skills—can empower young people to pursue careers that contribute to a more sustainable world.



Impact

The event had a significant impact on pupils, giving them the chance to come together, collaborate in small groups, and confidently share their ideas. Children particularly enjoyed exploring the careers fair, where they engaged with a wide range of industries and listened to presentations from other schools. The interactive nature of the fair made it especially memorable, with pupils showing great enthusiasm for the hands on activities and the free resources available to them.

Their feedback reflected the variety of learning experiences that captured their interest and things they had learnt throughout the day:

- “The drone, the cow interactive stall. The bees stall.”
- “There are different ways to help the planet and lots of jobs to do to help the environment.”
- “That by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the sea.”
- “95% of the world use AI.”
- “I learnt that there are so many perspectives about how AI is helping us.”
- “More about clean energy. How they measure the depth of the ocean.”
- “About Technology and the effects and good things. Also learning about jobs we want in the future”
- “The new amazing job opportunities we have for the future”

Employers also recognised the value of the event. One exhibitor shared:

“Brilliant, it was interactive and offered a range of experiences from different sectors. I think having the students go around the careers fair in small groups made the encounters more meaningful, as each student had the chance to speak 1:1 with employers and ask specific questions. The kids were delightful—really polite and asked interesting, engaging questions—so I felt they took something positive out of the day, which is lovely!”

April, a teacher from Herne View school shared *“We really enjoyed the Somerset Sustainable Futures Event! It was well organised and a lot of thought clearly went into the variety of activities available. The presentations from the keynote speakers were engaging, and the children who attended still speak about Albert the robot! Weeks later, they are still recalling facts they discovered at the event (And not just the fun activities we got up to!)”*

Richard, Deputy Head from Milford Junior School shared *“Some of our year 6 children proudly presented at today’s Sustainable Somerset event, where they made such a positive impression.”*

Together, these experiences helped spark curiosity, broaden horizons, and build excitement around future green and digital career pathways.



Reflection

Pupils left the event with a deeper understanding of sustainability, technology, and the wide range of careers connected to both. Many reflected on new learning about clean energy, how ocean depth is measured, and the surprising number of jobs that rely on technology. Children also explored the positive impacts of technology, learning how it can support the environment as well as everyday life. They shared new insights into artificial intelligence, recognising the many different perspectives on how AI helps society. Importantly, pupils recognised that even in natural environments, technology plays a vital role. They also gained clarity about future job interests and the skills they may need to pursue them.

Dr Beth Lane from AI In Schools shared “*AI in Schools was delighted to be involved in both the Primary and Secondary Somerset Sustainable Futures events. The energy and enthusiasm from the pupils was fantastic, and it was inspiring to see such thoughtful presentations and research from young people already engaging with important global challenges. It was particularly encouraging to see a strong focus on the environmental impact of technology and the role innovation and AI can play in building a more sustainable future. With so many employers involved and a wide range of hands-on, engaging activities, the events created a brilliant opportunity for pupils to explore real-world careers and ideas. Initiatives like this are incredibly important because young people need the opportunity to develop AI literacy, understand how technology is shaping the world around them, and feel empowered to become creators and problem-solvers in the future. It was a real pleasure to be part of such an inspiring and impactful initiative*”.

Jenny Salmon, project Lead of **Dream Big Somerset** said “*The Sustainable Futures primary event was an extremely successful day — there was a real buzz in the room from start to finish. The pupils did such a fantastic job presenting and confidently voicing their thoughts on digital and sustainable matters, and I want to give a huge thank you to the teachers who supported them throughout.*

It was wonderful to see pupils experience a truly hands-on careers fair, and inspiring to hear how much employers valued the opportunity to engage with primary-aged children. Starting careers education young is so important for raising aspirations, and that’s exactly what this event — and the wider Dream Big projects — have aimed to achieve here in Somerset.”



Next Steps

Building on the success of the event, the next steps include expanding the Somerset Sustainable Futures programme by offering additional workshops, resources, and school based activities throughout the year. During the event, pupils identified several Somerset businesses they would like to invite into their schools to deliver more -in-depth sessions about their industries. This creates a clear opportunity to strengthen direct employer engagement and support children's curiosity through real- world, hands- -on learning experiences.

Future plans also include developing more practical digital and green skills projects, deepening partnerships with local employers, and creating opportunities for pupils to revisit their learning through follow- up challenges. These continued activities will help embed sustainability and digital literacy more deeply within the curriculum while ensuring young people remain- at the heart of shaping Somerset's green future.

