

Environmental Education Project Development Plan 2013-2019

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1. Introduction

About us:

We run education sessions and events at Rosliston Forestry Centre and other venues around South Derbyshire and The National Forest area, working with partners to deliver multiple objectives and provide a range of activities, training and events for people of all ages.

Context

There is an expectation that outdoor learning has an impact on individuals' desire and ability to live their lives in a more sustainable way.

(Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2007; Department for Education and Skills, 2006).

'No one will protect what they do not first care about.'

Sir David Attenborough, 2010

(The Natural Environment White Paper, 2011)



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- We have shared responsibility with families for introducing our pupils to their own outdoor environment and cultural heritage.
- We are committed to supporting individuals and groups of all ages/ abilities to engage in environmental activities and have fun learning.

Description

We work with partners to provide opportunities for people to learn about the environment and have some fun too. We have links to other local environmental organisations across The National Forest and often work together on projects.

Our events vary from the Science Discovery Day and Apple Day to the Summer walks around South Derbyshire exploring the wildlife and heritage of the District. We also take on contract work to develop / deliver environmental education programmes around the Midlands.

Activities include:

- Wildlife Watch family activities at Rosliston Forestry Centre and other sites if required
- School Visits to Rosliston linking outdoor learning to all subject areas for all age groups.
- Outreach visits to deliver outdoor learning for schools / public
- Public events and initiatives like the Free Tree Scheme and Climate Week activities, bringing national initiatives to the local area

Look at <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/jubilee-woods/what-you-can-do/schools/Pages/educational-resources.aspx> to see examples of our work for a national partner, the Woodland Trust.

Partnership arrangements

The Environmental Education Project is part of South Derbyshire District Council, and our primary partners and funders are Rolls-Royce plc and The National Forest Company.

Other key partners at Rosliston are the Forestry Commission and Aurora Country Developments. Across the District and beyond we develop projects with others including the University of Derby, The Woodland Trust, Burton & South Derbyshire College, South Derbyshire CVS, Derbyshire County Council and Sharpes Pottery Museum.

Our customer base includes many others - from Parish Councils and Schools to individuals.

Our work is reviewed and advised by a Steering Group which consists of project development partners. We work together to share resources and deliver projects. We have a set of annual targets and report progress at Steering Group meetings and an Annual Report. Previous Annual Reports are available as PDF documents.

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Facebook: Environmental Education Project at Rosliston Forestry Centre

The work of the team covers community activity and events, school visits and partnership work, for example the Swadlincote Cultural Partnership and the South Derbyshire Environmental Forum. Work direction comes from this Development Plan and an annual agreement based on the Plan's work areas and aspirations.

2011–2 was the first year in a new 3 year partnership with Rolls-Royce plc, and we have worked on a series of volunteer days for staff which have helped us with resources, and have started a new community project together.

Funding arrangements

We are part of South Derbyshire District Council and receive core funding and back office support (payroll, HR, Health and Safety, Communications, IT etc) from our colleagues at SDDC and Northgate Public Services.

We have a commitment to SDDC to generate funding to deliver our activities where possible within the District, and to ensure that 100% of costs are covered when working outside the District. We undertake work outside the district regularly on this basis.

This is achieved through fees, sponsorship and grants.

We also receive core funding from Rolls-Royce plc and the National Forest Company on renewable 3-yearly / annual agreements. Their funding is used for projects which meet their specific objectives which include engaging young people in science education, community development and providing opportunities for volunteering and use of/ access to National Forest sites.

2. Aims and Objectives

Background

The previous Development Plan (2008-12) helped us to focus our activities and provided a background 'benchmark' for us to check ideas against. This current plan used that material as a starting point and then consulted partners (individuals and organisational aims/objectives) and staff and customers for feedback and input. The changes to the objectives are minor. The aspirations have been changed and expanded, as we had achieved many of the ones in the previous plan.

Aims and objectives 2013-2019

Our aim:

'To develop knowledge, respect for and involvement with the environment through enjoyable and engaging learning opportunities across South Derbyshire and The National Forest'.

Objectives:

1. To lead on the provision of high quality and enjoyable environmental education services for schools and other groups and to provide opportunities to improve access to outdoor learning for teachers and pupils.

Aspirations:

- Deliver Forest School activities and support schools setting up Forest School (resources needed).
- Work with landowners and schools to provide outreach opportunities tailored to different sites.
- Keep abreast of new developments in education and incorporate into education sessions.
- Identify projects and programmes for older pupils e.g. through Burton and South Derbyshire College.
- Manage self led groups at Rosliston and provide training for teachers to use their school grounds or local site/ park/ wood.
- Develop opportunities across the wider definition of environment, including cultural and heritage opportunities.
- Develop and deliver tree planting activities for schools through innovative and exciting programmes.
- Support partners in their aims to increase access for pupils for geographic or social inclusion reasons.
- Enable pupils to take part in useful conservation activities.
- Identify and work towards solutions to the 'barriers' limiting uptake of environmental education.
- Develop environmental education skills training and sharing of best practice with the University of Derby, Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, and other providers.

2. **To provide high quality community events and activities, providing opportunities for people of all ages and needs to develop their environmental knowledge and encourage action towards a more sustainable environment.**

Aspirations:



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- Develop, deliver and support a programme of informal and formal learning opportunities including events, activities and walks/ self led trails.
- Identify opportunities to bring national campaigns and information to South Derbyshire e.g. Apple Day, National Science Week
- Enable people to take their interest further through work experience, skills development opportunities and volunteering for EEP or partner organisations.
- Develop projects which help to link people more closely with their local park/woodland, linking to local cultural and heritage information and opportunities to join site 'Friends' or management groups.
- Support Derbyshire Biodiversity initiatives to increase wildlife recording and monitor species and seasonal variations.
- Work with Rolls-Royce to provide community projects which meet our objectives and support their employees and trainees in developing a wide range of personal skills and behaviours.
- Look at opportunities for intergenerational and inter-community work, e.g. with local village footpaths groups and others from the Environmental Forum.
- Identify ways in which volunteers' environmental knowledge and activity can support our educational aspirations.

3. To develop networks and partnerships in order to make best use of resources, add value to projects and share knowledge and skills.

Aspirations:

- Continue to identify and deliver joint constructive and mutually beneficial projects with Rolls-Royce plc.
- Build strong informal and formal networks of local education & environmental providers, working with National Forest Company, South Derbyshire Partnership and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (Wildlife Watch).
- Develop and progress constructive links with providers and partners outside the local area e.g. Woodland Trust.
- Identify and develop partnership links, and innovative ways of delivering projects which deliver multiple objectives. e.g. 'Woodland Discovery' (Woodland Trust), Free Tree Scheme, adult/ teacher training.
- Develop commission work with partner organisations.
- Develop cultural and environmental forum partnerships
- Continue to work with Rosliston partners to make Rosliston an exemplar community, environmental and education site, including protection of vulnerable areas, developing new initiatives and making the best use of existing site resources.

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4. To manage performance, evaluate all activities and incorporate results in further work. To market and promote the service and keep up to date with local and national developments in environmental education and disseminate best practice.

Aspirations:

- Share knowledge and skills with partners and contacts through various networking groups and partnerships, practical sessions, teacher training and use of media, email etc
- Develop staff team to ensure project delivery and development to the highest professional standard.
- Provide more education materials for websites, e.g. Crest Star Science Awards, and maximise use of social media to promote our sessions and activities.
- Develop a marketing framework for EEP.
- Monitor changes in profile of school bookings and respond accordingly (e.g. age of children)
- Make more of our unique selling points and maximise promotional opportunities.
- Use customer feedback and evaluation, self assessment and involvement with partner organisations to develop our programmes.
- Review all programmes and activities annually and include costs/ benefits / extension / development. Change, delete and add sessions to programme as required.
- Maximise use of resources including staff skills and knowledge and the physical resources e.g. classroom, unit 1b, new developments on site at Rosliston.
- Keep abreast of general policies e.g. health and safety and review annually
- Manage data collection and usage in order to maintain and extend bookings. Review use of IT to manage data

5. To maintain and maximise service and staffing levels for existing work and new project development through core funding, charges, sponsorship and grants.

Aspirations:

- Monitor costs and existing core funding timetables. Balance time spent delivering projects with time spent looking for funding opportunities for core work, when required.
- Support new developments which link to environmental education e.g. shelter project, camera obscura
- Work with partners to develop major projects and funding bids which meet our objectives, e.g. lottery funded projects.

- Review our efficiency and our charges to maximise income and good value for customers.
- Look at income generation potential of new projects from the start, e.g. teacher training programmes and seek funding.

3. Targets

See Annual Report – updated targets and outputs

4. Market Position: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationships with a range of partners • Reviewed aim, objectives and aspirations in relation to key partner, and other relevant, documents • Delivery of objectives meets with the overall aim • Aspirations include opportunities for further development and partnership working • A good team of staff, who work well together and have complementary skills, to deliver the objectives • Excellent reputation and track record in delivering projects 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time restraints – increased work/opportunities, do we need more staff? • Staff skills – increased variety of work, do we need any new skills/training in order to deliver? • Training of new staff – do we need to review and improve this? • Maximising publicity/promotion – need to keep on top of PR opportunities, show-casing success stories more, sharing best practice • Space restrictions – limit the number of groups/activities, development of 1B and outdoor shelter will help! • IT issues – unable to keep up to date with emails and computer based work due to unreliable IT, which results in missed opportunities/getting behind • Some projects, eg Garden at Rosliston, Wildlife Watch events, are unsustainable in current form
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting the uniqueness of EEP - how our service is different to others, why we are special! • Expanding our services – older 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding cuts/reductions in finance/sponsorship for the project • Staff leaving/off sick – how will we cover the work if this happens?

<p>groups, adult groups & Continuing Professional Development (CPD), national projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New partnership projects and opportunities – e.g. Rolls-Royce plc, University of Derby Woodland Trust, etc • Marketing strategy – review of school programme, plans for any new flyers, better use of Facebook/Twitter etc • New projects – inter-community, inter-generational • Development of wider environmental education opportunities – cultural, built, tourism • Maximise use of staff skills – are there any skills the team have that we could be used more? • More involvement in wildlife recording/biodiversity projects • Possibility to expand in the light of reductions in Local Education Authority training provision across The National Forest and the reduction in providers following cuts at the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Groundwork Derby/Derbys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-use of the Rosliston site – working with partners, habitat management and protection • Barriers to outdoor learning and limiting uptake • Damage to habitats - pond pollution/feeding of ducks, shelters in minibeast areas, removal of logs etc • Multiple events/activities on site at the same time – will there be any disruption/competition? • Other Environmental Education providers going under/ being cut – need to be mindful of costs and other risk factors
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5. Appendices – separate documents.

Kate Allies / Felicity Towns, Oct 2012