

Forest Education Initiative

Minutes of the meeting

25th July 2006

Present Kate Jones, Richard Gilchrist, Richard Hurst, Liz Beech, Jeff Searle, Liz Searle, Sarah Dinning, Yvonne Conchie, Andrea Bishop, Leanne Shipley.

Ian Robinson, Carole Evans, John Allom, Claire Longstaff.

Apologies

Welcome to Liz Beech, Liz Searle and Andrea Bishop

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Minutes of last meeting. Thanks to John and all at West Boldon Environmental Education Centre for delivering a fun and informative Forest Schools taster day.

2

Forest Schools

3. - **Research**

A great deal has been done with research into Forest Schools and we have been advised to steer clear of research by SP. Birmingham FEI have done a feasibility study into Forest Schools and it has been completed in draft and the final copy should be circulated in Sep.

Forest Research completed by Richard Murray and Liz O Brian – is this available electronically if so members would like it circulated.

KJ

- **Database/ Contacts in area**

It was discussed in a prior meeting that our link as a cluster group could be to provide advice and support for people interested in Forest Schools. It was decided to produce a pro-forma to email to the group (initially) to complete, to collect information on what activities were being carried out in the area with regards to Earth Ed and Forest Schools. It was discussed and details such as 'Who is out doing what?' 'Who is interested in Forest Schools?' 'What each organisation does' 'How are the organisations funded' 'What does it cost to attend a course?' 'Who do the various groups deliver to? What is the focus of each group?' Also to include who would be interested in more information on Forest Schools. We would get limited info if we were just collecting information on who is delivering Forest Schools in the area. John Allom and Paul at West Boldon are two to contact, also David Thompson (FACE) might be interested in training. Idea to ask Archimedes who they have trained in the area....maybe ask them to forward letters on for us as they will be unable to give out their details. Growing schools website – use but needs updating.

KJ

- **Training**

FEI have funding three times a year for up to £5,000. Groups are unlikely to get the full £5,000, if you apply you must have match funding. To apply your group must have a constitution/Bank account/ Treasurer. Up to 40 cluster groups may apply the next round of applications deadline is the 1st October. If it is decided to apply SP has suggested having a meeting in September where she will assist in the application.

Questions to consider

Who to train?

Need to be able to show that they will practice after the training and complete the assessment.

Practicalities of the training:

People would have to be willing to pay half of the training costs – ie the match funding.

Ask people

- Would you be interested in FS training?

- Would you be prepared to do x,y,z?
- le assessment/ deliver afterwards – where / how?

Questionnaire could be sent out to schools asking if they want training/ seminar or information on FS to see what the response would be. Discussed and thought very difficult to get response from schools/ teachers. Better if hand out questionnaires to contacts in schools that we all have.

Contact Archimedes/Bridgewater and find out how much it would cost if they were to come to us to train people, how many people would we have to have before they would consider coming up to area? How much would they charge? Would it have to be on consecutive days? Would it have to be residential? What would be the certain provision for a venue?

- **Sites**

SP suggested starting 'small'. Find a site even if it is on the school grounds. Once the school is up and running it can be used as a pilot but also an example of good practice. Get someone trained, maybe use as an after school club.

- **Open day/ Seminar** to make teachers etc aware of Forest school concept.

It was suggested that the 'Sustainable Schools' conference in Oct 2007 hosted by the EWE centre could be used as an umbrella to promote Forest schools. Forest schools could be run as a workshop and the conference used as a tool to promote sustainable schools. Two audiences – practitioners and schools. Good to get early years and classroom assistants involved.

Funding

- 4 BLF bid from FEI submitted but as it is a two-stage process FEI are still waiting to hear outcome from first process. Should have heard at the end of July but still waiting. The FEI have to decide if the funding comes through what would be the best use of resources, either a national team or local project officers

Many questions for SP were thrown up with regards to funding-

- Is there a strategic plan?
- If there were a national strategy would we be duplicating work they are going to do?
- What is the partnership?
- How would we as a group fit in?
- Are they looking to build on existing clusters?
- Group want to know details of the bid?
- When will they know the outcome?
- Who has the bid gone into?
- If it part of a CA bid which portfolio is it in?
- Who is the senior contact?

Interregional meeting

- 5 If we wanted to apply for funding by the 1st Oct for Forest Schools training then perhaps arrange a meeting in Sep with Sp, also involve the Tees and a group SP suggested in Cumbria. The idea would be to share ideas and have a question/ answer session.

Who would be happy to attend? Group keen to meet in Sep. Idea to invite SP for a longer session, we as a group could have a meeting in the morning to agree a constitution and then have an interregional meeting later on in the day with the other groups attending.

Potential dates discussed,
4th, 5th and 11th Sep all day fine.
12th and 13th Sep possible in the afternoon.

KJ

KJ

6	<p>Venue offered at Chopwell but thought an easier location for people arriving by train may be more convenient – Bill Quay farm classroom offered, 3rd venue could be the EWE centre. Dates will be put to SP and emailed around to group.</p> <p>Questions for SP.</p> <p>Questions listed and will be forwarded to SP</p>	KJ
7	<p>Other projects</p> <p>Handed out leaflets from FEI about various groups and the projects that they are involved in.</p>	
8	<p>AOB</p> <p>Constitution discussed and volunteers needed for chair and secretary. Great North Forest agreed to hold an account for the cluster group so it made sense for KJ to be treasurer. Seconded by YC.</p> <p>JS made a formal proposal to ask Brendan Callaghan from the FC to be chair. He is involved in education and the group felt it would be a good link. It was agreed to approach Brendan and invite him to next meeting.</p> <p>If not then Richard Powell also from FC.</p> <p>No one volunteered for role as secretary.</p>	KJ KJ
10	<p>Date of next meeting – Contact SP and arrange a meeting in Sep – email the group with details.</p>	KJ