

North East FEI Cluster Group
West Boldon Environmental Education Centre
Monday 8th October 2007



FOREST EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Present

Alex Lister, Chair, Northumberland Wildlife Trust
Rich Hurst, NESPSS
Liz Beech, Bill Quay Farm
Alison Nutter, Wingate Family Learning Centre
Glynnis Risely, Forest School Leader at Wingate Nursery
Glen Hughes Wingate Nursery
Richard Wood, Outdoor Learning Northumberland
Annabel Bartyla, Great North Forest
Sarah Dinning, West Boldon Env. Ed. Centre
Leanne Shipley, Forestry Commission, Chopwell Woods
Rachel Richardson, Villa Real School & Real Care

1. **Wingate Forest School Activity DVD**

Wingate staff brought along an excellent 25 minute film showing 3 & 4 year olds from the nursery using the woodland near the centre for Forest School activities

- Showed enjoyment of children
- Showed learning
- Decision making skill by the children
- Excellent team work
- The development of roles by the children
- Enjoying having a BBQ and eating outside

2. **Minutes from the last meeting**

- Action to carry over is to meet with Brendan Callaghan from the Forestry Commission to discuss the possibility of sourcing funding **Action RH & AL**

3. **Forest School 2007 Conference**

- The conference organised by Archimedes training is on Nottingham
- Alison Nutter is attending and will feedback to the clusters next meeting.
- More info available from www.forest2007.com

4. **News Updates**

Natural Play pilot site

- Pilot at Hamsterley Forest
- Looking to develop one at Chopwell through friends group
- Looking at the issue of risk and insurance
- Suggestion that next meeting be at Hamsterley to see it.

Wildlife Trust/National Conference

- People and wildlife conference for Wildlife Trust staff in Pulborough?
- Forest school is on the agenda
- Alex Lister is going and will report on how the Wildlife Trusts are planning to develop their support for Forest Schools.

Northern Sustainable Schools Conference

- Being jointly organised by North East, Yorkshire & Humber and North West regions
- It is being held in York on 7th and 8th February 2008
- Day 1 is for school staff, Headteachers, senior managers, governors
- Day 2 is for local authorities and partner organisations to look at strategic issues
- It is free
- Details on how to book will be promoted in November via www.sustainableschools-ne.org.uk

Wingate Nursery

- Developing an off the shelf project
- Based on play ranger scheme from Bath on Wells

- Costed up a consortium project with other villages
- Big Lottery play strategy funding
 - Taking play to the children
 - Done through Groundwork East Durham (Working for Easington DC)
 - £230K over 3 years for the district
 - Capital funding for outdoor classrooms. Revenue to go into Play Ranger (Wingate and Seaham)
 - Northumberland are not going down that route.

Richard Wood

- AONB funding to reduce costs by 50% of cost to schools (£6000)
- Northumberland Learning Landscapes, sponsoring teaching staff & schools to engage in outdoor learning activities and support accreditation
- Northumberland's Director of Children's Services wants forest school activity in every school
- Richards company are buying another site in Lowick in North Northumberland
- Northumberland College looking to add outdoor learning modules to some of their courses
- Richard is working with them on a project with Estonia, Belgium, Latvia and Turkey

Training Courses

- OCN courses could accredit courses
- Could Northumberland College purchase an off the shelf package?

Year of Food and Farming

- Flyers were handed out
- RH recommended registering on the website and using the Megamap
- Creates a mini website to publicise work and activity either as an organisation or a school

Any Other Business.

- Now a formal FEI cluster group
- Have a role, chairman, secretary
- Minute taking to be shared on a rolling basis
- NESPSS via The EWE Centre will continue to admin (Send out minutes, agenda's etc)

Role of the FEI Cluster

- It's a great forum for sharing
 - What is the direction?
 - What would we like to do?
 - Could we run events?
 - Sharing expertise and use of sites etc
 - Database of woodland sites/providers of services etc
- RH and AN will progress discussions with Northern Rock Foundation
- Sue Vaughan from Northern Rock contacted Alison to discuss ideas
- This cluster is keen to ensure any work is coordinated regional and the benefit is regional which will increase the capacity to support schools and increase the number of qualified staff available. **RH & AN to action.**
- FEI funding could be used for marketing of such a scheme

For next meeting

- Bring a wish-list for what individual members want
 - As individuals
 - As organisations

Date of Next Meeting

- Monday 21st January 2008, 1.30-3.30pm at Hamsterley Forest