

Forest Education Initiative



FOREST EDUCATION INITIATIVE

North East Cluster Group Wednesday 2nd April 1.30-3.30pm Hamsterley Forest Classroom, Hamsterley Forest

Present

Rich Hurst, NESPSS
Kath Ivens, GWK West Durham & Darlington
John Allom, GWK South Tyneside & Newcastle
Brendan Callaghan, Forestry Commission
Emma Hawthorne, NECF
Richard Gilchrist, Forestry Commission

1. Welcome & Apologies

Sarah Green, Elizabeth Beech, Sarah Dinning, Alison Nutter, Alex Lister

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were accepted.

3. Matters Arising

- Opportunities for funding from Forestry Commission (carry over action)
- RH updated on Northern Sustainable Schools Conference held in York in Feb 08
- Northern Rock – Funded Greenstart (Groundwork early years programme)
 - Sue Vaughan has now left
 - The Foundation is keener on funding social activity

4. Discussion around a potential of a regional bid to Access to Nature for Forest School Activity

- Full Access to Nature guidelines have been delayed until late April 08. Current information states:

Overall Aim of Access to Nature Funding:

To bring about lasting change to people's awareness of, access to and engagement with their natural environment

Outcome 1

A greater diversity and number of people having improved opportunities to experience the natural environment

Outcome 2

More people having opportunities for learning about the natural environment and gaining new skills

Outcome 3

More people able to enjoy the natural environment through investment in access to natural places and networks between sites

Outcome 4

Richer, more sustainably managed natural places meeting the needs of communities

Outcome 5

An increase in communities' sense of ownership of local natural places by establishing strong partnerships between communities, voluntary organisations, local authorities and others.

Grant Requested £	Rate	Match Funding
50,000 and up to 100,000	Up to 90%	10% (no cash requirement)
Over 100,000 and up to 500,000	Up to 80%	20% (minimum 10% cash)
Over 500,000	Up to 70%	30% (minimum 10% cash)

- Ideas for Access to Nature funding were discussed

- West Boldon – has delivered a certain number of forest adventure days as part of forest schools
- West Boldon - bid to Children in Need for approx £25k.
- The group who unclear which other organisations may be bidding.
- Groundwork North East is likely to bid for Greenstart programme.
- BC believes that a Forest School application is a very good fit for programme outlines. Partnership approach and a well defined bid is required.
- Discussion around who would be the accountable body
- NECF are likely to be bidding for another project.
- The Forest School bid should be kept separate from any other bids any of the partners may be putting in Forestry Commission helped to develop A to N nationally, but BC doesn't think they are on the grant giving board

Capital Works

- BC thinks that Forestry Commission funds could fund capital works to woodland sites to be used for FS activities from their grants programme (could be used as real matched cash real cash)
- East of England fund FS activity through Forestry Commission (funding is not ring-fenced)
- The Bid could build on the ideas of Centres of Excellence for Forest Schools across the region from which more FS activity will spread.

Existing Centres

- West Boldon (will be back on site in early 09). Using West Hall Scout Camp for 1 day a week and delivery a small amount of outreach work
- Wingate
- Villa Real (Hamsterley/Chopwell)
- Northumberland – Alex Lister/ Richard Wood
- Langley View (near Stanley)
- Sunderland?
- EWE Centre (could link with Groundwork West Durham and their woodlands project in Derwentside)
- Is Tees Valley FEI going to do its own thing?

Actions;

- Tees Valley → EH to speak to NECF colleagues to discuss their plans
- NECF other bid to A to N (EH to discuss with Clive at NECF and report back)
- GWDD potential bid was a similar idea to NECF idea, GWDD and NECF to discuss together (not Forest School linked)
- RH to check with Wingate & Villa Real on their plans
- KI to check on GWK potential bids

Key areas of a potential bid;

- Training of new FS leaders → 1 week intensive courses in the region. 3 day residential follows and have to deliver 6 FS sessions in 6 months in between the course and the residential
- Need to ensure wider access for groups in disadvantaged areas to FS activities.
- Could use existing planned sessions across the region to verify qualifications and speed up process
- Building capacity to create a critical mass for delivery of FS activity in NE region
- Transport → Users to fund transport (pump priming)
- Perhaps focus on:
 - CPD (taster days for staff) (teaching staff)
 - Bid for 2 or 3 years
- West Boldon → John Allom to check with Gwk that they are happy to willing to share Children in Need bid they have submitted to use as a basis of a bid
- Need to create a sub group to drive forward the bid development, once the full application information is available this group needs to meet quickly.
- RH stated he will support the bid but will not write it.

5. News Updates from members

- Annabel has unfortunately left NECF
- NECF on 'road to recovery'
- GWDD in discussion to take over 230ha of Derwentside District Council to manage & own the woodland. Also discussion with Wear Valley and Chester le Street Councils about their sites.
- BC → Forestry Commission and Natural England are producing a National Trees/forest and Woodland Strategy. Draft out in April. Need to get hooked in for Forest School activity.
- **Action:** BC to let the group know when its out
- RH highlighted the Sustainable Schools, Local Authority research which was commissioned and its potential future direction. Forest School activity should be part of LA plans for Sustainability education.

6. A.O.B.

None

7. Date of the next meeting

- Monday 19th May at NECF 10am-12noon