



FOREST EDUCATION INITIATIVE

**North East Forest Education Initiative Cluster Group**  
**Notes of the Meeting**  
**27<sup>th</sup> April 2007**  
**North East Community Forest Offices**  
**The Greenhouse, Annfield Plain, Co. Durham**

**Present**

Alex Lister, Northumberland Wildlife Trust (CHAIR)  
Rich Hurst, NESPSS, (Secretary)  
Sarah Dinning, Groundwork South Tyneside  
Rachael Richardson, Villa Real School/ Real Care  
Liz Hilsdon, Northumberland County Council  
Anne Robinson, Northumberland Learning Landscapes  
Annabel Bartyla, NECF  
Brendan Callaghan, Forestry Commission  
Richard Gilchrist, Forestry Commission  
Jim Beddingfield, Blackhall Farm  
Steven Rackham, Connexions  
Claire Wilkinson, Browney Primary School  
Sarah Templeman, Browney Primary School

**Apologies**

Caroline Jackson, Leanne Shipley, Helen Cheetham, Richard Wood, Steve Scoffin, Carole Evans, Ian Robinson, Clare Ruskin.

AL welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Minutes and Matters Arising**

- ❖ Anne Robinson has been appointed to the Northumberland Learning Landscapes role and was welcomed to her first meeting.
- ❖ The group is now formally constituted with FEI nationally. Action: RH to put constitution on the NESPSS website FEI page ([www.sustainableschools-ne.org.uk/FEIPartnership.htm](http://www.sustainableschools-ne.org.uk/FEIPartnership.htm))
- ❖ Decision was made to not apply for FEI national funds (up to £5K) as FEI suggested it would not fund training of new FS providers. Can reapply in next round in Autumn 07.
- ❖ AL wrote to DfES to enquire about funding from Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto funds. Unfortunately this was turned down. The DfES is going to put its 'Out and About' Manifesto package out to tender to be delivered nationally.
- ❖ Ecological Impact Assessments. These are expected in the in the national FEI Forest Schools Criteria. AL confirmed that members of this partnership would aim to assist in producing these.

**Forestry Commission (FC)**

- ❖ The Commission are willing for groups to use its sites for educational purposes. Would need negotiation on types of activity undertaken (issues over lots of felling/ shelter building etc)
- ❖ Would need to charge for use of Chopwell or Hamsterley classroom.
- ❖ Is an opportunity for FC to fund preparation of management plans for woodlands owned by schools or others. The agreement of the woodland owner is required. FC could provide minimum of £300 to pay for expertise to produce an EIA and a woodland management plan.

- ❖ The FC have maps of private and publicly owned woodlands for more information and to gain contacts visit: [www.forestry.gov.uk/northeastengland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/northeastengland)
- ❖ The FC is in discussions with Durham County Council to fund management of its woodland sites (worth approx £40K a year)

### **Review of Forest School Training at Hamsterley Forest in April 07**

- ❖ Three people present attended the training.
- ❖ It was run as an outreach programme by Bridgwater College.
- ❖ 16 people attended from a variety of schools and organisations over the five days
- ❖ It will be followed up a three day residential in October 07
- ❖ Covered lots on learning theories (four hours each day) including
  - production of risk assessments
  - teaching and learning styles
  - meeting the needs of learners
  - how to motivate learners
  - emphasis on inclusion and building self esteem (following an early years ethos)
  - Green woodworking/ shelter building/ fire building
  - Creativity and sensory learning activities
  - Links to current national curriculum
- ❖ Participants now have to plan, teach and assess six sessions. Produce a handbook and an essay
- ❖ Have a year to do the above
- ❖ Participants are planning to work together to deliver the sessions to share skills etc
- ❖ Villa Real staff plan to use land near the school, Hamsterley or Chopwell.

### **The Way Ahead**

- ❖ Real Care is a provider of outdoor learning, childcare and specialist training.
- ❖ It is planning to build a new learning centre for 14-19 year olds and is hoping to appoint a full time Forest School worker
- ❖ Real Care will be delivering first aid courses for Bridgwater College
- ❖ Connexions will be running summer residentials and are looking to use Hamsterley Forest (Woodcraft Centre) as an overnight base for young people at risk of becoming NEETS. (Not in Employment Education or Training)
- ❖ Also Thornley Woodland Centre might be a suitable venue
- ❖ RH stated that Paul Beadle who owns Rock-IT is in the process of buying a woodland in Co. Durham for schools and others to use for forest school type activities.
- ❖ Key Tasks:
  - Baseline Study of Activity:-
    - + Sites Used
    - + Contact name/ organisation
    - + Number of pupils involved
    - + Age ranges catered for
  - mapping of sites which are available to use across the region. Then produce a handbook to direct people as to where to go for support in each Local Authority area.
  - Create a database of qualified people (Level 2 & 3 Forest School accredited)

**Action:** RH agreed to put together a short questionnaire to gain some feedback. BC suggested that the FC may be able to fund some research work. Further discussions required.

### **Future Funding**

- ❖ RR suggested funding a central tool store for members to use.
- ❖ Suggestion to acquire funds to pay to lease a woodland which could be shared.

**Any Other Business**

Archimedes Training in Sheffield have produced information on Forest School courses and a National Forest School Conference in October 07.

**Action:** Information to be added to NESPSS webpage.

**Date and Venue for Next Meeting**

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 1.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.