

Inspiring environmental understanding through first-hand experience



Epping Forest Field Centre

The Centre is managed by FSC for, and on behalf of, the City of London



Head of Centre's report on progress in 2012

Purpose of report:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Joint Committee on progress at the Epping Forest Field Centre in 2012. I recommend that the report be RECEIVED.

The 2012 Plan presented to the last meeting made clear reference to the need to respond to rising basic costs and to reduced income in comparison to 2011 specifically in relation to HLF (DEF) funding and to the City of London payment. Reference was also made to the need to manage the additional cost of recruiting new business and finding additional income. Subsequently there has also been a need to respond to reduced course income arising from recessionary pressures.

With this in mind we have been prudent with expenditure although tight budgets give virtually no room for significant expenditure reduction other than in relation to salaries. The significant savings that have been made are salary related:

- We have kept a Tutor role (Laurence Jarvis) at 0.4 full-time equivalent and not made this full time for the peak season as originally envisaged
- We have not replaced a full-time Tutor (Christian Kiel) who left at the end of July

This has added to the cost savings arising from the redundancy (part-time Administrator) and discontinued role (Trainee Tutor) in December 2011.

It is hoped that this will lead to a satisfactory financial performance at the end of the year and that the impacts on service delivery and achievement of KPIs can be adequately managed. Whilst this inevitably brings additional pressures and challenges this is offset in part by efficiency gains arising from the current team having all worked together for more than 12 months


Our latest stakeholder' newsletter is attached to this report to give a flavour of other things that are of current relevance at the Centre. [Please note that some of the links in this newsletter may not be active until the circulation date of the 'stakeholder email') later this month.

A Fire Risk Assessment was carried out by Jerry Scott of CS Todd Associates Ltd on 12 June 2012 at the request of FSC as part of a review of all the safety of all of its operational sites.

The purpose of the report was to provide an assessment of the risk to life from fire, and, where appropriate, to make recommendations to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation.

Aside from the need to remove combustible material from the storage area between the boot store and the timber hut the action points are essentially what might be called 'landlord responsibilities' and a matter of some updating of fire safety provision, notably fire alarm cover for the timber hut and the fire resisting capability of doors in Ravensmead (shared staff accommodation). These action points have been referred to City of London officers in order that action can be taken, as appropriate.

We are making generally good progress towards the delivery of the 2012 Plan and the progress in relation to key performance indicators is as follows:

Criteria	2012 Targets	2012 Performance at end of third quarter
Learner experiences	22,000	2012 will be one the Centre's best ever years but we are likely to fall a little short of target reflecting impacts of 'recession', loss of DEF learner experiences in the Autumn and reduced demand for (Advanced level) biology courses together with limited staff time for marketing.
Volunteer days	525	Approaching target but may fall a little short with limited staff time to foster volunteer recruitment.
People	Able to demonstrate meeting of IIP standards for internal or external assessment	FSC re-accredited with IIP (assessment included EFFC) March 2012 with EFFC as one of the sample Centres assessed. 
Quality Badge (&PEF)	Maintain standards and prepare for re-assessment in 2013	Generally on track but with some developmental work delayed due to the need to focus available staff resources on course delivery and other higher priority work.
Health & Safety	Maintain standard of Gold Shield and prepare for re-assessment in 2013	Standards being maintained.
visitor feedback	In the first nine months of the year > 90% of customers have responded 'yes' to: <i>'Overall did your experience with us match or hopefully exceed your expectations?'</i>	
	In the first nine months of the year > 90% of customers have responded 'yes' to: <i>'Did your learning experience lead to a significant increase in your understanding of the environment?'</i>	