

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 2013

Purpose of report:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Joint Committee on progress at the Epping Forest Field Centre in 2013. I recommend that the report be RECEIVED.

Criteria	2013 Targets	2013 Performance at end of first quarter
Learner experiences	22,000	On target to date; future booking pattern unclear.
Volunteer days	500	On target
	Maintain standards for IIP. [Externally assessed in 2012].	Maintain standards and seeking continuous improvement.
	Exceed the standard for the Quality Badge in external assessment	Assessment scheduled for 22 & 23 April.
	Achieve Safety Shield Gold	External assessment by Northgate Arinso due summer 2013.
Meet or exceed service user expectations	> 90% of service users to record 'yes' on feedback forms	On target
Increase environmental understanding of service users	> 90% of customers to record 'yes' on feedback forms	On target

Staff turnover arising from the departures of our Team Leaders and one of our tutors (with responsibilities for publicity and Lessons from Nature) in the early months of 2013 created an opportunity to make further cuts to staff costs. Both replacement appointments were made at the starting point on the FSC tutor scale. The resultant salary savings, together with confidence now that we shall exceed estimates for grant income, should help to ensure that we will now have a modest operating surplus by the end of 2013. (The estimates presented to the Committee in October had shown a deficit).

I and the remaining two Team Leaders are attempting to cover the operational management and leadership responsibilities formerly undertaken by the outgoing Team Leader. Even with effective and efficient systems we have struggled a little at times with the cuts to staffing but we have managed to avoid any significant service issues. We are pleased to have successfully recruited two suitably experienced and talented tutors to join our team in place of the highly valued leavers from our team. We remain broadly on track to deliver the 2013 Plan but there will be significant challenges in delivering the KPIs alongside ambitious project work arising from these changes.

Looking ahead we have lots of scheduled 'Forest Families' activity days throughout the year as well as eco-activities for children and a wide range of leisure learning and professional development courses for adults alongside our normal schools provision. Notable events include:

- an evening session for teachers in Lea Valley Park on 22 May in partnership with other Essex Learning for Sustainability (ELFS) providers #
- an informal Open Day for families on 25 July a walk for FSC Life Members and members of the Associates of EFFF on 7 September #

these events are linked to plans to recognise the FSC's 70th anniversary.

In relation to the recommended actions arising from the Fire Risk Assessment that took place in 2012, as reported to the JCC in October, it is my understanding that City of London Officers have asked its contractors to address all of the items that I referred to the Superintendent as potentially CoL responsibilities. Some of the work has already been completed and it is envisaged that the remaining actions will be completed in the near future.

The aspiration in the 2011-2014 EFFF Plan to make Lessons from Nature a major part of the learning provision of the Centre has been moved forward with the creation of new a new website www.lessonsfromnature.org the content of which has been developed by the EFFF team.

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