



# Field Studies Council Epping Forest Field Centre

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Update for  
Epping Forest and Commons Committee  
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# Working together

## A 55 year partnership

Field Studies Council work together with City of London to deliver environmental education in the heart of Epping Forest.

Epping Forest Field Centre, a purpose built Field Centre with 6 classrooms was built in 1970.

Field Studies Council currently deliver courses to approx. 19,000 learners per year.

The partnership agreement states:

*Field Studies Council manage the Field Centre on behalf of the Conservators for the principal purpose of environmental and ecological studies research and instruction in relation to Epping Forest with the aim of educating children and members of the public in the appreciation of the amenity and interest which Epping Forest provides and the need for its conservation.*



# Field Studies Council

## Mission and Impact

An environmental education charity founded in 1943, we are best known for providing residential and day field trips for those studying biology and geography.

Our mission is to create outstanding opportunities for everyone to learn about and connect with the natural environment and be passionate about preserving its future.

Our impact comes from providing outstanding experiences for people to connect with the environment, learn about it, and make choices that help protect it.

Every year, our charity works with over 120,000 children and young people. We help them understand and value the environment upon which we all depend, especially now during a climate and biodiversity crisis.

We do this through:

- Fieldwork and outdoor learning courses for schools, colleges and universities
- A network of UK residential and day centres, and a range of places in which to learn
- Natural history and leisure courses for adults, family and community groups
- Wild ID guides and wildlife gifts





# Field Studies Council Strategy

## 2025-2032 strategic priorities

Field Studies Council is currently updating the strategy for the next 5 years.

Key themes are

- We aim to be a **leading provider of environmental outdoor learning, expanding our reach** to diverse audiences through great quality learning experiences.
- We will ensure that **the protection and preservation of the natural environment and sustainable practices are visibly embedded** within our ethos and values and demonstrated in practice

The strategy is underpinned by a theory of change. Through activities and outputs one impact is

- *More people engaged with outdoor learning, leading to a more environmentally responsible society with greater wellbeing*



# City of London Strategies

## Aligning Strategies

Through delivery of courses Field Studies Council supports the Epping Forest Management Strategy strategic aim to **welcome, encourage** and **inspire** visitors.

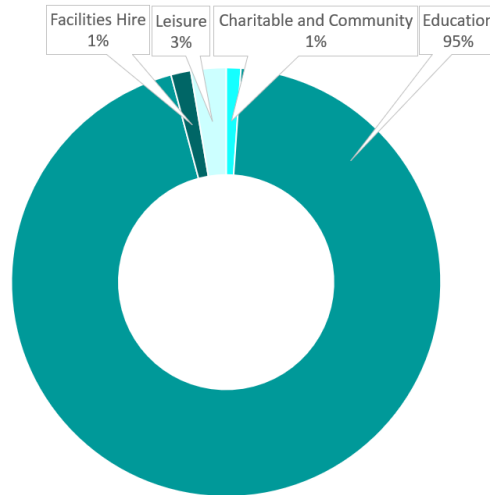
Field Studies Council delivery also aligns with themes from the City of London Corporation Natural Environment **Cultural Heritage and Learning Strategy** and other strategies

- Providing opportunities to learn
- Offering a programme of activities delivering wide ranging benefits
- Working in partnership
- Build understanding and knowledge about Epping Forest
- Understanding Biodiversity



# Learners and Customers

## 2024 Learners



95% of customers attend on a school trip

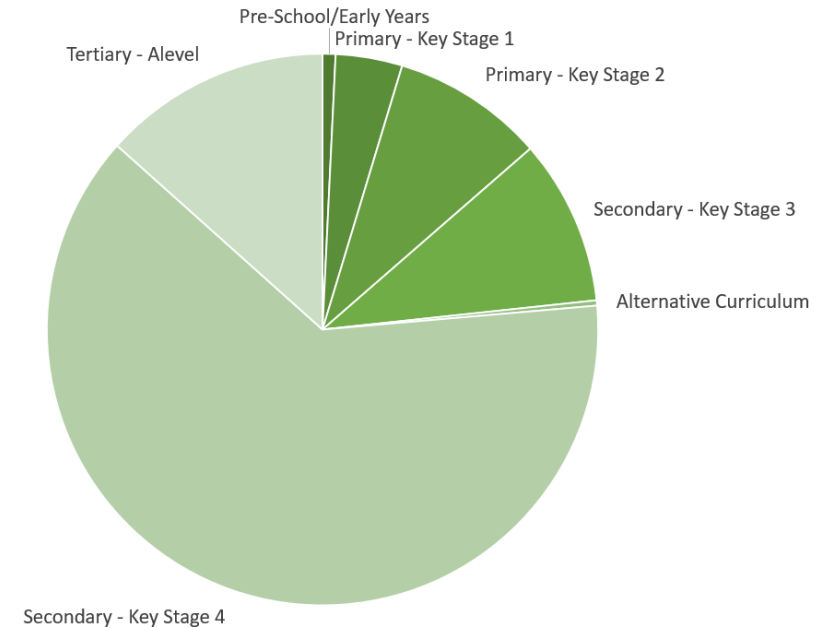
Other customers include nature inspired:

- School holiday activities
- Natural History Courses
- Birthday parties

## 2024 Education Customers

Of the education customers

- 14% Pre and primary school
- 73% Secondary (Key Stage 3 & GCSE) school
- 13% Tertiary (Alevel) school & college



# Learners and Customers

## Geography and Demographics

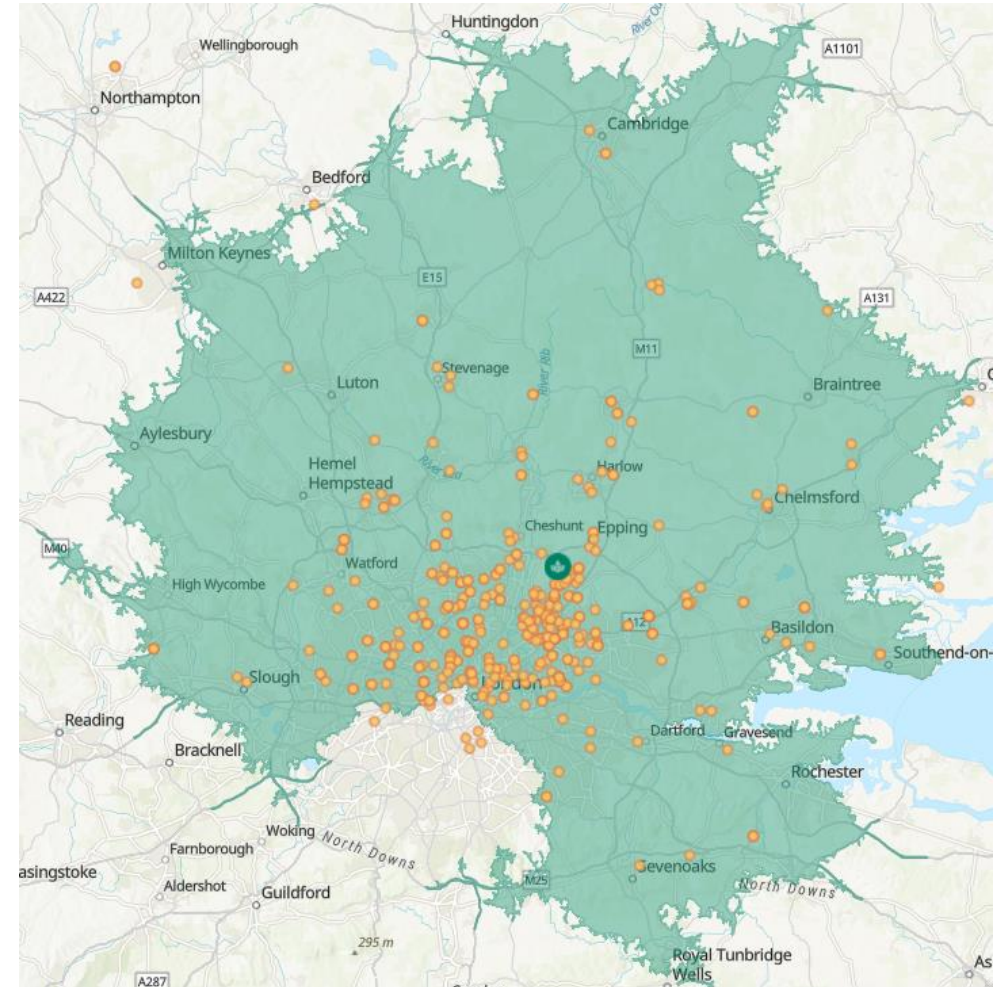
Most of our customers travel less than 60 mins to attend a course

- 11% of customers from postcodes adjacent to Epping Forest
- 57% of customers from London
  - Including 3% from City of London
- 32% of customers from outside London, most (as the map) from the Home Counties.

### *Map shows*

- *location of Field Studies Council Epping Forest*
- *60 minute driving time*
- *Postcode of lead Booker*

## 2023 Learner postcodes





# Operations

## Operational Costs and budget,

As a charity, Field Studies Council has multiple income streams. This includes

- charging customers to attend courses,
- external funding from trusts and foundations
- donations / charitable giving

This ensures we can reach groups that may otherwise not be able to access the opportunity.

2024 Budget (Indicative)	%
<b>Income</b>	
Schools	93%
Leisure Courses and Venue Hire	1%
Other	6%
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Staff	74%
Utilities & Insurance	10%
Overheads	10%
Estate & Property	4%
Rates & Council Tax	2%

## Staff and Volunteers

The Field Centre is staffed by 11 FTE staff

- 1 FTE Centre Manager
- 7 FTE Education staff
- 1.5 FTE Support staff
- 1 FTE Administration staff

Currently we have two regular education volunteers

The team work closely with the Field Studies Council London team an additional 4 FTE staff



# Operations

## Epping Forest Field Centre



The Centre:

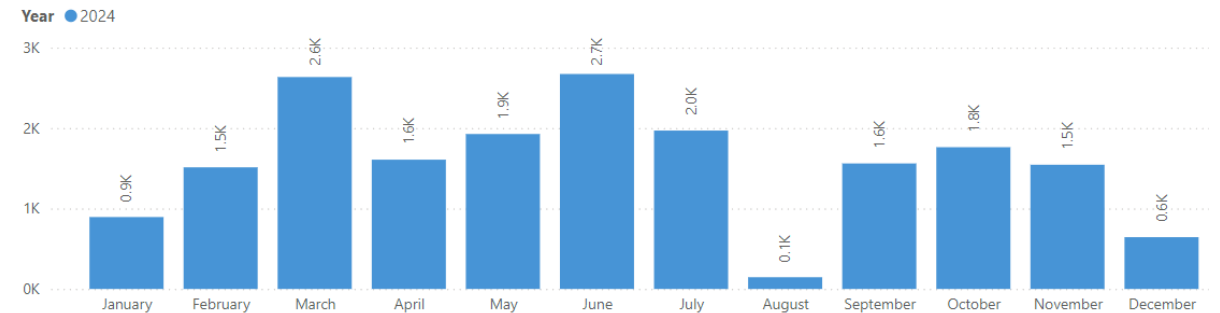
- Purpose built with 6 classrooms
- Offices and meeting room
- Fully accessible including many teaching sites

Almost all our teaching is within walking distance, no in-course transport required.

Field Studies Council Epping Forest Field Centre is a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge holder, recognition of high quality safety and teaching.



The Centre is busy all year round



*Number of learners by month*

# Example funded Project

## Wanstead Park Young Naturalists

Free sessions, open to aspiring young ecologists from the London Boroughs of Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

Aimed at 11–14 year-olds with an interest in ecology, the project enabled young people to

- experience first-hand experience of wildlife surveying.
- gain practical experience and conservation skills
- take active involvement in promoting and protecting nature
- understand local and global conservation issues
- Meet like-minded people
- Improve confidence and well-being through spending time outdoors

## Funded by the City Bridge Foundation





# Key Risks

## for Epping Forest Field Centre \*

- Price with challenging school budgets and increasing costs
- Changing priorities for external funding
- Cost of coach travel and limited public transport
- Competition e.g. new opportunities for schools
- Curriculum and Assessment Review 2025
- Technological advancements e.g. Virtual Fieldwork
- Customer expectation and satisfaction
- Recruitment, staff turnover and quality delivery
- Environmental impact on Forest

\* *In no specific order*





# Future

## Future Aspirations

Continue to deliver opportunities to learn in Epping Forest, that deliver wide ranging benefit including nature connection and understanding.

- School Trips
- Natural History Experiences and Courses for Adults
- Holiday activities
- Community engagement activities

Improving access to opportunities

Funding to support delivery and widen engagement

- To increase local engagement
- To ensure diverse and representative participation.

## Support – a helping hand

Raising awareness of the Centre and education offer  
Joint applications or support for funding applications

Opportunities to work together to deliver courses and events in Epping Forest including locations closer to public transport

Continue to support with building maintenance including replacing the Timber classroom

