

**FSC Epping Forest: report on 2017 to date**

## 2017 Overview

2017 has been a successful year to date, with the year end expected to be over 23,000 visitor days, delivered in and around Epping Forest. This increase is partly due to curriculum change, but also an increase in attendance at local community events.

We have worked closely with the City of London to maintain the buildings and grounds, and where possible update and improve the facilities, with a focus on security and carbon reduction.

The teaching team have responded well to curriculum change, developing and trialling new courses and continue to deliver high quality courses successfully, meeting or exceeding the expectations of 98.9% of customers. Seven of the staff team of 17 started this year, requiring training and staff development time.

## Work with the widest range of learners

### Formal Education (schools), Community Engagement and Play.

We have had a very successful year, with an expected year end figure of approximately 23,000 visitor days. These visitors have attended courses including those for schools, natural history and arts for adult learners, and activities for families in school holidays.

The increase in student numbers can partly be explained by the increase in Key Stage 4 (GCSE business) of approx. 2,300 visitor days, where a fieldwork experience is now a compulsory part of the course. This has partly offset the expected reduction in Alevel customers this year.

### Subsidised learners

FSC staff have increased their involvement in community events, accounting for approx. 2,000 additional visitors. Activities at the events, are aimed at engaging members of the public with the Forest, a key part of the vision for FSC and City of London. There is little or no income associated with them.

These events are aimed at local communities, they help develop good working relationships with other organisations and are an opportunity to promote the Forest and the work we do. This year to date staff have organised, delivered or attended:

- Queens Commonwealth Canopy (March) with City of London.
- Geographical Association conference (April).
- Loughton Forest Family Fun Day, funded by Loughton Town Council through the Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre (May).
- Discover Epping Forest Open Day with the Friends of Epping Forest and High Beach Church (July).
- Essex Natural History Show (August).
- Love Loughton Festival with St Marys Church, Loughton (September).
- Essex Learning Outside the Classroom providers conference (September).
- Countryside Live in Lea Valley (September).
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QCC visit March 2017



FSC Epping Forest is also delivering on the Green Entrepreneurs Europe (GEE) project with FSC Northern Ireland, and other European Partners which received support from the European Union Erasmus+ programme. GEE aims to interest and inspire pupils and lead to changes in thinking, resulting in transformative rather than additive learning. Nature, where there is no waste, is used as the model for re-thinking how business works.

In 2018, we look forward to working with the FSC Biodiversity team, and partners across London to deliver the HLF funded FSC BioLinks project. The project will bring together a network of volunteers with skills in biological recording and identification, and provide training opportunities for them. This in turn will increase the quality of invertebrate species data being submitted to our national biodiversity datasets and develop individuals as more highly skilled biodiversity volunteers.

### **Developing Networks**

Being part of FSC London Region has allowed us to work more closely together in 2017. We now have a shared administration system, which has meant when staff are on holiday, we have admin support for customers. Teaching staff are able to better support each other across the region, in sharing resources and course developments, and where needed, we are also able to share staff with other locations at times of need, and borrow staff if we need additional support.

### **High Quality resources**

FSC publications are used widely in teaching. This year, with their support, we developed an Epping Forest specific postcard publication that we can use with groups and at events. This has received very positive feedback from all who have seen and used it.

## **Provide learning of the highest quality**

### **Exceeding Expectations**

To date we are meeting or exceeding expectations of 98.9% of our customers. We will continue to monitor customer feedback and adjust our delivery as and when required.

### **FSC Epping Forest External Badging / Overcoming Barriers to first hand experiences**

The Learning Outside the Quality Badge assessment will take place in November, and we continue to ensure we meet the requirements of the award. We are applying for the Primary Geography Quality Mark, Secondary Geography Quality Mark and Centre of Excellence from the Geographical Association and expect to achieve these by the end of the year. We continue to work towards the Quality Badge + Assessment with the regional education team.

### **FSC Awards and External Badging**

FSC Epping Forest continues to support FSC in applying for external recognition. We will be applying for Investors in People in the Autumn, and staff will support the work done centrally to achieve this badge. We continue to monitor our work and feed data into systems as evidence for the Carbon Trust Award.

### **Partnerships and Networks**

We have worked together with City of London staff to better understand their needs, and identify how FSC can support their targets. Courses are aimed at all ages and abilities, and target the local community and further afield. Across all our courses all visitors learn in and about Epping Forest, and we have improved our welcome talk to better highlight the location of the Centre within the Forest. We hope by doing this, that we are more able to influence local people who can become advocates for the future of the Forest, influence local understanding and protect it into the future.

In March, we worked closely with the City of London team to deliver the Queens Commonwealth Canopy day, and Prince Harry visit, which was a great success.

We have worked with other partners (detailed above) to deliver a range of other subsidised learner experiences.

## Ensure the Charity's activities are sustainable.

### Staff

We have seen a big change in the staff team, with seven new staff this year: 5 tutors and 2 education support staff. This has required staff training and development, and it is a credit to the team they have achieved the number of visitor days delivered, whilst maintaining the quality of delivery.

### Working with Volunteers

We continue to be supported by a team of volunteers, undertaking tasks such as administration support, teaching support, grounds maintenance and event support.

### Improving our Environmental performance (including buildings and grounds)

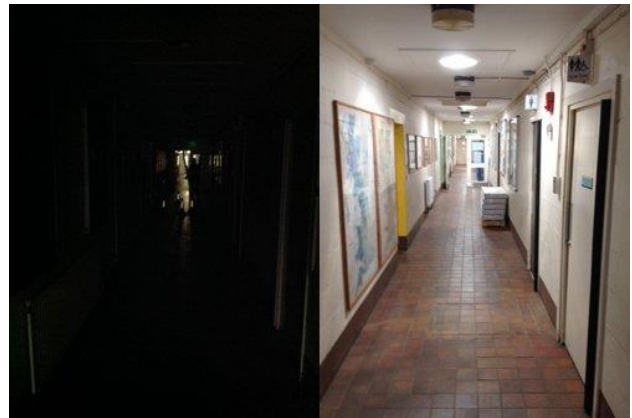
We have worked closely with the City to maintain the buildings and where possible improve them with a focus on security and carbon reduction. This year projects have included:

- Replaced all the radiators and pipework, funded by City of London.
- Installed 14 Solatubes, funded by FSC Green fund.
- Installed site wide CCTV, funded by FSC maintenance fund.
- New FSC and City of London signage, funded by FSC Epping Forest.
- Leased line, for improved teaching and productivity, funded by FSC maintenance fund.
- Finger Guards in all appropriate doorways, funded by FSC Epping Forest.
- Repaired pathways, cleared old fencing and removed fallen trees, FSC Epping Forest.

New signage in the car park & in classrooms



Solatube installation, showing before and after.



We will continue to work with the City of London team, to develop the buildings and grounds into a welcoming learning space.

### Financial Report

See attached report.

Helen Robertson, FSC Epping Forest

