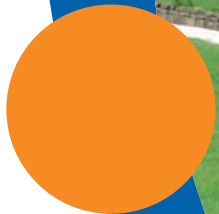




Environmental Education Project

2009/10 Report



Environmental Education Project



Annual Report 2009-10



Introduction

2009-10 has been a landmark year for the Environmental Education Project! We celebrated 15 years of providing activities for school and the public in the autumn, and by chance the Times Educational Supplement chose the same time to feature our work.

South Derbyshire District Council also chose the autumn to announce additional funding for the project, enabling us to offer longer term contracts to staff and increasing the financial stability and sustainability of our work. Also this year, for the first time, we have been involved in delivering national commissions, in addition to the regional and local work we have been doing with partners for many years.

As in previous years our activities fall into 4 main categories:

- work with schools (which is self funding)
- public activities, events and information
- work with partners on joint projects
- paid commissions

2009-10 saw the first staff changes for 4 years, with Vicky, Sarah and Amanda all moving on to new opportunities towards the end of the year, and Clare on maternity leave.

As the year ends, Clare is back and we are implementing a staff re-structure for 2010 -11. We welcomed Mike, Ellen, Yvonne and Felicity to the casual team, and said goodbye to Kate Turner and Amy during the year. Lesley, Ruth and Dot have really kept things going.

We have had technical problems at Rosliston in the last 12 months, including 2 separate floods (classroom and office) and a lot of IT equipment and internet problems. The cost in lost work time has been at least 25 full days. It would have been much greater without the support of colleagues at SDDC and Aurora.

Partnership details

The Environmental Education Project is part of South Derbyshire District Council, funded by SDDC and by the National Forest Company and Rolls-Royce plc.

A steering group is responsible for overseeing project objectives and annual work programmes, and is run in partnership with the key funding partners, the National Forest Company and Rolls-Royce plc.

We also liaise with other local providers of environmental education, local environmental groups, and the public and local schools. This helps us to plan and deliver activities and opportunities in line with local needs and customer requirements, and to share ideas and resources whenever possible.

Our aim, objectives and development plan are the result of consultation and work with partners. They also reflect the corporate objectives of the 3 main EEP funding partners, and partners on site at Rosliston Forestry Centre.

Each objective has an annual action plan with specific targets. Objectives are listed below but also illustrated in our Development Plan Summary Chart (see page 11).

This report summarises results from the action plans. Full details of our activities and how they deliver the action plans are available on request.

Our aim:

‘To develop knowledge, understanding, respect for and involvement in The National Forest and the environment through enjoyable learning opportunities’

Our Objectives:

1. To lead on the provision of high quality and enjoyable environmental education services for schools in The National Forest and South Derbyshire

2. To provide high quality accessible public events and activities, providing opportunities for people of all ages to develop their environmental knowledge and take action towards a more sustainable environment.

3. To develop networks and partnerships in order to make best use of resources, add value to projects, share knowledge and skills and disseminate best practice

4. To manage performance, evaluate all activities and incorporate results in further work. To market and promote the service and keep up to date with local and national developments in Environmental education. Disseminate best practice.

5. To secure existing service and staffing levels through core funding and charges, and finance new project work through sponsorship and grants.



Love Your Park Project

Key achievements in 2009-10:

- Achieving all our targets for school visits, events, tree planting and other activities from our own and our partners' action plans
- Close links with various national environmental initiatives, including OPAL (Open Air Laboratories) Project and BBC Breathing Places: <http://www.opalexplornature.org/>
- Gaining a grant from the European Social Fund, for a volunteer placement scheme (Felicity's first project!)
- Working with Rolls-Royce to develop 2 Community Projects with teams of graduate trainees
- Linking with the national 'Breath of Fresh Air' Cultural Olympiad project, through the National Forest Company and SDDC
- Managing a 75% change in the staff team without loss of service to customers
- Developing the poeTree Trail at Rosliston, in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and the Derbyshire Poet Laureate, River Walton, and the National Forest Company
- Developing and delivering the first year of Environmental Forum events and activities, working with Findern Footpaths Group, Dove Valley Community Project, Derbyshire County Council and the Open Space Development Officer at SDDC www.south-derbys.gov.uk/environmentalforum
- High profile publicity including the Time Educational Supplement, follow this link to read it: [Curriculum - Dip into nature - Features - TES Connect](#)
- Other national mentions included: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/feb/12/carbonfootprints-carbon-emissions>. This article leads to another link back to our work on the National Forest Company website
- Developing projects in the gardens, alongside Aurora Country Developments (Rosliston Managers)
- Delivering a professional commission for the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) to review an out of date publication and provide options and recommendations for its redevelopment
- Writing an education pack for the University of the First Age (UFA)
- Dot developed and led 4 summer walks, which were very popular, taking people around the District and learning about the heritage features and rich environment of the villages



Performance: Outputs Summary 2009-10

Outputs per year:	Target	Actual 2007-8	Actual 2008-9	Actual 2009-2010
Total No. Events (including Wildlife Watch – see below)	12 (24)	19	27	29
No. of Wildlife Watch activities for young people	12	13	13	14
No. of organisations worked with	5	10	10	15+
No. of School visits to Rosliston Forestry Centre	75	99*	88*	87*
No. of outreach sessions at Forest sites / in school grounds	6	20	7	8 (plus 5 days of 'Indigo Brave' Litter sessions organised in secondary schools)

Plus 675 hours worked for us by volunteers (no target for this)

Participations:				
No. people at community events:	1000	2119 (+ 40 Astros per month and + 50 bird group per fortnight)	2310 (+ 40 Astros per month and + 50 bird group per fortnight)	2761 (+ 40 Astros per month and + 50 bird group per fortnight)
Pupils at school events:	2500	4682** (Ros 4217, Outreach 435, Sharpe's 30)	4178** (Ros 3766, Outreach 412)	3895** (Ros 3317, Outreach 578)

2007/8 * of which 60 were urban schools, 35 rural schools and 19 were new schools –the rest were repeat visits.

** 535 pupils were from ethnic minority groups

2008/9 * of which 61 were urban schools, 22 rural schools, and 16 were new schools –the rest were repeat visits.

** of which 463 were from BME groups (Black and Ethnic Minority)

2009/10 * of which 50 were urban schools, 39 rural schools, and 28 were new schools –the rest were repeat visits.

** of which 662 were from BME groups (Black and Ethnic Minority)

NB some variation between years is accounted for by schools invited to take part in 'Tree for All' – some years we have a deliberate BME / urban or rural bias

Comments on the school visit numbers during 2009-10:

- Coach prices were considerably higher than in previous years
- More requests from schools to reduce contact time in order to reduce costs
- Class sizes smaller
- More demand for Early Years activities
- We lost some regular bookings due to cost even though *our prices stayed the same*.
- We gained new schools which had previously gone somewhere more expensive
- We did not do any direct advertising to schools in 2009-10

Predictions: Visit numbers will be higher for 2010-11 by estimated 10% on 09-10 as:

- We are already seeing an increase in bookings for April/May
- We now have high quality promotional literature
- We are advertising new sessions to meet trends in demand
- Thanks to SDDC we have been able to guarantee some hours to casual staff
- Fully funded Tree for All bookings are set to increase for 2010-11, thanks to The Woodland Trust and the National Forest Company
- NB -We have lost 1 regular booking (240 children over 4 days for past 6 years) due to the cost of school supply cover. We offered to hold our prices but it did not help enough

NB We are increasing our costs to schools (after market research, cost analysis and discussion with the Steering Group)

Events and event attendance: this increases year on year, and it is partly down to the work of the Rosliston Partnership in making the site an attractive and popular place to visit, and partly down to the previous success of our key events at Rosliston and other sites eg Apple Day which encourages repeat visits and word of mouth recommendations.

Highlights of partnership projects, events and school visits programmes:

Education and schools highlights

Science Week: Schools Outreach Project

Ruth worked with over 200 pupils on 'bees mean buzziness' sessions, meaning there are a lot of fuzzy yellow insects adorning classrooms and homes around the District! Learning about bees links in well to Science Week and also the OPAL project as Bees are one of the target species for project work in the Midlands.

The Country Trust

Over the summer we worked with the Country Trust to support school visits from both rural and city areas. The Trust identify schools that they want to work with, and the schools then choose where they want to visit from a list approved by the Trust, and the Trust pay all the costs for the visit.

Science Colleges

We have started working with King Edward VI School in Lichfield on projects connected to their specialist school status for science. These will include a science trail for secondary schools, to incorporate the Sundial and the camera obscura, and some links between natural sound and science. We are also discussing joint projects with The William Allitt School in Swadlincote, which has just been awarded science status.

New Sessions for 'Early Years' Groups

There is more demand from infant schools and nurseries than ever before. We usually adapt our general sessions to suit any age group, but this year decided to write some specifically for younger children. Sarah's 'Meet the Minibeasts' and 'All About Autumn' sessions include stories, rhymes and role play, and have proved popular with Early Years and infant groups.

Partnership Highlights

Rolls-Royce Community Projects:



BTCV filming the Camera Obscura Team

Camera Obscura

Each year, Rolls-Royce lines up projects for teams of new graduates and modern apprentices in the community. A team started work in January on a Camera Obscura and Cloud Observatory for Rosliston. The project will involve a small building on the picnic area with a special lens / telescope enabling close-up views of the surrounding area and the night sky. The cloud observatory (mirrors) outside, would also fit in well with our education sessions as we could split groups between the 2 activities. Working with staff at SDDC and from partner schools and the Rosliston Astronomy Group, the team have commissioned artist Michael Fairfax to do some initial designs.

Shelter Project

Last year's Community Project team designed a shelter to adjoin the classroom and provide covered lunch space and an additional outdoor teaching area. They were successful in gaining planning permission for the project and lining up volunteers to decorate it. They also worked with Ian Hey at SDDC to submit a funding application.

Cleaner South Derbyshire Campaign

We worked with a team from various sections within Environmental Services at SDDC to support this campaign. Our part involved work with schools on litter, recycling and personal responsibility and communication. We delivered work ourselves in the primary schools, but appointed a company called 'Indigo Brave' to deliver workshops for secondary pupils to explore changes in attitude and behaviour in order to reduce litter through influencing peers and family members.

Poetry project work

We were approached by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) with an idea to combine literacy and poetry workshops with environmental education. Derbyshire's Poet Laureate, River Walton, worked with a local school on site to develop their poetry skills, knowledge and confidence. She then went on to write a poeTree Trail for the site, which was funded jointly by the National Forest Company and DCC

Tree for All, in The National Forest (<http://www.treeforall.org.uk/>)

This is a national scheme run by the Woodland Trust, and contracted to the National Forest Company. Through the scheme we are able to offer free visits to schools both to Rosliston and to a tree planting site. The Forestry Commission and British Trust for Conservation Volunteers run the tree planting part of the day.

At Rosliston and other National Forest Centres, pupils learn about 'The Secret Life of Trees' and see how the trees they have planted will look in 15... and 100 years time. This year we were asked to co-ordinate the project on behalf of NFC, and Amanda and Dot did a great job, with excellent feedback from partners and schools.

South Derbyshire Environmental Forum (www.south-derbys.gov.uk/environmentalforum)

During 2009-10 we worked with partners at SDDC and within various parish councils and community groups to put on a programme of Environmental Forum events, based on consultation. 30-40 people attended each event, and people learned about environmental projects around the District, and how to start their own. In particular, Findern Footpaths and Dove Valley Community Project have taken the lead on Forum planning and delivery.



Partners planning 'Tree for All' at Hartshorne

Events highlights

Wildlife Watch – We continued to improve and strengthen our ‘Wildlife Watch’ programme this year and it has been more popular than ever. The 09-10 holiday activities included a selection of art/ craft based sessions funded by £1000 from Derbyshire County Council’s small arts grant. The most popular activity continues to be ‘pond dipping’.

Fun Science Event – The annual 2 day event in April was extremely popular with an estimated 300 participants each day. It is a partnership event with other science-related groups and businesses taking part and providing interactive activities.



Dot’s Summer Walks – Dot led a series of summer evening walks throughout South Derbyshire to look at the environmental and heritage aspects of the area. Numbers steadily increased as the walks gained momentum with Lullington attracting 12 walkers, Overseal 18, Castle Gresley 25, finishing with 32 walkers for the Swadlincote Open Spaces walk in August. The walks raised money for EEP to buy some new equipment.



Apple Day - This was another well attended and positive event on Swadlincote Market. This year we were joined by Bank House, who sold their chutneys and jams and helped with the other activities. Definitely an idea to expand for next year!

Night World – This is always very popular, but we try and make at least 1 change to the programme each year. This year we invited more exhibitors and reduced the number of formal talks to give people chance to circulate. The event attracted 250 participants. The event is a partnership between EEP and a whole range of wildlife and voluntary groups linked to night life and stars!

Partnership events:

Play Day – the team attended this annual event at Maurice Lea Park, organised by SDDC, and worked directly with 50 participants.

Toyota event – EEP attended an event at Toyota at the request of the SDDC Chief Executive and worked with 125 participants.

Festival of Leisure – several hundred children worked with us on each day, learning more about minibeads. This event was also a good opportunity for our summer ‘Work Experience’ students to see another aspect of our work and they were a great help to us! This is a flagship event for SDDC and we always commit a lot of resources to our activities there.

Site, conservation and volunteering highlights

Working together with site and funding partners enables us to deliver Conservation working days for Rolls-Royce staff. This involves groups of Rolls-Royce employees working on site for a day undertaking a range of conservation tasks, led by one or more of the Rosliston partner staff. In 2009-10 teams worked on the garden, on clearing paths, and renovated the wildlife hide.



Rolls Royce Staff Cleaning a Path

Overall, we benefitted from 675 volunteer hours helping us to deliver activities. This is 150 more than last year, and is a result of the leadership of Lesley, a former Rolls-Royce employee, who led volunteers throughout the summer helping run events. Additional hours have been spent in the garden by young people doing the community service part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

During the year we have extended our partnership with OPAL ‘explore nature’ (web) and delivered joint events, and joint training and also contributed results to the OPAL surveys for Lichen, sycamore spot and earthworms.

Flight Pond

The Forestry Commission have done a lot of work on the Flight Pond this year. FC have electric-fished the pond, and introduced more weed. These measures were designed to help the pond recover from the unknown pollution incident which devastated the wildlife and plant life in the water last year, and which the Environment Agency has investigated. Thanks to FC for all the support. SDDC and FC continue to investigate the longer term options for making the pond less susceptible to problems upstream.

Advertising / Publicity

During the year we worked with a freelance designer, Tamsyn Port to develop new advertising templates for events and school visits. Tamsyn also works with SDDC and the Rosliston partnership, which means she has been able to develop work for all of us that is distinct for each project, but clearly linked.

Carole Warbuton (SDDC Communications Officer) has negotiated a series of articles in the Burton Mail for the Council. On average we have done 2 per month to appear in the Saturday supplement. This was great publicity for us and also given staff experience of writing articles.

Over the course of the year we had a great deal of publicity, and this has been thanks to Carole’s team at SDDC, and also work by Carol Rowntree-Jones at the National Forest Company, plus lots of mentions from other partners – thanks very much to you all!

Resources

The EEP is a partnership led by South Derbyshire District Council (SDDC). Staff are employed directly by SDDC. The project operated with 1 full time member of staff, 3 part-time and a team of casual staff in 2009-10.

The primary resource of the project in terms of knowledge and also income generation is the staff. Staffing is also the greatest cost (see below). With an experienced team, most of the staff costs are for delivery of activities. With a new team a lot of time is spent on training and familiarisation.

This year has seen a changeover of staff, resulting in initial savings, while remaining staff dealt with all the bookings and inducted new colleagues. This saving has been carried forward to 2010-11, with the need to invest more than usual in training.

2010-11 also sees the increased contribution from SDDC, which will cover additional staff training costs and reduce our month-to-month dependence on income to be sure that staff wages are covered. We will still continue to monitor costs carefully though to ensure that school activities are delivered on a full cost-recovery basis.

- Our annual expenditure for 2009-10 was £88k
- £78k is wages and salaries. The remainder is rent, telephones, equipment, printing and publicity
- SDDC provides £33k plus central support costs (this will increase from 1st April 2010)
- Rolls-Royce sponsored EEP with £20k which is part of a 3 year £20k/ yr programme to March 2011
- We bring in around £15k each year through fees, charges, one-off project grants and commissions, in 2009-10 this was £18k
- Since 05-06, NFC has given us a one-off grant of £3k, increasing to £7k in 2008-9 plus specific project grants e.g. for Forest School and the Poe Tree Trail
- Our current funding gap is around £10k p.a. which we cover through additional small grants, it will no longer be a gap from 1st April, thanks to SDDC

We are always interested in talking to new partners, so if there are any businesses which would like to work with us - maybe sponsor an event or piece of equipment - please get in touch!

Other key partners include:

- The Forestry Commission
- Derbyshire County Council (Environmental Services and LEA)
- Derbys Education and Business Partnership / STEMpoint
- Aurora Country Developments (Rosliston Managers)
- Local teachers
- Local voluntary groups and parish councils



Environmental Forum Meeting in Hatton

We are very proud of our working relationship with all our partners. We aim to reflect their values and high standards of quality in the work that we do. The commitments and aspirations common to all our partners make for a strong partnership.

Future Plans

We have aligned our annual action plans to the Development Plan, combined with information from customer evaluation and suggestions from partners.

We delivered all the planned work from 2008-9 Annual Report EXCEPT registering for the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Mark. We self-assessed against the 'best practice' guidelines, and delivered all the requirements, but did not apply due to the cost and lack of recognition of the Quality Mark by schools (see below).

Plans for 2010-11 include:

- Progressing funding and then building the outdoor shelter (Rolls-Royce Community Project 2009)
- Developing the 2010 Rolls-Royce Community Project: a Camera Obscura and Cloud Observatory, alongside the team and other partners
- Monitor opportunities to engage with the Learning Outside the Classroom Council (LOtC)
- Evaluate and implement outcomes of Kate's MA research into outdoor learning and local training requirements
- Develop and deliver the 'Get Employed in the Forest' pilot programme (European Social Fund) and assess the outcomes
- Expanding our outreach project work, in partnership with campaigns at SDDC, to include new work in South Derbyshire's parks and schools.
- Further develop work with the Environmental Forum and with external environmental organisations such as Breathing Places and OPAL (Open Air Laboratories). Identify opportunities to work with environmental networks in Derbyshire, Staffs and Leicestershire
- Develop Forest School taster days and the Woodland Experience programmes for all age groups

Finally...

Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year and in particular to SDDC for making such a difference to the financial stability of the Project.

We have a range of exciting joint projects planned for 2010-11 and I look forward to working with you all as the year progresses.

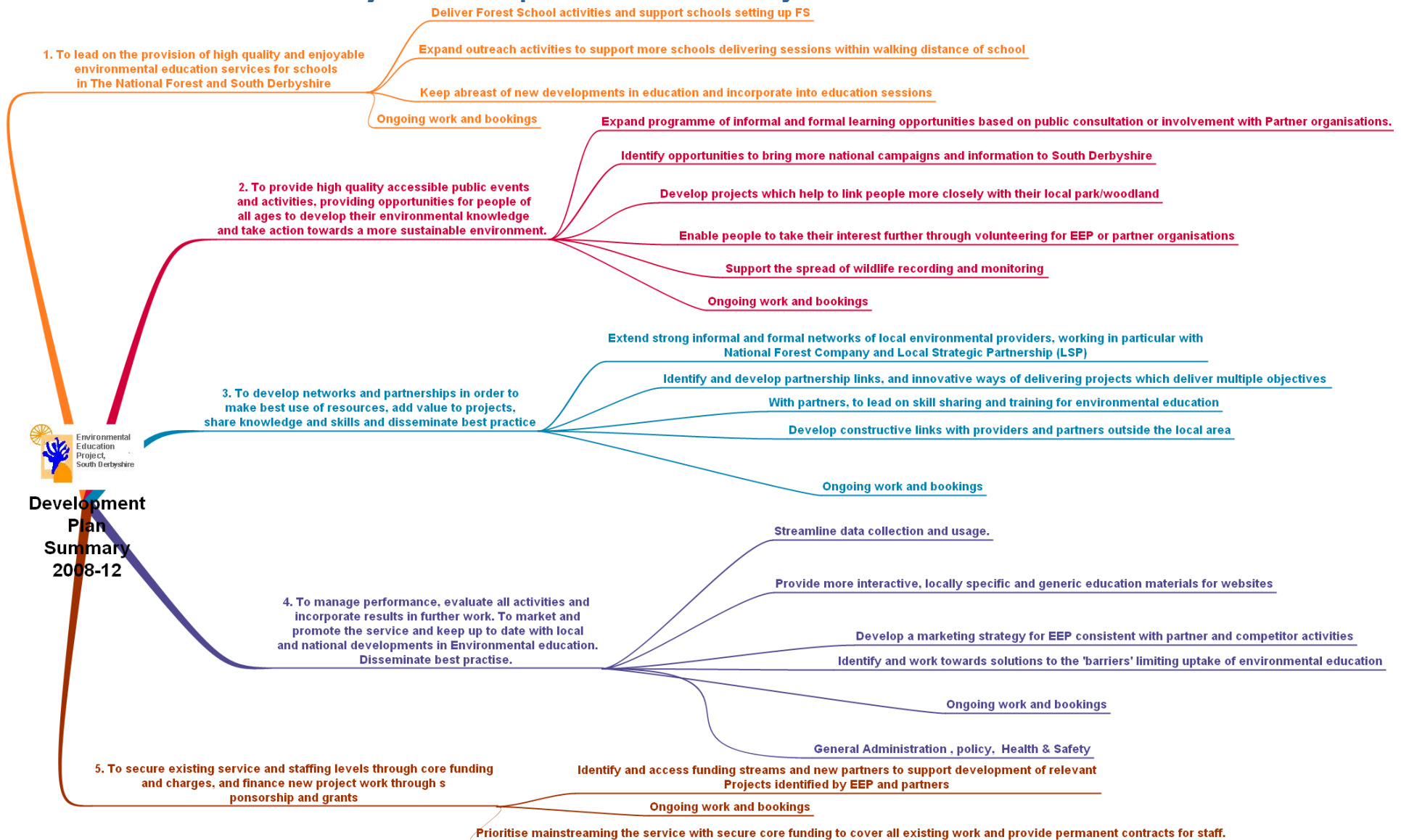
More information on any part of this report, and details of our events and activities for 2009-10 and plans for 2011 are available by contacting the Environmental Education Project on 01283 535039 or emailing rosliston@south-derbys.gov.uk

Kate Allies,
Environmental Development Manager,
South Derbyshire District Council

On behalf of the Environmental Education Project Team

June 2010

Environmental Education Project: Development Plan Summary Chart 2008-12



Project Staff 2009-10



Kate Allies – Project Manager



Vicky Smyth
Education Development

Until December 2009



Amanda Bell
Team Assistant

Until year end (09/10)



Sarah Keogh
Environmental Education
Assistant

Until July 2009

From the start of 2010-2011 Yvonne Waring, Ruth Frudd and Felicity Towns will be taking on key project roles alongside Kate Allies.



Lesley



Amy



Alisa



Clare



Dot



Ellen



Felicity
(Flick)



Mike



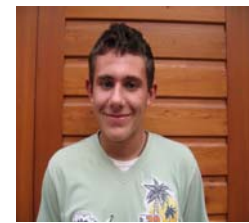
Richard



Rob



Ruth



Will

Feedback from Partners:

“Again the Environmental Education Project has come up with some important firsts during the last year. Kate has done a fabulous job setting up Environmental Forums throughout the District and the work that was done for the Forest Education Initiative demonstrates that the reputation and acclaim of the unit has been acknowledged nationally as well as the project bringing in some additional, much needed, income.

The important work with schools continues despite their reduction in budgets especially when it comes to transport. New ways of working, taking the education to the schools rather than bussing people into the centre have helped to maintain the initiatives. The team have also shown that (despite some key personnel moving on to other things during the year) they can maintained their impetus, enthusiasm and desire for innovation and diversity.

As ever, the input from our partners has been an essential element of the project. We thank them for their considerable interest and their continued funding and we trust that this partnership can continue through difficult times”

John Grant, Councillor,
South Derbyshire District Council

"Rolls-Royce recognises the vital importance of enthusing young people about Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths and we support a range of education outreach activities in those subjects. The Environmental Education Project run at Rosliston Forestry Centre and supported by Rolls-Royce is a great example of a project that sparks children's interest, enthusiasm and knowledge about the environment and the world around them. We also encourage and support our trainees and employees to get involved with community projects like Rosliston as development opportunities"

Nicola Swaney
Education Manager
Rolls-Royce plc

“This report shows how much 'strength in depth' there is in the Environmental Education Project, that is another way of saying that a small team, which has seen big personnel changes this year and reductions in budgets available in schools for visits, has nevertheless managed to meet its targets and also develop new projects.

As key partners to the National Forest Company, the project has set a standard for environmental education in The National Forest over the last fifteen years and has also, this year, made the most of opportunities with other partners and funders. We are confident that the new team now in place will enjoy every success in the year to come.

Meanwhile Rosliston Forestry Centre itself goes from strength to strength and the mutual benefit between the Centre and EEP is evident”

Sophie Churchill
Chief Executive
The National Forest Company

“As the managing company for both the Forestry Centre and the Get Active in The Forest Project it has once again been our privilege to work alongside the Environmental Education Project. The team consistently offer a high quality service to all their customers and are an integral part of the overall success of the Centre including the Green Flag Award”

Debbie Chesterman,
Manager, Aurora Country Developments Ltd and Rosliston Forestry Centre

“The Forestry Commission, as one of the partners at Rosliston Forestry Centre, and the major landowner are very happy to be associated with SDDC’s Environmental Education Service. They play a major role in enthusing local school children about science and natural history, encouraging them to care for their environment. The staff within the Education Service are very enthusiastic, professional and a pleasure to work with. Their efforts with the Tree For All project played a major part in ensuring its continued success, and their on-going liaison with FC staff helps us provide the necessary high quality resources they need to complete their education programmes at Rosliston”

Ian Hickman,
Forest Management Director, Forestry Commission



Dawn Chorus Walk