

Seeds of Change Outdoor Learning Survey



RECONNECTING RICHMOND'S RESIDENTS WITH NATURE **Summary of Consultation Results**

1.0 Seeds of change consultation

In June 2015 the London Borough of Richmond undertook two separate parallel consultations - a consultation with organisations and another with schools. The consultation sought to understand:

1. the general picture of the current provision of outdoor learning in the borough,
2. the geographical distribution of outdoor learning in the borough
3. how accessible current provision is to residents, especially in areas of uplift,
4. whether there is any specialised provision to specific client groups e.g. families, schools, older people, those with disabilities etc

Participants in outdoor learning, learn through what they do, what they encounter and what they discover in an outdoor setting. For the purposes of this consultation outdoor learning was defined as a broad term that includes providing access to nature, environmental awareness and education, recreational activities with an educational element, personal and social development through engagement with the outdoors, curriculum learning for schools or learning specific skills or information.

There were 2 separate consultations – one designed for schools and another for organisations. In total there were 34 separate responses. The organisations consultation had 31 responses (including 3 schools) and 3 schools responded to the questionnaire aimed at schools. The work of larger organisations that provide educational programmes on their own sites was not reflected in this consultation as they did not respond for example Strawberry Hill House, London Wildlife Trust, Kew Gardens, Barnes Wetland Centre, Ham House, and Bushy Park did not respond. There was a low response rate from schools, 6 organisations in total with three of the schools responding to the consultation for organisations rather than the one for schools. Responses from schools have therefore been considered excluded from the organisations together consultation and considered together.

2.0 Current Provision of Outdoor Learning in London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

2.1 Model of outdoor learning

Most (90%) of the organisations who responded said that they did provide outdoor learning. Three organisations (9.7%) said that they did not. Five of the 6 schools who responded provide outdoor learning programmes currently.

The largest percentage of activities offered related to access to nature type activities (71%). Environmental awareness and education was the next most popular type of activity (61.2%). Health and wellbeing (58%), learning specific skills or information (48.3%) and personal and social development through engagement with the outdoors (48.3%) were all well represented. There were three additional types of activity identified - land based qualifications, promotion of groups who provide this service and support to aid their development, child led play. For schools, the most



popular activities were access to nature, growing or gardening and forest school activities. One school also offered continuing professional development for teachers based on their practice.

2.2 Type of organisation

69% of organisations who responded were voluntary sector or not for profit organisations. There was one statutory organisation and 6 schools. A large number of organisations (53.6%) who responded work with children. The three organisations (9.6%) were “for profit” companies who said that they were early years or forest school organisations. There was also a private nursery and a childminder.

3.0 **Geographical coverage of outdoor learning in the borough**

When asked where the outdoor learning was held 9.6% organisations did not name an open space and 10.7% said that they worked on multiple sites but did not name them. This makes the analysis of geographical spread of outdoor learning difficult, however:

- LBRuT postcodes represented (including schools) were as follows: TW1 (8 organisations), TW2 (3 organisations and 2 schools) TW9 (1 organisation), TW10 (4 organisations), TW11 (1 organisation and 1 school), TW12 (2 organisations), SW13 (1 organisation), SW14 (4 organisations). The remaining organisations were registered outside the borough.
- There were 3 LBRuT postcodes not covered TW3 (Whitton North), TW4 (Whitton West), TW13 (which includes part of Heathfield ward).
- These areas do not have “Friends of” parks groups who might take on the role of leading outdoor learning.
- 2 organisations hold their outdoor learning on board boats on the River Thames.
- 5 of the 6 schools who took part in the survey said that they used other open spaces in addition to their school grounds. The sixth school had plans to do so in the near future.
- A total of 6 organisations (10.7%) mentioned Crane Park.

4.0 **Accessibility**



This consultation shows that there is some provision across most of the borough. There seems to be a concentration of activity in the Twickenham area where 41.8% of organisations have an office registered in TW1 and TW2. There is a small concentration in TW10 (14.3%) and SW14 (12.9%). The rest of the borough is thinly represented in the consultation.

4.1 Uplift areas and areas of deprivation and disadvantage

A local economic assessment¹ identified 5 areas of relative deprivation within the borough in communities based in Castlenau, Mortlake, Heathfield, Ham and Hampton Nursery Lands. There was also an area of disadvantage identified in Richmond. In 2011 LBRuT developed an “Uplift” Strategy that is designed to deliver a framework for the regeneration of five areas of the borough through a combination of Council and third party investment. These 5 areas are Hampton North, Mortlake, Whitton, Ham, and and Barnes.² From the replies the replies to the consultation it is apparent that there is some work in the postcode areas of the communities identified in this reports. In Heathfield (TW2) 6 organisations said that they deliver outdoor learning in Crane Park. Of the uplift areas no organisations are working in Hampton North (although there are 2 organisations based in Hampton) or Whitton, 4 organisations are working in SW14 area (Mortlake), 4 in TW10 (Ham), and 1 in SW13 (Barnes).

4.2 Charges to participants

Most organisations (58.06%) who responded did not charge for their activities, and where charges were made they ranged from £1-£5 (10.3%) to more than £21 (3.4%). Six organisations offered concessions, while 2 did not. Charges for outdoor learning programmes may have an impact on the access of residents living in uplift areas who may not be able to afford them. This is



¹Roger Tym and Partners (2011) Local Economic assessment

http://www.richmond.gov.uk/local_economic_assessment_rut_nov_2010.pdf

²<http://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/documents/s24541/Item14ENVFEB2011CabinetUpliftReport.pdf>

however an assumption and was not tested in this consultation. The consultation does not give details of who benefits from the concessions.

5.0 Who benefits?

In all 46.5% of organisations who responded were set up for the benefit of children, young people or families, while 18% were set up for the benefit of the general public, or Richmond residents. Other groups were set up for the benefit of specific groups including schools, friends groups, community groups, people with special needs or those who are disabled. Two organisations were set up to benefit the environment. Most of the schools (66%) who responded said that they worked with families, in addition to working with the pupils.

5.1 Number of participants and target groups

The number of participants involved in the sessions ranged from less than 5 participants (1 organisation) to more than 20 participants (9 organisations), 8 organisations said 5-10 and 7 11-20. Several organisations commented that the numbers involved depended on the project.

Most respondents (77.4%) said that their outdoor learning was targeted at a specific group. Children and families were the most popular group. 29% of schools said that were their target groups included local residents (32.2%) and adults (25.8%). Other groups were not so well targeted including: older people (16.1%), people with special needs (22.6%), the unemployed (9.6%) and people with low incomes (12.9%), Family Centres (9.6%), people with complex disabilities (9.6%). Additional target groups were identified as: cyclists, carers, disadvantaged children and adults

6.0 Future plans and barriers to development

More than half the organisations (58%) taking part said that they wanted to expand their outdoor learning provision and identified other opportunities for outdoor learning. Several organisations identified funding as a barrier to expanding their provision. One organisation identified a future cut in funding which would have a negative impact of what they are able to offer and another organisation said that they would expand only if partners were available. Other barriers identified were gaining permission from the council to hold outdoor learning sessions in parks and open spaces and the cost of insurance.

Organisations that do not currently have an outdoor learning programme were also asked to identify their barriers to outdoor learning. The answers given were: no experience of providing outdoor learning projects, insufficient funding or support, local open spaces are not suitable for this type of project, one organisation listed other priorities which meant that outdoor learning programmes were unlikely.

7.0 Conclusions



The consultation has shown that there is some outdoor learning taking place in Richmond's parks and open spaces. It is difficult to gauge whether the relatively low response rate was the result of limited outdoor learning programmes in the borough or limited engagement with the consultation process. There were some high profile organisations who did not respond to the consultation including for example Strawberry Hill House, London Wildlife Trust, Kew Gardens, Barnes Wetland Centre, and Ham House all provide educational programmes on their sites. This is not reflected in the results of the consultation. (Note the FSC who work in Bushy Park did not respond but the Holly Lodge Centre in Richmond Park did.)

The outdoor learning that was reported in the consultation is targeted mainly at younger children and families, but other groups are catered for. Schools make some use of their local parks. There is little outdoor learning offered to older people, people with special needs, the unemployed, and people with low incomes and people with complex disabilities.

Most postcode areas of the borough are covered by some provision of outdoor learning, but the consultation identified little or no activity in some areas of the borough including uplift areas. Of the

uplift areas no organisations are working in Hampton North or Whitton, 4 organisations are working in SW14 area (Mortlake), 4 in TW10 (Ham), and 1 in SW13 (Barnes).

Most organisations who currently deliver outdoor learning would like to expand their provision. Barriers to developing further programmes have been identified as funding, lack of support or permission from the council, and the need for insurance.

8.0 Recommendations following the consultation and next steps

- To identify additional providers of outdoor learning in the borough who did not respond to the consultation.
- To develop a programme of targeted outdoor learning projects that promotes the use of public open space.
- To develop outdoor learning resources available for residents and schools to use in parks and open spaces
- To develop community engagement programmes targeted to specific groups including those groups identified not well served currently: older people, people with special needs, the unemployed and people with low incomes, and people with complex disabilities
- To encourage curriculum learning to schools based in parks and open spaces and work to better understand what the barriers to this are.
- To work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders in order to promote the concept of outdoor learning e.g. friends groups, amenity groups and client based groups.
- To promote environmental awareness in local parks and outdoor spaces through outdoor learning.

8.1 Next steps

- To develop tools that will allow residents to identify outdoor learning currently provided in the borough. This could be a website or gazetteer that is regularly updated.
- To promote the current services available together with a message of the benefits. This could be through press releases to residents and more targeted messages to client groups that have been identified as a priority.
- To develop a steering group of experienced practitioners, teachers, academics and parks staff that can drive and take on the programme in the long term.
- To model outdoor learning provision in open spaces through small pilot projects in uplift areas, to selected community groups e.g. carers, or older people and to selected schools.
- To develop links with other stakeholders who work with target groups such as older people in order to promote any existing provision and to understand how programmes of outdoor learning in parks and open spaces can be developed to suit the needs of their client group.
- To develop links with schools in order to promote any existing provision, but also to understand how programmes of outdoor learning in parks and open spaces can be developed to suit their needs. Only few schools and no colleges engaged with this consultation process and anecdotal evidence suggests that they are difficult to engage with when developing outdoor learning programmes. In order to be successful any programme of outdoor learning needs to find a mechanism for engaging with schools and teachers.



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Appendix A Providers of Outdoor Learning in Richmond – Public contact details

Providers of Outdoor Learning in Richmond – Public contact details

The following organisations agreed that their contact details could be made available:

Name of organisation	Website	Contact name	Telephone	Email	Comments
2nd Whitton Rainbow Guide Unit	www.girlguiding.org.uk				
Brilliant Play Solutions CiC	www.brilliantplay.co.uk	Claire Chapman		Info@brilliantplay.co.uk	
East Sheen Primary School	www.eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk		0208 876 7484		
Environment Trust	www.environmenttrust.co.uk	Stephen James	020 8891 5455	office@environmenttrust.co.uk	Our events are advertised on www.environmenttrust.co.uk/whats
FORCE	www.force.org.uk			info@force.org.uk	
Friends of Barnes Common	www.barnescommon.org.uk	Sharon Morgan	7855548404	info@barnescommon.org.uk	Like us on Facebook!
Friends of Bushy and Home Parks	www.fbhp.org.uk				
Friends of Carlisle Park	http://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofcarlislepark/			focpark@gmail.com	
Green Corridor	www.greencorridor.org.uk	Julie Docking	01403 713567	julie@greencorridor.org.uk	
Ham United Group	www.hamunitedgroup.org.uk	Penny Frost	020 8940 2941	frostp@blueyonder.co.uk	
Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC	www.e-voice.org.uk/lgoal/		020 8401 6836	Outdoor.learning@outlook.com	Environment Clubs for Schools and training packages for teachers
Mandarin Ducklings Bilingual Montessori Home	www.mandarinducklings.co.uk	Liya Rickards	2084083166	info@mandarinducklings.co.uk	

Setting					
Nature Links CIC	www.naturelinks.co.uk	Heidi Magill		heidi@naturelinks.co.uk	
River Thames Boat Project	www.thamesboatproject.org	Pippa	0208 940 3509	info@thamesboatproject.org	We offer educational, therapeutic and recreational cruises and activities on the River Thames.
South West London Environment Network	www.swlen.org.uk	Colin Cooper	020 88920 590	hello@swlen.org.uk	
Thames Explorer Trust	www.Thames-Explorer.org.uk	Lorraine Conterio or Simon Clarke	2087420057	info@thames-explorer.org.uk	Summer playscheme - http://www.thames-explorer.org.uk/families/summer-playscheme Foreshore walks - http://www.thames-explorer.org.uk/foreshore-walks/
The Conservation Volunteers	http://www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond	Andy Flegg	07764 655 667	a.flegg@tcv.org.uk	
The Holly Lodge Centre in Richmond Park	www.thehollylodgecentre.org.uk	Anna King	0208 940 8730	aking@thehollylodgecentre.org.uk	Official provider for outdoor learning in Richmond Park on behalf of the Royal Parks
Wild Education	www.wildededucation.co.uk	Ellie Wrigglesworth		ellie@wildededucation.co.uk	
YMCA London South West	www.ymcalsw.org	myke catterall	020 8339 4626	mykecatterall@ymcalsw.org	

Providers of Outdoor Learning in Richmond – Public contact details

The following organisations also provide outdoor learning but did not take part in the consultation

Name of organisation	Website	Contact name	Telephone	Email	Comments
Bushy Park	Education and Learning in Bushy Park is managed by the Field Studies Centre for including course outlines and booking information see http://www.field-studies-council.org/centres/london/outdoor-classroom/royal-parks.aspx		020 3130 0469	enquiries.ldn@field-studies-council.org	
Ham House	Family visits http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house/things-to-see-and-do/for-families/ School visits - http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house/learning/				
Kew Royal Botanic Gardens	Family visits - http://www.kew.org/visit-kew-gardens/explore/kids-kew School Visits - http://www.kew.org/visit-kew-gardens/schools				Also horticultural courses http://www.kew.org/learn
London Wildlife Trust at Crane Park Island	http://www.wildlondon.org.uk/reserves/crane-park-island	Alex Robb	020 87552339 07702 669 888	arobb@wildlondon.org.uk	
Strawberry Hill House	www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk	Sally Stratton	020 8744 124	learning@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk	Also information on Facebook and twitter via the website
Wild fowl and Wetlands Trust, Barnes	Family visits - http://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/london/experience/for-the-family/ School Visits - http://www.wwt.org.uk/learn/learn-at-london/				