

Forest School SNPT



ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023



Charity Name: Forest School Swansea Neath & Port Talbot (FSSNPT)

Charity Number: 1087964

Address: Bishop's Wood Countryside Centre, Caswell, Swansea, SA3 3BS

AGM Trustee Report 2022 - 2023



CHAIR'S STATEMENT



In these unprecedented times we have been very aware that every human connection with nature is paramount to our health and wellbeing. We are still recovering from the years of the pandemic and more recently surged straight into a cost of living crisis. Our work has enabled people to reconnect with nature, children and their families to get together to enjoy being outside, to meet new friends and to get muddy once again! Forest School SNPT remains committed to rebuilding this connection through our project work, education programme and training opportunities.

Our professional staff and experienced volunteers have continued to demonstrate great resilience and adaptability, allowing us to be able to offer more than ever, especially in these uncertain times. This has been another challenging year, with many changes taking place, and one in which the trustees and staff held the reins whilst recruiting a new Manager for the organisation. We'd like to extend our thanks to Llys Nini for providing us with our permanent site. We are very grateful to our funders, who continue to support us and look towards the future with optimism.

Di Clark & Tim Orrell

Co Chair of Trustees

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Trustee Selection Method

We have a clear recruitment and selection process for appointing new trustees into their roles. Role Descriptions are available for all positions within the Board. New trustees are appointed by existing trustees and are approved at the AGM, by majority vote.. Should the recruitment process fall out of line with the AGM then an EGM will be called to ratify and agree the new trustees in order for them to be welcomed onto the Board.

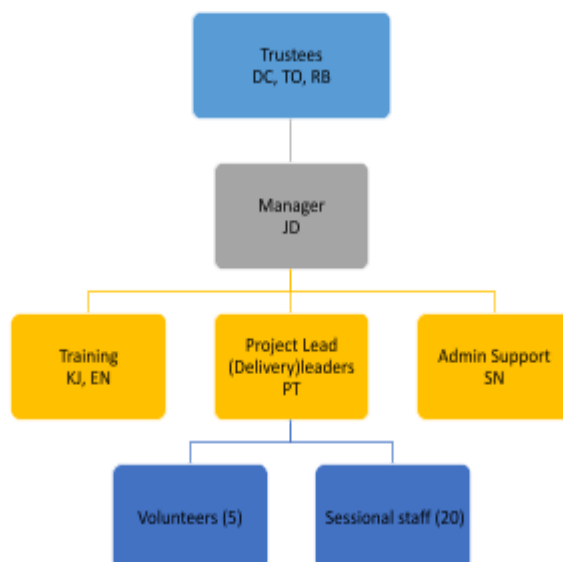
Governance

The Governing document is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is fit for purpose.

All policies and procedures are reviewed on an annual basis and are ratified by the Board. The FSSNPT Manager is line managed by one of the Co-Chairs, working closely with the Treasurer, staff members and all Board members to ensure there is a clear decision-making process.

We hold bi-monthly meetings of the Board where Strategic Direction of the organisation is reviewed.

Organisational Structure



FSSNPT employs a part-time FS Manager who has delegated responsibility for the day to day running of the organisation. The FS Manager is supported by 3 other part-time employees as detailed above. There are a further 20 FS Leaders and Assistants who work with us on a sessional basis. We also have 5 volunteers which we will need to look at a recruitment drive for the future.

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FSSNPT: Strategy

Charity Objects

To provide facilities for education and recreation outdoors with the aim of improving the lives of our communities. To implement traditional and effective FS techniques, outdoor learning and play across the Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot areas.

Aims

FSSNPT provides opportunities for all ages and abilities to grow in confidence, self-esteem, resilience and independence in woodland settings. All participants are supported with their individual growth and encouraged to explore the environment and connect.

FSSNPT implements 6 key principles in line with the FS community standards:

1. We facilitate a long-term process through regular interaction
2. We provide sessions in natural wooded environments
3. We promote and encourage holistic development
4. We offer learners the opportunity to take supported risks
5. All of our delivery team members are qualified FS practitioners (L3/L2)
6. We use a range of learner-centered processes

Our strategic plan for 22-25 is in development with strong aims, objectives and organisational values.

Quality Assurance

With a high staff: to participant ratio we enable individual learning needs and styles, facilitated by our qualified and experienced Leaders, Assistants and Volunteers.

All sites and activities are risk assessed. Sites range from wooded areas across Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot in addition to local beaches for Coastal School services. Activities are adaptable and broad including (but not limited to):

- Tool use (whittling, sawing, pruning)
- Identification of animals and plants
- Fire use (lighting, safety, maintenance, environmental responsibility and awareness etc)
- Foraging
- Cooking
- Shelter and den building
- Mud play, art and imaginative mud kitchen
- Engineering and problem solving
- Scavenger hunting
- Bushcraft skills
- Swings, climbing and physical exploration
- Nature art and crafts (clay, natural paints, print making etc)
- Woodland Conservation and environmental education

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FSSNPT is a training provider, offering a training programme ranging from AGORED accredited Level 1, 2 and 3 courses to CPD, taster sessions and team building. Our training covers topics such as FS leading, assisting, outdoor curriculum coordination, outdoor learning and play, first aid, introduction to the FS ethos and wellbeing in nature.

Activities

Our provision is predominately broken down into the following:

1. **Projects** - either delivered directly to or on behalf of the organiser e.g. local school, community group. These sessions are facilitated either on a site of the organisers (risk assessment dependent) or one of the sites FS utilises. As a FS, we encourage regular and consistent access to our services however we do also offer one-off opportunities for activities, e.g. school trips or taster sessions. Grant funding enables FSSNPT to run a series of funded or subsidised opportunities. We strive to create partnerships with local community groups to provide such opportunities to children, youths, families or adults at risk.
2. **Open sessions** – regular FS sessions for the community to participate in. These are paid for by individuals.
3. **Training** – as a certified AGORED Cymru training provider we provide accredited and non-accredited courses throughout the year enabling others to create, deliver and support other FS settings.

Achievement and Performance

Following the last AGM no further trustees have been appointed, however our previous chair resigned. It was agreed by the Board for Diana Clark and Tim Orrell to Co-Chair until formally appointed at the forthcoming AGM. Gwen Bezodis, as agreed by the Board, has taken on secretarial responsibilities agreed at 2022 AGM.

After a period of furlough, staff returned to their contracted work hours and pace of delivery and training courses have been restored. The previous FS Project Manager resigned from post and a new Manager was appointed formally in May 2022 having supported the oversight of the Charity in a freelance capacity between February 2022 and May 2022.

We hosted a number of education providers and groups across our various sites, one particular school booked us weekly for the entirety returned for the 22-23 year..

FSSNPT: Financial Review

Reserves Policy

The aim of the organisation is to maintain reserves to enable it to continue and expand the services currently provided and, in addition to developing new projects and opportunities in the future. Our policy is to strive to maintain a reserve of three working months, in addition to a reserve for statutory redundancy of £7,975 as at 31 st March 2023.

Further Financial Details

During the 22-23 financial year our primary sources of funds are detailed below:

£26,315 income generated through various projects (e.g schools, playschemes, seedlings)

£24,042 from our training portfolio

£13,915 in grant funding (including HMRC furlough income)

Total income: £64,470

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WHAT WE DID

Our training courses have been consistently well attended and we continue to be involved in the development of training in the sector through the Wales-wide network.

We have delivered many sessions which include:

Seedlings working with children and their families 0- 5 years.

Woodland Explorers working with older children aged 5 - 12 years old and their families.

A grant from National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All meant we could offer specific sessions working with Hands Up for Downs and Mixtup, all of which have been extremely successful. A quote from each of these organisations following the sessions is below.

Hands Up for Downs (HUFD) - Thank you to [The National Lottery](#) AWARDS FOR ALL Funding for making this project become a reality! 🙌 Staff and young people benefited and enjoyed it all so much



Mixtup - Yesterday's popcorn poppety smoke wafferty afternoon at [Forest School Swansea Neath & Port Talbot](#) was awesome! We devised new and wonderful games including the Where's Will forest flour trail 🌳 We made our own hoops from willow and whittled target stakes, we worked on our dream catchers and devoured popcorn, crumpets, hot chocolate and orange juice. Thank you Pam and Nigel

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DETAIL OF DELIVERY

Training

Level 3 Forest School Leader x 2 courses (16 participants)

Outdoor Paediatric First Aid x 2 course (18 participants)

Coastal School Top Up x 1 course (8 participants)

Forest School Assistant x 2 courses (14 participants)



Trainers perspective: from Emma North FSSNPT Trainer

Over the course of the last year, I have been working alongside Karen as part of the training team. Previous to this I was working as a sessional Forest School leader with Forest School SNPT. I began my journey towards becoming a Level 4 Forest School Trainer in early 2022. As part of the process of becoming a trainer I have shadowed some of the courses Karen has delivered and have run courses of my own. Moving from the delivery of Forest School sessions into training has been very rewarding, although I do miss leading sessions and would love to have the time stay involved with this side of things.

I have over the last year run a Level 2 Forest School Assistant course and a Level 3 Forest School Leader course. Whilst delivering training you get to meet some great like-minded people, some of whom having successfully completed their training have gone on to work for us as sessional leaders and assistants. It is not only good to be able to support individuals in this way but knowing that teachers and teaching assistants are gaining knowledge and skills that enable them to run Forest School sessions in their school settings are great too. We know that Forest School is a really beneficial

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process, and it is fantastic that this is increasingly being recognised by the education system. I hope to complete the level 4 training early 2024 and continue to work for Forest School SNPT long into the future! It is great to see the organisation moving forward and growing under the guidance and expertise of a strong team of trustees and with the vision and dedication of a hard-working staff and sessional team. I believe we are well placed to continue to offer high quality training and Forest School experiences to those who want and need it, and to develop what we can offer in order that our future becomes increasingly secure. Exciting times ahead!

Projects

- Seedlings x 75 sessions
- Woodland Explorer 18 x sessions
- School trips x 2
- Communities for Work x 6 sessions
- Family Fun Day x 2 sessions
- Gnoll Seedlings x 2 sessions
- Gower College trip x 1
- HUFD x 10 sessions
- Mixtup x 10 sessions
- Summer Explorers x 5 sessions
- NPT Under 5's x 16 sessions

Throughout the year we have been working with Ysgol Bryn Y Mor school offering sessions for outdoor learning.

We have worked with hundreds of children aged 0 - 12 years and their families.

Here is a sample of the feedback we have received:

'I really enjoyed playing with my friends' 'I enjoyed the clay' 'I enjoyed being funny with Nigel with the puppets' (I kept getting attacked by badger/rabbit and squirrel) Lots specified the rope swing as their favourite thing.

Favourite thing was making conker necklaces. I loved going in the hammock and swinging

' I.want to stay here ..!',(Child not wanting to leave at the end) I loved making my leaf bowls best

This is literally the highlight of his week. I'm going to have to start hosing him down

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FSSNPT Project Lead highlights: from Pixie Taylor

Seedlings at Llys Nini

We were fortunate to be able to offer funded Seedlings sessions for pre school aged children once again giving many more families the opportunity to come out and enjoy muddy fun throughout the seasons.

Highlights included digging , mud kitchen play and even full body immersion in our mud pit by some little adventurers!

It was rewarding to witness these very young children developing and gaining confidence physically and socially over the course of the year.

YGG Bryn Y Mor

Our forest school sessions with Ysgol Bryn Y Mor continued with all children from Yr 1 and 2 and a small nurture group of years 3 to 6 .

Singleton Park Ornamental Gardens is a perfect location for this project allowing the children to walk there from their school. They have benefited from getting better acquainted with the nature on their doorstep and learning skills such as den building, climbing trees and following trails and problem solving.

But if you asked them most would say they loved playing Draenog (Hedgehog) Tag and cooking marshmallows.!

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Sessional Staff Feedback: from James Morris & Chloe Naylor

"Working for SNPT Forest School since January 2022 has been a fantastic experience for myself, allowing me to expand my knowledge and enabling me to work with a diverse range of individuals, both as colleagues and attendees. Through working regular sessions, I have seen the charity's impact on families, allowing children to get outside and experience Forest School with skilled and engaging sessional leaders - and providing parents opportunities to meet and expand social circles. The opportunities I have had to lead have been really pleasant, and while it took time to find my feet, the communication from management and Forest School assistants gave me the confidence to know I was doing the right thing. Knowing the support of leadership was key in helping me through any issues, notably when showing sensitivity and transparency when dealing with a complaint. Having only worked in school settings before, my sessional work has expanded not only work opportunities and professional knowledge, but my social circle too, and for that I am extremely grateful." James

I started working with Forest School SNPT as a volunteer 7 years ago alongside my university studies. Since then, I have worked on various projects during the holidays and weekends and completed the Agored Cymru Level 2 Award in Assisting Forest School in 2020, leading to receiving paid work. I have learnt so much through working with the organisation over the years and met so many people with similar ideals as myself and that are incredibly down-to-earth. Being surrounded by such people has helped me to improve my confidence, which has led to me doing well in my term-time employment. I am thoroughly looking forward to working with the organisation on projects in the foreseeable future! Chloe

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WHO WAS INVOLVED:

Trustees:

Diana Clark (Co-Chair)
Tim Orrell (Co-Chair)
Natalie Coombs (Deputy Chair) - resigned 22/09/22
Gwen Bezodis (Secretary) - resigned 11/09/23
Ria Banscherus

Treasurer

Ruth Evans (Treasurer)

Employees

Sophie Lacey (Forest School Manager) resigned December 2022
Jackie Dorrian (Forest School Manager) April 2023
Pixie Taylor (Project Lead)
Karen Jones (Training Lead)
Emma North (Trainer) March 2023
Sasha North (Administration Assistant)

The people we could not achieve all that we have without:

Cazzie Wood, Charlotte Toft, Pam Mayford, Tonya Evans, Kate Davies, Chloe Naylor, Kath Eagle, Carina Roberts, Nina Xartwright, Emily Parkinson, Carys Lovering, Adele Evans, Nigel Little, Lydia Dixon, Clare Santimano, Laura Evans, James Morris and Rochelle Lewis and anyone who's name is missing (apologies)

Huge thanks goes to the volunteers who give up their time to support us in more ways than one. A massive thank you!

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Partners / supporting organisations:

SCVS

Nature Conservation Team (CCS)

Childcare & Play Team (CCS)

Cambium Sustainable

Outdoor Learning Training Network

Actif Woods

NPTCVS

Llys Nini RSPCA Animal Centre

CLOSING CREDITS

We would not be where we are now without the wonderful support of the children, young people and their families. We want to thank all of you who attended our sessions

Our Funders



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