

WIDEHORIZONS OUTDOOR EDUCATION TRUST
(a company limited by guarantee)
Report of the Trustees
For the year ended 31 March 2009

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2009. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in 2005 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Structure, governance and management

Widehorizons Outdoor Education Trust is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 27 July 2004. It is a registered charity with the Charity Commission.

Appointment of trustees

As set out in the Articles of Association, the number of Company Members is unlimited. The London Boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich each nominate one Councillor and one school governor to be trustees for a period of four years. Subject to the limitation that no more than 20% of the Board is 'controlled members' (employees or councillors of Lewisham and Greenwich) additional company members can be elected to the Board from time to time.

During the period covered by this report Richard Quayle resigned as a Director/Trustee as he was appointed as the Business Manager for the Trust. The Trust had new school governor representatives for both Lewisham and Greenwich. Alex Brooks-Johnson joined as a Trustee in May 2009 and brings with him experience of fundraising.

Organisation

The board of trustees administers the charity. During the year the Board met four times and the Finance Sub Committee met ten times. The Chief Executive manages the day to day operations of the charity and has delegated authority, within the terms of delegation approved by the trustees, for operational matters including finance, employment and the day to day delivery of outdoor education services to the community.

Objectives and activities

The objects for which the Company was established are to promote for the public benefit:

1. The advancement of education and in particular outdoor education;
2. The relief of poverty; and
3. The provision of facilities for recreation, sport and other leisure time occupations in the interests of social welfare for persons who have need for such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances with the object of improving the conditions of life of such persons.

Core activities and major sources of income

The Trust operates five outdoor education centres, leased from the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich. Two are day centres, two are residential centres with one providing a combination of day and residential courses. During term time we provide services directly to schools, mostly to schools within London. We have contracts to provide advisory services to the London Boroughs of Greenwich, Lewisham, Merton, Tower Hamlets, Brent, Hillingdon and Lambeth. We offer training and support services to schools, local authority departments and other organisations engaged in work with children and young people.

We still receive a significant subsidy from Greenwich and Lewisham. In 2008/09 this amounted to £325,005 (£340,306 in 2007/08).

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In 2008/09 we received grants for the delivery of specific projects. They are:

Grant paying body	Amount	Purpose
Growing Schools Project – FACE	£10,000	To provide schools with kits to enable them to start a garden
Co-operative Community Fund	£1,500	Establishing raft building as a curriculum activity at Ty'n y Berth Mountain Centre
Futurebuilders England – Revenue Grant	£54,500 out of £106,500	12 months running costs for the Central Office
Futurebuilders England – Capital Grant	£114,500	Refurbishment of Central Office and set up costs
DfES – Growing Schools Garden	£4,312	Continuation of the growing schools garden scheme
London Borough of Lewisham	£40,000	Establishment of a Forest School programme in the Borough
London Borough of Lewisham	£13,250	Funding for starting the 'Aiming Higher for Disabled Children' scheme
London Borough of Greenwich	£23,896	This is the first instalment of money for the relocation and fitting of new temporary classrooms at Margaret McMillan House

Performance against charitable aims 2008/09

Our visitor numbers are set out in the table below. 2008/09 has seen a drop (of 2.82%) in our visits. This is to be expected with the reduced capacity at Margaret Mcmillan House during the recent building work. The planned work at the Townsend Centre should not impact on the number of residential visits. The Trust is looking at ways to increase usage at Ty'n y Berth mountain centre.

Visits to day centres	2007/08	2008/09	Movement
Environmental Curriculum Service	8,740	10,537	+20.56%
Horton Kirby	9,792	10,266	+4.84%
Total	18,532	20,803	+12.25%
Visits to residential centres	2007/08	2008/09	Movement
Margaret McMillan House	22,671	17,072	-24.70%
Townsend Centre	12,804	15,179	+18.55%
Ty'n y Berth Mountain Centre	7,729	6,942	-10.18%
Total	43,204	39,193	-9.28%

The Trust monitors the ethnicity of the children visiting our Centres. The breakdown for Lewisham and Greenwich schools is:

Ethnic Group	2007/08	2008/09
White (A1 – A3)	50%	35%
Mixed/Dual, Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British, Other (B1 – E2)	49%	63%
Not stated (F1)	1%	2%

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The advancement of education and in particular outdoor education

Achievements in 2008/09	Plans for the future
<p>The majority of our residential courses last five days, this means that we provided courses to approximately 7,838 (8,640 in 2007/08) young people.</p> <p>In 2008/09 we provided 2,271 more day visits than in 2007/08. Based on a 39 week academic year this equates to 533 pupils per week (475 per week in 2007/08).</p>	<p>Our Forest School Leaders training is to increase from 45 to 60 people in 2009/10.</p> <p>The Trust will be providing taught Forest School sessions to Lewisham Primary Schools throughout the year.</p> <p>The increased capacity at Margaret Mcmillan House will be available during 2009/10 and we expect performance to be higher than 2007/08.</p>

The relief of poverty

Achievements in 2008/09	Plans for the future
<p>To be inclusive to our core population from Lewisham and Greenwich we ensure our prices are kept as low as possible. We do this through the subsidies from the two London Councils. We also encourage Greenwich schools to take advantage of the school journey grant.</p> <p>We have provided free activities to children as a result of grant funding, this includes Forest School sessions run by Widehorizons in school settings.</p>	<p>The Trust will be contacting the schools in Greenwich and Lewisham who do not use our facilities. In 2009 we launch our appeal 'Aiming Even Higher for Disabled Children', our purpose is to transform two of our Centres to provide high quality respite and holiday care for families with disabilities.</p>

The provision of facilities for recreation, sport or other leisure

Achievements in 2008/09	Plans for the future
<p>The trust aims to provide more weekend and holiday time courses in active outdoor recreation to our community over time. The investment programme described in our business plan outlines this growth. In this year we provided 3,867 recreational days at our centres, with programmes as diverse as 'Looked After Children' adventure weeks, Youth Group Projects and Adventure weeks for faith groups.</p>	<p>In summer 2009 the Trust will again be providing residential adventure courses for Looked After Children. We will be providing an additional holiday for Greenwich Council and a course for a Fostering Charity, TACT</p> <p>Ty'n y Berth Mountain Centre is looking to start a community climbing group.</p>

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Activity at Widehorizons Centres in 2008/09

Environmental Curriculum Service (ECS)	Service (ECS)
<p>The Centre has seen the arrival of a new tutor who has settled in well and has begun his Forest School Leader training.</p> <p>The Centre has had a really busy year running its normal service alongside Forest School sessions. We have welcomed a new user group from local Private/Voluntary & Independent sector, working with each group to deliver forest school sessions. We have also delivered one-off Forest School taster sessions which has enabled us to attract more users in the winter months.</p> <p>Forest School training continues to work in partnership with Greenwich to provide training courses. This year the Centre has started working with Lewisham Early Years Advice and Resources Network (LEARN) to train teachers and practitioners and to develop Forest School in Lewisham also. We are in the process of writing up research on the impact of Forest School which was done in partnership with St Peter's RC School. An article has been written about Forest School for the Journal 'Early Education' which is a leading early years' national voluntary organisation.</p> <p>The Centre grounds are now benefitting from a new Gingko tree plantation, a renovated butyl pond and four lively and attractive Nubian goats. The Centre is very lucky not to have lost our bees and are now looking forward to a productive harvest this summer.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Horton Kirby Environmental Studies Centre</p> <p>Last year over 10,000 teachers and pupils had the opportunity to explore Farningham Woods or walk through the River Darent. The Centres air raid shelter has been dusted down and furnished to give children the opportunity to gain in insight to life as an evacuee during the Second World War.</p> <p>The Centre has been working with New Covent Garden Market Authority and Farming and Countryside Education (FACE) to give schools in Battersea the Horton Kirby Experience. Through this partnership the classes are able to visit the Horton Kirby allotment as well as a local farm.</p> <p>The Centre is increasing their delivery of Forest Schools and is undertaking accredited training to become a Forest School Leader whilst also becoming delivering 6 week sessions to schools.</p> <p>As a part of the Trusts 'Aiming Even Higher' initiative, our goal is to create a Centre that exceeds the needs of visiting teachers and pupils, is accessible to all while retaining its character and atmosphere. The Centre has grown over the last few years and the facilities need to be upgraded.</p> <p>The allotment continues to be a success with children and the Centre is grateful for the time people spend keeping it tidy.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Margaret McMillan House</p> <p>The new £1m upgrade to the East Wing (to be called the Astor Wing) was completed on time in June 2009. This has increased our capacity for visiting children and their staff. The new facilities have shown us the way as we turn our attention to other dormitories. The Trusts next project called 'Aiming even Higher' aims to make the Centre as special as it can be and welcoming to all visitors.</p> <p>Our new Camping Area was officially opened by the Mayor of Greenwich. This gives visitors an opportunity to experience a night under canvas in our specially constructed canvas tipis, with the log cabin providing cooking facilities, showers, toilets and a classroom. This will give pupils an opportunity to share the residential experience</p> <p>Building on previous research, we are working as part of a unique project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation which aims to promote new and innovative learning. This has allowed three secondary schools from across South London the opportunity to work with us to explore ways in which staff and pupils can work together to enhance their learning both in and outside the classroom. In addition our activities are also taking leaps and bounds forward as well, with funding from the Leading Edge, we have able to plan for two new challenges which will add to the Margaret McMillan experience.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Townsend Environmental Study Centre</p> <p>The Centre has seen more weekend bookings than we've had before, and weekday bookings remaining consistently high throughout the year.</p> <p>The construction of the replica quarry on site was completed in September 2008. It is a tremendous resource which has added enormous value to existing sessions. The quarry has been incorporated into our rock investigation and Durlston Country Park sessions. It has also proved to be an atmospheric location for our evening smuggling talk, the children love the thrill of going down the stone steps into the darkness of the quarry.</p> <p>The Centres woodland resource is also taking shape with two of our teaching staff now trained as Level 3 Forest School instructors. This area will be used for Forest School sessions for local groups and schools and bushcraft and survival sessions for visiting groups.</p> <p>Progress has been made with regards to Futurebuilder's developments. Planning permission has been granted for a new dormitory and Rotary Cottage extension and work is due to begin in Autumn 2009, with completion by Summer 2010. In Autumn 2010, the new site configuration will be operational and our site capacity will increase meaning there will be space for new groups in future. The bungalow extension will allow smaller groups to have their own space. An existing dormitory will be converted into a classroom, recreational area and overflow dining room, which will give us the versatility we need.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ty'n y Berth Mountain Centre</p> <p>The Centre has seen a decline in its usage over the last financial year. This is due to the London Challenge funding for outdoor courses stopping. However, this has not deterred the Centre from developing more activities. They were awarded a small grant to help set up a raft building course. This has taken off in 2009 and combined with the new canoe grant the Centre is now able to offer more variety in activities.</p> <p>Four instructors have set up a community climbing club at the local leisure centre. They have already done trips to nearby crags and other climbing walls.</p> <p>Two instructors have been involved in setting up an area in a forest to study bushcraft. Camden Girls School helped to clear and prepare the site as part of their community project.</p> <p>Summer 2009 looks set to be one of the Centres best with instructors undertaking outreach Duke of Edinburgh award courses in partnership with Greenwich Youth Service.</p> <p>The Centre is in negotiation with local landowners to help establish a full 'Mountain Day' that can be done directly from the Centre. This will mean less reliance on transport to get to locations for activities.</p>	

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Fundraising

In 2009/10 the Trust is embarking on two large scale fundraising projects.

- a) Making it Special – which is to raise money to finish off the new building at Margaret McMillan House
- b) Aiming Higher for Disabled Children – this is fundraising in order for the Trust to upgrade facilities for disabled children and young people.

Risk management

The trustees have a risk management strategy comprising:

- An annual review of the risks the charity may face;
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified in the plan;
- The implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise.

This work has identified the range of risks:

- Those associated with delivering a varied outdoor education programme to young people and adults. The management of these risks will be continuously reviewed and reported to the Board;
- Financial risks associated with assuming responsibility for services previously managed by two Councils and transforming Widehorizons into a charitable organisation competing in the market place;
- Risks associated with the loss of key personnel, especially in the early years of the Trust.

The management of these risks will focus on capacity building.

The Risk Management Strategy was reviewed in February 2008 to take into account the impact of the Futurebuilders England investment (see below). The range of risks identified has been extended to include those associated with undertaking large building contracts and the associated financial risks of financing the investment.

Financial review

The Trust has an accounting year of 1 April to 31 March. This will be the third return to Companies House and to the Charity Commission. For the year 2008/09 we recorded an operational loss of £40,657. This decreased our unrestricted funds to £264,974.

Investment Policy

In our last annual report the Trust said it had invested £50,000. Due to cash flow issues during 2008/09 this investment was not made. Further assessment of our cash flow position is going to be made during the first six months with a view to making this investment. We also need to balance the need to hold reserves of cash for emergencies.

Reserves Policy

In this difficult economic climate the Trust is reviewing the aim of having a reserve fund of £250,000 in the first five full years of operation. The Trust currently has an unrestricted fund of £264,974. Now we see the need to increase our cash reserve to help cope with unknown expenditure in future years.

Plans for the future

The £1m re-building of Margaret Mcmillan House was completed on time in June 2009. The work at the Townsend Centre should begin in September 2009. All the increased capacity is expected to be in place by the start of the 2010/11 financial year.

The Trust is awaiting the drawdown of the final instalment of the grant on offer from Futurebuilders England. We are forecasting only having a small balance at the end of 2009/10.

The remaining restricted funds are being used up on an on-going basis. The FACE project should be complete by March 2010. The remaining Co-op Trailer grant will be used in 2009/10 along with an 'Awards for All' grant of £10,000 which we received in early April 2009. We are currently updating the agreement for using the Greenwich Forest School fund following the receipt of the grant from Lewisham.

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Trustees

The Trustees of the company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up.

Trustees' responsibilities

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the financial year and of its surplus or deficit for the financial year. In doing so the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enables them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In accordance with company law, as the company directors, we certify that:

- So far as we are aware there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware; and
- As the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

A resolution will be proposed at the Annual Meeting that Maths Partnership Limited be re-appointed as auditors to the charity for the ensuing year.

Approved by the Board

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David Picton – Chair

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Date