

## **Forest School Association Annual Report, May 2021**

2020 will be remembered as a challenging year for many people and organisations and we at the Forest School Association are grateful that we have come through this year and been able to maintain our support for members and the Forest School community.

An overview of the work of the FSA is included here.

### **Staffing**

Gareth Davies continues to lead the organisation in his role as CEO. His vision for the FSA means that we have been able to navigate the challenges of 2020. He liaises with a number of national and regional organisations, local FSA groups, funders and partners from business as well as advising and supporting the board. Additionally, Gareth does valuable work on the services provided for members through the website, is responsible for staff and consultant line management as well as identifying and seeking funding opportunities for the FSA and making sure everything keeps moving forwards. He is currently employed 3 days a week.

In September 2019 Nic Harding was welcomed to the team as Projects Officer.

His role is funded for two years by the Ashden Trust. The key objective of the role is to create resources in order to support members.

We have been fortunate to retain the services of Nell Seal as a consultant delivering on the Trainers QA and Recognised Provider schemes. It is great to have her expertise, insight and attention to detail.

We have continued the fruitful relationship with the Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL), who we contract for the routine administration of the FSA. Particular thanks go to Dave Brookes who has done a fine job both answering enquiries, updating the website and producing the member newsletter.

### **Board of Directors**

Directors of the FSA have continued to meet monthly to lead the governance of the organisation as well as supporting staff with operational activity.

Lily Horseman will be stepping down as Chair this year after 4 years in the role. She will continue as a board member. Sara Collins is Deputy Chair.

### **Membership and Membership Services.**

The FSA plans to increase our membership base by creating specific products to support members and by introducing new membership types aimed at affiliate members, including for retired practitioners and an honorary membership. Membership has taken a hit because of the impact of the pandemic on the sector but figures are recovering.

The number and range of member discounts has increased with offers that benefit members and the FSA.

### **Projects:**

Projects officer, Nic Harding, is now in his second year of employment and has been instrumental in working with directors and volunteers to deliver a number of projects which are of benefit to members. These include;

#### **Book; working title “Creating a Forest School”**

The words on the book are tumbling into place with many authors involved. We hope for it to be on sale by September 2021

#### **Pamphlet**

The pamphlet on [“How to create a Forest School - from the roots up”](#) has been well received and has drummed up pre interest for the book as well as provided links to other tools like the 5-minute video.

## **Presentations**

The five minute What is school presentation has been a huge success with 24,375 views on YouTube, and 27,000 views on Facebook. The longer- deeper dive video has had 5,100 views on YouTube but was less popular on Facebook with only 520 views. Both of these presentations can be used to communicate about quality Forest School.

## **Research App**

A web browser research app is in its development phase and will be ready for initial testing shortly. The intention is to collect data about the efficacy of Forest School for national research and to support FS leaders to advocate for quality Forest School. We hope to have the beta testing done and the web browser ready for the winter term.

## **Forest School principle Seminars**

Are in their final edit stage and will be launched in September. They will be available for members but also available for non-members behind a pay wall.

## **Newsletter – the weekly roundup**

Continues to deliver interesting articles, notices and research. Thank you to everyone who plays a part in finding the stories and to the Grammar Ninjas Dawn and Terry.

## **Webinars**

As a consequence of the first lockdown we identified a need to offer resources to members and others involved in Forest School. It was agreed that these webinars would not be restricted to FSA members, for two reasons:

Firstly, it was an opportunity for growing the FSA membership.

Secondly, we wanted to reaching out with free resources during a time of national crisis. To help individuals in the outdoor education sector and maintain much need connections. During the course of the next few months, these webinars proved to be very successful, necessitating an upgrade to our zoom membership to allow for a higher number of participants. In September, with many members returning to work, and both volunteer and FSA staff capacity being reduced, the working group decided to reduce the webinars to monthly, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday.

The format of the webinars evolved into two themes:

- In the thicket – a more in-depth look into certain themes and topics,

and

- Round the Hearth – a more informal networking and ideas sharing evening.

At the time of this AGM, the webinars, now run almost exclusively by volunteers, continue to be a valued resource with FSA members and non-members.

## **FSA Endorsed FS Trainer Scheme**

This quality assurance scheme currently has 12 members with an additional 5 currently at varying stages of going through to process which will swell numbers considerably.

The scheme is managed day to day by Nell Seal but the team of Endorsed Trainers act as 'owners' of the scheme and discuss/propose changes which are ratified by the FSA board. Stage 2 conversations with applicants' students and Stage 3 peer conversations are conducted by a team of 5 paid assessors who are all existing Endorsed Trainers.

The Endorsed Trainers have met regularly to engage with professional development and reflective practice, as well as supporting one another with qualification moderation processes. There is an anticipation that they will meet again in October before the annual FSA conference. This is an active and valued online network where practice is discussed and peer support is a key offer.

Nic is working on a Scheme for the Certification of Professional Development Courses. This is 80% complete and we are looking to launch after a brief period of testing and evaluation.

### **FSA Recognised FS Provider Scheme**

This recognition scheme enables those recognised to publicly demonstrate that they are facilitating FS experiences in line with all six FS principles.

We currently have 66 FSA Recognised FS Providers. There are a further 35 providers who have paid to apply and are in the process of becoming FSA Recognised; hopefully these will be added to the map of Recognised Providers over the coming months.

It has been a challenging period of time for this scheme. Covid-19 has meant that FS Providers have found it hard to gather evidence for applications and ongoing, 12 monthly annual declarations, in addition to furlough and permanent staffing changes. To add to this we are also nearly half way through a 12 month period where the original 32 providers, approved under the original version of the scheme and still part of it, are being asked to demonstrate with evidence that they meet the benchmarks set out in the current scheme.

We also have a total of 34 FS Providers who paid to apply but do not appear on our map of FSA Recognised Providers because i) they never submitted ii) they submitted but did not meet our benchmarks iii) they have been unable to meet our ongoing annual declaration requirements or iv) they were recognised under the 'old' scheme and have been unable to demonstrate they meet our current benchmarks.

In summary then, there have been 135 providers in total who were/are keen to explore recognition with the FSA and who have had conversations with us about FS in accordance with all six principles.

### **Forest School Qualifications**

The FSA have continued to work with Awarding Organisations (AO) to ensure they know about the units on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and the minimum standards for establishing Forest School training centres. There are eight AO in England who have adopted these standards.

The FSA will be working with AO in 2021/22 to review the RQF qualifications.

The FSA supported the Outdoor Learning Trainers Network in Wales and representatives of training organisations who use the units held by Agored to successfully bridge the gaps between the two sets of qualifications.

### **2020/2021 Conference**

It was with great sadness that we decided to postpone the annual conference until 2021. It will make it all the sweeter that we can celebrate 'Sustainable Forest School: Climate of Hope' later this year. It seems apt somehow. We are so looking forward to being under canvas and sharing with our peers again.

Put the date in your diaries and join us!

Hosts, Ox, Bucks and Berks FSA Affiliated Local group.

Title: 'Climate of Hope: Sustainable Forest School',

Dates: 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021

Venue: Hill End, Oxfordshire

### **Local groups**

During the last year one area of work that didn't have to change was the way the local groups meet. The Local Group National Rep's have always carried out their quarterly meeting online and continued to do so during 2020. These meetings are incredibly supportive and enable members to feed information from the various areas throughout country back to the national FSA organisation. This year has seen local groups tackling the pandemic in their own ways. There have been some fantastic examples of community leadership in the form of online CPD and networking. The Local Groups also feedback into the Other FSA projects through these meetings. Local group reps have been sharing documentation to help ease the burden and possible hesitation for new and emerging Local Groups. We want to make it as accessible for every local area to have their own group. The biggest barrier is the recruitment of volunteers so if you have time you could give to your Local Group please do get in touch.

## **National and International networks**

Normally staff and directors of the FSA would be attending and speaking at a number of face to face meetings and conferences but despite the pandemic we have been able to maintain our relationships with various partners including the Institute of Outdoor Learning, FENE (Forest Education Network England) Defra and National Forest, Sylva, Royal Forestry Society, Forestry England and Birmingham Institute of Forest Research, CLOtC and the Wildlife Trusts, Our Bright Futures, Green Alliance and One Shared World. Directors and staff have delivered presentations to Hamk University of Finland, Woman's Hour Radio 4, Radio London, Forest School podcast, Harmony podcast, Outdoor Learning ORN Webinar and Cumbria Development Education Centre.

## **Nature Premium Campaign**

The Nature Premium campaign was launched in July 2020. It is the first political lobbying campaign that the FSA has worked on. We are calling for the government to invest in regular nature experiences for all children. We have used a broad definition of 'nature' to include gardening, conservation work, permaculture, city farms and of course Forest School. You can see more information and some of the campaign highlights at [www.naturepremium.org/news](http://www.naturepremium.org/news) The campaign is being co-ordinated by Sara Collins and Sarah Lawfull and is a testament to their extraordinary energy. The campaign benefited from the active support from many of the directors and staff of the FSA who have contributed when they have been available. Some work regularly such as Jo working on social media and youth engagement and some on one off projects such as Lewis who created the website, Froo who wrote the first research statement, Lily who created the NP film that was vital for spreading the news, Gareth who found us some money, Nic who is available as an emergency backup and of course Matt whose idea it was in the first place.

We met with the Department for Education and were told that although the DfE accepts that spending time in and connecting with nature supports children's mental and physical wellbeing there is no money and no political will to make this happen. This is despite the fact that the Nature Premium would support priorities in the government's policy document [25 Year Environment Plan](#) and recommendations as set out by both [Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta](#) in his HM Treasury commissioned report and the Committee for Climate Change.

We have worked hard to gain support for the campaign and are delighted to be working with a [number of organisations](#) including The Harmony Project, CPRE and the Consortium 'Take the Learning Inside Out' led by The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. We have been supported by celebrities Chris Packham and Megan McCubin, Jane Goodall, Steve Backshall and key influencers such as The Bishop of Durham, Lord Randall, Tim Smit, Tim Gill, Stephen Morgan MP, Merlin Sheldrake and Baroness Bennett.

The campaign is now building political support outside of the DfE and building the economic argument to generate a private /public funding option to fund regular nature experiences so that ALL children spend time in and connect with nature. If you know any 'influencers' one who would be interested in helping please contact Sara at [sara.collins@forestschoollassociation.org](mailto:sara.collins@forestschoollassociation.org)

## **Forest School Day**

Forest School Day (FSD) is supported by FSA and has direct involvement from two of our directors. FSD has completed a third year in 2020. This annual day to celebrate Forest School is an excellent way of engaging the community in all the joys that are Forest School. This year's Forest School day is planned for October 8<sup>th</sup> 2021. A huge appreciative thanks to Katey Hugi who continues to be the driving force behind this annual event celebrating Forest School and raising it's profile.

<https://forestschoolday.org/>

## **Forest School Trading LTD**

The FSA set up a separate trading company in 2018. It has remained dormant due to lack of trading activity.

## **Finances**

The majority of funding for the FSA comes from membership. Without a conference in 2020 we have

had to manage the budget accordingly. The Ashden Trust funding for Nic's role has given us additional capacity.

### **Governance**

The directors have worked together as a board to maintain oversight of the FSA. A lot of energy and reflection has gone into a review of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. Our next piece of work is around the Values of the FSA and of Forest School in the wider sense to inform our marketing and engagement strategies.

There are 3 current directors standing for election as per our charitable objects: Geoff, Froo and Sarah, it having been 3 years since they were last elected as directors. This year we have 5 additional applications from Carol Middleton, Vicki Stewart, Sunita Thakur, Janet Green and Sarah Knight. We will co-opt these members to the board and will have a year to orientate within the organisation before standing in 2022. This is part of our ongoing commitment to work with candidates for directorship in checking they are fully aware of the responsibilities of FSA directors before putting them forward for election. Sarah Knight has also been offered a role as ambassador to the FSA and we will be working with her and with Tim Gill; our patron to see how we can use their energy and expertise in the future.

As Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the directors and staff for the hard work and energy they have brought to the FSA in this challenging year and to their support for me as chair.

Lily Horseman – FSA Chair - on behalf of the FSA board;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lily Horseman'.

Sara Collins – deputy chair  
Geoff Mason – Secretary  
Jon Cree - Treasurer  
Louise Ambrose  
Jo Philips

Sarah Lawfull  
Froo Signore  
Matt Harder  
Lewis Ames

Report of the Directors and  
Unaudited Financial Statements  
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020  
for  
Forest School Association

Contents of the Financial Statements  
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

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Forest School Association

Company Information  
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

DIRECTORS:

J N Cree  
L E Ambrose  
G S Mason  
Dr S A Collins  
Ms E A R Horseman  
Mrs J A Phillips  
Mrs S E Lawfull  
Mrs F Signore  
L H Ames  
M F Harder

REGISTERED OFFICE:

Warwick Mill Business Centre  
Warwick Bridge  
Carlisle  
Cumbria  
CA4 8RR

REGISTERED NUMBER:

08164851 (England and Wales)

ACCOUNTANTS:

Laytons  
Chartered Accountants  
6 Manchester Road  
Buxton  
Derbyshire  
SK17 6SB



Report of the Directors  
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

The directors present their report with the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31st August 2020.

**DIRECTORS**

The directors shown below have held office during the whole of the period from 1st September 2019 to the date of this report.

J N Cree  
L E Ambrose  
G S Mason  
Dr S A Collins  
Ms E A R Horseman  
Mrs J A Phillips  
Mrs S E Lawfull  
Mrs F Signore

Other changes in directors holding office are as follows:

L H Ames - appointed 14th March 2020  
M F Harder - appointed 14th March 2020  
N J Beales - appointed 14th March 2020 - resigned 12th August 2020

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

G S Mason - Director

27th April 2021

Forest School Association

Abridged Income Statement  
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

|  | 31.8.20<br>£           | 31.8.19<br>£         |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| GROSS SURPLUS  | 92,249                 | 98,074               |
| Administrative expenses  | <u>112,512</u>         | <u>82,066</u>        |
| OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS and<br>(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION | (20,263)               | 16,008               |
| Tax on (deficit)/surplus   | <u>-</u>               | <u>-</u>             |
| (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL<br>YEAR                          | <u><u>(20,263)</u></u> | <u><u>16,008</u></u> |

The notes form part of these financial statements

Abridged Balance Sheet  
31st August 2020

|  | 31.8.20<br>£ | 31.8.19<br>£ |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS                           |              |              |
| Cash at bank                             | 42,931       | 48,321       |
| CREDITORS                                |              |              |
| Amounts falling due within one year      | 16,173       | 1,300        |
| NET CURRENT ASSETS                       | 26,758       | 47,021       |
| TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT<br>LIABILITIES | 26,758       | 47,021       |
| RESERVES                                 |              |              |
| Income and expenditure account           | 26,758       | 47,021       |
|  | 26,758       | 47,021       |

The company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31st August 2020.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2020 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (a) ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

All the members have consented to the preparation of an abridged Income Statement and an abridged Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st August 2020 in accordance with Section 444(2A) of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors and authorised for issue on 27th April 2021 and were signed on its behalf by:

G S Mason - Director

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

1. STATUTORY INFORMATION

Forest School Association is a private company, limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales. The company's registered number and registered office address can be found on the Company Information page.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" including the provisions of Section 1A "Small Entities" and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Turnover

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable, excluding discounts, rebates, value added tax and other sales taxes.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the company's pension scheme are charged to profit or loss in the period to which they relate.

3. EMPLOYEES AND DIRECTORS

The average number of employees during the year was 2 (2019 - 1).

Chartered Accountants' Report to the Board of Directors  
on the Unaudited Financial Statements of  
Forest School Association

In order to assist you to fulfil your duties under the Companies Act 2006, we have prepared for your approval the financial statements of Forest School Association for the year ended 31st August 2020 which comprise the Abridged Income Statement, Abridged Balance Sheet and the related notes from the company's accounting records and from information and explanations you have given us.

As a practising member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), we are subject to its ethical and other professional requirements which are detailed within the ICAEW's regulations and guidance at <http://www.icaew.com/en/membership/regulations-standards-and-guidance>.

This report is made solely to the Board of Directors of Forest School Association, as a body, in accordance with our terms of engagement. Our work has been undertaken solely to prepare for your approval the financial statements of Forest School Association and state those matters that we have agreed to state to the Board of Directors of Forest School Association, as a body, in this report in accordance with ICAEW Technical Release 07/16AAF. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than Forest School Association and its Board of Directors, as a body, for our work or for this report.

It is your duty to ensure that Forest School Association has kept adequate accounting records and to prepare statutory financial statements that give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities, financial position and loss of Forest School Association. You consider that Forest School Association is exempt from the statutory audit requirement for the year.

We have not been instructed to carry out an audit or a review of the financial statements of Forest School Association. For this reason, we have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given to us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the statutory financial statements.

Laytons  
Chartered Accountants  
6 Manchester Road  
Buxton  
Derbyshire  
SK17 6SB

27th April 2021

Forest School Association

Detailed Income and Expenditure Account  
for the Year Ended 31st August 2020

|                                 | 31.8.20           |                   | 31.8.19           |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                 | £                 | £                 | £                 | £                 |
| Turnover                        |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Memberships                     | 39,480            |                   | 51,921            |                   |
| Conferences                     | 26,176            |                   | 45,297            |                   |
| Grant funding                   | 26,118            |                   | -                 |                   |
|                                 | <u>          </u> | 91,774            | <u>          </u> | 97,218            |
| Other income                    |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Sundry receipts                 |                   | 475               |                   | 856               |
|                                 |                   | <u>          </u> |                   | <u>          </u> |
|                                 |                   | 92,249            |                   | 98,074            |
| Expenditure                     |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Rent                            | 2,900             |                   | 2,000             |                   |
| Insurance                       | 267               |                   | 267               |                   |
| Wages                           | 50,096            |                   | 26,446            |                   |
| Social security                 | 747               |                   | -                 |                   |
| Pensions                        | 1,094             |                   | 583               |                   |
| Subcontractors                  | 13,104            |                   | 11,191            |                   |
| Telephone and website           | 2,002             |                   | 1,454             |                   |
| Advertising                     | -                 |                   | 384               |                   |
| Travelling                      | 721               |                   | 927               |                   |
| Administration fees             | 9,494             |                   | 6,661             |                   |
| Meeting and conference expenses | 30,548            |                   | 30,048            |                   |
| Sundry expenses                 | -                 |                   | 250               |                   |
| Accountancy                     | 699               |                   | 691               |                   |
|                                 | <u>          </u> | 111,672           | <u>          </u> | 80,902            |
|                                 |                   | (19,423)          |                   | 17,172            |
| Finance costs                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Bank charges                    |                   | 840               |                   | 1,164             |
|                                 |                   | <u>          </u> |                   | <u>          </u> |
| NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS           |                   | <u>(20,263)</u>   |                   | <u>16,008</u>     |

## Independent Examiner's report to the Directors of Forest School Association

I report on the accounts of the Association for the year ended 31 August 2020, which are set out on pages 3 to 7 of the annual accounts.

### Respective Responsibilities of Directors and Examiner

The Directors are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Directors consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent Examination is needed. The company's gross income has not exceeded £250,000. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of ICAEW.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To following the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as directors concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter have come to my attention:

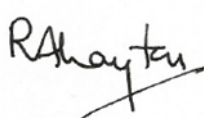
(1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

Have not been met; or

(2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name:



Robert Layton



**Laytons** CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS  
6 Manchester Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6SB  
PHONE: 01298 77997 FAX: 01298 72803

Relevant Professional qualification or body: ICAEW

Address: Laytons Chartered Accountants, 6 Manchester Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 9SB

Date: 07-05-2021