

LEE Committee Meeting – 7 September 2021

Agenda Item – LEE1661/21

Forest School

Introduction

In Croxley Green we have access to fantastic woodlands, which are used by many for leisure activities such as horse-riding, mountain biking, walking, and running. They have also been a popular location for families to spend time together outside exploring nature – even more so during the lockdown periods during 2020 and 2021.

One other fantastic use of these woodlands across the Country is forest schools or outdoor clubs, where young children can learn fun and invaluable outdoor skills. This might include setting up campfire and using whatever materials they can find there to make things, such as shelters, treehouses, bug hotels and much more.

In Cassiobury Park, there have previously been forest school / explorer sessions subsidised by Watford Council, which proved extremely popular with young children and their parents. These charged a nominal fee of £2 per child.

Having access to wonderful outdoor woodland amenities such as the Dell Wood presents an opportunity to trial a forest school session for young children in Croxley Green. This is a wonderful opportunity for young children and parents to have fun, make new friends and learn new outdoor skills.

Discussion

Charlie and Sarah Barron run an extremely popular and successful Wild Outdoors Club in Lower Gustard Wood, St Albans. They have agreed in principle to run a forest school trial session on behalf of CGPC in Dell Wood.

They are both DBS-checked and Charlie is paediatric first aid qualified.

The trial session will be for up to twelve children, aged between 4 and 10 years.

Parents are required to attend alongside their children – not a drop-off session.

Any equipment / materials required will be provided or sourced at the site of the session in Dell Wood.

Feedback will be gathered from the attendees at the end of the session in the form of a questionnaire. Depending on an appropriate level of demand / interest for further sessions, Charlie and Sarah can develop a 5-session term of Forest School sessions.

The trial session and any subsequent further sessions would be held on a Saturday morning, 10.30-12.30pm. Date of trial session to be determined.

Funding required from CGPC to cover the costs of the Forest School Leader and his assistant, which is £200 per session. This will also include any equipment or materials, which they will provide.

Advertising via the CGPC website / local Facebook groups / word of mouth at no additional cost and no one-off purchase or storage of equipment by CGPC is required.

Recommendation(s)

- That CGPC agrees to a maximum budget of £1,200 to fund:
 - 1) A trial forest school session in Dell Wood for up to twelve children aged between 4 and 10 years (parents present) at a cost of £200.
 - 2) Subject to sufficient demand, a further five weekly 2hr sessions at a cost of £200 per session.
- That the Clerk and the Administrative Officer will advertise the Trial session on the CGPC website and Local Facebook groups.
- That the Clerk and the Administrative Officer will take bookings for the session via telephone or people visiting the CGPC office to book.
- That the Clerk and the Administrative Officer will send registration forms (to be provided by Charlie) to parents making bookings and to collate those returned completed forms ahead of the session.
- That CGPC will charge a nominal fee of £2 per child, payable in advance. This being primarily to encourage sign-up only by those who will endeavour to attend.
- That the Clerk and the Administrative Officer will maintain a waiting list if the trial session becomes fully booked, in-case of subsequent dropouts.
- Assuming capacity attendance of a trial session and five further sessions, the final net cost funded by CGPC expected to be £1,056.

Cllr Adam Birch
17/08/2021