

## Case Study Template

<b>Topic</b>
<b>Funding</b>
<b>Name of Initiative</b>
<b>Rosliston Forestry Centre/Get Active in the Forest</b>
<b>Name of Local Authority/Organisation</b>
<b>South Derbyshire District Council/National Forest Company/Forestry Commission/Aurora County Developments</b>
<b>Related Topics/Issues</b>
<b>Community Resources</b>

<p><b>Aims &amp; Objectives</b></p> <p>Rosliston Forestry Centre's mission statement is to</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>“Provide visitors with a taste of all that's good in the National Forest”</i></b></p> <p>The centre's objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To become the primary outdoors visitor and activity centre within the National Forest;</li> <li>• To become a sustainable gateway to the National Forest;</li> <li>• To provide significant opportunities for health improvement, leisure and learning;</li> <li>• To promote the following primary themes:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Forestry is a process that provides social, economic and environmental benefits for those that participate;</li> <li>b) Education is a way in which people can understand and benefit from the countryside;</li> <li>c) Recreation is a way in which people can have fun and exercise and improve their health;</li> <li>d) Tourism boosts the local rural economy;</li> <li>e) Access and social inclusion ensure that everyone can benefit according to their needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcomes &amp; Impacts</b></p> <p>Rosliston Forestry Centre has developed over the last decade as an important tourist destination and community facility within The National Forest. The site has benefited recently from major improvements to the visitor centre and continues to attract an increasing and diverse audience from the local community and tourists visiting the area. The visitor experience currently includes a wide range of leisure activities in a forest setting such as walking, fishing, various play opportunities, environmental education, overnight accommodation, café/restaurant facilities, one off special events, art/craft activities and meeting facilities.</p> <p>The site and its development are under constant monitoring and review by a management group, which has membership from SDDC, National Forest Company and Forestry Commission. As part of the 5-year business plan for the development of the site, there is an identified need to extend the range of facilities on offer, to ensure the site continues to meet the needs of its users.</p> <p>Public engagement has been encouraged from initial development of the site, with community consultation being undertaken every 2 years to evaluate the success of the</p>

site and its facilities, help steer the development of the site and to canvass opinion on future initiatives.

The Friends of Rosliston Wood manages part of the site and has a memorial wood, with the group organising planting sessions and conservation tasks.

A number of groups have established themselves from initial involvement in activities at the site such as the pushchair Strollers and the Over 50's cycling group.

The 'Get Active in the Forest' project has been hugely successful in bringing people into the centre to participate in a wide variety of activities such as Orienteering, Archery, Laser Combat Games, Walking & Cycling and Tai Chi. A varied programme of Community Events & Demonstrations and Arts & Crafts is delivered each year and the Environmental Education Project strengthens the link with local schools and the environment.

Get Active in the Forest was the national winner of the 2008 National Lottery Best Sports Project Award, and the Environmental Education Project was recently praised in the TES top 10 national environmental initiatives.

### **Process**

The Centre was initiated when the key landowners came together to establish a venue for education, environment and recreation in the heart of the National Forest.

A partnership of the landowners was set up (Forestry Commission, National Forest Company and South Derbyshire District Council) to develop the site, and operate as an Executive Committee, with working groups forming to deliver key capital projects as appropriate.

The site is managed by a private management company, Aurora Country Developments, and sit on the Committee.

The site has evolved over the past decade, from existing woodland and farmland through to new plantations, a footpath network and visitor centre to the site today which also houses a community events arena, overnight accommodation and business units.

The development of the site is guided by a five-year business plan, which is regularly reviewed and refreshed, and new facilities are developed as funding opportunities arise.

### **Resources/Funding**

Funding has come from a variety of sources since the site was first developed. DDEP/EMDA; Sport England; Big Lottery; Forestry Commission; Derbyshire County Council; South Derbyshire District Council; National Forest Company and over £2million has been invested in Capital Projects since the site was set up.

Revenue funding is met by partnership contributions and income generated by the site and facilities.

### **Timescales**

Formation of Executive Steering Group - 2001  
Private Sector management company set up  
Consultation on site development: 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008

#### Key capital projects:

- Main Visitor Centre including soft play and shop units and Café and infrastructure (2001)
- Visitor Centre extension including Barn Room and Cycle Hire
- Construction of 4 Log Cabins (2004)
- Natural Play Area and main Children's Play Area (2006)
- Community Arena (2008)
- 2 additional Log Cabins (2008)
- Crazy Golf (2009)
- Business Units (completion due May 2010)
- Bike Skills course (completion due March 2010)

#### Accreditation and accolades:

- Green Flag awarded in 2008 & retained in 2009
- Get Active in the Forest – winner of Best Sports Lottery Award 2008

#### **Evaluation**

The success of the Centre is monitored and evaluated in two ways:

1. Through the annual collation of qualitative data such as income generated through car parking, room bookings, accommodation hire, and other data such as cabin occupancy rates and the number of events/activities held. These figures are compared against the annual projections in the business plan to assess whether the Centre is meeting targets.
2. Through the collection of qualitative information such as consultation feedback, evaluation from events and activities, visitor surveys. This information guides the future development of the site and ensures that services and activities on offer continue to meet expectation.

#### **Prospects & Opportunities**

The site is continuing to develop and evolve as new opportunities and demands arise.

5 new purpose-built, sustainably constructed Business Units are under construction. They are aimed at new and existing micro-businesses who wish to take advantage of the commercial opportunities presented by the developing visitor and woodland economy in The National Forest and are expected to be ready for May 2010.

A Cycle Skills Trail is planned for 2010, which will be in addition to the existing surfaced path network within the Centre. The skills area and trails will build on the existing path infrastructure and offer a designated area for children and families to gain cycling confidence, road safety awareness and bike handling skills. It will provide a venue for the developing "Go Ride" programme, which trains up ride leaders to work with secondary school pupils across the District to promote safer cycling and road safety. The facility will also offer the potential for training weekends and events (e.g. duathlons, cyclocross) for local cycling/Triathlon clubs, or 'Demo Days' in The Glade performance arena.

#### **Key Learning/Advice for Others**

The Partnership ethos has been a key strength in the success of the project. A partnership approach has been critical in enabling the development of the site, accessing funding and achieving the original vision of the Centre.

Flexibility in the approach to delivery has also proved invaluable. This gives space for the project to develop to meet the changing needs and demands, not only of the users, but also the funders.

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Contact agrees that GreenSpace can publish this case study in either printed  
or digital media

✓ Yes

Contact is happy for their contact details to be published with the case study

✓ Yes

## Other Information Sources

[www.roslistonforestrycentre.co.uk](http://www.roslistonforestrycentre.co.uk)

[www.nationalforest.org](http://www.nationalforest.org)

[www.south-derbys.gov.uk](http://www.south-derbys.gov.uk)