

**Outdoor &
Woodland
Learning**
SCOTLAND



NETWORKING EVENT
FEB 2016, KINDROGAN
EVALUATION

BACKGROUND TO THE EVENT

WHAT?

The OWL Scotland Networking Event was a 3-day programme in which event participants had the opportunity to increase their skills and knowledge of outdoor and woodland learning through presentations and workshops. By the end of the event, the participants had the opportunity to network with others from the wider Outdoor and Woodland learning community.

WHEN?

The event took place over 3 days starting on the evening of Friday the 19th of February and finishing on afternoon of Sunday the 21st of February. Almost every participant stayed for the full 3 days which resulted in a great turnout.

WHERE?

The event took place at Kindrogan House which is situated in Enoch-dhu, 20 minutes from Pitlochry. This was a very remote location for the event to be held, however, the surrounding woodland facilities made workshops a great success. There were also multiple breakout rooms for presentations and indoor workshops.

WHO?

The event was booked up extremely quickly with 65 people (including workshops leaders and organisers) attending the event. There was also a waiting list due to popularity.

The participants who attended this event included; OWL cluster groups from all over Scotland, Forestry Commission staff, Early Years staff, Forest Education Initiative coordinators and private business and freelance consultants. There were even 3 participants from England who travelled up for the event.

EVENT ORGANISATION

Promotional material was created and the event was advertised on the OWL Scotland website, existing networks, and various bulletins and through the cluster group's chairs. The event coordinator and the event organiser then worked together to create the booking form and event programme.

The OWL coordinator had made contact with workshop leaders and presenters prior to this and confirmation from the leaders was made. As booking was making progress, it was then up to the event organiser to finalise bookings and liaise with the workshop leaders and presenters. Details from workshops leaders and presenters was collected along with any resources they would require and their expenses such as mileage. The contractor and the OWL coordinator then made a site visit and examined Kindrogan House and the surrounding areas to work out which location would best suit each workshop.

The OWL coordinator finalised bookings and room allocation and the event organiser then sent out final details such as risk assessments, directions and cancellation policies to the workshops leaders and presenters.

In terms of catering, Kindrogan House supplied breakfast, a packed lunch and dinner for each day and set meal times were stuck to.

On the first day of the event, registration was set up by the OWL coordinator and event organiser and delegate packs laid out. Maps were allocated and delegates were shown to their rooms. A general risk assessment was then carried out by the even organiser in and around Kindrogan House. The event organiser then liaised with workshop leaders and presenters, made sure they had everything they needed and then showed them to their workshop or presentation location so individual risk assessments could be carried out.

The event organiser was on hand during the 3 days in case any last minute problems were raised and to answer any questions workshop leaders, presenters or delegates may have.

DELEGATE FEEDBACK AND EVENT EVALUATION

On the final day of the event, time was set aside post workshops to allow the delegates to fill out an evaluation form. This was encouraged by the event organiser and OWL coordinator in order to let them know of what went well and what improvements could be made.

Setting this time aside allowed 91% of forms to be completed and returned – this was 53 out of the 58 forms handed out as 5 of the delegates did not stay until the Sunday afternoon.

The general feedback of the event was extremely positive with very few workshops and overall experiences scoring below 'excellent'. Below is the calculated results of individual workshop feedback, overall experiences and venue features such as catering, rooms and equipment.

FIGURES AND GRAPHS

Firstly, the delegates were asked if the event met its objectives. The objectives of the event were:

- By the end of the event the event participants will have had the opportunity to increase their skills and knowledge of outdoor and woodland learning through presentations and workshops
- By the end of the event the participants will have had the opportunity to network with others from the wider Outdoor and Woodland learning community

This scored an extremely positive response with 45 participants voting 'entirely' and the remaining 8 voting 'mostly'.

Daniel Moncrieff, the head of FSC Scotland asked the delegates to add in some feedback about whether or not their knowledge of the environment as a whole increased. Some of the responses were as follows;

- "I learnt a lot about the pine martins around Kindrogan house!"
- "My knowledge of deer and pine martins was expanded greatly!"

- “I learnt lots about the environment and surrounding area through chatting to the employees at Kindrogan House.”

The participants were then asked 6 questions about the Administration and the Venue. These were grouped under the two headings.

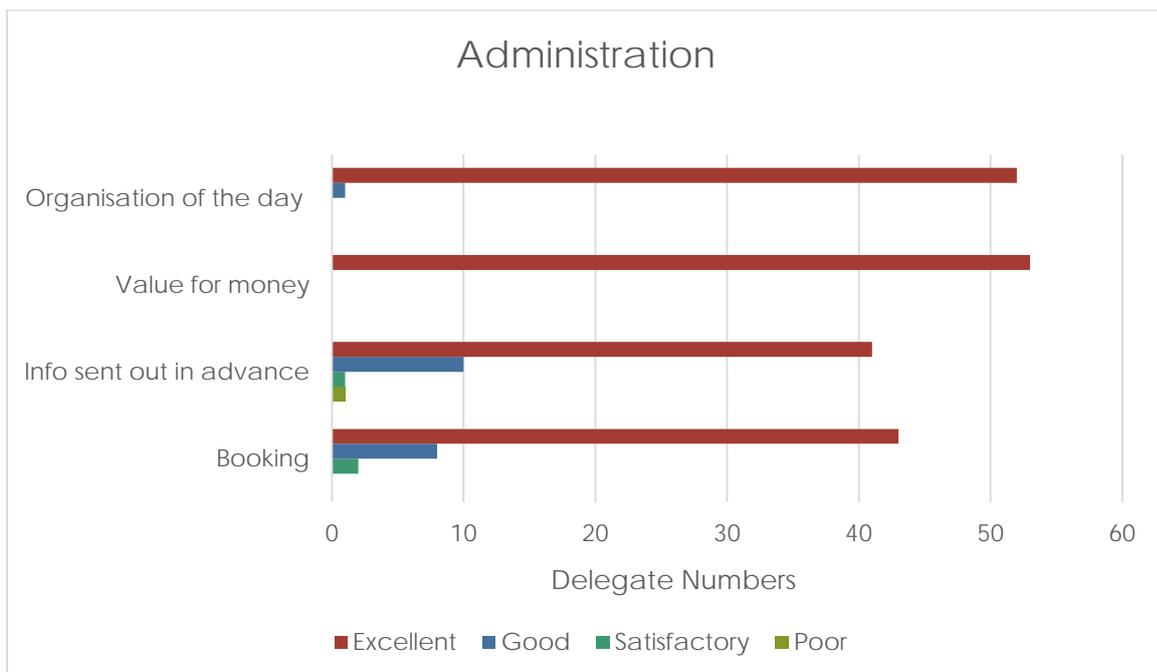
Administration

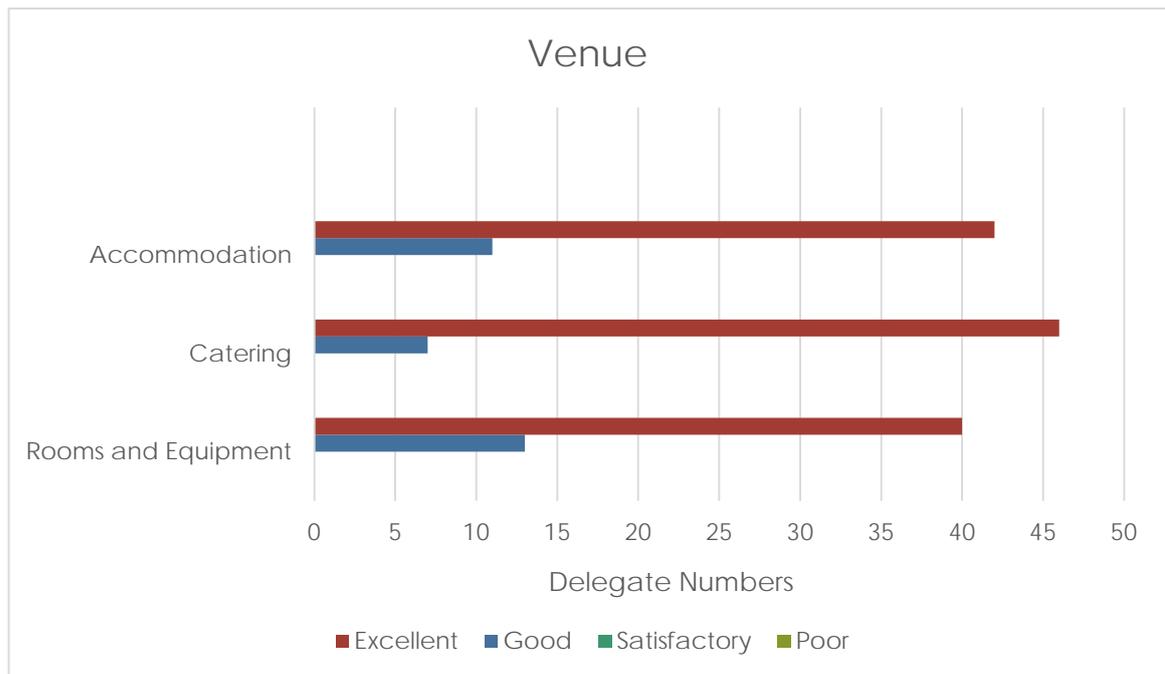
- Booking arrangements
- Information set out in advance
- Value for money

Venue

- Rooms and Equipment
- Catering
- Accommodation

Participants were asked to score these either, excellent; good; satisfactory or poor. All aspects scored at least 75% for ‘excellent’ however the graphs below show the response to these questions in more detail.

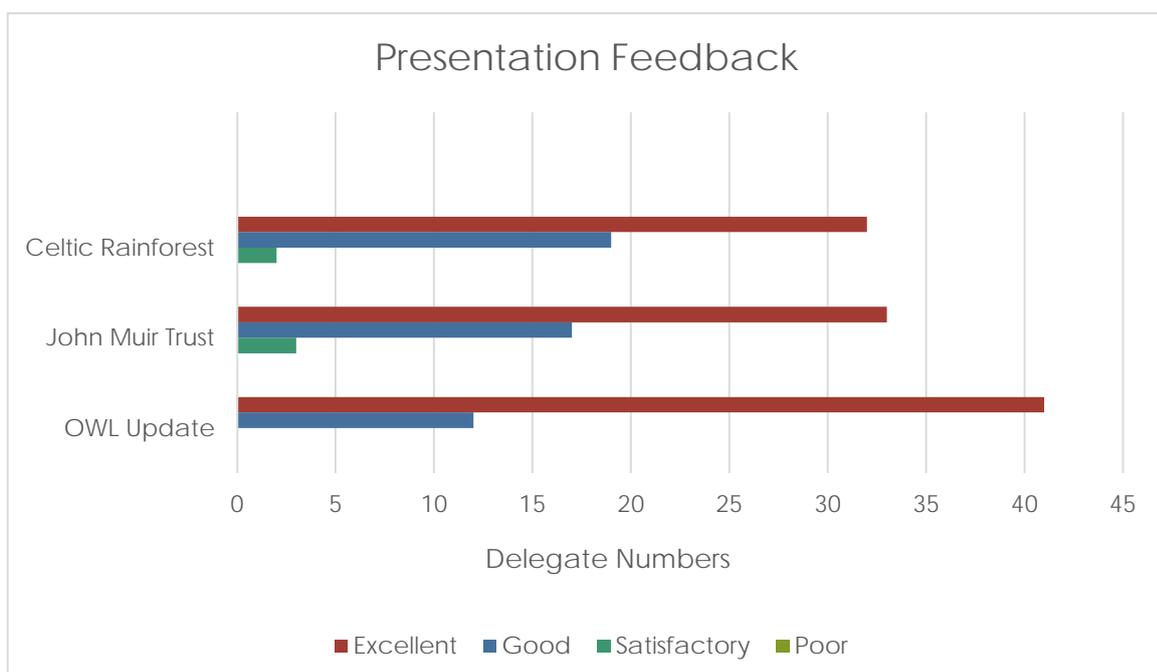




The catering was often highlighted throughout the evaluation forms, an aspect which delegates highly rated.

PRESENTATION FEEDBACK

There were 3 presentations over the course of the weekend which included, The John Muir Trust Award, The Celtic Rainforest and the OWL Scotland Update. Participants were asked to rate the quality and relevance of these presentations from Excellent – Poor. Results are shown below.



- The OWL Update – 41 participants scored this presentation excellent, 12 scored good and nobody scored the presentation satisfactory or poor.
- John Muir Trust Award – 33 participants scored excellent, 17 scored good, 3 scored satisfactory and nobody scored poor.
- The Celtic Rainforest – 32 participants scored excellent, 19 scored good, 2 scored satisfactory and nobody scored poor.

A presentation from the Flyde Forest School Group was added into the programme on the Saturday and they gave a great presentation of their time away in Norway visiting Kindergartens. The response from this presentation was extremely positive and as a whole the participants really enjoyed listening to this presentation and looking at the pictures from the trip.

Comments –

“The Norway trip was a new inspirational and supportive presentation”.

“Finding out about the John Muir Award was useful as we are hoping to help facilitate this soon”.

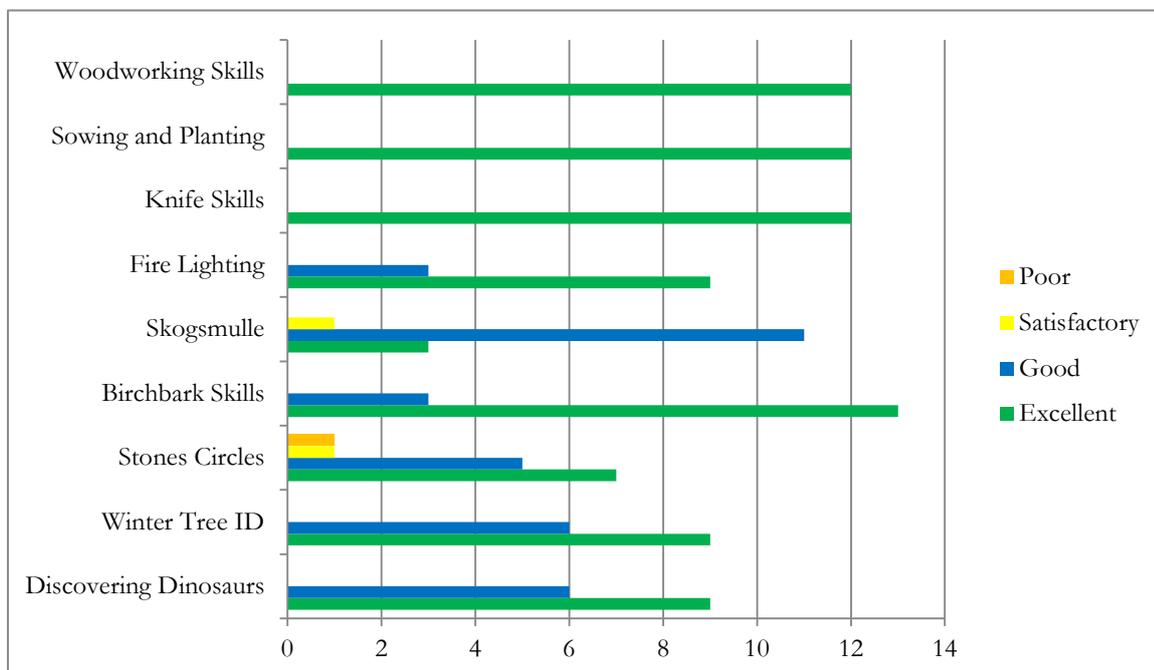
WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

The feedback given about the workshops was generally very positive, however, some proving more popular than others.

1. **Discovering Dinosaurs** – Of the 15 participants who scored this section; 9 scored excellent and 6 scored good. Nobody scored below this.
 - **Comments** – “Good activities in the Dinosaur Workshop – lots of ideas on games and ways to deliver”.
2. **Winter Tree ID** – Of the 15 participants who scored this section; 9 scored excellent and 6 scored good. Nobody scored below this.
 - **Comments** – “The Winter Tree ID workshops really stood out for me”.
3. **Stone Circles and Archaeology** – Out of the 14 participants who scored; 7 scored excellent, 5 scored good, 1 scored satisfactory and one scored poor.
4. **Birchbark Skills** – Out of the 16 who attended; 13 scored excellent and 3 scored good.
 - **Comments** – “I thoroughly enjoyed this workshop as it was very engaging, however, we would have liked a little more time”.
5. **Skogsmulle** – Out of the 15 who attended this workshop; 3 scored excellent, 11 scored good and 1 scored satisfactory.
 - **Comments** – “Brilliant transferable games and songs”.
6. **Fire lighting** – Out of the 12 who scored this section; 9 scored excellent, 3 scored good and nobody scored below this.
 - **Comments** – “I really liked how the fire lighting workshop linked with the curriculum”.
7. **Knife Skills** – All 12 who attended this workshop scored it excellent.
 - **Comments** – “I’ll be able to use and to teach the activities and games I learnt to the group I work with”.

8. **Sowing and Planting** - All 12 who attended this workshop scored it excellent.
9. **Woodworking skills** - All 12 who attended this workshop scored it excellent.
 - **Comments** – “Woodworking skills with Kim gave me great ideas which I can transfer to my work with children”.

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK FIGURES



WHAT DID PARTICIPANTS GAIN FROM THE EVENT?

- Learnt about the local environment through speaking to FSC staff
- The opportunity to network with other OWL cluster groups and to share ideas and advice with them.
- A whole range of new transferable skills through workshop attendance.

FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

As a whole, participants would not want to change much about the event at all. The venue and delivery was extremely popular, with some participants saying it has been the best venue yet. Others had recommended more signage throughout the house to locate rooms more easily. Some additional recommendations were;

- Workshops on country sports/animal tracking/herbal medicine/ wild foraging/fungi/willow weaving/bush craft/bird calls.
- A bigger social event in the evening and more times to talk with specific OWL groups
- Less bias towards curriculum, bit more working with adults/difficulties
- More time for practical workshops such as birch bark skills

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

After evaluating the feedback forms and examining any future suggestions from participants and workshops leaders, the contractor should consider the following aspects when planning any future OWL events:

- Ask permission for participant details to be shared to allow contact to be made post event if not made during.
- To allow more time for practical workshops or set aside time in the evening for projects to be finished.
- Quick e-mail confirmation of bookings and payments to allow travel and other arrangements to be made.
- Having another person as help on the days (such as a student on her placement) was extremely helpful and should be considered when planning future events.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks goes to all involved in the organisation and administration of the 2016 OWLS event. In particular a big thanks to,

- Staff at Kindrogan House for venue hire, catering and support before and during the event.
- The workshop leaders and presenters for providing interesting and engaging sessions.
- All of the participants for bringing and sharing their experience and skills.

USEFUL WEB LINKS

www.owlscotland.org

www.field-studies-council.org/

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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