



Learning Without Walls Newsletter

March/April Edition 2019

How to become part of the Northern Ireland Forest School community – Conference 24th September 2019 at Clondeboye Estate, Bangor



There has been a huge interest in schools, organisations and individuals wanting to become part of the Northern Ireland Forest School community.

As a result, we have been developing new systems and initiatives to cope with this surge in demand. Thank you for being patient with us.

We believe we have developed a programme that will suit your own individual need – shared education Forest School programme, 6-week Forest School leader programme, Forest School Awards and finally a Forest School mentoring programme.

A conference has been organised for the 24th September at 9.30am in Clondeboye Estate, Bangor to explain what a Forest School is,

what programmes are available. You will be able to register for your chosen programme on the day.

To find out more and register your place please click on the link below –



Claire Breen from St Colum’s Pre-School receives her Official Forest School plaque after achieving her Forest School Leader Level 3 Award.



Dr Rhonda Mitchell-Barrett receiving her award in her school grounds at Knockbreda Nursery School

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Environmental Impact

Article by Liz O'Connor – Forest Service

Please help protect our bluebell woods.

Bluebells have soft succulent leaves that are particularly sensitive to being trodden on. Once the leaves are damaged, they are unable to absorb the sunlight and so the plants cannot photosynthesise. This causes them to decline over the years.

By staying on the paths, you are helping to protect the carpet of bluebells for years to come.



Get to know bluebells close-up.

1.

- Bend down close to the bluebells and count how many bells there are on the stalks.

- What colour is the pollen?

2. - How many petals are there?

- What insects are visiting the flowers?

Be artistic with the bluebells.

–Draw them.

–Paint them.

–Compose a song about them.

–Write a poem about them.

–Dance for them.

Photograph the bluebells.

“Avoid damage by shooting from a low angle. It's easy to create the illusion that a person is sitting or standing amongst the bluebells when they are actually out of harms way on a footpath. Look for bends in the paths or junctions if you want flowers in the foreground as well as behind your subject.”

Hugh Mothersole (photographer)

You are not the only photographer in town so be considerate of others.

Protect the bluebells.

Build some 'bluebell protectors'

to keep people and dogs off the plants. Especially at corners and places where the constant treading has already weakened the bluebells. Just gather sticks as you go along and place them at the edge of the path.

(If you want to build a den look for the places in the forest where you won't damage the bluebells.)

Enjoy your walk with bluebells.

–On a warm day the smell of

bluebells will surround you.

–Look for the occasional 'white' bluebell.

–Walking in a natural environment can reduce your stress levels.

–Take time to stop and stare

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NIFSA Membership

As a small independent charity operating in Northern Ireland we rely enormously on your membership.

Annual membership is £100 and we believe offers good value for money.

Follow the link to subscribe now!

<https://www.forestschoolawards.org/cgi-bin/main.cgi?page=NIFSAMembership;vat=1544014101>

What do you get for your membership?

- a) Access to Member's Section of the Forest School Awards website which gives information on outdoor lessons, research and much more.
- b) A section on the website exclusively for your own organisation.
- c) Heavily discounted forest school sessions at Clondeboye Estate, Bangor.
- d) Area to record Forest School activities and produce Eco-Schools Reports.
- e) Free attendance for 2 members to the annual NIFSA conference.
- f) Monthly Learning Without Walls Newsletter.
- g) Entry into the Nature Rangers programme to encourage you to do 6 Forest School sessions every year.
- h) Opportunity to train and mentor other staff within your organisation as Forest School Leaders for only £30 Open College Network registration fee.

- i) We are constantly developing new initiatives and forming new partnerships. We are currently working on an accreditation programme and other exciting programmes. Watch this space.

Forest School Family



Thank you to Lorraine Brown, Assistant Manager of Clondeboye Nature Rangers, for starting the NIFSA Forest School Family Facebook site.

<https://www.facebook.com/NIFSA-Forest-School-Family-307581329759766/>

Click on the link above and like and follow the page. There will be regular posts to give you inspirational ideas when you are visiting local parks with your family.

Learning Without Walls statistics

Since September 2016, Learning Without Walls has accredited 40 qualified Forest Schools, training with an additional 129 schools and groups, registered 151 Forest School Families and facilitated 32,568 children learning outside.

