

Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge

The Activity Plan

The Vision for the Project

The heritage of High Lodge understood, cared for and celebrated by communities with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to help manage and enjoy it, sustaining a landscape that is accessible to all, as a working forest that is also culturally and naturally rich and beautiful.

The Purpose of the Activity Plan

The purpose of this Activity Plan is to better understand what current visitors and potential audiences want from High Lodge, in order to inform the presentation of the heritage of the site in a way which is meaningful, accessible and engaging for them.

This is primarily due to be achieved via the delivery of a new all-weather heritage trail around the High Lodge site, which will feature stopping points along the way, a range of interpretative material and a series of one-off and longer-term learning opportunities.

Within the context of this Activity Plan, the term 'audience' is used to describe all of the people who might come into contact with the heritage of High Lodge through this project. This audience includes current users and visitors to the High Lodge site, along with people attending events and taking part in activities. It also includes people who could become visitors, attendees, volunteers and users of the site in the future.

In order to maximise audience participation at the site, during the project there is a need to develop new and wider audiences which better reflect the diversity in the communities around High Lodge. This means engaging groups that are currently under-represented in High Lodge's audience profile, and/or groups who do not currently access this and other sites managed by the Forestry Commission.

In addition to developing new audiences, the project will also attempt to increase the level of engagement of High Lodge's existing visitors, providing new resources that enable these visitors to better understand the site's heritage.

The Plan seeks to put in place activities which will change people's perceptions of heritage to broaden its appeal and ensure that interest generated by the project results in sustained audience engagement at High Lodge beyond the lifetime of the project.

Contents of the Activity Plan, to meet the Aims and Objectives.

Executive Summary of the Project

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Background to the Project
- 1.2 The Aims and Objectives of the Activity Plan

2. Site Details and Context

- 2.1 Location and the Surrounding Community
- 2.2 Site Description
- 2.3 Historical Context
- 2.4 Heritage Context
- 2.5 Community Context

3. Limiting Factors

- 3.1. Organisation & Policy
- 3.2. Features and Facilities

4 Assessment of Current Provision for 'heritage awareness'

- 4.1 The heritage information currently provided for visitors
- 4.2 Forestry Commission Staff knowledge of the heritage
- 4.3 Partner and Stakeholder knowledge of the heritage
- 4.4 The current staff capability and resource to deliver heritage at High Lodge
- 4.5 The constraints from archaeological, wildlife and forestry operations

5 Logistics

- 5.1 A summary of how the route for the heritage trail has been chosen
- 5.2 The heritage features included on the Trail

6 Analysis of Current and Potential Audiences

- 6.1 Current Audiences at High Lodge Centre
- 6.2 Excluded Audiences
- 6.3 Barriers to engaging with audiences

7 Strategies for engaging with Current and New Audiences

- 7.1 Developing the Audiences
- 7.2 Recommendations to break down the barriers to access and participation and how these will be implemented

8 Strategy for the Provision of Learning

- 8.1 The Current Learning Provision at High Lodge and the Forestry Commission's National Strategy.
- 8.2 Current Learning Resources
- 8.3 Analysis of Existing Learning Opportunities for Non-School Visitors
- 8.4 The Learning Resources delivered by the Project.
- 8.5 Improving infrastructure for School Visits
- 8.6 New Learning Opportunities for Non-School Visitors

9 Strategy for Volunteering

- 9.1 Review of the volunteering opportunities within the Forestry Commission and at High Lodge.
- 9.2 Assessment of ways in which to reach those individuals and communities who are not the 'traditional' sources of volunteers or do not have a 'volunteering culture'
- 9.3 Recruitment of Volunteers
- 9.4 Consultation with Forestry Commission staff about their perception of the project's volunteering opportunities and the resources available to support these.
- 9.5 Review of volunteering programmes provided by partners, stakeholders and other heritage organisations in the area, to learn from and explore ways of working together.
- 9.6 The Volunteering Opportunities provided by the Project.
- 9.7 Retention of Volunteers as a legacy of the project.

10 Strategy for Training and Skills' Development.

- 10.1 The current training provision for volunteers at High Lodge and for Forestry Commission staff and consultants and gaps in this provision.
- 10.2 Analysis of the barriers to training and skills' development'
- 10.3 Consultation with existing and potential volunteers and Forestry Commission staff as to their training needs.
- 10.4 The delivery of training and skills' development and the resources required during delivery and after the project has ended.
- 10.5 Evaluation and Monitoring of the Training Delivery.

11 Strategy for the Delivery of Interpretation.

- 11.1 The Aims and Objectives of the Interpretation Strategy
- 11.2 The current interpretation of heritage at High Lodge.
- 11.3 Considerations, Constraints and Resources for Interpretation
- 11.4 Barriers to accessing interpretation and how to overcome them:
- 11.5 The Audiences for Interpretation and their Needs and Aspirations
- 11.6 How the Activities will contribute to the Delivery of the Interpretation
- 11.7 Delivery of Interpretation: Where and How and Fulfilling the 'Guiding Principles'
- 11.8 Management and Maintenance
- 11.9 Monitoring and Evaluation of Interpretation

12 Strategy for Publicity and Promotion

- 12.1 The current provision for publicity and promotion at High Lodge
- 12.2 The delivery of publicity and promotion for the project.

13 Strategy for Monitoring and Evaluating the Project.

- 13.1 Monitoring of the Project
- 13.2 Evaluation of the Project
- 13.3 Measuring Success

14 Conclusion to the Activity Plan.

15 Bibliography.

16 The Action Plan.

Executive Summary : 'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge'

The project will create an all-ability multi-user trail through Thetford Forest at High Lodge to explore, reveal and interpret its ten thousand years of landscape history. The trail, 4.2 kilometres, will be accessible to everyone as it will have a smooth surface, resting and shelter points and be suitable for families and less experienced cyclists and those with disabilities.

The Trail will explore the landscape features which make up the heritage of High Lodge. It will show how people have shaped that landscape, from prehistoric wildwood clearance to medieval rabbit farming; from gunflint mining in the eighteenth century to the creation of Thetford Forest in the twentieth and how its present-day management balances the needs of timber production with those of wildlife and recreation.

The project will deliver a range of benefits for heritage, people and communities.

For Heritage, the project will provide

- in-depth information about the heritage of High Lodge for the first time as a result of archaeological investigation and archival research.
- better management of the heritage features as a result of increased knowledge and greater awareness of their significance.
- in-depth information about the natural heritage of High Lodge as a result of wildlife surveys at each season.
- better management of habitats for wildlife as a result of increased knowledge and greater awareness of species density and distribution.

For People, the project will provide

- access to the forest by means of an all-ability, multi-user trail which will enable everyone to experience the forest environment in all seasons and weathers.
- interpretation of the heritage features on the trail with a virtual past touch screen; audio listening posts; a downloadable trail leaflet and information panels with seasonal themes to engage and interest all ages and abilities.
- training in new skills, with thirty training workshops covering archaeological, archival research, wildlife identification and visitor management skills.
- opportunities to participate in activities to discover 'the hidden heritage' with thirty six day schools and five special events.

For communities, the project will provide

- access to the forest environment and opportunities for participation in the activities for those with physical disabilities; those with limited sight and hearing; with health limitations; mental health issues and learning challenges.

- an enhanced visitor experience for families and children and for local residents and holiday-makers.
- schools and further education students with the learning materials and activities appropriate to their needs.
- a new 'heritage destination' and new activities for special interest groups.
- the opportunity to visit High Lodge and enjoy the forest environment for low-income families.
- the opportunity to learn new skills and participate as a volunteer for those who are unskilled or unemployed.

The planting of the forest and its management for wildlife, people and archaeology has protected the historic landscape beneath the trees since 1919. This project will provide opportunities for everyone to access this landscape and enjoy uncovering their heritage.

In 2019 the Forestry Commission celebrates its 100 year anniversary and this has particular importance for the heritage of High Lodge. From the Board of Timber Supply removing the plantation trees from the local estates for trench props in World War 1 to the Forestry Commission purchasing the Santon Downham Estate in 1922 (as its second landholding in the UK), the project's aims and objectives enhance the centenary. The activities planned for delivery of the project include revealing High Lodge's role in those early years of the Forestry Commission. The centenary celebrations and the celebration for the formal opening of the Heritage Trail will perfectly complement each other in 2019.

The Background to the Project

Consultation with and feedback from visitors to High Lodge over several years has shown that there is a need for a year-round facility to enable everyone to access the landscape of the forest and learn about it; help more people enjoy the wider forest that surrounds the visitor centre hub and improve and diversify people's enjoyment of the forest and understanding of its heritage landscape.

Accordingly, the Forestry Commission submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Round One Pass and a year's Development Phase funding and these were awarded in August 2015.

This Activity Plan has been supported by the strategies produced by consultants working during the Development Phase.

The Aims and Objectives of the Activity Plan

The aims of the Activity Plan are to

- provide for the engagement of the public as individuals and communities in the 'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge' Project
- help people of all ages and abilities learn new skills and to train them for active roles in heritage-related projects
- sustain the project's outcomes as a legacy.

The Objectives include:

- understanding and providing for the needs of current and new audiences
- understanding and providing for the needs of volunteer engagement and participation
- understanding and providing for the needs of skills' training for both staff and volunteers.
- understanding and providing for the needs of learning opportunities, both formal and informal learning
- understanding and providing for interpretation of the heritage
- using this understanding to provide a range of activities to help everyone enjoy, learn about and participate in the heritage of High Lodge.

2. Site Details and Context

2.1 Location and the Surrounding Community

2.2 Site Description

2.3 Historical Context

2.4 Heritage Context

2.5 Community Context

2.1 Location and the Surrounding Community

Thetford Forest, covering 19 000 hectares in North Suffolk and South Norfolk, is England's largest lowland pine forest. It is an entirely man-made landscape, owing its origins to the First World War when Britain had great difficulty in meeting the wartime demand for timber and half of all the productive trees were felled in just two years, from 1914-1916.

To ensure that Britain would not find itself facing another national timber shortage, on 1 September 1919 the Forestry Act came into being, setting up the Forestry Commission with responsibility to promote forestry, develop new forests and produce timber for woods in the United Kingdom.

High Lodge is situated less than six miles from Thetford and one mile from Brandon on the B1107. It is easily-accessible from the A11 and is 36 miles from Norwich; 37 miles from Cambridge and 19 miles from Bury St Edmunds.

Thus, its catchment area varies from the largely affluent Cambridge-Bury St Edmunds corridor to the towns of Thetford and Brandon with multi-deprivation indicators.

Sections 6 and 7 of this Activity Plan provide analysis of the catchment area existing and potential audiences.

Thetford is the main town, located on the A11 in the centre of the character area. Brandon is the only other settlement of any size, though the larger towns of Swaffham to the north and Mildenhall and Bury St Edmunds to the south lie just outside the core area. Further to the south and west are Cambridge and Ely, both centres of significant population and with rail and road links to London.

There are a number of major roads through the landscape – the A1065, A1066, A1075, A1088 and the A11 dual carriageway. These roads bring a strong sense of movement to the landscape but away from these transport corridors, the area remains still and peaceful and there remain some large, remote areas without any form of built development or access routes.

Other visitor attractions in the surrounding community compared to High Lodge

Site	Facilities	Accessibility	Charges	Information/Comparison
Brandon Country Park	30 acres of managed parkland, a mausoleum, lawns; pond; historic walled garden. Visitor Centre has a small cafe	Train Station 1.5 miles; Bus 500m;	Car Parking £1.00 for up to 2 hours, £2.00 between 08:00 and 20:00.	Three nature trails level surfaced. 8 mile cycle trail connects with High Lodge Centre. Lower charges for car parking/site entry but fewer facilities and smaller cafe.
Elveden Estate 'Courtyard Complex'	AA Rosette restaurant, food hall, home and garden shops selling products from 50 local artisans and artists.	By car or bike	None	Nature trail for children with an activity pack costing £1.50 and includes a tick list of natural objects to find and animal silhouettes to spot and identify. Upmarket site aimed at higher socio-economic groups.
Grimes Graves	The only Neolithic flint mine open to visitors in Britain with 400 pits and a small exhibition area. illustrating the history of Stone Age flint-mining.	Able-bodied visitors can descend 9 metres by ladder into one excavated shaft. Children under 5 years of age are not allowed	Adult £4.00, child (5-15) £2.40. Family (2 adults, 3 children) £10.40	Also a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a habitat for rare plants and fauna. Complimentary in terms of heritage.
Lakenheath Fen RSPB Reserve	Large wetland, consisting mainly of reedbeds and	On the Sustrans cycle route (used by the Hereward Way); accessible by	Centre open 9 am to 5 pm every day. RSPB members have free car	An events programme throughout the year; family explorer backpacks and trail guides.

	<p>grazing marshes which attracts rare bird species.</p> <p>Visitor centre with information; self-service drinks and snacks</p>	train at a request stop; footpath links the visitor centre with station.	parking; otherwise, the charge is £4 per motor vehicle.	<p>Better-resourced to deliver wildlife education.</p> <p>High Lodge must deliver a different 'education package' that is unique to its site.</p>
Lynford Arboretum	<p>Formerly part of the Lynford Hall estate with features which reflect its parkland origins.</p> <p>National collection of conifers owned by the Forestry Commission.</p>	Disabled car parking. Footpaths are suitable for wheelchair users	None	<p>Day to day management carried out by Friends of Thetford Forest volunteers.</p> <p>An area of quiet recreation which draws visitors who find High Lodge too busy at peak times.</p>
Thetford Castle.	Medieval motte and bailey castle; second largest man-made mound in England. Scheduled Monument now forms part of a local park.	Within public park	None	<p>Purpose-designed playground within Castle Park for children from two years up to sixteen including those with sensory, mental or physical disabilities</p> <p>Theme of the younger children's area was designed around the history of the town including a castle and walkways which are coloured like the river. The playground includes a communal area with seating for parents and grandparents to sit and watch the children.</p> <p>Free access but play offer not as extensive or adventurous as at High Lodge.</p>
The Priory of Our Lady of Thetford	One of most important monasteries in medieval East Anglia. Founded in the early 12th century, for 400 years it was the burial place of the Earls and Dukes of Norfolk	<p>Open daily from dawn until dusk. No charge. No designated disabled access but site generally level.</p> <p>Cycle; bus; train; walk from town centre.</p>	Small free car park	Unmanned site and no guides; interpretation panels.
Ancient House Museum, Thetford	Grade I listed Tudor merchant's house in which exhibitions about local area's history.	<p>Ground floor, shop, garden and toilet accessible to wheelchair users Open Tuesday – Saturday.</p> <p>Free parking on White Hart Street. Ten minutes walk from the train and bus stations</p>	<p>Adult: £4.20 Concession*: £4.00 Child (4-18): £3.20.</p> <p>Family (1 adult + children): £10.50 Family (2 adults + children): £14.30</p>	<p>Has excellent displays about heritage of the area which will complement the High Lodge Project.</p> <p>Will be used as a venue for publicity and to engage people away from the High Lodge site itself.</p> <p>Friends of Ancient House Museum will be invited to join and benefit from training workshops.</p>

Charles Burrell Museum	Housed in Burrells original paint shop, tells the story of the Charles Burrell Works – a Thetford business that once employed 350 people building traction engines, agricultural machinery, steam trucks wagons and tram engines.	Free parking nearby on White Hart Street. Ten minutes walk from the train and bus stations. April to October, Tuesdays and Saturdays Mezzanine level that is only accessible by stairs.	Free	Entirely volunteer administered. Possible competition for volunteers. Will be invited to join and benefit from training workshops.
Dad's Army Museum	Dedicated to the popular BBC comedy series Dad's Army. Trail linking film locations. Small cafe.	Free parking nearby on White Hart Street. Ten minutes walk from train and bus stations. Saturdays and Tuesdays in summer holidays.	Free	Entirely volunteer administered. Possible competition for volunteers. Will be invited to join and benefit from training workshops.
Thetford Warren Lodge	Medieval work and dwelling place of warrener of Thetford Warren	Not accessible by wheelchairs; path very sandy and uneven. Exterior only viewable.	Free car park nearby.	Access to interior by arrangement with Historic England. Complimentary in terms of heritage.
Weeting Castle	Despite its name, Weeting Castle was never fortified. The rectangular moat; it was built to demonstrate the wealth and power of the de Plais family.	Open dawn to dusk	Free. Small free car park.	Part of the area's heritage but no direct links to that of High Lodge.
Weeting Heath Norfolk Wildlife Trust	One of the best site in the country to watch the rare and unusual stone curlew. Visitor centre displays about the heathland and stone curlews. Hot drinks, ice creams, snacks and books available from the visitor centre.	Visitor centre and toilets both with wheelchair access	Gift aid admission: £4.25 for adults, free for NWT members and children.	Numerous rare plants and invertebrates are also found on Weeting Heath, which is one of the finest remaining Breckland grass heaths. Access limited to waymarked route and to hides.

2.2 Site Description

High Lodge, built in 1992, is now the visitor hub for Thetford Forest, providing recreational facilities for over 400 000 people annually and there is open access across the Forest (except for leasehold land) as part of the Public Forest Estate.

This is complimented by its wildlife heritage as Thetford Forest is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and an European-designated Special Protection Area (SPA) for its biodiversity and especially for its nesting nightjar and woodlark.

The Forestry Commission manages the Forest by balancing the needs of timber production with those of wildlife, people and archaeology and it is this multi-purpose management which is characteristic of the forests that make up the Public Forest Estate.

Brown tourist signs are present on all the main approach roads whilst large banners with clear signage direct you into the High Lodge entrance from the roadside.

There is a site entry fee applicable to visit High Lodge and prices are shown on the large banner at the entrance. Site Entry fees are charged per vehicle and cover site services and facilities, which includes parking. There are electronic ticket barriers on the entrance road with clear on screen instructions. Payment is made on site, at the end of a visit and tickets can be paid for at the Information Point or at the Pay Station close by with cash and card payments. Though there are no ATM cash machines on site, Bike Art, the Café and Go Ape! do have credit card facilities.

Annual membership can also be purchased at the Information Point, this is called the 'Discovery Pass' and is currently priced at £58 for a year (correct for 2016). This allows unlimited access to High Lodge by one car and includes local and national offers. There are also membership schemes for minibuses and coaches.

The Information Point is the main reception. Access is at ground level and there are no doors to the Information Point.

Accessible car parking spaces are available and are shown on the direction banners to either the 'Badger' or 'Adder' car parks. The car park surfaces are typically firm earth and stone and there are high level floodlights within both of these car parks.

The Information Point and toilets are approx 50metres away and are connected by smooth tarmac pathways, which are around 2metres wide. There are no steps on site but there are shallow ramps that lead into the Café and Bike Art cycle shop. However, as you leave the immediate area of the High Lodge patio, pathways become typical forest tracks which can be very wet and muddy and uneven, making access difficult.

High Lodge offers the free use of a mobility scooter, powered wheelchair and self propelled manual wheelchair, which was kindly donated by Friends of Thetford Forest (www.fotf.org.uk). Pre-booking is recommended and the website carries details at 'Planning your visit', - 'facilities for the less able.' (www.forestry.gov.uk/highlodge). Once away from the High Lodge patio, the path surfaces are not recommended for wheelchair users.

Toilet facilities are located at either side of the Information Point; both male and female toilets have low level counters, lever taps and step up stools, which can help all ages and capabilities to use the facilities.

High Lodge is not well-served by public transport. There is no regular bus service which calls at High Lodge.

The nearest train stations are Brandon, which is 3.3 miles away or Thetford at 6.2 miles away. Local taxi companies are located outside Thetford train station and Brandon has local taxi services where you can arrange your travel to High Lodge. Local taxi companies will drop off and collect from High Lodge and Site Entry fees will apply and can be paid for on site at the Information Point.

Facilities at High Lodge include:

Cycle trails: There are four trails ranging from 3.5 miles to 11 miles with variable surfaces ranging from earth and imported stone to roots and sandier conditions and a mix of flat and inclined sections with some having tricky descents and drop offs.

High Lodge also has a Pump Track which is a closed loop circuit of around 500metres with rolling features and tightly bermed corners to help those looking to build up their off road cycling skills and confidence.

Walking trails: There are four trails ranging from 1 to 6 miles and the conditions vary from surfaced sections (in the immediate vicinity of High Lodge) to typical forest conditions of earth and exposed roots which at times can be very wet and muddy.

Activity Trails: The current Activity trail is the 'Stickman Trail' (correct at February 2016) and is a self lead trail that is signposted from the Information Point, which helps explore the play areas. The trail has a mixture of surfaces from earth and stone to softer forest conditions with some exposed roots. Activity packs are available to buy from the Information Point. The trail is aimed at 3 to 10 year olds and is due to end in May 2016 when it may be replaced by another activity trails but these are linked to Forestry Commission national initiatives.

Wildplay: The entrance for the Wildplay area is approx 50metres from the patio and main thoroughfare, with the entrance identified by a large overhead banner and brightly-coloured map boards and information detailing where pieces of equipment are located and what to expect. Within this area there are over 50 different pieces of play equipment with a number of them suitable for those who are less able.

The Sound Trail can be found at the furthest point from the Information Point (approx 350metres). A variety of musical instruments can be found on the trail, such as a xylophone, sound cushions, windpipes and dance chimes, with the later two items both at ground level. This multi-sensory trail is an interactive and engaging part of the Wildplay collection.

Bike Art: the franchised hire bike and purchase facility with a good range of cycle products. Bike Art is approx 100metres away from the Information Point and connected by smooth tarmac paths. The access to Bike Art is via a wide open gateway, which leads on to a hard stoned yard.

Bike Art also offers a small range of up to seven different specially adapted bicycles and equipment for those who are less able. Friends of Thetford Forest provided the funding to purchase this specialised equipment so that visitors are able to choose and hire different bikes suitable for their needs. However, use of these bikes is currently restricted to the immediate vicinity of High Lodge because the sandy and uneven surface of the existing forest trails makes it very difficult to venture further into the Forest.

Go Ape! Go Ape! Tree Top Adventure is a physical and challenging course that requires participants to wear a harness and then climb, overcome different obstacles and use zip wires. It takes between 2 to 3 hours to complete. This course can accommodate individuals who may be less able or have mental health needs but participants must be able to lift themselves and move around the course.

For visitors who have learning difficulties or are visual impaired there is an option for two responsible adults to guide or supervise a participant around the course. Tree Top Junior is another shorter option to accommodate younger participants or those who may not have the fitness to complete the larger course.

Catering: The franchised Café is located between Bike Art and Go Ape! and smooth tarmac paths connect the Café from the Badger and Adder car parks. Outdoor seating is provided with wooden benches suitable for wheelchair users. Two large umbrellas provide an undercover eating option. A shallow ramp leads into the entrance to the Café/Pantry.

Event catering is offered for a range of bookings, such as weddings, birthday parties and meetings. The Oak Lodge building is often used. This is a separate single level building that is located around 200m away from the Café. There is a car park immediately outside Oak Lodge, which is made up of small 'pea shingle' over a hard tarmac surface.

Supplementary attractions are located around the site and operate mainly between March and November on weekends and school holidays; weather permitting. These activities are payable by cash on the day. These include:

Pony Rides, provided by Brecks Treks offers a short or long guided trek available on a first come, first-served basis. The rides take place on typical forest ground of earth and sand. Participants with learning and mental health needs can be catered for.

Lookout Archery provides a complete archery experience for beginners to intermediate archers, offering 'have a go' sessions but also welcoming group booking for birthdays, school visits and family days out.

Highline Adventure specialises in delivering dynamic, high impact mobile outdoor activities and brings a mobile climbing wall or a mobile spider mountain and slide to High Lodge subject to weather and availability.

Battlefield Live. The Battlefield Live terrain is played outside on softer forest ground conditions and is played in much the same way as paintball, with various activities available with team mission objectives.

Other attractions and events

Each year High Lodge hosts a range of events, including:

Concerts: part of the national 'Forest Live' concerts, where up to 10,000 concert goers can enjoy an open air concert on the large grassed field arena at High Lodge.

Accessible parking is provided close by within the Badger and Adder car parks and smooth tarmac paths connect to the designated arena entrance and to the accessible viewing platform. Accessible toilets are located next to the viewing platform inside the concert arena.

Friends of Thetford Forest volunteers have responsibility for the accessible parking from parking the cars on arrival; helping audience members to access the designated entrance and viewing platform to offering assistance back to the car parks at the end of the concerts and exiting the site. In 2016, seventeen volunteers gave 120 hours to the four nights of the concerts.

Barbeques: There are eight barbeques on site that are available to hire. They are all free standing and are approximately 90cm tall. They are positioned around the main grassed area with barbecues 3 and 4 the closest to the Oak Lodge path meaning easier access by wheelchair or mobility scooter.

'The High Lodge Field' is the main grassed area where visitors are able to play games, picnic or relax. It can be bumpy and wet and challenging in a wheelchair. Beneath the surface is the 'hidden history' of its former uses.

Active Forest is a partnership agreement with Sport England to encourage people of all ages and abilities to engage in sporting activity within the forest. At High Lodge there are two table tennis tables and a volley ball net. Both are 'turn up and have go' activities.

Additional Information:

Assistance dogs are welcome on site.

The signage on site is a mixture of banners, wooden material, and plastic typically in dark green with lighter text in cream and orange colours. Pictograms and illustrations are used in some locations.

Way-marked trails are colour-coded and have directional arrows on named coloured plastic discs.

Within the local area there are several places to stay which have designated and particular access and disability provision. The list is available on the Forestry Commission website and from the Information Point.

2.3 Historical Context

When the Forestry Commission was created in 1919 to ensure that there would be no future national timber shortage, it was land for Thetford Forest that was among the first purchased.

By the end of the First World War, the economic position of the landed estates across England was generally very poor with low agricultural prices, low rents and hence low incomes. In Breckland, farms were without tenants and farmland was derelict.

At the same time, the Government was aware of the nation's timber shortage, with timber stocks at the lowest ever recorded. In July 1919, the Forestry Commission was set up to promote all aspects of forestry and to acquire land on which to plant the trees. Some of its initial purchases were in Breckland: a small area near Swaffham in 1922 and then the 4 944 acre Downham Hall Estate in 1924, including High Lodge Farm, bought for £2 4s 8d an acre.

Scots and Corsican Pine were the two predominant species planted, as best suited to the low rainfall and the sandy soils. They were then managed through the processes of brashing and thinning to ensure that the maximum volume of timber was produced.

Though the Forest was planted with the single purpose of growing trees, by the 1980s it was gradually developing a more complex, multi-faceted role, taking into account wildlife habitats and public access for recreation.

In 2000, the Countryside & Rights of Way Act (CROW) was introduced and provided new access rights on areas of land such as mountain and moorland and the Forestry Commission voluntarily dedicated the Public Forest Estate in England as open access land. With increased public access and use of the forest rides and tracks, came the need for a Visitor Centre and in 1992 this was opened at High Lodge.

In terms of human evolution, Thetford Forest is a 'new creation' and is not yet one hundred years old. It is essentially a modern environment but, paradoxically, contains within it many features from ten thousand years of landscape history, conserved and largely hidden beneath its trees.

It is this 'hidden heritage' which the project will explore and reveal for everyone to access, understand and enjoy.

2.4 Heritage Context

The heritage that the project focuses on is the landscape at High Lodge, Thetford Forest where there is evidence of human activity from the prehistoric to the present day. Much of the evidence is not immediately obvious as it has to be sought within the trees and lacks interpretation. Visitors are not aware of the long history of the site, a heritage that is a microcosm of the wider landscape history of the Brecks.

By the **Neolithic period**, c3 500 to 2 100BC, flint began to be used extensively and sourced from mines, including the known site at Grimes Graves only five miles from High Lodge. There are flint pits around High Lodge which may be Neolithic and the project will carry out research to test this theory. Certainly, Neolithic people were working with flints at High Lodge, leaving as evidence **waste flakes and pot-boiler pebbles** and mapping of where these are found will be included.

The process of land clearance for cultivation and grazing continued during the **Bronze Age** and these people have left the earliest visible earthworks in the forest: the **burial mounds** known as round barrows or tumuli. In fact, as areas of the mature trees are felled, more barrows are coming to light, preserved among the plantations, with several close to High Lodge. Mapping of the barrows; comparison of shape and size and any special wildlife will be part of the project.

In the medieval period, the farming of rabbits for their meat and their fur in designated areas called '**warrens**' transformed the landscape.

The name 'High Lodge' is especially significant as it denotes the warrener's dwelling place on the highest point of the warren. (it occurs in several locations on the Brecks). In fact, the Oak Lodge Community Building, within High Lodge, is the site of the medieval **Downham Warren Lodge**.

The perimeter banks of Downham Warren, at almost eight miles in length, survive as visible features in the landscape, among the best surviving **warren banks** in the whole of the Brecks. However, there is no site information to explain their significance.

Sheep often shared the warrens with the rabbits and the grazing areas were referred to as 'sheepwalks', a term found on the 1791 map of the Cadogan Estate which included High Lodge.

The **Agricultural Revolution** sought to convert the Brecks to arable by marling the land, spreading chalk or clay to improve it. There are several marl pits around High Lodge, together with evidence of former fields enclosed from the heath. Belts and plantations of Scots Pine were established for longer-term profit; to stabilise the sandy soil and provide game cover for shooting; some of these veteran trees survive. Marl pits and veteran trees will be recorded during the project.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the area around Thetford (Thetford Chase) became an important royal hunting ground, used by Kings James and Charles. The abundance of game was a strong attraction, added to low land prices and a relatively sparse population, for the establishment of 'parkland estates' with the houses often being described as 'shooting boxes'. Vestiges of the landscape of the Santon Downham Estate survive in the vicinity of High Lodge and will be investigated in detail.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Brandon flint-knappers had the sole contact to supply the British Army with its gunflints. Some of the flint was mined at Lingheath, close to High Lodge, and the horse-shoe shaped depressions of the **flint mines** cover a wide area.

In the **First World War**, the Government's Home Grown Timber Committee purchased and converted standing timber and built sawmills. This included the requisition of timber on the Santon Downham Estate and a narrow gauge railway was built to take the timber from High Lodge to the sawmill by the River Little Ouse while the Canadian Army Timber Corps was billeted in Santon Downham Hall. The project will try to establish the route of the railway and seek archival evidence for it.

In the 1930s, High Lodge was one of four '**Labour Camps**' set up to house the unemployed whose 'dole' was paid only if they attended. The men worked in gangs, putting in forest infrastructure, often in isolated and rough conditions and with strict discipline.

During the **Second World War**, the site became an army camp and then housed Polish refugees, many of whose descendants live in Brandon today. The project's documenting of these camps will be the first time this has been done.

When the Forestry Commission was created in 1919 to ensure that there would be no future national timber shortage, it was land for Thetford Forest that was among the first purchased. From those initial plantings to how the forest produces timber today is also part of the heritage. This is complimented by its wildlife heritage as the whole of Thetford Forest is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and an European-designated Special Protection Area (SPA) for its biodiversity.

Although there has been a very strong visual change, the forest plantations have largely been within pre-existing land boundaries, and have therefore conserved the historic landscape beneath the trees. This project will reveal and interpret that heritage for everyone.

The **Action Plan** Section 1a-f; Section 2a-e; Section 6a-1; Section 10a-e refer.

See also

Rapid Identification Survey
Heritage Management Plan.

2.5 Community Context

The rural communities and market towns across the Brecks have a wide variety of economic and social needs and are affected by deprivation both locally and across the area as a whole.

In the Brecks, 74% of the population lives in rural communities and 23% in sparse rural areas.

Household deprivation in both the rural and urban Brecks is very similar to the East of England, with figures for the rural Brecks of about 30% not deprived; 38% deprived on one measure; 25% deprived on two measures; 6% deprived on three measures and 0.4% deprived on all four measures.

In housing, 95% of the Brecks population are housed in houses and bungalows and 4% in flats. The Urban Brecks (Thetford and Brandon) has low levels for owner-occupied housing and high levels for socially rented housing.

Household income is 12.6% lower in the Brecks than the East of England with the Brecks rural areas an average 13.1% lower.

Within the rural area of the Brecks, agriculture, forestry and tourism are the largest employment sectors. In the market towns, manufacture, retail, distribution and catering are significant and here employment is mainly skilled, though with lower than average levels of managerial or technical employment. However, in the Brecks, 32.3% of people between 16 and 74 have no academic, vocational or professional qualifications (27.9% in the Eastern Region as a whole).

Low aspiration is frequently mentioned in reviews as one of the factors affecting participation in education and training. A combination of readily available employment, difficult travel and the low proportion of higher education experience among parents seem to combine to have this effect.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a significant increase of migrants from the acceded EU countries; 3,000 Polish, 2,000 Lithuanian and approximately 25,000 Portuguese.

(Figures provided by Defra from CACI Household Paycheck Data).

Deprivation Indicators

Out of the 20 per cent most deprived LSOAs in England one is in the Brecks. It has six LSOAs in parts of Thetford in the most deprived ten per cent on the Education, Skills and Training domain (IMD). Thetford has a higher percentage of people with no qualifications than the national average. In the Abbey and Saxon wards, this is over 40%.

Specific areas of deprivation within the Brecks are in Brandon and Thetford where the proportion of residents working in unskilled jobs is above average and therefore wages and salaries are below average.

Brandon is a small market town that has problems unique in Suffolk, with a high number of shop vacancies and a decreasing number of retailers within the town centre. It has a higher than average population of people aged 60 years or over and 64% of residents live in bungalows with a higher than average percentage of households consisting of one pensioner living alone.

Brandon is in the top quintile of most deprived wards in Suffolk for housing deprivation. Rental from private landlords or letting agencies is high, probably due to the high number of transient military personnel who live in these areas.

Educational attainment is below average. 40% of children who attended Methwold High School obtained 5 'GCSE' passes in 2003 compared to the Suffolk average of 57% and the average point score at A Level is also below the Suffolk and national average. Only 10% in Brandon East achieved a level 4/5 qualification (first degree or above) compared to 20% nationally. 37% of people aged 16-74 yrs have no qualifications at all compared to the national average of 29%.

Unemployment is less than the national average but the skills base is low. Almost double the national average are employed in public administration or public defence posts due to the large USAF military airbases nearby. The airbases employ a large number of the population both directly and indirectly and any removal of the airbases would impact significantly upon Brandon's economy. Higher levels of domestic violence are recorded than in other areas of Suffolk.

Significantly enlarged by migration from London, Thetford's local population increased fourfold between 1958 and 1980. This has now created a mixed identity which contrasts with its surrounding communities. Its population is big enough to display some features associated with urban disadvantage and these include a number of socio-economic issues :

25% of the population is under 16 years compared to the national average of 17%.

Educational standards are very low with 12% of students in 2000 obtaining no GCSE passes at all compared to the national average of 5.4%. The 2001 census shows that only 9% of people in Thetford have achieved a level 4/5 qualification (first degree and above) compared to 20% in England.

Three out of the four Thetford wards have youth unemployment rates of over 30%.

There is a high rate of teenage pregnancy and anecdotally, there are said to be large problems associated with substance misuse. Thetford Abbey, Barnham Cross and Guildhall are all equal ninth worst wards for teenage pregnancy in Norfolk.

The wards of Thetford-Abbey and Thetford-Saxon have twice the Norfolk average for the percentage of households consisting of lone parents living with dependent children.

Child health is a major concern as it has the highest number of children on the Child Protection Register for its size of population in the whole of Norfolk. Three out of the four Thetford wards are in the top quintile of most deprived wards for child poverty deprivation both in Norfolk and nationally

All 4 wards in Thetford are in the top quintile of most deprived wards for education, skills and training, both in Norfolk and nationally.

Three of the four Thetford wards are in the top quintile of most deprived wards for housing deprivation in Norfolk. Thetford Abbey is also in the top quintile nationally.

Thetford – Abbey Ward is in the top quintile of most deprived wards for health and disability deprivation in Norfolk.

(Statistics from the Brandon and Thetford Profiles, Keystone Development Trust, 2014)

3. Limiting Factors

3.1. Organisation & Policy

There are a number of factors which might impact upon the potential delivery of the Activity Plan.

The factors include:

- Organisational limitations, especially the capacity of the Forestry Commission staff at High Lodge and in the East District Office to manage and administer the project and carry its benefits forward.

The Forestry Commission has had to meet the challenge of providing services with significantly reduced funding and resources but it has committed to finance and staff time to deliver this project and to sustain it into the future.

There also needs to be a consistent and joined-up approach to organising and promoting events and activities on the High Lodge site to prevent any 'conflict of interest' The Forestry Commission's Events Officer and the Project Manager will need to work together to complement existing and on-going events and activities with those specific to the project.

- Marketing limitations which could impact on the awareness of the heritage trail and the project in the local and regional tourism agenda.
- The appropriate marketing and promotional support will be provided by site partners and stakeholders such as Go-Ape Adventure Play which is already the leader for all site publicity.
- Managing volunteers could be a limitation in terms of the capacity of the Forestry Commission Staff.
- Resources are limited for the delivery of onsite led-learning for schools and other learners.

The main volunteer group working at High Lodge and across the Forest is Friends of Thetford Forest and this group manages itself and has confirmed its role in helping and supporting the Forestry Commission to deliver and sustain the project.

3.2. Features and Facilities as Limiting Factors

- Forest Environment
- Forestry Operations
- SPA and SSSI
- Access
- Transport
- Cost

See also [Trail Design, Construction and Infrastructure](#) for more information and explanation of 3.2.

4 Assessment of Current Provision for 'heritage awareness'

4.1 The heritage information currently provided for visitors

The current interpretive material to be found at High Lodge is primarily focussed on the environmental and ecological aspects of the site, with visitors being encouraged to take an interest in the flora and fauna which they see around them.

Currently there is no material presented which relates in any meaningful way to the historical and archaeological heritage of the site. Little attempt is made to explain why the site is known as High Lodge, for example, and no attempt made to identify or interpret historic landscape features, such as the surviving stretches of medieval warren banks which are to be found at various locations around the site.

The one exception to this is the 'Earth Matrix', a tall freestanding column near to the Information Kiosk which presents a sample section of the geological strata which are to be found beneath the ground at High Lodge. There is one small interpretation panel which offers an explanation for this feature, but it is densely packed with small images and text and anecdotal observations suggest that most visitors pass by this feature without stopping.

4.2 Forestry Commission Staff knowledge of the heritage

The Forestry Commission's Staff knowledge of the heritage is minimal, with those working at High Lodge having little knowledge of the 10 000 years of landscape history beneath the trees. The exceptions are a Visitor Information Assistant who formerly worked for Historic England at Grimes Graves and the Trails' Officer who has a personal interest.

Knowledge of wildlife is much better, with the Site Manager being a moth expert and an experienced birdwatcher.

The Conservation and Heritage Officer based at the East England Office has limited involvement at High Lodge due to time constraints.

4.3 Partner and Stakeholder knowledge of the heritage.

Again, this is minimal.

4.4 The current staff capability and resource to deliver heritage at High Lodge.

With such minimal knowledge and without the resources required, 'heritage' is not currently delivered at High Lodge.

'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge' is therefore highly important in terms of training in heritage skills and knowledge and delivery of that heritage for the Forestry Commission and the site partners alike.

[The Action Plan](#), Section 1a-e; Section 2a-e, Section 5a-e and Section 9a-i refer.

4.5 The Constraints from archaeological, wildlife and forestry operations.

Please see '[The Design and Construction of the Heritage Trail](#)' document where these demands have been assessed and actions put in place as a result of recommendations.

5 Logistics

5.1 A summary of how the route for the Heritage Trail has been chosen

Please see

[The Design, Construction and Infrastructure of the Heritage Trail. Recommendations and Implementation.](#)

5.2 The heritage features included on the Trail are

Downham Warren Lodge Site

Warren Perimeter Banks

Gunflint Mines

Horseshoe Pit

Trapping Banks

Estate Plantation Banks

Marl Pit

Medieval Tracks

And close by, burial mounds.

[The Action Plan](#) Section 1a-e; Section 2a-e; Section 6a-i refer.

See also

[Rapid Identification Survey](#)

[Heritage Management Plan.](#)

6 Analysis of Current and Potential Audiences

6.1 Current Audiences at High Lodge Centre

6.1 Within this context, the term 'audiences' is used to describe all of the people who might come into contact with the heritage of High Lodge through this project. This audience includes current users and visitors to the High Lodge site, along with people attending events and taking part in activities. It also includes people who could become visitors, attendees, volunteers and users of the site in the future. The process of audience development also involves changing people's perceptions of heritage to broaden its appeal and ensure that interest generated by the project results in sustained audience engagement at High Lodge beyond the lifetime of the project.

In order to maximise audience participation at the site, during the project there is a need to develop new and wider audiences which better reflect the diversity in the communities near to High Lodge. This means engaging groups that are currently under-represented in High Lodge's audience profile, and/or groups who do not currently access this and other sites managed by the Forestry Commission. In addition to developing new audiences, the project will also attempt to increase the level of engagement of High Lodge's existing visitors, providing new resources that enable these visitors to better understand the site's heritage.

In order to make recommendations on the best way to develop the audience at High Lodge it is first necessary to use currently available sources of data to analyse the nature and motivation of the site's existing audience with a view to identifying who is currently engaging with the site, and more importantly, who is not. It is also necessary to understand why people choose to visit the site and what they do once they are there. Finally, a number of barriers to audience participation are presented and recommendations made for ways in which these might be most effectively overcome in order to develop and sustain a new audience.

Analysis of the Current Audience

In order to better engage High Lodge's existing visitors, and in particular to increase their interest in the site's rich heritage, it is vital to understand who currently visits High Lodge and what they do while they are there. The Forestry Commission undertakes market research on a regular basis to better understand its visitor profile, and there are several sources of information available for High Lodge that can help us to understand the current audiences. These sources are as follows:

- **Visits and visitor numbers:** These figures are derived from data obtained from site entry points, which count the number of cars entering the site. This figure is multiplied by 3.5, taken to be the average number of occupants of each vehicle, in order to give an indication of the number of people visiting the site. These figures are very useful for understanding peaks and troughs in visitor numbers, and for highlighting times of day and times of year when the site is more or less busy. We can also compare visitor numbers with other Forestry Commission and non-Forestry Commission sites to understand High Lodge's position in the wider marketplace. These figures do not include any representation of the visitors who arrive on foot or by bike, none of whom trigger the site entry counters.
- **Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS):** These reports are based on site visits undertaken by Visit England to ensure that the site meets their visitor attraction standards. The most recent reports available for High Lodge are based on site visits carried out on Sunday 16 February 2014 (Visit England 2014) and Saturday 24 October 2015 (Visit England 2015).
- **Customer Profile Report:** Carried out by Experian, this report analyses a database of customer postcodes and classifies them based on characteristics such as family composition, age, housing type and tenure, social group, etc. While this survey was primarily carried out with marketing objectives in mind, it provides a useful overview of the visitors to High Lodge and helps identify those groups that are currently under-represented in the site's audience. The most recent High Lodge Customer Profile Report dates from July 2011 (Experian 2011a) and can be compared and contrasted with a similar survey undertaken for Forestry Commission properties nationwide at about the same time (Experian 2011b).
- **Quality of the Visitor Experience Report:** These surveys are carried out by a market research company every three years. The most recent report for High Lodge was produced in 2014 and was based on 246 visitor interviews carried out at High Lodge (Beaufort Research 2014). The findings are compared with results from the previous survey carried out in 2011 (BMG Research 2012) and with the results from other Forestry Commission sites in England.
- **Other Resources:** A range of other sources of information relating to High Lodge is available, especially organisational research undertaken by the Forestry Commission. This includes national surveys such as the *Public Opinion of Forestry Survey* carried out in March 2015 (Forestry Commission 2015a), a working paper on the number of visits and visitors to the Public Forest Estate in England based on this survey (Cross 2015) and a survey of population numbers within specific drive-times around the Public Forest Estate, based on census information (Forestry Commission 2015b).

All of these resources help to inform our understanding of High Lodge's current audiences and serve to suggest ways in which this audience can be developed and expanded.

The National Audience

A recent geographical survey based on census data undertaken by the Forestry Commission demonstrated that 99.6% of the English population (89.2% of the UK population) live within a 60-minute drive of forest or woodland, and that the vast majority of the population live considerably closer than that (Forestry Commission 2015b). Faced with this opportunity, data extracted from the *Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015* suggest that between 14.1 million and 18.6 million adults visited the Public Forest Estate in the year to March 2015, with the best estimates falling around the 6.4 million mark, some 37.5% of the adult population of England (Cross 2015). The survey also found that in England, and in the UK as a whole, over half of the 2015 respondents had visited forests or woodlands during the last few years (England: 55%; UK: 56%). This represented a significant decrease from the 2013 survey, in which approximately two-thirds of respondents had visited forests or woodlands (England: 65%; UK: 66%), and the peaks reached in 2007 and 2009 when over 75% of respondents had visited forests or woodlands (see Table 1; Forestry Commission 2015a).

Year	UK	England
2003	67%	66%
2005	65%	65%
2007	77%	76%
2009	77%	77%
2011	67%	68%
2013	66%	65%
2015	56%	55%

Table 1: Percentage of respondents to the Public Opinion of Forestry Survey reporting visits to woodlands during the last few years (Source: Forestry Commission 2015a).

6.2 Excluded Audiences

In order to better understand visitor patterns, all survey respondents were asked for their main reasons for not visiting woodland more often or not visiting at all. The main reason cited was that respondents were 'not interested in visiting', with other reasons given including 'I'm too busy/not enough time', 'woods are too far away' and 'don't have a car' (Forestry Commission 2015a). These responses are summarised in Table 2 and highlight a number of key barriers to participation which are considered in more detail later in this report.

Reason for not visiting woodland	UK	England
Not interested in visiting	33%	35%
I'm too busy/not enough time	27%	28%
Woods are too far away	15%	16%
Don't have a car	15%	16%

Other personal mobility reasons	13%	12%
Bad weather	12%	12%
All other reasons	25%	25%
None of these/Don't know why	9%	8%

Table 2: Reasons for not visiting woodland (Source: Forestry Commission 2015a)

In order to assess the importance of woodlands and forests to the public, respondents to the 2015 survey were asked to state their level of agreement with a set of statements regarding the purpose and use of woodlands and forests. Overall, the results suggest that woodlands are viewed as most important for wildlife and for recreation. However, woodland was also identified as an area with important learning opportunities, with 84% of UK respondents (England: 83%) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that 'people can learn about the environment' and 68% of UK respondents (England: 67%) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that 'people can learn about local culture or history' (Forestry Commission 2015a).

All of these statistics are encouraging and support the aims of the current project to create an all-weather heritage trail at High Lodge. It is clear that a substantial proportion of the UK population regularly visit woodlands and forests, many of them for the purposes of recreation, and that a significant sub-set of these visitors expect to encounter opportunities to learn both about the environment and about heritage during their visits. The results of the *Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015* provide a useful and encouraging national context within which to frame our understanding of current audiences at High Lodge.

High Lodge's Current Audience

The High Lodge site attracts a large number of visitors and is consistently one of the most popular Forestry Commission hubs in the country. Total visitor numbers are derived from the site entry counters, which track the entry and exit of individual cars, and these figures are multiplied by 3.5 (which is taken to be the average number of occupants per vehicle) to arrive at a total number of visitors (see O'Brien and Morris 2010). The entry counters do not count those who arrive on the site by foot or by bike, although these are factored into the 3.5. Based on this method, the total number of visitors to the site during the 2015/16 financial year was in excess of 400,000, a substantial increase on the previous year's total of just over 300,000.

As might be expected, site entry and exit data can be used to track peaks and troughs in visitor numbers across runs of days, weeks or months, and time-stamped ticketing enables the length of each visitor's stay to be calculated automatically. The site entry data also allows for differentiation between visits by Discovery Pass holders, paid day tickets and free tickets/site entry permits. The average duration of a visit to High Lodge based on the 2014 *Quality of the Visitor Experience* survey was 2 hours and 59 minutes (Beaufort Research 2104), while the Visit England recommended minimum visit time for High Lodge is 4 hours (Visit England 2014). A wide range of activities is available at the site, some of them fixed installations, such as walking and cycling trails, and others, such as Go Ape!, run by concession-holders on an regular or semi-regular basis

The entry data give a good indication of overall numbers, but the most comprehensive source of information about the demographic makeup of High Lodge's visitors is the regular *Customer Profile Report*, last undertaken at High Lodge by Experian in 2011 (Experian 2011a). Although this report is now five years old, no comparable survey has since been

carried out, so this has been used as the main source of information for understanding the key characteristics of High Lodge's current audiences. Anecdotal evidence from staff and others involved at High Lodge suggests that this profile hasn't changed substantively in the last five years.

Many of the trends that are indicated by Experian's 2011 report are reinforced by the results of a *Quality of the Visitor Experience* survey carried out by Beaufort Research in 2014. While this survey was primarily focused on the visitor experience, the report also includes some information on High Lodge's visitor profile, such as repeat visits, age and sex profiles, and group sizes (Beaufort Research 2014). A final source of information is the online *High Lodge Multi-user Survey* which was carried out in late 2014 and early 2015 (Forestry Commission 2015c). Combining the information available from these sources enables us to draw together a sufficiently detailed visitor profile for High Lodge.

Visitor Catchment Area

The audience at High Lodge is drawn from a wide hinterland which encompasses the entirety of East Anglia and encroaches into the East Midlands. According to the 2011 Customer Profile Report, 94% of High Lodge's visitors live within a 50-mile radius of the site (see Figure 1) and 99% live within 100 miles (Experian 2011a). Likewise, the 2014 *Quality of Visitor Experience* report used postcode data to conclude that 88% of visitors were from East Anglia, with an additional 3% from the East Midlands and 2% each from Greater London and South East England (Beaufort Research 2014). The vast majority of visitors arrive at High Lodge by car and 91% of visitors have been calculated to live within an hour's drive of the site (Experian 2011a). Very few visitors arrive at the site by other means, because High Lodge is not served by public transport; this is a significant barrier to participation which is addressed later in this report.

The 2011 *Customer Profile Report* also demonstrated that the vast majority of visitors to High Lodge are day trippers (92%), with only 8% reported to be holidaying in the area (defined as one or more overnight stays), meaning that the vast majority of visitors to the site are resident within the region. This differs from other Forestry Commission sites in England where on average 16% of visitors are holidaymakers (Experian 2011a).



Figure 1. A map showing settlements within a 25-mile and 50-mile radii of High Lodge (Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2016)

Repeat Visits and Discovery Passes

The 2014 survey revealed that 27% of visitors to High Lodge were doing so for the first time. Of the 73% who had visited the site before, most were infrequent visitors, visiting the site less than once a month. Only a quarter of repeat visitors came to the site more than once a month (Beaufort Research 2014). This is a similar pattern to that recorded in the 2014/15 online *Multi-user Survey*, in which 10% of respondents were first-time visitors, 26% visited the site weekly, 46% visited monthly and 18% visited annually (Forestry Commission 2015c).

The 2014 survey found that 11% of visitors to the site held an annual Discovery Pass ticket, in line with the national average, and that another 40% of visitors were interested in finding out more about them (Beaufort Research 2014). The online survey had a higher response rate, with 34% of respondents holding a Discovery Pass, although it must be borne in mind that the respondents to this survey were self-selecting and more likely to be positively engaged with the Forestry Commission already (Forestry Commission 2015c). Data collected from the site entry counters during the 2015/16 financial year indicates that approximately 17% of spring and summer visitors to the site have Discovery Passes, which rises to 27% of visitors during the autumn and winter months.

It is clear that the majority of visitors to High Lodge are repeat visitors and that a small core of regular visitors hold Discovery Passes. This would suggest that the vast majority of people who visit High Lodge for the first time subsequently return and that some of them do so at a frequency which makes the relatively high cost of a Discovery Pass economically viable. There are two key conclusions of relevance to the current project. First, that it is critical to ensure that the new heritage trail and associated learning opportunities offer content which will sustain visitor interest over a number of repeat visits. Secondly, in terms of audience development, active steps need to be taken to draw more first-time visitors to the site in the first instance, with a view to them becoming repeat visitors. In order to develop these strategies most effectively, we need to know about the types of people who are visiting High Lodge already and understand how they use the site. Crucially, we also need to identify those people who are not visiting High Lodge and understand their reasons for choosing not to do so in order that any barriers to participation can be identified and mitigated.

'Mosaic' Lifestyle Groups

Experian use their 'Mosaic' system to classify UK households into 15 main socio-economic groups, within which they identify 67 different types of household (Experian 2009). These classifications are derived from numerous data sources, such as postcodes, family composition, age, housing type, social group, qualifications, profession, income, shopping habits, interests, newspaper choices and internet use. The 2011 Experian *Customer Profile Report* sampled 176 visitors to High Lodge and used them to build an audience profile for the site. This profile can be compared to that of the whole UK population in order to ascertain how representative the High Lodge audience is of the wider population (Experian 2011a). The results of this survey are summarised by Mosaic group in Table 3. Table 4 presents the same data sorted in descending order of variance from the base population for High Lodge, highlighting those groups who are over-represented and under-represented in the visitor profile. Table 5 presents the same data again, sorted on the percentage variance from the base population for visitors to Forestry Commission sites nationwide.

Mosaic UK 2009 Lifestyle Group	Total UK Population %		Total Forestry Commission %	Percentage Variance %		High Lodge Audience %	Percentage Variance %
A: Alpha Territory	3.12		2.84	-9		0.00	-100
B: Professional Rewards	8.14		16.18	+99		19.32	+137
C: Rural Solitude	4.40		9.91	+125		11.36	+158
D: Small Town Diversity	8.68		13.74	+58		19.32	+123
E: Active Retirement	4.45		2.65	-40		2.84	-36
F: Suburban Mindsets	10.62		13.73	+29		10.23	-4
G: Careers and Kids	5.60		11.54	+106		15.91	+184
H: New Homemakers	5.22		5.48	+5		4.55	-13
I: Ex-Council Community	8.91		5.03	-44		2.84	-68
J: Claimant Cultures	5.44		1.31	-76		0.00	-100
K: Upper Floor Living	5.56		0.40	-93		1.70	-69
L: Elderly Needs	5.68		1.47	-74		0.00	-100
M: Industrial Heritage	7.61		8.10	+6		10.23	+34
N: Terraced Melting Pot	7.48		3.19	-57		1.14	-85
O: Liberal Opinions	9.09		4.44	-51		0.57	-94

Table 3: Breakdown of Experian Mosaic 2009 Lifestyles Groups for the total UK population (n=26,569,236), visitors to all Forestry Commission sites (n=13,799) and the High Lodge Audience (n=176) (Source: Experian 2011a)

Mosaic UK 2009 Lifestyle Group	Total UK Population %	Total Forestry Commission %	Percentage Variance %	High Lodge Audience %	Percentage Variance %
G: Careers and Kids	5.6	11.54	+106	15.91	+184
C: Rural Solitude	4.4	9.91	+125	11.36	+158
B: Professional Rewards	8.14	16.18	+99	19.32	+137
D: Small Town Diversity	8.68	13.74	+58	19.32	+123
M: Industrial Heritage	7.61	8.1	+6	10.23	+34
F: Suburban Mindsets	10.62	13.73	+29	10.23	-4
H: New Homemakers	5.22	5.48	+5	4.55	-13
E: Active Retirement	4.45	2.65	-40	2.84	-36
I: Ex-Council Community	8.91	5.03	-44	2.84	-68
K: Upper Floor Living	5.56	0.4	-93	1.7	-69
N: Terraced Melting Pot	7.48	3.19	-57	1.14	-85
O: Liberal Opinions	9.09	4.44	-51	0.57	-94
A: Alpha Territory	3.12	2.84	-9	0	-100
J: Claimant Cultures	5.44	1.31	-76	0	-100
L: Elderly Needs	5.68	1.47	-74	0	-100

Table 4: Breakdown of Experian Mosaic 2009 Lifestyles Groups for the total UK population (n=26,569,236), visitors to all Forestry Commission sites (n=13,799) and the High Lodge Audience (n=176) sorted in descending order on High Lodge's variance from the base population (Source: Experian 2011a)

Mosaic UK 2009 Lifestyle Group	Total UK Population %		Total Forestry Commission %	Percentage Variance %		High Lodge Audience %	Percentage Variance %
C: Rural Solitude	4.4		9.91	+125		11.36	+158
G: Careers and Kids	5.6		11.54	+106		15.91	+184
B: Professional Rewards	8.14		16.18	+99		19.32	+137
D: Small Town Diversity	8.68		13.74	+58		19.32	+123
F: Suburban Mindsets	10.62		13.73	+29		10.23	-4
M: Industrial Heritage	7.61		8.1	+6		10.23	+34
H: New Homemakers	5.22		5.48	+5		4.55	-13
A: Alpha Territory	3.12		2.84	-9		0	-100
E: Active Retirement	4.45		2.65	-40		2.84	-36
I: Ex-Council Community	8.91		5.03	-44		2.84	-68
O: Liberal Opinions	9.09		4.44	-51		0.57	-94
N: Terraced Melting Pot	7.48		3.19	-57		1.14	-85
L: Elderly Needs	5.68		1.47	-74		0	-100
J: Claimant Cultures	5.44		1.31	-76		0	-100
K: Upper Floor Living	5.56		0.4	-93		1.7	-69

Table 5: Breakdown of Experian Mosaic 2009 Lifestyles Groups for the total UK population (n=26,569,236), visitors to all Forestry Commission sites (n=13,799) and the High Lodge Audience (n=176) sorted in descending order on Forestry Commission visitors' variance from the base population (Source: Experian 2011a)

As can clearly be seen in Table 4, in 2011 four 'Mosaic' Lifestyle Groups were significantly over-represented in the High Lodge audience when compared to the wider UK population. In descending order, these groups were:

- *G – Careers and Kids*: Families with young children where both parents are likely to earn solid incomes providing for a comfortable modern home;
- *C – Rural Solitude*: Residents of small villages and isolated homes where farming and tourism are economic mainstays;
- *B – Professional Rewards*: Experienced professionals in successful careers enjoying financial comfort in suburban or semi-rural homes;
- *D – Small Town Diversity*: Residents of small and medium-sized towns who have strong roots in their local community.

Interestingly, these same groups are the top-four over-represented groups in the national Forestry Commission audience as well, albeit with the positions of the top two groups – *Careers and Kids* and *Rural Solitude* – reversed (Table 5). From this we can conclude that there are clear existing audience bases for both High Lodge and the Forestry Commission more widely, which need to continue to be specifically catered for in any new developments. The most significant audience at High Lodge would appear to be relatively affluent adults, many of them parents with young children ('Careers and Kids'), some of whom go on to form the 'Professional Rewards' group as their careers progress and their children grow up and leave home. These two combined groups make up 35.23% of High Lodge's audience.

The second part of the core audience comprises those who belong to the 'Rural Solitude' and 'Small Town Diversity' demographics, both of which are arguably over-represented at High Lodge as a direct result of the site's rural location and the nature of its audience catchment area. This is also likely to be the case for many other Forestry Commission sites nationwide and may go some way to explaining the apparent over-representation of these groups in the national audience too.

The combination of these two groups accounts for 30.68% of the High Lodge audience, which is unsurprising when one considers that the immediate High Lodge hinterland encompasses the 'Small Town' population centres of Thetford, Brandon and Mildenhall, while the smaller 'Rural Solitude' communities of Weeting, Mundford, Ickburgh, Lakenheath, Elveden and Eriswell all lie in relatively close proximity (Figure 1). The adjacency of Thetford and Brandon would also account for the one further over-represented (albeit to a much lesser degree) group at High Lodge, that of *Industrial Heritage*, which is typified by traditional conservative residents of communities which have historically been dependent upon industry (Table 4).

From the point of view of the current project, understanding the origin and motivations of the current audience of High Lodge is important, but even more important is the recognition of those groups who are under-represented in the existing High Lodge audience. While what High Lodge has to offer is never going to appeal or be appropriate for some of these groups, others do form part of a valid potential audience which needs to be tapped into and encouraged to visit the site with a view to becoming regular visitors.

Table 4 demonstrates that several Mosaic Lifestyle Groups were greatly under-represented in the 2011 of High Lodge's visitors. Three of these groups were not represented in the High Lodge audience at all and are barely represented in the national Forestry Commission audience either.

Other groups were slightly more visible, but still at a much lower rate than the national average. Specifically, these groups are:

- *L – Elderly Needs*: Elderly people who are reliant on support either through specialised accommodation or the basic state pension;
- *J – Claimant Culture*: Families reliant on benefits living in low-rise council housing where there is widespread disadvantage;
- *A – Alpha Territory*: People with substantial wealth who live in the most sought after neighbourhoods.
- *O – Liberal Opinions*: Young, well-educated city dwellers enjoying the vibrancy and diversity of urban life.

Again these figures are at least in part a reflection of the site's catchment area, which with the possible exception of Cambridge, does not really contain any areas which might be considered to constitute 'Alpha Territory' or feature large numbers of those belonging to the 'Liberal Opinions' group. Of greater significance are the more genuine absences of 'Elderly Needs' and 'Claimant Cultures' from the demographic, as both of these groups are resident in some numbers within the High Lodge catchment area. Given the exposed and physical nature of much that High Lodge has to offer, it is perhaps not surprising that the elderly and infirm do not see the site as having something for them, but it is hoped that the new all-weather heritage trail being developed as part of the current project might be developed and targeted in such a way as to bring this demographic into the High Lodge audience.

The 'Claimant Cultures' group is typified by low incomes, dependence upon state benefits and low levels of car ownership, all of which are significant (although it is hoped not insurmountable) barriers to participation at High Lodge. Many of these characteristics are also shared with the 'Elderly Needs' group. Tellingly, low or moderate income is a defining characteristic of many of the other under-represented groups identified during the 2011 survey, specifically:

- *N – Terraced Melting Pot*: Lower income workers, mostly young, living in tightly packed inner urban terraces, including some areas of high diversity;
- *K – Upper Floor Living*: Young, mostly single people on limited incomes renting small flats from local councils;
- *I – Ex-Council Community*: Residents with low levels of education, but sufficient incomes who live in the better right-to-buy council houses.

Other groups which were also under-represented, but to a lesser degree (Table 4), included:

- *E – Active Retirement*: Elders who have sufficient pensions and savings to choose pleasant locations in which to enjoy their retirement;
- *H – New Homemakers*: Young singles and couples in small modern starter homes.

Overall it is clear that there is a core audience for Forestry Commission sites drawn from defined local catchment areas and that this trend is repeated at High Lodge. The Mosaic system measures audience profiles against a national norm and this clearly results in the over-representation of more localised circumstances, such as the high levels of 'Rural Solitude' and 'Small Town Living' found among the High Lodge audience. In many ways the most useful element of the Mosaic data is its ability to highlight those groups which are not actively engaged with High Lodge and suggest possible reasons why this may be the case. Again, in some instances this is a reflection of local circumstances, but there are a number of genuine barriers to participation which more detailed analyses can help us to identify.

Socio-Economic Background

The Mosaic breakdown gives a very useful measure of the different sectors of society which constitute the High Lodge audience, but there are a number of more conventional methods of analysis which can be used to gain an insight into who is and, crucially, who isn't visiting High Lodge. Using the National Readership Survey (NRS) social grades, the 2014 *Quality of the Visitor Experience* survey indicated that visitors to High Lodge tended more towards the ABC1 socio-economic groups (professional and non-manual working, the 'middle class') than the C2DE groups (skilled and unskilled workers and the unemployed, the 'working class') demonstrating a 64% / 36% split (Beaufort Research 2014).

NRS Grade	High Lodge %	Total Forestry Commission %
AB	35	40
C1	29	31
C2	26	18
DE	10	10
Refused	<1	1

Table 6. Breakdown of the social class of visitors to High Lodge (n=246) and Forestry Commission sites nationwide (n=1,654) (Source: Beaufort Research 2014)

This reinforces the findings of the 2011 Experian report that current audiences have a higher than average household income and that most lower income groups are under-represented in High Lodge's visitor profile (Experian 2011). That said, High Lodge does appear to be more successful at attracting visitors from the C2DE socio-economic groups than other Forestry Commission sites (High Lodge's 36% of visitors being compared to 28% on average for other sites). Again, this is most likely to be a reflection of the demographic biases to be found within the High Lodge catchment area.

Ethnic Background

One aspect of the visitor profile that has only been captured in the 2014 survey is the ethnic background of visitors to High Lodge. This survey concluded that the overwhelming majority of visitors to High Lodge described their ethnic background as 'White: British / Irish / Welsh' (96%) with only a small number of visitors describing their ethnicity as 'White: Other' (2%), which includes other Europeans and Americans, or as 'Black / Asian / Mixed' (1%) (Beaufort Research 2014). These figures are in line with data for visitors to other Forestry Commission sites in England, for which the average profile is almost exactly the same (Table 7).

Ethnicity	High Lodge %	Total Forestry Commission %
White: British/Welsh/Irish	96	96
White: Other	2	3
Black/Asian/Mixed	1	1
Refused	–	<1

Table 7: Ethnic background of visitors to High Lodge (n=246) and Forestry Commission sites nationwide (n=1,654) (Source: Beaufort Research 2014)

These figures broadly reflect the ethnic profile of Norfolk and Suffolk, although as can be seen in Table 8 it would seem that the 'White: Other' and 'Black/Asian/Mixed' populations of the two counties are under-represented in the High Lodge audience. A much greater discrepancy is revealed when ethnic makeup is examined at district level. Forest Heath, the district within which High Lodge is situated, has an extremely high percentage of 'White: Other' residents (13.5%), which includes other Europeans and United States service personnel based in the district, and a 'Black/Asian/Mixed' which is higher than the county averages (8.1%). Breckland district, which includes Thetford, also has a relatively high percentage of 'White: Other' residents (5.6%), although the percentage of 'Black/Asian/Mixed' residents is slightly lower than the county averages (2.7%). It would seem that the members of these local ethnic communities are not engaging with High Lodge for a variety of reasons and in order to develop the audience further it will be necessary target these groups and encourage them to become more involved with High Lodge.

Ethnicity	Norfolk %	Suffolk %	Forest Heath %	Breckland %
White: British/Welsh/Irish	92.9	91.4	78.4	91.9
White: Other	3.5	3.8	13.5	5.6
Black/Asian/Mixed	3.5	4.6	8.1	2.7

Table 8: Ethnic makeup of Norfolk and Suffolk, contrasted with the ethnic makeup of Breckland and Forest Heath districts (Source: ONS 2012)

Age Profile

In terms of the age profile, High Lodge visitors follow a similar pattern to visitors to other Forestry Commission sites in England. At High Lodge 63% of visitors were aged under 45 and 37% were 45 or above (Beaufort Research 2014). This does not differ greatly from the population as a whole, in which 41.7% of the population of England is aged 45 years or older.

One group which is especially poorly represented at High Lodge are people aged 65 and over. This group made up 16.4% of the UK population in 2011 (ONS 2012), and was estimated to make up nearly 18% of the total population in mid-2014. However, the visitor survey carried out at High Lodge in 2014 indicated that just 5% of visitors to the site fell into this age category, which is even lower than the average at other Forestry Commission sites in England (8%). This is also a trend that the Experian survey in 2011 highlighted, with the Mosaic Lifestyle Group 'Elderly Needs' being significantly under-represented, as were those from the group 'Active Retirement' (Experian 2011a). At High Lodge only 8% of

visitors described their working status as 'Retired', while the majority were employed full time (30+ hours per week = 54%) or part-time (<30 hours per week = 17%) (Beaufort Research 2014).

Most visitors to High Lodge were accompanied by children (63%). Of these a significant majority were children aged 0–10 years, with children aged 11–15 years only being part of 19% of groups visiting the site. The average number of children per group of visitors at High Lodge was 2.2, which reflects the recorded national average (Beaufort Research 2014).

Just over half (53%) of High Lodge visitors had children in the household, which follows the national trend. This also supports anecdotal evidence that most of those visitors in the over 65 age category are grandparents visiting the site with their grandchildren. This would seemingly account for the difference between the percentage of visitors from households containing children (53%) and the percentage of visitors accompanied by children (63%), in that the children concerned do not live in the same household as their grandparents.

Gender Profile

As has been seen, visitors to High Lodge generally conform to the demographic profile recorded at other Forestry Commission sites with minor local biases. However, one area where there is a noticeable difference is that there is a strong female bias in the High Lodge gender profile, with 60% of visitors being female. The gender split for Forestry Commission sites in England was 52% female and 48% male (a reflection of the national average) (Beaufort Research 2014). The exact reasons for this difference are unknown, and may simply be a statistical reflection of factors on the day on which the survey was carried out. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the site is particularly popular with mothers of pre-school-age children in quieter periods during the week and outside the school holidays, and this may be responsible for the gender bias.

Having assessed the demographic make-up of the High Lodge audience, it is now necessary to examine the activities which are available on the High Lodge site and look at what visitors to the site choose to do during their visits.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport's *Taking Part* survey on participation in cultural activities collects data on many aspects of leisure, culture and sport in England, as well as an in-depth range of socio-demographic information on respondents (DCMS 2015). The survey is now in its eleventh year and is commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in partnership with Arts Council England, Historic England, and Sport England. The main sectors for which data are gathered in the *Taking Part* survey are arts, museums and galleries, archives, libraries, heritage and sport. For each of these sectors, data about the reasons for participating and not participating, barriers to participation, and the frequency of participation are also collected.

The results of the *Taking Part* survey provide useful background information about engagement with heritage, and help highlight audiences which are traditionally under-represented. The *Taking Part* survey measures adult participation in heritage by whether respondents visited a heritage site in the twelve months prior to interview, as well as the frequency with which heritage sites were visited. In the year to September 2015, more than seven in ten of all adults in England (72.5%) had visited a heritage site at least once in the previous 12 months.

The survey found that consistent heritage site visitors came from less deprived groups than other respondents. They were more likely to be in the higher socio-economic group (66%, compared to 45% of other respondents), to live in 'Wealthy Achiever' areas (32%, compared to 16% of other respondents) and to live in less deprived areas according to the

Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (39% at levels 8–10, compared to 23% of other respondents). In addition, just over three quarters of Consistent visitors owned their own home (76%, compared to 55% of other respondents) and seven in ten were employed (70% working, compared to 59% of other respondents).

Respondents to the most recent *Taking Part* survey who did not report any visits to heritage sites were typically from more deprived groups. More than half were in the lower socio-economic group (56%), almost half lived in areas at the lower levels of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (48%), and more than a third lived in areas classified as 'Hard-Pressed' (35%). They were more likely to be female (61%, compared to 51% of other respondents), black or minority ethnic (20% BME, compared to 9% of other respondents) and identify as a religion other than Christianity (15% 'other religion', compared to 6% of other respondents). Non-visitors were also more likely to have a disability or long-term illness. Two in five Non-visitors (39%) reported having a disability or long-term illness, compared to less than a quarter of other respondents (23%). Indeed, 20% of respondents with a disability or long-term illness did not report visiting a heritage site at any of a series of evenly-spaced interviews, compared to 10% of respondents without a disability or long-term illness.

These survey results clearly indicate that participation in activities relating to heritage is not evenly spread across the population. The similarities between the demographic profile of this typical heritage audience and the existing core audience at High Lodge and other Forestry Commission sites discussed above are strikingly similar. From this it can be inferred that there is a sufficient overlap between the two audiences for new heritage-focussed activities at High Lodge to be of interest to the existing audience, but also we can be reasonably confident that the members of the existing heritage audience who may not previously have visited High Lodge would find that the site has much to offer them both in terms of heritage and their other interests.

As might be expected, the demographic profiles of those groups who are under-represented at High Lodge and those who do not visit heritage sites are also very similar. It is important to understand the factors behind these variations, and in particular to identify and overcome any barriers to participation. To this end, the rest of this report presents a systematic review of the barriers to participation among these under-represented groups which have been identified during the course of the researching and writing of this report.

6.3 Barriers to engaging with audiences.

A range of barriers can deter individuals or groups from participating at sites such as High Lodge and in order to increase participation and engagement these barriers need to be identified and mitigated as far as possible.

At a national level, respondents to the *Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015* who indicated that they hadn't visited forests or woodlands were asked the reasons why they had chosen not to visit (Table 2; Forestry Commission 2015a). Among the specific reasons cited were 'haven't got a car' (UK: 15%; England: 16%), 'other personal mobility reasons' (UK: 13%; England: 12%) and 'bad weather' (UK: 12%; England: 12%), all of which are as applicable to High Lodge as any other site.

Many barriers to access are site specific and in order to gain a more subtle understanding of the barriers which may have deterred individuals or groups from visiting High Lodge, a series of consultation workshops were held on the site in July 2016.

Representatives from various local groups and voluntary organisations from among the target audience of this project (i.e. existing High Lodge users, non-users, those with heritage interests and non-heritage interests) were invited to walk the route of the proposed heritage trail, vote on the types of activities which they would most like to see included in the project and provide feedback on how the site works at present.

These consultees included local groups such as heritage societies and the Women's Institute, volunteers from a local museum, members of the Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People, and representatives from the Workers' Educational Association.

These consultation events provided a valuable opportunity to gain an insight into some of the current barriers to participation at High Lodge, particularly as many of the consultees knew about the site, but had never chosen to visit it before.

The issues highlighted in these workshops are discussed here in turn, along with wider barriers to participation identified during the research and writing of this report.

For ease of use, these barriers have been grouped into Organisational Barriers, Social/Cultural/Intellectual Barriers, Physical Barriers and Economic Barriers, although as will be seen, there is a considerable degree of overlap.

Organisational Barriers

There are a number of organisational barriers to participation at High Lodge which have been identified during the consultation process, some of which are site specific, but many of which are affected by wider Forestry Commission policies and protocols. It is suggested that many of these barriers could be overcome with relative ease.

Provision of Information

The Forestry Commission makes information about its sites and their facilities available in a wide variety of formats, including a range of leaflets, although the main platform for this information is the Forestry Commission website (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england>). There is also now a free Forestry Commission app – the Forest Xplorer – which is available for Apple and Android smartphones and contains details and information about individual sites, including High Lodge. The provision of information in suitable formats is crucial for accessibility and audience development, and while it is the case that much of the High Lodge audience is digitally aware, there are portions of the local community, especially in the underrepresented groups, for whom access to a computer, smartphone and/or the internet is difficult for physical or economic reasons.

It must also be borne in mind that reliance upon a mobile phone application and/or web-based information system can be severely limited by the poor mobile phone and Wi-fi coverage in at High Lodge itself, meaning that live data cannot easily be accessed during the course of a site visit.

Disability Awareness

The Forestry Commission train their staff to be welcoming and inclusive, however feedback from visitors to the site suggests that more could be done by staff to meet the needs of some visitors, particularly those with disabilities. For example, some consultees suggested that the Forestry Commission's front-of-house staff and volunteers would benefit from Deaf Awareness training, while the consultation sessions have demonstrated that regular meetings with representatives of disability groups can be very

Forestry Commission Corporate Style Guide

As a large corporate body with a national identity, the Forestry Commission has a very clear and prescriptive house style guide which governs the appearance, layout and content of on-site signage. This is necessary to ensure that the Forestry Commission brand is clearly identifiable, and that visitors to different Forestry Commission sites feel a sense of familiarity. However, visually impaired visitors to the site reported that the current signage is very difficult for them to use due to small font sizes, cramped layout and difficult colour combinations, and have requested that more accessible interpretative materials be produced and displayed around the site and online.

Social, Cultural and Intellectual Barriers

There are a number of social and cultural barriers to participation in evidence at High Lodge which need to be addressed in order to broaden the appeal and accessibility of the site.

Alienation

The consultations held as part of the audience development process have demonstrated that many of the under-represented groups highlighted in the user profile surveys feel that High Lodge is simply 'not for people like me'. Specifically, the site is perceived to be aimed at the more able-bodied sectors of society, primarily because of the number of active leisure pursuits promoted such as cycling trails and Go Ape!, and also at the more affluent, because of the relatively high costs associated with visiting the site and the fact that additional fees are charged for participating in the concessions (see also Economic Barriers, below). There is also a perception that High Lodge is aimed at families with children, reinforced by the amount of space given over to large play equipment and the promotion of activity trails, and while it is true that families with children constitute a significant proportion of the existing audience this perception needs to be challenged in any new marketing campaigns.

Local Community Links

Allied to the feeling of alienation, there is a decided lack of local context in the current interpretative resources provided at the site which means that visitors and residents within the catchment area are not made aware of the site's history and its relevance to the historical development of local settlements and economy. For example, little is made of the Polish refugee camp established on the site around the time of the Second World War, which resulted in the formation of the local Polish community still in evidence today.

Most of the current interpretation at High Lodge is presented via interpretation panels comprising text and graphics. Many of these adopt a layered format, with key facts being presented at the top of the interpretation panels, and more detailed information being presented beneath. Presenting information in this way is seen as a good way of meeting the needs of a variety of different audiences, regardless of their knowledge, ability or interest in a subject. However, some of the existing interpretation panels do exclude some site users because they cannot easily access information presented in this way.

There is currently no learning provision for people with learning disabilities or those who find reading difficult. Consultation with visually impaired people revealed that much of the current signage and interpretation at High Lodge is impossible for them to read because of the background colours and text sizes used (see above). At present there is no alternative way of accessing any of the interpretation at High Lodge, so this information cannot be used by people who find reading difficult.

Linguistic Barriers

Audience profile surveys of the High Lodge site have consistently demonstrated that ethnic minorities, especially those who are non-English speaking, are drastically underrepresented in the demographic profile of visitors to the site when compared to the national and regional baseline figures for the total population. Greater effort needs to be made to cater for non-English speaking audiences, both on site but also in promoting the site to new audiences. For example, the Forestry Commission website is only provided in English, although many web browsers such as Google Chrome offer automatic translations now, and the vast majority of the promotional and interpretative materials provided on the site and in the wider community are also solely in English. Given some of the strong heritage links which High Lodge has with the region's ethnic minorities, especially the Polish community, it is vital that efforts are made to address this.

Physical Barriers

The ability of people to get around the site will affect whether or not people decide to visit High Lodge. A number of issues have been highlighted during the consultation process.

Weather Dependence

Much of the High Lodge site is outdoors, with a very limited range of activities available should the weather be poor. A knock-on effect is that the ground stays wet after bad weather, with the resultant soft and muddy ground making it difficult for pushchairs and wheelchairs to use some of the marked trails.

Lack of Public Transport

The vast majority of visitors to High Lodge arrive at the site by car. Accessing the site by cycle, foot or motorcycle is free, but there is no designated walking or cycling route from either of the nearby centres of population at Thetford or Brandon. User surveys have shown that many of the under-represented groups do not necessarily have access to their own vehicle, but the site cannot currently be accessed by public transport. There is no bus service that stops nearby and the nearest train stations are at Thetford and Brandon. Taxis are available locally that will come to High Lodge, but a reduced entry fee is payable for them to access the site to drop off and pick up visitors. This lack of provision contrasts sharply with nearby Brandon Country Park, which has a regular bus service which stops 500m from their entrance for visitors travelling between Thetford and Brandon.

Insufficient Toilet Facilities

Survey respondents have consistently cited the insufficient toilet provision at High Lodge as a reason for not visiting the site. While there are toilet facilities adjacent to the Information Kiosk and the café, there aren't very many of them and on busy days especially there can be long queues. This shortfall is particularly problematic for disabled visitors and those visiting in groups, for example school or coach parties. Visitors and potential visitors have also expressed a desire for additional toilets to be provided at the further reaches of the site.

Disabled Parking/Blue Badge Holders

There is a designated disabled parking area located close to the information point, although individual bays are not demarcated and are poorly signposted. The informal layout of the car park means that visitors are reliant on other car park users leaving enough space between and behind vehicles to enable users to get in and out of their vehicles. Although level, the disabled parking area does not have a solid surface, which makes it difficult for wheelchair users. Although disabled parking spaces are provided, there are currently no concessionary parking rates offered for Blue Badge holders.

Economic Barriers

As has become apparent, there is a clear contrast between the demographic profile of the High Lodge catchment area and the existing core audience. One of the major discrepancies surrounds income, with lower-income groups choosing not to visit the site, and there are a number of economic barriers to participation.

Parking Charges

Given that the site is inaccessible by public transport, most visitors arrive at the site by car and therefore have to pay to park at the site. Parking costs are high compared with other nearby attractions), although this is justified on the basis that there is no additional site entry fee on top of the parking fee. When divided by the average 3.5 occupants per vehicle this fee seems more reasonable.

Where?	Cost per hour	Max. cost	Notes
High Lodge	£2.20	£11.50	Annual pass £58
Brandon Country Park	Up to £0.75	£3.00	
Lakenheath Fen RSPB Reserve		£4.00	
West Stow Country Park	£0.50	£2.00	Annual pass £15

Table 9. Car parking charges at High Lodge and nearby attractions.

High Lodge also has a site entry drop off/pick-up fee for visitors arriving by taxi, the only form of public transport able to reach the site. The people visiting High Lodge will be asked to pay £4.40 on top of the taxi fares; this charge pays for site services and facilities. The fee also applies to customers being dropped off/picked-up by private car.

Concession Charges

As well as the parking costs, many of the concessions running out of High Lodge are also relatively expensive, meaning that the total cost of the day to the visitor can be quite high. This is especially true if they eat at the site as well, and the price of a family day out can escalate quickly. The costs of each concession are summarised as follows:

Attraction	Description	Cost
Battlefield Live	Combat game	£17.50 for 2 hours
Bike Art	Cycle hire	£5 per hour
Breck Treks	5 minute pony trek	£4
Breck Treks	15 minute pony trek	£8
Go Ape!	Adult ticket	£33
Go Ape!	Child (aged 10–15)	£25
Go Ape!	Child (aged <10)	£18
Go Ape!	Segway hire	£35 per hour
Highline Adventure	Mobile climbing wall/slide	£4 per turn
Look Out Archery	Archery Tuition	£10 per hour

Table 10. The additional costs of the various attractions on offer at High Lodge.

With so many opportunities on site, many of which are effectively open access, it is difficult to assess what visitors choose to do when they visit the High Lodge site. The entry counters keep a tally of vehicles entering and exiting the site, but beyond that is it very difficult to track visitors' movements around the site. The individual concessions do keep records of their customers, but unfortunately none of these data have been made available for the purposes of this Activity Plan port, and visitors may use one or more of the concessions during the course of their visit.

The best measure of visitor activities is again provided by the 2014 *Quality of the Visitor Experience* report (Beaufort Research 2014), which presents the results of interviews with visitors who were asked about the activities which they had undertaken or were planning to undertake on the site.

The most popular activity at High Lodge was walking, with 66% percent of respondents reporting that they had visited the site with this intention. Walking on a sign-posted trail was the most popular method of walking (41% of respondents), followed by unguided walking (24%) and dog walking (13%). Cycling was cited by 24% of visitors to the site, with 15% of respondents using the specified trails and 14% choosing to cycle off the established trails and tracks (Beaufort Research 2014).

These conclusions are slightly at odds by the 2015/15 online *Multi-user Survey*, in which 66% of respondents said that they came to High Lodge for cycling, while 50% cited walking and 23% specifically mentioned dog-walking (Forest Commission 2015c). However, as was discussed above, respondents to this survey were self-selecting and for the most part already engaged with High Lodge, so higher figures are to be expected. The question also allowed multiple responses, so it is difficult to identify and differentiate primary and secondary motivations.

What is clear from these surveys is that many of the people who come to High Lodge do so to walk or at least if they choose to walk whilst they are on site even if that wasn't their primary motivation for visiting the site.

A substantial proportion of those walkers choose to follow one of the sign-posted trails, with others opting to range freely around the site, and a considerable number of walkers are accompanied by their dogs.

All of these conclusions bode well for the success of the current project to develop a new all-weather heritage trail around the High Lodge site, as there is already a demonstrable audience for trails of this kind and a new trail is effectively guaranteed an audience. What is less certain is the degree to which the existing audience will be interested in and drawn to the heritage of High Lodge, as this is an aspect of the site which is currently rather downplayed in the existing interpretative schemes and is therefore difficult to quantify with any certainty.

7 Strategies for Engaging with Current and New Audiences.

7.1 Developing the Audience

As is clear from the analyses presented so far, High Lodge already enjoys a large and diverse audience who choose to visit the site for a number of different reasons. The leisure opportunities available on the site are clearly very popular, and the proposed development of an all-weather, multi-user heritage trail and associated learning packages will complement much of what is already on offer, as well as broadening the appeal of the site to potential new audiences.

Therefore, in order for the current project to succeed it is necessary to develop and broaden the High Lodge audience by enhancing the experience for existing users, bringing new audiences to the site and offering a wider range of opportunities for learning and development. The priorities for audience development for the current project fall into three main categories:

- The Existing Audience: As has already been discussed, High Lodge has a large existing audience drawn from the local population and from visitors to the region, although this audience is not primarily visiting the site for heritage-related reasons.

The development of the new heritage trail will cater for those already using the site's other trails, but will also provide clearer interpretation and greater understanding of the site's historic environment than is currently provided.

- **Under-represented Groups:** As has been seen, several socio-economic groups are under-represented in High Lodge's existing audience when compared to regional and national demographic profiles, and these groups need to be targeted in order to redress this imbalance.
- **Special Interest Groups:** The trail will appeal to local archaeological, historical and wildlife organisations, including individuals and groups who might not otherwise consider visiting High Lodge.

7.2 Recommendations to break down the barriers to access and participation and how these will be implemented.

Recommendation	Implementation
Not all of the existing or potential High Lodge audience use the internet as their primary source of information and more traditional media still have significant part to play in promoting and interpreting the site.	Traditional paper copy publicity and promotional leaflets distributed – 35 000 copies per year.
It is important to ensure that all key documents, interpretation panels and other supporting materials are downloadable in advance in order that mobile-phone technology, including screen readers, can be used to deliver this information to visitors during their time on the site. This is particularly important for those who depend upon this technology, but will also affect general users who wish to access this data on site	This guidance will be prominent on the website and partner and stakeholder websites and in all promotional literature.
Thought should be given to the provision of free Wi-fi to at least one designated area of the site and the possibility of boosting the existing mobile phone signal explored.	Forestry Commission currently (October 2016) investigating this provision.
The online Access Statement is a very useful document and could be promoted to all visitors to the site, not just those with accessibility issues	This will be done with better profiling on the website.
the formatting of the document should be improved to make the text easier to read, the images should be made larger and suitably captioned.	Underway with revision of document in early 2017 and as a result of development phase consultation with access-limited potential user groups.
The text also needs to be simplified and clarified, perhaps with the help of an organisation such as the Campaign for Plain English, and key pieces of information, such as car parking charges, included in the document.	Underway with revision of document in early 2017 and as a result of development phase consultation with access-limited potential user groups. Friends of Thetford Forest will test plain English also.
A large-print version of the document should be made available on the High Lodge website alongside the standard print version, and a downloadable audio version of the guide in MP3 or similarly compatible format should be considered.	Underway with revision of document in early 2017 and as a result of development phase consultation with access-limited potential user groups.
Translations of the document should be commissioned in the main languages spoken in the High Lodge catchment area with the help of an organisation such as Norfolk County Council's INTRAN service	Underway with revision of document in early 2017 and as a result of development phase consultation with access-limited potential user groups.
Greater emphasis should be placed on disability training for all public-facing staff and volunteers, with a particular emphasis on Deaf Awareness and the use of British Sign Language	Training workshops are included at delivery for volunteers and for Forestry Commission Staff.
A focus group should be regularly convened to help monitor and	Members of the Suffolk Coalition of the Disabled will

improve upon disability awareness at the site.	carry out an annual monitoring visit and provide an audit and recommendations. Friends of Thetford Forest will support with transport costs if required.
In order to break down these barriers and challenge the perceptions which give rise to such feelings of alienation, it is necessary to seek out and directly market the site and its facilities to those under-represented groups and reassure them that the site also caters for them.	See Section 12.2 on publicity and promotion to these groups.
Targeted marketing of free events and site open days would help to bring new visitors to the site who might otherwise choose not to come.	Forest Discovery Day 2018 and all annual Open Days and Heritage Open Days will include free site entry .
A focus group should be regularly convened to help monitor and improve upon relationships with the under-represented groups at the site.	Friends of Thetford Forest will set up a Forest Forum for all forest users which will meet annually and also has a web presence.
There needs to be greater recognition that different people have different ways and speeds of taking in information	See Section 8 (Facilitating Learning) and Section 11 (Strategy for Interpretation) for recognition of barriers and strategies to overcome these.
Interpretation panels should be complemented by other sources of information, for example audio presentations or games where the information is delivered in a more interactive way	See Section 11 (Strategy for Interpretation) and in particular Section 11.6
Links should be provided to additional sources of information for those who wish to explore topics in more detail after their visit	There will be in-depth information and access to other sources of information on the High Lodge website.
Consideration should be given to interpretation that uses senses other than sight, for example developing a 3D model through which visitors can explore the historic landscape and use touch to understand how components of the historic landscape such as the warren banks may once have fitted together	The Virtual Past Touch Screen will deliver this.
Seating should be provided adjacent to all interpretation so that everyone can access the information in comfort, at their own pace.	Benches and rest perches are to be positioned next to the audio posts.
In order to attract a more diverse audience and cater more directly for the regional catchment it is necessary to provide multi-lingual promotional and interpretative materials, leaflets and signage tailored to the languages spoken within the site's primary catchment area	This will be done in Polish and Portuguese.
Translations of the document should be commissioned in the main languages spoken in the High Lodge catchment area with the help of an organisation such as Norfolk County Council's INTRAN service. Local non-English media outlets, such as the East Anglian Polish-language newspaper <i>NaszeStrony</i> , should be used more effectively.	See above
While there is little that can be done about the British weather, more sheltered areas should be provided around the site to allow people to escape sudden downpours when they occur. These would be especially useful along the trail routes, where people feel at greatest remove from the shelter offered by the core buildings at High Lodge, and are an integral part of the proposed heritage trail	Two rest and weather-protection shelters will be provided on the trail.
The lack of public transport links is a major barrier to participation and the Forestry Commission should give serious consideration to entering discussions with the local bus companies to provide a service which would pass the entrance to the site along the B1107 Brandon to Thetford road	The Community Bus Schemes will run a minibus to High Lodge one day a week during the summer holidays.
Additional accessible toilets should be provided around the core of the High Lodge complex, but consideration should also be given to providing further toilet facilities at more peripheral locations, perhaps using this as an opportunity to promote more ecological sound toilet technology	A feasibility study and SWOT and cost analyses have been undertaken. See Trail Design and Construction Document.

The management of High Lodge would be wise to revisit the disabled parking provision at the site and invest in creating a suitably solid parking surface, with clearly demarcated bays and adequate signage. The number of bays provided should also be increased.	The Forestry Commission is making this provision but not as part of this project (though such provision will be supportive of it).
Consideration should also be given to offering a concessionary rate to Blue Badge holders.	This has been considered several times but is not workable.
Given the nature of High Lodge it will never be possible to make the site fully accessible to wheelchair users. Concessions such as the café should be encouraged to think about how accessible they truly are	The Access Audit recommendations will be shared with site partners. Each year, there is a pre-season meeting and a post-season meeting for all site partners and stakeholders and monitoring and evaluation of the access provision will be added to the agenda as a priority.
Targeting marketing at disabled audiences should place a greater emphasis upon the availability of adapted bikes at the site, as well as the provision of wheelchairs and mobility scooter.	The Access Audit recommendations will be shared with site partners. Friends of Thetford Forest will upgrade the publicity for the adapted bikes with a new flyer (costs not part of the project).
The booking system should also be promoted and made clearer so that users can be confident that there will be provision made for them once they arrive on the site.	This will be done in 2017.
There is a strong public perception that High Lodge is an expensive place to visit and that the parking charges are relatively high, which they demonstrably are.	Greater effort needs to be made to promote the fact that the 'parking charge' covers everything on the site bar the concessions and that High Lodge has a lot more to offer visitors than cheaper local attractions.
The Discovery Pass is a very economical solution for those wishing the site more regularly, but the one-off fee is high and may put many potential visitors off buying one	There are concessions offered when purchased at open and discovery days.
The concessions are running successful commercial enterprises with established audiences, but thought should be given to offering reduced rates to under-represented groups in an effort to broaden and build their audiences and the audience of the wider site.	This would be very difficult to administer and regulate.
Concessions should be actively encouraged to offer events specifically tailored to the needs of disabled visitors, enabling them to participate more fully in what the site has to offer, or promoted to parties derived from the under-represented groups in the wider community.	The project's disability training workshops will be offered to all site partners.

The Action Plan, Sections 6a –i; Section 7a-d; Section 8a-d; Section 10a-e and Section 12a-m refer.

See also
Consultation
Recommendations and Implementation
Access Audit Report.

8 Strategy for the Provision of Learning

8.1 The Current Learning Provision at High Lodge and the Forestry Commission's National Strategy.

The overall aim of this strategy for learning is to identify and plan formal and informal learning opportunities which will be developed and delivered as a part of the 'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge' project. The learning opportunities arising from the project will enable everyone to access the heritage of High Lodge and its landscape and remove the barriers which currently prevent such learning.

The main objective is to provide an educational resource for the built and natural heritage of the High Lodge site. This resource needs to include opportunities for both led and self-led learning, and a training programme for volunteers to give them the skills needed to help deliver that learning. These new learning opportunities will be designed to increase participation in events and education programmes, to increase the number of educational visits to the site and to increase the skills, knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of all visitors.

In order to present a suitable programme of structured learning opportunities, it is first necessary to assess the corporate approach to learning taken by the Forestry Commission.

All of the learning opportunities presented as part of the current project will be delivered alongside the Forestry Commission's own ongoing learning provision at High Lodge, so a clear understanding of the nature and range of this provision is vital to the development of this complementary suite of learning opportunities.

High Lodge is managed by the Forestry Commission as part of the Public Forest Estate, so it is essential that the educational resource developed during this project is closely linked to and complements the Forestry Commission's existing learning offer.

Forestry Commission England's learning message, as presented in their *National Learning Strategy 2013–2015*, is that:

Our trees and forests are essential for people, wildlife and the green economy. They are for recreation ... learning ... communities ... health ... habitats ... biodiversity ... timber ... jobs ... sustainability ... climate change ... tree collections ... research ... aesthetic value.

The stated purpose of this learning message is to capture what is special and unique about the trees and public forests in England and the way they are managed sustainably by the Forestry Commission (Forestry Commission 2013).

In recent times, the Forestry Commission has undergone significant changes to the way in which it provides and delivers learning in the 1,500 or so forests and woods which it manages. In the past, the Forestry Commission provided high-quality learning experiences for people of all ages, most of which were led by experienced site rangers. These ranger-led learning activities including shelter-building, habitat and wildlife discovery and art-and-craft activities based around a series of environmental themes.

A restructuring of the Forestry Commission's learning provision in 2013 as part of their *National Learning Strategy 2013–15* resulted in the establishment of regional learning teams based at six key sites across the country. As part of the same process, the post of National Learning Manager was established to coordinate learning activity across the Public Forest Estate in England. Learning at High Lodge is currently managed as part of the Eastern Region by a team based at Bedgebury in Kent. As a result of this restructuring and the new approach to learning brought in with it, the corporate emphasis has shifted away

from ranger-led learning activities towards the development and implementation of self-led learning trails and learning delivered externally by third-party providers.

At the end of the period covered by the 2013 National Learning Strategy a *National Learning Strategy Update May 2015–March 2017* was issued, which is intended to provide further guidance until a new strategy is devised for the learning teams in the new *Public Forest Estate Management Organisation* in 2017 (Forestry Commission 2015). This document reiterates the key messages of the 2013–15 document and the vision underpinning the Forestry Commission's national learning strategy remains unchanged:

to enable everyone, everywhere, to connect with the nation's trees and forests so that they understand their importance and the role of the Forestry Commission in their management, and act positively to safeguard forests for the future.

The National Environment White Paper 2011, entitled *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature*, stated that 'We want to see every child in England given the opportunity to experience and learn about the natural environment' (DEFRA 2011). Sites such as High Lodge provide excellent access to the natural environment and an opportunity for outdoor learning in a unique forest landscape.

One of the Forestry Commission's stated aims in their updated *Learning Strategy* is to 'enable ... local schools to use their local woods, by providing them with resources and advice' (Forestry Commission 2015). At High Lodge, the number of school visits has declined significantly in the last 18 months following a peak in 2014 of 137 school visits per annum. In 2015 there were only 79 school visits, a decline of some 43%.

The reasons behind this significant decline are likely to be varied and complex, but it is clear that the change in the way on-site learning is delivered has resulted in fewer schools visiting High Lodge.

During an interview conducted as part of the development phase of this project, the Forestry Commission's National Learning Manager stated that 'when we used to have staff that delivered learning visits, it was a popular site, but as organisational priorities have changed, the number of visits has dropped' (Rachel Giles, pers. comm.).

Although ranger-led will not be reinstated, this project will attempt to reverse this decline and encourage more visits from primary and secondary schools in Norfolk, Suffolk and further afield. In order to ensure that the learning resources which are developed as part of this project complement and enhance the existing Forestry Commission learning provision delivered at High Lodge the current provision has been assessed and is summarised below, beginning with an assessment of the online resources which are available.

8.2 Current Learning Resources

The main starting point for online resources is the main learning page of the Forestry Commission's website, which can be found at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-learning> and which has been substantially updated during the last six months (at September 2016). This page provides sidebar links to both the *Forestry Commission Learning Strategy 2013–15* and the recent *Learning Strategy Update (May 2015–March 2017)* while the main page promotes sub-pages aimed at the following potential learning audiences:

- *Schools and Groups*: aimed at teachers and group leaders, this section is designed to make it as easy as possible to plan activities and lessons in the forest and includes lesson plans, curriculum links and downloadable resources for children from pre-school age to Key Stage 4.

- *Family activities*: aimed at parents, this section contains cross-links to a series of pages detailing activities for children including the Stick Man trail (discussed further below) and activities to download and print.
- *Students*: aimed at secondary school, college and university students, this section provides information about careers with the Forestry Commission, volunteering opportunities and links to study resources.
- *Adult learning*: aimed at adults who wish to know more about the forest or become a volunteer, this section contains links to study resources and further information.

For the purposes of this analysis, it is good to note that the information for schools is readily identifiable and the 'Schools and Groups' webpage (<http://forestry.gov.uk/forestry/BEEH-A6JGEK>) contains links to pages giving ideas for activities to complete before, during and after the site visit. These pages include guidance on suitable clothing, risk assessments and the like, as well as informal quizzes and other activities to test the success of the learning.

At the time of writing, the Lesson Plans webpage contains seven downloadable curriculum-linked lesson plans on the following subjects:

- Explore with your senses
- Terrific trees
- Exploring natural materials (forest art)
- Geography – Key Stage 1
- Exploring natural materials (building structures)
- Minibeasts in the forest
- Forests for the Future

The updated *Learning Strategy* document states that by April 2017 there will be more than 40 such lesson plans available to download, and it is intended that the current project will produce additional lesson plans in the same house style which are specific to High Lodge and its heritage.

Additional links from the 'Schools and Groups' page highlight the Forestry Commission's partnership working with the Children's University and with the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. The Children's University is an international charity which encourages children aged 5 to 14 years to try new experiences, develop new interests and acquire new skills through participation in innovative and creative learning activities outside of the school day (<http://www.childrensuniversity.co.uk>). Participants in supported activities are awarded time stamps for completing them which are verified by the Forestry Commission and added to their Children's University Passport to Learning, and many of the standard activities offered at Forestry Commission sites have been adapted to be able to be counted in this way.

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) describes itself as the national voice for learning outside the classroom and believes that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances (<http://www.lotc.org.uk>). The CLOtC also runs an accreditation scheme for sites which provide outdoor self-led learning opportunities and High Lodge is one of the many Forestry Commission sites which has secured this award. The Forestry Commission itself is currently working towards achieving a CLOtC Site Provider Award.

As far as High Lodge is concerned, the most significant link from the 'Schools and Groups' webpage is that which guides the user towards more details of the *Ranger in a Bag* scheme which is considered in more detail in the next section.

High Lodge itself also has a dedicated Learning Page on the Forestry Commission's website (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/highlodge-education>). The webpage is intended to be the starting point for anyone wishing to undertake learning activities at High Lodge. This page

brings together information likely to be required when planning a group visit to the site, including details of parking arrangements, toilet facilities, wet weather provision, health and safety, risk assessments, insurance, first aid and supervision ratios. However, aside from logistics this page is currently rather limited in its content and is not fully cross-linked with other sections of the Forestry Commission website. For example, although the High Lodge page states that there are self-guided programmes available from Early Years to Key Stage 4, no downloadable resources are actually available from this page and links are not provided to the pages on which these resources are to be found. All of the information on the High Lodge Learning page would benefit from being linked in to the main Forestry Commission Learning page and sub-pages, especially those relating to the *Ranger in a Bag* scheme.

Ranger in a Bag

At High Lodge, as at many Forestry Commission sites, all of the learning provision is now self-led, with individual leaders expected to prepare material in advance to use with their groups on site. At some sites this has resulted in the implementation of trails and learning activities where previously there was neither the time or resources to provide anything of the sort, while at other sites where ranger-led tours were the norm this represents a scaling back of the learning provision in real terms.

The self-led learning model adopted by the Forestry Commission requires visitors to use dedicated pages of the Forestry Commission website to download resources in advance of a visit and the website includes several pages specifically for schools to use when planning a visit to High Lodge (discussed above). In addition to the web resources, each self-led learning programme is supported by a pre-site visit with the site Education Ranger which needs to be booked in advance.

Ranger in a Bag is available at more than 20 Forestry Commission woodlands. These backpacks provide a range of equipment, games and resources to run an educational visit in the forest for a class of up to 35 children and are most suitable for children aged 4 to 11 years old. Each bag includes enough activities for a half-day session.

A range of different sessions are available nationwide, but at High Lodge only two *Ranger in a Bag* options are currently available, 'Amazing Animals' and 'Shelter Building'. Although the High Lodge Learning webpage does not currently link to any supplementary information about these resources, the Forestry Commission's national learning pages provide useful links to the National Curriculum and some suggested learning objectives.

These sessions can be summarised thus:

Amazing Animals: A selection of clues and evidence left behind by forest animals and birds, as well as a minibeast search in the forest habitat, will inspire the detectives and naturalists within your group.

Bag Contents: Instruction sheet, emergency sheet, 8 woodland clues and answers, 7 sets of magnifying lenses, bug boxes and paintbrushes, identification guides.

National Curriculum: KS1/KS2 Science – working scientifically; animals including humans; living things and their habitats.

Learning Objectives: to discover that different locations/habitats support a different variety of plants and animals; to find out how animals adapt to the seasons; to identify animals and their habitats (including micro-habitats).

Shelter Building: A great team activity. Children work together to construct sturdy shelters from forest materials. Test the structures using the 'rain test'.

Bag Contents: Instruction sheet, emergency sheet, one bucket and three tumblers (for the 'rain test').

National Curriculum: KS 1/2 Design and technology – generate and communicate ideas through discussion; select from and use a range of materials and components, according to their characteristics; building structures, exploring how they can be made stronger, stiffer and more stable; evaluate ideas.

Learning Objectives: to plan, make, evaluate and improve structures in the outdoor environment; to work together as a team; to develop problem-solving skills.

Orienteering: The large permanent orienteering course has routes to suit a range of ages and abilities. A compass can be used but is not essential for the course. This will test students mapping skills as well as allowing exploration of the wider forest environment.

National Curriculum: Key Stage 2+ – to provide the environment to take part in adventurous activities in an unfamiliar environment; to provide a basic introduction to orienteering techniques when requested.

These self-led *Ranger in a Bag* sessions are clearly popular with those who use them, and the Forestry Commission intends to roll out more of the established activities across more of its sites as time progresses. The current project will also develop a number of *Ranger in a Bag*-style activities focussed around the history and heritage of High Lodge, and these are detailed in the second half of this strategy.

A final interface between High Lodge and the area's local schools is via the Forest Schools network. Norfolk and Suffolk have a growing community of Forest School practitioners, who work in various ways. Some are teachers, teaching assistants or Early Years practitioners running Forest School programmes as part of their role at a school, some are employed by wildlife or education organisations and groups come to their sites for programmes, and others are freelance practitioners who work across many different sites and with many different groups. Many primary schools are now committed to an annual programme of Forest School activities involving children aged 4 to 11 years old.

The Forest School Association, the UK-wide organisation dedicated to promoting Forest School uses the following definition: 'Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and complements the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.'

Many organisations, including the Forestry Commission, have publicised the importance of reconnecting people with nature both for people and nature. By visiting the woodland regularly throughout the year or over a longer period of time, people develop a sense of connection and belonging to a natural area. Through first-hand observation they see the seasonal changes of wildlife and see the consequences of our actions upon it.

Currently there is some provision for Forest Schools at High Lodge, but the High Lodge Forest Schools webpage only provides details of the cost (£200) of obtaining permission to run a Forest School session at the site. This fee allows a school to bring their own qualified Forest School leader to High Lodge and to carry out activities within a specified area.

Given the increasing popularity of Forest Schools in Norfolk and Suffolk this part of the website should be enhanced to encourage Forest School practitioners to take advantage of the unique outdoor learning opportunities that High Lodge can offer and suggest ways in which they might integrate a visit to High Lodge into their ongoing Forest School programmes.

8.3 Analysis of Existing Learning Opportunities for Non-School Visitors

High Lodge enjoys a large and diverse audience who choose to visit for a number of different reasons and the site regularly receives between 300,000 and 400,000 visitors per annum. Analyses have demonstrated that this audience is largely drawn from a 50-mile radius catchment area centred on the site and that a large proportion of the audience comprises families with children (Beaufort Research 2014). In addition to learning targeted at schools, High Lodge also offers a large range of more informal learning opportunities which cater for this wider audience, and it the current project is intended to broaden this offer to the existing audience as well as attracting new audiences to the site.

Adult Learners

As discussed above, one of the key areas of learning highlighted on the Forestry Commission's Learning webpages is Adult Learners, who can be broadly defined as those actively seeking training opportunities or experiences which will lead to the acquisition of new skills and understanding. Visitors to these pages are directed towards online information about Pests and Diseases, Sustainable Forestry and other information, as well as the interactive guide to identifying tree species. More importantly, users are also informed about volunteering opportunities which includes the chance to volunteer with the Friends of Thetford Forest. These opportunities are not specifically linked from High Lodge's own webpages and this needs to be rectified.

The Friends of Thetford Forest describes itself as a voluntary organisation aiming to increase community involvement, understanding, and enjoyment of Thetford Forest (<http://www.fotf.org.uk>).

The Friends offers numerous volunteering opportunities across a wide range of subjects, including conservation, ecology and archaeology, and they have been particularly active at High Lodge in recent years. They have been identified as a key partner in the delivery of the current project and the established body of volunteers has expressed considerable interest in the learning opportunities which are due to be offered.

One of the key under-represented groups amongst the High Lodge audience is adults with disabilities or learning difficulties (Beaufort Research 2014). While the High Lodge site is largely accessible (albeit with room for improvement), there is not currently specific learning provision made for such groups and this is something which this project will rectify.

Families and Other Visitors

A wide range of activities is available at High Lodge, some of them fixed installations, such as walking and cycling trails, and others, such as Go Ape!, run by concession-holders on a regular or semi-regular basis. Many of these activities offer learning opportunities, either as an active part of an exploratory trail aimed at families with young children or, as is more often the case, in the form of passive interpretative material to be read and absorbed during the course of touring the site. Some of the concessions also offer activities which include elements of learning within them. This section briefly summarises these different learning opportunities, beginning with way-marked trails which are aimed at families and other visitors.

8.4 The Learning Resources delivered by the Project.

The learning strategy which will be employed during the delivery of the new High Lodge heritage trail has been developed in order to maximise the number of learning opportunities which are presented at the site with the dual purpose of broadening the offer to the existing audience of High Lodge users while at the same time encouraging those who have not visited the site before to begin to do so.

New Learning Opportunities for Schools

All of the learning resources developed for schools as part of this project will include cross-curricular learning linked to National Curriculum objectives. Every state-funded school in England must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils. The National Curriculum forms one part of the school curriculum. The aims of the National Curriculum are as follows:

- The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.
- The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

Pupils of compulsory school age in community and foundation schools, including special schools, and in voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools, must follow the national curriculum. It is organised on the basis of four key stages and twelve subjects, classified as 'core' and 'other foundation' subjects. The Secretary of State for Education is required to publish programmes of study for each national curriculum subject, setting out the 'matters, skills and processes' to be taught at each key stage.

All of the resources for schools will be developed in line with the Forestry Commission's model for self-led learning. However, it is hoped that during the project volunteers will also be trained to help with school visits to the site. This should help address the issue that we identified during our consultation with primary and secondary school teachers, many of whom reported feeling lacking in confidence when teaching outside of the classroom.

	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Year Groups (Age)	1–2 (5–7)	3–6 (7–11)	7–9 (11–14)	10–11 (14–16)
Core Subjects				
English	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mathematics	✓	✓	✓	✓
Science	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Subjects				
Art and Design	✓	✓	✓	
Citizenship			✓	✓
Computing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Design & Technology	✓	✓	✓	
Languages		✓	✓	
Geography	✓	✓	✓	
History	✓	✓	✓	
Music	✓	✓	✓	
Physical Education	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 11. Core subjects in each of the National Curriculum Key Stages.

In order to fit in with the Forestry Commission's current model for learning delivery to schools, learning for children at Key Stage 1 (ages 5–7) and Key Stage 2 (ages 7–11) will be developed using the Forestry Commission's existing *Ranger in a Bag* model. Each activity bag contains equipment, games and resources for a half-day session for a class of up to 35 children and are most suitable for children aged 4–11 years old.

Most school visits are from primary schools, so it is important to develop new resources for this audience to use on future visits to the site that will introduce High Lodge's heritage to this audience. Two new learning resources will also be developed for Key Stage 3 (ages 11–14) and Key Stage 4 (ages 14–16) learners. Secondary schools are less frequent visitors to the site, and it is hoped that these resources will encourage teachers from nearby schools to visit the site with their pupils. The next sections detail the new learning to be developed.

The Tree of Life (Key Stage 1, could be extended for Key Stage 2)

Aim of the Resource

This resource will use a timeline and artefacts to explore the key events in High Lodge's past, pinpointing significant events on a timeline and putting these into chronological order. Key issues to explore will include Stone Age flint mines in the Brecks, Bronze Age funerary landscapes, the arrival of the Romans in East Anglia, the impact of the Vikings in nearby Thetford, the development of medieval rabbit warrens in the Brecks, the flourishing gun-flint industry in the post-medieval period and the impact of the World Wars on the landscape and the need for managed forests as a timber source.

Curriculum Links

Key Stage 1 History: Chronological understanding; significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.

Key Stage 1 Geography: Develop knowledge about their locality; use simple compass directions and locational and directional language to describe the location of features.

Key Stage 2 Geography: Understand how land-use patterns have changed over time; describe and understand key aspects of human geography including types of settlement and land use, economic activity and the distribution of natural resources.

Learning Objectives

Understanding of relative chronology and the ordering of historical events.

Increased knowledge of the history of the local area.

Classroom Activities

A series of complementary downloadable resources will be developed to be used in the classroom in advance or following on from the visit to High Lodge. These will include downloadable activities for the children to complete such as creating and adding local and national historical figures and events to a timeline. The Teachers' Pack will also include discussion ideas and suggestions for further follow-on activities that build on what the children learned at High Lodge including art and design activities such as illustrating imaginary scenes from the region's past.

Flint-working in the Brecks (Key Stage 2)

Aim of the Resource

This resource will explore flint as a material, and its different uses at different periods in time. It will consider flint as a naturally occurring resource that was mined locally, both in the Neolithic (at Grimes Graves) and in the post-medieval period at High Lodge (the gunflint industry). It will consider how flint was used in the Stone Age and in the post-medieval period.

Curriculum Links

Key Stage 2 History: Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age.

Key Stage 2 Geography: Understand how land-use patterns have changed over time; describe and understand key aspects of human geography including types of settlement and land use, economic activity and the distribution of natural resources.

Key Stage 2 Science: Explore different kinds of rocks and soils, including those in the local environment.

Learning Objectives

Knowledge of changes in Britain in the Stone Age.

Classroom Activities

A series of complementary downloadable resources will be developed to be used in the classroom in advance or following on from the visit to High Lodge. These will include downloadable activities for the children to complete such as finding flint mines on aerial photographs and sorting images of flints into different types of tool. The Teachers' Pack will also include discussion ideas and suggestions for further follow-on activities that build on what the children learned at High Lodge including art and design activities such as building a model of a Neolithic flint mine.

Exploring Bronze Age East Anglia (Key Stage 2)

Aim of the Resource

This resource will explore how we can find out about prehistoric civilisations, using a case study of evidence for the Bronze Age in East Anglia as an example. The resource will explain what Bronze Age barrows are, and how we can find them in the modern landscape. It will explain the impact of modern farming practices on earthworks, and how other uses of the landscape, in particular forestry, can help preserve such features. It will introduce the idea of grave goods, and get children to think about what these objects can tell us about how people lived in the Bronze Age.

Curriculum Links

Key Stage 2 History: Changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age; Chronological understanding; Historical Enquiry; Local History.

Key Stage 2 Geography: Place knowledge: understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom.

Learning objectives

Knowledge of changes in Britain during the Bronze Age.

Understanding how archaeological evidence can be used to understand prehistoric communities and how maps and aerial photographs can be used to understand the past.

Classroom activities

A series of complementary downloadable resources will be developed to be used in the classroom in advance or following on from the visit to High Lodge. These will include downloadable activities for the children to complete such as finding barrows and ring-ditches on aerial photographs and sorting images of grave goods. The Teachers' Pack will also include discussion ideas and suggestions for further follow-on activities that build on what the children learned at High Lodge including art and design activities such as making and decorating a Bronze Age beaker.

Rabbit Warrenning in the Brecks (Key Stage 3/4)

Aim of the Resource

This resource will explore how we can find out about rabbit warrening, using the evidence of warrening at High Lodge as an example.

Curriculum Links

Key Stage 3 History: the development of Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066–1509; a local history study.

Key Stage 3 Geography: understand how human and physical processes interact to influence, and change landscapes, environments and the climate; understand how human activity relies on effective functioning of natural systems; interpret Ordnance Survey maps in the classroom and the field, including using grid references and scale, topographical and other thematic mapping, and aerial and satellite photographs; use Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to view, analyse and interpret places and data.

Key Stage 3 Science: the interdependence of organisms in an ecosystem; how organisms affect, and are affected by, their environment.

Learning objectives

Knowledge of the development of warrening in Breckland and its wider historical context. Understand why the landscape of Breckland was well-suited to the development of warrens and identify other landscape types and areas where warrening might have flourished. Understand the impact of warrening on the wider landscape and how we can still identify warren features on modern and historic maps and aerial photographs.

Classroom activities

A series of complementary downloadable resources will be developed to be used in the classroom in advance or following on from the visit to High Lodge. These will include downloadable activities for the children to complete such as aerial photographs from which the course of the warren banks can be traced. The Teachers' Pack will also include discussion ideas and suggestions for further follow-on activities that build on what the children learned at High Lodge including art and design activities such as creating accurate maps of historic warren sites.

High Lodge in the 20th century (Key Stage 3/4)

Aim of the Resource

This resource will explore the events that changed the landscape at High Lodge during the 20th century and the sources we can use to investigate these developments.

Curriculum Links

Key Stage 3 History: challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day; a local history study.

Key Stage 3 Geography: understand how human and physical processes interact to influence, and change landscapes, environments and the climate; understand how human activity relies on effective functioning of natural systems; interpret Ordnance Survey maps in the classroom and the field, including using grid references and scale, topographical and other thematic mapping, and aerial and satellite photographs; use Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to view, analyse and interpret places and data.

Key Stage 3 Science: the interdependence of organisms in an ecosystem; how organisms affect, and are affected by, their environment.

Learning objectives

Understand the key factors and context of the development of forests such as Thetford. Understand how human activities can impact on the natural environment.

Name past and present economic activities associated with trees, woodland and forests.

Understand a range of forest management systems and their impact on the environment.

Classroom activities

A series of complementary downloadable resources will be developed to be used in the classroom in advance or following on from the visit to High Lodge. These will include GIS resources (including historic maps and aerial photographs) which they can use to track the changes and developments in the landscape of High Lodge through time. The Teachers' Pack will also include discussion ideas and suggestions for further follow-on activities that build on what the students learned at High Lodge. This could include designing a sustainable forest for the future, choosing one or more focuses (visitors, timber, wildlife) and selecting appropriate management techniques to ensure sustainability.

Activity Days

In addition to providing the new teaching packages outlined above, it is proposed that a number of activity days to be led by in-house or third-party experts will be marketed to local schools during the course of the delivery phase of the project. The exact number of sessions offered will depend upon the take-up amongst the local schools and it will be possible to tailor these events to the needs of particular schools and pupils as required.

Four activity days are proposed, each to be hosted at High Lodge. Each would be aimed at both primary and secondary schools and sixth forms in terms of the focus and subject with learning packs compiled at the appropriate level and also adapted for those with learning difficulties and for adult learners and special interest groups.

In addition, for older students there will be information provided on careers in forestry.

There will be the option of a day for all three activities with a less concentrated delivery for each which might have a wider appeal for primary schools.

Archaeologist for a Day

An archaeologically-themed day which focuses on the techniques used by archaeologists to understand the past. Subjects to be covered would include using historic maps, measuring

and mapping a section of an earthwork bank, learning about how previous land-use has left a legacy in the forest landscape and understanding the management issues around protecting archaeology in a working forest.

Forest Manager for a Day

A forestry-themed day which focuses on the issues associated with managing the forest. The day would include learning about how the forest is managed for timber production, wildlife, archaeology and recreation, with illustrative site visits and decision-making exercises where real problems are presented.

Ecologist for a Day

An ecology themed day focussing on key forest species, habitats and their management, opportunities and constraints of the SPA and SSSIs and balancing multi-purpose forestry.

Archaeologist/Forest Manager/Ecologist for a Day

A three-part day split between being an archaeologist, being a forest manager and being an ecologist with a fun selection of activities drawn from the two stand-alone activities which delivers learning and involve children in discovering for themselves and making decisions.

8.5 Improving infrastructure for School Visits

In order to ensure good take-up of the schools learning opportunities that will be developed as part of this project, feedback from teachers and others suggests that there are some improvements that are necessary in order to make High Lodge better suited to school visits.

Outdoor classroom

Several teachers reported that the lack of a room or other covered area which they could use in bad weather discourages them from visiting High Lodge. When bringing large school groups to the site they need somewhere to get changed into and out of wet weather gear at the beginning and end of the day. Additionally, several teachers suggested that an 'outdoor classroom' incorporating seating and an outdoor chalkboard as a minimum would be desirable.

Secure area for storing bags/packed lunches

Many of the teachers consulted during this project noted the need for somewhere on-site for students to leave packed lunches, particularly for groups including younger children.

Oak Lodge will be offered to all schools to use as a base during delivery of the project and afterwards on a pre-booked facility.

Better/more toilet facilities

Several teachers reported that the current toilet facilities are insufficient when bringing school groups to the site. Most schools tend to bring more than one class at a time to minimise the cost of coach hire per pupil, meaning that group sizes can be up to 70 pupils or more, and the current toilet provision is inadequate.

Meet and Greet

Several of the teachers we talked to suggested that they would feel more confident leading groups at High Lodge if there was someone on-site waiting for the group to arrive who would meet and greet them and provide a briefing at the start of the day. It is hoped that during the project volunteers can be trained to provide this role. Training will be provided for this role.

Guidance for teaching outdoors at High Lodge

It was suggested that a High Lodge teachers' pack which complemented the existing resources for schools and addressed some of the teachers' concerns about teaching outside would be helpful. This could be made freely available online or hosted in a password-protected area of the Forestry Commission website.

The learning materials will be trialled by the two schools which were the winners of the Development Phase 'Design a Shelter' Competition (Ickworth Park Primary and Thurston Community College) and by runner-up Weeting Primary.

A free school visit to use the learning materials will be offered to Thetford Red Castle Primary School and Brandon Glade Primary School (catchment areas of low income families).

8.6 New Learning Opportunities for Non-School Visitors

Alongside the resources that will be developed for schools, this project will produce a range of new resources for adult learners (including those with learning difficulties), families and other visitors to High Lodge. These resources will focus specifically on the heritage of High Lodge, as there is currently no learning provision relating to the site's history and heritage.

During the project there will be numerous opportunities for adult learners to take part in a series of events which will introduce them to different aspects of the heritage of High Lodge. In addition, several 'legacy' learning resources for a non-schools audience will be developed, focused on informal learning for all visitors to the site, and delivering information about High Lodge's heritage and its relevance and place within its local community.

The Forestry Commission is committed to a self-led learning model, so these resources will fit into that model, combining a mix of downloadable resources and interpretation panels. These resources will be complemented by trained volunteers who will be able to provide guided tours along the Heritage Trail and in the wider landscape of High Lodge (by appointment). These learning resources are designed to be sustainable beyond the lifetime of the project.

The Monday Group (adults with learning challenges who are members of Friends of Thetford Forest) will evaluate the learning materials in terms of meeting their needs.

The Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People will trial and evaluate the learning materials, to ensure they are suitable for those with visual impairments and do not exclude those with physical access limitations.

Students on the arboriculture and countryside management courses at Easton and Otley College will evaluate the learning materials for the themed days focused on the archaeology, ecology and timber production and management of Thetford Forest.

Day Schools

The project will provide opportunities for people to learn new skills through the volunteer heritage programme. Similar projects elsewhere have demonstrated that acquiring new skills can make a real and lasting difference for people as they can increase an individual's confidence and sense of self-worth as well as their employability.

A wide range of day schools and workshops to be led by in-house or third-party experts will be offered on a variety of subjects related to the history, archaeology, ecology and management of the High Lodge site and Thetford Forest more widely. The exact number of sessions offered will depend upon the take-up amongst the local population and it will be possible to tailor these events to the needs of particular groups as required.

Treasure Hunt Trail

Aimed at children up to the age of 16, this Treasure Hunt will require participants to solve clues to identify the locations of a series of rubber stamps situated along the new route. These stamps will feature images of artefacts associated with the long history of High Lodge, helping to reinforce the heritage messages which are central to the project. The successful completion of the Treasure Hunt Trail will enable the participant to claim a medal/small reward featuring an artefact with a meaningful connection to the site, perhaps a worked flint arrowhead or something similar.

As with many of the activities undertaken at High Lodge, steps will be taken to ensure that the successful completion of the Treasure Hunt Trail will be eligible for hour-stamp credits in the Children's University's *Passport to Learning*.

The Action Plan Section 9a-i and Section 11a-h refer.

See also
[Consultation](#)
[Recommendations and Implementation](#).

9 Strategy for Volunteering

9.1 Review of the volunteering opportunities within the Forestry Commission and at High Lodge.

Volunteers are an essential part of delivering the 'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge'. Trained and guided by professionals, they will contribute research and be a labour force for the project and they in turn will learn new skills and gain knowledge and experience.

Many volunteers will also be sharing their skills and knowledge, often built up in previous careers or during volunteering activity.

This project will encourage volunteers to share their experiences with other volunteers and to encourage and mentor new volunteers.

Research by large organisations that rely on volunteers has shown that a heritage volunteer group is rarely fully representative of the local population –so it is important to broaden the range of people who are involved in heritage projects and to make them relevant to potential volunteers by:

- Increasing opportunities for heritage volunteering by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to increase diversity within an organisation
- Increasing the quality of heritage volunteering opportunities
- Matching tasks with the right people
- Providing tailored training and support for volunteers
- Offering taster sessions as a way to encourage new volunteers.

The Project Team in conjunction with other Forestry Commission staff also considered the following questions:

- What is the function of volunteers and what tasks are volunteers suited to?
- What skills and experience should volunteers bring to the project.
- How will the project go about finding volunteers.
- What will the selection process involve.
- If volunteers are successfully recruited, how will the project ensure they remain for the delivery phase and beyond.
- Does the project have good volunteer management and policies planned and ready.

Volunteering at Forestry Commission Sites in England.

To help ensure that this project incorporates 'best practice' a survey was undertaken of volunteering at other Forestry Commission sites. The Forestry Commission promotes volunteering under the slogan 'Boots to Fill' and advocates involvement 'if you enjoy the outdoors, want to learn new skills, meet new people and be part of the Forestry Commission team'.

In 2014 a National Volunteer Co-Ordinator was appointed and a 'Volunteer Handbook' written. This sets out 'policies and procedures' to be followed by all staff and volunteers working on the Public Forest Estate, so that there is a uniform standard of care and recording. This standard applies to both volunteers who are directly managed by FC staff and volunteers who manage themselves. However, just as no two Forestry Commission sites are the same, there is a wide variety of volunteering opportunities and voluntary groups.

The main sites and their volunteering opportunities are summarised here.

1 Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest – Kent

A forest site offering cycling, walking, running, riding, adventure play and Go Ape within the 320 acre Pinetum which contains over 12,000 trees and shrubs (including 1,800 different species) from across five continents, many of them rare and endangered.

Volunteers can work on the Wednesday Wild Crew and Sunday Conservation Working Groups. Volunteers are also offered an opportunity to welcome visitors, answer their questions and help ensure visitors can find their choice of activity. Volunteers also work with and are trained by a paid Learning Team.

The Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum is a charity that was established in 1993 to support the work of the Forestry Commission at Bedgebury. Membership is £66.00 for an individual and members receive free admission all year round, as well as regular journals containing details of events and activities.

Paid Staff administer the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum; write the newsletters and website and organise the volunteering.

2 Westonbirt – The National Arboretum, Gloucestershire

A place where visitors can learn about trees within 15,000 species for all over the globe as well as enjoying recreational opportunities.

Currently there are 260 volunteers giving 18,000 hours of free time to the Arboretum, helping to maintain Westonbirt's unique collection of internationally important trees and shrubs to a high standard and supporting staff in delivering family events and curriculum-based learning programmes to families and school children each year.

The Friends of Westonbirt Arboretum is a registered charity and a non-profit making company, limited by guarantee and managed by a board of 12 trustees, who provide governance, policy direction and appoint staff to manage the operations and day-to-day running of the charity.

3 Wendover Woods – Buckinghamshire.

A site offering orienteering, fitness and assault courses, cycling and walking.

The Chilterns Society holds regular work parties for conservation projects that the Commission otherwise would not be able to undertake with its own limited resources.

This work, overseen by the Commission's professional staff, has included restoring and maintaining habitats and woodland paths, and restoring heritage monuments in the woods.

4 Thetford Forest – Norfolk and Suffolk

Thetford Forest, covering 24 000 hectares, is England's largest lowland pine forest. High Lodge built in 1992 is the visitor hub for Thetford Forest, providing recreational facilities for over 400,000 visitors annually.

There are two voluntary groups operating in Thetford Forest:

TIMBER is the Mountain Trail Biking Club whose purposes are to promote and provide facilities for and encourage community participation in the amateur sport of mountain-biking in Thetford Forest. It is entirely funded by subscriptions and donations from members and sponsors.

As well as helping the Forestry Commission to maintain and improve the mountain-biking trail network in Thetford Forest, TIMBER holds regular social rides, training sessions, coaching from a qualified coach and road trips to other sites.

Some of TIMBER's volunteers are trained to perform trail inspections for the Forestry Commission, thereby ensuring that the existing trail network stays open to the public. TIMBER also attends the Cycling Development Team Meetings organised by the Forestry Commission for all cycling stakeholders.

Friends of Thetford Forest is a voluntary organisation set up in 1995 to help increase understanding, knowledge and enjoyment of Thetford Forest and to encourage the involvement and support of the community in its development. It is run by a committee of seven volunteers which meets every six weeks. No paid staff are involved in the administration of the membership.

Volunteers write the newsletters and the website; compile the risk assessments (after training by FC) following FC safety at work guidelines; recruit and manage volunteers and help train them; organise events and projects and generate publicity, having built up an extensive network of local and regional media contacts.

Friends' has enjoyed a twenty-year partnership with the Forestry Commission, raising over £200 000 and giving between 3500 and 4000 volunteers hours annually to Thetford Forest. It undertakes one conservation task a month to improve habitats for wildlife; carries out regular checks on the walking trails; has a 'Meet and Greet' role at High Lodge Centre; helps at the summer concert series and at special events and is responsible for the practical day-to-day management of Lynford Arboretum. Members with learning difficulties maintain the shrub beds in the car parks and around the Centre at High Lodge.

Friends' members have been involved in archaeological investigations in Thetford Forest (but to date not at High Lodge) and this involvement has been on an individual basis and generally with the Breckland Society, a voluntary group representing the wider Brecks.

In addition, Friends has twice conserved the scheduled ancient monument of Mildenhall Warren Lodge, consolidating the standing remains in 2000-2002 with grants of £50 000 (including HLF) and constructing a roof of timber from East Anglia's Public Forest Estate in 2013 with grants of £80 000. It has held 14 annual open days at Mildenhall Warren Lodge, attended by approximately 2000 people.

Friends of Thetford Forest represents the users and visitors to the Forest and acts as their 'voice', advising the Forestry Commission of their views and concerns. It led the campaign against the proposed sell-off of the Public Forest Estate in 2010 and remains involved in

the on-going plans and draft legislation for the future Public Forest Estate Management Organisation. It has initiated visits to Thetford Forest by five DEFRA Forestry Leads; one Treasury Official; Lord de Mauley; David Heath MP as Forestry Minister and Elizabeth Truss MP, two weeks before she was appointed Minister of State for the Environment. All these visits have been jointly hosted by Friends and the Forestry Commission.

Friends of Thetford Forest will be the lead voluntary organisation for 'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge'.

Its support is evidenced by the £1000 contribution to the development phase of the project and the £3000 pledged for delivery.

Priorities for Volunteers in Thetford Forest

In 2014, Friends of Thetford Forest carried out a Volunteer Survey to identify areas of importance, ways to improve the volunteering experience and benefits from volunteering.

The main findings and opportunities from the survey identified by volunteers included:

- Spending time in the environment
- Meeting new people and making new friends
- Giving something back and helping a great cause
- Improving local sites
- A new interest
- Learning new skills
- Working in amazing places
- Believing in the Forestry Commission's values
- Working with professionals and experts
- Learning more about the local environment
- Accessing opportunities for personal growth and development
- Gaining recognition of a job well done
- Have a shared stake in the success of the project
- A personal "thank you" is greatly appreciated.

9.2 Assessment of ways in which to reach those individuals and communities who are not the 'traditional' sources of volunteers or do not have a 'volunteering culture'.

Undeniably and despite the positive volunteering carried out by Friends of Thetford Forest, there are barriers to people becoming volunteers.

General Barriers include:

- Cultural myths and perceptions that time away from work is for relaxation, not for learning or making a contribution that requires effort.
- Lack of confidence in the ability to contribute
- An inability to translate life experiences and skills to a particular program's needs.
- Fear about safety, such as having to use public transport or concerns about drugs and crime associated with low-income populations.
- Physical limitations, such as illnesses, disabilities or lack of energy.
- Financial issues, including concerns that expenses associated with volunteering may strain already limited financial resources.
- Difficulties with transport and getting to the volunteering location
- Competition for volunteers as many other organizations are trying to recruit the same "volunteer-minded" people.

Barriers specific to volunteering at High Lodge Centre include:

- Lack of public transport to the site
- High Lodge is for recreation. especially for families with younger children

- The Forestry Commission's Volunteer Manager and part-time assistant are not based at High Lodge but at the District Office because they cover the whole of the East District.
- The lack of a dedicated Volunteering Base
- The limited capacity of the Community Building known as Oak Lodge which seats a maximum of forty theatre-style and its use for a variety of purposes.
- There is currently no single point of contact for volunteering.
- The Forestry Commission website has only a very general description of volunteering and does not list the opportunities for instance
- Most volunteering in Thetford Forest is through Friends of Thetford Forest and membership is £10.00 per household per annum.
- Lack of connectivity with a very poor or even non-existent mobile phone network signal (because of the tree cover) and no Wifi.

Overcoming the general barriers depends on promoting the benefits of volunteering which include:

- increase in satisfaction with life by participating in an enjoyable and rewarding experience.
- increase in a sense of connection to the community.
- a feeling of being productive and making a worthwhile contribution.
- addressing a social issue in a way that is consistent with personal values.
- using skills and sharing experiences, interests and knowledge.
- learning new skills.
- having contact with and learning more about age groups other than your own
- making new friends through the volunteer experience.
- leaving a legacy for the younger generation.

It also involves ensuring that volunteering opportunities are inclusive and that there are no barriers for specific groups or populations by:

- seeking always to explain how its aims and objectives are in keeping with the interests and beliefs of a particular potential volunteer's background and beliefs.
- highlighting the achievements of volunteers from different cultural groups in the media.
- making the project accessible for people for whom English is a second language.
- Actively recruiting 'champions' who will reach their communities .
- Offering opportunities for families to volunteer together.
- ensuring that physical access is available to all, within the topographical constraints of the site

Overcoming the particular barriers to volunteering at High Lodge

- Working with community transport in Thetford and Brandon to run a minibus to and from High Lodge one day a week during the holidays.
- Offering opportunities for families to volunteer together, such as on wildlife surveys.
- Having a High Lodge member of staff as the dedicated 'point of contact' for volunteers.
- Considering 'creative options' for a volunteering base such as using part of a mobile currently for storage.
- Ensuring that any Oak Lodge bookings for volunteering activities are booked well in advance.
- Improving the volunteering section on the Forestry Commission website with a list of the opportunities, frequently updated and reviewed.
- Consideration by Friends of Thetford Forest for a 'support scheme' for potential volunteers unable to afford the membership fee.
- Improving the connectivity at High Lodge so that there is at least some Network coverage and WIFI is available.

The case for volunteering must be made in user-friendly language and include

- what this project does in connection with the Forestry Commission
- what cause or group of people it benefits
- the range of volunteer opportunities that exist
- the difference a volunteer can make to the project
- what the volunteer can gain from working on the project and with the Forestry Commission
- the support volunteers can expect
- how prospective volunteers can find out more.

Accordingly, the Project will follow and be committed to the 'Investing in Volunteers' Quality Standard for organisations that involve volunteers.
 (www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk)

The nine indicators that have been identified and designed to cover all aspects of volunteer management are:

Indicator 1	There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation
Indicator 2	The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.
Indicator 3	The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.
Indicator 4	The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to volunteers.
Indicator 5	The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering
Indicator 6	The organisation is committed to using, fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.
Indicator 7	Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to their role, the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel.
Indicator 8	The organisation takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers.
Indicator 9	The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers due and timely recognition.

The role of the Project Manager will include the implementation of these nine indicators.

'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge' will aim to:

- increase opportunities for heritage volunteering by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- increase the quality of heritage volunteering through knowledge and experience.
- offer people of all ages and abilities the opportunity to learn new skills
- train people of all ages and abilities for active roles in this and other heritage-related projects.

The following individuals and groups have already committed to volunteering for the project, subject to funding and following consultation during the Development Phase:

Individual/Group	Volunteering Role	Contact Name
Norfolk WEAs	Carrying out research	Beryl Amis
Thetford and Brandon WIs	Making warreners' smocks	Carol Moore
Ramblers Walking for Health	Leading guided walks	Melanie Brown
Dad's Army Museum	Launch Event	Bob Breen
Friends of Thetford Forest	Promoting, the project; recruiting and providing volunteers; participating in all aspects of the project and a source of	Alan Spidy

	volunteers (including the Monday Group, adults with learning challenges).	
Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People	Promoting, the project; recruiting and providing volunteers; participating in all aspects of the project as much as possible.	Geof Dix
Equal Opportunities Norfolk	Promoting, the project; recruiting and providing volunteers; participating in all aspects of the project as much as possible	Michelle Brown
Breckland Society	Promoting the project and a source of volunteers	James Parry
Thetford Society	Promoting the project and a source of volunteers	Stuart Wright
TIMBER (cycling in Thetford Forest)	Promoting the project and a source of volunteers	Martin Monahan
Weeting History Society	Promoting the project and a source of volunteers	Tim Bridge
Weeting 21	Promoting the project and a source of volunteers	Tim Bridge
Beachamwell Society	Promoting the project and a source of volunteers	Philip Spencer
Norfolk and Suffolk U3A	Promoting the project and a source of volunteers.	Beryl Amis; Carol Moore

9.3 Recruitment of Volunteers

With visitor numbers at High Lodge reaching 440 000 a year, there should be considerable scope for recruiting and engaging volunteers. However, the primary purpose of visiting High Lodge is recreation, especially children's play, picnicking and Go-Ape and most people come in family groups or with friends to enjoy a day out in the fresh air but with facilities nearby. The challenge for the project is to engage with visitors and to persuade them to volunteer.

The 'Meet and Greet' role already undertaken by Friends of Thetford Forest volunteers at weekends and on bank holidays is an excellent starting point for recruitment.

In addition, the following strategy has been developed to aid volunteer recruitment. It will be applied in full only as and when appropriate.

- Volunteers coming forward to participate in an activity (such as an archaeological investigation or a wildlife survey) will not have to complete a formal application or go through rigorous checks.
- Volunteers who will be taking a lead role (such as guiding walks or school visits) will be required to complete an application process and checks.

Volunteer Recruitment Strategy

- The project will develop appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, and which are of value to the volunteers and create an environment where they can develop.
- There will be a fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.
- Selection procedures will be standardised, appropriate to the volunteer role(s) and include agreed timescales together with clear criteria in terms of skills and abilities needed for particular roles (if appropriate).
- People interested in volunteering will be provided with clear information about the type of voluntary work available; the application and selection process; whether there is any compulsory training; a summary of the project's expectations of volunteers and what volunteers can expect from the project.

- A 'task description' will be drawn up for each voluntary role including the necessary skills, attitude, experience and availability needed to do the work.
- At some point in the recruitment procedure, time will be given to explore the individual's reasons for volunteering.
- Potential volunteers will be given further opportunities to find out more about the voluntary work before committing themselves and feedback is given to volunteers whose applications are turned down.
- The use of official checks will take into account the relevant Government guidelines, and the roles in which volunteers will be placed.
- Where possible, tasks will be adapted to suit the needs and interests of individual volunteers.
- An assessment of potential risk to volunteers will be done when designing volunteer roles.
- Appropriate insurance guidelines and cover for volunteers will be set up.
- There will be a clear policy on the reimbursement of legally allowable expenses.
- Procedures for taking up references will be based on the nature of the work and the roles volunteers will be undertaking but they will be uniform for all prospective volunteers applying for a particular role.

During the recruitment process, it is important to promote a diversity of roles and opportunities, including:

- activities involving specialist skills
- more generalist roles
- regular, short term and also occasional tasks
- tasks for which a volunteer may be 'on call'
- opportunities for groups and for individuals
- opportunities for those with 'access limitations' so that no one is excluded from volunteering
- tasks that can be done from home
- 'hands on' tasks
- thinking/writing tasks
- time of day
- length of commitment

The Recruitment Plan

Advertising for new volunteers requires any organisation to prepare a case for support – its message to potential volunteers must choose channels for recruitment be persistent and patient.

Recruitment materials must be able to catch people's attention and be:

- adaptable for a wide range of materials, from flyers and brochures to videos and websites and accessible to everyone.
- convey the sense of professional expertise and purpose appropriate to the project.
- use attractive graphics that draw attention to the materials, and include the logo
- reflect the diversity of the pool of potential volunteers.

Recruitment Strategies that will be used to reach and recruit volunteers include:

- word of mouth.
- direct mail.
- information tables at community events.
- presentations to community groups.
- flyers, posters and brochures.
- articles and press releases in local and community newspapers.
- articles in other organizations' newsletters and link on their websites.
- presentations in the local media.
- Social Media
- asking current volunteers to talk to their peers about volunteering

- making use of existing social and professional networks.
- developing connections with organizations that have credibility with groups to help gain visibility and access to these groups.
- inviting potential volunteers to meet staff members and other volunteers and get a real "feel" for the project
- flexibility in scheduling, so that volunteers can work the hours that are most convenient for them, can work when their friends are working, and/or can work with particular staff members or participants.

Other Issues to be considered include:

- recruiting more people than actually needed - in general, at least 25 percent of the people who show some interest will not follow through or will drop out during training.
- paying attention to timing - recruitment may need to be ongoing and the time between recruitment and start-up must be minimal, to avoid losing interested applicants.
- making sure that there is always a response to inquiries from potential volunteers, even during periods when there is no active recruiting.

The following organisations and groups will be used to help recruit volunteers, in addition to the groups and organisations listed above:

Organisation	Website
Jobsite	Jobsite.co.uk
do-it.org.uk	https://do-it.org/
i-volunteer.org.uk	www.i-volunteer.org.uk
inspired	https://vinspired.com/
volunteering matters	www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk
friendship works	www.friendshipworks.org.uk/Volunteering
Voluntary Norfolk	www.voluntarynorfolk.org.uk
Parish Magazines/Newsletters	various
free newspapers	various
Community volunteering	www.wdcvs.com
Reach Volunteering	https://reachskills.org.uk/
Time for Volunteering	http://timebank.org.uk
Forestry Commission	www.forestry.gov.uk/highlodge
Friends of Thetford Forest	www.fotf.org.uk
TIMBER	www.timbermtb.org
Music Arts	www.musicartsproject.com
High Lodge Business Partners through promotion and publicity: Go-Ape; Churchill Catering; Bike Art; Bushcraft; Archery; Face Painting; Pony Rides.	Links via www.forestry.gov.uk/highlodge
RAF Lakenheath and Mildenhall USAF Bases	Social Media contacts.

The Recruitment Procedure

Though ideally the project would like to accept every potential volunteer, there must be a screening process to avoid any 'mismatches'. This screening process could include:

- a written application
- a face-to-face interview
- references
- criminal record and child abuse checks (required for anyone who works with children or young people)
- using the training sessions as a part of the screening process, particularly because the trainings present an opportunity to see how potential volunteers interact in a group setting.

As stated above, volunteers coming forward to participate in an activity (such as an archaeological investigation or a wildlife survey) will not have to complete a formal application or go through rigorous checks.

Volunteers who will be taking a lead role (such as guiding walks or school visits) will be required to complete an application process and the appropriate checks.

Appointment of Volunteers

All volunteers will be asked to provide

- Contact details
- Emergency contact details
- Details of any health or access issues
- Confirm in writing that they have been made aware of the risks associated with the particular volunteering activity

All such information will be treated in confidence.

9.4 Consultation with Forestry Commission staff about their perception of the project's volunteering opportunities and the resources available to support these.

Issues for the Forestry Commission staff, both at High Lodge and in the East District Office include:

- staff having the time to supervise and mentor volunteers.
- the appointment of contract staff to implement and support the volunteering programme
- the costs associated with marketing and volunteer recruitment.
- the volunteer application and screening process; and the orientation, training, management, evaluation, and recognition of volunteers (especially after the known funding has ended)
- space needed as a base and workplace for the volunteers.
- additional support mechanisms to cater for those with special needs.

These issues can be overcome through resources provided by the project and by longer-term forward planning:

- the project manager will take responsibility for volunteering during the lifetime of the project and co-ordinate with the High Lodge member of staff responsible and with the Volunteer Manager.
- any contract staff employed to help deliver the volunteer programme (especially the training) will be expected to adhere to the 'Forestry Commission's policies and procedures and the ethos of the Public Forest Estate.
- Costs associated with volunteering longer-term will be built into the High Lodge budget.
- All High Lodge staff will be made aware of the volunteering opportunities provided by the project
- Staff will undergo training in additional support mechanisms to cater for those with special needs as part of the project's training programme. Costs to revisit and refresh this training will be built into the High Lodge long-term budget.

9.5 Review of volunteering programmes provided by partners, stakeholders and other heritage organisations in the area, to learn from and explore ways of working together.

The partners at High Lodge, Go-Ape, Bike Art and Churchill Catering, do not have volunteers working with them nor do they have a volunteering programme.

Brandon Country Park (Suffolk County Council) uses volunteers to 'meet and greet' and to help maintain the walled garden. Volunteering opportunities are not obvious on its website.

The Ancient House Museum, Thetford has volunteers who help bring the collections to life for school and group visits, carrying out tasks such as preparing crafts, dressing as a Tudor or cooking on the Victorian range. They also help with general interaction with the public

at seasonal events and during school holidays. Job descriptions and application forms are available on the website.

The Charles Burrell Museum, Thetford and the Dad's Army Museum, Thetford are both run entirely by volunteers and are open two days a week.

Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trust Reserves (East Wretham and Weeting Heath and Lackford Lakes) rely on volunteer work parties supervised by paid staff to carry out conservation management.

Unsurprisingly, there is actually competition for volunteers and voluntary support though in general organisations are willing to support each other with links to websites and in promotional material, especially with regard to training opportunities which may be shared and allow volunteers from various organisations to benefit.

9.6 The Volunteering Opportunities provided by the Project.

To help understand and assess what potential volunteers would like to see included in the project, a form was available at all the consultation events for registering interest in activities and training opportunities.

The results were as follows:

Activity	Information	Take Part	Publicise
Downham Warren Lodge Site Investigation	8	3	3
Re-constructing a metre length of a warren bank	2	1	2
Finding Flint-facing on warren banks	5	4	3
20 th century High Lodge: Labour, Army and Refugee Camp	10	7	3
Field-Walking and examining molehills for archaeology	5	4	3
Investigating old routes that survive as forest tracks	9	5	2
The WW1 narrow gauge railtrack	9	5	2
Tree Identification	6	4	3
Mapping veteran trees	6	4	3
Bird Identification	4	3	2
Deer in the Forest	6	2	2
Identifying Plants	5	5	3
Researching archives to find evidence of species in the past	6	4	3
Carrying out wildlife surveys	6	5	2
The Forest 'then and now' ways in which forest operations have changed over the century	9	4	3
Photographing the Forest	6	7	4
Drawing and Painting in the Forest	7	2	3
New Skills You can Learn			
Caring for archaeological sites	6	3	2
Surveying and recording an earthwork site	5	2	1

Caring for and identifying Finds and Artefacts	8	1	2
Accessing and using archival resources	7	4	5
Researching and using interpretative material	5	4	1
Interpreting Historic Landscapes	7	7	3
How to carry out wildlife surveys	4	4	3
Leading guided walks	6	2	3
Leading visits by schools and special interest groups	5	4	2
Producing Effective Powerpoint Presentations	5	4	1

In addition, a suite of posters was produced, each featuring one of the proposed activities:

- Caring for Sites
- Investigating the Site of Downham Warren Lodge
- Finding the Flint-Facing on the Warren Banks
- The Secrets of High Lodge
- The Working Forest
- Wildlife Surveys
- Investigating the Site of the Gunflint Mines.
- Re-constructing a Warren Bank

These were on display at all the consultation events and everyone was asked to vote, using counters placed in the appropriate box, for the three they would most like to see included in the project.

The suite of posters was also on display for three days at the Forestry Commission Office and staff voted too.

The results were as follows:

Activity	Votes for Activity
Caring for Heritage and Wildlife Sites	24
Investigating the Site of Downham Warren Lodge	37
Finding the Flint-Facing on the Warren Banks	48
Revealing the Secrets of High Lodge	48
The Working Forest	39
Investigating the Site of the Gunflint Mines	46
Re-constructing a Warren Bank	9
Carrying out Wildlife Surveys	42

There was very little interest in re-constructing a warren bank so this was omitted from the activities.

The following Volunteering Opportunities will therefore be included in the delivery of the project:

Revealing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge through

- Taking part in archaeological and archival research which will yield new information about the heritage of Thetford Forest.
- researching interpretative material for the website and for learning
- identifying archaeological artefacts
- caring for earthwork sites and carrying out general maintenance of the earthworks on the Trail
- undertaking regular inspection of disturbed ground for surface archaeology
- undertaking wildlife and tree surveys
- mapping veteran trees

Action Plan 6a-i refers.

Helping deliver the Project's Activities through

- organising and providing guided tours along the Trail and in the wider landscape of High Lodge
- meeting the needs of visitors with physical and learning limitations.
- providing virtual technological access for those who are unable to physically access the heritage
- helping with and leading visits by schools and special interest groups
- organising activities for the public, including risk assessments, health and safety regulations and compliance with designated site restrictions
- giving outreach talks and presentations.

Action Plan 5a-e refers.

The activities that volunteers will be able to take part in are listed in the Action Plan.

For roles where volunteers are effectively carrying out a job of work, training will be given (see Section 10) and job descriptions provided, as follows:

Job Descriptions for Heritage Skills Volunteering Roles.

Role	Meet and Greet
Job Description	Meeting and Greeting Visitors so that visitor experience is of the highest possible standard
Qualities	Knowledge of health and safety; general knowledge of the site and of the area and particular knowledge of the heritage and the trail. Able to engage with visitors and co-operate with other volunteers
Training	How to provide a friendly and polite welcome; the general information about the site and more detailed information about the heritage and the trail. Procedures for helping people in need; health and safety; dealing with emergency situations; dealing with difficult people and situations.

Role	Guide: Heritage and Themed Walks
Job Description	Leading walks on the general history of the area and the natural environment and on specific themes/features; interaction with the public.
Qualities	General knowledge of the site and of the area. Leadership qualities. Able to engage with visitors and interpret history and the historic landscape and in particular the heritage features on the trail.
Training	how to deliver guided walks and best practice. Health and safety; Customer Care; Dealing with difficult people and situations; dealing with emergency situations; the history and wildlife and forest management and more detailed information about the heritage features on the trail.

Role	Guide : Access Needs Group Visits
Job Description	Leading and guiding around site those with access needs so that they gain the best possible visitor experience
Qualities	General knowledge of the site and of the area. Leadership qualities. Particular knowledge of access needs and how to meet them. General knowledge of the site and of the area. Leadership qualities. Able to engage with visitors and interpret history and the historic landscape and in particular the heritage features on the trail.
Training	How to deliver access needs visits; health and safety; customer care; dealing with difficult people and situations; dealing with emergency situations;. Policies for working with vulnerable children and adults; the history and wildlife and forest management and more detailed information about the heritage features on the trail.

Role	Guide : Schools and other educational group visits
Job Description	Leading and helping with schools and other educational group visits Working with children and teachers. Liaising with school teachers
Qualities	
Training	how to engage and deliver for schools; running the activities; working with and supporting teachers; working with children policies, guidelines and regulations; health and safety; dealing with emergency situations; the history and wildlife and forest management and more detailed information about the heritage features on the trail.

Role	Delivering Outreach
Job Description	Delivering outreach and off-site talks about the Heritage Trail; High Lodge and Thetford Forest.
Qualities	Ability to engage and interact with audiences. Ability to deliver Powerpoint Presentation.
Training	Fundamental skills of public speaking : oral (spoken), multimedia (using various media - visuals, audio, etc), powerpoint presentations, short impromptu presentations, planned presentations; best practice; tips and techniques for successfully delivering presentations, and methods for reducing presentation fears and stresses; the history and wildlife and forest management and more detailed information about the heritage features on the trail.

Role	Archival Researcher
Job Description	Researching archival evidence; gathering records from local communities; placing research in the public domain
Qualities	Knowledge of range of archives and where to access; knowledge of cataloguing systems; local awareness and communities' networks.
Training	How and where to access documents; cataloguing and archiving.

Role	Producing Interpretation for Heritage Projects
Job Description	Working with professionals to write text and source images for interpretation of the heritage; wildlife and forest management.
Qualities	Knowledge of local history; knowledge of source material.
Training	What is effective interpretation; pitfalls to be avoided; reaching the identified audiences; making judgements and critical analysis 'fit for purpose'.

Role	Events Organiser (to assist the Forestry Commission and Friends of Thetford Forest).
Job Description	Organising and holding special events such as Heritage Open Days; develop a 'template' for open days so that these can happen with the minimum of effort; this would include generic publicity; risk assessment; general information about access provision; emergency procedures.
Qualities	Efficient and meticulous organisational abilities and problem-solving
Training	Aims/Objectives; Core Planning; Timetable; Publicity; Jobs and people to do these; risk assessments; health and safety regulations; insurance; finances; access arrangements; visitor flows; dealing with emergencies. Best Practice.

9.7 Retention of Volunteers as a legacy of the project.

The NCVO Institute for Volunteering Research report '*A model of progressive volunteer involvement*' suggests that eight factors influence retention.

- The image and appeal of volunteering.
- Methods of recruiting volunteers.
- Recruitment and application procedures.
- Induction into volunteering.
- Training for volunteering.
- Overall management of the volunteering.
- The ethos and culture of the organisation
- The support and supervision given to volunteers

Since volunteering should be as accessible to as wide a range of people as possible and in order to assess whether this is indeed the case, consistent information will need to be collected and monitored from volunteers such as:

- age
- gender
- ethnicity
- registered disability

It will be the volunteers' choice as to whether they supply this information.

Turnover or 'loss' of volunteers is inevitable - and is not necessarily a bad thing. Volunteers may move on for positive reasons such as finding paid work, and a regular intake of new volunteers helps to keep any project fresh and vibrant.

There may be new opportunities to consider, involving volunteers in short term or group tasks, emphasizing the need always to keep volunteer recruitment continually on the agenda.

Recognition of the dedication of volunteers can take the form of acknowledging their input into the delivery of the project at all meetings and events and through publicity, including generated news releases.

Friends of Thetford Forest will work in partnership with the Forestry Commission to ensure continuity of the project's benefits and outcomes.

Friends' will:

- carry out trail route inspections to ensure that the route is safe and in the best-possible condition for the public to use
- carry out regular monitoring of the shelters and the interpretation within them
- carry out regular monitoring of the audio posts and the virtual past monitor
- undertake the site maintenance work on the archaeological sites on the route of the Trail, under the guidance of the Forestry Commission's Heritage and Wildlife Officer (annually or as required)
- undertake the conservation of the habitats on the route of the Trail, under the guidance of the Forestry Commission's Ecologist (annually or as required).

The inspections and regular monitoring will be on a monthly basis (as a minimum) and reports will be submitted to the Forestry Commission's Trails Officer for follow-up action. It will therefore be the Forestry Commission's responsibility to take remedial action and to solve the problems identified.

In addition, Friends of Thetford Forest will work with the Forestry Commission to help with

- the recruitment and training of new volunteers and refresher training for the project's volunteers, as part of its on-going volunteering programme.
- updating the dedicated 'heritage and wildlife' text on the Forestry Commission's dedicated webpages and on the inked Friends' webpages, as new information comes to light.
- supporting the organisation and delivery of day schools, workshops, special interest tours and events on demand, by retaining a database of the project's activities and their providers.
- supporting schools' visits with volunteer help.

The Forestry Commission values the contribution that volunteers can bring to managing the Public Forest Estate and the value of volunteering to individuals and society. 'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge' will provide new and exciting opportunities for volunteering within Thetford Forest for everyone.

The Action Plan Section 6a-i; Section 9a-i; Section 10a-d; Section 11a-h and Section 12a-m refer.

See also

[Summary of Training and Volunteering Contributions. Consultation Recommendations and Implementation Access Audit Report](#)

10 Strategy for Training and Skills' Development.

10.1 The current training provision for volunteers at High Lodge and for Forestry Commission staff and consultants and gaps in this provision.

Provision for training is linked to the other components of the Activity Plan to ensure a continuity of approach and coherence and to show the Forestry Commission's commitment to meeting the training needs of its staff and volunteers.

'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge' aims to deliver twelve outcomes, all of which will require training so that they are effective and beneficial for their intended audiences.

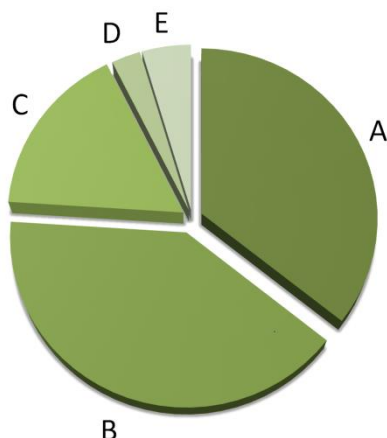
These outputs include:

- access
- archaeology
- public events
- outreach projects to traditionally hard to reach groups
- schools' projects
- investigative built heritage projects
- website development
- interpretation
- wildlife surveys
- mapping projects
- practical wildlife conservation management
- practical built heritage conservation management

Skills' training is an essential element of the project because much of the work will be carried out by volunteers, trained and overseen by professionals and will involve a wide range of community groups including schools, local societies and organisations and those sectors traditionally seen as hard-to- reach. Many volunteers will also be sharing their knowledge, often built up in previous careers or during other volunteering activity.

From 31/10/2013 to 06/01/2014, Forestry Commission England ran a consultation entitled '*Forestry Commission volunteer questionnaire*'. This report covers the online element of the consultation process, which was run from <http://englandconsult.forestry.gov.uk/forest-districts/ded030a3>

This consultation included asking respondents to rate the training aspects of volunteer management and the results were as follows;



A Very Good 35.69%
B Good 40.31%
C Satisfactory 16.62%
D Poor 2.76%
E Not Answered 4.615%

There is clearly room for improvement as less than half thought the training was 'very good' even though just under half rated it as 'good'.

Unfortunately, there was no further in-depth analysis to determine what the criteria were and why the responses were as they were.



In 2014-15, **Friends of Thetford Forest** conducted a similar survey of its members who were or had been actively involved in volunteering and one question was *How do you rate the training ?*

A Very Good 37%
B Good 26%
C Satisfactory 15%
D Poor 11%
E Not Answered 11%

In summary, the current training delivery is provided by:

Friends of Thetford Forest

TIMBER

Forestry Commission Staff.

10.2 Analysis of the barriers to training and skills' development.

The Forestry Commission already relies on volunteers to help it achieve its aims and objectives and recognises that training is vital to help them deliver their roles effectively and with enjoyment and confidence.

To ensure that the training opportunities and training provision are available to all, the barriers that prevent access to training must be understood and strategies put in place to overcome them.

General barriers to training include the following perceptions:

- It's not for me.
- There is nothing that would interest or engage me.
- 'Heritage' and 'Conservation' are exclusive
- Volunteering is for professional retired people who are 'time-rich'.
- You have to be very well-educated to train as a volunteer
- There is nothing here of interest.
- Learning ends when you leave school
- School did nothing for me so what can more training offer ?

In addition, there are circumstances and attitudes which may limit or exclude the participation of non-traditional and hard-to-reach groups including:

- Customs, traditions, expectations, beliefs based on race, religion,
- social status or family background and heritage
- Levels of living and life styles, especially if they are below others in
- the group
- Level of education and self-esteem below that of others in the group
- Degree of alienation and extent of belonging to the dominant group
- as viewed by the disadvantaged and minority groups
- Physical and mental limitations and disabilities, including language
- and communication skills
- Extent of courtesy, tact and recognition of human dignity accorded
- the disadvantaged and minority groups by staff, volunteers and
- others connected with the Scheme
- Learning situations where the subject matter content and vocabulary
- are too complex or specialized and is not relevant to the needs
- and problems of the target audience.
- Insensitive use of language which interferes with the development of cross-cultural connections.

Socio-economic barriers to training can arise when people or communities face a combination of problems including

- unemployment
- discrimination
- poor skills
- low incomes
- poor housing
- high crime levels
- poor health
- family breakdown
- activities aimed at individuals and groups based on high levels of income and

- affluence
- activities requiring costly purchases of equipment or supplies
- activities that have extensive requirements for membership and participation, including dress and travel.

General Solutions to resolving the barriers to training and learning include:

- responding to the 'real-life, felt or expressed needs' of individuals and communities
- using familiar surroundings initially or in a location served by public transport
- taking childcare arrangements into account
- offering culturally appropriate refreshments
- taking cultural holidays and community gatherings into consideration to avoid a conflict of events
- dressing appropriately and respectfully for a particular cultural group
- using material at an appropriate level and in the appropriate language
- using examples that are relevant and meaningful to individuals and communities
- involving cultural guides and diverse volunteers in the planning and holding of training activities,
- identifying and using the appropriate teaching methods to address preferred learning styles
- determining activities and learning experiences that would be most effective and meaningful for a specific cultural or ethnic group
- formulating approaches to reach diverse audiences and ethnic communities
- recruiting volunteers from within the cultural or ethnic minority groups
- making direct approaches to traditionally-excluded and hard-to-reach groups, offering training and learning which will meet their needs
- provided that these are appropriate for the project.

Physical disability and sensory impairment can also present barriers to training.

Valuable information on these barriers came from the consultations held on site with the Suffolk Coalition for the Disabled and with the Monday Group, adults with learning difficulties.

It was suggested that in order to better assist visitors with hearing loss, Forestry Commission staff working at the Information Point would benefit from Deaf Awareness training and/or some British Sign Language and/or Makaton training. In order to help visitors who are visually impaired FC staff and/or regular volunteers should be given Sighted Guide training.

Feedback from the Staff has resulted in the invitation to attend this training being extended to the other visitor centres in the East England District, Bedgebury Arboretum; Jeskyns Wood, Kent and Wendover.

Specific Barriers to Training at High Lodge include:

- I'm here to enjoy myself.
- It's a place for family recreation.
- There's nothing to be trained for.
- The lack of a dedicated volunteering/training base
- Forestry Commission staff who have little or no knowledge of the heritage

to deliver the training.

The following table summarises the general and specific barriers and related issues and puts forward possible solutions for this project:

Barrier	Issues	General Solution	High Lodge Solution
Venue	Unsuitable for less mobile/hard of	Wherever possible select venues that are	Oak Lodge will be the training venue and is fully accessible.

	hearing/location	accessible.	On-site training and archaeological investigations will be made as accessible as the activity and terrain allows.
Transport	Poor public transport for those relying on this form of transport.	Car sharing schemes. Wherever possible select venues that are accessible.	Community Bus will be encouraged to call at High Lodge when demand. The Community Bus will pick up from the low income estates in Thetford and Brandon one day a week during the summer holidays on a pre-booked basis, with ticket costs met by the project.
Administration	Paperwork and bureaucracy can put some potential participants off.	Simple processes/paperwork Contact point for help.	Provision made to communicate by post with those who do not have email.
	Administrative boundaries.	Training is open to all.	Training is open to all.
	Publicity for courses.	Training Opportunities advertised through as many avenues as possible.	Training Opportunities advertised at High Lodge in advance; on websites as listed in VOL Section.
Participant confidence	Those that have not attended similar events less likely to attend.	Simple processes/paperwork Contact point for help	Simple processes/paperwork. Contact point for help.
Timing/care responsibilities	Some potential participants unable to make events due to time or caring responsibilities.	Offer training at a range of times and days of the week.	Offer training at a range of times and days of the week.
Finance	Cost of events can discourage participation.	Training is free at the point of delivery Materials and equipment provided free of charge.	Training is free at the point of delivery Materials and equipment provided free of charge Free Site Entry Passes will be issued to participants undergoing training.

The results have been used to help inform the training programme for this project. The training programme is set out in [Sections T 1-22 of the Action Plan](#).

10.3 Consultation with existing and potential volunteers and Forestry Commission staff as to their training needs.

The Project Team will need to undergo an annual performance and development review which will assess training and development needs, enabling them to undertake their posts effectively.

Identified training needs may be met through training courses; work shadowing; individual study and mentoring

This training will largely be undertaken as part of their substantive posts with additional opportunities made available if required, such as seminars and individual study.

Consultation with Forestry Commission Staff has shown a desire and need for training in the areas listed below:

- Heritage and History of High Lodge
- The Route of the Trail
- Awareness of where the heritage features are located
- Wildlife
- Forest Management
- Meeting the needs of those with access limitations
- Meeting the needs of those with sensory impairments.
- Activities' Promotion and Publicity.

In addition, one member of the Project Team for delivery, the Forestry Commission's Trails Officer at High Lodge, will undergo a short training course to enable him to carry out a basic CDM role on site and monitor progress daily. This training will increase his own skills' base as well as benefit the project.

Consultation with High Lodge Site Partners has shown that they will require training so that they can:

- understand the delivery of the project
- have a basic knowledge of the 'heritage' of the project
- promote and publicise all activities and opportunities to their audiences
- use their network of contacts to benefit the project
- contribute ideas and provide feedback based on their special skills.

The Partners are especially valued because they bring in audiences and have a diverse range of experience, knowledge and skills which they can use for the benefit of the project.

Consultation with potential volunteers has shown a desire and need for training that covers a range of disciplines and includes training in

- Archaeological Skills
- Historical Skills
- Natural Heritage Skills
- Visitor Skills
- Heritage Projects Skills.

For details of the consultation during the Development Phase, see [Consultation](#) Document.

10.4 The delivery of training and new skills during delivery and after the project has ended.

Effective and relevant training delivery depends upon the amount of time available, identification of preferred ways of learning and the resources such as capacity, time, location, materials and budget.

The Project Manager will be responsible for delivery of the training, supported by members of the Project Team and with individual training components delivered by specialist and expert providers.

There are four steps to this responsibility:

- induction
- assessment of training and development needs
- meeting the needs and filling the gaps
- supervision and support.

Induction:

The induction programme will

- take into account prior experience and learning and be based on identified needs.
- explain the ethos, aims and objectives of the Forestry Commission to help ensure that everyone act in the best interest of the organisation and the project.
- explain the structure & operation of the project together with internal and external relationships.
- make clear responsibilities, accountability and liabilities.
- address health and safety issues.

Assessment of training and development needs
These will come from

- discussion with individual volunteers.
- the training demands of specific activities, planned with the input of professionals responsible for the activity.

Meeting the needs and filling the gaps

This will be done by

- offering a wide range of training opportunities (sharing of skills; shadowing; mentoring as well as training workshops).
- evaluating how effective a training facility has been.
- reviewing the training provision annually.
- revising the action plan to address and training and development needs.

After the Project has ended:

Friends of Thetford Forest will work in partnership with the Forestry Commission (as it has done for over twenty years, since 1995) to assist with

- the recruitment and training of new volunteers and refresher training for the project's volunteers, as part of its on-going volunteering programme.
- retain a database of the project's training activities and their providers
- review training and skills' development needs and help meet these needs.

A programme of workshops will deliver the training and there will also be 'on-site' skills' development as part of the specific activities.

The workshops are listed in the [Action Plan under the 'Training' Section T1-30](#).

10.5 Evaluation and Monitoring of Training Delivery.

An evaluation form will be given to each trainee and feedback analysed and acted upon.

The take-up of the training opportunities will be monitored and improvements made where necessary, especially in publicity to 'hard to reach groups' and in ensuring that the training opportunities are made accessible to everyone.

(Please see also Section 13 Monitoring and Evaluation below).

Training presents a wonderful opportunity to expand the knowledge base of all participants in the project, be they volunteers; partners and stakeholders; consultants, contractors and providers; Forestry Commission Staff or members of the Project Team.

The training programme will strengthen those skills that each participant needs to improve and enhance their involvement.

The structured training programme will ensure that participants have a consistent experience and background knowledge. It will help to mitigate any weaknesses so that there is a group of people who have a similar level of skills and are therefore able to take over for one another as needed or work together or independently without constant help and supervision.

Training will build confidence and competence and enable better understanding of the project and how it is delivered. Having the opportunity to learn new skills in a sympathetic and supportive environment can be life-changing and lead to new careers and friendships and greatly-increased self-esteem.

The investment in training shows participants in this project that

- the importance of their roles is recognised
- the skills and knowledge that they bring to their work are appreciated and applicable

- they are valued and appreciated.

For the project, training brings the benefits of

- greater satisfaction among the participants
- fewer incidences of 'trouble shooting'
- improved quality and range of activities
- reassurance of a quality standard as achievable
- overall increased effectiveness and successful delivery of the project.

'Trailing the Hidden Heritage' will therefore help people of all ages and abilities learn new skills and train them for active roles so that they can be involved in helping to deliver and sustain this project.

The [Action Plan](#) Section 1a-f; Section 2a-d; Section 3a-g; Section 4a-e; Section 9a-i; Section 10a-d refer.

See also

[Summary of Volunteering and Training Contributions.](#)
[Consultation](#)
[Recommendations and Implementation](#)
[Access Audit Report](#)

11 Strategy for Interpretation of the Heritage of High Lodge

The heritage that the project focuses on is the landscape at High Lodge, Thetford Forest where there is evidence of human activity from the prehistoric to the present day. Much of the evidence is not immediately obvious as it has to be sought within the trees and lacks any interpretation. Visitors are not aware of the long history of the site, a heritage that goes back ten thousand years.

11.1 The Aims and Objectives of the Interpretation Strategy

The overall aim of the Interpretation Strategy is to offer an enriching and informative visitor experience which also encourages further engagement.

In particular, the aims are to

- foster an understanding of the culturally significant heritage landscape of High Lodge and Thetford Forest
- generate wider support for and active involvement in the care and conservation of this historic landscape and its biodiversity, as its guardians
- produce interpretation that is relevant to the needs and aspirations of the audience whatever their age, existing knowledge, cultural background or access needs.

The objectives of the Interpretation Strategy are to:

- encourage understanding of the historic evolution of the landscape
- encourage understanding of how land management has shaped the landscape and influenced its wildlife and biodiversity
- celebrate the cultural associations and activities of the landscape
- make links to other heritage features within Thetford Forest and the wider landscape of the Brecks
- provide ways to get involved with the High Lodge site both during the project and afterwards to help sustain its benefits.
- encourage more people to access, learn about, become involved in and make decisions about their landscape heritage
- involve organisations, community groups and individuals in actively helping to plan and deliver high quality, locally distinctive and themed interpretation for the benefit of local people and visitors.
- create and sustain a continually evolving and accessible archive of local heritage

- resources, information and understanding.
- provide physical and intellectual access to the heritage resource for all, whether in person or remotely and at all seasons and times of the year.
- encourage local children to grow up with a sense of identity directly related to their home and community.

To deliver the aim and fulfil the objectives, a number of issues must be addressed:

- the constraints and resources
- overcoming barriers to interpretation
- consideration of the management issues that will affect interpretation
- the audiences for interpretation and their needs and aspirations
- identifying the themes and storylines and how these will be delivered.

11.2 The current interpretation of heritage at High Lodge.

There is currently no dedicated heritage interpretation on site at High Lodge.

The Geological Column has an interpretation panel explaining the layers of rock beneath the ground.

The Nature Trail, installed in 1998 before the value of public consultation was really recognised, is in an inappropriate location behind the High Lodge buildings and across the exit drive. There is no disabled access on this trail.

The High Lodge pages of the Forestry Commission website have showcased the development phase and encouraged consultation, the results of which are included in Section 6 of this Activity Plan.

(<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/highlodge>).
highlodgefeedback@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

11.3 Considerations, Constraints and Resources for Interpretation

Physical Considerations

- Physical intrusion into the landscape should be minimised so that the 'forest environment' is respected and not compromised
- The demands of Forest Operations (the planting, thinning, felling, harvesting and extraction of timber must not be hampered or impeded by interpretation infrastructure as Thetford Forest is above all a 'working landscape'.
- The constraints of the Special Protection Area and SSSI must be respected (a legal requirement)
- All timber materials used in the interpretation infrastructure must confirm to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards. In other words, they must be sourced from products that support responsible forest management. As long as any timber used is from the Public Forest Estate (which includes Thetford Forest) then this constraint will be met, as all PFE forests and woods have FSC accreditation.

Maintenance and Management Considerations

The same care and attention that is given to the design and implementation of the interpretation must be given to its subsequent maintenance and management.

- Physical interpretive media is likely to have a life of 5 to 6 years but whatever media is used there is a need to care for, and constantly refresh, the initial investment.
- On-site signage, visitor orientation and interpretive panels will be regularly inspected, cleaned, repaired and renewed when suffering from fading and general wear and tear.
- Friends of Thetford Forest volunteers will assist with the inspections and regular maintenance.

Relevance Considerations

- Printed items will be reviewed and kept up to date factually, reprinted and effectively distributed to sales and distribution outlets so that they are always accessible to the visitor/user.
- It will be an on-going responsibility to ensure distribution and that stocks are maintained.
- Guided walks programmes, events and activities will be given the appropriate professional attention to detail to conceptualise, plan, manage and market.
- The webpages and website will be constantly reviewed and refreshed as information changes and new initiatives evolve.

It is also important to recognise and remember that interpretation is only one of a number of factors which are part of the overall visitor experience that requires monitoring, evaluation and review.

These 'other factors' include

- visitor welcome and customer care
- road signage
- car parks and toilets
- visitor orientation
- visitor information services
- overall quality of the sites and attractions
- food and drink
- overall environmental quality
- attention to detail.

Resource Considerations

Forestry Commission staff working at High Lodge have not had any training in the delivery of heritage interpretation. This training will be included in the delivery of the project.

Within the local history groups and voluntary organisations such as Friends of Thetford Forest, there are volunteers already trained in archival research from previous projects. These volunteers will cascade their training for new volunteers and act as mentors to help research and present information for the delivery of interpretation.

During the Development Phase, volunteers have put together a Resources Directory and contributed research for the Heritage Management Plan.

The Resources Directory is a compilation of all the archival documents, maps, photographs and oral history recordings for High Lodge, the first time this has ever been compiled for the site. Research for the Heritage Management Plan has concentrated on listing the Norfolk and Suffolk Historic Environment Records and listing specific Sites and Monuments Records.

11.4 Barriers to accessing interpretation and how to overcome them:

General barriers to accessing interpretation include:

- too much text and written in long and involved sentences
- use of technical and academic language
- assumptions about existing levels of knowledge
- designs that do not take account of visual impairment
- structures that do not take into account wheelchair users
- English as the only language used
- lack of mobile phone signals in the Forest due to the tree canopy
- reliance on standard or conventional interpretation panels and leaflets which have little or no appeal for younger audiences.
- failure to provide interpretation that is accessible at all levels – from the casual

visitor to special interest groups; informal learners to academics.

A great deal of research has been undertaken into how people learn and what sort of information and interpretation people remember.

- The most regularly used statistics are that people remember about:
- 10% of what they hear
- 30% of what they read
- 50% of what they see
- 90% of what they do

(Dr. Bill Lewis, Communications Professor, University of Vermont)

Other research into how children react to interpretation suggests that children remember about:

- 10% of what they read
- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see
- 50% of what they see and hear
- 70% of what they say
- 90% of what they say and do.

(Sandra Rief, 1993)

To help overcome barriers to Interpretation, a number of 'guiding principles' have been drawn up following consultation with visitors, local people, Forestry Commission Staff and High Lodge partners and stakeholders.

These 'guiding principles' include

- involving local people in the planning, development and design of the interpretation
- encouraging local participation in the activities and events that are connected to interpretation of the heritage of High Lodge.
- using interpretation as a tool for improving the visitor experience and visitor management
- ensuring that key sites present the key interpretive messages and contribute to the overall sense of 'a landscape through time'
- encouraging support for 'green' activities such as cycling and walking
- using local materials to promote and sustain local distinctiveness
- using materials and structures which are appropriate to the forest environment and are not intrusive or distract from their landscape setting.
- placing an emphasis face to face interpretation wherever resources allow.
- ensuring that the human stories are drawn out of the physical resources and the history of the landscape.
- linking interpretation to school National Curriculum themes and ensuring that schools can make maximum use of local resources within their study plans
- providing a hierarchy of interpretive provision providing different levels of messages for different audience groups and allowing access to more detailed explanations in a readily accessible and digestible form for visitors who want it.
- providing interpretation that is multi-sensory and engaging to make it accessible to all.
- linking interpretation to the daily and seasonal routine and activities of Thetford Forest.

11.5 The Audiences for Interpretation and their Needs and Aspirations

Participation and interaction through interpretation can be achieved at various levels.

- physical interaction with the landscape – actually being out there walking, cycling or taking part in conservation and management work.
- interaction with other people who are also interested in the heritage of the landscape such as local archaeology, history and wildlife groups, adult education groups and research groups with the united aim of finding out more about local heritage and biodiversity and sharing it with others.
- 'virtual' interaction with interpretation that encourages and enables people to delve more deeply into the local heritage stories through search programmes on websites and interactive CD Roms and DVDs.
- mixed media interpretation (visual and audio) that encourages exploration of the main interpretive themes at a variety of levels to meet the personal interests and needs of the user.

It is important when planning and delivering interpretation to

- understand the audiences for whom it is intended so that interpretation is relevant to their interests, needs and aspirations.
- differentiate between the needs of local people who will see interpretation media such as displays and outdoor panels time and time again and visitors who may see it only once.
- to cater for a wide range of learning styles and physical and intellectual ability to ensure that interpretation is accessible and understandable to all.

The following tables consider each of these audience groups and what should be taken into consideration in developing relevant interpretation projects and media.

Audience Interpretation Considerations

Audience	Analysis of Audience	Meeting the Audience Needs
Local Residents	people living in the surrounding towns and villages; regular repeat visitors; current non-visitors	Regularly, or seasonally, changing interpretation to maintain the interest of repeat visitors. Opportunities to involve local people of all ages in the development of interpretive projects to provide a new locally distinctive dimension to content, generate a sense of ownership and raise local awareness. Outreach interpretation to attract the interest of those who do not currently visit. Temporary interpretation, or 'bulletin boards', where visitors can see land management practices in operation to explain what is happening and why. Features in the Discovery Pass newsletters and in the Friends of Thetford Forest twice-yearly newsletters. Features on the High Lodge webpages of the Forestry Commission's website about the Heritage Trail www.forestry.org.uk
Visitors	day visitors	Use of High Lodge name and logo and

Audience	Analysis of Audience	Meeting the Audience Needs
	<p>staying visitors (short breaks and longer holidays)</p> <p>people staying with friends and relatives</p> <p>people using hotels, B & B etc</p> <p>overseas visitors</p> <p>people planning a visit</p> <p>remote access 'visitors'</p>	<p>key themes on all interpretation where appropriate</p> <p>Up to date web site with downloadable maps and detailed information about the Heritage Trail.</p> <p>Site Partners and stakeholders carrying a link to the Heritage Trail webpages on their websites.</p> <p>Information about public transport and car-free options for accessing High Lodge via the web site, Tourist Information Centres and visitor 'gateways'.</p> <p>Inclusion of Heritage Trail literature in 'bedroom browser' packs at accommodation providers and especially at accommodation which has dedicated disabled provision.</p> <p>Appropriate language publications available as downloads.</p>
Young People	<p>Young children visiting with family</p> <p>young people visiting with family and friends</p> <p>young people visiting for another site attraction eg Go-Ape or cycling.</p> <p>formal education visits</p> <p>playschemes</p> <p>children's wildlife and history clubs.</p> <p>Students from sixth form colleges; University of East Anglia and Easton and Otley College.</p>	<p>Interpretation must be engaging, involving and exciting to capture the imagination of young people on leisure visits e.g. drama, music, participatory arts events, re-enactments.</p> <p>Inclusion of a quiz, competition or physical challenge makes interpretation more exciting, challenging and rewarding for young people.</p> <p>For educational visitors interpretation must be carefully structured to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, provide educational resource material for pre- and post visit work and on-line access to databases and reference material for homework.</p> <p>Families should be given the opportunity to learn and discover together. This requires a hierarchy of messages to interest a mix of generations.</p> <p>Outreach interpretation can be aimed at children through schools, wildlife and history clubs.</p> <p>Keep up to date with young people's interests and expectations e.g. using the latest technology such as interactive</p>

Audience	Analysis of Audience	Meeting the Audience Needs
Recreational Users	<p>walkers (long and short distance)</p> <p>cyclists</p> <p>orienteers</p> <p>wild runners</p> <p>(horse riders will be excluded from the Heritage Trail for safety reasons).</p>	<p>computer games and interactive web sites.</p> <p>Variety in length of the Heritage Trail with the option of two 'short cuts'</p> <p>Focus on themes to provide reasons to follow the Trail</p> <p>Development of a 'Forest Code' to help people have a safe and satisfying experience, respecting other trail users and without damaging the resource they have come to enjoy.</p>
Special Interest Visitors	<p>people on leisure visits with a wide range of interests such as historic landscape; wildlife; archaeology; painting and photography</p> <p>people on leisure learning educational or study visits</p>	<p>A hierarchy of interpretation to satisfy both specialists and those with limited knowledge.</p> <p>The skills and expertise of local specialists should be harnessed to support the development and delivery of unique and locally distinctive interpretation.</p> <p>Events Programme linking key themes to special interest market.</p> <p>Referral from one site to other sites with similar themes e.g. Grimes Graves; Thetford Castle and Priory; Ancient House Museum; Weeting Castle; Weeting Heath.</p> <p>Accessible web-based archive for people undertaking research and study based projects.</p> <p>Multi-layered information contained on web site to allow people to delve as deeply into themes, subjects or sites as they require.</p>
Audiences with particular needs	<p>in wheelchairs</p> <p>using mobility scooters</p> <p>with hearing impairment</p> <p>with visual impairment</p> <p>mental health problems</p> <p>learning difficulties</p> <p>health problems</p>	<p>Interpretation that conforms to the Disability Guidance both on site and on the webpages</p> <p>Is produced as a result of consultation.</p> <p>Development of a 'Forest Code' to help people have a safe and satisfying experience, respecting other trail users and without damaging the resource they have come to enjoy.</p>

Consultation with the audiences listed above and with Forestry Commission staff, site partners and stakeholders has taken place throughout the Development Phase and is summarised in the following table:

Consultation	How and When	Outcome
Current Audiences	On-site generally and at Discovery Day and Open Day; during 'Meet and Greet' at weekends.	General enthusiasm to discover more about the history and heritage of the Forest and how it is managed. No one was negative about the project.
New Audiences	Those identified at Round One invited to consultation events	Voted for activities would most like to see included and to give more information leading to interpretation.
Site Partners and Stakeholders	Meetings with presentation about the project.	Each partner/stakeholder will 'host' an image that links it to the project as follows: <i>Churchill Catering</i> – game recipes <i>Bike Art</i> – forester with his bike <i>Go Ape</i> – collecting cones by swinging from ropes in the tree canopy <i>Archery</i> – hunting rabbits with bows and arrows <i>Pony Rides</i> – horse and cart as transport
Those with Access Limitations	At consultation events and from website.	An Access Audit has been produced. This will be used to ensure that all activities are inclusive (subject only to the terrain which might at times be difficult for those with physical limitations) and every effort will be made to publicise this, especially to those often excluded by default.
Forestry Commission Staff	Staff with particular concerns (Ecologist; Forest Operations Manager) invited to a consultative 'walk the route of the trail. High Lodge Staff given presentation. Staff at the East District Office	Provided feedback comments and procedures to overcome and mitigate concerns. Identified training needs and resources needed to help deliver the project. Voted for activities would most like to see included and to give more information leading to interpretation.
Other Professional Organisations	At meetings where short presentations given by project manager	100% support for the project.

See [Consultation](#) Document for a detailed account and analysis.

11.6 How the Activities will contribute to the Delivery of the Interpretation

Period of History	Activity
By the Neolithic period, c3 500 to 2 100BC, flint began to be used extensively and sourced from mines, including the known site at Grimes Graves only five miles from High Lodge. There are flint pits around High Lodge which may be Neolithic and the project will carry out research to test this theory	Identification and mapping of worked and waste flints and pot-boiler pebbles.
The process of land clearance for cultivation and grazing continued during the Bronze Age and these people have left the earliest visible earthworks in the forest : the burial mounds known as round barrows or tumuli	Mapping of the barrows; comparison of shape size and any special wildlife; significance in the landscape and how they were re-used (including any mentions in archival records).
Iron Age : possible sites	Earthwork survey of the circular banks and ditches of the Horseshoe Pit investigation to look for evidence of date and origin.
In the medieval period, the farming of rabbits for their meat and their fur in designated areas called 'warrens' transformed the landscape. The name 'High Lodge' is especially significant as it denotes the warreners' dwelling place on the highest point of the warren.	Archaeological Investigation of the lodge site of Downham Warren Lodge. Investigation to determine the extent of flint-facing on the warren banks.
Sheep often shared the warrens with the rabbits and the grazing areas were referred to as 'sheepwalks', a term found on the 1791 map of the Cadogan Estate which included High Lodge.	Investigating evidence of sheepwalks, folds and droveways and medieval routes and identifying those that survive as forest rides and tracks.
The Agricultural Revolution sought to convert the Brecks to arable by marling the land, spreading chalk or clay to improve it. There are several marl pits around High Lodge, together with evidence of former fields enclosed from the heath. With shelter belts and plantations of Scots Pine	Investigation and mapping of those features that remain of the parkland, especially plantation boundaries, shelter belts and veteran trees.
During the Napoleonic Wars, Brandon flintknappers had the sole contact to supply the British Army with its gunflints . Some of the flint was mined at Lingheath, close to High Lodge, and the horse-shoe shaped depressions of the flint mines cover a wide area.	Surface Site clearance of some of the flint mines so that their distinctive horseshoe shape and chalk spoil heaps are visible from the Trail.
In the First World War , the Government's Home Grown Timber Committee purchased and converted standing timber and built sawmills. This included the requisition of timber on the SantonDownham Estate and a narrow gauge railway was built to take the timber from High Lodge to the sawmill by the River Little Ouse	Site investigation and research to establish the route of the railway and archival evidence for it.
In the 1930s , High Lodge was one of four 'Labour Camps' set up to house the unemployed whose 'dole' was paid only if they attended. The men worked in gangs, putting in forest infrastructure.	Mapping the outlines of the buildings from evidence on the ground and from aerial photographs and LIDAR. Research into how the camp was organised and where the men came from.
During the Second World War, the site became an army camp; a home for lumberjills and then housed Polishrefugees , many of whose descendants live in Brandon today.	Appeals for photographs and personal/family memories. Archival Research.
When the Forestry Commission was created in 1919 to ensure that there would be no future timber shortage in time of war, it was land for Thetford Forest that was among the first purchased as the Public Forest Estate.	The Forest Discovery Day special event - looking at the ways in which forest operations have changed over the century with an exhibition of photos and machinery.
The whole of Thetford Forest is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and an European-designated Special Protection Area (SPA) for its biodiversity and nationally-important bird populations of woodlark and nightjar.	Tree Identification; Bird Identification : Sight and Sound; Identifying Deer in the Forest; Identifying Plants; Researching archives to find evidence of species in the past to the wildlife which now inhabits the forest; carrying out wildlife surveys; creating wildlife habitats ,with some in mitigation of the trail route.

See [The Resources Directory](#) for additional information.

11.7 Delivery of Interpretation: Where and How and Fulfilling the 'Guiding Principles'.

Facility	Virtual Past Timeline Monitor
Where	at the beginning of the Trail
What	a vertical outdoor high brightness outdoor touch screen
How	installed between oak posts which have an apex pitch roof shelter.
Requiring	electricity to the unit
Content	The main story will be a time line to show the changing landscape over 10,000 years, depicted as a narrated time line supported by images depicting the following; Present Day. World War Two. Labour Camp 1930s World War One. Gunflint Mining The 18 th , Century Estate Medieval Rabbit Farming. Saxon and Roman Prehistory
Supporting Facilities	For each of the nine elements of the story line there will be a support AV which give more detailed information about each of the historic landscapes
Involving	Information will be researched and collated by trained volunteers working with the project manager; approved by the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service and the Norfolk Historic Environment Service and the Forestry Commission's Historic Advisor and then given to the contractor producing the interpretation.

Facility	Two Shelters on the Route of the Heritage Trail
Where	Three walls of each shelter will be used for interpretation
What	There will be four sets of interpretation panels, changed to fit the four seasons (to encourage repeat visits as well as greater awareness of the forest environment).
How	Up to eight indicators on a dial will provide messages specific to various activities described or depicted at various points on the panels.
Requiring	Solar –powered and battery standby activators
Content	Shelter 1 The Wildlife of High Lodge and Thetford Forest Spring : Tree Pipit Goshawk Woodlark Song Thrush Crossbill Snakes Amphibians Early Butterflies Plants Deer Foxes Summer: Nightjar Cuckoo Hobby Bats Butterflies/Moths Plants – foxglove; Viper's Bugloss; Scabious ; Harebell; Heather Deer Foxes Autumn: Firecrest Fieldfare Redwing Siskin Berries/Seeds/Cones Deer Foxes Winter: Owls Deer Foxes Shelter 2 Timber Production and Forest Management Spring: Weeding Spraying Grass-cutting Summer: Ride Cutting Ride Re-instatement (righting any damage after harvesting) Autumn: Ploughing Planting Forage Harvesting Winter: Ground Preparation Mulching Weed Clearance Chemical Spraying Disc ploughing on conservation rides Timber Production: Forest Design Plans Timber Tree Species Climate Change Experimental Planting Forest Resilience Thinning – age of trees 15/20 years Harvesting -trees mature at 60 years. Timber to 6 sawmills near Norwich. Timber products. Fencing; Deer Management FC Staff and Contractors. Jobs/Careers in forestry
Supporting Facilities	
Involving	Information will be researched and collated by trained volunteers working with the project manager; approved by the Forestry Commission East District Ecologist; the Wildlife Rangers and the Forest Operations Team and then given to the contractor producing the interpretation

Facility	Audio Listening Posts
Where	There will be eight Audio Trail Posts each with one pre-recorded message maximum three minutes in duration and with the facility to change the recorded message and to adjust the volume.
What	Each post will contain a U turn unit which will power the audio and a stored power facility charged by a solar panel which is also activated by a half turn for visitors who may struggle to turn a handle to generate power.
How	The units to be mounted on FSC oak posts, a number, simple image and the text in Braille to be applied to the front face of the post.
Requiring	The Audio Posts will be positioned at High Lodge Field Downham Warren Lodge Horseshoe Pit Warren Bank Gunflint Mines Marl Pit Warren Trapping Bank Medieval Trackway
Content	The history and heritage of the above sites, including the features to be seen as evidence on the ground.
Supporting Facilities	U turn unit as described in 'What' above.
Involving	Information will be researched and collated by trained volunteers working with the project manager; approved by the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service and the Norfolk Historic Environment Service and the Forestry Commission's Historic Advisor and then given to the contractor.

Facility	Website and Social Media
Where	Forestry Commission's High Lodge webpages
What	Access to general and in-depth information about the heritage features and the trail
How	The webpages will function as a 'hub', not only for the dissemination of practical and interpretative information but also as a focus for participation and community development inspired by the site and its history.
Requiring	Hosting and refreshing by the Forestry Commission
Content	Downloadable leaflet for the heritage trail
Supporting Facilities	A telephone number accessible from any phone, mobile or landline
Involving	Information will be researched and collated by trained volunteers working with the project manager; approved by the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service and the Norfolk Historic Environment Service and the Forestry Commission's Historic Advisor.

11.8 Management and Maintenance

The same care and attention that is given to the design and implementation of any interpretation should be given to its subsequent maintenance and management. Physical interpretive media is likely to have a life of 5 to 6 years but whatever media is used there is a need to care for, and constantly refresh, the initial investment.

This will be done by:

- regular inspection of on-site signage, visitor orientation and interpretive panels
- regular cleaning and repair and renewal as required
- regular review and updating of printed items and their effective distribution
- regular review and refreshment of the webpages, especially as information changes or new initiatives evolve.

11.9 Monitoring and Evaluation of Interpretation

There is always a danger that once installed or circulated, interpretive materials are then forgotten about, especially as staff move on.

To ensure that visitors to High Lodge experience high quality and up-to-date interpretation, regular monitoring and evaluation will be carried out.

Monitoring and evaluation are an essential part of the process of planning, implementing and improving interpretive provision.

They help us to understand

- if the aims and objectives are being met
- if the target audience is being reached
- if the messages are really understood and appreciated.
- if the media is appropriate for a particular age range of visitors.

There are a number of different processes suitable for the evaluation of interpretation. The most appropriate method will depend upon the reason why the evaluation is to be carried out and what sort of data is required.

Where mainly quantitative data is required, such as numbers of visitors attending an event, where they came from, how they arrived, how they found out about the event etc. a short questionnaire survey will be used.

However, when more detailed information is required, such as whether or not the key interpretive messages have been understood by visitors or whether the media is appropriate for a particular age range of visitors, then more detailed qualitative analysis is needed.

These will include:

- studying how visitors react to, and interact with, the interpretive media using the trail cams (there will be a general notice stating that this is happening) .
- focus groups to give in-depth discussions to understand fully what they thought about the interpretation and whether they understood and were interested in the themes and messages.

Monitoring and evaluating use of the website will involve more than counting the number of visitor 'hits'. Using an appropriate analytical system (e.g. Google Analytics, SiteMeter) it will be possible, for example, to distinguish returning from first time visitors, to learn *how* visitors browse the site, and to ascertain the most popular individual pages and downloads.

A more detailed analysis of evaluation techniques is included below and is applicable to interpretation and to ensuring that this interpretation strategy meets the needs of all its audiences.

In particular, the draft interpretation will be evaluated by the Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People and Equal Opportunities, Norfolk to ensure it meets the guidelines for those with sensory impairment. It will be evaluated by the Monday Group, adults with learning difficulties who are members of Friends of Thetford Forest and carry out gardening work at High Lodge.

Interpretation for 'Trailing the Hidden Heritage of High Lodge' is of an importance equal to that of the physical trail itself. Indeed, the trail would be 'meaningless' in terms of heritage without the interpretation of the historic landscape features of High Lodge.

Interpretation will show how people have shaped this landscape, from prehistoric wildwood clearance to medieval rabbit farming; from gunflint mining in the eighteenth century to the creation of Thetford Forest in the twentieth century and how its present-day management balances the needs of timber production with those of wildlife, archaeology and recreation. It will enable everyone to understand, appreciate and enjoy the history, wildlife and management of the landscape of High Lodge and Thetford Forest.

The Action Plan Section 2a-e; Section 3-g; Section 6a-i; Section 10a-d refer.

See also
[Consultation](#)
[Recommendations and Implementation](#)
[Access Audit Report](#)
[Heritage Management Report](#)
[Management and Maintenance Report](#).
[The Resources Directory](#).

12 Strategy for Publicity and Promotion of the Project

12.1 The current provision for publicity and promotion at High Lodge

12.1 Section 6 considered audiences for High Lodge and how to retain and attract them. It emphasised the need to 'increase the level of engagement of High Lodge's existing visitors' and to 'develop new and wider audiences which better reflect the diversity in the communities near to High Lodge and groups that are currently under-represented'.

Key to achieving these aims is targeted and effective publicity and promotion of the heritage trail and associated activities. Such publicity and promotion must use and extend the existing marketing of the site.

Currently, 35 000 traditional leaflets are distributed across East Anglia each year. There are High Lodge webpages within the Forestry Commission's website, receiving 11,000 hits a month, 366 a day. These webpages are updated weekly and carry general information about the facilities and attractions; daily site information and a comprehensive access statement. High Lodge also has over 10,100 'likes' on Facebook and is updated 2 or 3 times a week.

Friends of Thetford Forest plays a leading role in publicising events at High Lodge. It has a strong working relationship with the Press and Media, especially the Eastern Daily Press; East Anglian Daily Times; the Thetford and Brandon Times; Bury Free Press and Radios Norfolk and Suffolk. It has a Twitter account with over two hundred followers; a presence on Facebook with 250 regular users and a website (www.fotf.org.uk) with over 1000 hits a month.

In addition, there is a marketing partnership co-ordinated by Go-Ape which delivers publicity for the Forestry Commission and the site business partners. This includes active

promotions during the four outdoor summer concerts in July which in 2016 attracted audiences of nine and a half thousand on three of the four evenings.

12.2 The Delivery of Publicity and Promotion for the Project.

Publicity and promotion of the project during delivery and beyond will make use of the existing strategies and mechanisms described above.

In general, publicity for the project will make use of the following promotional tools:

Promotional Tool	Delivered by
Word of mouth.	Existing visitors who have an enjoyable experience at High Lodge
Direct mail	The Forestry Commission's Discovery Pass scheme; Friends of Thetford Forest members
Attendance at community events	Friends of Thetford Forest
Presentations to community groups	Trained volunteers (see Action Plan)
Articles or press releases in local communities	Parish Magazines and newsletters; free newspapers.
Articles in other organisations' newsletters.	BTO; RSPB; Wildlife Trusts; Archaeological Groups;
Developing connections with organisations that have credibility with groups to help gain recognition	Suffolk Coalition of the Disabled; Norfolk's Equal Lives; Walking for Health Groups.
Making use of existing social and professional networks	Friends of Thetford Forest Corporate Members; Site Partners; Suffolk Coalition of the Disabled; Norfolk's Equal Lives websites and newsletters.

The High Lodge webpages will include a section promoting the heritage trail and have a downloadable trail leaflet and the facility to access information about the heritage for both non-specialist and specialist audiences. These pages will also give details of the activities at delivery and how these can be arranged on demand after the project has ended.

Each site partner will publicise the heritage trail by having on display a captioned image which links its own activity to the history of High Lodge, as follows:

Site Partner	What it does	The Linking Image
Churchill Catering	Franchise for Cafe	Medieval Recipes for Rabbits and Game as a table top display
Bike Art	Bike Hire; Purchase and Repair	Archival Photograph of a Head Forester going to work on his bike in the 1950s.
Go-Ape	Hire Wire Adventure Courses	Archival Photograph of a forest worker swinging from a rope collecting pine cones for seeds in the 1920s.
	Archery	Mural copied from a medieval image of rabbits being hunted with bows and arrows
Brecks Treks	Pony Rides for children	Archival Photograph of a horse pulling a cart carrying two children with heathland background.
Bushcraft	Traditional survival skills	Nets used for trapping rabbits

These measures should help create the 'active steps' needed to be taken to draw more first-time visitors to the site in the first instance, with a view to them becoming repeat visitors.

Section 6 of this Activity Plan also showed that several Mosaic Lifestyle Groups were greatly under-represented at High Lodge so publicity will be targeted specifically at these groups, as follows:

Under-Represented Group	Barriers to accessing High Lodge and its heritage	Targeted Publicity and Promotion
Elderly people reliant on support either through specialised accommodation or the basic state pension	No public transport to High Lodge. If come to site by car, have site entry fee to pay.	Information sent to residential care homes and day centres in area to encourage arranged visits.
Active Retired	Unaware that High Lodge has anything to offer them.	Network of U3As in East Anglia; network of WEAs; Retirement Associations (Probus; Professional RAs). Coach Companies which offer day excursions. Special Interest Groups.
People with disabilities and access limitations	Regard 'Thetford Forest' as a recreational destination for the fit and active.	Use partnerships established during development phase with SCODP and Equal Lives to disseminate information and have articles in their newsletters and on website and in social media.
Families with children aged 11 to 15	Children have outgrown the adventure play offer.	Use social media to promote activities such as the archaeological investigations.
Families reliant on benefits living in low-rise council housing	Site Entry Fee is an additional expense and even a 'luxury' for such households	Community Bus will run from Thetford and Brandon one day a week during summer holidays; must be pre-booked but ticket costs met by project.
Unskilled Workers	'Heritage' is probably associated with negative education experiences and a sense of failure at school.	Work with the Keystone Trust and Nova Training in Thetford/ Brandon (FOTF has volunteers from Nova) and Mildenhall Learning Centre to publicise all training opportunities offered by the project.
The Unemployed	As above.	As above.
Ethnic Minorities	Polish and Portuguese Communities language barriers and a forest as a recreational destination is not part of their culture.	Use existing support networks such as 'Migrant Help's' Migrant Advice Service with a drop-in centre in Brandon to send promotional leaflets in Polish and Portuguese and include links between cultures (High Lodge Polish Refugees in WW2; Portuguese had medieval warrening industry).
People with substantial wealth who live in the most sought after neighbourhoods.	Thetford Forest not seen as a place to visit as does not have the 'cachet' of more high-end destinations such as the Elveden Estate.	Use summer concerts to publicise and promote the attractions of High Lodge and the Heritage Trail in particular.
Young, well-educated city dwellers enjoying the vibrancy and diversity of urban life.	Thetford Forest not seen as a place to visit.	Use summer concerts to publicise and promote the attractions of High Lodge and the Heritage Trail in particular.
RAF/USAF Bases of Lakenheath, Mildenhall and Feltwell.	Insular security conditions at the Bases and lack of awareness of destinations nearby. USAF not allowed to promote visitor attractions .	Public Affairs Departments on the Bases contacted during the development phase explained restrictions but suggested that social media links on the Bases be used for 'unofficial promotion'.

Finally, a **Promotion Day** will be held bi-annually for tourism providers with the first of these days on installation of the heritage trail. This day will enable those who engage with holiday-makers to experience a visit and be better-informed in terms of promotion. All site partners and stakeholders will be involved as well as the volunteers trained in visitor management skills.

Tourism Providers invited will include:

- Forest Holidays, Thorpe Woodlands (log cabins)
- Holiday Cottage Companies
- Pubs with Accommodation
- Bed and Breakfasts
- Guest Houses
- Hotels

- Youth Hostels
- Campsites and Caravan Parks
- Dog Friendly Accommodation
- Accesible Holiday Accommodation Providers.
- Visit Norfolk
- Visit Suffolk.

The Action Plan Section 5a-e; Section 8a-e; Section 10a-d; Section 11a-c; Section 12a-m refer.

13 Strategy for Monitoring and Evaluating the Project.

Monitoring and evaluating the project both during delivery and at the close will help to ensure that resources are used wisely and that the needs of diverse audiences are being met.

In particular, they will help

- determine if the project's aims, objectives and outcomes are being or have been met
- assess to what extent the project is achieving or has achieved these goals and what factors affect their success.
- identify strengths and weaknesses (and where resources should be directed in future)
- ensure that learning is shared and asses the merits and effectiveness of formal and informal learning.
- gauge if visitors are representative of local or wider communities and if not, is this due to shortcomings in accessibility ?
- assess the extent to which visitors understand the project's intended messages and if they don't, why this is.

In addition, monitoring and evaluation will also demonstrate to the Forestry Commission (as the lead organisation) and to partners and stakeholders, especially funders

- how effectively the project is being delivered.
- that there is a framework against which to measure progress
- that feedback is being taken into account
- that there is sound justification for sustaining the project's outcomes.

13.1 Monitoring:

Monitoring the progress of the project involves identifying the 'critical path' activities and other major stages or decision points in the project and measuring progress against them.

Monitoring will therefore include:

- Comparing the planned timetable and the schedule of works against the actual works carried out, allowing corrective action to be taken appropriate to the extent of the deviation from the plan.
- Setting tolerances for cost, scope and quality and ensuring that these are adhered to.
- Having a regular and agreed reporting system by any contractors and consultants to the project team so that progress is known and any slippage or problems identified before they escalate.]
- Regularly assessing the level of project risk and the success of any risk mitigation, enabling the project manager to pick up on problematic areas in advance.
- Assessing the level of project change to identify issues that may affect the business case and/or the critical success factors.
- Being aware of the 'environment' outside the project and bringing to the notice of the project team any changes that may affect the project.

13.2 Evaluation will be done at the start (formative), during and at the end of the project (summative). It will be quantitative (numbers and hard data) and qualitative (opinions, feelings). Sufficient flexibility will be built in to the timetable so that early evaluation can inform later activities.

A Baseline will be established as a measurement before evaluation begins. This acts as the reference data against that future measurements or observations will be compared.

It will give a summary of the situation before the project begins and then demonstrate the amount of progress made or 'the distance travelled' during the life of the project.

Components to be evaluated:

i Capital Works:

- the success of the delivery of the capital works element of the project will be measured by the completion of the planned scheme on schedule and within budget
- by gathering feedback from trail users and visitors in order to gauge people's opinions about the finished route, surface and access provision suitability.

ii Interpretation:

- A survey will be conducted to test the interest and effectiveness of the interpretation.
- Changes in levels of engagement can also be measured e.g numbers of volunteer guides coming forward, social media engagement, numbers of web hits and numbers of heritage trail apps downloaded.

iii Activities:

- Numbers attending the special events, day schools and workshops (individuals and groups)
- Comments on the feedback forms
- Number of repeats required because of demand
- Numbers of volunteers engaged
- Numbers receiving training.
- Those on courses or special tours will be asked to complete a feedback questionnaire with their demographic details as well as their opinions
- Schools and group visits will be asked to provide feedback on all the provision made for them.
- There will be a section for feedback on the website. Users of the downloadable resources will be asked to give feedback.

The process of evaluation of the three components is focused on what can be learnt from the evaluation and hence evaluation must

- be tailored to the activity and the audience (children cannot be expected to complete a long and detailed questionnaire for instance).
- include several types of data collection and both : in-house evaluation and commissioned evaluation
- give due consideration to the various perspectives of those involved, analysing and presenting the in a way appropriate to the audience
- be insightful enough to offer the 'how' and 'why' (why participants did or did not enjoy an activity and how successes can be repeated and the less successful aspects improved upon).

The evaluation process will continue beyond the end of the project and the information collected will help inform future management decisions.

Methods of Evaluation

Questionnaires	
Strengths	Weaknesses
One of the most commonly used evaluation methods so 'tried and tested'	Only some people will complete so not a full range of views
Quick and easy to complete.	Limited information obtained
Opportunities	Threats
Particularly suitable when a response from a large number of people in a relatively short time is required or when a rolling survey is desirable.	People who are motivated to give opinions (e.g. those with strong views)
Can ask for information about people's knowledge, awareness, satisfaction, expectations, behaviour, preferences and beliefs, as well as demographic data (e.g. respondents' age, ethnicity, gender, etc).	Literate people so inclusive
User is free to express opinion	
Open questions - to allow for a spontaneous and unstructured response.	
Closed questions - a 'yes' or 'no' answer or an answer from a set of predefined categories	

Interviews	
Strengths	Weaknesses
These can take place informally (e.g. a conversation between a visitor and front-of-house member of staff) or more formally, where the interviewer has a predefined set of questions to ask of the interview	Can be time-consuming
Can take place face-to-face or via the telephone	Interviewer needs skills and training
Can obtain in-depth views	May be difficult with children and the non-articulate.
Opportunities	Threats
Semi-structured interviews involve using a set of pre-defined topics but allowing for the interviewer to ask them in his/her own way, depending on how the interview progresses	Can yield a lot of data which needs processing correctly
With face-to-face interviews it can be easier for the interviewer to read the participant's body language, whereas telephone interviews can have the added benefit of enabling the interviewing of non-users.	Can be threatening to some people.

Focus Groups	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Suited to situations where you need to get qualitative information from participants more quickly and at lower cost than would be the case with individual interviews	Difficulty recruiting an appropriate sample
Obtains in-depth views	Skilled facilitator needed
Opportunities	Threats
Group interaction may stimulate ideas and opinions that would not necessarily have been revealed in a one-to-one interview	Analysis is time-consuming
	Not everyone is comfortable in a group
	May be difficult with children and the non-articulate
	Choosing participants so that they are representative of a wider population (such as the views of participants and then non-participants and under-represented groups

Observation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Visitors interact with exhibits, other visitors and members of staff	Requires training in skills needed
Simplest observational tool is a count of the number of people entering a space, by visitor type (e.g. family group, peer group) and time of day (e.g. morning, lunchtime, afternoon) or weekday.	Good Planning
Can reveal patterns about which spaces are more popular with which visitors and at which times	
Opportunities	Threats
Can provide an interesting insight into the way in which visitors respond to and use the space	Some observation yields a lot of data
What learning takes place in these settings.	Can be intrusive, therefore need to ensure people can opt out.

Using a Timeline	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Simple Concept: The timeline for a project or activity is set out on a roll of paper.	Depends on recall capacity of participants and their co-operation.
Participants are asked to recall and reflect on specific questions about different stages of the project.	Needs strong and competent facilitator
Opportunities	Threats
Their responses are recorded directly onto the timeline or via post-it notes attached to the timeline	Some people uncomfortable in a group situation
Responses are then discussed amongst the group.	Feel intimidated by being asked to articulate responses.

Mobile	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Fun Easy to analyse by a quick count To cater for different learning For getting responses to particular questions	Some people may follow others Not efficient for long, open-ended responses
Opportunities	Threats
Simple responses to simple questions Flexible as many mobile phone applications (referred to as <i>platforms</i>) will build a mobile data collection survey. Allows the easy capture of other forms of data, such as images, video, and GPS coordinates	Network coverage Cost of Use

Internet	
Strengths	Weaknesses
World-Wide Access to the project	Time-consuming to monitor
Opportunities	Threats
Dissemination of information world-wide Reaching new virtual audiences	Inappropriate visitors to the website

It is anticipated that the evaluation process will use a variety of those methods as deemed appropriate for the evaluation task being undertaken.

The Evaluation Report will

- include reflections on the outcomes of your project
- describe the learning outcomes
- demonstrate that stakeholders and partner organisations' feedback has been included alongside that from staff and from those participating in the project.
- identify those areas of delivery which were not as successful and explain how the project will move forward from these areas and make improvements to them
- show what the results of the evaluation were and what is now going to change as a consequence and what will continue as 'best practice'.

The Report's findings will be presented in different kinds of reporting styles to ensure that all audiences for it are reached, including:

Audience	Method of Reporting the Evaluation
Forestry Commission	Written report and an oral presentation
Funders, partners and stakeholders	Written report and an oral presentation
Participants in the Project	Newsletter
Volunteers	Newsletter
Non-Participants/ Non-Users	Internet.

The Project Reflection Workshops will provide an opportunity to bring together people who have been involved in or affected by the project.

Workshop Participants will:

- Share their version of the project's story.
- Describe their personal high points and low points.
- Identify evidence of the project's impact.
- Explore what can be learnt from their experiences of being involved.

The findings of the workshop will be included in the Evaluation Report.

13.3 Measuring Success will be an independent, external assessment of how well the project has met the HLF's aims for:

Conservation

- the heritage features better understood and conserved;

Learning

- interpretation telling the story of the historic landscape and the particular heritage features, wildlife and management of the forest.
- associated day schools, workshops , special events and outreach talks informing and increasing knowledge.
- schools visits and learning resources
- volunteers acquiring new skills.

Participation

- access to the heritage features, the wildlife and the forest environment provided for everyone
- volunteers managing and delivering the project
- volunteers helping to deliver training and education,
- existing and new audiences participating in events, courses and tours.
- Community groups sustained
- Networks continuing to grow and be supportive.

In order to best gauge the success of the trail project and measure the degree to which it has developed the audience of the site it will be necessary to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative Data

There are already a number of existing mechanisms by which the audience at High Lodge is profiled, and surveys are undertaken regularly by the Forestry Commission.

Additional surveys are due to be conducted on a regular cycle and these will provide an indication of any changes to the demographic of the High Lodge audience profile, although it will be difficult to identify any demographic changes brought about specifically by the project.

It is suggested that an additional audience profile survey for High Lodge is commissioned and that it include questions related to the aims and objectives of the trail project. This should be undertaken before, during and after the implementation phase in order to gauge project-specific effects on the demographic of the High Lodge audience.

Another useful measure of the success of the heritage trail project will be the number of people using the trail itself and simple mechanisms need to be developed and implemented which will allow the capture of these data.

At present, the only meaningful count of visitors to High Lodge can be obtained from data collected by the car park counters, with the total number of cars being multiplied by 3.5 in order to obtain a total number of visitors. Once visitors are past the entrance gates it is not currently possible to track their movements around the site, but it is suggested that simple footfall counting devices are installed at several evenly spaced locations along the trail, including both the long and shorter routes and the shelters, so that a picture of the true nature of the usage of the trail can be obtained.

These counters can be augmented by additional 'people-spotting' surveys, to be carried out by volunteers stationed along the route on a fixed series of dates throughout the lifespan of the project in order to characterise more subtly the types of people using the new trails.

High Lodge is currently highly-rated on the TripAdvisor website and visitors should be encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences here too.

High Lodge also has a Facebook page, which is actively used to promote the site and engage with visitors, and this too can be used to promote and collect feedback relating to the new trail. Being mindful of the fact that many of the currently under-represented groups do not necessarily use the internet extensively, more traditional methods of collecting feedback, such as visitor comment forms which can be deposited on site or returned by freepost or a visitors' book to be completed on site should be used.

The focus group of current users and potential users of the High Lodge site which was established for the purposes of developing the project has provided a number of useful insights into the running and promotion of the site. As has been highlighted several times in the previous section, the continuation of this group into the future would have numerous benefits to the running of the site, as well as providing feedback on the project.

The project-development focus groups which have been established should continue to meet regularly throughout the project in order to capture feedback and changing opinions over the lifespan of the project and beyond.

The Action Plan 'Targets and Measures of Success' and 'Method(s) of Evaluation' for all sections refer.

14 Conclusion to the Activity Plan

As is clear from the analyses presented here, High Lodge already enjoys a large and diverse audience who choose to visit the site for a number of different reasons. The leisure opportunities available on the site are clearly very popular, and the proposed development of an all-weather, multi-user heritage trail and associated learning resources will complement much of what is already on offer, as well as broadening the appeal of the site to new audiences.

It is clear that the core demographic of the existing High Lodge audience comprises relatively affluent visitors, many of them with families, almost all of whom live within a 50-mile radius of the site. This is broadly in line with the key demographic for Forestry Commission sites nationwide, and also overlaps heavily with the key demographic of those interested in visiting heritage sites.

From this it can be inferred that there is a sufficient overlap between the two audiences for new heritage-focussed activities at High Lodge to be of interest to the existing audience. It is very likely that the members of the existing heritage audience who may not previously have visited High Lodge would find that the site has much to offer them both in terms of heritage and their other interests.

It is also clear that a significant proportion of the population within the High Lodge catchment area are under-represented in the current audience profile and steps need to be taken in order to address this imbalance and open up the site to new audiences.

Poorly represented socio-economic groups include ethnic minorities, low-income households, skilled and unskilled workers and the unemployed (C2DE), people with disabilities, people over the age of 65 and families with children aged 11 and upwards. Again, these trends are broadly reflected in the nationwide Forestry Commission audience and also amongst those who choose not to visit heritage sites.

In order for the current project to succeed, it is necessary to develop and broaden the High Lodge audience by enhancing the experience for existing users, bringing new audiences to the site and offering a wider range of opportunities for learning and development.

The project has an added significance. Planned for a two-year delivery, it will end in 2019, the year of the Forestry Commission's centenary. Even more remarkably, it was the Santon Downham Estate, including the High Lodge site, which was the second land purchase made (a small area near Swaffham being the first) on which to plant the new Thetford Forest.

By providing opportunities for everyone to celebrate all that this forest environment can offer, both during delivery of the project and in the years to come, its vision will be fulfilled:

'the heritage of High Lodge understood, cared for and celebrated by communities with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to help manage and enjoy it, sustaining a landscape that is accessible to all, as a working forest that is also culturally and naturally rich and beautiful'.

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