

Report of the Team Leader for Learning and Inclusion

Subject: ‘Learning in Partnership’

Purpose of Report

To provide members with a review of the Authority’s education work with a particular focus on how our objectives in this area can be achieved through working in partnership with others.

Introduction/Background

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Education Services

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) delivers a range of educational services and opportunities for schools which are broadly described below. In 2024-25 we worked directly with 9,400 learners, from pre-school through to A level and college students. Whilst the majority of participants are local to Pembrokeshire, there are some schools which travel from out of county to make use of the Authority’s education offer. In addition, the reach for some services and projects is much wider, for example, the PCNPA led Tirlun (Learning Resources for Designated Landscapes) project has a Wales-wide audience for its digital content.

The National Park Authority’s Education Services can broadly be divided into 4 areas:

- The ‘charged for’ programme of activity delivered at numerous locations in and around the National Park, which offers Curriculum linked activity over a range of subject areas. This programme is managed by the Llanion Park based Learning and Inclusion Team, and delivered by both Area Rangers and Learning officers
- The ‘charged for’ programme of activity delivered at National Park Centres (primarily Castell Henllys and Carew Castle, with a smaller amount of work undertaken at Oriel y Parc). Activities are cross-curricular in nature but predominantly focus on the historical interest of the two sites together with learning opportunities based on exhibitions at Oriel y Parc galleries. These programmes are managed and delivered by each of the centre-based teams. In the year 2024/25 National Park Centres delivered 75 sessions to 2600 learners at their locations *(included in the above overall total).
- Activities for school aged children linked to community engagement and social inclusion objectives of the Authority. Sessions are delivered by Area Rangers and to a lesser extent the Learning and Inclusion teams and National Park Centres, the majority are delivered without a charge.

- Project and partnership activity involving schools and/or pre-school settings. Activities provided with specific objectives, often linked to external funding/sponsorship. Present examples include Roots/Gwreiddiau (a Cleddau/Haven focussed project) supported by South Hook LNG, Tirlun ([Home | Tirlun](#)) and Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools.

Working in Partnerships to deliver the Authority's education work

Increasingly the Authority has taken a collaborative approach to delivering its education work, recognising the benefits of working alongside others to improve the quality and reach of some of its services. Challenges associated with funding, particularly where core budgets are limited, means that innovative options for service delivery are important, with ways of working that reduce costs and barriers to participation being particularly valuable in the present operating environment.

The work summarised below provides examples of ways in which the National Park Authority is working with others to deliver learning outcomes.

Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools

The National Park Authority plays host to the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools (PODS) partnership and project officer.

Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools (<http://pembrokeshireoutdoorschools.co.uk/>) was established in 2010 as a collaboration between the 'Professional Learning Community' in Pembrokeshire (including headteachers, teachers and local authority advisers) and key strategic partners including Darwin Science, Sports Pembrokeshire, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and the National Trust. The partnership now includes 15 organisations, groups, schools and charities supporting the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools aim 'to promote the use of the outdoors across the National Curriculum for young learners in Pembrokeshire'.

A full-time project officer, supported with external funding secured by PCNPA, worked with 25 local schools and 1500 learners directly in the past year, delivering training on outdoor learning topics to more than 100 teachers. However, the 'added value' of partnership working is seen in the breadth and range of outdoor learning opportunities available to schools in Pembrokeshire, with a co-ordinated approach often key to delivering work that is complementary and joined up in the way it is delivered.

An example of the PODS partnership in action can be seen in the work around school grounds and their development as places for learning. With the Outdoor Schools Co-ordinator providing initial advice to schools on actions to improve the quality of school grounds to benefit both biodiversity and learners, we have seen these visits backed up with sessions from experienced practitioners such as Darwin Science, delivering sessions to learners in schools. Often schools will go on to use this work to contribute towards their accreditation as an Eco School or as part of the Sustainable Schools Pembrokeshire programme.

Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools partners are able to work with the majority of the 60+ schools in the county. The sharing of information, knowledge and experience

through regular meetings and joint projects translates into a better experience for all learners.

Tirlun

Over the past three years the 8 Welsh Designated Landscapes ([Landscapes Wales](https://landscapes.wales/)) have been working on a collaborative project to develop bilingual, Curriculum for Wales linked learning resources under the banner of Tirlun: <https://tirlun.wales/> <https://tirlun.cymru/>. The initiative has been delivered by the Education Team at Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and supported by the Welsh Government's Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places fund.

Tirlun was developed collaboratively, with the Designated Landscape teams, teachers from across Wales and consultants from Think, Learn, Challenge ([Bilingual Educational Services - Classroom Resources Wales - TLC!](https://thinklearnchallenge.wales/)) and Tinint (digital partners for the project) working together to develop and design activities and content.

The unique resource provides schools with extensive learning materials and related content focussing on the 8 Designated Landscapes, whilst covering a range of topics and approaches to learning, both inside and outside the classroom. The Tirlun resources are available to all teachers and learners in Wales, through a dedicated website and through Hwb, the all-Wales digital learning platform.

The first phase of the project was completed in March of this year, with a Senedd launch attended by educators and representatives from Designated Landscapes in Wales. The use of the new resources has been supported by promotional campaigns and by the inclusion of Tirlun as a cross-curricular learning resources for schools on Hwb, the Welsh Government's digital learning portal. Although the project continues to evolve, we can see from a single month's snapshot between April and May 2025, that there were 2,185 visits to the Tirlun website from various digital sources across Wales and further afield.

The second phase of Tirlun has just received further funding from the Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places collaborative fund, with the next stage of the project very much focussed on working with others to achieve learning goals linked to our Designated Landscapes.

Gwreiddiau Roots

Launched in 2019, the initial aim of the Gwreiddiau Roots project was to promote a greater understanding of the natural environment and food production in the locality. The project is fully funded by South Hook LNG through Pembrokeshire Coast Charitable Trust. Roots is now in its fifth year, with the initiative having evolved to focus on a wider range of topics linked to land use, nature recovery and local community. Its fundamental goal, to foster a greater knowledge and awareness of the local environment and the associated human interactions amongst learners.

Roots has continually progressed, facilitating diverse learning opportunities for Pembrokeshire schools. Since the project started the Authority's Education Officer (who delivers much of the work on a 1 day/week basis) has delivered 150 sessions

for schools, with a particular focus on schools in the Milford Haven cluster and activities in and around the Haven/Cleddau.

The connections to South Hook LNG have evolved since the project's launch, with a closer working partnership having developed with regular meetings and 'shared experiences' as South Hook staff attend some of the learning sessions provided. Last year PCNPA staff supported the establishment of an orchard within the South Hook LNG complex and continue to advise on the management of a nature reserve adjacent to the terminal.

In recent months South Hook LNG agreed to support a more ambitious programme for Gwreiddiau Roots over the next two years, with a focus on the Daugleddau Estuary and additional funding to develop a new digital learning resource for schools covering a range of topics, looking at heritage, biodiversity, cultural and economic themes associated with the locality.

Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

The Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (www.fpcnp.org.uk) are a local charity founded in 1991, to help to protect, conserve and enhance the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park for all who live, work or visit here, to enjoy both now and in the future.

Since 2023 the Friends group have supported the PCNPA learning programme from their charitable funds 'to enable more learners to make the most of opportunities to find out more about the National Park as part of a curriculum linked experience'. The support has taken the form of covering the cost of bookings onto the education programme offered by the Authority - the cost of bookings is currently £4.50 per child for a day. In 2024 this support enabled 15 schools sessions (benefiting 690 learners) to be delivered by the Engagement and Inclusion teams, removing a potential barrier to participation by reducing costs to schools.

The project has created the opportunity for the Friends to get a better understanding of how we deliver work in this area and, through regular updates and meetings, to see how their contributions can make a difference. The partnership with the Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park continues to develop with funding available to support schools during this academic year.

Wales Council for Outdoor Learning

One of the challenges for the Outdoor Learning sector is to achieve a profile for work in this area that demonstrates its value to schools, learners and educators in general. The Wales Council for Outdoor Learning brings together stakeholders from across the country to promote and raise the profile of outdoor learning in Wales.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Learning Team and Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools are active members of the Council, supporting its campaigns and initiatives such as Wales Outdoor Learning Week.

The partnership benefits the 'outdoor learning community' as a whole, bringing together key stakeholders to:

- Promote the role of outdoor learning in helping the environment.
- To lead by example and share good practice
- Facilitate a platform for partnership working
- To lobby for the development/recognition of Outdoor Learning with the Welsh Government and other key agendas.

Schools

Outcomes for learners and for delivering against our key objectives of 'promoting knowledge and understanding' are best achieved when we have good working relationships with schools. In recent years more focussed work through Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools and Gwreiddiau Roots for example, has allowed our learning teams to be more collaborative in the way we work with some schools. This approach can also be seen in the work of the Ranger Team at a community level with local schools and across the National Park centres where good connections with local schools often exist.

Where we have been able to develop work in this way we have seen opportunities to deliver more tailored learning, perhaps focusing on a particular location or topic. In turn this work can be shared with other schools as an example of good practice or a case study. Recent examples have included work with Waldo Williams Community Primary School, whose 'wellbeing walk' to Foel Drygarn in the Preselis has been used a template for similar learning days by other schools. Twilight events first delivered at Johnston School as a Gwreiddiau Roots, PODS partnered project have since been replicated at other schools across the County to extend learning beyond the school day.

Comparisons

In comparison with other National Parks in the UK beneficiary numbers are high for PCNPA's education programme, this may, at least in part be due to the range of services offered; from centre based to outreach (across the National Park) and from 'free to access' to 'charged for'.

There are a number of other providers locally, including:

- The National Trust
- The Wildlife Trust (at Cilgerran Wildlife Centre)
- Darwin Science
- Field Studies Council (Dale) [largely out of county users]
- Valero Field Centre –Pwllcrochan
- The Rivers Trust
- Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools (partnership of which we are a lead partner)
- Outdoor Activity Providers

The services offered by the above don't necessarily complete with our own offer and in many cases are complementary. The mix of heritage education (at Castell Henllys and Carew Castle) and a flexible offer available at a range of locations across the National Park delivered by our ranger teams provide a unique service with broad and varied content for learners.

The development of the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools partnership in recent years, with the profile it has achieved amongst educationalists both locally and further afield suggests that there is value in a more collaborative approach to delivering education services.

The emerging new National Curriculum for Wales arguably presents greater opportunities to engage educators (and learners) in assets such as the National Park, particularly given the number of links to the 'whole school curriculum' at all levels and the renewed focus on locality indicated by the curriculum guidance to date.

Financial considerations

In 2024/25 PCNPA education services had a collective income of around £14,000. However, the external support for work in this area brought in significant funding – more than £20k from The Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, South Hook LNG and Forest Holiday (grant to support schools access to National Park learning experiences through National Parks UK) alone. Larger grants and support for projects such as Tirlun and Pembrokeshire Outdoor School contributed additional funding to support the services delivered.

The cost of delivering these services is high when staff costs and overheads are included and in general terms outdoor and environmental education services offered by most practitioners rarely yield significant income streams and most commonly become subsidised services. However, it is clear that taking innovative and collaborative approaches to the way this work is delivered can start to reduce costs to the Authority and add value to the quality of the service.

Risk considerations

Despite external support, the education work we deliver is dependent upon core funding. Whilst some income is derived directly from education activity it is small compared to costs and so the emphasis on attracting funding and working collaboratively will be important if we are to sustain current levels of activity.

Demand for the services we offer seems unlikely to diminish greatly in the coming years, particularly if the emphasis of the new Welsh Curriculum encourages thematic and cross-curricular learning which could play to the strengths of a strong offer from the education team(s). However, there will be a need to ensure that our offer fits the requirements of the curriculum in order to remain an attractive option for educators.

Additional challenges for the service largely relate to our customer base. The rising cost of transport (coach travel) for schools is a known limiting factor for schools planning educational visit and this seems likely to continue to be the case. Developing the market for our work represents a challenge, with 'hard to reach' schools and teachers requiring more targeted work in terms of their engagement with outdoor learning.

Compliance

The Authority's education services are linked to the requirements of the Welsh National Curriculum and support the role required of public bodies by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The services comply with the Welsh Language Standards (2016), and we are able to offer the majority of our programme in the medium of Welsh. The Authority's education services could be more clearly aligned to corporate objectives, although recent reviews have started to address this.

Human Rights/Equality issues

Our Education services address key equality issues in terms of access to the natural heritage of Wales and contributed to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's own Equality Plan.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

Our education services have no discernible negative impact on biodiversity in the National Park. The content of educational programmes contributes to increased awareness of biodiversity in Pembrokeshire (amongst new audiences) and involves participants in positive actions which support biodiversity.

Welsh Language statement

Our education services provide a platform to engage with a range of groups and communities in the medium of Welsh.

The work of initiatives such as Tirlun and Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools is fully bilingual with resources, training and support for schools all delivered bilingually. The initiative has provided targeted support for Welsh medium schools in recent years.

Recommendation

Receive the report and note for future consideration.

Author: Graham Peake, Learning and Inclusion Team Leader
(For further information email: grahamp@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)