

Our Impact

Field Studies Council

Inspiring everyone to be curious,
knowledgeable, passionate and caring
about our environment

FSC



Introduction

This report shows the positive impact of our charity on both people and planet.

The Field Studies Council (FSC) provides outstanding experiences for people to connect with the environment, learn about it and make choices that help protect it. This was the vision of FSC's pioneers when they first met during World War Two.

“Ultimately, the environment is protected by people who value and understand nature.

First-hand experiences in nature spark curiosity and passion, but when combined with knowledge, empower people to live more sustainably. They become environmental advocates themselves by impacting those around them. FSC's impact is in helping learners take those steps.

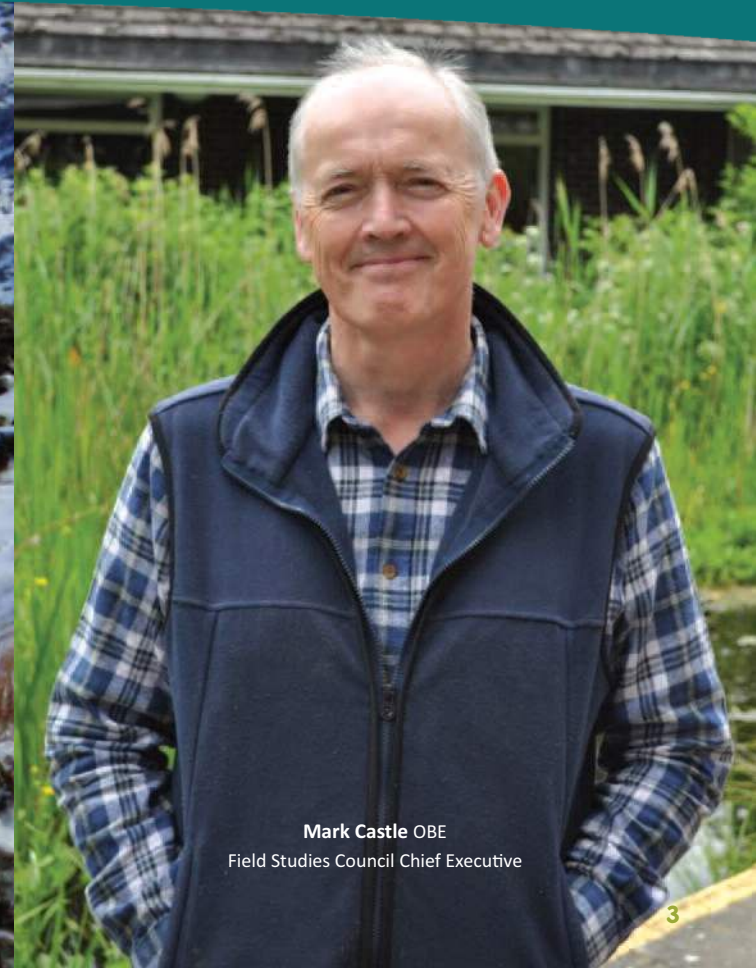
We need everyone to care about the danger that our planet faces and have the knowledge and ability to do something about it. This need has only increased as the need to protect our environment has become urgent.

FSC's impact report highlights our work in delivering environmental education to people of all ages and abilities, but also new areas of work where our impact is growing.

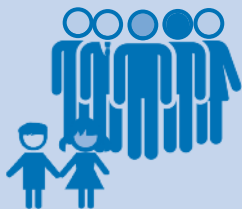
Covid-19 has been the biggest challenge this charity has faced in over 75 years. Its impact on us and our beneficiaries was profound. But as FSC and the nation rebuild, we know that the opportunities that we offer are needed more than ever before.

Mark Castle

Chief Executive



Mark Castle OBE
Field Studies Council Chief Executive



**in our last full year before
Covid-19 we welcomed
150,113 visitors
187,210 overnight stays
98,489 day visits
11,358 courses**

Icons made by flaticon.com/cliparts.co

“ The students who attended the trip said how much easier the exam was because they could remember the different parts of the river... because they saw it first-hand. **Humanities leader**

“ The boys began to appreciate that knowledge, skills and learning can be accessed in the immediate environment... this raised their confidence. They saw that learning is for everyone. **Teacher**

Outdoor learning

There is no substitute for first-hand experiences in nature. FSC gives our learners chances to see and explore landscapes for themselves. Hands-on practical activities in the outdoors bring a subject to life, and create vivid memories which last.

The real world includes urban areas. FSC leads courses in fast changing urban conurbations where learners are helped to explore and interpret London and its parks or Birmingham's regeneration areas.



“ You don't get to measure beach profiles in Hackney!
A level geography student

Benefits of residentials

FSC residential experiences provide time to study in greater depth. This has a positive impact on study skills, critical thinking, and reflection. Away from the usual classroom environment, FSC residentials offer time and space to develop better peer relationships.

Being away from home, sharing new experiences, and overcoming challenges all build personal and social skills. Teachers and parents report improvements in independence, self-confidence and self-esteem. Levels of team-working and maturity improve.

“ I am of no doubt that our excellent results are in no small part to the work that we do over the three day trip. Students return to school and show much more passion to the subject. **Teacher** ”

“ A girl who wouldn't answer tutor's questions on the first day spoke in front of everyone in the last day's presentation. The value of that is just not measurable. **Teacher** ”



Residentials provide significant contact time so that teachers get to know their students better too, with the impact seen in learners being less worried about making mistakes or asking for help.



“ The students live in inner-city areas and for the vast majority this was the first time they had set foot in the countryside. One asked me what 'wellies' were! **Teacher** ”

Responding to the Covid pandemic

The pandemic stopped FSC's core business. No residential courses were possible for more than a year. Face to face training was severely limited. Our beneficiaries risked missing out.

We didn't want merely to wait out the storm. Instead, we increased our reach and charitable impact by immediately finding new ways to support learning, teaching and help all ages connect to nature during lockdowns.

Visitors couldn't come to us, so we found new ways to connect them with us and even with each other, including adults forced to shield at home and feeling isolated.

How we helped

Keeping learning alive online

We developed a completely new suite of free live online school lessons as #FieldworkLive. Our adult learning courses also moved online to share biodiversity skills through Biolinks. Combined, FSC engaged more people than would ever pass through our centres in a year. Digital has helped enthuse learners and whet their appetite for more hands-on learning. Hard pressed teachers, learners and parents found the activities inspiring during lockdowns and are now booking more blended experiences.



Going local during lockdowns

Our publications team distributed tens of thousands of wildlife identification guides. They have universal appeal. Mindful of lockdown restrictions, FSC guides opened up nature that could still be discovered right under the nose of individuals and families, even in the smallest habitats, garden or local greenspace.

Stay with Us

When guidelines allowed, we opened FSC centres and their beautiful grounds for Covid Secure holidays. Our low cost, clean and simple accommodation offered a chance for lockdown weary visitors to connect to nature, relax in stunning locations and enjoy the space, peace and freedom.



£13m of lost charitable income

150,000 people unable to visit

Over 450,000 people engaged with FSC during the pandemic

“ We found ways to continue bringing outdoor learning to life when our centres were closed, our beneficiaries were in lockdown and access to nature was severely restricted. **CEO**



#FieldworkLive went global with learners from 32 countries

377,096 learners engaged with #FieldworkLive during 2020

20,000 engaged with #PrimaryNatureLive

“ I’m home schooling because of the pandemic. We’ve loved joining the lectures, and it’s been an absolute highlight of this time... fun, unique and exciting inspiration. **Parent**

#FieldworkLive engages school learners online during pandemic

FSC’s #FieldworkLive series was broadcast live on YouTube for primary, secondary and A-level students. The 12 sessions were delivered from scratch in just seven weeks in partnership with Encounter Edu.



FSC’s teaching staff quickly developed the ability to deliver live online, build rapport through a camera, and adapt from teaching a usual class size to one of several thousand. They even created ‘Blue Peter style’ models of rural landscapes. Pet tortoises were also an instant hit with participants!

Behind the scenes, moderators organised shout-outs to enthusiastic schools and pupils and responded to 16,000 live chat comments. Our experts also provided a complete support package of high-quality resources.

In time for the third lockdown, FSC also broadcast #PrimaryNatureLive sessions to cater for the needs of our primary learners. These sessions were gratefully received by our learners, teachers and parents in need of inspiration and fun ways to engage with study and nature.



Digital

School learners

Since 2020, FSC's digital experiences have enhanced and reinforced outdoor learning and fieldwork.

FSC's experiences are co-created with experts and trusted by schools across the country.

Our curriculum courses are tailored to the exam boards and include knowledge enhancement and fieldwork skills courses. FSC also offers blended courses.

field-studies-council.org/digital-and-outreach



Adult learners

In 2021, FSC brought taxonomy and related art online with new digital courses.

Thousands of adults have now enrolled to feed their personal and professional interests in natural history, biodiversity and environmental art.

FSC courses aren't flat but interactive, using live experiences with tutors and assessments to develop learning. Learners complete a sequence of topics for each subject towards recognition and accreditation.

field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences



BioLinks

Biological recording provides vital information about Britain's wildlife and how it is coping or not with habitat loss and climate change. The UK needs more biological recorders to fill the knowledge gaps so that campaign organisations and governments can take action.

FSC BioLinks is a £1.4m training and skills project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We are filling the skills gaps in invertebrate identification with programmes in the West Midlands and South East England.

FSC BioLinks has accessible entry to engage the curiosity of individuals wanting to connect with nature as well as boosting the knowledge and skills of those who are interested in biological recording as a career.

This project has already expanded the UK's database of 'unloved' invertebrate species with thousands of new records.

“ Well done for finding such inspirational speakers and on adapting so seamlessly to the current situation.



“ You have no idea just how your meetups brighten up my week.



Moving online

BioLinks courses moved online within two months of lockdown starting.

Our invertebrate courses enabled learning to continue at a time when so many opportunities were closed. We also built new communities at a time of isolation for many.

FSC BioLinks delivered online support to volunteers in species identification, which is no easy task when identifying tiny soil creatures – but crucial for biodiversity.

Our ‘Virtual Meetups’ also introduced topics as varied as bees, hedgehogs and hornets.

BioLinks will continue online courses. Post pandemic, these skills will be in greater demand as governments tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.



2,920 learners attend events and courses

2,900 new biological records created

5,500 learners on 39 online events

18,246 people read blogs to support biological recording skills

Courses rated 4.4/5.0 for usefulness



“ I strongly feel that I wouldn't have chosen to study biology at university or have the job I do today without the FSC. Joining the Youth Council is now a fantastic opportunity to ensure that other young people can have access to the same positive experiences that I have.

Youth voice 16-25

Young people's voices are increasingly being heard on environmental issues – from calling for more action on climate change to demanding more outdoor learning opportunities.

FSC works to ensure all young people can increase their environmental knowledge and connect more with nature, but also broadens horizons as to what they could do with their knowledge and passion for the natural world.

FSC Youth Council

In 2021, FSC's new Youth Council was set up to hear directly from young people. It changes them from just being consumers of FSC products to being co-creators, ensuring that what we offer is relevant for their age group, study plans and career aspirations.

Our council members benefit from shaping a national charity and earning career skills and contacts. FSC benefits from the insight of 12 young people.

Subsidised natural history courses

During 2021, FSC has been providing subsidised places on our natural history courses for young people aged 18-25 in England. We want to enable young people to take on volunteer and professional roles in the green economy.

Young Darwin Scholarship

Every year, FSC provides financial support for people aged 16-25 to attend life changing experiences through biodiversity training scholarships. This includes mentoring from inspiring experts and meeting life-long friends. In 2021, FSC received a four-fold increase in demand for our scholarships. And this is after FSC increased our offer to 75 from 15 places. Many applicants come from disadvantaged backgrounds and can't afford to attend the environment training they need to get employment.



Higher education placements

Every year, FSC employs students to train them in environmental education. Our students get stuck into all aspects of FSC's work from delivering courses, engaging with communities, and taking part in ongoing scientific research. Some also carry out their own research projects. They leave us having gained confidence, knowledge and a lot of practical skills.





Publications

“What’s that?” FSC foldout biodiversity guides spark curiosity.

FSC Publications are part of that first step for people to take an interest in nature in their own local area, school field or on holiday.

The lack of good guides often hampers biodiversity work and biological recording, so FSC produces specialist guides for professionals doing research and surveys.

FSC Publications have a big following of experienced naturalists, including famous wildlife presenters. We often work with partners to develop specialist guides for overlooked species that provide really important clues to the health of our environment.

We also produce FSC guides for under-recorded species, such as earthworms, where we have radically increased earthworm records in the UK in partnership with the FSC BioLinks project.

“ I recently purchased the chart for my elderly mother who has become interested in watching garden birds from her home; she was highly delighted.

“ A fantastic way for adults and children to learn about our environment. This is just what I wanted to help me identify local ferns.



“ Great products at affordable prices, perfect for our training workshops.



In the last two years we have:



• worked with over 30 partners



• sold 127,000 ID guides – 122,000 general interest and 5,000 to enthusiasts and professionals



Publications

Connecting people in lockdown: wildlife on the doorstep

FSC's wildlife identification guides offered practical help – and hope – during lockdown, especially for parents and grandparents.

Our guides were used by thousands of people across the UK to make the most out of their daily exercise or time in the local park. FSC's team created bundles of wildlife guides suitable for all ages to inspire curiosity about the wildlife on their doorstep or in their back garden.

By reconfiguring our warehouse to make it Covid Secure, the team was able to deal with a huge increase in demand:

- April to September saw a 150% increase in orders, with June's order doubling.
- The bestselling charts were for garden birds, butterflies, bees, trees, garden bugs and beasties and flowers of walks and wayside.

“ So simple to follow and easy to help identify the wonderful creatures of Britain. **Wildlife lover**

FSC relaunch our renowned natural history training courses

During 2021, FSC redesigned our approach to deliver hundreds of courses with thousands of learners ages 18+.

FSC has built on success and responded to feedback to work with skilled tutors and expert societies to develop and curate standardised learning frameworks.

Our learners can now more easily progress through levels of skills, knowledge and confidence to fulfil their personal and professional ambitions. We desperately need more people who understand, record and protect the natural environment upon which society depends.

To help more people, FSC's natural history courses are now available online through our popular platform, including interactive sessions with tutors. Our courses also now run at suites of new locations in urban and rural areas across the country, in addition to FSC's education centres.



Whether people attend a beginners' course on fungi online or an advanced habitat surveying course in Glasgow, they will benefit from the same opportunities

to progress and connect with nature and other people.



This relaunch is possible thanks to a new national team at FSC called Eco-Skills.

Plus lovely gifts from donors and funded projects. There is lots more to do, so we're designing more content and funding bids to extend our offers.

If you'd like to support FSC to engage learners, please contact ecoskills@field-studies-council.org



To book places on courses, visit field-studies-council.org



**700 young people
with visual
impairments have
taken part since 2005**

“ I will definitely say that I will be giving everything a go because I pushed myself... and I persevered.



Everyone

FSC includes those who have less easy access to nature, but where doing so has a big personal impact.

Visual impairment projects

Since 2005, FSC has worked with other charities to support young people with sight loss and visual impairment.

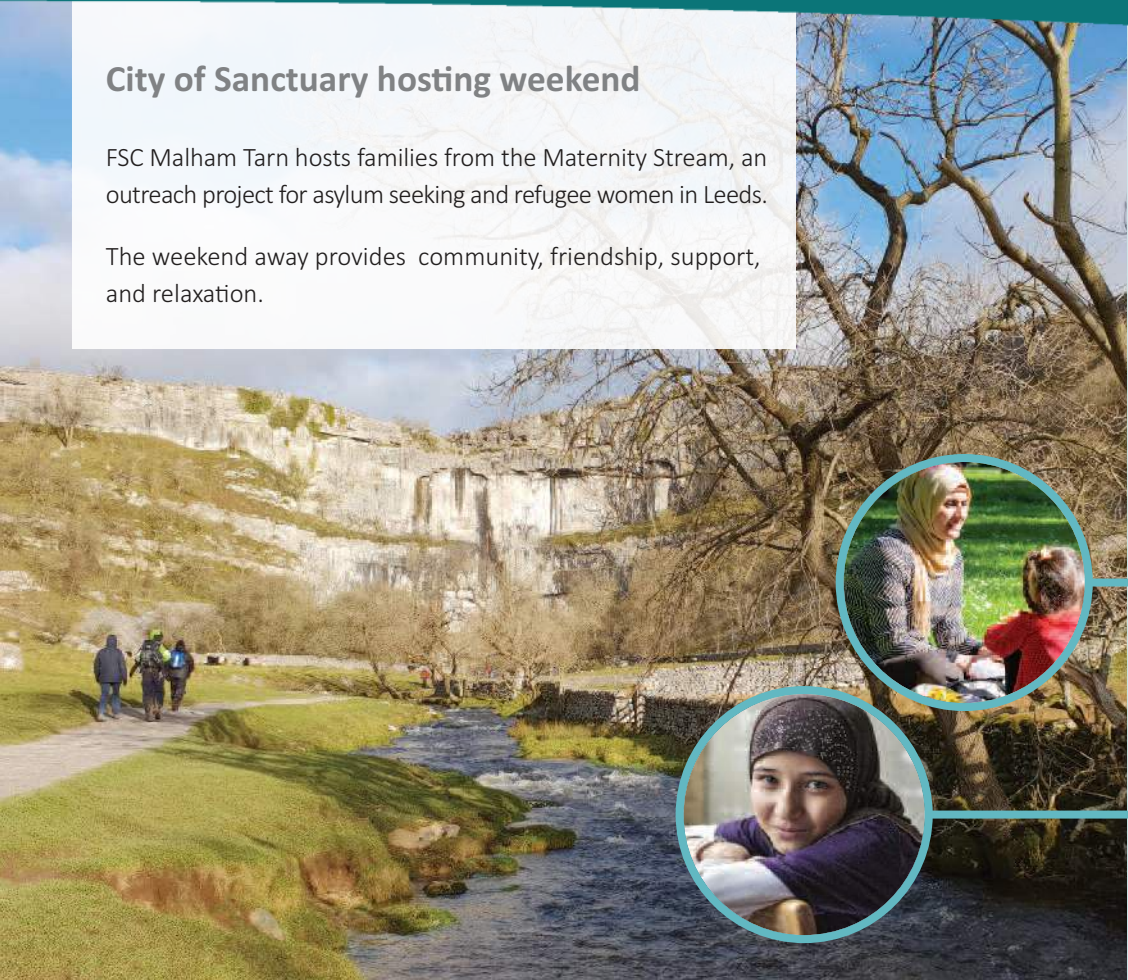
Using the environment as a vehicle for learning, participants report improvements in their independent living skills levels, especially self-confidence.

FSC created a tactile model for young people to locate where they were in relation to panic, stretch and comfort zones before and then after taking on an outdoor activity. They then celebrated their increased confidence.

City of Sanctuary hosting weekend

FSC Malham Tarn hosts families from the Maternity Stream, an outreach project for asylum seeking and refugee women in Leeds.

The weekend away provides community, friendship, support, and relaxation.



**175 people involved
since 2015, 30 in 2019**

“ When I come to Malham I forget all the bad things... this is my first holiday since I have lived in the UK, and I have been here five years.

“ The women and children had a fantastic time and many of them said it is the only holiday they get in a year and their children look forward to it all year.



Opening access

FSC believes in the benefits of environment education by experiencing the outdoors and related experiences online and using guides.

We also believe everyone should have these opportunities. So it's upsetting that many people face barriers to taking part in FSC's charitable activities. Often these barriers are financial. Sometimes people need additional support.

Every year, the requests for support we receive far exceed FSC's charitable funds. Even more so during the pandemic.

During 2021, FSC responded to increased demand by bringing together our offers to increase access for more people. We offer a wider range of practical help.

Visit field-studies-council.org to find out when they open and who is eligible. Or sign up to our newsletter or follow us on social media.



Discounts. We give money off selected training courses and bundles of our famous wildlife ID guides. Look out for codes and offers online.

Subsidies. Like a discount, but larger and tailored to help specific audiences, especially younger adults, and to help access for specific taxa. Look out for codes and offers online.

Grants. We give grants to help school groups visit FSC centres for inspiring experiences. This is an application process and reduces the cost of a visit.

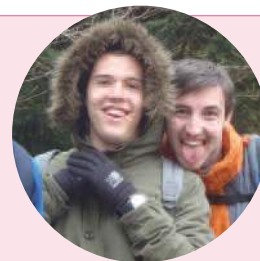
Scholarships. We enrol Young Darwinians on long term training and mentoring to follow their dreams to understand and protect the natural environment. This is an application process.

Placements. We fund interns to learn skills on the job across FSC teams, especially education skills. This is an application process organised as paid vacancies.



The majority of our offers rely on the generosity of individuals and families who donate to FSC. Plus charitable trusts who kindly fund specific projects run by FSC.

We urgently need funds to meet demand for support from children and adults in need. If you're able, please donate to FSC at field-studies-council.org/donate





Health and wellbeing

Spending time in nature and connecting to the environment is great for our health and wellbeing. This has become a cross-cutting theme for FSC.

Covid-19's lockdowns and restrictions brought home to us all just how important connecting to nature can be.

FSC is working closely with a PhD researcher to deepen the evidence base that underpins our approach. Many FSC experiences offer the widely adopted **Five Ways to Wellbeing**.

1
Keep learning

Something new about the world
and ourselves



2
Connect

Be part of a shared experience



3
Being active

Exploring and working in the fresh air



4
Take notice

Time and opportunity for awe and
wonder from the small creatures to
large landscapes



5
Give

By working together in groups and
adding to our store of knowledge



Nature Friendly Schools

FSC is one of the delivery partners in this £6.4 million, four-year Department for Education funded project, designed to understand how high-quality activities in natural environments in disadvantaged schools contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing and also a learners' engagement with school.



Responding to the climate emergency

In 2019 FSC Trustees declared a Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis, recognising the catastrophic impact of climate change and biodiversity loss on our environment, people and the planet.

FSC's new Carbon and Nature Recovery Action Plan aims to address these issues via **Achieving Carbon Net-Zero** by 2030, ambitious nature recovery across our estate and advocating sustainability.

FSC is custodian for many different habitats including nationally designated SSSIs. These are an incredible teaching resource, but an important natural resource too. The new nature recovery plan will safeguard these resources, increasing the resilience of species and habitats at FSC locations.

We have a lot of buildings used by a lot of visitors, each creating a carbon footprint. Sustainability is being reflected and demonstrated in the way in which our centres and their habitats are managed, and in the way in which our courses are taught.

Our carbon management programme has included investment in green technologies such as solar, water and biomass. Our estate has many older off-grid buildings in remote areas that encouraged us to explore alternative green technologies.

FSC education staff have been trained in a United Nations course in sustainability.

We help people to understand and then feel empowered to take action. Our courses offer opportunities for our visitors to see for themselves the impact of single use plastic litter, or link their daily food choices with their own carbon footprint. This makes the connection between theory, practice and our individual actions.

FSC can make a greater impact by encouraging all of our visitors to adopt more sustainable, pro environmental behaviours whilst they stay with us, but also when they go home. This area of work is a focus of our new **Carbon and Nature Recovery Action Plan**.

Climate Change Ambassador course

FSC Millport and partners developed and delivered a new Duke of Edinburgh Gold residential. The aim was for the young people to feel inspired and then empowered to make positive changes in their local communities. Throughout the week, their understanding of the subject and their motivation to contribute to positive change grew significantly. At the end, each pledged for the planet. Some to share what they had learned with others by speaking at school assemblies and others to take action on reducing plastic in their school and local sports clubs.



“ When I signed up for it, I had loads of questions about climate change and I came here to get them answered. Through all the group discussions and stuff we’ve done, my questions have been answered. It’s been just a great week!



In 2011, FSC set the target to reduce its carbon emissions by 40% by 2020.

Our Location Based Reporting shows we have achieved a reduction of 65%.

We now face the challenge of net-zero emissions by 2030

Partnership projects

FSC extends our reach and impact by being an active partner in both national and local projects.

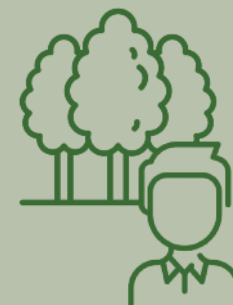
These projects increase access to learning opportunities and engage under-represented communities. They also assist young people seeking to start a career in nature or give them a platform to speak on environmental issues. This work contributes to the growing evidence base for the multiple benefits of nature connection.



FSC's close partnership with **The Royal Parks** in London extends our ability to offer a range of courses in exciting built up and natural habitats, but in easy reach of tube and train stations.

FSC is a partner in **Our Bright Future**, a programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. FSC works in partnership with two projects. The **Growing Confidence** project in Shropshire builds skills and confidence in young people through exploring wild places and the wildlife in them. The **Green Futures** project in Yorkshire develops wellbeing and life skills in young people, particularly the annual Youth Environment Summit which is organised and delivered by young people at FSC Malham Tarn.

A new partnership with the **London Borough of Lewisham** delivers outdoor learning in **Beckenham Place Park**. It was one of our first places to resume lessons in the park after lockdown.



**9,166 learners
in Bushy Park,
Greenwich Park and
The Regent's Park
in 2019**



**40 Members of the
UK, Scottish and Welsh
Parliaments have an
FSC Centre in their
constituency or
region**



Advocacy

FSC's UK wide advocacy campaigns work to ensure that people of all ages and abilities enjoy outdoor learning, not just those who can afford it.

High quality outdoor learning was not guaranteed for every school child even before Covid-19 had a profound impact and before mandatory fieldwork was removed from the 2021 and 2022 summer exam series.

Entire cohorts of learners have missed out on outdoor learning and fieldwork as residential could not take place for over a year, day visits were severely limited, and lockdowns restricted travel.

We continue to champion the needs of learners who have missed out and now need to catch up on the knowledge and skills needed for work or further study. In particular we continue to highlight the most disadvantaged who rely on school fieldtrips for their experiences of outdoor learning.

FSC will continue to campaign, respond to consultations, and work with like-minded organisations to demonstrate the positive role that outdoor learning has in so many areas of policy:

- re-engaging learners and helping them catch up
- boosting mental health and wellbeing
- engaging children with STEM
- developing the skills needed for the green jobs
- tackling the big issues of our time including climate change and biodiversity loss.



In 2020 and 2021 FSC responded to consultations and provided evidence on issues as varied as:

- GCSE and A level assessments
- the impact of Covid-19
- the safe reopening of outdoor learning opportunities
- access and inclusivity to the natural environment
- the biology curriculum
- a GCSE in natural history
- apprenticeships
- future qualifications in Wales

Stay with us

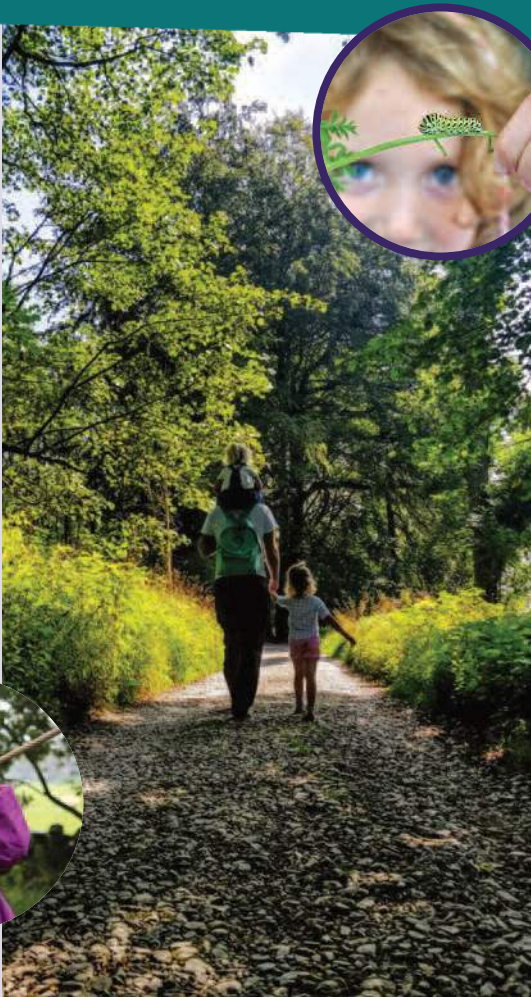
Good clean fun in the great outdoors.

Unable to provide residentials for schools during the pandemic, FSC found a new way to help people connect to nature after the stresses of lockdown restrictions. When guidelines allowed, families unable to go abroad created their own adventures in the great British countryside instead. We repurposed our centres and their beautiful grounds to provide simple holiday accommodation for lockdown weary visitors.

“ 7.30am. Having my morning cuppa, looking at one of the most famous views in the world. And even better, we're staying in that house!



After weeks of being cooped up at home, staring at screens, FSC offered guests low cost but Covid Secure sites with wide open spaces and room to breathe, think, play and let off steam. After a hearty breakfast, visitors could explore the local woods, coasts and countryside. Relaxing in the knowledge that others were doing the cooking and cleaning, visitors could find the perfect picnic spot or just find a place just to sit and enjoy the peace and quiet.



1,500 bookings

“ Imagine a conservation field study centre that doubles as a hostel/B&B, located in the heart of Shropshire and surrounded by areas of outstanding natural beauty, UNESCO sites and dark sky discovery sites and you have Preston Montford.

Transform a young life today

Every year, demand for FSC experiences exceeds our charitable funds.

And every year, we offer financial support to disadvantaged young people to access outdoor learning when they couldn't otherwise.

It costs our charity £30 to inspire a child with practical fieldwork skills at one of our education centres. It costs another £30 to sustain learning of young adults using FSC's wildlife guides.

Without financial support, these people miss out on experiences they need to protect the environment, improve their wellbeing, and live sustainably.

By donating today, our charity can act now to support young people most in need.

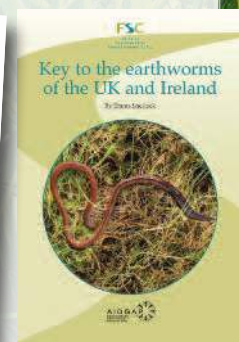
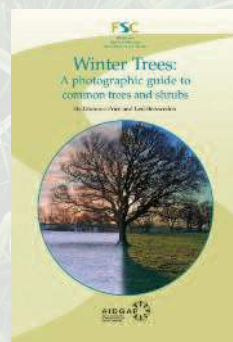
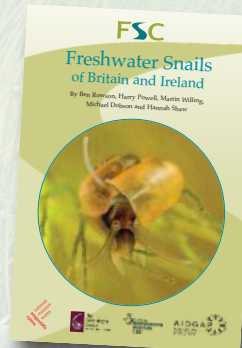
If you're able, please donate today at
field-studies-council.org/donate

Thank you.

Want to find out more about wildlife?

FSC provides a wide range of wildlife guides to help you get to grips with identification.

Find out more at field-studies-council.org/shop





Meet the FSC staff: a passionate bunch

I work with school staff to enable more young people to discover the benefits of taking part in outdoor learning. **Sam**

My job is to ensure all customers and colleagues have a safe, educational, fun experience in the outdoors. **Sarah**

Human Resources work to get the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. **Sara**

I create and curate training courses to help adults protect the natural environment. **Clare**

I manage a centre team who all work hard to give learners the best possible experience so that they will want to come back again. **Helen**

As CEO I take a great team doing great work and help them to do it better. **Mark**

I'm developing the new FSC Digital Hub, multimedia resources to support schools before and after field trips. **Bethan**



My role is ensuring our charitable income is sustainable. **Chris**

I support the Trustees, making sure that they receive timely information and decisions are recorded accurately. **Susan**

I find creative ways to tell the real-life stories of our beneficiaries to inspire investment in FSC. **Jennie**

Outdoor learning really develops an appetite. We know our healthy and hearty food is a big part of any FSC experience. **Janine**

The marketing team tell the world what FSC does, why they should stay with us and why they should learn with us. **Mary**

As part of the leadership team, I support FSC's energetic teams and set strategy to grow our charity. **Philip**

The infrastructure team reduce our carbon and increase our biodiversity right across our centres. **Andy**

Digital keep the systems running so that we stay connected with learners and with each other. **Phil**



“ Whether a visitor has been coming for years or they are a child away from home for the very first time, everyone gets a warm welcome.



“ Thank you
to our Patron,
partners, supporters
and members.



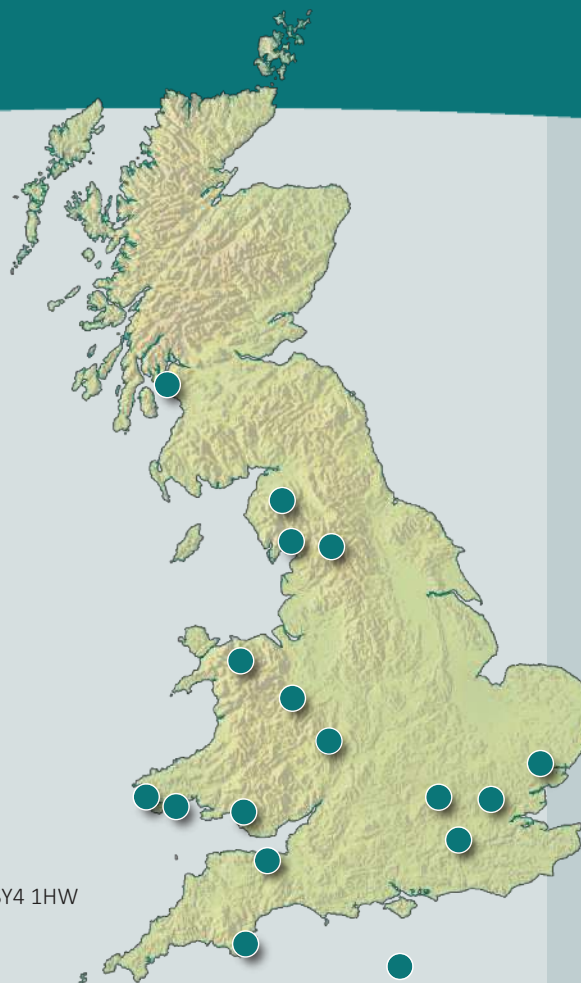
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FSC locations

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