



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

THE ERNEST COOK TRUST



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Chairman's Report

Welcome to The Ernest Cook Trust Annual Report for 2021.

It has been a challenging and difficult year with lockdowns, quarantines and vaccinations. The office has been closed for much of this period with many staff working remotely, from home and some furloughed. Our Outdoor Learning programmes have been seriously curtailed with many schools closed for certain periods. Having said all that, our staff have been absolutely magnificent and incredibly resilient in 'keeping the show on the road'.

I am particularly proud that the Trust was able to commit over £600k in emergency funds to provide help to those schools in the most deprived areas. The provision of digital devices to many of these schools has been a lifeline. We have also provided financial support to a number of Outdoor Learning Centres who have been struggling through the pandemic but provide such an excellent environment for our young people.

A hugely significant event has been the very generous gift of Court Farm in Quenington to the Trust. Court Farm



comprises a modern architect-designed house which we hope to use as our Head Office; the historic Grade 1 listed Knights Gate House; 3 modern detached cottages; a magnificent Cotswold Barn and approximately 50 acres of pasture land, which is contiguous with other land owned by the Trust. We are enormously grateful to The Frank Gollins Charitable Trust, the late Beryl Gollins, David and Joanna Gollins for entrusting us with this wonderful property. In addition there is also a collection of paintings by Ormond Edwin Gollins. In accordance with their wishes these will be displayed and we will also be running a bi-annual art competition for local schools.

We are all looking forward now to a slow return to normality over the next 12 months. There is much to do and the Trust is well positioned to play its part with our dedicated staff and a clear strategy. My fellow Trustees have been a tower of strength and support to me and all our staff over the last year and I give them my very sincere thanks.

Andrew Christie-Miller, Chairman



A word from our Chief Executive

As a nation, the pandemic has taught us many lessons: that charities make a vital contribution to public life; that the disadvantaged will shoulder the brunt of any challenge, be it a pandemic, conflict, the effect of climate change or a declining economy; that nature can provide huge healing benefits to our wellbeing; that organisations must remain agile enough to navigate 'stormy waters'.

I hope this Report is testament that the dedicated team at The Ernest Cook Trust faced the challenge well. We remained pragmatic and flexible, redirecting our grants to where they were most needed, providing outdoor opportunities for our local communities and, when possible, those further afield, and managing our estates in a way that kept everyone safe and well.

We did this while all the time planning for the longer term impact of our decisions and our work. We built a better, stronger organisation, bringing in new expertise in project management and impact evaluation, we rebranded and built a new website, we bought a farm. And we did it all together, as 1ECT. I could not be more grateful to my Trustees and colleagues for the genius and resilience they have shown.

Dr Victoria Edwards OBE FRICS FAAV



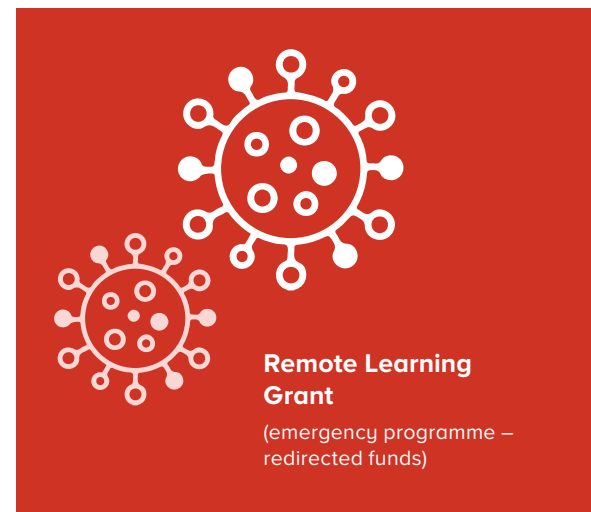
CHARITABLE
ACTIVITY

Strategic Framework

We have four core strategic programme areas. In 2021 we also re-directed funds to an emergency response programme, to help meet the urgent needs of school children during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Our vision is for an environmentally engaged society with better nature-connectedness



EVERYTHING
OUTDOORS



CHARITABLE
ACTIVITY



Everything Outdoors

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to prevail throughout 2021, the importance of connecting with nature for our physical and mental wellbeing was increasingly evident.

Our work as educators and influencers in the *Learning from the Land* sector became ever more relevant, set against a backdrop of a mental health crisis amongst school-leavers and young people, with unemployment rising by 13% amongst 16-24 year olds (House of Commons research briefing, 2021) and an increase of 80% in reported poor mental health in 18-29 year olds, the largest increase for any age group (Resolution Foundation, 2021).

As restrictions eased, our Outdoor Learning programme sought to help disadvantaged children and young people through various activities on and beyond our estates:

- » We designed and launched a Traineeship programme for 18-24 year olds, developing land-based skills to help achieve better life outcomes.
- » When restrictions eased, we returned to full capacity for our Schools programme, working hard to ensure that as many children as possible were able to experience woodlands, farms and rivers on and beyond our estates.
- » We focused on teacher training, helping to develop Outdoor Learning skills and knowledge within schools. We created Resource Packs to help teachers make better use of their outdoor spaces, and offered free online consultations.
- » We adapted our work with community groups in light of prevailing COVID-19 restrictions. We were able to continue offering sessions to a number of priority groups, including parent and toddler sessions, respite days for Young Carers and wellbeing and nature exploration days for refugee groups. We also established a partnership with a Health Centre in Dorset to deliver a programme of mental health and wellbeing support sessions for young people with anxiety and depression, and delivered online nature sessions to a wide range of participants who weren't able to travel.



Photo: Andy Pilsbury



Everything Outdoors

The grants awarded under our Everything Outdoors programme have three key audiences:

Schools

Outdoor Essentials Grant

Communities

Outdoor Learning Officer Grant

Outdoor Futures

Apprenticeships & Scholarships



Photo: Andy Pilsbury

Photo: Stuart Walker
Photography



Impact on Schools

Our focus is on environmental engagement for disadvantaged children and young people who have fewer opportunities to experience the outdoors. This includes those from minoritised ethnic groups.

We have continued to focus our free Outdoor Learning provision towards schools who need it most - those in communities experiencing high levels of deprivation, those with above average numbers of children with Special Educational Needs, Pupil Premium, Education and Health Care Plan, Free School Meals and English as an Additional Language.

Half the children experiencing our woodlands, farms and rivers were from disadvantaged or deprived backgrounds



c.12,000

wellies / waterproofs delivered to 232 schools (£116,000)



4,200

visits made by school children to our outdoor sites



500

schools facing transport barriers to Outdoor Learning to be awarded travel grants (£250,000)



300

teaching professionals trained up and inspired to deliver Outdoor Learning

Improving life chances in the face of 21st century challenges



Impact on Schools

One child who talks very little in school was super confident while digging for worms and he was happy to chat to his friends and teachers.

Teacher, Gloucestershire

We don't have any grass for children to play on, so it was magical to see them enjoying climbing a tree in the meadow and just running free.

Teacher, Gloucestershire

COVID-19 and other factors had lessened my enthusiasm for Outdoor Learning and you have made it return with abundance. I will definitely be using the outdoor area more and am already thinking of ways in which I can use it in ALL subjects and topics.

Teacher, Pendle Hill

Lots of [the students] commented on how calming it was. They initiated more conversations and asked more questions than they usually do.

Teacher, L2 College session, Gloucestershire

I have squirrelled away so many good ideas for future Outdoor Learning – songs, activities and teaching points. Truly inspirational.

Teacher, EYFS, Dorset

The children had the most wonderful day and have not stopped talking about their adventures. The freedom of the woods and the chance to be active in learning experiences away from routine was incredibly beneficial and is an experience we are truly grateful for.

Teacher, EYFS, Gloucestershire



Impact on Communities

Greater collaboration for greater impact. We are proud members of a number of networks, and have established a peer-to-peer learning network for our own staff and those we fund in other organisations.

We are also trialing the licensed use of our sites by other organisations and schools ready to access the outdoors without support, in an effort to break down the barriers to long-term engagement with Outdoor Learning. Our partnerships with Lowther, The Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership and Chatsworth (Devonshire Educational Trust) continue, increasing the scale, impact and influence of our work.



One woman has had a few very difficult experiences with neighbours in England and has not felt welcome since arriving. I could see her lighten up and become more confident about speaking English throughout the day - that was definitely a wow moment for me!

Refugee community session, Gloucestershire



Photo: Andy Pilsbury

- » 69 community sessions delivered supporting 631 vulnerable children and 384 adults
- » 10 Outdoor Learning Officer posts in UK charities supported throughout COVID-19



Impact on Outdoor Futures

It's helped me move on in life,
made me realise what jobs
I am capable of.

Kickstart participant, Cumbria

It's helped me find out about
different opportunities and helped
me build more confidence in
group situations.

Kickstart participant, Cumbria



- » 7 Arkwright Engineering Scholarships awarded through The Smallpeice Trust
- » 11 placements created through Kickstart to build the employability of young people at risk of long-term unemployment

GREEN INFLUENCERS SCHEME

Photo: Andy Pilsbury



CHARITABLE
ACTIVITY

Green Influencers Scheme

In a year that culminated with the world's focus on COP26, The Green Influencers Scheme gained huge momentum with over 1500 Green Influencers engaging in local youth social action projects across England, despite the challenges of COVID-19.

Proudly supporting
youth social action

#iwill



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



COMMUNITY
FUND



Green Influencers Scheme

The Green Influencers Scheme has enabled a huge variety of social action projects to take shape, particularly in deprived communities where the benefits are most welcome.

The enthusiasm and creativity of so many young people has been inspiring, testament to the guidance of the 44 Green Mentors. With over 1500 Green Influencers already active around the country, the scheme is on target to recruit 5000 by 2023.

Ongoing momentum

This programme has taken shape thanks to a collaborative approach with funding partners and Host Organisations. The momentum we are now gaining is reaching far and wide across the country, as thousands of young people forge a lasting sense of responsibility towards the natural world, forming a social action habit that will last a lifetime.

The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to £54 million joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to support young people to access high quality social action opportunities. The Ernest Cook Trust is acting as a match funder and awarding grants on behalf of the #iwill Fund.

360° Grants Each Green Influencers Scheme group is awarded a £360 start-up grant for their project (reflecting 360° circle of influence). 360° Grants have been awarded for a variety of projects including:

- » Improving a local community area and school grounds by creating a garden
- » Campaigning (including litter and Walk to School campaigns)
- » Recycling (and upcycling) projects such as a plastic bottle fashion show
- » Improving biodiversity including bee hotels and wildflower meadows
- » Planting trees and building ponds
- » Creating allotments and selling produce to communities
- » Climate projects including improving air quality
- » Renewable energy projects for schools



Green Influencers Scheme Project Grants These larger awards are selected by the Youth Advisory Board. Grants have been made for:

- » Community gardens
- » Production of a book on hedgerow biodiversity
- » An accessible platform on a pond with signage for educational information



Green Influencers Scheme Impact



37

Host Organisations

awarded grants in November 2020



44

Green Mentors

now employed across England



1500+

Green Influencers recruited

80% in the target age range of 10-14 year-olds

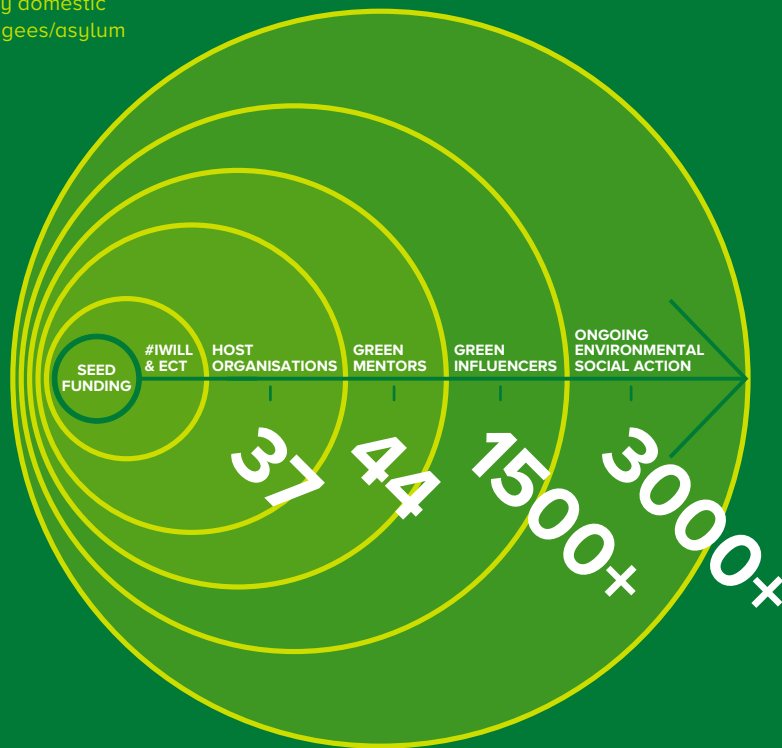


3000+

Peers engaged

to become involved in community environmental projects

Over half the Green Influencers are from the top 20% of highest deprived areas in England and include young carers, young people affected by domestic violence, and refugees/asylum seekers.



Green Influencers Scheme Significant Achievements

“It makes me feel hopeful for the future of our planet..”



First Annual Conference

In March 2020, the Trust hosted the first annual Green Influencers Scheme Conference, which brought together some of the most inspirational youth social action activists in the country with an eclectic range of experts, youth and community workers from environmental charities and not-for-profit organisations.

All 115 delegates met virtually via Zoom for an all-day Conference promoting youth social action which was designed to inspire, encourage and support Green Mentors in their work. Guest speakers included Amy Meek (co-founder of Kids Against Plastic), Rhiane Fatinikun (founder of Black Girls Hike), Helen Whyman (Head of the #iwill Fund) and Professor David Sheffield (University of Derby).

Youth Led

Leading this Conference were our first cohort of Youth Advisory Board members. Throughout 2021, they have set a very high standard in their leadership role, selecting recipients for the scheme's Project Grants and helping make strategic decisions to ensure its ongoing success.

During this year, the Green Influencers Scheme has grown beyond its original concept. Not only has it provided opportunities for young people to realise their potential to positively impact the environment, it has also given them a purposeful connection with nature which has proved vital for their wellbeing and mental health, essential for post-COVID-19 recovery.

I wanted to say how much I enjoyed the Conference. The opposite of Zoom Doom, really positive, interesting and some great peer learning. Please pass on my thanks, one of the best online conferences I have attended.

Thank you for a fantastic day. Feel truly inspired and excited to support young people in their projects and developing skills and confidence for effective social action!

A photograph of two children in a forest, seen from behind, as they work together to build a shelter. They are using long, thin sticks to create a conical structure. The child on the left is wearing a light blue hoodie and dark blue track pants with a white stripe. The child on the right is wearing a dark blue jacket, a grey beanie, and colorful polka-dot rain boots. The forest floor is covered in fallen leaves and sticks, and the background is filled with thin tree trunks.

THE OWL
COLLABORATION



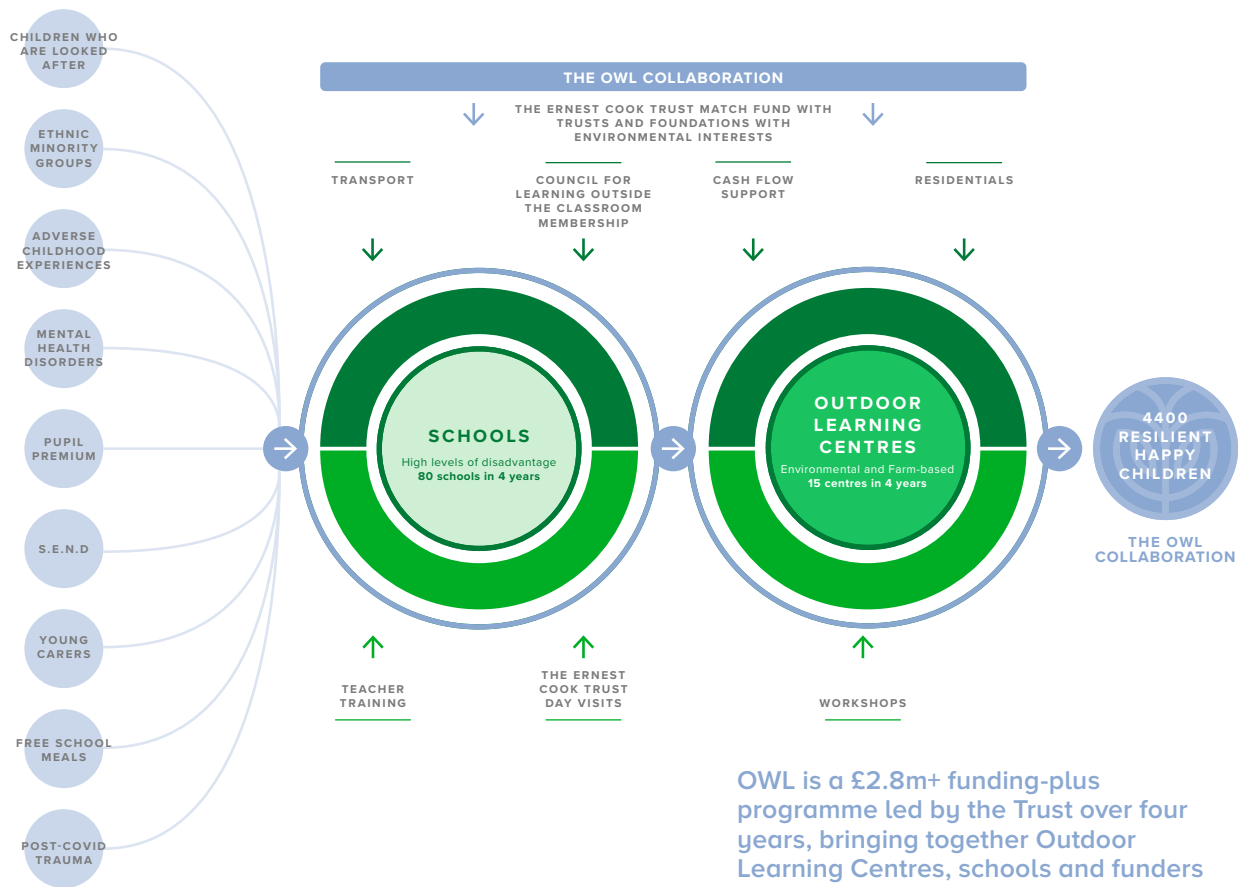
CHARITABLE
ACTIVITY



The OWL Collaboration

Launched in 2020, OWL was devised as an immediate response to three specific challenges:

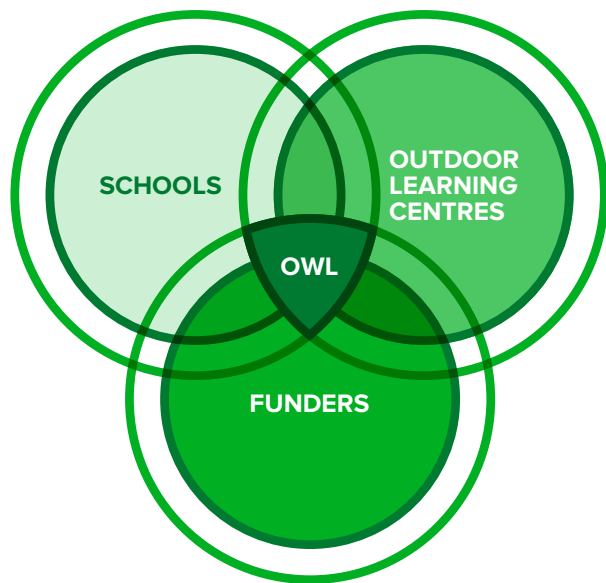
- » Adverse experiences of disadvantaged children and young people during COVID-19
- » Challenging financial circumstances facing Outdoor Learning Centres due to COVID-19
- » The ongoing climate and environmental crisis



OWL is a £2.8m+ funding-plus programme led by the Trust over four years, bringing together Outdoor Learning Centres, schools and funders to help 4400 disadvantaged children



The OWL Collaboration



Funders

OWL offers funders an opportunity to be part of a meaningful, long-term and impact-driven programme. If it can demonstrate its success over its initial four years, OWL has the potential to influence future funding and policy streams in the sector.

The Dulverton Trust has become the first Trust to partner in The OWL Collaboration.

Schools

Through a tripartite collaborative approach, schools will develop new ways of teaching and develop skills for learning outside of the classroom.

Schools chosen to be part of The OWL Collaboration will receive:

- » **Free funded places for disadvantaged pupils (up to a maximum limit, as agreed and allocated by the Outdoor Learning Centre)**
- » **Training weekend for the school's teachers, with expenses paid**
- » **Generous contribution to transport costs to and from the Outdoor Learning Centre**
- » **Annual membership of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom**
- » **In addition, schools will be able to access other grant streams from The Ernest Cook Trust, where eligible**

Outdoor Learning Centres

Grants worth £350,000 were awarded to seven Outdoor Learning Centres in December 2020. The first grants were initially to help with cash flow during COVID-19 while centres were unable to fully operate. Seven of these grantees are now established within the programme's pilot phase.

Through cooperative working, knowledge transfer, mutual support and shared learning, we believe that OWL's anticipated success will clearly demonstrate the benefits of farm and environmental centres to young people's development. This will be key to explaining the important role Outdoor Learning Centres play, as the sector evolves to meet future challenges.

Centres selected for the pilot phase:

- » **Jamie's Farm (Bath, Hereford, Monmouth, Lewes)**
- » **Bore Place, The Commonwork Trust (Edenbridge, Kent)**
- » **Countryside Education Trust (Beaulieu, Hampshire)**
- » **Lambourne End Centre (Lambourne End, Essex)**
- » **Magdalen Farm (Chard, Somerset)**
- » **Ufton Court Educational Trust (Englefield, Berkshire)**
- » **The Shallowford Trust (Newton Abbot, Devon)**



The OWL Collaboration Significant Achievements

As COVID-19 restrictions eased, the first OWL visits to Outdoor Learning Centres began in Autumn this year.

St John the Baptist School in Hackney was amongst the first schools to enjoy an Outdoor Week of Learning at Ufton Court in Berkshire. Headteacher Toni Mason's comments typify all the schools' experiences:

"Now in class, children are communicating more effectively with their peers with higher levels of concentration and resilience. Without the support of Ufton Court and The Ernest Cook Trust, important life experiences like these would just not be as possible for our children."

The Outdoor Learning Centres have also given very positive feedback. Jamie Feilden, CEO of Jamie's Farm said:

"By sharing best practice with other providers, we hope to move the outdoor education sector forward and ultimately give more children lifelong memories of being in nature and a sense of hope for their future."



Impact is evaluated in four Outcome Pillars:

Nature connectedness

Pro-environmental behaviour

Resilience, self-confidence and wellbeing

Better engagement with learning



7

Outdoor Learning Centres awarded a total of £350,000



32

schools with high levels of disadvantage engaged



700+

young people already booked for an Outdoor Week of Learning next year

THE
LEARNING
ESTATE



CHARITABLE
ACTIVITY

The Learning Estate

In our role as landowners and influencers in the debate around the environment, farming and sustainability, The Ernest Cook Trust is pursuing one of its boldest projects to date - The Learning Estate.

The Little Dalby estate in Leicestershire is the location for this long-term collaborative project. It aims to develop lasting, sustainable outcomes for this landscape and the communities of people it serves, on and beyond the estate.

Set against a backdrop of pressing environmental, economic, social and health challenges, this 10-year project will be inclusive and transparent, maximising learning opportunities for all stakeholders as we seek to become a beacon for the future of estate management.

Such an endeavour requires the commitment, trust and vision of a wide range of carefully selected stakeholders, a process that continues to gather momentum.



What more delightful avocation than to take a piece of land and by cautious experimentation to prove how it works. What more substantial service to conservation than to practice it on one's own land?

Aldo Leopold



**REMOTE
LEARNING
GRANT**

(emergency programme –
redirected funds)



**CHARITABLE
ACTIVITY**



Redirecting funds to immediate need

In the early stages of the pandemic from April to June 2020, the Trust swiftly redirected £117,500 of grant funds to schools to support their most disadvantaged pupils. The grant provided essential education material, tablets, laptops and broadband provision to 41 schools. In some circumstances the funds were also used by schools to provide food parcels.

Home-schooling proved extremely challenging for parents, especially when children were sharing devices or had no equipment at all, so in January to February 2021 and in response to this widening gap in remote learning access across the UK, a further £504,350 provided 211 schools nationwide with an estimated total of 2780 devices.

This grant funding opportunity for schools attracted considerable media interest including live national radio broadcasts.



3000

families received electronic learning devices



3/4

of schools engaged had above average Free School Meals pupil numbers



This grant made a difference to so many in a time of crisis.



I am for the first time in many years lost for words. Your support and generosity means so much.



**TRUSTEES'
REPORT**

Objectives & Activities

As one of the UK's foremost funders and providers of Outdoor Learning, The Ernest Cook Trust helps disadvantaged children and young people, their families and communities forge lasting connections with nature.

We do this by working collaboratively with like-minded organisations who share our passion for the outdoors. Working with educators and influencers at all levels, we advocate the benefits of Outdoor Learning with a view to embedding it in the school curriculum and beyond.

Through four strategic programme areas, we aim to improve life chances for children and young people, strengthening their resilience in the face of 21st century challenges.

Our vision is for an environmentally engaged society, where all young people have opportunities to learn from the land.

We believe that the reach of our work extends beyond individuals, impacting society, the economy and the environment. By seeking to make our voice heard, the Trust aims to be a catalyst for change at this critical time for our climate, environment and wellbeing.

Achievements, Performance, Future Plans

The Trust's achievements and its impact are reported on pages 4 to 26 and outlined in the Chairman's Report on page 3.

Plans for the future are reported on the next page.



We fund others  **GRANT SUPPORT**

We fund and run our own programmes  **DIRECT DELIVERY**

We work to maximise impacts and promote better outcomes  **RESEARCH & ADVOCACY**

Future Activity

Improving the Trust's programme delivery, increasing our impact, seeking funds to help us grow and improving our environmental performance continue to be strategic priorities for the coming year.

In September 2021 we became the proud owners of Low Becks Farm, Mungrisdale, Cumbria.

This upland farm previously belonged to Newton Rigg Agricultural College and was being sold by its successor, Askham Bryan College.

The Trust has acquired the farm with the intention of keeping land-based skills training within Cumbria. This is a milestone in the Trust's seventy year history, as we become farmers. The local community has provided a very warm welcome and we are encouraged by the many generous offers of support we have received in making our farming and learning dreams come true.

Our first step will be to conduct a broad scoping exercise of the land-based learning needs of the area, while evaluating appropriate farming systems to improve the environmental quality of the farm.

As well as acquiring Low Becks Farm, we have recently taken back in-hand Home Farm, Quenington in Gloucestershire. Home Farm, an organic livestock and arable farm, had been farmed by the Lander family for over a hundred years. Tim Lander made the difficult decision to hand the farm back to the Trust shortly before he passed away. Our longterm intention is to use the pasture land as another learning enterprise in the south. We have a lot of work to do to develop a suitable learning programme, but we hope that in time we will do Tim's memory justice by creating something very special at Home Farm.

Both of our new farm-based learning ventures will sit within the Everything Outdoors strategic programme area. Both will also benefit from the important work we continue to develop on measuring and understanding the impact of our work. Impact evaluation forms a crucial part of developing our strategic programmes and in ensuring that they are worthy of support, both internally and from external organisations.



The Estates



23,000

ACRES

across 6 counties



22

FARMS

best-practice, innovative
land management



200+

**RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTIES**

10+ small commercial
properties, 100s of allotments

The Trust owns and manages over 9,300 hectares (23,000 acres) of land and property, made up mainly of let farmland, but also woodland, houses, cottages and a few small commercial premises.

We own estates in six counties: Buckinghamshire, Cumbria, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire and Oxfordshire. The estates are managed for capital growth and income return while seeking ways to improve their environment, habitats, protect landscapes and heritage. Over this financial year, the Trust's Estates Strategy has been developed with a more analytical approach to understanding how they contribute to the Trust's overall objectives. This is an iterative process, with constant review and challenge.

Active management is pursued, with land being acquired or disposed of as suitable opportunities arise. We seek to be professional, progressive, supportive landlords. We expect tenant farmers to aspire to and advocate best practice in farming, land management and environmental impact (which should always be above minimum legal requirement). As landlords to those residential customers renting family homes, we commit to exceeding minimum legal standards for environmental impact and are always looking for ways to improve our service and standards within the reasonable means of the Trust.

The Estates

It was a challenging year for estate management, dealing with the financial risk of COVID-19 and adapting our operational processes to cope with the resultant lockdowns. From a financial perspective, we benefitted by having only a small property portfolio in the commercial sector, where the majority of reduced rental income occurred. In management terms the pandemic accentuated the geographical spread of our estates, from Cumbria to Dorset, and we relied on our local team and contractors to assist us in keeping everyone safe and properties well maintained.

The Trust owns some beautiful parts of the countryside and we experienced a surge in people enjoying it, some of whom were responsible and respectful and some less so. Our estate team did a tremendous job in engaging with the public and undertook an in-house Infrastructure Survey of all walls, bridges, tracks, gates and stiles, particularly where there is public access. We also completed all outstanding actions from our latest comprehensive Asbestos Survey.

We had planned for the completion of three years of increased investment in repairs and maintenance across our estates in 2020/21. Anticipating a reduction in income, the availability of contractors and access to properties, we scaled-back our ambition focusing on legislative compliance and emergency works. We worked hard with our tenants to minimise the impact of this and are extremely grateful for their support and understanding.

Residential Property

Trustees agreed to suspend rent reviews for our residential portfolio for 2020/21. Likewise routine property inspections were not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Fortunately, only a few of our residential tenants experienced financial difficulty as a result of the pandemic.

The market for rural housing has been incredibly strong throughout the year, and it was a surprisingly busy period for residential lettings. We successfully let 14 new tenancies during the year, with four properties subject to extensive refurbishment prior to re-letting.



Our Farms

Overall, our tenanted holdings give us the opportunity to work with experienced, long-standing family businesses, coupled with the energy and new ideas of the younger generation.

For most of our agricultural tenants the pandemic meant business as usual, but for some it was a good opportunity to capitalise on an increased demand for direct sales and contact with the public.

A further three agricultural successions were completed over the year, affording the next generation of farming tenants the security needed to invest in their farms.

Rent review notices were served on three holdings to review the rent and enter into meaningful discussions regarding tenants' businesses.

Trustees agreed to co-invest with tenants in the replacement of two dairy complexes. We are proud to support a broad spectrum of farming sectors across the estates and all four of the dairy farms now have a bright future.

Extensive forestry work continued over all our

estates to remove dead, dying and dangerous ash trees as a result of ash dieback. We are proud to report that during the year we planted some 3,500 new trees, representing more than double those removed.

Ornithological surveys continue across the Home Estates and have commenced on our Little Dalby Estate in Leicestershire, with priority species being supported by habitat development work. Further ecological survey work will be conducted at Little Dalby as part of The Learning Estate programme. Our aim is to extend the surveys across all Trust land, to develop a crucial baseline for our environmental improvement goals.

For the Trust there has been much discussion on new opportunities to use our farming subsidiary, ECT Farms Ltd. We are not stepping into commercial farming, but it will enable us to control our land and property in support of the provision of new learning experiences. In the meantime, we continue to work with the Learning team to develop learning opportunities on the estates. On the Home Estates in Fairford, our conservation/learning apprentice completed his apprenticeship successfully.



Estates - Sales & Acquisitions

Three property sales were completed in the 2020/21 financial year, being small scale plots on the Hatherop Estate.

We were delighted to accept the generous bequest of Court Farm Estate in Quenington, Gloucestershire by The Frank Gollins Trust, adding four residential properties to our managed portfolio and 30 acres of agricultural land nestled between our Fairford and Hatherop Estates.

Following the annual review of all property, it has been agreed that portfolio values will be subject to some indexation, both in the context of our residential portfolio and woodlands. The agricultural sector has been subject to considerable volatility, although values have remained broadly static.

Estates - Development

Given the long time horizon for most large strategic sites, there have been no significant changes in our development portfolio. Sites across all estates have been brought forward with specific project teams, seeking the best professional advice and guidance where possible. We continue to support local communities where we can with the production of neighbourhood plans, ideas for the development of new homes and businesses, access initiatives and the provision of expertise in specific areas.

Local Authorities have had to delay the development of statutory plans as a result of the pandemic. To assist public consultation, we launched a new website for Wisloe, a large strategic development site on the Slimbridge

Estate, in conjunction with our partners Gloucestershire County Council: www.wisloe.co.uk.

The resolution of the planning application on our second large strategic site, on the Hartwell Estate, has been delayed as the local authority has undergone a transition to a Unitary Authority. It is also being hampered by HS2, with the initial site works well underway for the construction of the new railway through the estate.

Trustees took the decision to delay the construction of five new dwellings on our Fairford Estate, to be built through our trading subsidiary Mintglebe Ltd. We expect to recommence works in the 2021/2022 financial year.

Investments

The Trust's charitable activity is funded from external grants and donations, returns from its investment portfolio and surplus income from the estates. The Trust's finance and investment policies are intended to provide long-term stability and liquidity sufficient for the financing of the Trust's charitable activities while maintaining the real value of the endowment.

The Trust's investment policy is reviewed annually and establishes the long-term investment objective, risk-profile, strategic asset allocation and investment restrictions as well as encompassing our policies on Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG). The policy reflects a total-return objective that considers all sources of return and means that both income from the portfolio and the underlying capital can be used to support charitable activities.

The Trustees have considered a policy in relation to socially responsible investment and sustainability for the Trust in the context of its aims and objectives. The Trust expects its investment managers to consider issues when making investment decisions, such that the Trust is seen to have applied best practice and is not at risk of undue criticism or damage to its reputation and standing. The Trust also expects the investment managers to report on how ESG considerations have been applied in the selection and management of investments.

The Ernest Cook Trust has five significant items of expenditure:

The Trust's income derives from surplus income over expenditure on the estates and from its investment portfolio.



THE GRANTS THAT WE MAKE



THE COSTS OF MANAGING THE ESTATES



THE COSTS OF PROVIDING LEARNING OUTDOORS



THE COSTS OF MANAGING OUR INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO



THE RUNNING EXPENSES OF THE ERNEST COOK TRUST (of which staff costs are the major component)

Total expenditure costs are managed carefully to ensure maximum expenditure on charitable activity.

Risk Management

The Trustees are responsible for the oversight of the risks faced by the Trust.

We review our risk regularly through the Management team, our committees and our full Board of Trustees, using a comprehensive Risk Register that identifies the risk, the potential severity of its impact and its likelihood of occurrence. Risk Management is scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Management Committee, which reviews the Trust's risk position, internal controls, compliance with relevant statutory and finance regulations, and the work of our external auditors.

Risks are mitigated by ensuring internal policies are reviewed regularly; ensuring adequate reporting procedures, from operational to board level; providing relevant training across the organisation; taking appropriate and timely professional advice; making sure that the Trust is appropriately insured against risks.

PRINCIPAL RISKS & UNCERTAINTIES

Financial – We planned our 2020/21 budget expecting the pandemic to significantly reduce our estate income. Actually, the agricultural estates stood up very well. We agreed a small rental rebate overall on commercial and residential properties. The value of our investment portfolio decreased substantially at the start of the pandemic, but had recovered well by the close of the financial year. Going forward, it is clear that the demand for our charitable activities could easily outstrip our ability to resource our work. We are planning ways to increase our annual income, including long-term development of the estates to produce higher yields and increasing our grant seeking and fundraising efforts.

Cyber Crime – Common with all charities, we remain acutely aware of the risks associated with increased cyber crime. Staff are regularly reminded of the risk and specific nature of the crimes as they develop. We have a 'risk aware' culture in the organisation, which is crucial in reducing this risk.

Health & Safety in Estates and Learning Activities – There is some risk associated with children and young people learning outdoors and with managing large landed estates. We manage this risk with rigorous, up to date health and safety procedures and risk assessments for all activities, high levels of staff awareness and training, and third party assessments and advice.

Child Protection and Safeguarding – Trustees are aware of the safeguarding issues associated with working with children and young people. All Trustees and staff undertake regular safeguarding training and our Senior

Safeguarding Lead, Trustee Simon Eliot, works with our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Emily Crawley, to ensure that our policy is up to date and consistently upheld.

Staff Performance and Retention – We are aware that the pandemic has taken its toll on the work and home lives of the nation and recognise that this could prove a threat to staff performance and retention. Throughout the year our staff have worked hard to maintain the Trust's growth in activities while coping with difficult working conditions. We have mitigated this risk by paying careful attention to staff wellbeing, maintaining close communication and providing support to one another. We continue to monitor staff performance and wellbeing.

Operational risk – is mitigated through the regular review of activities and the use of professional advisers. In our partnership work, we specifically mitigate risk by conducting thorough due diligence of any potential partners and drafting written partnership agreements.

Governance – We are aware of the importance of good oversight of the Trust's assets, management and charitable activities by the Board of Trustees. Our Trustee engagement remains at a very high level and we are currently planning Trustee succession to ensure that the right mix of skills, experience and expertise is maintained. Trustees receive monthly management accounts, minutes of all committees and a quarterly report from the Chief Executive. A transparent culture and culture of open communication with the executive helps Trustees maintain a thorough oversight of the organisation.

Structure, Governance & Management

The Ernest Cook Trust was founded and endowed in 1952 by the late Ernest Edward Cook as an educational charity. The 1952 Deed of Trust was added to and amended in 1984, 1995 and 2006. The Trust was incorporated in 2012. The Directors of the Trust are also its Trustees for the purposes of charity law. Our Head Office is based on our Fairford Estate in Gloucestershire. The Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales, number 1146629.

There are currently six Trustees. Each Trustee's appointment is reviewed every five years and Trustees are formally required to retire at the age of 75. New Trustees are provided with a comprehensive induction programme and individual Trustee evaluations are conducted annually by the Chairman. Training of Trustees is reviewed against individual training needs.

The Trustees are paid under the terms of the Articles of Association to recognise the professional work they undertake on behalf of the Trust, over and above that normally expected of a charity Trustee. There were no changes to the Board during the 2020/21 year.

The Trust's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March and meetings of the full Trustee Board were held quarterly. The Trustees have appointed four Trustee-led committees to monitor specialist areas of activity: Estates; Finance and Investment (including Audit and Risk Management); Everything Outdoors; and the Green Influencers Scheme. Each committee has its own terms of reference, is chaired by a Trustee and reports back to the main Board. No estate visits were made by Trustees in 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The full Trustee Board ratifies the decisions of the grant-giving committees, which examines in detail the grants to be awarded under the separate grant streams approved by Trustees. Matters requiring a decision by the Trustees are referred to them either at one of their meetings or, in between such meetings, by correspondence (normally email) and telephone calls.

The Trust is run on a day to day basis by the Chief Executive, assisted by some 34 staff, including a Property Director and Heads of Learning, Grants, Finance and Operations & Communications.



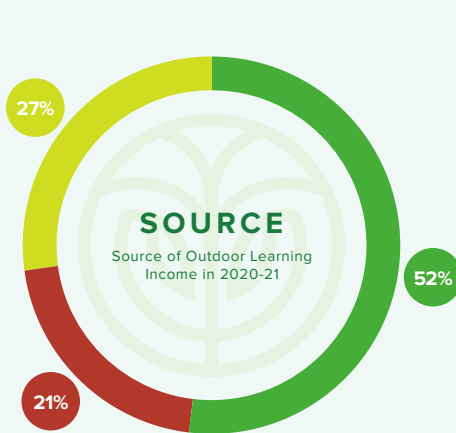
Financial Statement

The Ernest Cook Trust is one of the UK's foremost funders and providers of Outdoor Learning for disadvantaged children and young people. We care for 23,000 acres of land across six counties from Cumbria to Dorset, which serves as both an asset and an Outdoor Learning resource.

Surplus income from our estates, together with returns on our investment portfolio, fund our charitable work. This is augmented by grant funding from the public and third sector. By strategically curating our funds and collaborations in this way, we increase the scale, impact and influence of our work.

Our full Annual Report & Accounts can be found on the Trust's [website](#).

Income for the Grants and Learning elements of our charitable activities are shown opposite.



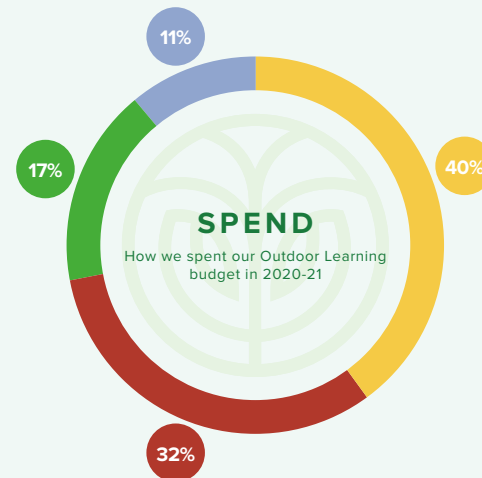
OUTDOOR LEARNING INCOME
£2,365,142



(NET) ESTATE CONTRIBUTION

EXTERNAL RESTRICTED FUNDING

INVESTMENTS



OUTDOOR LEARNING EXPENDITURE
£2,695,565



GRANTS - UNRESTRICTED

GRANTS - RESTRICTED

DIRECT LEARNING

LEARNING SUPPORT COSTS

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Ernest Cook Trust Legal and Administrative details for the year ended 31 March 2021

Registered Company
No. 7907411

Registered Charity
No. 1146629

Registered Office and
principal address:

THE ESTATE OFFICE
FAIRFORD PARK
FAIRFORD
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
GL7 4JH

Trustees

Andrew W M Christie-Miller
Chairman

Harry M Henderson DL

Simon F Eliot

Sir Bertie Ross KCVO

Mary E Riall

Jenefer D Greenwood OBE

Senior Management Team

Dr Victoria M Edwards OBE FRICS FAAV
Chief Executive and Company Secretary

Sara B Rostant
Executive Assistant and Head of
Operations

Michael A Birnie MRICS FAAV
Property Director

Suzie R Paton
Head of Grants

Emily M E Crawley
Head of Learning

Michelle L Cole FCCA
Head of Finance

Committees

Finance and Investment
(inc. Audit and Risk Management)

Andrew W M Christie-Miller
Chairman

Harry M Henderson DL

Estates

Sir Bertie Ross KCVO
Chairman

Jenefer D Greenwood OBE

Ian Monks FRICS

Everything Outdoors

Simon F Eliot
Chairman

Mary E Riall

Green Influencers Scheme

Mary E Riall
Chair

Advisers

Banker

National Westminster Bank plc
32 Market Place
Cirencester
Gloucestershire GL7 2NU

Solicitors

Charles Russell Speechlys LLP
Compass House
Lypiatt Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 2QJ

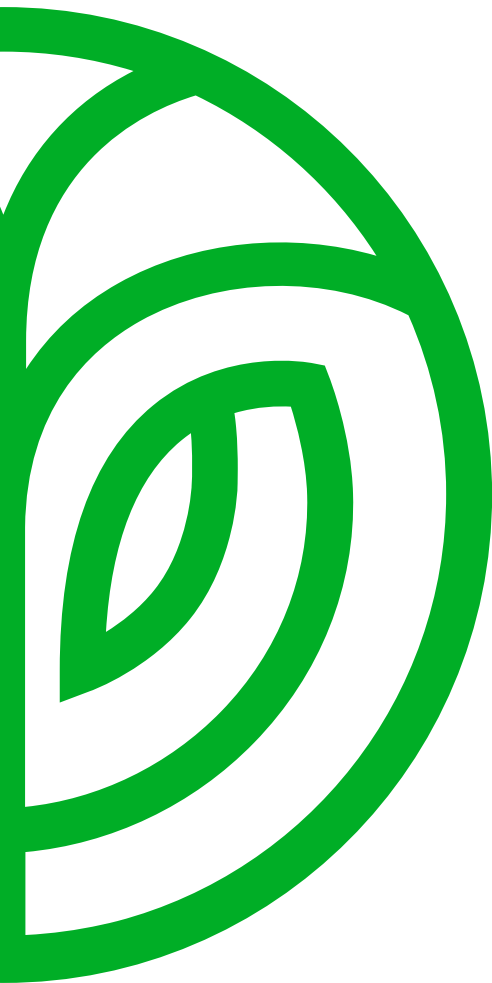
Payne Hicks Beach
10 New Square
Lincoln's Inn
London WC2A 3QG

Auditor

Price Bailey LLP
24 Old Bond St
London W1S 4AP

Investment Adviser

Cazenove Capital Management
1, London Wall Place
London EC2Y 5AU



Our History

The importance of being Ernest

The roots of The Ernest Cook Trust are deeply embedded in our founder's love of the countryside.

Ernest Cook bought several country estates which were eventually bequeathed to The Ernest Cook Trust - the educational charity he established in 1952.

Just as he used his own fortune for good, so we share the wealth of our considerable knowledge, experience and land, championing the *Learning from the Land* sector.

Our story continues

The important work Ernest Cook began continues to thrive today. This success emanates from a diverse range of people at the Trust who share the wealth of their skills and abilities, working together as one.





Fairford Park, Fairford, Gloucestershire GL7 4JH

Office 01285 712492 Email hello@ernestcooktrust.org.uk Web www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk

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