

## TITLE:

## Going back to nature at Kingston Maurward College

DATE: **May 2009**

## SUMMARY

Kingston Maurward College in Dorset needed to keep track of the wide range of plants and animals its campus is home to. These species, such as badgers and deer, could have an impact on the college's plans for future development.

A biodiversity group has been established and has begun the task of recording information about the species the college is home to.

## INSTITUTION PROFILE

Organisation profile  
Land-based HE College  
No of employees: 250  
One campus

## EAUC COMMENT

This case study provides an interesting example of how monitoring biodiversity can bring together staff, students and the local community, as well as benefiting the curriculum.

### THE PROBLEM

As a land-based college Kingston Maurward realised that it had a lot of information about biodiversity on its campus, but that none of it was held or analysed centrally.

The college's senior management team wanted to be able to understand what protected animals and plants the college was home to, as they had previous experience of protected species on the estate and they had the potential to interfere with plans for the development of the college, especially in relation to building projects.

The college grounds are open to the public and it wanted to share its rich biodiversity with the local community. It had also received a number of grants for improvements such, as managing hedges and putting up bird and bat boxes, which required biodiversity information.

### THE APPROACH

An initial meeting was held between the Principal and interested lecturers to discuss the options for tackling the need for information on the species at the college and where they can be found. The lecturers volunteered to collect information on specific habitats across the campus, but a way of keeping and analysing that information was still needed.

Another meeting was held with the college's IT department to establish what support they could provide in setting up pages on the intranet and the possibility of linking these to remote cameras to observe the animals and plants.

To support the project, a biodiversity group was established and students, staff and the local community were invited to join. The college used its links with the local parish council to reach out into the community. The purpose of the group was to start recording information on which species of plants and animals could be found on the campus and where they were spotted. Some of this was done as part of on-going work and was supplemented with information gathered by wildlife groups.

A section on the college intranet was also dedicated to biodiversity, which would not only provide useful information for those with an interest, but would be valuable for students studying horticulture, outdoor management, or on countryside or agriculture courses.

### OUR GOALS

- To create a single point of information for wildlife information on the campus
- To post a regular update on the college website of the key biodiversity indicators on campus
- A whole college approach to maintaining and improving biodiversity
- An opportunity for students and visitors to take part in surveying and recording campus biodiversity
- To create an accurate and continuous record of biodiversity information to show long-term changes

## OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

### Obstacle

- Staff having enough time to dedicate to the project in addition to their 'day jobs'
- Funding specialist resources, such as remote cameras, which will help gather the information
- Recruiting members of the community to the biodiversity group

### Solution

- The college is investigating integrating the biodiversity work into its curriculum so students and lecturers will have more time to work on it
- The college is investigating different funding options, including working with local organisation Chalk and Cheese, which funds local biodiversity and rural economy projects
- Use existing contacts and networks – such as the parish council. The college is also involved with a local Dorset Agenda 21 group – a government-backed group that supports sustainable communities in the area

## PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

- Progress has been slower than the college hoped due to the time pressures on staff and those involved in the group
- Some information has been gathered and is on the intranet. The college accepts gathering this information is a long-term project
- There are eight members of the biodiversity group, including the Principal. The group mainly keeps in touch using email, as free time for meetings during the day is very limited for staff
- The college plans to work with the Dorset Environmental Records Centre to access the biodiversity information it already holds

## LESSONS LEARNT

- For such initiatives to be successful, they have to be supported by the whole college, particularly all of the SMT, rather than a single member. The college's Principal, who championed the project, is now moving on, so senior support is no longer guaranteed
- It needs someone to co-ordinate the group in order to harness the initial enthusiasm and keep things moving forward
- Tutors, however willing, need to have time to take part in the group. One way to achieve this is to integrate the group's activities into the curriculum
- Funding is needed to support any project of this type, but people having time to dedicate is even more important

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Tom Goss, Kingston Maurward College, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8PY  
01305 215150

[tom.goss@kmc.ac.uk](mailto:tom.goss@kmc.ac.uk)

[www.kmc.ac.uk](http://www.kmc.ac.uk)

Chalk and Cheese – [www.chalkandcheese.org](http://www.chalkandcheese.org)

Dorset Agenda 21 – [www.dorsetagenda21.org.uk](http://www.dorsetagenda21.org.uk)



**The Environmental and Sustainability  
Champion within Further and Higher  
Education in the United Kingdom.**

The EAUC provides training, advice and support to our members as well as providing a forum for best practice in the sector.

To join phone **01242 714321**

### Disclaimer:

Although every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate the EAUC, the contributing institutions, the funding and the endorsing bodies do not warrant its accuracy and disclaims any liability for its use.

[www.eauc.org.uk](http://www.eauc.org.uk)  
[info@eauc.org.uk](mailto:info@eauc.org.uk)