



2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014

Dear Steward Community Woodland

It gives me great pleasure to be able to add my support to your planning application. I would be most grateful if you could ensure my comments are passed on to your local planning authority as a part of your submission.

I am primarily writing this from the perspective of my position as an educator, and as a leader and manager of education.

As you will be aware I have the privilege of leading and managing education for a large number of young people and adults in my role as Headteacher. I am currently the Headteacher at Pinewood School in Hertfordshire. Pinewood is an 11-16 maintained foundation secondary special school for young people with Moderate Learning Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). A large number of young people in the school also present with a range of significant medical difficulties, psychological difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some of the young people present with extremely violent and challenging behaviour.

The school was designated as a Specialist Cognition and Learning College with a Rural Dimension in 2010 and we were accredited as an Adventure Learning School in 2012. Our most recent Ofsted Inspection was in June 2012 during which we were cited as having an outstanding curriculum.

I have been employed by Hertfordshire County Council for the last twelve years. I am currently in my eighth year as the Headteacher at Pinewood School. Prior to this I spent five years at a maintained secondary special school for boys with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties, where I was appointed to the position of Deputy Headteacher. Before moving to Hertfordshire I spent a while working as a Senior Teacher at another maintained secondary special school for boys with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties, and was employed by Buckinghamshire County Council. My teaching career started with Buckinghamshire County Council, as a Design and Technology teacher in a mainstream selective grammar school for boys. I have a BEd (Hons) in Design and Technology, an MA Ed, and a Post Graduate Certificate in the Coordination of Special Educational Provision. I was awarded the NPQH in 2004, became an accredited School Improvement Partner in 2008, a Local Leader of Education and Professional Partner in 2010 and have also been accredited as an Executive Coach through Bristol Business School. I am currently an





Improvement Partner within Hertfordshire's school improvement team.

Throughout my educational career I have taken every opportunity to ensure young people spend time in an outdoor or woodland environment, and have been fortunate to have been directly responsible for the outdoor education programme in three schools.

I am passionate about ensuring that young people have access to our outdoor spaces and encourage learning outdoors across all areas of the school and wider curriculum. Outdoor learning forms an integral part of Pinewood's curriculum and all young people have an entitlement to at least four hours dedicated outdoor learning every week. We are extremely fortunate to have use of some privately owned areas of semi natural ancient woodland close to us, as well as some small areas of woodland on our own site, and we run a thriving Forest School programme.

I would like to signpost you to a valuable resource that details the many and varied positive effects that spending time in woodland creates:

<http://www.woodlandforlife.net/all-you-need-to-know/need-social.htm>

I am also aware that the Dartmoor National Park Authority published a woodland strategy with some specific aims around woodland access for education, training and recreation. I note from the Action Plan 2005-2010 that there were specific targets around education, access and recreation. For reference the action plan I am referring to can be found by following this link:

[http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/42955/laf-dws.pdf](http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/42955/laf-dws.pdf)

Much has been written about the educational value of time spent in woodlands, but I know that Steward Community Woodland takes learning in the great outdoors to a whole new level. Just the diversity of the programme that is and can be offered at the wood not just for it's residents, but for the local and wider community as a whole. I know the local community are extremely supportive of the work that the residents share with them and feel sure that they would be really missed if they were not there.

On a personal level, I was extremely fortunate to spend some quality time at Steward Community Woodland at the end of March this year, visiting and learning from one of the residents, Sharif Adams. Sharif is an outstanding green wood craftsman and an exceptional bowl turner, and I visited to see if some of his skills would improve my own turning – which they did immensely I'm pleased to say! I received a really warm welcome from all of the residents that I had the opportunity to meet, who were most enthusiastic in sharing their woodland life with me. I was also really pleased to be given a guided tour of some of the woodland facilities – there is so much resourcefulness that could be shared about living a





low impact life and making a positive impact on the landscape that it almost seems unethical not to allow the residents to share it?

I wholeheartedly lend my support to this planning application and hope that I am able to visit again in the future, maybe with some of the young people that I care for so they too can be inspired and learn from the residents of Steward Community Woodland.

Many thanks for ensuring that my thoughts and opinions are taken into account whilst the local planning authority are making their decision.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Lloyd  
Headteacher

