

RANGER SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2014 -2015

1. Deliver a Programme of Public Events					
Summary					
Events to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to explore, discover, appreciate Aberdeenshire's natural and cultural heritage.					
		Targets and Achievements			
Strategic Priority	Action	Target 2014/2015	Achievements 2013/2014	Achievements 2014/2015	Feedback
Protect and promote the historical environment	Deliver a public events programme across Aberdeenshire for children, families and adults to promote awareness and understanding of our natural and cultural heritage.	69 events	75 events	69 events (952 attendees)	100% of attendees felt welcome or very welcome
Protect and promote the natural environment	Deliver public events to support local, regional and national initiatives.	7 events	5 events	7 events (70 attendees)	98% of attendees found our events informative or very informative
Improved access to sport and cultural activities	Deliver public events to support local, regional and national festivals.	14 events	23 events (Year of Homecoming)	14 events (1034 attendees)	98% of attendees found our events enjoyable or very enjoyable
	Develop Volunteer Ranger opportunities to support the delivery of ranger events and sessions.	Appoint Volunteer Ranger	New measure for 2014-2015	First Volunteer Ranger appointed	
	TOTAL	90 events	103 events (2875 attendees)	90 events (2056 attendees)	
Commentary					
In 2014-2015, the Ranger Service's remit saw a change of focus which concentrated more on community engagement and the development of volunteer opportunities. This, combined with staff changes, resulted in fewer public events being run compared with 2013-2014.					

2. Work with Groups and Communities

Summary

Community Group Sessions with the Ranger Service seek to deliver the Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives of a Smarter, Fairer, Greener and Healthier Scotland. Group Sessions contribute particularly to the delivery of the Council's Biodiversity Duty.

		Targets and Achievements			
Strategic Priority	Action	Target 2014/2015	Achievements 2013/2014	Achievements 2014/2015	Feedback
Protect and promote the historical environment	Sessions to enable community groups to explore, discover and appreciate their local natural and cultural heritage	43 sessions	A total of 90 sessions. This figure was not broken down in to sub actions	98 sessions (1882 attendees)	100% of groups found our sessions to be informative or very informative 100% of those attending a group session felt welcome or very welcome
	Protect and promote the natural environment	Sessions to enable community groups to improve their local environment and biodiversity and promote biological recording		20 sessions	
Providing good quality public spaces	Sessions to engage the marginalised, disadvantaged or otherwise excluded	14 sessions		18 sessions (164 attendees)	
Improved access to sport and cultural activities	Sessions to promote the health benefits of accessing the outdoors	2 sessions		5 sessions (75 attendees)	
	Sessions to deliver volunteer conservation opportunities	8 sessions (1000 volunteer hours)		8 sessions (1482 volunteer hours)	
	TOTAL	87 sessions		90 sessions (1643 attendees)	

Commentary

During 2014-2015, there was a considerable rise in the number of sessions and attendees for groups and communities. This increase, combined with developing opportunities for practical volunteering, aimed at empowering communities to deliver practical and tangible benefits to their local area. An effort to engage with those who had not historically accessed the Ranger Service was also undertaken.

3. Environmental Education for Schools

Summary

School Sessions with the Ranger Service offer an outdoor learning experience to pupils and education providers. The sessions promote awareness and understanding of Aberdeenshire's natural and cultural heritage. These sessions deliver the Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives of a Smarter, Fairer, Greener and Healthier Scotland.

		Targets and Achievements			
Strategic Priority	Action	Target 2014/2015	Achievements 2013/2014	Achievements 2014/2015	Feedback
Protect and promote the historical environment	Support Schools in outdoor learning, promoting local natural and cultural heritage and responsible access	192 sessions	211 sessions	255 sessions (6506 attendees)	100% of classes enjoyed or really enjoyed their session 97% of teachers felt a session with the Ranger Service was very relevant to their class studies on natural and or cultural heritage 85% of teachers said they were definitely more confident in doing more outdoor learning after working with the Ranger Service
Protect and promote the natural environment	Sessions were run to engage marginalised pupils or those at risk of exclusion	8 sessions		8 sessions (102 attendees)	
	Support was provided for John Muir Award participants	36 sessions	44 sessions	54 sessions (270 attendees)	
Enhanced community learning and development	Delivery of Continuing Professional Development workshops for teachers	4 sessions	5 sessions	7 sessions (148 attendees)	
	TOTAL	240 sessions	227 sessions (6955 attendees)	324 sessions (7026 attendees)	

Commentary

The Service proactively sought to engage with those who are excluded or marginalised or who have not historically been engaged with the Ranger Service. These pupils tend to be taught in smaller classes than pupils in mainstream classes and this is reflected in the figures compared to the number of sessions delivered. The Service also sought to engage with education providers to empower teachers to deliver outdoor learning.

4. Responsible Access, Bennachie Centre and Continuous Improvement

Summary

The Ranger Service has a key role in promoting the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) and encouraging visitors to enjoy the Bennachie Centre as a resource for environmental education and recreation. The culture of Continuous Improvement is embedded in all of the team's work.

		Targets and Achievements			
Strategic Priority	Action	Target 2014/2015	Achievements 2013/2014	Achievements 2014/2015	Feedback
Protect and promote the historical environment	Access: Delivery and promotion of Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) message and promotion of access opportunities	150 sessions	140 sessions	153 sessions	Included in events feedback 97% of visitors felt welcome at the Bennachie Centre 28% of visitors found their visit educational 21% of visitors felt the centre was good for children
Protect and promote the natural environment	Public events to promote responsible access based on need/demand			Responsible dog training session (40 attendees)	
	Respond to responsible access issues reported to Council	As required	New Measure	New Measure	
Delivering high quality customer service	Bennachie Centre: Promotion by staff of the Bennachie Centre for use by community groups and organisations	7 sessions	6 sessions	7 sessions	
Promoting inclusiveness	Implementation of Bennachie Visitor Experience Plan	Ongoing	New Measure	Improvements to the visitor experience	
Effective corporate communications	Continuous Improvement: Continue to develop and implement a Promotional and Communication Plan; Benchmarking; Strategy and Action Plans; Feedback Forms; Best Practice	8700 website hits 450 Facebook Likes	New measure 178 Likes	8748 website hits 479 Facebook Likes.	

Commentary

The Ranger Service continues to seek to deliver a high quality efficient service through a culture of Continuous Improvement. To reflect Infrastructure Service priorities, there was an emphasis to be more involved in promoting SOAC and delivering improvements for visitors to the Bennachie Centre.