

Owl Scotland offering some down to earth wisdom



Children should not be wrapped up in cotton wool but should be allowed to get down and dirty in the great outdoors. That is the wisdom imparted by Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland (OWL Scotland), a new organisation dedicated to increasing the use of Scotland's outdoor environments for learning, which was launched yesterday.

OWL Scotland is supported by Forestry Commission Scotland and has evolved out the Forest Education Initiative which ran successfully for over 20 years and supported hundreds of projects throughout the country.

Launching OWL Scotland at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Outdoor & Woodland Learning manager Bonnie Maggio said:

"Scotland has an abundance of outdoor environments which are first class places for children to learn in.

"Our playgrounds, towns, cities and parks can be used to actively engage our young people and make learning real.

"OWL Scotland operates through local groups who share skills, resources and networking opportunities, whilst being supported nationally by grants, advice and training."

The objectives of OWL Scotland include:

- **First Hand Learning experience** – Increasing the use of the outdoors for learning – discovering, exploring and connecting to the natural world;
- **Learning for Sustainability** -Increasing opportunities to learn outdoors about the natural world and how it links to social and economic factors locally, nationally and globally;

- **Knowledge, skills and understanding of outdoor environments** – Increasing opportunities for adults to develop pedagogical skills for use in a range of outdoor environments to encourage depth, breadth and progression in learning; and
- **Health and Wellbeing** – Increasing understanding of the positive impacts of learning outdoors on health and wellbeing.