

Kelston Roundhill

school visits and partnerships



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The 160-acre Kelston Roundhill farm site, including the newly refurbished Old Barn, is now open and available for school visits and overnight stays. This is in addition to the existing visits available to the dairy and cheese factory at Park Farm next door which continue. It makes sense for schools to co-ordinate the two visits.

**Using Kelston Roundhill and the Old Barn
can help children's education in**

Science

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Personal and social development

Details below. Camping is possible. The Old Barn has catering facilities to a domestic standard, two loos and two showers. The barn is off grid, with

use of a generator and borehole. It is double-glazed behind wood shutters, and has two wood-burning stoves.

It is accessible on foot from all directions, notably from the Cotswold Way. You can make deliveries by car or van direct to the Old Barn.

Neighbouring Park Farm (which runs Bath Soft Cheese Ltd) offers visits to a working dairy farm and cheese factory. This can include guided tours of the dairy where four award-winning organic cheeses are made, watching cows being milked etc. Kelston Roundhill is tenanted and managed for farming purposes by Park Farm, so joint arrangements for visiting both locations together are easy.

Some teaching materials and risk assessments are available.



Invitation: become a partner school

From 2016/2017 Kelston Tump LLP, owner of Kelston Roundhill, is inviting up to four schools to be project partners. Each selected school is invited to focus on specific aspects of conservation or arts. Further guidance from an advisory group of external experts is available.

Benefits of being a partner school

All schools are welcome to arrange visits at any time, and this will remain the case.

But as a project partner you can have a schedule of priority visits booked through the year. We can arrange an induction meeting to show you over the site and discuss possibilities and risks. You can be a keyholder, and have lock access codes. We can together put in place standing arrangements for

insurance, risk assessment and mitigation etc. Projects such as restoring ponds, meadows, woodland or orchards bear fruit over several years, and these would make much more sense in the context of a long-term relationship. Finally, we suggest an end-of year festival or event in which schools can celebrate and share their work with each other.

We'd suggest a specific focus of conservation for each school. This can extend to induction, training and support from a local wildlife NGO such as Avon Wildlife Trust, the Magnificent Meadows project, Plantlife, Buglife etc.

Kelston Tump LLP would make a limited amount of capital available for eg tools or works such as pond restoration and learning materials.

Conservation categories

The suggested conservation categories are:

Meadows - the Roundhill field has never been ploughed and is species-rich with so far 65 identified species of grasses and flowers including orchids. Many are edible (though not all palatable). The whole farm needs conservation work to control pests such as ragwort (which is poisonous to animals but relatively easy to deal with) and Japanese knotweed (which happens to be edible but is fiendishly hard to get rid of). There is the opportunity also to restore the neighboring Hangmans field to diverse meadowland over a period of several years.

Hedges & trees - the site has several km of hedge, some recently cut and laid, much more that needs to be cut and laid, and some interesting stretches neglected for over 100 years. Barrows Style has 5000 newly planted trees. Some will suffer from ash dieback. It's a chance to see over the years how a canopy establishes itself, how trees are thinned or replaced and how mature trees are maintained. This includes the iconic "Kelston Clump" copse to which exclusive access can be arranged. We are open to the building of tree houses in Abbots Copse, and could fund that work.



Pictures of the Ascension Day outing used by kind permission of Saltford C of E Primary School"



Ponds - there are traces of several ponds near the Roundhill itself, where collected rainwater seeps out of the limestone cap over the impermeable fullers earth for much of the year. These sites are a prime candidate for pond restoration. We are happy to undertake the capital works. A partner school could work on this project from scratch and see how natural ponds become a haven for wildlife. The desired outcome is we end up with new plants, insects, and amphibians (frogs; possibly even newts).

Wildlife

Insects

the land is part of an important insect corridor. It is rich in butterflies and we're open to cultivation of more butterfly-friendly plant species (eg buddleia). We have six bee hives at work.

Birds

There is interesting bird life which we have not documented, but which includes skylarks, raptors, whitethroat warblers and owls.

Bats

A recent survey by Avon Wildlife Trust found serotine, common pipistrelles, noctule, brown long-eared and lesser horseshoe bats.

Other wild mammals

include deer, badgers, hares, rabbits, foxes. We have not investigated mice and voles. We would like to find or establish hedgehogs (at a safe distance from the badgers). The farmers keep sheep and cows on site.

Humanities

As well as conservation and environmental science we would welcome applications from schools for partnerships in humanities. These can include art, poetry music and storytelling.

Kelston Tump LLP has started a promising relationship with the globally connected Centre for Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University. This is proving a rich source of world-class and local expertise, ideas and knowledge.

History

any written history the site may have remains largely undiscovered. It seems to have been a prehistoric flint knapping site, a Celtic rallying point and a look out point for the Battle of Lansdown in the Civil War. It is rich in recent social history, figuring strongly in local



awareness and people's memories (from anecdotal evidence and to judge by mementos and relics left on the site). Flints, clay pipes, broken pottery and oyster shells, field and hedge patterns, quarry and landfill relics offer their own story for interpretation and understanding. There is an important cultural history to be mapped out here. Some students might like to research written records and find out more.

Art

Kelston Clump on the Roundhill features in many paintings or engravings, including any that show the skyline of the world heritage city Bath from the south or southeast. It is much photographed, with a dedicated group on Flickr. The site is suitable for gathering and painting or drawing wildlife, plants and flowers. Specific nature-based art exercises can be arranged: see for example the work of Sophie Erin Cooper who can act as art tutor.



Poetry and storytelling

The site has inspired poets, songwriters artists and photographers past and present. There is a reasonable body of existing material to study and learn from, and also the opportunity to contribute the poems, songs and photos that create the next part of its story.

Music

Kelston Records: Inspired by and with a great deal of technical help from Bath Spa University Kelston Roundhill has seen the launch of a new record label Kelston Records. It presents live recordings of environment- and location-based material, recorded live in the Old Barn. This is great fun, and may offer further education opportunities; for example it could offer exceptional selected students the chance to help stage and record live events, and see how the music industry works including artist selection, contracts, promotion sales marketing and distribution.

Events

Kelston Roundhill has been a place of gathering or pilgrimage for millennia. It can be used for “day of quiet”, reflection, meditation and yoga, or for celebration or events. It is not licensed eg for marriages and is non-denominational, but is well suited to celebration of end of year, leaving school, birth/marriage/death or other milestones. It is also ideal for staff away-days or other team meetings.

Personal and social development

Kelston Roundhill feels remote and is well suited to quiet reflection. One local primary school for example has for years made an Ascension Day excursion to hold school assembly on the Roundhill.

It's a good environment to teach facts about science and history, but equally well suited to allowing children to explore and express their own feelings in rural quiet and emptiness. The Kelston Roundhill landscape may feel natural compared to an urban setting or school buildings, but is of course itself entirely shaped by human work: the field system, land uses, hedges, planting etc. This raises interesting questions about our relationship with nature (of the sort that Thomas Beckford would have reflected on up in his nearby Tower which is easily visible from the Roundhill).

Given that environmental issues now form a substantial part of the RE curriculum Kelston Roundhill offers a good location to help explore these questions. These might include the human role in a natural landscape, what our relationship and responsibility should be toward the environment, and the value and meaning of everything other than being human.

We propose to develop and share some resources for contemplation and reflection on our relationship with nature, who we are and how we fit in. We would be pleased to see the development of more specific schools coursework, and to find out what works in addressing what the National Trust describes as a "nature deficit".



Would your school like to be a Kelston Roundhill partner?

If you'd like to be considered as a Kelston Roundhill partner school please write briefly to say:

- how such an arrangement would fit your school ethos and educational priorities
- which conservation or art categories you would prefer and why
- what level of visits and activities would work best
- what age groups
- how you approach insurance, risk assessment and liability
- any other relevant aspects
- what sort of financial arrangement you propose.

On the latter point we are flexible about financial arrangements and are asking for proposals. The Kelston Roundhill project incurs capital and direct costs (cleaning, insurance, maintenance, janitor) which we would like to help recoup. Note that we are not necessarily looking to schools to carry the main burden of this, particularly when some are not in a position to do so.

We believe that the longer-term partnerships could be a more efficient use of time and resources than one-off visits.

Our costs (capital cleaning, janitorial, time) are primarily associated with using the Old Barn itself. Simply visiting the farmland incurs negligible cost for

us, as long as visitors abide by the Countryside Code, do no damage and leave no trace.

If we went down a route of doing one-off school visits using the Old Barn we would ask for £5-10/head. But it is far more efficient in terms of time and resources to have a partnership allowing unlimited visits to Kelston Roundhill including the Old Barn throughout a year, if this is in a context of well-briefed teaching staff, agreed scheduling, insurance and risk appraisal arrangements and shared teaching resources.

We recognise that budgets and available funding sources vary. We absolutely do not want cost to be a barrier to the valuable educational possibilities for local school children that arise from using Kelston Roundhill.

For some schools (eg special schools) we may be able to help identify a benefactor.

We propose one-year arrangements initially but would be happy to extend this to eg three years which may make more sense for seeing results from longer-term projects such as woodland development or pond restoration.

Please contact us if you'd like to discuss any aspect of this proposal, to do a teacher site visit, or to arrange any school visits during 2016/2017.

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