**Brief Timeline of Events in Respect of Kensley Sheds, The Rewild Project and Forestry Enghland**

**2016**

* **Kensley Sheds** is a derelict and dilapidated Forestry ‘shed’ and isthere is talk of **Demolition.**
* The Rewild Project is working in Partnership with Arbor Training CIC & Forestry England to deliver wilderness skills sessions to young people at GFAPS local excluded unit based at the dilapidated Kensley Sheds.
	+ Scott Baine is the primary delivery person, working with Tamsin Sagar, FE community ranger. Often sessions take place outside of the boundaries of Kensley Sheds and no permissions are needed, no risk assessments requested.
* Opportunity arises for community groups to make bids to deliver contracts under Forester’s Forest £2.2M of lottery investment into Forest of Dean to promote engagement with heritage.
	+ There is an important covenant on creating a ‘Legacy’ using the funds to create projects that will keep going for a long time past the end of the funding.
* Scott Baine, Director of The Rewild Project make a bid to deliver 2 contracts teaching heritage craft skills and edible forest skills.
* Scott Baine also advising ‘Arbor Training’ and a bid is made by Arbor Training to take on Kensley Sheds as a base for their ‘New Leaf’ Social Forestry Project (also funded by FF)
* Scott Baine is the Project Manager and leads the eco refurbishment volunteering under Arbor Training and an estimated £90k is invested through Arbor Training plus many hundreds of volunteering hours.
* Scott Baine continues to volunteer for Arbor Training as Forestry & Operations Manager. Delivering ‘New Leaf’ project objectives of training disadvantaged people in social forestry, and sustainable woodland management practices.

**2017/2018**

* ‘Arbor Training CIC’ liquidates, and transfer of assets is made to The Rewild Project.
* Forestry England transfer the Kensley Sheds Licence agreement to The Rewild Project, asking that the name ‘New Leaf’ is kept for the duration of the funding.
* The Rewild Project continue to deliver 2 original contracts, plus the New Leaf Contract.
* Contract for Home Education & Single Parent Family Sessions with the FF Underspend Fund won & successfully delivered.
* Contract for Springs and Wells of The Forest of Dean won & successfully delivered.

**2020 – Post COVID**

* The Rewild Project continue to make use of Kensley Sheds almost 7 days per week.
* Over £180k of funding is invested by Barnwood Trust to continue to run weekday craft and land sessions for disadvantaged groups.
* £187k funding from Thirty Percy to run 3 new projects. 1 of which to develop a qualification in craft and land skills.
* The Rewild Project become an Employer of 20 staff.
* Government Tender for Holiday Activities and Food won based at both Kensley Sheds and The Rewild Permaculture Allotment.
* The Rewild Project are approached to become an exceptional provision for GCC.
* ***The Rewild Project continue to run Home Education sessions, including a daily nature connection walk.***
	+ ***These are funded under Foresters Forest / Via Forestry England.***
	+ ***Grant reports are sent to Forestry England with pictures of children exploring the lake.***

**October 2021**

2 Forestry meetings with Beat Foresters who confirm they are happy with The Rewild Project forestry practices and confirm practices for next cutting season and onwards after the conclusion of Foresters Forest.

Also point out that licences need to be chased up from estates team and that we can discuss longer term lease with Estates at that point.

**22 November 2021**

Conversations begin regarding a longer-term lease agreement, as Forester’s Forest is due to end in April 2022.

Lewis James is the only agent in the estates team, he leaves FE in January 2022, but returned in April 2022.

(Further discussions regarding taking on Bracelands Farm – a Forestry Building which was an outdoor pursuits centre – The Rewild Project looking to expand to create a further micro crafts village for community use)

**December 2021**

***A home education ice exploration and safety activity is undertaken in December 2021 pictures are sent to Forestry England via social media channels – with no concerns raised.***

***Albeit weather is not cold enough for ice to become thick enough to stand on.***

**July 2022**

Following a meeting with Lewis James, 10-year lease agreed in principle, pending Heads of Terms being drafted.

* Email confirmation attached.

**6th December 2022**

After chasing Estates team for update on Lease / Licences for Kensley Sheds and Coppicing Licence, we hear that Lewis James has left again, and William Carless will meet with us to discuss.

* Meeting minutes recorded by Emma Gleave.

**Friday: 16 December 2022**

Morning time Sam & Scott undertake an ice safety training session, after first going out in the morning & testing the ice, talking to the kids about dangers, when to cross ice etc..

(Longest cold spell in England, minus 10 for over a week, frozen thick, cannot break through. Scott is experienced for over 8 years outdoors experience in northern cold climates – Canada, Sweden, Norway)

In the afternoon Sam take young people out for a second walk, she says don’t go on ice this time as I am alone, a couple do go on anyway, just at the edge, and a man starts shouting and follows them back to Kensley Sheds being abusive.

A man from Wildlife Trust sees the incident, helps to move the abusive man on – he tells Sam that the aggressive man is a wildlife trust volunteer and is well known for his bad & abusive behaviour. Apologises and says he will write an incident report (however he went off on his Christmas break and is not back until new year so we have been unable to contact him)

4pm-ish after the session a parent who witnessed the angry volunteer comments via the parents WhatsApp group, saying they are not happy, we assure him it was indeed a safe activity, in a long conversation – other parents say they are supportive and trust us, and are glad for the opportunity their children have.

4.30pm - I (Emma) receive a call on rewild landline number from irate man saying how dare we take kids onto the ice. I talk to him about our attitude towards risk and that our instructors are all trained and experienced, and I trust them completely to make the right decisions. I take his name and number and tell him I will investigate the incident further and get back to him with the outcome.

Around the same time, separate and unbeknown to me, Scott receives call from Tom Brockington (the new ‘Our Shared Forest’ coordinator) at Forestry England to follow up complaint (Scott thought it was the parent complaint – he had no idea about the 2nd person) so he had a discussion, saying he will send over our RA - get the message it's not a big deal, all is fine as long as they have a RA on file.

**Monday 19th December**

We receive an email saying they are taking this very seriously & we have to vacate the sheds by 12 mid-day the following day!! (However, we didn’t get this email until Wednesday as we were busy delivering holiday club sessions)

**Wednesday 21st December**

At this point we think that it must be the member of public complaint they are talking about – there was no incident in the morning, just a planned walk and nature connection activity (maybe it wasn’t the parent that complained to them after all?)
- and we send them an email including statement from Sam Wingfield talking through the incident in the afternoon of the man being abusive.

(This includes telling them about the witness from the Wildlife Trust - a ranger who is writing an incident report, because he moved the abusive man along - however he is off work until after Christmas now)

**Thursday 22nd December**

The next email accuses us of lying to and says the licence will not be renewed, and we have to vacate completely by 31st December – and all FE staff are now out of the office from 23rd December until January 3rd.

**Friday 23rd December**

Response email requesting how FE would like the matter to be resolved, we would hope that as a goodwill gesture that we would be able to take students completing the Level 2 qualification in ‘Craft and Land Skills’ to the end of the academic year, which would give us time to make alternative venue arrangements.

**3rd January**

Rewild Project’s regular ‘weekday sessions for disadvantaged groups’ are due to start again (community support session, teaching heritage crafts and providing hot locally produced food and transport, for mental health and general wellbeing and community building).

A decision is made to move the sessions to Angus Buchanan where we have use of the bowls club and a shipping container for green woodwork.

Rewild Project staff arrive at Kensley Sheds to collect materials to run the session and find FE Contractors onsite who have been instructed to change the locks.

Rewild staff explain to FE contractors that we need access to all the craft resources and other community assets & the contractors then leave.

**3rd January – Email from TRP to Kevin Stannard & Tom Brokington / FE**

To say we are still awaiting a response since before Christmas about how we can resolve matters.

Statement made by Kevin Stannard on behalf of FE to Gloucestershire Live newspaper article to say he was in discussions with The Rewild Project to resolve matters.

**9th January – Email to Kevin**

* Email to Kevin – we have still had no answer, since before Christmas.
* Explaining current position pending conversation regarding the investigations.

Received letter from Kevin later in the day:

Letter from Kevin Stannard – Excerpt:

For the avoidance of doubt, our investigation has concluded that:

1)  A director of Rewild CiC did take a group of young people out onto the ice of a frozen lake.

2)  Forestry England were not asked for permission to do so, and did not give any such permission.

3)  Forestry England never saw, nor approved a risk assessment for the activity prior to being informed the activity had taken place; and further the risk assessment provided after the fact would seem to be wholly inadequate.

4)  Our firm view is that this incident represents a gross error of judgment which severely undermines our trust in Rewild’s abilities to manage their operations in a professional manner.

It is our fourth conclusion, as set out above, that answers the question as to why Forestry England are not renewing the licence for Rewild to occupy Kensley Shed.

**31st January – Letter to Kevin – Excerpt**

In summary we are requesting 3 key things:

1. Transparent access to your investigation, the evidence gathered and the process followed in order to be able to complete our own safeguarding & HSE investigations and the GCC LADO facilitated AMM process, of which you have been a part of.

2. A fair right to respond to the accusations against us through an appeal process.

3. A proper exit strategy to include: clear recognition of, and planning for, the impacts of removing an important and unique asset from our community more generally & our participants specifically; be reasonable in it's demands; provide fair consideration for The Rewild Project's assets.

**6th February – Letter from Kevin: Excerpt**

‘I set out the outcome of our investigation in my letter of 9th January. I see no reason why your safeguarding investigation should be predicated on Forestry England’s completed investigation.’

‘The decisions taken by Forestry England which followed are not subject to an appeals process.’

**9th March – Letter from Michelmores**

States that they have been seeking resolution, but it is clear a solution cannot be reached and they must take legal eviction proceedings.

**16th March – Email to Michelmores**

Stating that we do wish to come to an agreed wind down & EXIT strategy and wish to have a conversation regarding the assets at Kensley Sheds.

**20th March – Rewild meeting with Environmental Law Firm Barrister for Advice.**

**21st March – Letter from Environmental Law Firm to Michelmores**

Requesting a round table meeting and a choice of 4 dates.

23rd March after 12pm

27th March (am) (Counsel has a 3pm engagement)

28th March after 2pm.

29th March (am) - Counsel has a 3pm engagement.

**29th March – Email from ELF**

To say still no word from Michelmores regarding a meeting date.

**31st March – Email from Michelmores to ELF**

Agree to a legal teams meeting only with only 2 agenda items:

1. Its position on the expiration of the Licence Agreement, and whether it accepts it has expired by operation of law; and
2. Its proposals for vacating the Premises.

ELF email to say that is the same 2 points that TRP are wishing to discuss. However, the Barrister is away over Easter holidays and will arrange this once the Barrister returns.

**27th April – Email from Michelmores to ELF**

Advising they have been given instructions to commence proceedings.