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Forest Management Director
Kevin G Stannard

By email to emma@therewildproject.com

5th January, 2023

Dear Emma

Rewild CiC and Kensley Shed

Your email of 3rd January refers.

The licence to use Kensley Sheds is an annual one which runs from the 1st January to the 31st December each year. The licence for 2022 has expired, and thus Rewild need to remove their property from the sheds and vacate the site as soon as possible. I understand from a site visit made on Tuesday, 3rd January that Rewild were indeed vacating the property, thank you.

Why is Forestry England not issuing a new licence for Rewild to use Kensley Sheds for 2023? This is the question that I will now address.

On the afternoon of Friday, 16th December, 2022 Forestry England staff were made aware from two different sources that a group of young people from Rewild had been taken out on to the ice at Woorgreens Lake. On investigation it was quickly established that the group in question were from Rekindle, a youth group forming part of Rewild's operations.

Information we have received from yourself, from others, and from Rewild's website has led us to conclude that one of the directors of Rewild, namely Scott, did take a group of young people out on to the ice. This may have been separate to the incident related by Sam Wingfield in her account which you forwarded to us, but the omission of the mentioning of Scott's activity was, in our view, disingenuous.



On the afternoon of the incident in question our operations manager did request, and was provided with a risk assessment for the activity in question, namely taking a group of young people out on to a frozen lake. That document (dated May 2021) appears to be a general risk assessment for the Rekindle group, and not a specific risk assessment for the activity – albeit a section for going onto a frozen lake has been added at the end. Given that was the only risk assessment we were provided with when we asked, then it is reasonable for us to assume that was the only one that had been prepared. Making that assumption we have concluded that the risk assessment is entirely inadequate given the risks, and indeed the recently reported fatalities of young people from another part of the country.

In the short period between the incident and the Christmas break we provided you / Rewild with an opportunity to acknowledge a gross error of judgement as a step towards taking corrective action. We have seen no evidence that Rewild have acknowledged any such error of judgement, indeed all of the communications we have seen emanating from your organisation has been focused on defending the original incident, and apparently arguing the activity had been well planned by an experienced individual. I am afraid that our finding is that the activity was ill-conceived, and we have seen no evidence of sound planning of that activity.

I acknowledge that you state in your email of the 3rd January that your investigation as Rewild's safeguarding lead is still under-way and you must of course pursue your own investigations as per your organisations policies and procedures. For our part we have concluded our own investigation. 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.

I would welcome any evidence your investigation unearths that challenges our conclusions. However, please be clear that there is no current licence for Rewild to use Kensley Shed, or indeed any other permission or authority for Rewild to use land managed by Forestry England at the current time.



If your organisation wishes to request permission to use land that we are responsible for in the future, then please apply through our permissions processes and your requests will be assessed on their own merits.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K G Stannard', with a horizontal line underneath.

Kevin G Stannard
Forest Management Director,
West Forest District

