

Success Story



Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) provides resources and expertise to thriving businesses and organisations throughout the UK who wish to innovate, expand or improve their performance.

Part funded by Government, these Partnerships involve combining the knowledge and expertise of an academic institution, such as the University of Plymouth, with the appointment of a talented graduate who works within the business or organisation on a strategic project.

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Paignton Zoo Environmental Park – living up to the name

"Our on-going alliance with the University of Plymouth has proved enormously beneficial to us. Not only has this project directly supported our mission to inspire in our staff and visitors a life long respect for the environment, it's helped us truly live up to our name on a global stage"

Ian Turner, Curator of Plants and Gardens



Paignton Zoo Environmental Park was first opened in 1923 having evolved out of the zoological collection built up by animal lover Herbert Whitley. Its name has changed several times over the years and in 1996 Paignton Zoological and Botanical Gardens became Paignton Zoo Environmental Park, with the environment becoming one of the main pillars of its brand. This coincided with a grant from the European Regional Development Fund and major redevelopment of the Zoo as a whole, creating one of the most reputable zoos in the country. Set in 75 acres providing a wide range of habitat and breeding grounds for its animals, Paignton Zoo attracts almost 500,000 visitors a year. Today, the Zoo is a registered educational and scientific charity and is regarded as a key tourist attraction in the south west. Its parent trust, the Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust (WWCT), also owns Newquay Zoo, Living Coasts (a marine aviary in Torquay) and Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve. www.paigntonzoo.org.uk

As a conservation organisation, Paignton Zoo Environmental Park takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously and is constantly striving to identify key areas for improvement in reducing its environmental impact. In 2003 it turned to the University of Plymouth experts in Environmental Science and the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships team for assistance in designing and implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS) across all sectors of the organisation to achieve ISO 14001 accreditation status.

With the assistance of KTP Associate Alexis Huggins, an MSc graduate in Environmental Impact Assessment, Auditing and Management Systems, an intensive environmental review of current practices was conducted. In line with the Zoo's environmental policy, priority areas within its environmental operations were identified for improvement, such as the amount of waste, energy and water usage across the Zoo site. In addition to these targeted improvements, the introduction of new legislative requirements in the form of operational and emergency procedures and the carrying out of regular audits and reviews on the environmental impact of the Zoo has been formulated with the successful introduction of the new EMS system. This ultimately led to a new Environmental Policy being established and a new EMS Group being formed. This group was instrumental in producing tangible savings in energy consumption and in particular reducing water consumption by 26%. The Zoo was awarded ISO 14001 accreditation in August 2005 which gives greater credence to the word 'Environmental', living up to the name Paignton Zoo Environmental Park.



Alexis Huggins, KTP Associate with Paignton Zoo Environmental Park

PROJECT OBJECTIVES DEFINED

- 🌀 Conduct an audit of current systems to identify and prioritise significant impacts
- 🌀 Design and implement an Environmental Management System (EMS) across all sectors of the organization
- 🌀 Reduce the organizations environmental impact by minimizing the risk of accidental environmental damage and reducing utility consumption across all its operational areas
- 🌀 Ensure compliance with legislation
- 🌀 Achieve ISO 14001 accreditation
- 🌀 Recommend best environmental practice for future developments within the Zoo's 10 Year Master Plan
- 🌀 Raise awareness of environmental issues to be promoted both internally and to visitors to the Zoo

THE BENEFITS OF THIS KTP PARTNERSHIP

To the Company:

- 🌀 ISO 14001 accreditation and associated credibility
- 🌀 Greater understanding of the environmental impacts across all sites in terms of legal requirement and compliance
- 🌀 Reduced utility costs through improved environmental management - savings of approximately £5,500 per annum on electricity at Living Coasts and £6,000 per annum on water at Paignton Zoo and Living Coasts
- 🌀 Embedded Environmental Management System supported by comprehensive documentation and fully trained personnel
- 🌀 Culture change and raised staff awareness of environmental factors resulting in sustained reduction of waste production and energy usage
- 🌀 Capability to apply this new environmental knowledge to develop new educational initiatives such as the 'Green Awareness Day' and 'World Environment Day' held at Zoo
- 🌀 New skills acquired, and facilities and communication channels developed to raise public awareness of environmental issues

To the Associate:

- 🌀 Undertaken an Advanced EMS Auditing course, becoming a qualified lead auditor
- 🌀 Achieved Associate Membership of the IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment)
- 🌀 Gained NVQ Level 4 in Management
- 🌀 Offered a position with Paignton Zoo Environmental Park on a fixed term contract as Environmental Officer
- 🌀 Continued personal development including presenting at 2 annual EMS National Forums at the University of Plymouth

To the University:

- 🌀 Increased knowledge for academic staff of the practical implementation of an EMS and accreditation of ISO 14001 in a new environment
- 🌀 Development of a valuable case study to be used as new teaching material
- 🌀 The supervision of undergraduate projects in Biological Sciences and Psychology
- 🌀 Identified potential further research studies
- 🌀 A series of lectures at the University of Plymouth to undergraduates and post graduates by the KTP Associate

**For further information on Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and other University services contact:
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