

LSIS sustainability Project

Linking Sustainability and employability
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Introduction

The Fiske is an area at Otley College in Suffolk which is the beginnings of an Arboretum. Neglected and suffering from complex problems no management plan or focus for the area is presently in place. To create a fully sustainable Arboretum would allow Arboriculture students at the college to take ownership of the area and improve it for future cohorts. The project will focus on the selection sourcing and management of plants for the area, as well as how the arboretum can be made a fully sustainable teaching and learning resource.

Project topic chosen

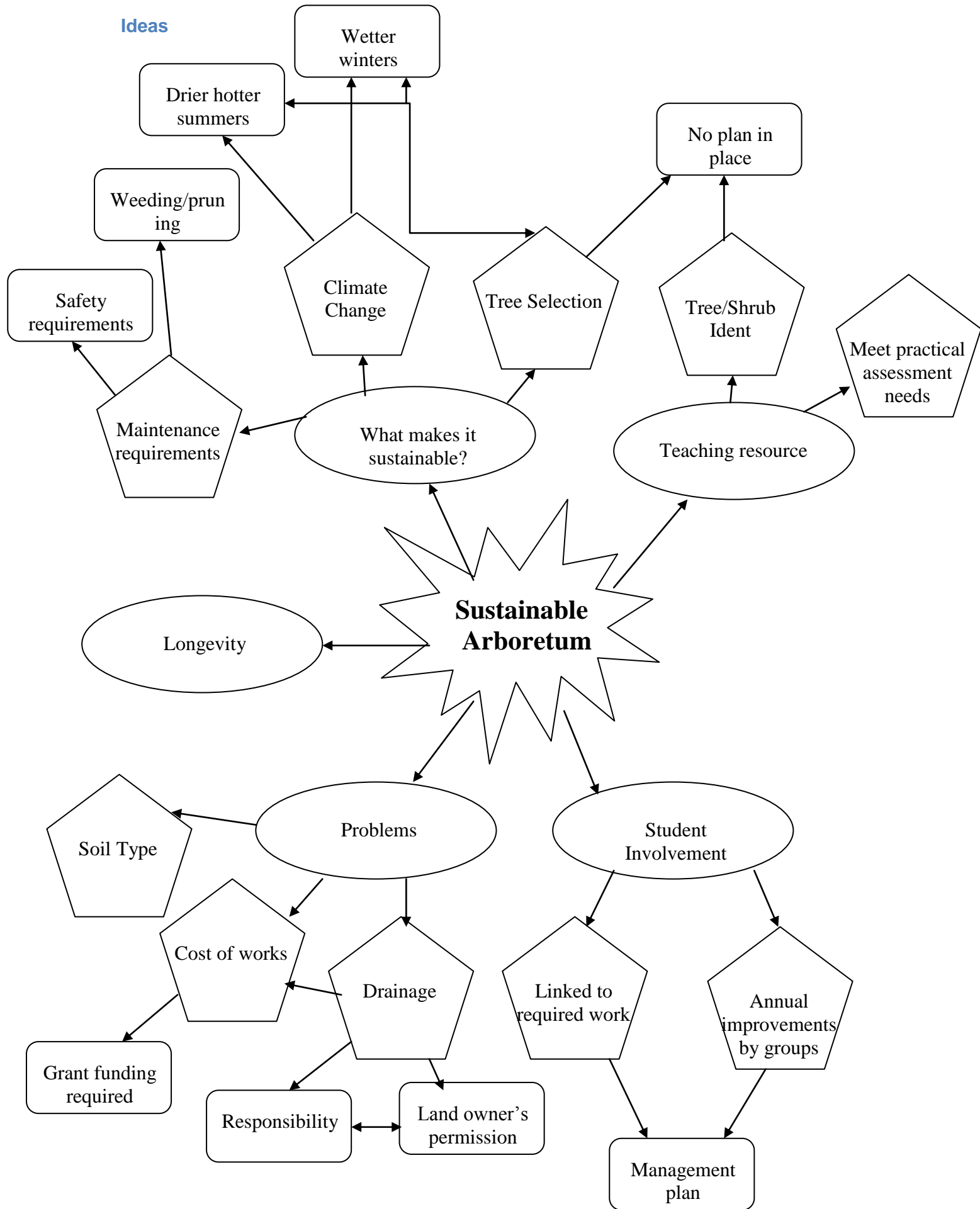
Otley college has an area which is the beginnings of an arboretum. Originally planted as an identification resource for conservation students, I have been leading a project to formalise the plant collection and create a more suitable Arboretum for use of the burgeoning arboriculture department at the college. I have already begun the process of creating an informal accession plan. This is primarily focused around the Quercus and Acer specimens already established, and having already selected new specimens for planting. I was inspired to look at how I could further develop this plan to potentially create a long term management plan which is heavily focused on the establishment and long term management of a sustainable arboretum.

Development of ideas

Inspiration for the focused aims of my project came from a number of different sources and influences. The initial idea was something that I was already involved in but was treating as a very informal project that was evolving without any clear focus. Having had numerous discussions and meetings with the head of facilities at the college and a former colleague who had worked at the college for 25 years and was better acquainted with the history of the site, a picture of the issues facing the trees and the usage of the area began to arise.

The trees suffer a strange and challenging environment. Growing in a clay soil on an area donated to the college which was previously arable land. The trees suffer from near drought conditions in the summer, which is then followed by waterlogged conditions in the winter. Speaking to an agricultural lecturer at the college he suggested there may be a plough pan which was not allowing water to drain away. This seemed feasible although once I spoke to Steve Coghill he explained that when the field was donated a car park was installed and the ditch that the land drains from the field drained into was removed. With nowhere to drain to the water from the field backs up into the Fiske during winter. Following this revelation, this now seemed to explain an awful lot. I called and spoke to a land drainage contractor who gave me advice and a quotation for carrying out the drainage on the field side of the Fiske. This can be seen in appendix C. It soon became clear that there were greater issues involving the draining of the land surrounding the Fisk. Email communication with Clerk to corporation at the college can be seen in Appendix D. The issue of whose responsibility it is to drain the Fiske and what happens with the water is something that will clearly need to be addressed.

Ideas



I decided that it was important to gather some information on sourcing trees to plant in the area. Already knowing that the trees we would most likely be requiring would not be available from common commercial nurseries I decided it would be important to get some sound inside information. Initially I contacted Keith Sacre of Barchams tree nursery and following a telephone conversation outlined in appendix a, it became clear that cost of suitable specimens was going to be a major influence on any management/planting plan. I then made a visit to a local nursery and had a long conversation with the owner who suggested I speak to Mallet court nurseries, which I duly did and decided to get a quotation for some trees that may form part of my final plan, this can be found in the appendices. Following further trips to Cambridge botanical gardens with students for inspiration I began to formalise my project aims

Following a meeting with Neil Ridley who is a bid writer at the college, it was suggested that there may be some funding available for a project with a sustainable focus. Neil was already aware of the work I had planned for the Fiske and suggested the funding could be used to install the drainage required to redirect the water from the field. Following this meeting I began to think more about water management on the Fiske and the influence tree selection will have on the sustainability of the arboretum. After looking at the suggested climactic changes for the area over the next 80 years tree selection to favour these predicted conditions will be a vital part of the project.

Analysis of project

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of chosen project.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear requirement identified • Informal project outline already underway • Grant applications already carried out • Able to utilise curriculum and support staff to help complete project • Basic requirements in place to create successful Arboretum • Strong college sustainability focuses including previous projects. • Current sustainability policy in place 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large project may not be achievable • Reliant on other parties involvement to complete • Requires agreement from management within various organisations • Requires funding for total completion of project
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will leave a lasting legacy • Will improve management of Fiske for future cohorts • Will improve conditions for trees in the Arboretum • Will improve my own knowledge of tree collection management • Will meet colleges sustainability commitment 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance to highlighted changes required by college following project • Change and realignment may jeopardise the implementation of the project

Project aims

- To create a management plan for a sustainable Arboretum at Otley College.
- To involve students in the planning process and link this to their required assessments.
- To oversee the first stages of the rejuvenation of the Arboretum.
- To learn more about the management requirements of a plant collection
- To gain grant funding towards the creation and implementation of the management plan
- To make long term links with other bodies and organisations ensuring the long term future of the arboretum.

The focus of the project will be the production of a management plan. The aim will be to create a 25 year plan that will enable staff and students to programme and carry out work with the long term goal of creating a sustainable Arboretum of a high standard that can be used as a teaching resource.

Appendices

Appendix A- Diary entries

Appendix B- Copy of bid application

Appendix C- Email correspondence and quotation for land drainage

Appendix D- Email correspondence regarding land drainage

Appendix E – Quotation for trees

Appendix F – Communication with suppliers regarding stock in relation to conditions.

Appendix G- Record of meeting with Dr Sharon Hulm, to discuss the college's sustainability policy.

Appendix H -College sustainability policy.