

Business and Tourism Information Pack

This pack is aimed at people who require in depth information for course work and homework. It can also support learning during a visit to Colchester Zoo.

In Feb 2025, **Colchester Zoo's transitioned to a charity, Colchester Zoological Society**. This is a significant change in the zoo's business operations. However, the full implications of this shift are still being assessed. The information in **this pack reflects the 2024 calendar year, during which the zoo operated entirely as a Private Limited Company.**



Charity no. 1105621

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*Please note, most of this pack describes Colchester Zoo's business during normal conditions in pre 2019 and 2022 onwards. For specifics of 2020 and 2021, please see the 'COVID Business Impacts' section

History of Colchester Zoo

Colchester Zoo was established in 1963 by Zoologists Frank and Helena Farrah in the grounds of Stanway Hall Park. The site was around 25 acres in size and contained a small collection of animals ranging from lions to kangaroos.

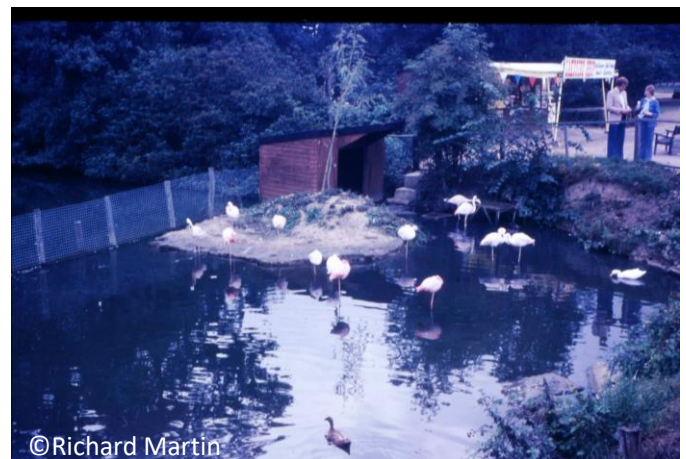
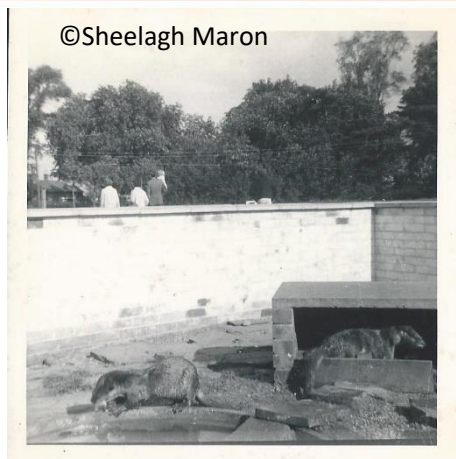
The purchase of the Stanway Hall Estate was the realisation of a lifetime's ambition for the owners. Helena Farrah acted as the Zoo curator during this period, becoming the first female curator in Europe.

In 1983, Colchester Zoo changed hands and was taken over by the Tropeano family.



Between 1983 and 2025, the Zoo operated as a family business, Colchester Zoo Ltd. During this time, the zoo has been continually redeveloping to improve the facilities for both the animals and visitors. It has been developed as a conservation centre and has expanded in size from the original site of 25 acres to 60 acres, following the purchase of neighbouring land.

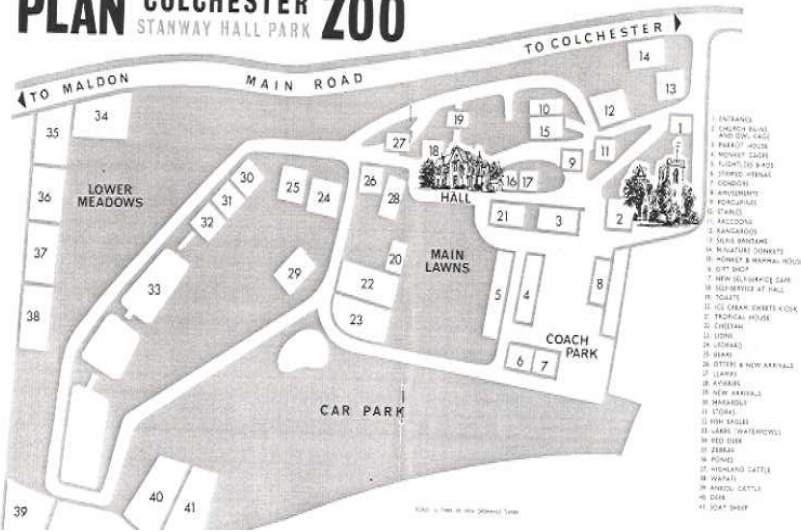
In Feb 2025, the zoo completed the transition to a registered charity, Colchester Zoological Society. This is an exciting opportunity for the zoo to provide additional support to conservation projects, but at the zoo as well as projects helping save animals and habitats around the world.



Colchester Zoo's transition to a charity marks a significant change in the zoo's business operations. However, the full implications of this shift are still being assessed. The information in this pack reflects the 2024 calendar year, during which the zoo operated entirely as a Private limited Company.

PLAN COLCHESTER ZOO

STANWAY HALL PARK



The Zoo map in 1963

ZOO MAP & DISPLAY TIMES

These displays are timed to take place throughout the day, so you can pick out a few if you are here for a few hours or you can choose a whole days entertainment if you wish.

OTTER FEED 12.00
See how the otters are fed.
Duration 5 minutes

BIG CAT FEED 16.00
Starting from Tiger Valley. See how the cats are fed and talk to the keeper.
Duration 30 minutes

FALCONRY DISPLAY 11.45, 13.30, 15.15 (16.30), (17.30)**
Free flying bird of prey display.
Duration 30 minutes

KEEPER ENCOUNTER 12.45 & 14.45
The chance to talk to some of the keepers and meet some of their animals.

FAMILIAR FRIENDS Between 12.00 & 16.00
The chance to get closer to a range of farm animals and to talk to the keeper.

FEED THE SEALS 13.00 & 16.00
Find out all about seals.
Duration 15 minutes

MEET THE ELEPHANTS 11.30, 14.30, (16.30)**
See some of the activities the elephants do during the day and have the chance to feed them.
Duration 30 minutes

BEAR FEEDS 15.30
See how the bears are fed and cared for plus the chance to talk to the keepers.
Duration 15 minutes

ELEPHANT BATH TIME 15.00
See the elephants having their bath. (May be cancelled in adverse weather)
Duration 30 mins

PENGUIN PARADE 12.00 & 16.30
Find out all about the penguins.
Duration 15 minutes

SMALL MAMMAL FEED 12.30
Hear how the small mammals are fed and talk to the keepers.
Duration 10 minutes

REPTILE ENCOUNTER 14.00 & 16.15
Find out about reptiles and talk to the keeper.
Duration 15 minutes

CHIMP FEED 17.00
See how the chimps are fed and cared for.
Duration 15 minutes

PARROT DISPLAY 12.45, 14.45, 15.45, (17.00)**
Find out about parrots.
Duration 20 minutes

KEY TO THE ANIMALS
All the enclosures are numbered in order of the Easy Route.

Start of No. 1, Climp World

1 Climp World	31 Zebra
2 Mississippi	32 Zebu Buffalo
3 Angora	33 Fallow Deer
4 Ringed Pheasant	34 River otter enclosure
5 Cattle	35 Lions
6 Mammals	36 Pangolin Mares
7 Lorains	37 Seals
8 Orange Uthens	38 Brown and Ringtail Lemurs
9 Ice Creams	39 Llamas
10 Parrots	40 Skunks
11 Ground Squirrel	41 Crocodiles
12 Reptile House	42 Dalmatian Puppies
13 Andrew Gardens	43 Farmings
14 Small Mammal House	44 Zebras
15 Aquatic House	45 Wallabies
16 Penguins	46 Wallabies
17 Reptile Plains	47 Crocodiles
18 Reptiles	48 Zebu Buffalo
19 Reptiles	49 Otters
20 Reptiles	50 Tiger Walkway
21 Reptiles	51 Bush Dogs
22 Reptiles	52 Cape Hunting Dogs
23 Reptiles	53 Brazilian Tapirs
24 Reptiles	54 Asian Flying Cats
25 Reptiles	55 African
26 Reptiles	56 Leopards
27 Reptiles	57 Chimpanzees
28 Reptiles	58 Diana Monkeys
29 Reptiles	59 Thai Monkeys
30 Reptiles	60 Javanese Macaques
	61 Diana Monkeys
	62 Snow Leopards
	63 Snow Leopards
	64 Ruddy Spotted Cats

INFORMATION
COLCHESTER ZOO IS OPEN TODAY UNTIL:
18.00 JULY AND AUGUST
18.00 EASTER, JUNE AND SEPTEMBER
17.00 OCTOBER AND MARCH

PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS UNLESS DIRECTED AS MOST NEED A CAREFULLY BALANCED DIET.
Please remember you are looking into an animal's home and do not bang on the glass or shed. So take time to look carefully or go back later.

PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS UNLESS DIRECTED AS MOST NEED A CAREFULLY BALANCED DIET.
Please remember you are looking into an animal's home and do not bang on the glass or shed. So take time to look carefully or go back later.

The Zoo map in 1994

Colchester Zoo Today

Today, Colchester Zoo fulfils the four main roles of zoos:

- Conservation
- Education
- Research
- Recreation

All of these roles are intrinsically linked with research leading to better care and, along with education, helping to improve and advance conservation. In order to fund the work and care for the animals, the zoo needs to be a good day out for people in order for them to come to the zoo and make return visits, hence the recreation part.

What is a zoo?

A "Zoo" is defined under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 as an establishment where wild animals are kept for exhibition to which members of the public have access, with or without charge for admission, seven or more days in any period of twelve consecutive months.

Zoo Legislation and the Zoo Licence

Zoos operating in the UK are required by law to follow several pieces of legislation.

In 1999, the **European Council Zoo Directive** came into force. It requires all zoos to:

- Participate in conservation measures
- Promote public education and awareness
- Accommodate animals in conditions that satisfy the biological and conservation requirements of individual species
- Prevent animal escapes
- Keep up to date records of the zoo collection

Post Brexit, this legislation has been rolled over into new UK laws. This is currently being reviewed and updated. Specifics are yet to be determined as to how this fits into the Secretary of State's Standards (see below).

The **UK Zoo Licensing Act** was created in 1981, and was amended in 2002 to more fully cover all aspects required by the Zoo Directive (as above).

The Zoo Licensing Act requires the inspection of all zoos every 3 years (or as required).

The UK **Animal Welfare Act** 2006 ensures that all the welfare needs of an animal are met and makes cruelty to animals a criminal offence.

The **Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice** was formed in 2004. These guidelines are intended to set the standards that UK zoos are expected to achieve in all their work. These standards are continually updated. It also includes:

- Transportation and movement of live animals
- Conservation, Education & Research
- Public Safety
- Records
- Staff and training
- Public facilities
- Ethical review process

The concept of **Five Freedoms** was originally created in 1965 to ensure the welfare and wellbeing of farm livestock by the Farm Animal Welfare Council. These concepts are included as law in the Animal Welfare Act (2006 as above). Over time these have been adapted into the Five Needs and then later into the **Five Domain** model of Animal Welfare.

- Nutrition Domain
 - Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; Access to fresh water and a nutritionally balanced diet
- Physical Environment Domain
 - Freedom from discomfort; A suitable environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- Health Domain
 - Freedom from pain, injury, and disease; prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- Behaviour Domain
 - Freedom to express normal behaviours; Sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
- Mental State Domain
 - Freedom from fear and distress; integration of the other 4 domains to maximise positive experiences and minimise negative ones.

Health and Safety

Colchester Zoo must comply with all the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and subsequent law. At Colchester Zoo, there is an established Health and Safety Policy, as well as formal risk assessment procedures. These include all aspects of visitor interaction/areas, all staff job roles and any other relevant places and/or procedures. For example, every behind-the-scenes experience has a specific risk assessment for each type of animal involved and every different type of experience which visits those specific animals.

Essentially, we follow the detailed Health and Safety regulations and requirements of a **large tourist attraction**, AND a specific **hazardous workplace** (in relation to exotic animals, etc.), AND multiple **children's play areas**, AND a **food-serving business**, as well as all general Health and Safety guidelines which apply to all business.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) both employers and employees have certain legal responsibilities:

- Employers have the responsibility to provide a safe place of work, safe systems of working and the appropriate training, supervision and information as required.
- Employees must not put at risk the health, safety and welfare of themselves, their colleagues or the general public. They must co-operate with their employer regarding Health and Safety and not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.



Procedures

There are several established procedures in place at Colchester Zoo which minimise the risk of accident and injury. These include animal escape, bomb threats and unauthorised entrance into an enclosure. Any staff working with hazardous materials follow COSHH regulations. All staff are trained on these procedures and regulations during their induction period.

Additionally, we follow specific health and safety protection for people with disabilities, young people under 18, pregnant women and other identified groups who require additional protection.

First aid

There are qualified and appointed first aiders at Colchester Zoo who are on call to deal with any accidents that occur. If there is an accident which involves either a member of staff or a visitor, our trained first aiders can respond at the first aid room (for minor injuries such as grazes or bee stings), or on site (for more serious injuries). In the event of very serious injuries, we have procedures in place to allow emergency paramedic access to all areas of the site, including specific plans for access to keeper/animal areas and unique public access areas (e.g. at the top of play areas; inside the upstairs of the giraffe house; etc.). We have three defibrillators located across the site, as well as first aider access to portable defibrillators.



Accidents, injuries, and near misses are reported following RIDDOR rules and regulations. This includes paperwork such as accident report forms and a site accident book.

Safety Around Animals

Animals do pose a Health and Safety hazard if they are not kept in suitable enclosures. All animals are housed in enclosures which ensure their safety, the safety of their keepers and the safety of all zoo visitors.

Colchester Zoo categorises our animals with a system which highlights potentially dangerous animals at varying levels (e.g. tigers, chimpanzees, pygmy hippos, etc.) through to animals that do not pose serious risks (e.g. land-snails, hissing cockroaches, etc.). Specific policies and procedures are in place depending on the category of the animals. For example, animals in the highest category have no direct contact (even with keepers), and there are restrictions on which keepers can work with them based on seniority and the supervision required to do so. In contrast, animals ranked in our lower categories can have keepers with less experience or lower qualifications working directly with them, as well as the possibility of allowing contact with our visitors (e.g. visitors can hold our snails).

More information regarding Colchester Zoo's enclosure design, and management of zoo animals can be found in our other information packs at:

www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/education/learning-resources/#info



Animal Handling

Any time there is close contact with animals, there is potential for injury or illness. This exists for all animals, regardless of their risk category (e.g. even a snail could potentially transmit an infection to a human). The main hazards for some of our close contact animal species include scratches, minor bites, being knocked over, and transmission of infections (zoonotic disease which can be transmitted from animals to humans).

To overcome these potential hazards, signage is used around the site informing visitors of the risk (e.g. if you walk through the goat enclosure, there is a chance they may jump on you and knock you down). Where close contact is allowed, we have staff present overseeing any interaction and ensuring the safety of our animals, whilst also ensuring that visitors follow safety rules and regulations.

To prevent transmission of potential animal infections, there are hand washing facilities available near all locations where close contact is permitted. Additionally, any animals used for close contact are regularly health screened for specific zoonotic disease (e.g. all reptiles used for handling are tested for salmonella on a regular schedule).

More information regarding Health and Safety in Zoos can be found at:

www.biaza.org.uk/downloader/1819

www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/visitor-attractions.htm

Mission Statement and Values

A mission statement provides businesses with a sense of direction whilst clearly defining the business' aims and objectives. As a zoo, conservation is core to our mission statement.

Our mission statement has three main components:

1) We strive to **provide a first-class visitor experience**.

To do this we must:

- Identify our customers
- Understand what our customers want and need

2) We want to **further understanding and respect towards animals**.

To do this we must:

- Ensure excellent animal care
- Provide visitors with education and information relating to our animals, the environment and threats these both face

3) We want to **help wildlife conservation**. To do this we must:

- Work at the zoo to contribute to ex-situ conservation
- Fund and support in-situ conservation projects around the world

As a zoo, conservation is core to our mission statement. However, the business component of 'being a great visitor attraction' is essential to why we exist. If we were not a popular attraction, there wouldn't be any income to provide funding for our conservation work, nor would there be any audience to educate about our animals and the threats they face. Therefore, the three aspects of our mission statement are intertwined and are all important in terms of why and how we exist as a business.

Our mission statement is further supported by our core values:

Improve: We encourage creativity, strive to think differently and turn our ideas into actions.

Deliver: We ensure the highest standard of care for wildlife, provide excellent guest service and create fun and transformational experiences that connect people to nature.

Collaborate: We conduct ourselves in a manner that fosters respect and teamwork among staff, volunteers and our partners to achieve our mutual goals.

Care: We are proud, energetic and passionate about saving wildlife and will inspire others to value the critical role of our zoo.

In more detail, **Colchester Zoo** ensures we fulfil our mission and follow our values by:

- Ensuring an excellent and enjoyable day out for visitors. To do this we must:
 - Understand our customers' needs and wants
 - Offer competitive pricing, activities and experiences
 - Ensure we are aware of - and plan for - future needs and wants
- Providing high quality animal care in accordance with best practice. To do this we must:
 - Ensure we meet the 'Five Freedoms' (as defined by British Animal Welfare Law)
 - Design animal enclosures to best suit animal needs while also meeting the needs of visitors and zoo keepers
 - Ensure the site (including enclosures), and keeper actions remain current with improvements in animal care including: veterinary care; enclosure improvements; animal training; animal enrichment; and conservation actions (including breeding)
- Participating in co-ordinated breeding programmes, giving priority to species that are threatened in the wild. To do this we must:
 - Work alongside EAZA (European Association for Zoos and Aquaria) and WAZA (World Association of Zoos and Aquariums) to ensure the conservation of threatened species in captivity, while following best practices and animal care guidelines
 - Develop a comprehensive Collection Plan taking into account species knowledge, status in the wild, and the presence (or absence) of co-ordinated breeding programmes
 - Follow EAZA (or other relevant) recommendations for animal transfers and movements
- Promoting care for the environment and leading by example. To do, this we must:
 - Have a sustainability plan and policy for our own actions
 - Promote awareness of, and adherence to, sustainable principles among our visitors
 - Actively strive to become more energy efficient, improve water conservation, reduce waste, and ensure we source responsible and trackable products, food, and packaging
- Supporting field conservation programmes in the wild, through Colchester Zoo's Action for the Wild (AFTW) charity. To do this we must:
 - Manage AFTW through grant distribution and guidance for global conservation projects
 - Encourage donations to AFTW and contributions from the zoo's operating budget
 - Manage the UmPhafa Private Nature Reserve in South Africa to provide conservation opportunities, research provision and habitat rewilding and restoration
- Developing our role in zoological and conservation research. To do this we must:
 - Ensure our research priority list aligns with our mission and values
 - Develop links with universities and other research institutions locally and internationally
 - Work with onsite researchers to ensure animal husbandry best practices whilst providing valuable research to help further animal care and conservation
- Increasing public understanding of animals and conservation. To do this we must:
 - Educate visitors about animals, including the conservation role of zoos
 - Provide engagement surrounding sustainability issues, including promoting actions we are taking on-site to improve our sustainability, and what visitors themselves can do
 - Engage with visitors about our AFTW projects and conservation in the wild
 - Provide formal education from pre-school to degree level on a range of curriculum linked educational topics with a focus on animals and conservation

Zoo Sustainability

Colchester Zoo is striving to improve the way we manage our site to reduce our negative environmental impacts, whilst at the same time, improving nature on-site and encouraging our visitors and staff to do the same. We are currently focusing on six main target areas:

1) Waste Management

With over 1 million visitors per year, we provide a high level of waste. We continually strive to reduce this in a variety of ways.

We have reduced and removed single use plastic, including polystyrene, in all our food outlets (wherever possible, excluding food health and hygiene regulations). We have switched to paper, sustainable birchwood, Vegware™ (a compostable plant fibre), or reusable products wherever possible. For example, when refurbishing our catering outlets, we are transferring our soft drinks from plastic bottles to draft systems. We are also removing plastic from other places, not just our catering outlets. For example, we use hivewrap (100% recyclable and biodegradable paper wrap) instead of bubble wrap for posting fragile items. In retail, we no longer sell single-use helium balloons on-site. Instead, we now offer re-inflatable animal toys. These allow for sustained play, as well as preventing balloon 'escapes' as previously occurred with our helium balloons. We are also striving to replace other retail products with more sustainable options, such as our Ecokin range of soft toys made using recycled plastic water bottles. For more details see our Plastic Pledge online here <https://www.colchester-zoo.com/plastic-pledge>

For waste produced on site, the zoo operates a 'single-stream' recycling system. This means that rather than having separate bins, all visitor waste (including rubbish and recyclable material) is put into the same bin. The zoo then uses a third-party company to individually sort and separate this waste into recyclable, compostable, refuse derived fuel (RDF), and landfill. This method is more efficient than relying on visitors to appropriately sort rubbish as overwhelming visitors with too many recycling options results in only 2% of our rubbish from site ending up in the landfill.

We encourage our visitors to reduce their waste. For example, within the zoo an additional 5p is charged on hot drinks purchased in a disposable cup which is not charged to people using reusable cups. This charge is then donated to our AFTW charity to help fund conservation projects worldwide. Reusable cups can also be refilled on site.



Our animal waste is managed in two ways. All herbivore waste (including animal faeces, used animal bedding, etc.) is composted at an on-site muckheap. When broken down, this is then used by local farmers as fertiliser. Omnivore and carnivore waste can contain biological pathogens and zoonotic disease. For these health and safety reasons, and to follow environmental and zoo legislation, all omnivore and carnivore waste is sent to a registered facility for incineration.

2) Energy Improvements

Wherever possible, we strive to improve our energy efficiencies. For example, a variety of our 'tropical' animal houses rely on passive solar heating (essentially greenhouse-like roofs) to supplement other heating systems. Many of our staff and public areas make use of motion sensitive lighting or lighting on timers. This ensures that we do not waste electricity on lighting when no one is in the area. Likewise, many of our office/admin buildings utilise climate control systems to ensure we do not heat buildings unnecessarily when they are not in use (e.g. on weekends when certain buildings are not staffed).

Many of our buildings across the site, both new buildings and retrofitted buildings, make use of green living roofs. Depending on the specific location, these roofs may make use of a variety of plants, including mosses, grasses, and drought-loving plants to create a living vegetative layer across the rooftop. As well as providing aesthetic benefits, these roofs help reduce energy use. The natural plants help to absorb solar energy. This naturally helps keep buildings cooler during hot days in summer. On cooler days across winter, these green roofs provide a layer of insulation and help the buildings maintain heat, thus lowering energy usage. These living roofs have many other benefits as well, including producing oxygen, providing shade, housing pollinator plants, and slowing water runoff during heavy rain.

Additionally, where site improvements and new buildings have been constructed, the zoo strive to use renewable energy for heating and other electrical needs. Depending on the specific location within the zoo and the access to necessary resources, we have installed biomass boilers and active solar panels. Our biomass boilers burn waste sawdust shavings (compressed into pellets) from the timber industry. We are also registered as a self-supplier with BSL, supplying all our own fuel for one biomass boiler from waste wood from the zoo. These biomass boilers are an improved and innovative design combining the advantages of traditional biomass ejector and bottom feeding systems. They also utilise improved cleaning systems that retain flue gases which improves performance whilst reducing ash residues.



3) Reducing Water Usage

We are striving to reduce our water usage, and especially any water wastage on site. We seek out and fix leaks within our water system - which is quite a challenge sometimes as some of it has been in place for 50+ years!

Throughout the site we utilise rainwater where possible, including via water butts collecting runoff from buildings and more in-depth water recycling systems utilising rainwater. For example, our Komodo dragon enclosure collects rainwater from the roof into large holding tanks under the entire enclosure. This water is then cycled through the enclosure (with cleaning) in order to ensure tropical levels of humidity.

When redeveloping areas, or installing new buildings, we look for further ways to improve our water efficiency. This includes utilising grey water wherever possible, such as for toilet flushing.

Additionally, across the entire site, the natural water runoff (e.g. from rainwater) is collected into our main lakes. Via a series of reed beds, and other vegetated areas, this water is naturally filtered and cleaned before outflowing into the Roman River, which connects to the Colne River and the surrounding Colne Estuary National Nature Reserve.

4) Procurement via Responsible and Sustainable Sources

As a large business, we utilise a wide variety of suppliers for a range of products including catering supplies and retail stock, as well as animal bedding and food. We actively seek out environmentally ethical companies and products where possible and encourage existing suppliers and contractors to show consideration of the environment. This includes not just choosing sustainable sources, but also environmental friendly initiatives such as reducing packaging, ensuring chlorine-free paper, promotion of Fair-Trade principles, etc.

For our catering outlets and animal food, we strive to ensure food is sourced as locally as possible to reduce our food transport miles (and thereby, our carbon footprint). As such, many ingredients used to prepare food on site are Red Tractor assured.

In addition, we seek other products certified in a variety of sustainable ways. For example, all our coffee sold on-site is certified by the Rainforest Alliance. We aim to only use FSC certified timber in all new construction. Our food products are RSPO approved, or palm oil free (for more details see our palm oil statement online here www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/sustainability).



5) Enhancing Biodiversity on Site

We are working hard to increase the value of wildlife habitat within the zoo grounds to encourage native plants, increase pollinator diversity, and improvise habitat for local British wildlife. We have increased plantings of native species across the zoo grounds. These are beneficial for native wildlife (including pollinators), as well as requiring less maintenance (e.g. watering in the summer). Where non native species are planted, we strive to select drought tolerant, low maintenance plants to limit (or remove entirely) reliance on fertilisers and intense watering. In line with this, we have shifted away from damaging sprayers to control pest weed species across site, and instead focus on manual removal.

Where relevant, we provide information about wildlife friendly gardening and ways of enhancing biodiversity for zoo visitors to take part in at home. This includes identifying native species as well as providing positive green gardening advice. Throughout the site we have examples of various bug hotels, solitary bee hives, overwintering locations for butterflies, and other wildlife friendly gardening ideas.

Our Nature Area is the best example of improved biodiversity on site. This is an area of old farmland near the bottom end of the zoo that has been transformed from a waste field overgrown with nettles (which, despite being native to the UK, have relatively low habitat diversity value), to a thriving riparian habitat linking to the Roman River Nature Area. This includes natural ponds, wildflower plantings such as hedgerows, and larger specimen trees and shrubs.

We are working hard to improve our knowledge of the wildlife that currently utilises our site. This has included participating in various BioBlitzes, moth surveys on site and bat monitoring programs to look at roosting bats. Crowd-sourcing our visitors to help with citizen science identification, we have worked in collaboration with iNaturalistUK and the National Biodiversity Network Trust on the BIAZA Spotted on Site campaign to identify native species across our site.



6) Engaging our Stakeholders in Sustainable Action

As well as taking sustainable action ourselves, we are working hard to encourage good environmental practices among our staff, visitors, and the wider community. We aim to do this through training, awareness and participating in environmentally sensitive initiatives.

We have a range of actions across site which encourage these actions and behaviours. For example, we encourage visitors and staff to limit vehicle idling on site and promote sustainable transportation options where possible.

In a broader scope, we publicise our green policy and objectives and encourage our visitors and staff to follow our examples (e.g. focus on water conservation or search for sustainable products when purchasing). We are also working on creating links to the wider community and encouraging participation across the local region in green schemes and initiatives.

Business Structure

Colchester Zoo (as of the 2024 fiscal year) is a private limited company. We are not a registered charity and do not receive governmental grants or support such as lottery funding*.

The zoo's income comes from admissions, items and food purchased, as well as the purchase of experiences. The money is reinvested into the zoo to aid in the maintenance of the zoo and future developments.

Colchester Zoo Limited

The business is owned and managed by the Managing Director, Dr D. A. Tropeano. All policy decisions are ultimately made in collaboration with the management team.

The day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the Zoo Manager who reports directly to the Managing Director. The animals within the zoo are the direct responsibility of the senior Animal Management Team, who report to the Zoo Director (see the staffing chart later in this pack for more details).

Stakeholders

Colchester Zoo has stakeholders which are groups of people interested in the finances of the zoo. These groups include customers, employees, potential employees, suppliers and distributors, the local community, the local government and the media.

Shareholders

As a private company, Colchester Zoo does not have any shareholders. We do not receive any grants from the council or other charitable bodies. As a private business, Colchester Zoo also has to pay Corporation Tax, Business Rates and VAT. Colchester Zoo also has a charitable arm, known as Action for the Wild. This charity funds conservation work in the wild all around the world and as a charity, it can receive gift aid donations.*

Competition

Colchester Zoo's competition are any other leisure and tourism places to which visitors may go instead of coming to the zoo. These can include other attractions such as zoos and theme parks, as well as other activities such as family events or days at the beach.

Colchester Zoo stays ahead of its competitors by:

- **Valuing customer feedback.** Understanding the positives and negatives seen by customers allows us to adapt our products and services to better suit customers' wants and needs.
- **Pricing strategies.** We price products to ensure customers receive excellent value for money, whilst also ensuring our pricing is comparable to our nearby competitors.
- **Research our competitors.** We stay aware of what other attractions (especially other zoos) are offering visitors in order to stay current with developments in the zoo/tourism industry as well as being aware of specific dates for big (potentially competitive) events, etc. which may impact our event schedule or visitor numbers.
- **Ensuring best practices in animal welfare.** By addressing animal needs and requirements as a first priority, we can ensure we are viewed as a site of conservation, education and research where our visitors can support us and feel aligned with our core mission statement.
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- See the specific 'COVID Business Impacts' section of this document for exceptions to this in 2020 and 2021
- **Details of how the zoo operates as the charity, Colchester Zoological Society, are not included in this pack

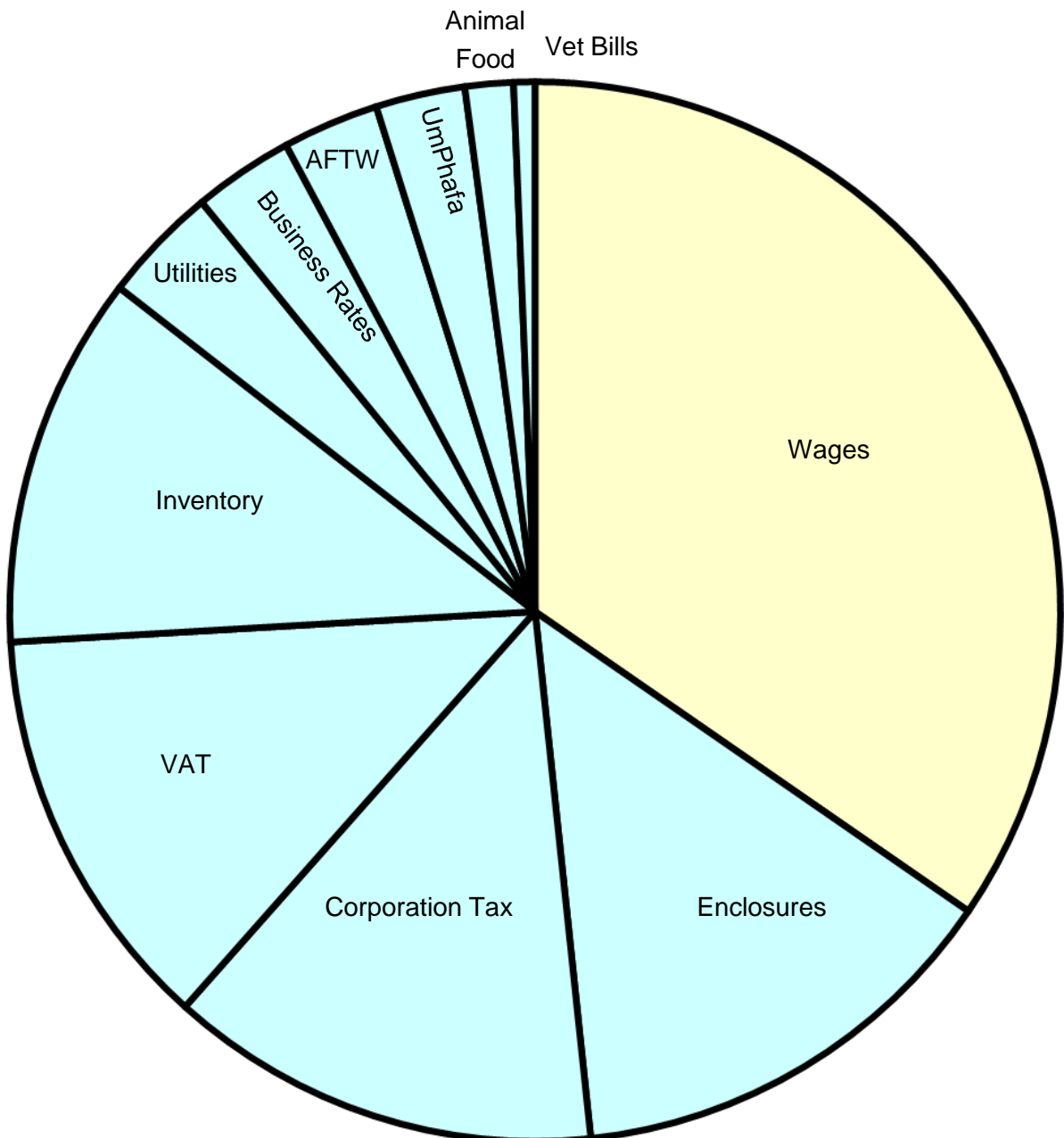
Zoo Finance

Financial Operations

Colchester Zoo is open year-round (except for Christmas Day). It receives its main income during the Easter and summer school holidays. The winter months of January and February are the quietest and income is at its lowest during this period.

It costs around £287,000 a week (approx. £41,000 per day) to run Colchester Zoo. Below is a pie chart showing where the money goes.

Note: AFTW is Colchester Zoo's charity, Action for the Wild, and UmPhafa is Colchester Zoo's private nature reserve in South Africa.



Financial Objectives

Unlike other business, it is not the aim of Colchester Zoo to make as much money as possible. As the care of the animals is paramount, profit is reinvested to improve the care of the animals and to support conservation work.

Profits are also reinvested into the zoo's visitor facilities to ensure that visitors have an enjoyable experience during their day. These facilities range from improving the toilets and upgrading disabled facilities, to redeveloping food outlets in order to increase capacity, and improving food options.

The financial objectives of Colchester Zoo are:

- **Gain operational efficiencies**
- **Improve the zoo's infrastructure**, for both animals and visitors
- **Develop new sources of revenue**, aligned with our mission statement and values
- **Grow the zoo's supporter base**, to gain more visitors from a wider area
- **Invest in our site**



Orangutan Forest

Built in 2008 to replace the old orangutan enclosure which was built in 1972. This improved the care provided as well as management of the orangutans. This design also enhanced the visitor experience and allows for better education.

Southern Kitchen Redevelopment

Redeveloped in 2017 to modernise the kitchen facilities and improve efficiency, as well as creating a more pleasant eating environment for visitors.



Cost Classification

Costs can be fixed or variable and direct or indirect

Fixed costs - a cost of total monetary amount, which remains constant as the activity level changes.

Includes taxes, buildings, equipment. Fixed cost items must be paid for whether the park is open or closed and whether there are guests or not.

Variable costs – a cost of total monetary amount that varies in direct proportion to changes in the activity level. Includes all non-capital costs, such as electricity, supplies, etc.

Fixed	Variable
Wages	Vet Bills
Business Rates	AFTW/UmPhafa
Corporation Tax	Enclosures
VAT	Inventory
Animal Food	
Utilities	

Utilities are in both, because if the Zoo wasn't open, the utilities would be a lot lower (e.g. not using all the visitor toilets, not heating restaurants, none of the restaurant utilities, etc.). However, the animals still need heat, light etc. even when there are no visitors in the Zoo.

We can also analyse our costs as direct and indirect.

Direct Costs: Any expense (fixed and variable) directly attributable to providing a good facility or service. **These expenses only exist because the zoo is open and/or operational.**

Indirect Costs: Remaining costs (fixed and variable) which would still need to be paid even if the zoo was not open/had no visitors.

Direct	Indirect
Inventory	Vet Bills
Wages*	Business Rates
	Corporation Tax
	VAT
	AFTW/UmPhafa
	Animal Food
	Enclosures
	Utilities

* Most of our wages are direct costs (e.g. staff at entrance, grounds staff cleaning up after visitors, play area staff running the play area, etc.). However, there is a portion of wages which is indirect because the animals will still need care regardless of whether there are visitors in the zoo.

Break-Even Analysis

Below is Colchester Zoo's break-even chart. As the chart shows, the zoo is very dependant on visitor numbers. The break-even point is the point when the zoo starts to makes a profit. Before the break-even point, the zoo is making a loss.

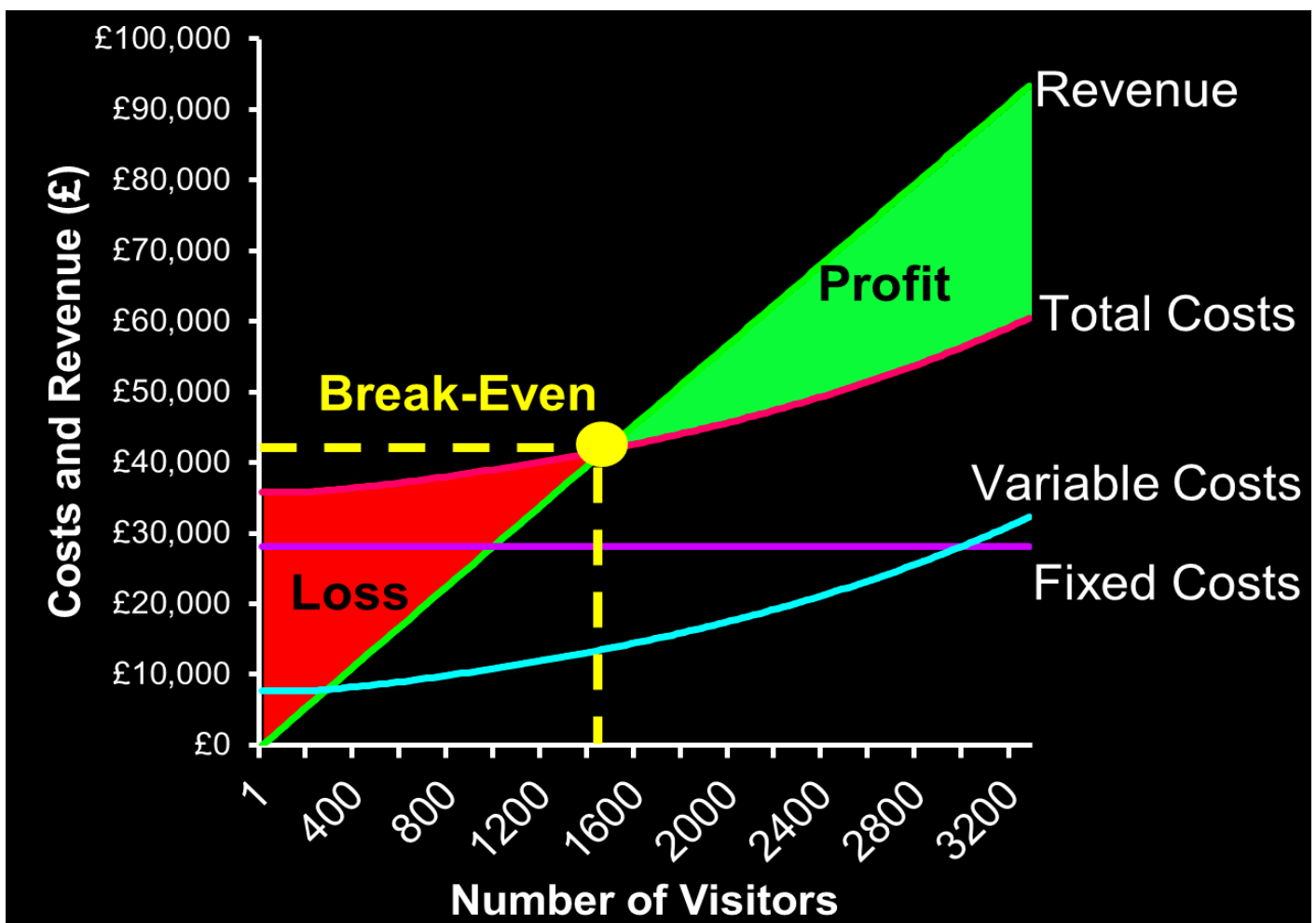
The green line is revenue. This is usually directly tied to visitor numbers: as more people visit the zoo, more money is made, not just from admissions, but from the secondary spend as well.

The purple line shows the fixed costs. These are costs that remain constant regardless of visitor numbers (e.g. taxes, most wages, etc.).

The blue line represents the variable costs. There is not a direct correlation between the variable costs and visitor numbers (which is why this line is not straight), however variable costs are affected by our visitor numbers (e.g. with more visitors we use more inventory, have higher utility usage, etc.)

Fixed costs and variable cost summed together give the total costs, represented by the pink line.

Where the total costs line intersects the revenue line is the 'break-even point'. This is when the zoo is making enough money to cover all of the costs. After that point, any revenue earned (above the amount to cover the total costs) is profit.



Staff at Colchester Zoo

Colchester Zoo employs around 280 members of staff on a full or part time basis. During the summer season, additional seasonal staff are employed to manage the higher visitor numbers.

Some of the main department at Colchester Zoo include:

Admission, Guest Services & Administration

This is our visitors' first point of contact when entering the zoo. In this department, they coordinate ticket sales, process group bookings and the various "Keeper for the Day" experiences. They are also an information point and coordinate lost visitors and lost property.

Retail

This is our visitors' last point of contact when leaving the zoo as our retail team runs the gift shop, selling everything from magnets, books and cuddly toys, to ornaments and furniture.

Catering

From washer-uppers and cooks, to catering assistants and cashiers, our catering team are responsible for running our many catering outlets around the zoo and making sure our visitors have choices of food and drink, no matter what their requirements may be.



Play Area

The play area team look after our smaller visitors! They supervise the soft play area, the Crazy Sand Shop and face painting. This team also create and host several shows for the visitors.

Grounds

This is an extremely busy team who ensure the 60 acres of zoo grounds are kept to the highest standards of cleanliness, making sure the bins are emptied regularly, the paths are kept clean and clear, and the toilet blocks are all kept to a high standard.

Gardening

The gardening team maintain the plants around the zoo. This includes all the formal plants in visitor areas, plants within animal enclosures and native British plants on the zoo's Nature Area.



Communications and Development Team

This team deals with all of the PR and promotions. As well as maintaining and developing the zoo's online presence on the website and social media, they also design posters, arrange filming for programmes like Zoo Days and publish our newsletter.

Maintenance and Development

A complete building team, consisting of carpenters, labourers, digger drivers, plumbers and electricians – all responsible for the construction of new animal enclosures and buildings around the park, together with the maintenance of all of our existing buildings.

Accounts & Human Resources

This team is responsible for all finance within the zoo. They ensure that staff are paid, organise invoices, pay our suppliers, manage our accounts, and coordinate NI, staff benefits and other paperwork. Additionally, this department assists with the coordination of job applications, as well as onboarding and inductions for new employees.

Animal Team

The animal keepers form one of the largest teams at Colchester Zoo, ranging from our curators to our trainee keepers. They look after all of the daily needs of the animal species to the highest standards possible. As part of ensuring the animals' welfare, keepers do training with the animals to allow for better husbandry as well as for veterinary purposes. The animal keepers also require public speaking skills, as this is the team that delivers the talks at animal enclosures as well as guiding and leading most of the behind-the-scenes experiences.



Conservation Education Department

This department is responsible for the formal and informal learning within the zoo. This includes learning for general visitors, with informational signs as well as online resources. Learning for formal groups includes running sessions for schools, home educators, and youth groups. Research projects on site are coordinated through this department, as is work-based learning and our 'Student Keeper' programme.

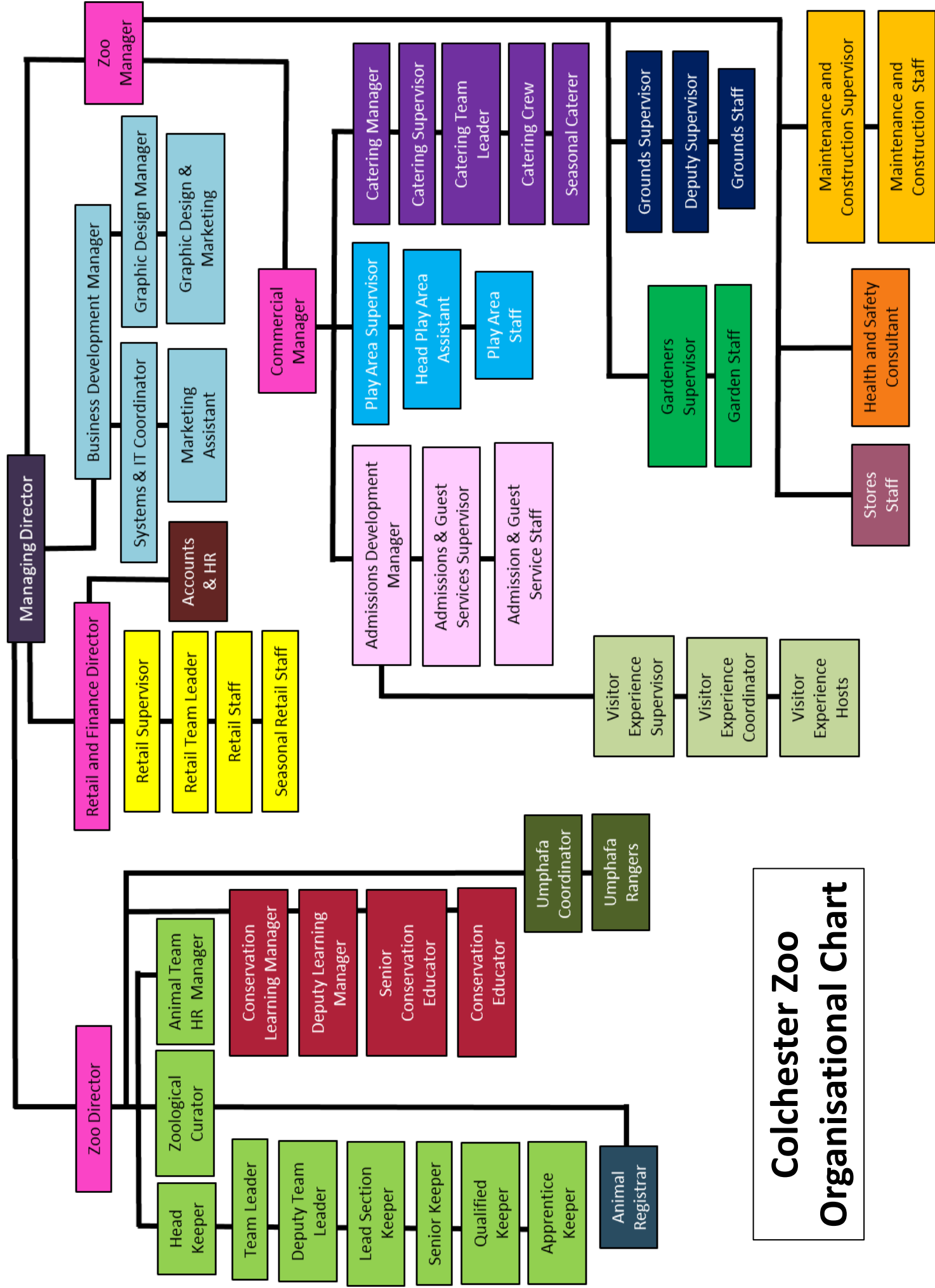
Volunteers

Colchester Zoo also has a dedicated team of volunteers. These people volunteer their free time to the zoo. We have two different roles for our volunteers. Our Animal Ambassador volunteers support visitor learning by providing information about animals and enclosures while helping raise awareness of conservation work and the threats these animals face. Our Zoo Host volunteers help us ensure our guests have a great visitor experience. They are the smiling face that many of our visitors see after they enter the zoo and are always happy to point the way or provide any information needed.



UmPhafa Team

Colchester Zoo's charity, Action for the Wild operates a private nature reserve called UmPhafa in South Africa. The staff working for this department are mainly based in South Africa. They are responsible for the management of the reserve, support research, coordinate the rehabilitation of the habitats and ensure the reserve is a safe place for wildlife. Most of the staff are hired from the local community and the team are involved in community projects as well.



Colchester Zoo
Organisational Chart

Staff Recruitment

Recruitment may be due to growth of the business, internal promotions or staff leaving. Vacancies at Colchester Zoo can be filled internally – i.e. by someone who already works at the zoo; or externally – i.e. by someone outside of the zoo.

Colchester Zoo is an equal opportunities employer and has an equal opportunities policy. The policy's aim is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, beliefs, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.

Recruitment Process

There are several steps to the recruitment process:

1. **Job description:** Describes the main tasks and responsibilities that comprise the job.
2. **Personnel specification:** Describes the type of person you are seeking.
3. **Advertisement:** Job advertisements need to raise interest and be eye catching. Colchester Zoo advertises jobs on the zoo website and through the BIAZA website.
4. **Short-listing:** Short-listing should be done by those who will be doing the interviewing. The personnel specification, job description and application form should be used as the most accurate and objective tools in short-listing. Short-listing is simply deciding which candidates you wish to invite for an interview.
5. **Interviews:** An interview is a controlled conversation with the purpose of gaining information to determine suitability and involves continuous assessment. Interviewers want to find out if the candidate can do the job, if they will they do the job well and if will they fit in.
6. **Second Interviews:** In some cases, a second interview may be part of the process. This would normally be a working interview to help see how that person works and for the staff members they may be working with to meet them and to then help with the selection.
7. **Selection:** The best person is then selected and a job offer made. It is also a good idea to have a second person as a 'back up' in case the first candidate declines the offer.

Induction

All new employees at Colchester Zoo receive a staff induction when they start. There is usually an 'induction session' or training day, with further information provided pre and post session. This induction is often carried out by a member of the relevant department working with a member of the human resources team. Depending on the job role, a group induction day covering many of the main points may be provided for many new employees on the same day (e.g. all new seasonal catering staff may have an induction together prior to the start of the busy Easter school holidays).

The purpose of an induction is to:

- Reduce anxiety
- Provide an introduction to Colchester Zoo and our mission statement
- Give the opportunity to meet co-workers as well as other relevant staff from other departments
- Ensure all paperwork is completed accurately and appropriately
- Allow new employees to understand ways of working
- Provide legal health and safety information
- Explain the working environment and facilities
- Reiterate terms of employment and main duties of job roles

During the induction process the following categories are covered:

Pre-employment which includes: joining instructions; ensuring right to work; paperwork (including banking details, computer logons, etc.); uniform policy; employee handbooks; etc.

Health and Safety which includes: emergency procedures (e.g. fire, animal escapes, etc.); first aid procedures; accident reporting; PPE as appropriate; smoking policies; etc.

Workplace Compliance which includes: security; confidentiality agreements; data protection; etc.

Facilities which includes: IT (as appropriate); staff parking; orientation to the zoo (including relevant staff rooms, admin buildings, first aid locations, etc.).

Organisation Information which includes: the zoo's mission statement; products and services; our customer care policy; etc.

Benefits and Policies which includes: pay (methods and date); NI information; pension schemes; other benefits; working hours; timesheet reporting; etc.

Role Specific Information which includes: reiteration of the job role and requirements; introduction to the department/team; organisational orientation (of the entire zoo).

As part of the induction process, departments utilise job specific New Employee Checklists. This provides a handy list of all the steps in the induction process of a new employee. It ensures that no steps are forgotten and that all employees are appropriately trained. This includes training for job roles (e.g. the use of computer systems or cash tills), as well as health and safety training.

Staff training and development

Colchester Zoo values its staff members and so offers training and development throughout employment. This is based on job roles and staff specific skills and expertise.

In house training may include:

Customer relations
Dealing with difficult customers
Successful merchandising
Environmental enrichment
Animal training
Presentation skills

External training may include:

Food and Hygiene Certificate
First Aid
Driving courses (forklift)
NVQ Team Leader
NVQ Customer Services
Level 3 Zookeeper & Aquarist Apprentice

Staff Appraisals

Colchester Zoo monitors work performance via appraisals on a continuous basis so that strengths can be maximised and any weaknesses overcome

New employees have designated appraisals at set times depending on their job role. After completing their probation period, appraisals then take place annually.

Appraisals record an assessment of an employee's performance, their potential opportunities and any development needs. Appraisal objectives include:

- Reiterating key job roles
- Highlighting successes and why
- Identifying areas to be improved and why
- Re-evaluating any set targets or aims
- Agreeing on future targets or aims and planning how to achieve these
- Identifying skill gaps and relevant training or assistance to bridge these gaps

Customers

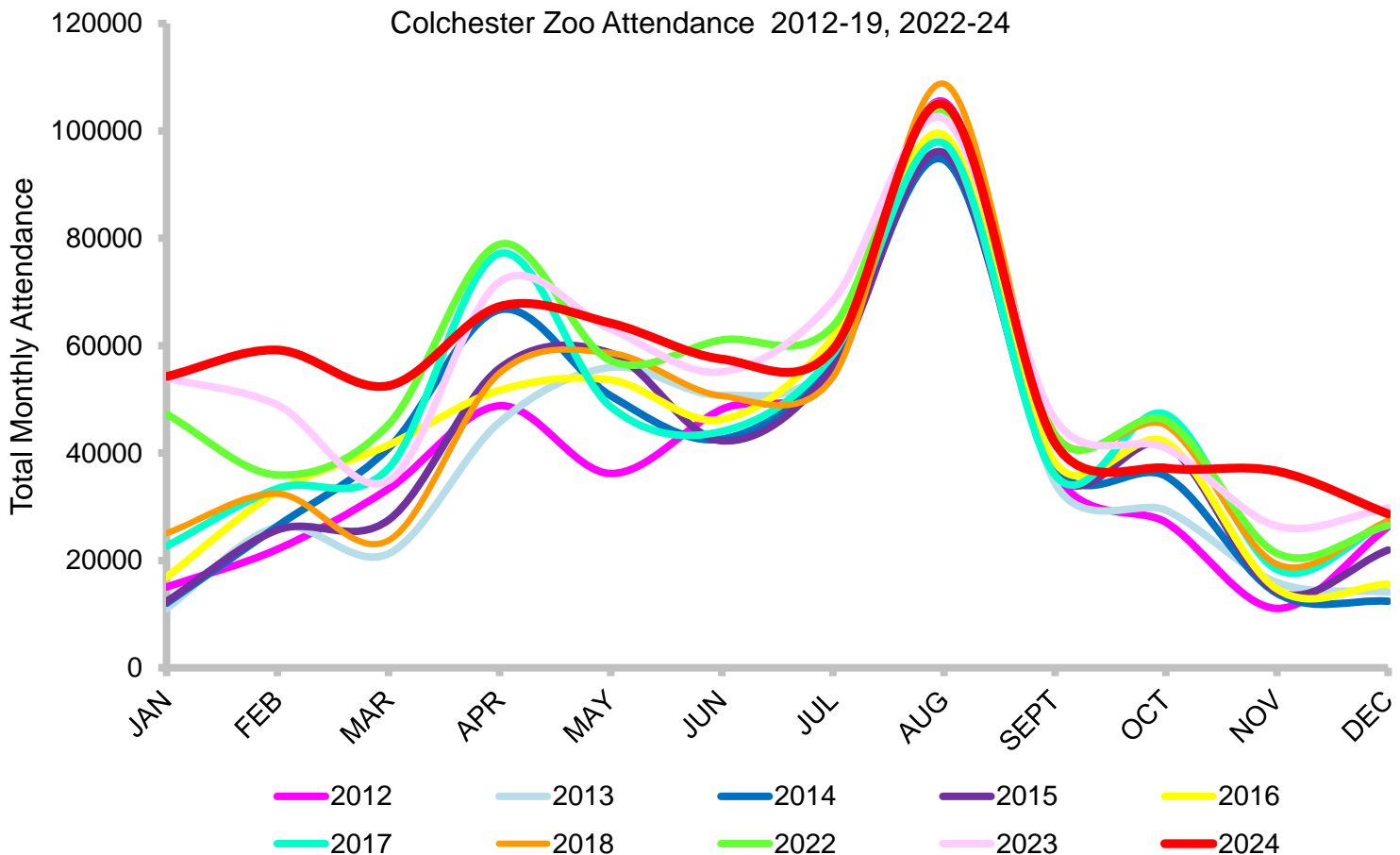
On average, Colchester Zoo has around 1 million unique visitors every year. This is in addition to our zoo pass holders who can visit multiple times whenever they want across the year.

We have an exceptionally loyal and local customer base with 86% of our visitors living within a 30-minute drive of the zoo.

Demographically (with variation year to year), our customers are made up of approximately:

- 70-75% families (including grandparents)
- 15-20 % adults visiting without children
- 10-15% schools
- 1-2% organised groups (e.g. Girl Guides, Scouts, coach tours, international tour groups, etc.)

As shown in the graph below, these visitors are not evenly distributed throughout the year. There are two main peaks over the Easter and summer school holidays. This makes sense because the majority of our visitors are families, and they visit when the children are not in school. There are also other smaller peaks coinciding with October, February, and May half-terms as well as the Christmas holidays. Despite these small peaks, attendance is comparatively low over the autumn and winter and higher over the spring and summer months. Once again, this makes sense as we are an outdoor site and visitors prefer to come to the zoo when the weather is typically better.



*Please note, 2020 and 2021 are not included in this graph due to their unusual attendance patterns, please see the end of this pack 'Covid Impact' for more details of operations during these years

Meeting Customer Needs

Colchester Zoo needs to take into account the four main needs of our customers: price, quality, choice, and convenience. We meet these needs in the following ways:

Price:

Colchester Zoo uses **competitive pricing** by researching other nearby tourist attractions. For example, Colchester Castle, East Anglia Railway Museum, Jimmy's Farm, etc. As well as attractions nearby, we also research similarly sized zoos across the entire country. For example, ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, Chester Zoo, Blackpool Zoo, etc. Based on comparison factors between us and the other attractions (i.e. what the visitors actually get out of their entry fee) we set our prices to match. This includes our entry ticket prices, as well as prices for behind-the-scenes experiences and other products we offer.

Like many outdoor tourist attractions, we also offer **seasonal pricing**. As shown in the graph of visitor attendance, we are busiest during summer, and relatively quiet over winter. Our 'Peak Season' (sometimes called 'High Season') prices are typically our highest and in place from approximately Easter school holidays until the end of October half-term. Our 'Off Season' (sometimes called 'Low Season') prices are usually our lowest and available for January-February. The rest of the year we have 'Mid Season' (sometimes called 'Shoulder Season') pricing which is set in the middle. These higher prices allow us to accommodate the needs for higher staffing levels during our busier seasons as well as help us attract visitors during the quieter times of year. Some outdoor attractions (e.g. many theme parks) close over winter. Colchester Zoo (and many other zoos) typically remain open, since the animals require feeding and care every day of the year and so we can not simply shut down for the winter months.

Colchester Zoo frequently uses **discounted prices** for a number of different reasons. These let us acquire new customers (e.g. a partnership where employees at a local business who may not have visited before get 10% off). Discounts can also help increase sales, for example a buy one get one free offer, or a free hot drink voucher with any food purchase. Specific discounts can also help to gain repeat visitors, and we frequently run offers that allow visitors to upgrade their day ticket to a season pass with a discount. We also run discounts, such as our 'January Blues' offer to encourage out of season visits when the zoo is quieter.

Throughout the year Colchester Zoo runs many special events. Especially popular are the Christmas and Halloween events. These events are special and themed around holidays (e.g. the Christmas Grotto or the Halloween late night Trail of Terror). Due to this, and the expectation that customers attending these experience are not visiting to see animals (the usual purpose for a visit to the zoo), but instead visiting only for these special activities, many of these events have separate or additional **event prices**. This pricing allows us to offer additional things (e.g. every child who visits Father Christmas receives a gift), or to price specifically for an event (e.g. a ticket for the Halloween Trail of Terror is only valid for the special night-time event, where we have costumed scarers, but the rest of the zoo is shut).

Quality:

Colchester Zoo ensures our visitors receive a quality product by analysing visitor feedback. This feedback allows us to ensure we are meeting customer needs and providing the quality of product they expect for the price paid. For details of the types and kinds of feedback analysed, please see the more detailed section in this information pack titled 'Customer Feedback'.

Choice:

Colchester Zoo has a very wide range of customers in terms of demographics. As such, we try and offer a wide range of products and services to suit their varying needs. This allows us to ensure that our customers have the choice to select the product (be that entrance, experiences, food, or retail products) that best suits their specific needs. This is best shown through some examples of what specific demographic/customer type some of our different products might appeal to:

- A local single parent with a newborn and a 2 year old can purchase an adult season pass to allow repeated visits across the year. The two children can enter the zoo free of charge, including entry to the indoor soft play area (especially popular in winter during poor weather).
- A family can visit the zoo to celebrate their child's 7th birthday. They have booked a private play area timeslot and a private face painting session for all the children attending, but to help keep costs down they have brought a picnic lunch and can all eat outside at the picnic tables. As part of their party package, each child attending gets a goody bag from the shop, including an inflatable animal (instead of balloons to limit single use plastic waste).
- A Corporate Business can partner with us to develop a bespoke 'corporate adoption package'. In addition to specific bespoke branding at an enclosure, the company receives entry tickets to distribute to their employees as staff incentives as well as tailored corporate teambuilding events held at the zoo.
- A group of 19 year old students from Essex University can purchase tickets to the Trail of Terror at Halloween. They won't get to see the zoo animals, but they will have a two hour Halloween experience including haunted house style activities.
- Grandparents who live in Colchester have a visiting grandchild who lives far away. They can visit the zoo using senior tickets (60+) and a child ticket which are both discounted compared to standard adult entry. As part of standard entry they can ride the train, meet some animals up close, and for a small fee the grandchild can have their face painted.
- A couple can visit the zoo as part of a behind the scenes animal experience. This includes their entry to the zoo, a two course table service meal, a souvenir gift bag, a private behind the scenes up close experience with one of our animals, and if they want, even the chance to plan a perfect proposal at the zoo.
- A couple can use Tesco loyalty vouchers to visit the zoo at a highly discounted rate. They have never been before and the cheaper price means they can enjoy a day out and see if they like the zoo. Because they are visiting in January (a typically slower month), they can make use of our additional on the day discounts and get a free hot drink with entry. They use the 'wet weather viewing' option in our app to ensure they still see as many animals as possible and make the most of their visit despite the poor weather.
- A school can visit the zoo with all their year 6 pupils as an end of year celebration. All 120 pupils can enter the zoo at discounted school rates. The school can organise ice lollies for each child and goody bags as souvenirs of their visit.
- A school can visit the zoo with one class of year 5 pupils on a focussed trip to learn about endangered animals. They can attend a free formal educational session about endangered animals during their visit. They can also download and use our free endangered species information pack and activity pack. The teacher has selected a number of activities for the pupils to complete during their visit, including an endangered species trail to make sure they see the key animals they are learning about at school.

These are just a few examples of the wide range of products available at Colchester Zoo. By providing such a range of options, we ensure our customers have a choice in what they buy and how much they spend on entrance, experiences, food and retail. These choices help us meet our diverse customers' needs.

Convenience:

Colchester Zoo strives to ensure our customers can access our products easily with as little hassle as possible. We have an online portal for season passholders to manage their zoo passes enabling them to renew passes (including receiving discounts), access data about their visits, and receive other passholder perks online. We also have an extensive online social media presence where we provide information and can answer visitor enquiries. For visitor ease, many of our products can be purchased online in advance, including experiences, day tickets, cash vouchers, gift experiences, food vouchers and retail products.

Where relevant, we can deliver products to customers, such as posting adoption boxes, or arrange for easy collection at the zoo, such as our pre-purchase picnic orders.

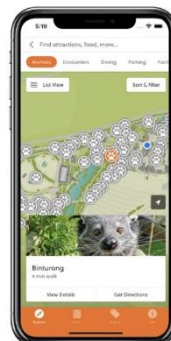
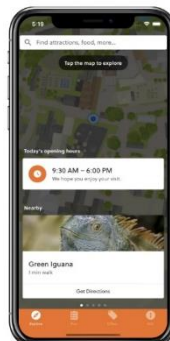
Accessibility:

To ensure convenience for our customers, Colchester Zoo also tries to improve accessibility wherever possible. Currently, approximately 5-10% of our visitors require assistance during their visit which we accommodate by providing a free assistant entry to the zoo at a 1:1 ratio for any qualifying visitors.

In order to improve accessibility, we also offer:

- A suggested easier route around the zoo (avoiding the steepest hills and most uneven ground).
- Manual wheelchair and mobility scooter hire once visitors arrive at the zoo.
- Wheelchair access for almost all areas of the zoo, including our train. This includes modifications for specific keeper areas so that visitors in wheelchairs can still participate in behind the scenes animal experiences.
- All toilets around Colchester Zoo and at our cafes have accessible toilet facilities.
- A Changing Places adult changing facility (Radar key access) is available with a height adjustable changing bench, space for additional assistants and a ceiling track hoist.
- Assistance Dogs are allowed within the zoo (with exceptions for specific enclosures containing free roaming animals, etc. for the safety and wellbeing of our animals).
- Hearing Induction T loops are fitted in our entrance building, Guest Services and many other locations around the zoo.
- Where possible we have provided additional audio information, such as our downloadable audio animal encounters.
- Our downloadable Visual Social Story helps visitors with additional needs know what to expect during their visit to the zoo, and can be paired with our Sensory Exploration Trails.
- We provide autism awareness training for our front line staff.

As we are an exceptionally large site (60 acres!), we have tried to improve navigability for the convenience and access of all visitors. Our improved Zoo App includes a live map feature, updated encounter times with nearby locations and a variety of other features to help our visitors make the most of their day.



Marketing Mix - Products

Colchester Zoo offers a range of different products which we break down into four categories:

Entry/Admission:

An entry ticket to Colchester Zoo provides access to over 60 acres and approximately 180 different species of animals. Our customers can learn about animals at keeper encounters, explore their habitats in a variety of naturalistic walkthrough enclosures, and have the opportunity to see these amazing creatures up close.

In addition to the animals, there are a variety of other activities. This includes many play areas (even indoor soft play) and a road train. Throughout the year, there are seasonal and special events that are included in our standard entry ticket. While some of these events have components that require an extra charge (e.g. receiving a gift from Father Christmas), most events include free activities such as meeting and posing for photos with our mascot dinosaurs during Dino Days.

There are also a variety of free activities for visitors to participate in during school holidays. These change throughout the year but might include the opportunity for visitors to go pond dipping, make enrichment for the animals, solve a mystery trail, or pretend to be a zoo keeper.

Retail:

This includes everything visitors can buy and purchase during their visit. This includes in the zoo purchases as well as purchases in our shop at the exit of the zoo. Many of our in the zoo retail offerings are seasonal and only available during peak times. For example, we sell inflatable animals (our more environmentally friendly alternative to balloons) and decorative sand art (that children can make) during the school holidays. There are also options available year round, such as face painting and purchasing food to feed animals in select walkthroughs.

Our retail shop provides a wide range of items for purchase from soft toys and t-shirts to beautiful sculptures and gifts. We have everything available from 99p items for pocket money spends to art for hundreds of pounds and everything in between. We also offer a wide range of bespoke 'My Moment' products which allows customers to personalise souvenirs from their visit.

Food & Drink:

Colchester Zoo allows visitors to bring in their own picnics, but we also provide a wide range of food and drink options around the zoo. Our two main food outlets (Penguini's Restaurant and Meerkat Hangout) are open every day, and our secondary outlets (Gourmet Sausage and The Waterhole) are open most days. We then have a variety of other outlets and temporary food kiosks which are open dependent on visitor numbers (based on e.g. pre-sold tickets), weather forecasts (with more open during better weather), and time of year (with more open over the school holidays). These restaurants provide options for everything from sweets, baked goods and hot drinks, to full formal plated meals. We also provide catering options for gluten free and dairy free as well as vegetarian and vegan customers.

Above & Beyond:

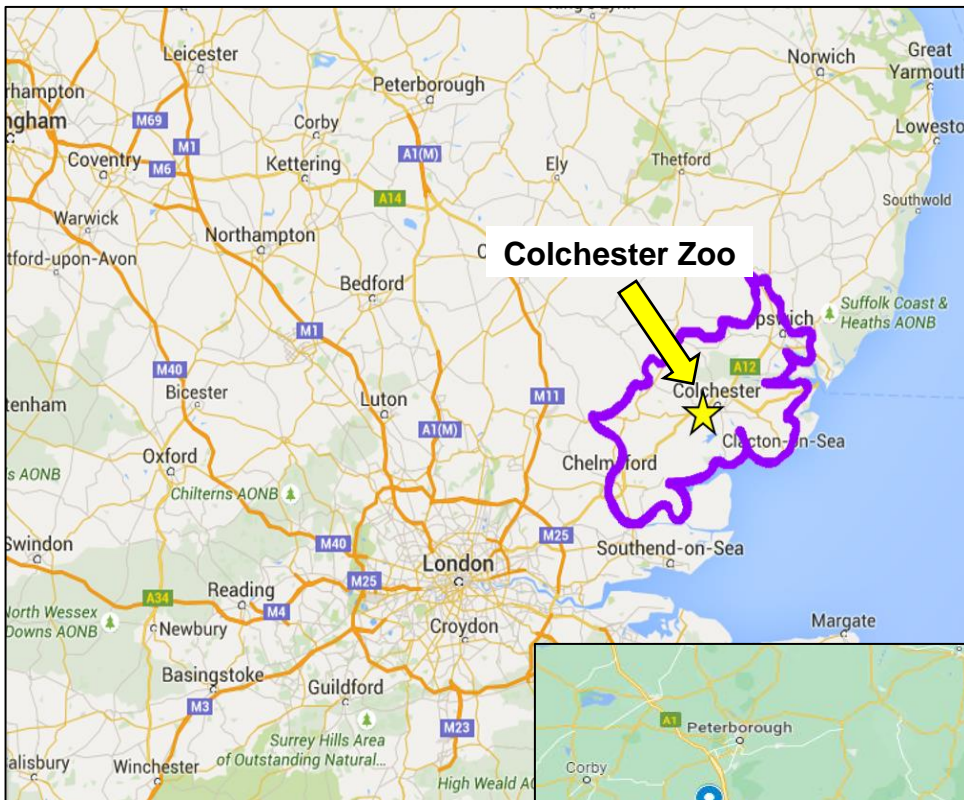
We offer an extensive range of products that give visitors the opportunity to go above and beyond as part of their visit and take part in a variety of special, bespoke, and behind-the-scenes experiences. There are options available in a wide range of price points, and to suit all visitors from young children to retirees. For the most up to date offerings, including prices, please see our website for further details:

www.colchester-zoo.com/gifts-and-experiences/animal-experiences

Marketing Mix - Place

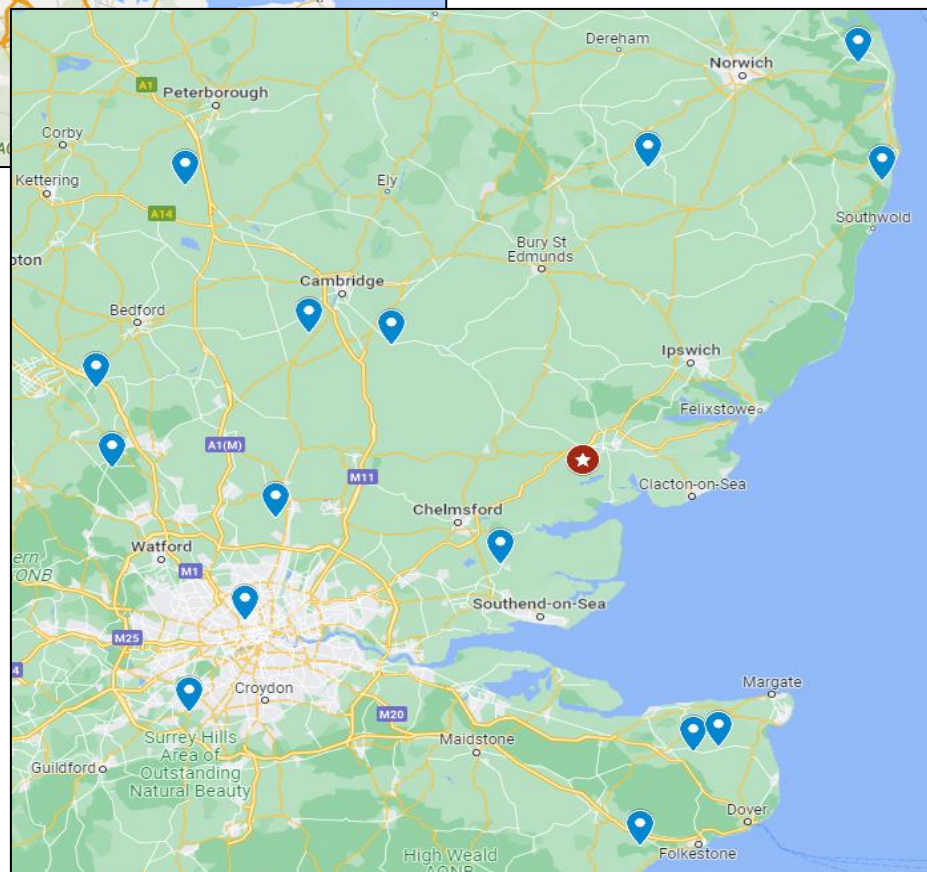
Colchester Zoo is situated 2 miles off the A12 south of Colchester. There are major road links via the A12 connecting with the M25, M11, A120 and A14. The zoo is signposted with brown tourist signs indicated by an elephant.

The zoo has an exceptionally local customer base with approximately 86% of visitors living within a 30 minute drive of the zoo (see the purple outline on the below map).



The zoo has an exceptionally local customer base with approximately 86% of visitors living within a 30-minute drive of the zoo (see the purple outline on the map to the left).

The map on the right shows the location of the zoo in relation to other zoos and similar animal attractions. Colchester Zoo fills a gap, with the nearest competitor animal attractions located near Chelmsford, Cambridge and into Norfolk.



Marketing Mix - Price

As with many zoos and other outdoor tourist attractions, Colchester Zoo utilises a changing price structure depending on the time of year. This allows us to generate additional income during our busiest season, when we require greater staffing levels in order to accommodate higher visitor numbers. This also allows us to attract more visitors during our quieter time of year.

Some outdoor attractions, such as theme parks, close over the quietest winter season. This is because they do not require staffing when they are not open. Since our animals require care year round, we have staff working every day of the year. As such, even if our visitor numbers are low, it makes sense to remain open even during our slower times of year.

Broadly speaking, we can break our prices down into:

- **Peak Season** (High Season): the busier summer season which for most zoos is April or May – end of Sept or Oct).
- **Shoulder Season** (Mid Season): varies depending on if there are special events, but for most zoos this is Nov and Mar or April
- **Off Season** (Low Season): is the quietest winter time (typically Jan-Feb/Mar)

Our pricing in December and October is usually dependent on special holiday events linked to Halloween and Christmas. Depending on the event, we may utilise 'peak season' prices, or have a separate 'event ticket' price to gain access to event activities only.

As well as changing our ticket prices based on the time of year, our prices are also based on what other nearby competitor zoos offer.

Below is a table of what it costs to visit Colchester Zoo compared to London Zoo and Banham Zoo. London Zoo has a larger visitor base with higher income (and is based in London), whereas Banham Zoo is listed, they are a smaller zoo and do not have all the large star animals.

Peak Season	Adult	Child
Colchester Zoo	£28.50	£21.00
London Zoo	£38.00	£28.10
Banham Zoo	£25.00	£19.00

Shoulder Season	Adult	Child
Colchester Zoo	£24.50	£18.00
London Zoo	£33.00	£23.10
Banham Zoo	£19.75	£15.25

Off Season	Adult	Child
Colchester Zoo	£18.50	£13.12
London Zoo	£26.50	£17.25
Banham Zoo	£16.50	£12.85

*Prices across 2024 for all three zoo's pre-booked ticket prices

Discount Prices

In addition to our standard entry prices, we also utilise discounts.

There are five main reasons we offer discounted prices:

1) Acquire new customers

We partner with various external organisations and voucher companies in an effort to attract visitors who may not visit Colchester Zoo otherwise. By providing extremely discounted prices, we can hopefully attract these new visitors (who may not be tempted to visit at the higher regular prices). For example, we have run promotions via Tesco Clubcard points for discounted entry. We have also partnered with Tendring District Council, Suffolk Police, Sainsbury's and a variety of other local organisations and business to provide discounts of 10%-25% off for their staff.

2) Increase sales

We run temporary discounts on our zoo passes, 'Above and Beyond Experiences' and our catering and retail options in order to increase sales. For example, we have run discounts of 15% off zoo passes and for bundles of four passes (e.g. two adult and two child passes) purchased in the same transaction. We also frequently run meal deals in our cafes and restaurants with discounts if a meal deal combination of food is purchased together.

3) Gain repeat customers

Some of our discounts are to encourage customers to visit us again on repeat visits. For example, after purchasing a day ticket, customers can upgrade to a season pass with a discount. This will hopefully encourage them to upgrade and return for more visits (and thus greater secondary spend).

4) Sell a specific item

These discounts often relate to specific holidays, events, or products we have in stock. For example, if we have a lot of ice creams in stock near the end of August, we may run a discount on them in order to clear the stock before the end of our busy season (and the warmer weather when people are more likely to buy ice creams). For this same reason, we often run Black Friday Week, or Christmas sales on specific seasonal goods in our retail shop.

5) Encourage out of season visits

Since the zoo is open year round, we want to encourage visits during our quietest months. In addition to our already discounted 'Off Season' prices, we sometimes provided further discounts to encourage these visits. For example, in a number of different years we have run 'January Blues' deals with tickets as low as £5 per adult entry in order to encourage mid week January visits. These deals also have the added benefits of potentially attracting new customers which will hopefully turn into repeat visits (see above).

When our visitors enter the zoo on discounted entry tickets, they are also more likely to purchase more products (retail and catering) once they are at the zoo, thus leading to increased secondary spend. Thus, while some of our entry prices are greatly discounted, the overall expenditure per visitor often remains approximately constant. This also leaves visitors feeling like they are 'getting a great deal', which in turn may lead to increased repeat visits and general better attitudes towards and opinions of the zoo.

Marketing Mix - Promotion

The advertising and promotion we use at Colchester Zoo can be analysed via the AIDA marketing model. This is a model that describes the steps that occur from the time a consumer first becomes aware of a product to when they actually buy it. The acronym stands for:

- **Awareness** – the customers learn that we exist
- **Interest** – the customers want to find out more about us
- **Desire** – the customer wants to buy our products/visit the zoo
- **Action** – the customer purchases our products/visits the zoo

The breakdown of the specific promotional methods we use, and which components of AIDA they link to is as follows:

Emails:

This includes our passholder e-letters, and various opt-in promotional emails and competitions (accessible via our website and social media feeds). The key benefit of email is that we can set it to run automatically (e.g. send an email automatically to a passholder on their birthday based on information in our customer database, offering discounted cake at our café).

We use email to generate **interest** (e.g. upcoming events), and drive **action** (e.g. containing links to purchase tickets, experiences, etc.)

Print Media:

We utilise leaflets onsite to advertise many of our above and beyond experiences. We have leaflets around the site, as well as at tourist locations through Essex and nearby. These leaflets work to generate **desire** relating to a specific product (e.g. our Keeper Shadow experience), or the zoo in general (e.g. our general zoo leaflet at the tourist information point in Colchester).

We also publish a zoo magazine. This is available free onsite, as well as at a variety of local partner businesses, such as the local Sainsbury's superstore, or the Odeon cinema. Our magazine is great for increasing **awareness** of what is available (for returning customers who might not be aware of changes), as well as attracting new customers who might not be aware of what is available.

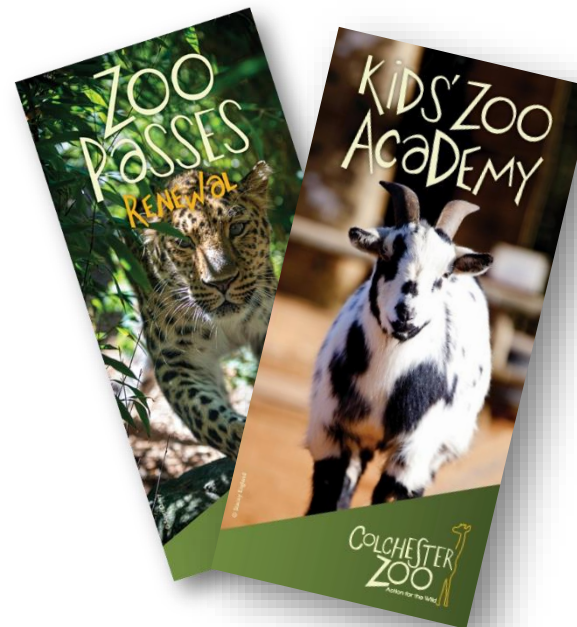
Radio:

We do not pay for radio advertising spots; however, we partner with local radio stations to provide free tickets or vouchers that they can utilise in prize draws (e.g. call in to win a family day out at Colchester Zoo). This provides the opportunity to reach a lot of people (at relatively low cost to us), and thus increase **awareness** of the site and our products.

TV:

As with radio, we do not pay for television advertisement; however, we have been used as a filming location for a wide variety of programmes ranging from 'Come Dine With Me', to 'BBC Attenborough documentaries'. TV reaches a large and diverse audience, and this is useful for raising **awareness**. These filming segments are usually short one-offs, and not something we actively seek out.

However, as and when they occur, we will partner with production companies in order to facilitate filming on site if appropriate, whilst ensuring the health and wellbeing of our animals at all times.



Corporate Sponsorship:

We offer a variety of individually tailored partnerships with local business and organisations to provide corporate sponsorship. Depending on the specific agreement, these businesses pay us to sponsor something at the zoo for a set amount of time (frequently a specific animal enclosure). In exchange, the business has their branding used on internal zoo signage, as well as promotion of their business in our zoo magazine and e-letters. Frequently these partnerships also involve corporate experiences and Teambuilding for the business as well as giveaway zoo vouchers which they can use internally at their business for staff motivation and perks.

This type of promotion offers two-way generation of **interest** and **awareness**, with visitors to the zoo now aware of these businesses and staff at the businesses being incentivised to visit the zoo.

Vouchers:

As discussed in the discounted prices section of this pack, we partner with various external organisations and voucher companies in an effort to attract visitors who may not visit Colchester Zoo otherwise. Vouchers have a number of benefits including raising **awareness** and **interest**, thereby attracting new customers who might not be familiar with Colchester Zoo. By offering extremely discounted vouchers, this can also directly lead to **action** with potential customers purchasing tickets because the price is just so good.

Online Presence – Website and Review Sites

The zoo has an extensive online presence enabling us to reach an exceptionally wide and diverse audience as well as providing potential customers with information about the zoo. This includes our own website, as well as engaging with visitors (and potential visitors) on a variety of review sites (e.g. TripAdvisor). Potential customers on these sites are usually already aware of Colchester Zoo, so these sites are therefore useful to increase **desire** (e.g. provide information about specific experiences they can have onsite or products they can purchase), as well as driving **action** with the opportunity to purchase day tickets, passes and experiences online via our website.

Online Presence – Social Media

Colchester Zoo utilises social media to generate **interest** among our followers in an engaging way. For example, we can mention upcoming special events, post photos and videos of new animals, tell stories about popular animals and run a variety of contests. All of these things can make our followers more excited and interested to come back and visit us in person again soon.

Our main social media site is Facebook, or content ported onto our Instagram and Twitter feed. We also utilise YouTube for longer, more in-depth video segments.

Non-Traditional Media:

In addition to the aforementioned promotional methods, Colchester Zoo also strives to use non-traditional media. This includes a variety of ways of reaching new audiences who may not be aware of the zoo or what we offer and thereby increase **awareness**. For example, we have had zoo staff attend the 'Association for Science Education' conference with teachers in order to promote science trips to the zoo for higher level science students. As another example, all of our zoo vans are branded with Colchester Zoo animals and logos. We also use branding and signage when attending community events, such as providing face painting at outdoor cinema events in Colchester's Castle Park. There are a variety of other activities and branding we use to help increase awareness, most of which would not be formally classified as traditional advertising media.



SWOT Analysis - Product Evaluation

As part of Colchester Zoo's sales forecasting and product evaluation, we undertake a SWOT analysis. This lets us focus on external as well as internal factors to identify where we are successful and where we could improve.

The breakdown of our SWOT Analysis of Colchester Zoo is as follows:

Strengths

This is where we excel as a business and succeed in terms of customers and products.

- Customer loyalty – exceptionally high numbers of passholders renew, and many older passholders/zoo visitors have been visiting the zoo since they themselves were children.
- Dwell time – our visitors have a high dwell time for an outdoor tourist site. Specific time varies based on weather, visitor type, and time of year but it is usually upwards of 4 hours. In turn, this contributes to a greater secondary spend.
- High Approval Ratings with visitors – they enjoy their visit, rank us highly on review sites, and provide us with good feedback. This also contributes to increased secondary, spend as well as repeat/return visits.

Weaknesses

These are internal disadvantages we have compared to our competitors.

- Huge staff – we need to employ a very large number of staff but many of those are seasonal positions which need to be filled each year.
- Fuel costs – with our extensive tropic spaces, heating costs are very large compared to entirely outdoor tourist attractions or even other zoos with more outdoor hoofstock paddocks.
- Lack of Partnerships – as a private business, the zoo has historically had a lack of external partnerships compared to other large (charitable) zoos in the UK. By actively building relationships with external organisations, councils, funders, grand distributors, and other supporters we can gain internal advantages and processes.

Opportunities

These external factors provide scope for growth and future improvements.

- Increased tourism – with more UK residents having staycations over the holidays (rather than travel to Europe), we have scope to gain more national exposure and attract an audience from a wider geographic region.
- Targeted Marketing - through the use of emerging technologies (such as targeted social media), we have access to a more cost-effective way of engaging directly with customers.
- CZS – the Charity – our transition to a charity will provide us huge opportunities for growth and access to funding and stakeholders that were not previously available.

Threats

These external factors pose risks to our business and are outside of our control.

- Animal Disease - there are many zoonotic diseases (e.g. bird flu, hoof and mouth, etc.) and outbreaks of these can impact how our visitors and keepers interact with animals, as well as laws and regulations relating to our animals.
- Cost of Living Crisis – when people have less to spend, high value items (e.g. some of our behind-the-scenes experiences) are cut, and non-essentials (like days out to the zoo) are also cut. Even if they still visit, we see drops in secondary spending.
- Weather – extreme weather events can result in visitors not wanting to visit the zoo, as well as potentially lead to changing requirements/restrictions in terms of animals we can safely keep

PESTLE Analysis – Market Research

As part of Colchester Zoo's sales forecasting and market research, we undertake a PESTLE analysis. This lets us examine external factors which could affect our visitor numbers and thereby our future sales and trends in product purchasing (including visits to the zoo).

The breakdown of PESTLE external factors which are most likely to influence the zoo include:

Political influences

- Brexit – the transition for Brexit has many impacts on zoos, including dramatic changes to animal transport with mainland Europe as well as changes in tourism
- Animal Welfare legislation – this can effect how animals are kept, or which animals are kept in zoos (e.g. the recent political discussion over keeping Elephants in Captivity)
- Education Policy - including everything from introduction of T Levels to curriculum changes (e.g. new Natural History GCSE)
- Pressure Groups – including anti-zoo lobby organisations, which can directly and indirectly influence animal welfare legislation
- Anti-terrorism measures – such as the Martyn's law, which imposes regulations and restrictions on any premise which has a certain threshold of attendees on site.

Economical influences

- Cost-of-living crisis – high inflation of fuel prices may reduce disposable income limiting leisure attraction visits.
- Tourism trends towards 'staycations' – also influenced by weaker pound post-Brexit and increased red tape for mainland EU travel
- Staff Shortages – post pandemic has been increasingly hard to attract seasonal and entry level positions, especially for our commercial side e.g. summer catering staff.
- Energy Costs – heating, lighting, etc. now have significantly increase overheads.

Social influences

- Opinions about zoos – for example, one negative TV program about can result in lack of visitors
- Local demographics of the Colchester area show that generally there is an aging population, with a (relatively) lower number of children. Families are also having children later. All of these could result in less desire for 'family days out at the zoo', as these are typically seen as days for younger children.
- Lifestyle trends – competition from indoor attractions, sopping, streaming content, virtual experiences, etc. means that families are increasingly time-poor and days out to the zoo are not always priorities
- Accessibility – raising awareness around neurodiversity and physical access needs mean that attractions must focus on inclusivity or risk losing some of their attendees.

Continuation of PESTLE external factors which are most likely to influence the zoo include:

Technological influences

- Use of CRM, online booking forms, and data-driven marketing can all for more personalised communication and visitor management
- Social Media – this is necessary for marketing, especially to attract a younger audience.
- Education Policy – emphasis on technology over natural history/nature could impact where schools can go on trips or what they can access
- Competing Tech – advance in virtual field trips, AI wildlife experiences, and home-based learning may reduce demand for in-person visits to the zoo – especially among education audiences.
- Conservation Technology – improvements in tech, genetics, and breeding programmes provides scope for zoos to strengthen their conservation involvement
- Mobile apps and other visitor tools can improve the visitor experience, as well as providing accessibility support and wayfinding.

Environmental influences

- Climate Change – specifically changing and severe weather patterns (e.g. more storms, high winds, etc.) can influence animal welfare, enclosure design, visitor comfort. This can also greatly lower visitor numbers
- Biodiversity Crisis – increasing awareness of loss of species means that visitors may be interested in this, but zoos need to clearly articulate their roles in species preservation.
- Sustainability – visitors and regulators expect and demand zoos to reduce their environmental impact (e.g. zero waste targets, ethical sourcing, reduced water usage, etc.)
- Sustainable Travel – zoos are pressured to support green transport options (e.g. EV charging points)

Legal influences

- Laws – the New SMZPGB will directly influence many zoo activities, such as handling animals, etc., as well as links to other animal welfare laws
- GDPR – Data Protection – the use of visitor data (e.g. for marketing) must comply with strict privacy laws
- Health and Safety Regulations are increasingly stringent and detailed (e.g. risk assessment, no-contact animals, emergency planning)
- Employment Law – e.g. changes to minimum wages, zero hour contracts, apprentice rights, volunteer protections, etc. can all change how we employee staff.
- Equality and Accessibility Law changes how organisations comply (e.g. with the Equality Act 2010), including things such as “reasonable adjustments”, inclusive communication, etc.

Market Research

In order to understand our visitors and to ensure we meet their needs, we conduct market research. To do this we can use primary data or secondary data.

Primary data is new research we specifically investigate and analyse. This is the most useful because it tells us exactly what we want to know. However, because we are specifically gathering the data this is more costly and takes considerably more staff time.

Secondary data involves analysis of already existing information. It doesn't incur costs or take time to gather (because the data already exists). However, it not might be what we want to know.

Some of the main types of market research undertaken at Colchester Zoo include:

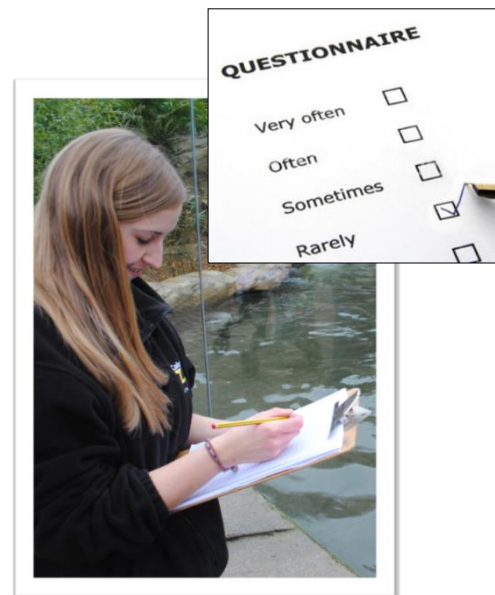
Primary Market Research at Colchester Zoo

Visitor surveys: ask visitors questions on specific topics, or about specific products. This includes visit questionnaires as well as more detailed feedback and comments.

Observations: by observing visitors on site we can learn about how they use zoo grounds, interact with interpretation, dwell time at specific enclosures, etc.

Social media: asking questions to gain opinions, feedback and generally gauge people's reactions. This is potentially useful for reaching audiences who might not visit the zoo in person.

Mystery shoppers: people employed by an external agency that visit the zoo and provide us with an unbiased account of their visit from a customer perspective.



Secondary Market Research at Colchester Zoo

Ticket sales: this includes analysing what types of tickets are purchased (e.g. adult or child); what ticket types are purchased in the same transaction (which gives an approximation of group size); when tickets are purchased; if tickets are purchased following a specific promotion; and a variety of other information relating to tickets and ticket types.

Turnstile data: including what tickets are used; how many visitors are entering the zoo at any given time; busiest times of day at entrance; etc.

Shop sales: including what is purchased; when most purchases occur; whether passholders are making purchases (tracked via discounts provided for passholders); what purchases are frequently made together; whether purchases are made in response to specific promotions; etc.

Café sales: similar to shop sales, including what is purchased; when most purchases occur; whether passholders are making purchases (tracked via discounts provided for passholders); we also have the opportunity to link sales to other site data such as which foods are likely to be purchased based on specific weather; etc.

Customer Feedback

Types of Feedback:

Broadly speaking, our customer feedback can be broken into three categories:

Complaint: a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable

Comment: a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion or reaction.

Compliment: a polite expression of praise or admiration.

ACT Fair Responses to Feedback:

Although as a business we try our best to meet and exceed visitor expectations, we do understand that situations may arise when a visitor wishes to give feedback about their visit. In response to feedback, Colchester Zoo follows ACT Fair Procedures:

- Acknowledge
- Confirm
- Track

Following these procedures for responses, we strive to:

Minimise the delivery of unsuitable products and services by encouraging best practice before, during and after customer engagement.

In order to meet the ACT Fair procedures, we have six core customer outcomes:

1. Customers can be confident that they are dealing with an organisation where the **fair treatment** of customers is central to the corporate culture.
2. Products and services marketed and sold are designed **to meet the needs** of identified customer groups and are targeted accordingly.
3. Customers are provided with **clear information** and kept appropriately informed before, during and after the point of sale.
4. Where customers receive advice, the **advice is suitable** and takes account of their circumstances and **individual needs**.
5. Customers are provided with products that perform as we have **led them to expect**, and the associated service is of an **acceptable standard** and also as they have been led to expect.
6. We will **value all comments, compliments and complaints** as opportunities to learn and improve our service and products.

Following these procedures, if a customer expresses dissatisfaction verbally or in writing, we need to put things right, ideally by the end of the next business day.

Resolving any complaints efficiently and in a timely manner provides the following benefits:

- Happier customers, leading to improved customer loyalty.
- The chance to examine and put right any weakness in our organisation early on (thereby reducing future similar complaints).
- Reduces follow-up correspondence/ongoing issues.
- Reduces administration.

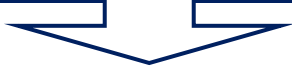
Customer Feedback: Comments, Compliments, and Complaints Procedure

Our commitment to you

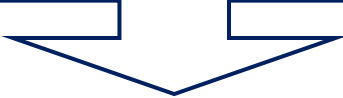
At Colchester Zoo, each of our customers is important to us, and we believe you have the right to a fair, swift and courteous service at all times.

We are in receipt of your complaint and we will deal with it promptly, effectively and in a polite and positive manner.

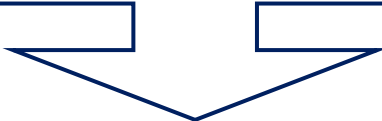
1) We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receipt



2) We will investigate your complaint and do our best to send a final response to you within 10 working days from receipt of your complaint. If we are unable to provide you with a final response within this time, we will send you an update.



3) If step 2 above is not achieved, we will do our best to send a final response to you within 4 weeks of receipt of your complaint. If we are unable to provide you with a final response within this time frame, we will write to you explaining why and advise you when you can expect a final response.



4) If more than 4 weeks from the date of your complaint has passed and you haven't received a final response, or you are dissatisfied with the final response you have received (at any stage of the process) you can contact :

The Director
c/o Customer Engagement Manager
Colchester Zoo
Maldon Rd
Stanway
CO3 0SL

You must refer your complaint to us within 6 months of the date on the final response.

Customer Service Standards

Customer service is the interaction and experience between our customers and Colchester Zoo (the business), as well as the resulting expectations. Providing excellent customer service and improving what we already offer can build better customer relationships, ensuring repeat visitation as well as better customer loyalty and increased secondary spend.

Colchester Zoo has set benchmark goals for customer service across a range of standards. This ensures we meet our minimum goals for providing excellent customer service, as well as giving us a measurement to improve on in the future.

Our key standards are:

1) Speed Standards

Ensure customers receive quick and efficient service. This includes entry to the zoo (with minimal queueing), timely service in cafes, keeper talks which start at designated times, efficient management of customers in the shop, appropriate response times to any complaints, and everything else that ensures there are minimal delays to interrupt our customers' day out. *An example speed benchmark is that all school visits should gain entry to the zoo in under 15 minutes from arrival time at the coach park.*

2) Accuracy Standards

Ensure all information, customer interactions, products, and other details provided by the zoo (online, as well as in person, both on and off site) are correct and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

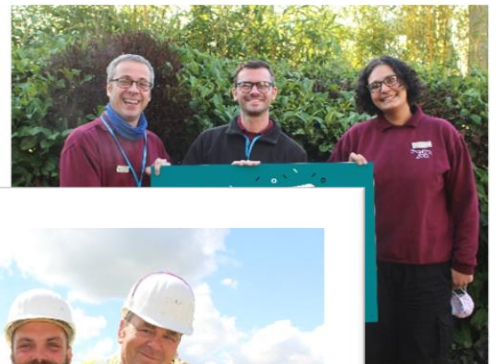
An example accuracy benchmark is to maintain greater than 85% customer opinion in relation to information provided on our website.

3) Transparency Standards

Ensure the entire zoo experience from initial enquiry to visit (including what a visit entails, and what visitors can expect including costs) is clear and presented in a way so that customers can make fully informed decisions regarding their (potential) visit.

Essentially, ensuring openness, communication and accountability.

An example transparency benchmark is to ensure publication of an annual report for our AFTW charity showing a breakdown of where donated funds have been spent to help conservation.





4) Accessibility Standards

Ensure that all our products (including general zoo visits as well as retail, catering, and experiences) are available to all our (potential) customers including those with a range of abilities, impairments, or other specific needs.

An example accessibility standard is to ensure all visitors booking an experience who indicate any form of additional needs receive a personal phone call to discuss requirements, with provided information given to zoo keepers prior to the experience taking place.

5) Empowerment Standards

Ensure that all customers (including potential customers) feel in control, including: ensuring we provide flexibility (and avoid bureaucracy); acknowledge comments and complaints in an efficient manner; provide opportunities for self-service options where practical; and ensure transparency of information (as detailed in our Transparency Standards).

An example empowerment standard is to ensure every complaint is dealt with efficiently following our complaint procedure with written acknowledgement within 5 days of initial complaint, and resolution within 10 days (or an update if resolution is not possible within this timeframe).

6) Friendliness Standards

Ensure that all staff employed by Colchester Zoo are trained in customer communication to guarantee friendliness and politeness in every interaction. Linked to this, even when utilising automated processes (e.g. automatic emails, or online ticketing systems), ensure customers still receive a personalised, human-touch in their interactions. This friendliness standard is also utilised during our hiring and promotion decisions, especially in any customer facing job roles.

An example friendliness standard is to ensure we maintain an average customer rating of no less than 4 (out of 5) for post entrance Employee Interaction scores.

7) Efficiency Standards

Ensure Colchester Zoo operates in a way that is most efficient (in terms of monetary cost as well as staffing time and intensity) whilst ensuring customer needs and expectations are met. This is essential in allowing us to provide excellent customer service, while maximising funds that can be spent on zoo improvements and contributions to our conservation works.

An example efficiency standard is to ensure at least 90% of complaints are managed within 4 interactions (including phone calls, email, and in person interactions).

Communication

Colchester Zoo is a large organisation with over 300 staff and over 1 million visitors to the site. We need to ensure efficient communication among staff and with all external stakeholders (including all customers and potential customers). To do this, we use a range of communication methods.

External Communications

External communication allows the zoo to communicate with all customers as well as any other external stakeholders including government, suppliers, and press.

The 'Marketing Mix – Promotion' section in this pack contains information regarding how the zoo communicates for promotional purposes. The 'Customer Feedback' section in this pack contains information regarding how we communicate with customers surrounding any complaints, comments, and compliments.

In brief, the main methods we use to communicate externally include emails, print media, websites (ours and external), social media, telephone and post.

Internal Communications

Internal communication allows staff at the zoo to communicate with all other staff, volunteers, and any external contractors working on site.

Meetings – this includes both inter- and intra- departmental meetings. These ensure information is passed between all staff and departments. Meetings also provide the opportunity to develop new ideas and improvements across all levels of the organisation. Various special committees (e.g. our Events Committee, or Staff Social Committee) also meet regularly.

E-mail – communication among office-based staff is frequently done via email due to different shift and working patterns. Additionally, all staff and volunteers receive regular zoo updates via our weekly Staff Newsletter.

Notice Boards – these can be found in most staff areas (e.g. staff rooms, admin offices, etc.), and provide a place to post staff notices (e.g. health and safety notices, upcoming staff events to sign up for, etc.). Any important information is also shared via direct communication.

Private Staff Facebook Page – provides quick and accessible updates and information for all staff. It also allows for networking and communication across departments regarding upcoming events and changes at the zoo.

Radio – all zoo departments have access to radios allowing for instant communication across the entire site. There are three channels in use to ensure relevant information is passed quickly and that channels are open when required (e.g. for a first aid incident).

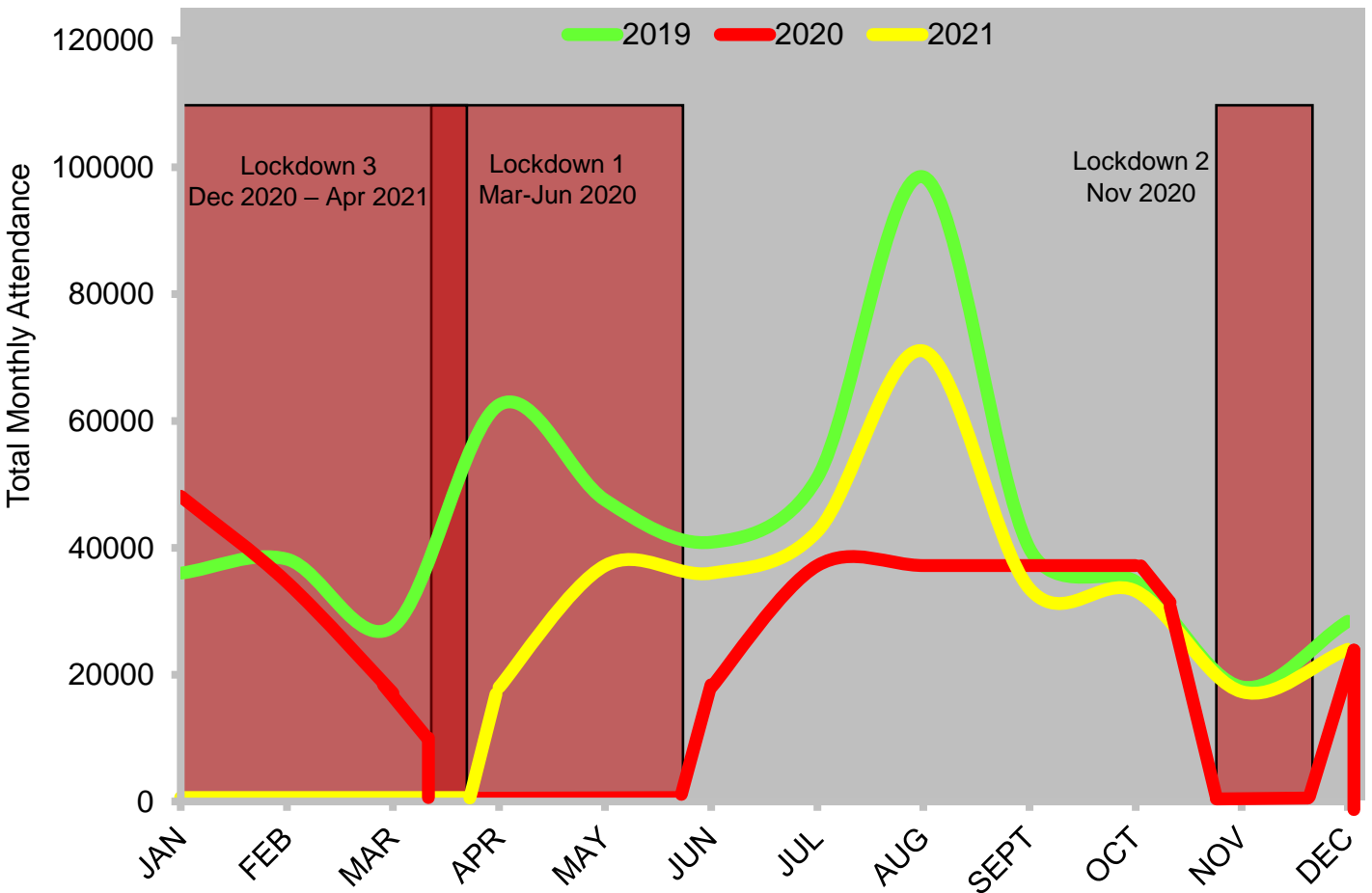
Internal telephone – office-based staff can communicate via our internal telephone system, including transferring and forwarding external calls to the relevant departments.

Secure Mobile Apps – a variety of third-party secure apps are used by different departments in order to provide instantaneous and confidential communication channels (e.g. provide photos from an animal section to an off-site vet, communicate among management staff regarding security issues, etc.).

COVID Business Impacts

The rest of this information pack provides details on how Colchester Zoo operates under normal circumstances. This section provides details of the business operations of Colchester Zoo during the business years of 2020 and 2021 during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

During COVID, BIAZA zoos collectively lost approximately £200 million, with a 42% decrease in visitors across the 2020-2021 business years due to lockdowns and other restrictions.



The above graph highlights the impact of the three national lockdowns, with Colchester Zoo visitor attendance in 2020 and 2021 shown compared to 2019. During these lockdowns the zoo was completely shut and had no visitors at all. Even when the zoo was open, it was often operating at a reduced capacity with a cap on maximum visitor numbers, restrictions on access (e.g. no indoor areas), or other restrictions limiting the amount or timings of visitors in the zoo.

Between March 2020 and April 2021 Colchester Zoo was:

- Fully open on 38 days**
- Partially open on 142 days**
- Fully closed on 207 days**

This all resulted in greatly reduced income because visitors are the zoos main source of income.

Running Costs - Expenditure

Unfortunately, Colchester Zoo (like many zoos) has exceptionally high running costs that exist even when the zoo is shut. As a result, in normal years, the zoo doesn't close over winter, despite lower visitor numbers. This means that even during lockdowns, many of the running costs and expenses still existed. We took many actions, including utilising government resources, in an attempt to minimise these costs.

These collective actions resulted in a **35% reduction in costs**, decreasing daily operation costs from approximately £41,000 to approximately **£27,000 per day**.

Our main costs, and the actions we used to minimise them are as follows:

Wages

The furlough scheme was incredibly helpful in lowering the cost of staff wages. In a normal operating year, we usually have between 209-367 staff, with many on seasonal or short-term contracts. Across 2020, we had 314 staff furloughed at one point or another. Many of these staff were only furloughed for short times, or alternating furlough and working, known as flexi furlough.

An important point to remember is that furlough was a more complex scheme than just the government paying wages. At various points across the scheme, the employer made changing percentage payments contributing to the staff wages. Staff also took a 20% reduction in pay. There were also further complications and changes, with companies paying for NI/Pension contributions, government bonuses for furlough retention, etc.

In addition to furlough, almost the entire zoo staff went through a formal redundancy process. By the time restrictions eased in April 2021 a total of 57 staff had been let go, representing a 19% redundancy.

At our lowest staffing numbers in January 2021, there were only 99 staff actively working. Of those staff, many worked alternating weeks with furlough - working reduced hours, or were on-call furlough. This meant that during the early parts of the 2021 lockdown, there may have been as few as 30 staff working onsite on any given day.

For summer 2021, while still operating at reduced capacity, staff rehiring was a slow process. By 2022 staffing levels have returned to near pre-pandemic.

New Enclosures / Building Improvements

This cost was removed almost completely. New buildings were put on hold and some expansion plans were cancelled entirely. Supplies and materials already ordered and received onsite continued to be used as they were delivered, because these processes can take months or years for custom ordered supplies and were impossible to cancel. Essential maintenance and all necessary building related to animal care and management was continued. Excluding those specific construction projects, new funds were not spent on enclosures or building works.

Corporation Tax & VAT

Corporation tax is a type of tax paid on earnings. Since the zoo wasn't earning income from visitors whilst closed, there was less for us to pay tax on.

Additionally, there were various government schemes, via the Support for Businesses, which allowed businesses to pay less Corporation Tax and VAT.

Some of the main schemes included: changing the fiscal reporting year from 12 to 18 months; allowing businesses to claim back some losses against tax paid in previous years; and VAT reductions from the standard 20% to just 5% (until 30 Sept 2021) and 12.5% (until 31 Mar 2022).

Inventory Costs

Unfortunately, due to the sudden and unexpected nature of the zoo closure for the first lockdown in March 2020, Colchester Zoo lost a lot of money due to inventory wastages. We had been preparing for a busy Easter holiday so there was a lot of catering inventory on site. Fresh food went bad quickly, and by the time the zoo reopened in July, a lot of the frozen/stored food had lost quality and was not suitable for public sale.

Our retail inventory suffered fewer losses, however, some products (e.g. sweets, fudges and other confectionary) could not be stored, or items branded with specific years/dates were no longer relevant.

Despite these losses, Colchester Zoo utilised the zoo shutdowns to develop and implement a more efficient and effective retail/catering inventory management system. This allowed us to better track and manage stock moving onto site and being sold, as well as better preparation for future uncertainty. This preparation meant that during the second and third lockdown we suffered relatively low losses due to inventory wastages.

Utilities

While the zoo was shut, utilities were reduced by closure of our admin/office/public buildings. These buildings had reduced or shut off water, electricity and heating. However, utility costs could not be reduced entirely since approximately 80% of these costs are for animal enclosures (e.g. heating, aquarium water, water used for cleaning enclosures, etc.).

Business Rates

Business rates costs were greatly reduced due to a different government scheme. From April 2020-April 2021, there was a 100% reduction in this rate for many businesses (including Colchester Zoo). As a tourism/hospitality industry, this 100% reduction continued until June 2021. From July 2021-March 2022 we remained eligible for a 66% reduction in these rates.

UmPhafa & AFTW

UmPhafa is a private nature reserve managed by Colchester Zoo, located in South Africa. Action For the Wild (AFTW) is the zoo's conservation charity through which we distribute funding grants to projects around the world.

Our funding to UmPhafa remained constant as we oversaw its management and faced new challenges, such as increased poaching. Likewise, our promised grants and funds to conservation projects around the world continued to be distributed through AFTW. However, due to global travel restrictions (resulting in e.g. lack of volunteers/researchers etc.), stay at home orders (resulting in lack of staff, or inability to operate in some areas) and staff shortages (due to illness, need to isolate etc.), many conservation projects around the world were unable to operate, or needed to operate at a reduced capacity. These projects, therefore, didn't apply for new funding and demand for conservation funds reduced, even though the actual need for on the ground conservation remained as high, or even higher than pre-pandemic. Due to this decreased demand, collectively, BIAZA funding on conservation decreased by 38% across 2020.

Animal Food & Vet Bills

The final categories of costs, animal food and vet bills, could not be reduced. These costs remained fixed, as animals needed food and healthcare regardless of whether the zoo was open or not. Thankfully, these represent Colchester Zoo's lowest costs, but they remained relatively constant throughout the pandemic, regardless of lockdown status or income.

Income

Colchester Zoo's main source of income in a normal operating year is our visitors, with spending on admissions as well as secondary spend on retail and catering options. Zoo closures, as well as various restrictions, greatly reduced or eliminated these sources of income.

Admissions

While the zoo was shut during lockdown there were no visitors at the zoo and no spending or direct income from them. However, for most of 2020, even when the zoo reopened, capacity was limited to approximately 50% of our usual visitor numbers. In addition, we were required to account for additional restrictions, such as closing indoor animal enclosures, one-way routes around the zoo, and additional space for social distancing.

In normal operating years, a busy day (especially over bank holidays, weekends, or special events) might see as many as 9,000 visitors in the zoo in one day. Over 2020 and 2021, for many days (including what is usually our busy summer holidays), the zoo operated some days with a maximum capacity of just 2,500. Additionally, for much of the time, this maximum capacity also need to account for zoo passholders. On an average summer day in 2020 when we were opened, we had an estimated admissions income of just £19,000 per day.

Secondary Spend: Catering and Retail

In normal circumstances, each visitor to the zoo spends an average additional £13 in secondary spend. Restrictions on indoor spaces, closures of shops and food outlets, limitations to takeaway only and other restrictions meant that whilst the zoo was open many of our outlets and sale points were not. Due to these restrictions across summer 2020, our average secondary spend decreased to just £5.

Across summer 2020, with admissions and secondary spend, given restrictions in place, Colchester Zoo had an average daily income of just £26,000 – still below our £27,000 average daily costs during this time.

Experiences

Behind-the-scenes experiences contribute to Colchester Zoo income. Across 2020, even when the zoo was open, virtually none of these experiences were available. Many experiences require close contact with people, groups, or involve confined indoor spaces. Due to restrictions, none of these could be offered.

Another concern regarding COVID was biosecurity and zoonosis – could zoo animals catch and spread COVID? At the start of the pandemic, no one knew the answer to this. Any staff working with animals had greatly increased PPE and various other health and hygiene procedures to avoid making animals sick. As more information emerged, it became apparent that many zoo animals can become sick with COVID and spread COVID to humans. This includes big cats, monkeys, apes, canine species, otters, and many more. Thankfully, research now shows that many of these animals that contract COVID have mild respiratory symptoms and usually make full recoveries without any intervention. All of this uncertainty meant that even where space/human restrictions could be met, close encounters with zoo animals were avoided across 2020 and most of 2021.

All of this meant that it wasn't until 2022 that experiences started to return to normal levels, albeit with some permanent changes to operations and procedures. Prior to this, experiences actually cost us money, because many people book these well in advance and were provided with refunds for experiences that were cancelled.

Government Grants

In addition to the various government schemes in place to help businesses minimise costs, there was also government support and grants to help provide additional income.

There were many different grants provided by the various levels of government at different times throughout 2020 and 2021. These included business restart grants, local restriction support grants, closed business lockdown payment, National Tier 4 grants, and various other support funds.

In total, Colchester Zoo received just over £46,000 across 2020 and 2021 via these grants and funds. This may seem like a lot of money; however, in normal circumstances our daily operation costs are approximately £41,000.

During the pandemic, there was a lot of discussion surrounding the government 'Zoo Animal Funds' and the 'Animal Welfare Grant'. This was a £100 million fund to which zoos (and other similar animal organisations) could apply for individual grants of up to £730,000. When this fund closed, only 12% of it had been used with almost all of it being awarded to small animal collections (e.g. animal collections at colleges). Colchester Zoo, like almost all large UK zoos, was ineligible for these funds.

Donations

Colchester Zoo's customers are incredible loyal and supportive. In a normal operating year, many of these people (including some who never actually visit the zoo in person) provide us with money to help us care for our animals at the zoo. These donations to 'Adopt' zoo animals usually account for approximately 1-2% of our annual income.

During the pandemic, when the zoo was unable to open and almost all of our regular sources of income were no longer possible, we launched an Emergency Operating Fund where people could donate to help support the zoo, care for our animals, and ensure our conservation, research, and education work could continue.

During 2020 and 2021, ticket admissions remained our largest source of income, but during this time donations accounted for almost **20% of our income**. Almost all of these donations came from regular, everyday families and visitors. This was not film stars and footballers rallying for support. Instead, this was local Colchester businesses, or children donating £20 of their pocket money, or parents' virtual marathons, or grannies who remember visiting Colchester Zoo when they were children.

It is because of our incredibly loyal and supportive fans in the local community and beyond that Colchester Zoo survived through the pandemic and continued to be able to care for our animals and help nature all around the world.

To everyone who supported us through the pandemic, and everyone that continues to do so, we remain eternally grateful for your support, kindness, and help.



Colchester Zoo Student Survey Guidelines

Students may complete customer service/visitor opinion or staff surveys while at Colchester Zoo providing they comply with our survey guidelines as stated below. Please inform Colchester Zoo (via email at education@colchesterzoo.org) if you plan to undertake this research as part of your school trip.

SUPERVISION

Students in year groups 7, 8 and 9 must be supervised at all times.

Students in year 10 and older may be unsupervised.

All students conducting visitor surveys **must be clearly identified** either in school uniform or with lanyards etc., so that zoo staff can identify students in the event of any issues.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

Teachers are responsible for all student behaviour at Colchester Zoo.

Before your visit, ensure your students are aware of the following points:

- Be polite at all times.
- Explain to all participants that the survey is part of your coursework.
- Please respect visitors who do not want to answer your questions – they don't have to!
- Do not disturb visitors whilst they are eating, watching encounters or otherwise engaged.
- Do not wait at the zoo entrance to 'pounce' on newly arrived visitors.
- Spread out around Colchester Zoo (do not stay in one large group).
- Do not approach/ask the same people questions repeatedly.
- If the survey is designed for Colchester Zoo staff, please only approach staff who have time to answer (e.g. not someone working in the café with a long queue). Please understand that staff may be busy and therefore unable to answer your questions.

SURVEY DESIGN

Your school's name and course should be at the top of the page

- Ensure anyone answering your survey is aware it is part of a school project and not something undertaken by Colchester Zoo.
- Do not use Colchester Zoo's logo on your survey.

Keep it short

- Visitors are here to enjoy their day out – if they choose to answer your questions, please ensure you don't take up too much of their time.

Don't repeat questions

- Asking 'How did you enjoy your day' and 'Rank your enjoyment' is repetitive.

Use a variety of questions

- Ranking/scale questions are easiest and quickest to answer.
- Open-ended questions provide excellent data, but take more time.
- Closed-ended questions are yes/no or other limited option answers.

Make your survey graphically pleasing and easy to read

- All participants need to be able to read your survey in order to fill it out.

Limit the use of technical or specialised language

- Visitors may not be familiar with terms such as 'unique selling point', 'marketing mix', etc. Avoid these type of terms in your survey.

Ensure your survey is GDPR compliant and does not collect personal information.