

Dear Colleagues,

Upcoming Staff Meetings

It's only been a week since the board of trustees meeting and their very welcome decision to accept the recommendations and adopt the proposals that were put forward. I talked the proposals through with many of our managers on Tuesday. Trying to ensure that we are all kept up to date is a challenge at the best of times and made even more difficult with many staff on furlough and others unable to have the usual support of face to face contact with managers and colleagues. Please make use of the zoom meetings to keep up to date – the next one will be on Tuesday.

To make the best use of these meetings for everyone involved, I hope that you will have had an opportunity to read the plan or the summary beforehand and if you have questions do feel free to send them in advance to Joy so that we can group similar ones together. My intention is to focus these meetings on how and what we need to do in the coming weeks, rather than re-visiting why we need to make the changes. Those of you that have read the documents or watched the manager's briefing will know that in the absence of customers we must borrow to survive and convince potential funders that we can pay them back. The plan is designed to do that and secure a strong future for the FSC.

Two unhelpful government announcements and one Plan for Jobs

Last week also saw a bit of a double hit from government on the same day: Ofqual's proposed reduction of fieldwork/ practical science for some students taking exams in 2021 and the blanket guidance from government advising against overnight stays in the autumn term. Day trips are allowed and there were warm words about outdoor learning, but even though our plans had anticipated little income in the autumn this is not good news. Ofqual's proposal is only a consultation and many pro fieldwork organisations have already been working together to plan a robust and united response. I am already engaging politicians on the guidance because we have covid secure sites to offer schools that come to stay and a blanket ban seems inconsistent with other activities that are allowed.

Yesterday the Chancellor in his Plan for Jobs announced that "Where problems emerge, we will confront them...where challenges arise, we will overcome them" and therefore I am challenging him to do just that in relation to the above announcements because of the risk they pose to jobs in the outdoor learning sector.

Stay with Us – some good news

On a more positive note, FSC is now welcoming our first guest to stay at centres. The marketing team and all the hostel managers have worked really hard and we have had quite a lot of media interest. But please keep sharing the content and we need more personal stories and pictures from staff about what makes their particular centre so special and why people should Stay with Us. Tom Stamp sent in a clip of the view from Dale Fort that just spoke for itself. Keep sending them into the marketing team.

Terms and Conditions

Covid-19 has meant that many of us are more familiar with FSC's booking terms and conditions than we would ever wish to be. Thanks go to Maggie for all her work before the crisis in getting them into shape. Had we not made the changes when we did, and also moved away from FSC's beloved

tradition of each centre having its own unique set of Ts and Cs, it is unlikely that we would still be here. They have really stood up well to the current crisis and legal advice has confirmed our approach. There has been a lot of media coverage about refunds, school trips and who is covered by package holiday regs (we are not as it happens) but we can continue to be really confident that we have been doing things the right way and can thus protect the business. There's a [good FAQ page](#) if you or a customer needs reassurance about this.

Welcoming People Back Safely

It's good to be able to welcome people back from furlough and with more staff on site there will be a special H&S update soon to remind us all about the covid secure measures we need to take. The welcome back Monday meeting have also been appreciated as people realise that it's normal to find coming back to work a little bit odd.

Save Lottie's Sanity

Please remember that if you want to contact head office staff it's best to email or slack. Please don't phone the head office number as every call goes through to Lottie and she really needs to be able to focus on customers instead.

I hope to see many of you on zoom on Tuesday.

Stay safe and keep well

Mark