

Thu 23/07/2020 15:45

Dear Colleagues,

I promised you an update on the preparatory work flowing from the recent Board of Trustees Meeting. I have asked that a sub group of the SLT is formed, chaired by the Director of Finance and Business Administration to coordinate the development of the 'FSC future' proposals, and to oversee the work involved in implementing any changes on behalf of the entire SLT. I would see this group meeting frequently and providing regular progress reports to the SLT. I anticipate being able to make a formal announcement regarding the commencement of the consultation in early August. I am conscious that you seek clarity and will work hard to ensure that we communicate regularly.

In the meantime, the Finance and Administration Committee met recently and I wanted to highlight some key decisions with you:

- Firstly, I want to reassure furloughed staff that even though the amount of government support will be tapering off in the coming months we will continue to top up your pay to the current 80% level.
- Secondly, the needs of the charity mean that some staff will be asked to return to work full-time over the coming weeks. From 1 August, those staff working 100% of their contracted time will be paid 100% of their salary.
- Finally, with increasing numbers of staff returning from furlough or being placed on flexible furlough, we needed to decide a cut-off date for the accrual of extra leave for non-furloughed staff. From 31st July, therefore, the scheme will end. Guidance with more details will be available shortly in the [HR section](#) of the Covid-19 folder on the intranet. I know that non furloughed staff have put in very long hours, but I am glad that we have been able to at least acknowledge that, and your role in ensuring that furloughed colleagues have an FSC to come back to.

Not taking things lying down

The last week has seen a lot of political activity with the sector pulling together to campaign for a rethink on the guidance advising against residential in the autumn and also the threat to fieldwork in the summer exams. I have written to the PM challenging him to "Cut the Gordian Knot" and to allow us to get on with levelling up (classical references and talking about levelling up being two of his consistent themes so hopefully it might catch his eye). Centre MPs have all been contacted along with members of the Education Select committee.

FSC's suggested response to Ofqual's proposals to reduce the fieldwork and practical science elements of the 2021 exams and assessments were also taken up by our partner organisations the Royal Society of Biology and the Geographical Association. FSC is currently doing more press work and others in the sector gave an excellent interview on the Today Programme about the issue on Wednesday which you can listen to from 2h.55m [here](#).

Education Team Update

With so much uncertainty about residentials, FSC's plans to increase our digital offer continue apace with a new outreach and digital programme being offered for autumn 2020. We will be running tutorials for the Geographical Association GEO (Geography Education Online) website launching this autumn and are looking to take part in an online science festival this summer with Royal Society of Biology. The team ran a great NEA (non-examined assessment) conference for 60 teachers in late

June which was followed by a student NEA online conference that has engaged with hundreds of A-level students.

Income Generation

Stay with Us is seeing more bookings and now that the restrictions in Wales have been lifted, we are seeing a rise in bookings at our Welsh centres too. This has required speedy action from the infrastructure team, including setting up a new area for caravans at Preston Montford, Castle Head and Blencathra. Please keep sharing the information with friends and family. Meanwhile the addition of a donation button as part of publication sales has already seen 150 donations.

Finally, thank you for all the positive feedback that I have received about these weekly emails. I'm glad that you find them useful and that they go some way to keep us all connected. I was slightly surprised to hear that my heartfelt thanks to the admin teams caused a lump in someone's throat, but it is so important to acknowledge all the "above and beyond" work that is being done. Please keep nominating your colleagues and sharing good news that I can include in these emails.

Stay well and keep safe

Mark