

Thu 30/07/2020 18:34

Dear Colleagues,

As ever, in this dynamic situation, there is plenty going on. Quarantine 'off' or 'on' gives a sense of the dynamic, and the news that the great British staycation is here to stay has got to be a positive, at least for the FSC. The questions over residentials and OFQUAL's consultation remain but we are doing what we can to influence decision makers. I know that there are concerns over the immediate future I expect that the team leading on the proposals agreed by the Board of trustees will be able to communicate on proposals fairly soon. To give you a sense of the time frame, I would see staff representatives being in place by the 19<sup>th</sup> of August and I expect to be able to make a formal statement around the 12<sup>th</sup> of August on the proposals and the consultation process.

### **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)**

Some good news. The £2.5m CBILS has been agreed and signed off by trustees. This is excellent news. The average loan issued by Barclays (our CBILS provider) across UK is only £800k. Barclays have been clear that they are very supportive of the future FSC business model. For me, this demonstrates that they have bought into our plans and recognise the work that has gone into preparing our case and the credibility of our proposal. This is very good news.

### **Media**

There has been a lot going on in the media. I wrote to the PM specifically about OFQUAL and Government guidance and there has been lots of media coverage of that and other issues which you can see below:

<https://www.shropshirelive.com/features/2020/07/24/charitys-shropshire-hostel-opens-for-stay-with-us-family-breaks/>

<https://www.ptmollie.com/home/blog/>

<https://www.whatswhatmagazine.co.uk/2020/07/28/shropshire-hostel-opens-for-family-breaks/>

<https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/field-studies-council-boss-on-overnight-school-trips-1-6765836>

<https://educationbusinessuk.net/news/27072020/charity-calls-pm-allow-overnight-school-trips>

<https://entirely.media/charity/business-news/uk/midlands/shropshire/uk-charity-calls-on-pm-to-cut-the-gordian-knot-on-overnight-school-trips5202>

<https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/field-studies-council-boss-on-overnight-school-trips-1-6765836>

My interview with BBC Radio Shropshire is below, you will have to download to listen. You could probably more easily go into BBC player for Tuesday morning at 0825:

<https://wettransfer.com/downloads/fe7d3513fcc92ad1761ef5e5156aa77f20200730093404/2ae0575be3e2daedbd08e3a3dab38f4520200730093444/98df1c>

## HEPs

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Higher Education Placements (HEPs) who have been working with us during what has been a very 'unusual' year. Some have already departed but for those who have stayed working for us this year, I know that you have picked up all sorts of roles and tasks that you might not have expected when you first arrived with us. Your support, efforts and good humour have been much appreciated. Good luck for next year.

## Responding to Need

I would like to give a special mention to the team at Millport for welcoming and managing to accommodate the needs of the local care home that caught fire; it houses people with special needs of all ages and their carers. The team responded quickly to the situation and, with about half an hour of notice, were able to meet the care home guidelines for COVID, ensuring that the clients have spotless and lovely accommodation and excellent food. Particularly well done to Brian, Catriona, Andrea, Duncan, Tracy, Stewart. I think it is fair to say have all gone the extra mile to support those in need.

## Natural History GCSE

FSC took part in the GCSE Natural History consultation and we are also sitting on the OCR Strategic Advisory Board for this. This week we had an article published in the newsletter and should get more information on the progress of this qualification soon.

## Stay with Us

I would like to thank all of you for your support of 'Stay With Us'. The enthusiasm, commitment and ideas coming forward have been fantastic. There have also been many excellent scores for the centres, with a number getting the maximum 10 rating and a great many comments about how wonderful and friendly the staff were. Just a few examples from customer reviews:

'We were blown away by Wendy's hospitality' - Castle Head

'people were nice and friendly especially Tom was very helpful' – Dale Fort

'The guy in the kitchen was lovely and offered tips for the local area' - Flatford

And some insider information, you are able to **book directly** with the centre admin teams to get a **15% staff discount**. In terms of the bookings leader board – Tom Stamp and his team at Dale are in the lead but others are hot on his heels.

## Recent Reviews

We've had some great reviews on booking.com about our staff:

**Castle Head** – *"Breakfast was nice, people were nice and friendly especially Tom was very helpful."*

**Dale Fort** – *"The location was nice and the staff were friendly."*

**Blencathra** – *"The staff were very friendly, the place was very clean and nice. Lovely place, definitely will go again."*

**Juniper Hall** – *"Staff very friendly, excellent location and delicious breakfast."*

**Castle Head** – *"We were blown away by Wendy's hospitality. Thoroughly deserved role as hospitality manager. Great location and cool living area. Also shout out to the axolotl, was great seeing him."*

## **Morale**

During Philip Turvill's staff talk yesterday, he asked how people feel about the future of FSC. The results from those participating were: 10% feel happy, one quarter feel unhappy, and two thirds feel a mix. Personally, I feel 'confident' - that is not the same as 'happy' - but if Barclays buy into our proposals, that is a significant vote of confidence as far as I am concerned. I am 'happy' that we have a roadmap for our survival and that we continue to innovate and succeed through your excellent work. I, of course, recognise the uncertainty, it would be frankly ridiculous were I not to do so. This is an unprecedented situation and I am 'unhappy' that there remains uncertainty but we will do what we can to address that. To conclude, I feel confident that the FSC's mission is relevant and inspiring and that over the coming months we will, together, create the platform for future success.

## **Staff Talk**

If you missed the staff talk from yesterday where we heard from Paul, Helen and Ian. The recording is now online (<https://web.microsoftstream.com/channel/3791cf71-eebb-45fc-bc6f-a3374192d32b>). To view, sign in to Office 365 and use your FSC email address and password.

## **More Customer Feedback**

"Tracy

I just wanted to send a wee note of thanks to all of you for an amazing weekend in Millport. You made so many people happy to be away from the stresses of present times. There are no words to say how much we appreciate all that the staff did to serve us and keep everyone safe, I know it was a lot of extra work but everything was done with a smile n their faces and such patience.

On a personal note I'm aiming to be more environmental friendly in my purchases after reading some of the information and my talk with Catrina. I've been on YouTube trying to find ways of making my own cleaning materials. I noticed you had a cleaning solution made up when I took the mop To clean our paint from the floor in the ark. If you have any tips to pass on I'd appreciate it.

With much appreciation

Carol"

I do not believe that I could finish on a more positive note!

Stay safe and keep well

Mark