

Thu 03/09/2020 16:39

Dear Colleagues

Staff Consultation

With staff reps now elected (and thank you to all those who stood) the staff consultation is now underway. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic I have been honest with you about its impact on us and the fact that its sheer scale means that adapting to this new operational environment will be painful. Nonetheless decisions no matter how painful will have to be made if our charity is to survive. The hard and unavoidable fact is that it is people who are being impacted and I will never lose sight of that as we navigate, what has to be at times, a formal and legal process.

I believe that I have been upfront about the finances and the scale of the change needed to ensure FSC's survival and whilst our options are somewhat constrained by the financial position, this is a genuine consultation on the proposals we have submitted. Please do engage with the process because good ideas are not restricted to the SLT. I am of no doubt that communications and transparency are going to be key to retaining your confidence and all those involved will continue to do their utmost to meet your expectations in this regard. Sometimes we may fall short and we will put our hand up if that is the case; the unheralded release of the [proposal documents](#) in an email titled 'Election result for employee representatives' could have been handled better and I apologise for that. Please read and consider these proposals and use your staff reps and line managers to clarify anything which requires further explanation.

Guidance on residential school visits

Across the UK, guidance from all governments continues to advise against residential trips. The sector as a whole has been busy working together and lobbying to get at the very least a date for when the guidance will be reviewed although allowing schools themselves to make an informed decision soon is our ultimate goal. With covid secure accommodation and plenty of outdoor space available, plus growing concerns about covering all the subject content whilst still catching up, the guidance is looking increasingly untenable. A copy of my latest letter to the Secretary of State will be uploaded with my weekly messages on the staff news website.

Covid-19 Staff Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey

Despite unhelpful comments from some politicians regarding working from home, we really want to get a sense of what and how staff are feeling about the current Covid -19 implications for their current work situation. The [survey](#) closes at 5pm on Monday 7th September. We know that communicating electronically with every member of staff continues to be a challenge for a small but nonetheless important number of staff, so I'm asking managers to check that everyone is given the opportunity to respond – even if in the last resort, it is via paper.

Grant and Funding Opportunities

Away from the disappointment of the schools guidance, staff are busy pursuing other funding and grant opportunities. Some of these are related to skills and training such as Defra's Green Recovery Fund where we are working on stand- alone and partnership bids. Other areas of interest remain connecting children to nature and we are working with Access Unlimited, a coalition of like-minded organisations, building on the Glover Review's recommendation that every child should spend a

night under the stars. Talks with DEFRA on making this a reality continue this week and we have a place at the table.

Impact Report

FSC has produced our first Impact Report in common with others across the charity sector. It is deliberately designed to be completely different from an annual report, neither is it a narrative of a year. Instead, we have taken 2019 as frame and showcased just a few examples of how we make an impact on both people and the planet by doing what we do. Our aim is to hook our target audience with short impactful stories and examples. We are targeting those that might not know very much about us or maybe think that all we do is teach fieldwork: journalists looking for an interesting story angle, MPs trying to solve society's problems, funders, potential funders and members looking for a cause to support. It was difficult to choose which examples to use, but we plan to make this a regular publication. You can read more about it and see a copy [here](#).

All Staff Talks

This week's all staff talk was on FSC's plan to transform Biodiversity Training and if you have missed this, or any of the other staff talks, you can catch up via this link <https://web.microsoftstream.com/channel/3791cf71-eebb-45fc-bc6f-a3374192d32b> and you will need to sign in to Office 365 with your FSC email address and password.

This week's special mention

Welcome back to Kay Oxley, a key member of the C-OPT group whose input and knowledge has been much missed. A bike accident resulted in a very nasty shoulder break which is slow to heal. Kay will be on reduced hours as she continues her recovery.

Keep well and stay safe

Mark