

Thu 03/12/2020 15:32

Dear Colleagues,

Slightly delayed today I am afraid as I was attending the Board of Trustees meeting but the delay gives me the opportunity to convey the Board's thanks to all of you for your hard work and resilience through this very difficult year

Updated but unchanged guidance from government

'Fine words butter no parsnips' as the Department for Education (DfE) announced that whilst appreciating the sector and what we do, it will not be changing the guidance on residentials. We are awaiting further updates from other parts of the UK but don't expect it to vary much. A working group of representatives is being set up, with a plan to work with DfE towards a full reopening by Easter 2021. By which time we all hope the vaccination programme will be in full swing. In the meantime it's important to make our customers aware that FSC still has lots to offer. There have been 214 booked digital and outreach courses, 205 of these have been digitally delivered across 40 different specialist subject areas. The most popular course you will probably not be surprised to know is the Enhancement Module: GCSE Geography Exam Ready Fieldwork Skills.

Growing Confidence Video

With all the PM's recent announcements about green jobs and conservation skills, I want to draw your attention to this short [uplifting video](#) made about the Growing Confidence Project that FSC helps deliver. It's powerful to hear from the young people themselves as they talk about what the project has meant for them and how it does indeed grow their confidence.

Higher Education Placements at FSC Millport

It has been almost a month since our 16 Higher Education Placements (HEPs) set sail for Millport for a shorter placement than usual because they couldn't come in July. They arrived off the ferry looking incredibly windswept but eager to get started. On the first day the programme kicked off in the most FSC way possible with a session of team games. In their first four weeks, they have undergone a great deal of training to introduce them to the FSC, delivered by a mix of people from across the organisation – first aid, risk management, duty training, fieldwork, fire safety and social media. In their second week, they met with the SLT team who helped them understand better how the organisation operates and how their role with us fits into the bigger picture. They've also been outside developing the work begun by previous HEPs and the team at Millport, improving the nature trail, bird watching opportunities, improving their ID skills as well as supporting social media for all centres. HEPs will stay at Millport until March, when we hope there will be sufficient business for them to go to centres across the rest of the country. We haven't taken on as many HEPs this year as usual, so centres will have fewer than usual.

New FSC Infographic on what we have been up to

Jennie Comerford usually writes an upbeat letter to key FSC donors at this time of year to let them know what their donations have achieved, for example how the Kids Fund and Bursary learners have enjoyed their time with FSC. Obviously this year is a little different, but instead Jennie and the marketing team have produced and sent out an upbeat infographic (attached) to highlight what we

have still managed to achieve despite the pandemic. Jennie has some spare copies and is happy to post them out if you know someone that should receive one and can send her the address.

Dave Morgan's Sabbatical

Map man Dave is taking up a 12 month sabbatical where he will be working with one of FSC's strategic partners ESRI. There is a [really useful article here](#) about the work that FSC does with ESRI and we believe that this opportunity will reap benefits for FSC, ESRI and Dave. He will be missed while he is away, as will his ability to act as master of ceremonies at Head Office by turning almost every learning opportunity into a game with maps.

Special Mention: FSC Millport's Nomination at the Nature of Scotland Awards

On Wednesday evening last week, the Scottish RSPB annual Nature of Scotland Awards were held online. We were delighted to find that FSC Millport had been recognised for its contribution towards sustainability and had been shortlisted for the Business category as Best Practice in Sustainability in an Environmental Centre. The awards recognise individuals and organisations that are making outstanding efforts towards nature recovery, a healthy climate and a sustainable future for Scotland. Millport has been recognised for constantly striving to improve its efforts in sustainability, across all departments, including in the kitchens where clingfilm is no longer used, in the grounds where interpretation promotes access to nature and shares information for guests, and in the community with whom team work on beach cleans and bioblitzes. The new green gift shop with lots of zero waste products for sale also got a mention. I am delighted that the RSPB and NatureScot awards board recognised the team's efforts and considered them to be outstanding. Congratulations to all the staff at Millport who make it happen every day.

Stay safe and keep well

Mark