

Thu 17/12/2020 10:15

Dear Colleagues

I am writing to you following the Board of Trustees meeting that took place on 3rd December, and as we come to the end of the most difficult year in the long history of the FSC.

First, I would like to assure you that in all decisions of the Board, the extremely difficult situation you find yourselves in, your future and that of the FSC are foremost in our minds. The Trustees are a very talented and committed group of individuals who give time to both oversight and scrutiny of the charity, and perhaps more importantly to work with the SLT as they in turn work with you and external partners to ensure a viable and thriving future. This year the Board has probably worked more closely with the SLT than at any point in recent years, with many additional (and longer) meetings and a far greater number, length and complexity of papers to consider. Throughout we have worked to examine assumptions and to test decisions and having done so I would like you to know that we are fully in support of these decisions, and that we have great confidence in Mark and the SLT as we go forward.

Amongst the decisions we have considered this year are ones that very directly concern you as individuals, as staff restructuring plans have been developed and consulted on. We are aware that 'restructuring' may seem like an unwelcome euphemism when it is your job that is under consideration. However, whilst Covid-19 has precipitated far more drastic action than was anticipated, it is important to remember that the decision to do so has its origins in work in 2018-19 relating to structural change to meet existing and changing markets. As a Board we strongly supported the approach and continue to do so. The financial decisions made this year are, as you know, necessary to support this process and for the future of the FSC. We are deeply grateful for the way you as individuals and the staff community as a whole have responded to these unprecedented challenges.

I would like to take the opportunity to update on some changes in the Board of Trustees. The December Board was the final meeting for our Honorary Treasurer, Geoff Brown, who has been a Trustee since 2001 and Honorary Treasurer since 2003. Many of you will know him, and some have worked extensively with him as he played a crucial role in helping to oversee FSC's finances and diligently supported relevant FSC staff. Geoff's contribution has not only been in relation to finances - his experience at Shell in internal audit led eventually to the establishment of our Audit & Risk Management Committee. Geoff and his wife are leaving the UK shortly, emigrating to Sydney, Australia to be close to family. We have conducted interviews to appoint a new Honorary Treasurer and other up-coming Trustee vacancies. The interview panels have put forward excellent candidates for approval and appointment following the March meeting of the Board of Trustees.

As you all know the FSC's role in developing learners' interests in, understanding of and care for the natural world, is as vital as ever. This is purpose enough for your work, but as the relationship between the climate crises and loss of biodiversity is becoming understood and accepted, and indeed has the positive role reversing biodiversity loss can play in contributing to stabilising the climate, it is ever more important. In such a context, the charity has never been more relevant than it is today, and on behalf of the Board I would like to express our confidence in your inspiring work.

So here are the updates ...

All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Outdoor Learning

This week Tim Foster presented to this newly formed group. It includes a number of FSC friendly MPs and is gathering in more that we hope will become much better informed about FSC's work. We continue to highlight and focus on what we *can* do to help address the immediate concerns of learners, parents. Policy makers and teachers both now and when residential can go ahead. Post-Covid, we hope that this group will continue as an effective voice to help government

'join the dots' between all that we can offer and the many pressing public policy concerns that can benefit from what we do.

11-19 Biology Curriculum Framework

The Royal Society of Biology is looking in detail at the biology curriculum and as an active member, FSC has been asked to input into the work. RSB is one of the key organisations that would consult with DfE and Ofqual and equivalent devolved organisations in any curriculum reviews or change in the next few years. This is a great opportunity to get involved and it is never too early to shape ideas. It's an exciting time for 21st century ecology with a renewed focus on biodiversity but also the emergence of concepts around ecosystem services and natural capital. We will be doing our best to make sure that it's all embedded in the curriculum along with the necessary fieldwork and outdoor practical ecological skills that will be needed.

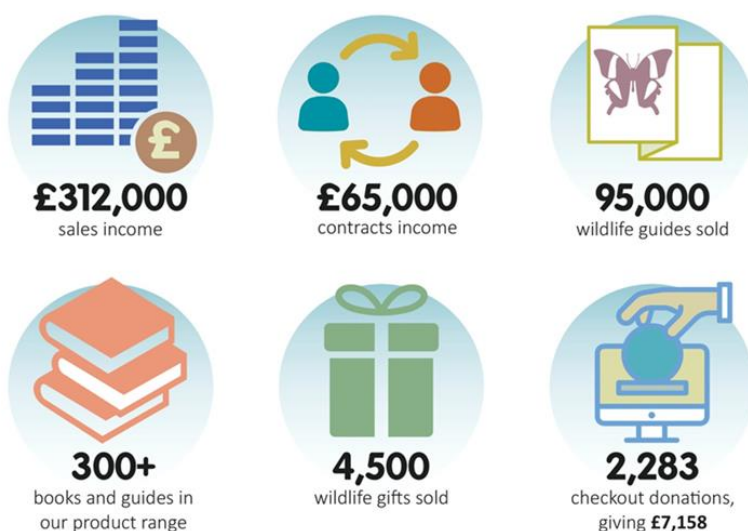
All Staff Zoom 5th Jan

You will have all received an invitation to the New Year all staff zoom at 3.30 pm. It will be an opportunity to hear from those who will be setting out FSC's priorities for the coming year. There will be opportunities to catch up if you miss it, but as with fieldwork, there is nothing like the real, live, interactive experience.

FSC Pubs are certainly not closed but last orders are on Sunday

We are on a bit of a roll with infographics, so it's fitting that the final one of the year is all about what publications have been up to, keeping FSC's name out there at a time when so much else was locked down.

During 2020 FSC Publications delivered...



Figures as 11.12.2020

field-studies-council.org/shop

FSC
PUBLICATIONS

We wish you all a restful and enjoyable Christmas and New Year break.

Pete