

Thu 11/03/2021 09:57

Dear Colleagues,

I realised that I have been sending out these weekly catch ups for a year now, a year that for some has been so busy you have hardly had time to draw breath, for others it might have dragged a bit and tragically for some, has included the trauma of losing friends and loved ones to Covid 19. I started these emails at a time when we were just about to be scattered to the four winds, either to start working from home or to be put on furlough. With so much disruption, dislocation and such rapid change, many people were missing from the usual lines of communication. This email has been one way for me to try to reach as many of you as possible in a timely manner, and I hope mitigate any sense of isolation that you may have felt. I have also shared the updates with our trustees who have commented that it has enabled them to keep their fingers on the pulse of our charity and monitor its vital signs on a regular basis. Thanks for all your feedback and don't forget to keep sending in nominations for special mentions or items of news that will be of interest. I would rather err on the side of too much communication than too little and it is great to put some positive news in the emails too.

### **Reopening News and possible news of news.**

A year ago the Covid Operational Planning Team were meeting daily, with some working in the wee small hours, as the UK nations all unveiled slightly different approaches at slightly different times. We will emerge from lockdown at different times too, but we have some clarity on what we can offer customers. The complexities of getting FSC centres and staff up and running again falls to the new Operational Coordination Team (OCT) mentioned last week, and you can find out more about them and their role from yesterday's All Staff Zoom which will be uploaded for you to view [here](#).

Subject to each planned step of England's roadmap being confirmed every 5 weeks, we are now able to offer education outreach on top of our online courses, some limited camping and self-catering options from 12<sup>th</sup> April and [Stay with Us](#) and some Eco skills courses at certain centres from 17<sup>th</sup> May. We have been told to expect an announcement on the school visits guidance in England next week, a week earlier than expected. The sector is making its case for day visits to be permitted from 12<sup>th</sup> April and residential with Covid Secure measures from 17<sup>th</sup> May. We remain hopeful, but are also mindful of the government's chief medical officer's warnings about relaxation of restrictions.

We have *provisional* dates that we are working to for schools, both day and residential and can take provisional bookings but we will be doing all we can to encourage bookings through Summer and Autumn. The bottom line remains that the present roadmap allows schools to visit and stay with us from 21<sup>st</sup> June and we will do all that we can to encourage them to do so. Fortunately, our [Book with Confidence scheme](#) can offer our customers the reassurance that they need.

The ongoing uncertainty has led us to review recruitment decisions made recently, as well as our intentions for currently vacant posts. This is not something we treat lightly but we have to carefully balance the risks to our finances with our ability to meet customer demand. As you know the goalposts keep moving which makes it tricky to say the least. Regrettably we have had to make some decisions to change the start dates for some posts, and to withdraw some posts altogether. Our reopening plans need to be as flexible as possible, and we will be monitoring the situation closely so we can react accordingly. Managers and candidates will be contacted by Group Operations Managers with details as soon as possible and we will deal with each individual decision sensitively and on a personal basis in line with our values.

### **Interim Changes**

Following on from my Catch Up email of 18 February which covered the interim changes resulting from Simon Ward's departure, from this Monday Rhyd-y-creuau and Preston Montford will join Tim Foster in the North region with Alex MacFie as their Group Operations Manager.

**New round of government funding**

A second round of the [Green Recovery Challenge](#) fund has been announced with £40m up for grabs. Those of you that have paid attention will know that FSC is part of a successful coalition that got funding in the first round for the Generation Green Project which will prioritise young people from BAME groups, disadvantaged backgrounds and coastal communities. The fund's overall focus is on creating and retaining green jobs that play an active part in restoring landscapes and habitats. The clear focus on connecting people to nature is something that plays to our strengths so we wish Jennie all the best as she gets stuck into another funding bid.

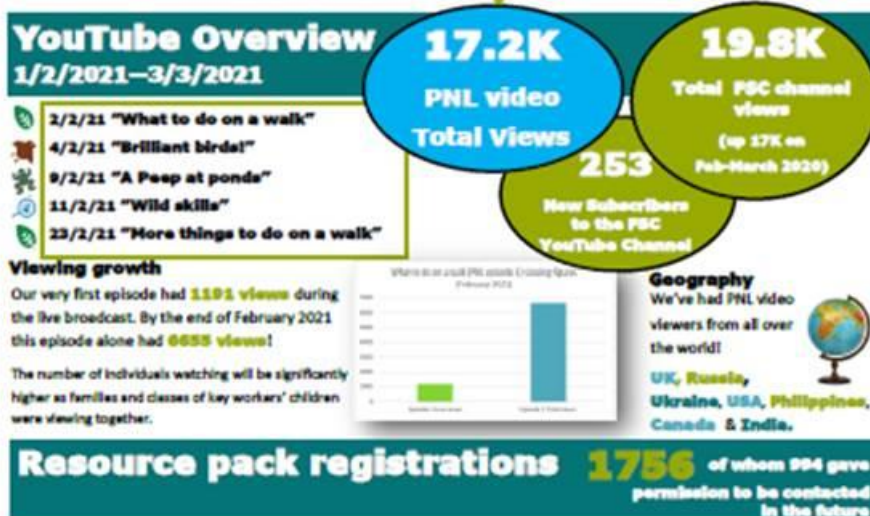
**FSC on Countryfile**

For those of you who missed it, Countryfile did a good piece on environmental education and the pros/cons around having a separate Natural History GCSE. #Primarynaturelive was also featured so it was good to see Chloe, Lou and Angus appear on primetime TV. You can see the feature [here](#) which starts at 7:10 minutes in. More free publicity for one of the holidays at Nettlecombe has come via a rather nice write up in the [travel section of the Telegraph](#).

**Primary Nature Live: Results so far**

Jonathan Calcraft has produced an excellent impact report on #PrimaryNatureLive which will be uploaded to the Staff News pages but below is just the first page to give you all a taster of what has been achieved so far. Congratulations to all who have been involved in a project that had a standing start only in January.

# #PrimaryNatureLive



## Congratulations

Congratulations to our Head of Human Resources - Sara Seivewright who has recently obtained the highest level of professional standard as a 'Chartered Fellow' of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Sara completed this outside her busy working hours and would like to thank her team and wider colleagues for all their support, especially during the last year with the challenges of Covid. Sara hopes that this will influence others across FSC to make every opportunity of personal professional development, including through any relevant professional bodies.

Stay safe and keep well

Mark