

Thu 18/03/2021 11:16

Dear Colleagues,

There is no news yet on the outcome of the review into school trip guidance. However there is plenty for the Board of Trustees to discuss this weekend and so at 12pm next Wednesday I'll be hosting an all staff zoom where I will do my best to keep you up to date. As always there will be an open mic for questions, and it will be recorded for those unable to attend. Invites will be sent out shortly and feel free to email your questions in advance to Joy j.blizzard@field-studies-council.org to avoid being that colleague who is frantically typing away in the chat box on a last minute question when the meeting ends. Despite no news on the guidance, it's good to know that Epping's Tutor Hannah and HEP Laura were able to get back to some sort of normality by delivering in person teaching to St Mary's school Beckenham, who have been missing out on their weekly lessons in the park until now.

New Eco Skills Team

The permanent team for Eco-Skills is now in place, picking up from the fantastic development work undertaken by the interim team over the past few months. The Eco-Skills team will organise 150-200 Eco-Skills courses to run online from April and at FSC Centres and other venues from July. This includes around 90 previously successful courses that we're looking to run again at FSC Centres and other places, alongside a large number of new courses from our new learning frameworks to be delivered both online and place-based. The courses are for people aged 18+ across the UK, plus some targeted provision for people aged 16-17, including Young Darwin. They will be delivered in the main by associate tutors and we are currently in the process of booking the tutors and venues although customers themselves will book the courses directly through the website. For any enquiries please contact c.rooney@field-studies-council.org (Clare Rooney, Training and Engagement Manager Eco-Skills) or direct people with queries to the dedicated mailbox ecoskills@field-studies-council.org.

New Scientist Article Success

In January I wrote that the New Scientist Magazine offered free pages to charities and that we were successful in pitching an article about what we do. At the time I commented that it may flush out a rich benefactor. So I'm pleased to report that an individual anonymous donor has donated £5K and told FSC that he had money to give away and was flicking through old copies of New Scientist and our article chimed with him, adding that he thought our work with young people will be especially important post pandemic. In addition, the property law firm Kilburn Strode deal with new inventions across a wide variety of scientific areas and they particularly liked the phrase "*Studying unpredictable nature develops practical, problem solving skills. Dealing with complex, messy data and adapting to the unexpected are essential to equip learners for the fourth industrial revolution*" and have invited FSC to apply for their CSR award worth £30k. From first spotting the opportunity, writing the article and now to following up leads has involved staff and Bebold Media working collaboratively across teams and at speed which has become the hallmark of our response to getting through the last year.

Taxing times

Along with the daffodils comes the end of the tax year so time to remind you about being able to claim tax relief for working from home. It recognises the impacts on heating, lighting and broadband bills. Sadly there isn't yet a scheme to help out those of us whose grown up children moved back in a year ago. The application process has been made as simple as possible which in itself is a sign that we are living in extraordinary times. You can claim for a whole tax year even if you have only worked from home for one day due to Covid-19. It's worth about £60 for basic rate tax payers. Martin Lewis has just updated his blog about this which you can read here on [Moneysavingexpert.com](https://moneysavingexpert.com) and to claim the tax relief visit <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home> and

complete the online application. If you are eligible you will receive your full entitlement by way of an adjustment to your tax code.

Vaccines for the 50+

As you may have heard in the news, appointments are now opening up for those who are 50+ [so here is the link](#). I've (only just) had mine and I'd encourage you all to get them to keep you and your colleagues safe.

Preventing the spread of New Variant Email Signatures

There are numerous opportunities for self-expression at FSC, but the email signature block isn't really one of them. Please don't add your own signature blocks to sit over the top of the central managed one. A lot of thought from the marketing and digital team goes into what is, and crucially what is not included. Personalised signature blocks detract from a good clean look and the recipient can end up with a sprawling message full of links than can double the length of the email. Simple messages about your working hours are fine.

Amazon Smile

If you are an amazon shopper you can help FSC by making us your chosen charity and a small donation is made each time you shop. So far, we have raised the princely sum of £65 so if you would like to help out see the article on the [staff news](#).

Higher Education Placements

And finally, in what must have been the strangest year ever for our HEPs, I'm very pleased to see from the comments below that they have really grabbed what opportunities were available and made the best of their time with us. HEPs have been managed by Alex MacFie and mentored by Jenny Pearson so my thanks to them all, and to Jess Madden for putting this infographic together.

HEP Projects/Tasks Overview

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|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| ✓ Delivering online sessions | ✓ Biological surveys | ✓ Blogs & social media |
| ✓ Supporting presentations | ✓ Conservation (beach clean survey) | ✓ Inventories/organising resources |
| ✓ Preparing centres for reopening | ✓ Development of nature trail | ✓ Microscope maintenance training |
| ✓ Resource creation (educational) | ✓ Project assistance with Biolinks, Ecoskills, Publications & Primary Live | ✓ Risk management, Health & Safety, COSHH, biosecurity, fire safety training |
| ✓ Independent project management | | |



Placement Testimonials

"I have gained so much **confidence** in working with people from my placement. Organising and running a community beach clean taught me **leadership skills**. Being involved with school outreach for vulnerable students has improved my **engagement with people** about environmental issues. These experiences, amongst others are **incredibly valuable** for me in moving towards a future in public engagement in conservation issues." - Emma, Durham University



"I feel like I've **made a real difference**, which means the world to me. I've also met some top notch people, who also mean the world to me" - Gregor, University of Brighton

"Getting **professional experience**, working with a group of great people, being outside – I feel like a **valued and trusted member of the FSC team**." - Bob, University of the West of England

"I've really enjoyed working in a **team of likeminded environmentalists** and feel I have **contributed to the continuation of a great company** by reinvigorating lessons plans and the site I've worked at."

- Ada, University of Plymouth

"There is **freedom to do projects** that I am passionate about that also benefit the centre. There are lots of **great opportunities**." - Kathryn, University of Sheffield

"This placement year has given me the **opportunity to explore** what I'm passionate about and I have **found so much support** from the FSC in exploring these"

- Jess, Durham University

"You become well integrated into FSC, and I was given the opportunity to be part of primary nature live. In a time where I can't interact with children, this was a **great experience for practicing delivery and resource development**." - James, University of the West of England

"The HEP placement gave me a **vast insight** into how an environmentally conscious charity operates. Its teachings and sustainable practices, helped me in **evaluating my future career path**" - Chad, University of Plymouth

"There is **no place I would rather be** than the FSC"

- Mika, Coventry University

FSC

Keep safe and stay well

Mark