



Thu 15/04/2021 16:26

Dear Colleagues,

### **Testing, Testing**

As promised in last week's catch up, the guidance document '21 04 14 Covid Secure Operating Guidance- Free Covid-19 Testing' for staff on using the free, at home testing service can be found  [here](#) in the Covid-19 Folder and the self-cert form if you do test positive is  [here](#). It's part of keeping you, your colleagues and our visitors as safe as possible. Staff from Epping and Amersham have organised themselves in a way that other centres might want to copy. They have opted to do their tests on the same day each week, send each other reminders and by doing the tests in the evening can help sort out cover for any colleagues who might test positive.

Late yesterday afternoon the Welsh Government [guidance](#) on home testing was published aimed at identifying the virus in those of us that have no symptoms. The free tests are for those who cannot work from home and who are not part of a regular testing scheme through an employer. Free home testing kits will be available from Friday from [these locations](#) listed in the document – other locations and postal delivery are being explored. Community testing is continuing in some areas of Wales and through schools. A similar scheme is expected to roll out in Scotland from the end of April. We will be updating our staff guidance to reflect this

### **FSC Family Adventure Holidays**

With travel abroad a bit of a lottery and the increased demand for Staycation options, now is a good time to remind friends and family about [FSC's holiday offer](#). At the moment the longer, more expensive options are the most popular but there are lots of shorter breaks available too. There has been good coverage in the [local press](#) around several of the centres and a great piece in the [Smiley News](#) which highlights our charitable work too.

### **Pubs not Pub: alternatives to sitting in cold pub garden**

Now that we can get out and about a little more and meeting up outside is one way to see friends and family I'd like to remind you that [FSC's Wildlife Shop](#) has a huge selection of nature guides and books plus an expanding range of nature-themed gifts including notebooks, pollinator packs, bags and bundles. As a little boost the Publications team are offering **10% off any purchases for FSC staff** before 1<sup>st</sup> May, simply use voucher code **staffgifts21** at checkout.

### **Ethnic Diversity in the Environment Sector**

In February I drew your attention to some Equality Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Seminars delivered by Institute of Outdoor Learning. Since then our own EDI group presented an all staff zoom which you can still see [here](#) and they are now supporting an exciting new initiative which needs your help. Wildlife and Countryside Link and Natural England, in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn and the John Ellerman Foundation have commissioned a Review into Ethnic Diversity in the Environment Sector. The Review is conducting a survey and I would really encourage staff to take part. It will take about five minutes to complete. The Review will develop a route map to help the sector, and organisations within it, become more ethnically diverse. Your survey answers will help shape the development of this route map. As staff, you have an insight into the organisation that the most senior leaders often do not see. That is why your views are vital. The data from the survey will be aggregated and no individuals will be identifiable in the reporting. Wildlife and Countryside Link's remit is England, however both England and UK-wide data will be reported in the Review's findings. Take the survey at:

<https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90334600/envdivreview> The survey will be live from 9 April 2021 to 28 May 2021.

### **Epic Epping**

This week saw the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first visitors to FSC Epping Forest and it's a shame that Covid-19 has prevented a suitable celebration. Since then over 675,000 visitors have come through the doors, but there have only been three centre managers in all that time. I'm glad that people are not keen to leave.

### **Special Mention: Farewell to Adrian Pickles**

Adrian is leaving us after more than 20 years at FSC. Starting as Head of Centre and Malham Tarn, Adrian brought excellence to the teaching delivered to schools and universities. He also became a key part of the local community and is well known for his fell-running. After nine years at Malham, Adrian became the Head of Centre at Preston Montford and in that time also welcomed Bishop's Wood and its staff into the FSC Family. His time at PM improved the offer for adult and university education and he was well known as a scientist and as an educator. As with many long serving FSC staff however, he will be remembered as much for his appearances at staff conferences as for his professional career. I am told that these have included a Bat Man costume and as host, his introduction of the Poetry Ambulance which brought a welcome injection of the arts into proceedings. For many staff he will be remembered for bringing some much needed warmth into a very cold morning session at Nettlecombe. Adrian took from his pocket his trusted note book and led a sing along of "Mr Dinosaur" - never one to let slip an opportunity to fly the flag for geology. To this day staff are not sure whether it was an original composition or a remastering of another work. Adrian you will be missed, and we all wish you well for the future.