

Thu 26/08/2021 11:41

Dear Colleagues,

As you know me and other members of the SLT have been visiting centres and continuing to meet teams. It is great to see you all, and essential that we gather and take note of your feedback. This week the SLT zoomed with the HEPs at Millport, whose welcome arrival I mentioned in last week's catch up. Some great questions from them to help keep us on our toes.

Coverage in the Telegraph

The marketing team and BeBold PR pitched the Great Outdoor Adventure breaks to the Telegraph a little while back so I'm really pleased to see that FSC Blencathra has been featured in the Telegraph's recent round-up of half term holidays. Being listed in the [20 of the best UK and European holidays for October half-term](#) is a huge achievement where we are mentioned alongside Rome and Disneyland.

Generation Green

FSC is a partner in this project which is funded by the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. Through new jobs, training, volunteering roles, residentials and outdoor and online learning experiences, the project provides more than 100,000 opportunities to connect young people to nature— many for the first time. This [latest newsletter](#) gives a very good summary of the people behind the projects and if you haven't got time to read all of it, scroll to page 7 which features FSC's very own Bek Trehern.

Welsh changes to fieldwork requirements

In an exchange of emails that would do a 'Yes Minister' script proud, we have been trying to get a definitive version of the changes to the 2022 exams. The proposal was less draconian than England's with a reduction rather than a removal of mandatory fieldwork. It would be good to know, and to know before the start of the term would have been even better. Unfortunately "the computer says no" and the information that currently, only teachers can access, should be made available to us at start of the autumn term.

Beavers Back for Good?

Good news is in short supply at the current time, but the [Government Consultation on Managed Beaver Reintroduction](#) has been launched, alongside plans to increase protection for the species. The reintroduction of beavers on the River Otter provided multiple benefits. The consultation covers England only and is cautious in its wording and approach with much emphasis on stakeholder engagement, but that the government has stated that they are "committed to providing opportunities to reintroduce formerly native species, such as beavers, where the benefits for the environment, people and the economy are clear" is quite a shift in thinking in a relatively short space of time. As with all consultations, you can have your say as a citizen via the online survey.

"The dreadful truth is that when people come to see their MP they have run out of better ideas" Boris Johnson

I know that several trustees have been in contact with MPs re the reduction in fieldwork and that some of the responses may have felt a little disappointing. However an MP offering to pass on our concerns to the DfE, or reply with a response that they themselves have received from Ofqual or a minister should be regarded as a success. It shows that they have bothered to raise the issue and building relationships with MPs takes time. We will be writing to them shortly with links to our Impact Report, partly to thank those MPs that have been active on our behalf but also to flag up to the others that despite their utter inaction, FSC is still very much a going concern.

Call for a Guest Editor for 30th September and 7th October

There will be no catch up next week as I am on annual leave. At last week's meeting with the Education Team Leaders, there was a broad discussion about setting a culture where people do not feel that they have to respond to emails sent in the wee small hours or to be contactable when they are on leave. It was a good point which we should all heed. I'm also offering an opportunity for a Guest Editor for the catch up when Joy is away. You might want to do a roundup of news or as guest editor do a themed special about a particular area of work. Contact Joy if you would like to pitch for the role.

Special mention

There is a fine line between a place being biodiverse and being so overgrown that it's difficult to access the building. So thank you to all the HO staff who pitched up on Tuesday lunchtime to weed and tidy the courtyard. Many hands made light work of what was quite a big job. Now that nettles no longer impede the table tennis a celebratory game was played, another welcome sound of normality returning.

Stay safe and keep well

Mark