

Thu 04/11/2021 10:34

Dear Colleagues,

It has been great to have an opportunity meet some of you again and to welcome those of you who are recent arrivals. I really do value these sessions, they allow me to thank you personally for all your efforts and to listen to your views. This afternoon I was at Nettlecombe. I enjoyed the opportunity to walk up the valley and see the centre again after an absence of too many months. I also enjoyed the frank and forthright exchange of views and ideas. As I write I am at Slapton which has 68 visitors this evening which is really good to see. I am confident that when I meet the team tomorrow they will be similarly motivated and motivating.

### **Heading to Glasgow**

At last week's event at the Natural History Museum where the DfE unveiled some new initiatives in response to COP26, I was told by a youth activist that (apparently because of my advanced years) I could not be expected to have the same passion for the environment as someone younger, as they had more "skin in the game". Despite my time on the planet being somewhat limited, I have been invited to attend the launch of the DfE initiatives in Glasgow and, provided my Zimmer frame is up to it, I think it best to accept. It's another opportunity to catch up with some of our delivery partners and possibly bend the ear of the new Secretary of State for Education too. Sadly I can't provide more details on the new initiatives because they are embargoed until tomorrow. Having given top billing to nonagenarians Sir David Attenborough and the Queen, I'm relieved that at least the organisers of COP26 think people over the age of 16 still have something to offer.

### **FSC Youth Debate**

*"When businesses plant trees, does it take away their responsibility to reduce carbon emissions?"* - Anna (16), FSC Youth Council

My encounter with an ageist youth campaigner has made me appreciate once again the quality of FSC's own Youth Council. Yesterday they hosted and chaired a 2 hour debate with 18 young people from around the country including some new to FSC. The chosen topic for debate was whether planting trees is the best solution for climate change. Great arguments were put forward both for and against, with the against team winning the audience vote. Open floor discussions on what COP26 leaders should be deciding upon included ecosystem fragility, our carbon footprint, our biodiversity crisis and awarding larger climate grants. Dylan Byrne, Bek Trehern, Anna Lewis and Olivia Watts put a lot of work into this event and generated a fair amount of media interest along the way (a couple of examples are [here](#) and [here](#)). Thoughts are already turning to holding another debate but I'll leave you with a couple of key quotes from the evening:

*"Every single ecosystem that is on earth needs to be protected equally, no one ecosystem is more valuable than others"*

*"The people that are going to make it happen are us, so we have to be listened to"*

### **New Initiative with the NFU Goes Live**

Many congratulations to PM tutor Lewis Withy who delivered a brand new initiative with the National Farmers Union after initial project scoping by Jo Harris. Working with the NFU, Encounter Edu (who helped us deliver Fieldworklive) and a local farmer, Lewis has developed a [series of live lessons](#) looking at the issues of farming and the environment. This is part of the NFU's own response to COP26 and we are particularly pleased to have been sought out as a delivery partner. With significant changes to farming rolling out across the UK we believe that there are opportunities for FSC in that sector. The person who brought Lewis' hard work to my attention commented that

“Lewis just took it all in his stride, developing scripts and worksheets, appearing in front of the camera and working behind it.” You can catch the lessons going out this week on [YouTube](#)

### **Business Managers’ Meeting**

On Monday and Tuesday next week our Business managers are meeting at Preston Montford to reflect on our experiences, consider what learning we can take from them and how we might apply that learning. I am sure they will have given you the opportunity to share your ideas with them but it is never too late to bring something to their attention and enable it to be discussed and considered.

### **Covid is a long way from over**

It’s hard work remaining vigilant. I know that many of you are still dealing with Covid-19 testing and self-isolation regimes and that some had your half term plans spoiled. I’d like to draw your attention to a [change in the Welsh guidelines](#). The changes include if someone in your household now tests positive or has Covid symptoms you'll now need to isolate until you've had a negative test, even if you are fully vaccinated. The C-opt are keeping an eye on any changes relating to Plan B, and also the possibility that schools might receive letters from their Heads of Local Public Health asking them to consider whether educational trips and residential visits should go ahead. The measures that we set out on our [Covid – keeping you safe](#) page and all the reassurance that we can provide is needed as much as ever.

Stay safe and keep well

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