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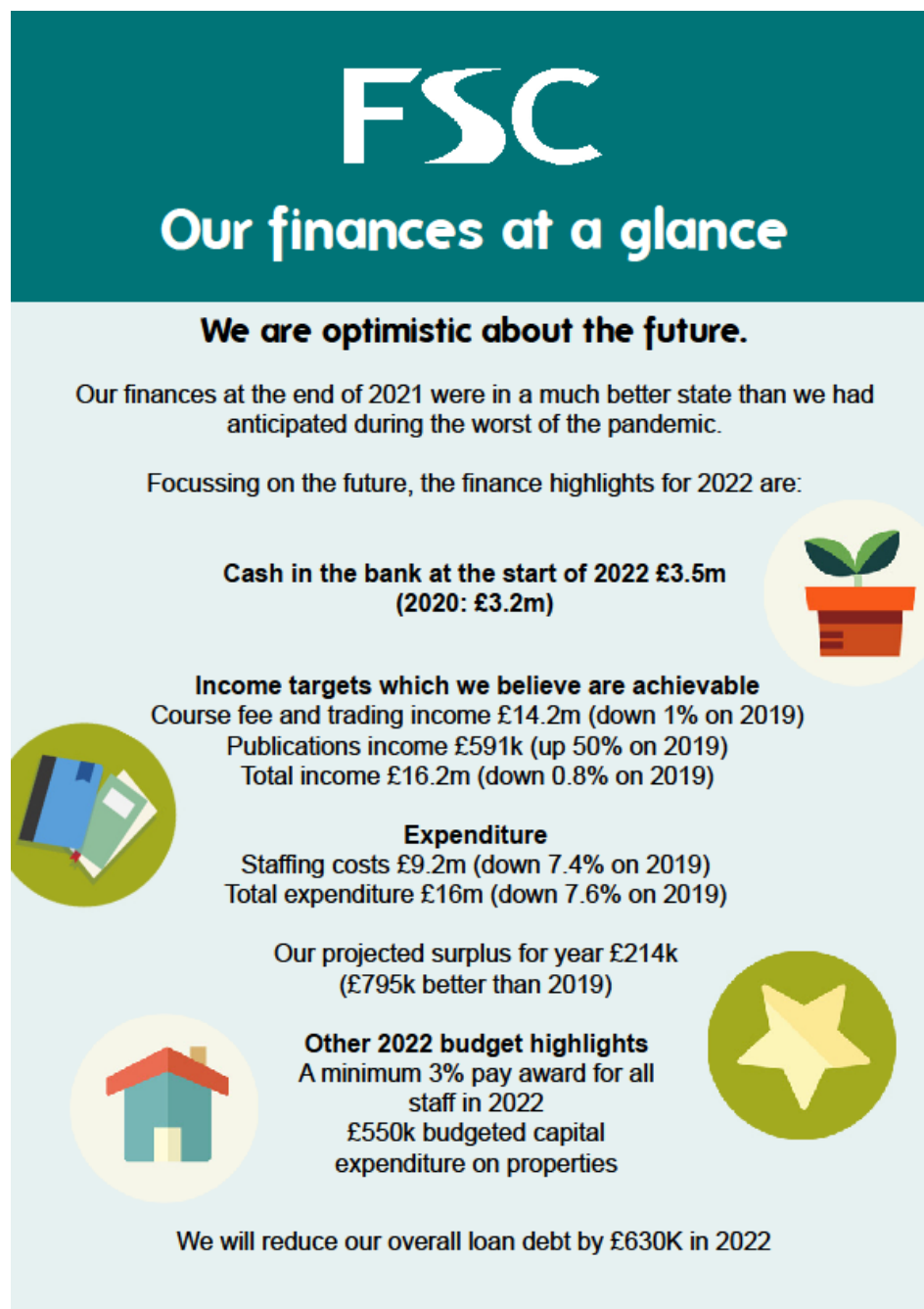
Dear Colleagues

Coronavirus Public Health Guidance

You may have heard news bulletins yesterday talking about decisions being made to relax covid restrictions in the nations of the United Kingdom. Whilst on this face of it this is excellent news, as ever the 'devil is in the detail' and there will be local differences to be taken into account. We are considering the implications and will include the Covid OPT's interpretation in the catch up next week.

Future Finances

As promised in the last catch up, we kick the year off with some finance news, as the state of the bank balance will dictate how we deliver the strategy that I highlighted last week. I'm particularly pleased that the feared rush of cancellations due to Omicron didn't materialise and that bookings continue to come in. Sam has set out some of the headline figures for the coming year. The takeaway message is one of growing confidence in our recovery.




National Minimum Wage


To enhance recruitment and retention, we will bring forward the statutory National Minimum Wage increases which incorporate the cost of living pay award for scale points 4 -16 to commence on 1st March. The 1st April change will remain for all posts on point 17 and upwards. I am sure you will be supportive of this decision which aims to enhance recruitment and retention at an early stage in the season.

Trees for Cities

Earlier this month saw the deadline for residents of 7 cities and coastal towns to register for our free tree guides. I'm pleased to say that over 13,000 residents will receive free winter tree ID guides from FSC next week with more to follow in the coming months. Both individuals and community groups have signed up, and the response has greatly exceeded our target of engaging 5,000 people. What's more, many of those who have signed up are not very knowledgeable about trees with 93% unable to identify 10 or more species and almost half have never planted or cared for a tree. The community groups involved will bring in a large number of young people and also those from a really diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. The project caught the imagination of the local and regional press too – here is a [typical example](#) of the coverage.

Staff reps

We aim to have two staff reps for the Board of Trustees and each of its three sub-committees. Due to staff changes we now have two vacancies: one for the Board of Trustees and one for the Education Strategy Committee. The Board meets four times a year and the Education Strategy Committee meets three times a year, but only one of the two reps needs attend – so the time commitment is shared. Further information about what being a staff rep means can be found on the FSC intranet ( [here](#)). Information about each of the Committees can be found in the [Trustees](#) section of the intranet; minutes and papers from past meetings can be found under Document Archive/Committees and Groups/....

So, if you seek a development opportunity, why not consider becoming a staff representative? If you are interested in putting yourself forward to fill one of these positions, please complete the  [Interest Form](#) and return it to Susan s.appleyard@field-studies-council.org by **Monday, 7 February 2022**. If you would like to discuss this informally before making a decision, please do not hesitate to contact her.

Obituary

Earlier in the week, we learned the sad news of the death of Dr Steve Trudgill. Steve became an FSC trustee in the 1970s and his support for FSC continued throughout the rest of his life in one way or another; for the last decade or so he was an Honorary Vice-President. Steve was a regular attendee at FSC art courses, at Slapton in particular on Hilary Gibson's courses. With Tim Burt and others, he conducted research at Slapton on nitrate pollution. His books on soils were well known to generations of FSC staff and students. He also published widely on solutes in river systems and more recently reflected on the philosophy and practice of physical geography. Alas, he did not live long enough to see his new book 'Why conserve nature?' published at the end of this month. Steve's academic career took him from degrees at Bristol to university appointments at Strathclyde, Sheffield and Cambridge, where he was a Fellow of Robinson College. In due course, we will mark his contribution to FSC in some fitting way.

Farewell to Tim Foster

This is the last catch up before Tim Foster, Head of Group North, heads off to enjoy a well-deserved retirement. Tim joined FSC as Head of Centre for Blencathra in 2005, five Prime Ministers and 9 Education Secretaries ago. Fortunately for FSC, Tim had more tenacity than them and his passion for high quality outdoor learning and ensuring that our visitors had the best possible experience has underpinned his time with us. In 2018 Tim became Head of Group North and during the Covid pandemic worked tirelessly to ensure that the charity emerged in as good a shape as possible.

The picture below could well be titled “Two gentlemen about to stand down” but it was the basis of a suggested caption competition in 2019. Tim laughed at himself with a very good grace at Nick Laphorn’s winning lines so we thought that we could repeat it here in the same spirit.

We wish Tim every happiness in his retirement as he spends time travelling, being with his many grandchildren and enjoying the countryside that he helped open up to so many young people. I know that he is collecting a campervan in February and intends to spend more time travelling in 2022 with his wife Sue. He has also become a trustee for CAfS (Cumbria Action for Sustainability) and intends to continue with some RGS events so I am confident that our paths will cross in the future. Due to Omicron we were unable to plan a Blencathra goodbye event, so maybe in the summer?

“The problem is when you live such a high profile life, it’s only natural that people want to have their photo taken with you.

If you need any advice on how to sort things out just drop me a line.”

“Thank you, I will” replied Boris.



Stay safe and keep well

Mark