


Thu 21/04/2022 13:19

Dear Colleagues,

GCSE in Natural History

As part of the launch of the Department for Education's Strategy for Sustainability this evening the GCSE is getting its official go ahead. This has been the result of a lot of hard work, nagging and lobbying. FSC was involved in the very early days before more well-known organisations and individuals joined what has now become a bit of a bandwagon. Back then indeed, some within the sector dismissed the idea as that of "some woman". Some woman indeed. Journalist Mary Colwell has spearheaded the first new GCSE since 2014 in the face of a Whitehall unwilling to make changes to the curriculum. As I write this, a clearly converted Nadhim Zahawi is enthusing about the new GCSE on Radio 4. Of course it's good news for us, but we are still going to continue to campaign to ensure opportunities for all learners throughout their school years whether they choose this GCSE or not.

Covid Reflections Report

Our Covid Lessons Learned report was considered at the recent Board of Trustees' meeting and the recommendations will be taken to the Audit and Risk Committee to determine how they can be embedded in to our operations. You can find the report in the recent Board of Trustees papers  [here](#) from page 84. We know that staff experiences of covid were widely different with some furloughed for months and a few working for what felt like all the hours to keep us afloat. With almost every member of staff being furloughed at some stage, it was easy to feel out of the loop despite our best efforts to keep people informed without breaking furlough rules. That became an ideal situation for myths to flourish and a large part of this report seeks to set out what was happening during the last two years, how we responded to the ever changing guidance across the different UK nations and the decisions that were made. The report captures the human as well as the operational issues. It's a straightforward report and I would encourage you to take a few minutes to read it.

Sam's Nature Friendly Schools blog

As promised last week, Sam Thurston has shared some reflections and considerations from the Nature Friendly Schools project as it draws to an end. Please read his blog on the [Staff news page here](#). Sam will be sharing some of the fantastic impacts that the project achieved next month.

Out and about

Field Studies Council was represented at the Shropshire Primary Outdoor Learning Conference earlier this month. We had an exhibition stand managed by Jess P and Karen from the sales team and Arran and Jonathan from Preston Montford delivering two practical workshops entitled the 'Outdoor Learning Toolkit'. The delegates particularly enjoyed the hands on elements that Jonathan had set up with invertebrate tanks, rock and soil activities, tree measuring and mammal shelters. Our fold out charts were popular too. We received positive feedback from the attendees, including from local schools who had never used us before, and generated lots of interest in what else we offer.

Geographical Association conference

The GA, one of our strategic partners, held it's conference on the theme of 'Everyday Geographies'. It was a hybrid event but the first time that delegates could meet face to face since 2019. Thank you to Nick Lapthorn was there to represent us and Carol Decker and Dawn Cook who were there from marketing and sales respectively. Thanks also to Simon Ward and Charlotte Foster both Senior Tutors from Flatford who led a workshop for teachers. It's a good opportunity to connect and

reconnect with classroom teachers, about half of whom we think are new to FSC and not yet customers.

Welcome to FSC this week:

Ian Tester is joining us as a Tutor at Rhyd-y-creuau and Scott Wycherley is joining Central Services as Education Manager.

Special mention

This week, Belinda Airey has been nominated. She has been with Eco-Skills since 2021 as one of the coordinators. Having started with FSC in 2014 at Rhyd y creuau Belinda's knowledge and experience of FSC systems has supported the new team and kept them on the right track many times. Recently she joined Keiron in sorting out the website duplicate order issue and made sure our customers were dealt with in a professional and courteous manner. The Eco Skills team said that they feel lucky to have such an experienced, hardworking and friendly team member.

Stay safe and keep well

Mark