

Thu 29/06/2023 08:31

Dear Colleagues,

### **National Fieldwork Fortnight**

We are a few days into National Fieldwork Fortnight, a celebration of fieldwork which encourages schools to take part in learning outside the classroom. We are sharing several free resources from the Education team on our website and social media pages to support the initiative and engage with teachers. If you have photos of groups in the outdoors to share on social media between now and 7th July please use #nationalfieldworkfortnight to join in.

### **GCSE in Natural History**

Since [confirming](#) back in February that the government is still committed to taking forward the new GCSE, there is no news yet on the promised public consultation on the draft content. The stated aim remains that it will be first taught from 2025 which doesn't leave anyone much time to create the course materials and teacher training that will be needed. We are keeping a close eye on it, hoping that the government's focus on other matters doesn't delay the timeline.

### **Centre Pages on the Website**

The landing page for [our locations](#) has been revamped so customers now enjoy a larger, interactive map, filtering options and a postcode tool. The next phase is improving the content on each individual location's page. This is an opportunity to really show off your centre. If you have any good quality current photographs of your rooms, buildings or outdoor spaces please send them to the marketing team.

### **Young Darwin (YDS)**

This year, we saw a record number of applicants for the YDS, with 390 young people applying for 80 spaces. This is an additional 130 applicants compared to last year. The scholars have now been sorted and scored, which was very difficult owing to the excellent quality of all the applications. We have also recorded an increase in the number of applicants from underrepresented groups for this year's scholarship:

	2021	2022	2023
Applicants from an ethnic minority background	13%	16%	17.50%
Applicants with a neurodiversity	/	19%	24%
Applicants requesting financial support	/	8%	10.70%

Our 80 scholars have now been selected and our first scholarship will be running at Millport the last week of July, followed by 4 further scholarships at Preston Montford, Nettlecombe, London and York. Over the coming weeks.

### **Special Mentions**

As you all know customer retention is very important and one of the things we want to promote is a culture of excellent customer care. I thought that I would share this example of "going the extra mile" at Slapton. I know that this sort of thing is happening all over the FSC, but I want to celebrate it more:

As a result of a student being ill and their member of staff being tied up with a hospital trip, Kerry Harper-Walker the administrator came in on Sunday on her day off in order to drive a group to their

field sites so that the fieldwork could go ahead – she quite literally went the extra mile(s). Brian Thirtle the Maintenance Office also had his weekend disturbed in order to rescue a member of FSC staff that had become trapped in a bedroom by a broken lock. Having alerted some students to the issue, they were able to contact Brian who came in on his day off. Having managed to climb in through the window he was able to free them both! Alongside this was some fabulous feedback for Harmony the HEP from a participant on the Biodiversity course – Robert said “The member of the hospitality team assigned to our course, Harmony [Tang], was exceptional. Even when she was called away because of a situation elsewhere she made sure that other staff would cover for her.”

I would also like to share this week’s nominations from the team at Castle Head who have also had a busy season. Higher Education Placement Ewan Holmes has been nominated for going the extra mile, stepping in and stepping up, often right at the last minute. Helping out with hospitality and activity sessions, he’s been flexible whilst remaining cheerful and professional throughout. The team say that they will be sorry to see both Ewan and fellow HEP Liea go because they have both been invaluable.

I have also had a nomination for Dave Elphick (ETL at Castle Head) described as, “a quiet, dignified and a quite marvellous Education Team Leader. He is the first to ‘take one for the team’ and regularly puts in extra shifts, sleep-in duties, is on call and always has an open ear if we have questions and has solutions if the team are struggling. He is truly the glue that holds us together and I have a massive amount of respect for him. Castle Head has, as have we all, had a very busy season during which everyone in the team has folded sheets, cleaned up sick, unblocked toilets, taken groups of excited children through ghylls, hoovered, moved bedding, canoed, taught geography and biology to the very highest standard, and always with a smile. We have been literally flying by the seat of our pants and done an excellent job. Dave has supported us through it all. So a huge thanks to him and the whole team at CH”.

### **Welcome to Field Studies Council**

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new starters both coincidentally called Amy

Amy Alexander to Epping Forest as an Administrative Assistant  
Amy Turner to Juniper Hall as a Hospitality and Catering Assistant

Mark