

08.30

Dear colleagues,

### **People Plan**

At the Staff Conference in January we started collecting your ideas for the People Plan, then at the March Executive Weekend, the Leadership Forum commented on an initial draft of the Plan created to support and develop our people. The Plan has now been via SLT and Board of Trustees followed by the Finance and Administration Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> September, after discussion, the committee endorsed the intended direction of travel. We would like to share with you the final version of the plan. We are briefing the Leadership Forum today and your managers will share further details with you in your team meetings. A recording of the meeting will also be available for your managers to share.

### **Digital Security**

Be on the lookout for QR Codes in your work emails. Microsoft/Office 365 and our Digital Team **won't** send you QR codes to scan via email. If you do receive one, don't scan the code, instead report it to our Digital Team ([digital@field-studies-council.org](mailto:digital@field-studies-council.org))

### **Recent Biodiversity Programme contract work**

I thought it would be timely to give you an update on the work of the Biodiversity team. Owning learning materials across [the subjects](#) and having a UK-wide professional network of tutors is strongly positioning Field Studies Council's Biodiversity programme as a hub for environmental organisations to turn to for their annual training needs both online and in-person. Alongside a [scheduled annual programme](#) of >200 courses we can offer corporate [on-demand courses and bespoke training](#). We were recently commissioned by the Woodland Trust to develop and deliver training for their staff network in lowland and upland priority habitats so that effective decision-making on areas for tree planting is ensured. Courses were piloted this year and now form part of the trust's rolling CPD programme. We have taken a similar approach to salt marsh vegetation training for the Environment Agency supporting their staff with ongoing surveying and monitoring duties. Most recently we agreed a contract worth c. £40K with the Forestry Commission to provide comprehensive training and publications to support their launch of a new woodland condition assessment app.

### **Young Darwin Scholarships**

Young Darwin Scholarships have finished for another year. In 2023, we welcomed 80 scholars at locations across the UK, including Preston Montford, Nettlecombe Court and Millport. Scholars have explored a range of natural spaces, such as salt marshes, rocky shores and woodland, and have worked with a range of experts, from tutors at our centres, to our associate tutor network, to conservation organisations such as the Natural History Museum and London Wildlife Trust. The scholarship has provided invaluable tools to these young people, such as practical conservation work, identification, and career development. Most importantly, the scholarships have created a network for young people to connect with other like-minded individuals. An evaluation of the 2023 Young Darwin scholarships will be available soon, but for now, here are a few quotes directly from our scholars!

“Inclusive, immersive and incredible, being away with so many likeminded people and doing so many great activities in such a stunning location has been very rewarding and given me great memories.”

“Having the context of the Young Darwin Scholarship when conversing with experts and asking them questions was truly invaluable. Furthermore, seeing brown people/women/other minorities in the conservation sector made me feel empowered.”

“Intense, thrilling, invaluable. I feel like I’ve been set up for life. Can’t wait to use my connections and experience to further my education and hopefully my career too!”

### **Getting our bearings**

We welcome the Ofsted Geography Subject Report: [Getting our Bearings](#) that was published on Tuesday. The report makes recommendations to support fieldwork including in the main findings, which describes fieldwork as “underdeveloped in almost all schools.” This underlines the continued relevance of our charitable mission for the current generation of geography students. We can do much to support schools address these findings by demonstrating best practice in fieldwork through our courses, CPD and digital resources. Some staff may wish to read the full report and discuss it with visiting teachers.

### **Gold Award Success**

It’s been a very successful year for our program of Young People residentials. So far, we’ve hosted a total of 357 young people, of which, 281 of those have used the experience to complete the residential section of their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. With the introduction of two new courses this year, Conservation with Zoo Keeping at Slapton Ley and History Camp at Preston Montford, we’ve been able to offer experiences that set us apart from other providers.

Sarah Fenn, from Marketing, tagged along to Preston Montford’s History Camp to capture the outdoor learning [on camera](#) to help promote this course for 2024. Tutors Charlotte Timerick and Rachel Turner planned a packed 5-day schedule that encouraged participants to consider all four forms of historical evidence as they visited some of Shropshire’s most historically important locations.

We have a handful of residentials still to come this year during October, but the great news is that we have already surpassed last year's figures. A huge thank you to all who have been involved in the DofE program, it really is a team effort.

### **Staff Handbook**

An updated copy of the [Staff Handbook](#) has recently been uploaded to the Intranet. This includes additional information within Section 24: Accommodation & Meal Provision for FSC Staff, which explains how staff report defects and request repairs; and general updates to the Disciplinary, Capability and Sickness Absence sections which are summarised on the Record of Amendments in the appendix. As the Handbook applies to all Field Studies Council employees, I strongly encourage all staff to remind yourselves of the contents.

### **Education campaign**

The latest campaign targeting new schools and colleges to visit us went live last week. Thank you for all the work across many teams to get it prepared, including centre staff who have pulled together free teacher taster events and the education team who have created the updated Digital Hub Plus as a free resource for schools. It has led to 80 sign ups to Digital Hub Plus and over 200 new mailing list

contacts interested in our education products so far, which the sales and marketing teams will now try and convert to bookings.

### **Free webinar**

We are members of the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) and as part of our work to reach international schools we're delivering a free webinar next week. Chloe Toorneini will be leading the session 'Delivering meaningful Fieldwork' for schools on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September. Please sign up if you are interested in hearing the session and supporting Chloe:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_dlltXaXPTw-FiT5om2ZP3A#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dlltXaXPTw-FiT5om2ZP3A#/registration)

### **Promotion**

Congratulations to Sarah Bradford who has been promoted to Maintenance and Estate Assistant at Juniper Hall

Mark