

Thu 18/07/2024 08:31

Dear Colleagues,

Changes to the Board of Trustees

At yesterday's Board Meeting, Jeff Sissons was confirmed as our new Chair of the Board of Trustees, taking over from Pete Higgins who stands down as Chair after steering us through numerous challenges including the Covid years. Gill Miller is now our Vice Chair. Pete will be staying on as a trustee and we also confirmed several new trustees who were appointed last month- Dr Delia Garratt, Nicola Lynes, David Westgate and Chris Brook who each bring skills, specialisms and knowledge to our charity.

With Dr Ruth Copeland-Phillips and Keith Goddard being appointed at the previous board meeting in March we have had 6 new trustees this year. You can find out more about our new Chair Jeff and Vice chair Gill on our website [here](#) which will also shortly be updated to reflect the recent changes in trustees and job descriptions. I'd like to thank all of our trustees for donating their time and expertise to us.

The King's Speech and future government plans

For any who read the Labour Manifesto, the King's speech didn't hold many surprises. As far as our charity is concerned, the plans around education do include an expert-led review of curriculum and assessment (no date was announced for this) and it seems likely that it will focus on a curriculum which is 'rich and broad, inclusive, and innovative'. Creative subjects and sport were specifically mentioned in the manifesto but there were no references to outdoor learning or fieldwork. There will however, be a comprehensive strategy for post-16 education.

There is also big focus on skills, including skills to deliver the industrial strategy and by implication plans for green energy which do get a considerable amount of coverage. There was no specific mention of skills for nature but we will know more when a new body Skills England is set up (skills are a devolved issue). When it comes to nature and nature recovery there were some broad brush statements, plans for nine new National River Walks and three new National Forests. And that perennial favourite: tree planting. Of course, a lot of policy can be contained in just one line in a manifesto, but it's interesting to note that the issue of nature protection and football clubs had similar amounts of coverage.

Away from Westminster, we have already heard back from four MPs who would like to take up our offer of a visit to the centre in their constituency.

When two cake-orientated charities collide...

Not so much collide, but come together for an enjoyable evening. Pictured below are Margam colleagues Siân Lane and Amanda Gisby who were invited to speak about the work of Field Studies Council to Margam WI. The WI took a genuine interest in our work and also kindly donated £50.

Apart from cake, jams and providing an incredible network, the WI have considerable campaigning clout. In the year that we were set up- 1943- the WI were campaigning on equal pay for women. So if anyone ever gets invited to speak on the importance of fieldwork or outdoor learning, it's always worth saying yes if you can. The WI chooses a couple of causes every year upon which to campaign including those causes that that don't usually get a lot of other attention. So you never know which cause they might take on next.



Special Mention

This week two members of staff independently nominated Brendan Leach for his help in sorting some problems that our Sales and Customer Advisor staff had with the 3CX system. One nomination read

"We had a new version of the phone system loaded this week which has caused the team a few headaches. Brendan has been very patient problem solving for us and running a workshop for us this morning. His calmness in explaining the system has soothed many a knotted brow". Thank you Brendan.

There were no new starters to welcome this week. Previous catch ups, along with our fairly new page dedicated to Health and Wellbeing can be found on the [staff news page here](#).

Best regards

Mark