

Thu 01/08/2024 08:31

Dear Colleagues,

GCSE in Natural History

Many organisations have worked long and hard to get the GCSE in Natural History over the line. It was going through the final stages of cross departmental sign off when the election was called. We are concerned that it will be swept up in the Curriculum Review which could mean a considerable delay. Awarding body OCR are coordinating responses and they are keen for people to contact MPs to ask them to not to delay.

I've written to the Secretary of State and I'd encourage all staff and trustees to email your local MP. You can find contact details [here](#). Here are just some pointers:

- Short emails are best and include your address and postcode so that they know you are their constituent.
- The ask is that the GCSE goes ahead. There is no need for a delay or for it to get caught up in the Curriculum Review.
- Reasons include that it was put together with young people who wanted to learn more about the planet and felt that they didn't have enough opportunities to learn outdoors.
- This hasn't changed and many school learners are missing out on outdoor learning and fieldwork.
- It would be a shame to deny them the opportunity to develop natural history skills and knowledge when the UK needs people to help us achieve Net Zero and boost nature recovery.
- Feel free to add in your own experiences of seeing first hand how learning in and about nature can have such a big impact.

If you need any more information or if you get a helpful response back from your MP, please contact Joy Blizzard.

Rapid Review of Environmental Targets

Plenty of nasty surprises await the new government but the dire state of nature has been no secret. A rapid review of the Environmental Improvement Plan [has been announced](#) and will report by the end of the year. There will be a new, statutory plan to protect and restore the environment with a particular focus on waterways, waste, tree planting, air quality and halting the decline in species by 2030. For those who like stats and dashboards there is a lot of information on progress or otherwise [here](#).

Royal Society of Biology - a chance to join the RSB Plant Science Group

We have a number of touch points and projects with the Royal Society of Biology and as a member organisation we are also entitled to have a representative at these group meetings. Representatives from other member organisations and guest speakers exchange information and discuss matters in the plant science sector including education, biodiversity,

conservation, and agriculture. Meetings are held 4 times a year, usually on Zoom, with the next meeting being on 3rd September (10:30 – 12:00).

If you would be interested in joining and being added to the group mailing list, please contact Kieran Woof, Senior Science Policy Officer on 020 3925 3470 or via plantsci@rsb.org.uk making him aware that you are from the Field Studies Council.

Field Studies Council in the Media

We have secured a number of pieces in the media about Flatford Mill and Nate's role as Centre Manager including this piece here on the [BBC Newspaper](#) and we are looking to work with BBC Radio Suffolk again on a podcast about the local area.

Flatford Mill also appears in a National Trust exhibition [Inspired by Nature](#) at Dudmaston Hall in Shropshire. My thanks to PM Senior Tutor Charlotte Timerick whose eagle eye spotted a letter on display from the last owner of Dudmaston who had really enjoyed a painting course at Flatford run by the artist John Nash.

Special Mentions

With the Olympics in full flow, this week's special mentions have a slightly sporty theme. Firstly, Amanda Gisby from Margam has just returned from the British Powerlifting Championships. She won 1st place and gained another 2 World records and 2 British records which is an incredible achievement.

On a slightly different but none the less important scale, Gus Goodwin (below, 3rd from right) and family completed the Race for Life at the weekend and hit their target of raising £1,000 for an excellent cause. And finally the team at Rhyd-y-Creuau used the Staff Reward scheme for a picnic from a local bakery with Nosecco - a wise choice because the picnic was followed by what was described as "an epic game of rounders on the village green". Rounders should be an Olympic sport.



Welcomes and congratulations to:

Josh Wood has joined Juniper Hall as a Casual Hospitality and Catering Assistant

Amy Hopley has been promoted to Education Team Leader at Millport

Katy Boreham is promoted to temporary Centre Manager at Blencathra.

Previous versions of the catch up can be found on the [staff news page](#) and more about the Staff Reward scheme mentioned above is in June's [Occasional Staff Newsletter](#).

Best regards

Mark