

Thu 19/09/2024 08:37

Dear Colleagues,

Donation to the Young Darwin Scholarship Programme

Last week Patricia de Haan came for a tour of Preston Montford, having first visited in 1960. The meres and mosses course changed her life and set her on a particularly fulfilling and interesting career path. She has kindly donated £10,000 so that others can have the same opportunity that she did. Now 82, her enthusiasm for what we do hasn't dimmed. You can hear more about her visit [here on Radio Shropshire](#) 2:47 minutes in and we will be doing some press work in the coming days.

Staff from Preston Montford and Head Office really enjoyed their time with Patricia and her husband David, going through her photos and over tea and biscuits looking at our own archive from her time with us. She particularly enjoyed seeing how much facilities had changed and improved and also spent time chatting with the current education team.

Stories such as Patricia's are so important for both our fundraising and policy work because they powerfully demonstrate the ongoing need for everyone to have opportunities to study the natural world. Here is Patricia with her husband David on a tour with Arran and with Gen Tudor from Radio Shropshire.



A message from Helen Greatorex re the Have Your Say Survey

I've received feedback that some staff members don't feel comfortable sharing their ideas in the Have Your Say survey. Reasons given include that they don't want to look silly and they are fearful

of how their views might be perceived. It is sad to think this would be the case, but I wanted to reassure you that:

- In the Have your say survey there is no such thing as a bad idea. Nothing will be considered silly or stupid. Brainstorming ideas can be the building blocks for some amazing creative ideas that could really make a difference for us. So please share your thoughts.
- The other thing I can assure you of is that asking for names is so we can go back to individuals for clarity or to get further input from them. It can be difficult to explain something fully when you only have so much space to write, whereas a chat can be more helpful. We will limit who reads your comments and ideas to a small group of people who will be processing the information we have gathered. Beyond that group, the information will be anonymised.

I'd also like to understand why you might feel this way, so if you'd like to get in touch for a confidential chat, I'd be very happy to discuss any concerns with you.

Helen

Pension Scheme changes

From 1 October 2024, both of our existing workplace pension schemes will have the additional option of investing on a Salary Sacrifice basis. Choosing to invest in this way could result in National Insurance savings for both you and Field Studies Council, so increasing your take-home pay whilst also reducing the Charity's salary costs. Further details of Salary Sacrifice Pensions, including how you opt-in will be provided in the next few weeks. In the meantime, if you aren't already a member of one of the schemes, we would encourage you to consider joining: you're never too young (or too old!) to invest in a pension.

Green Fund Autumn 2024

Green Fund is our internal scheme for projects designed and delivered by our staff which focus on reducing our carbon emissions, supporting nature recovery and boosting biodiversity. They also provide opportunities to develop bid writing, project management skills, and help both staff and visitors become more sustainable.

The Autumn 2024 Green Fund application selection process was completed last week, a decision was made to fund four exciting projects:

- Slapton Ley - Community compost
- Dale Fort - Wildflower Meadow
- Epping Forest - BioSECURE: Biosecurity project
- Juniper Hall - Drinking Fountain and Bottle Filler

More information will be shared about the Autumn projects as they begin in the coming months, as well as news and images from the completed summers projects soon.

New Energy contracts

We have recently signed new contracts for our mains electricity and mains gas supplies, which begin on 1st October. Our new 24-month 100% renewable electricity contract is with British Gas, our existing Green (mains) Gas Ecotricity contract has been extended for 12 months.

Energy costs remain a significant cost of operating our centres and buildings, so although our new energy prices are slightly cheaper than our previous contract (around 11.5% cheaper/kWh), we must continue to be thoughtful about how we use energy. To that end, we will be carrying out centre

Energy Efficiency Audits during Autumn 2024. Sustainability Manager Sam Thurston will be in touch with further information.

Kitten in need of a new home

Field Studies Council dogs have been in the limelight so in the interests of balance we'd like to find a new home for this stray female kitten kindly being looked after by staff at Preston Montford. Please contact Louise Conway for further details.



Welcome to Field Studies Council

David Plant has joined the Fundraising Team working remotely as Fundraising Officer.

Mark Monk has joined the Finance Team at Head Office as Purchasing Manager.

Georgina Telfer has joined the team at Blencathra as a Casual Hospitality and Catering Assistant.

Also this week:

Erica Deadmarsh has returned to Juniper Hall as a Hospitality and Catering Assistant.

Best regards

Mark