

Thu 28/08/2025 08:30

Dear Colleagues,

Key Meetings with North Ayrshire District Council

For some time, we have been in negotiations with North Ayrshire Council about enhancing our operations from Millport. Elke and her team hosted an excellent stakeholder event, attended by officials and academics, to consider how the proposals might develop and what impact they could have. Our own professors Pete Higgins and Des Thompson were amongst the attendees and speakers. My sense was that there was widespread support for the ambitious plans. There is still much work to be done but it was a thoroughly enjoyable and productive event where the Millport team, with a little help from the weather, showed Millport off at its best.

Keeping Us All Safe

The Operational Health & Safety Working Group plays an important role in ensuring the safety of all our staff and visitors. Our most recent customer research found that when it came to choosing a provider, the Health and Safety record of the organisation is ranked second only to value for money. The group met last week and, as always, covered a packed agenda. This includes reviewing Operational Codes of Practice (OCoPs) - look out for the revised Machinery OCoP and Safeguarding OCoPs amongst others that will be circulated this autumn.

The group also reviews external audits, reports and actions. **WELL DONE to the teams at Margam Discovery Centre and Rhyd-y-creuau** who have achieved over **95%** in no less than 5 different areas - Riddox reporting, External Safety Audits, Fire Report Actions, Legionella Report Actions and Compliance Training. These are exceptional performances, and we hope that this will become the norm as we all strive to keep ourselves, colleagues and visitors safe. Da lawn!

Hire a Canoe

The weather has been kind this summer and Hire a Canoe now has 603 5-star reviews on TripAdvisor and has now been awarded Travellers' Choice 2025. This means we rank in the top 10% of listings on TripAdvisor. Well done to all involved.

Welsh visitor levy

The bill to place a levy on all visitors staying overnight in Wales has been passed by the Senedd, though it will be for each individual council to decide on whether to implement a levy and not before a full consultation has been undertaken. It's particularly disappointing to see that educational trips are specifically included rather than excluded from the levy. However, the earliest any council can implement it is 2027 and a lot of consultation and lobbying can take place before that, even if a council decides to take the idea forward.

Mileage Claim forms

To aid our statutory carbon reporting, the Finance team has asked that when completing claims for private miles, please just put the starting and finishing post codes in the description box. No other text is necessary but the system does require you to fill in the description so please use the format: 'SY4 1HW to LD3 6TT one way or return'.

Our colleagues compiling the carbon returns would appreciate your assistance with this and in the meantime, Ipllicit have been asked for a better solution so we can ensure a standard approach.

Special mention

Ipllicit, or rather the team responsible for the project have received a nomination from a manager who really appreciated its efficiency in getting some jobs done, whilst being able to see all the key information needed in one place for the first time. New system roll outs can often take a bit of getting used to, but I'm glad to see it paying off.

Welcome to Field Studies Council

Matilda Tryon has joined the team at Juniper Hall as Trainee Tutor

Andy Ayshford has joined the team at Rhyd-y-Creuwau as Education Support Assistant.

Best regards

Mark