

Thu 27/11/2025 08:31

Dear Colleagues,

Leadership Forum



As I said last week, members of the Leadership Forum gathered at Blencathra to consider issues ranging from how to introduce a culture of continuous improvement to the exploitation of Artificial Intelligence. We also took the opportunity to get outdoors as much as possible. Many thanks to Katy and the team for hosting us so well, to the participants for getting stuck into the agenda and to Helen Greatorex and the HR team for organising the event.

The Budget

Yesterday's budget was more heavily trailed and leaked than any I can remember. As always, the details will be pored over by Sam. We will be impacted by changes in the National Minimum Wage. Not because we have lots of people on that wage - we don't - but because our policy to maintain differentials between increments pushes up the wage bill. We will also be looking for clarity on the changes to salary sacrifice schemes that we have in place.

Finance and Administration Committee Papers

These were circulated last week, and I know that staff take a keen interest. [The papers](#) set out the challenges that this organisation will face as the demand for our core business continues to decline. This is not due to a lack of hard work by, or commitment to excellent service by everyone, but because our key customers struggle to fund residential. We do have a programme of projects to help us navigate our way through the changes that we'll have to make as well as take advantage of new opportunities.

Feedback from Centre Hire Users

Our growing diversification into centre hire has, I know, come with a number of challenges for staff, but they result in excellent feedback. Here are just two examples that are representative of that feedback on how your hard work has been appreciated. Well done. First from customers at Rhyd-y-creuau:

- *Can't tell you how excited we all are, your team and venue really shined through as the best. The combination of pride, passion and flexibility is so rare! We were so exceptionally impressed with Shell, Sandie and the team, let alone the fab centre.*
- *It has been an absolute pleasure working with you and your team over the past couple of summers. Juniper Hall is such a magical place that has truly brought our summer camps to life.*
- *In short it was amazing. The families had such a wonderful experience and your team of staff at Dale help that happen, they couldn't do enough for us. What a credit to your organisation.'*

Double Your Donation with the Christmas Challenge 2025

A reminder that the Challenge kicks off next week on **#GivingTuesday** and any online donations made in that week can be doubled. You can [find out more here](#) and please do share the Challenge on your social media channels.

Christmas Gifts

Our [sustainable clothing range](#) continues to grow and tasteful Christmas [jumpers](#) and [reindeer t-shirts](#) have been added to the range of wildlife themed items. There's currently a Back Friday 10% off deal to take advantage of so now might be an ideal opportunity to bag a bargain.

What's in a name?

The guardians of the brand have asked me to remind everyone to please use our name in full. We are not *FSC* or even *Field Studies Council (FSC)*. The acronym, which legally belongs to another organisation entirely, keeps popping up in external as well as internal documents. I know from personal experience that it's a hard habit to break, especially as AI often refers to us by our acronym too, so please take care. I'm told I owe the swear jar that's been set up to deter acronym use.

There are no new starters this week, but Megan Crisell has begun the development opportunity of our Adventures Away from Home Project Officer.

Best regards

Mark