

Thu 11/12/2025 08:30

Dear Colleagues,

### **Big Give Christmas Challenge**

I'm pleased to say that we [exceeded our target](#), and with gift aid the week's Challenge has raised over £40k. Preparation started over 6 months ago with some really careful stewardship of members and supporters, letting them know that if they were thinking of giving, then this particular week would double their impact. A well-timed Christmas card then kicked things off with much of the money arriving right at the start of the week

Reasons for giving included having attended the Juniper Members' Day in the summer, the Slapton Research Seminar and even our involvement in the Military Covenant. Thank you to Gemma, David and Anna who spent a lot of time and effort with our members over many months, and it really paid off.

### **New HR System Provider Chosen**

Following a very extensive process involving staff from across the charity, we have chosen Cascade Iris as our new HR system provider. All three systems that we asked to demonstrate to us represented a significant improvement on our current HR system. However, Cascade Iris received consistently good feedback from staff evaluators, particularly in the areas of self-service, e-PDR, EDI, reporting, and staff engagement.

Cost was not the sole factor in our decision, but it was important, especially as an expensive upgrade was to be imposed by our existing provider next year. Cascade Iris is the most cost-effective and will result in an estimated saving of around £200k over five years including implementation costs, compared to remaining with our current provider. Thank you again to all involved in the road testing and in the long and detailed demonstration days. HR will be in touch with staff in 2026 with opportunities to be involved further as the project progresses, with an anticipated 'go live' for the new system of August 2026

### **Artificial Intelligence**

At our recent Leadership Forum, one of the key topics that generated a lot of staff interest was the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). To help us innovate, work smarter, and ensure the charity keeps pace with emerging technologies, we're exploring how to engage with AI tools effectively—while doing so responsibly, with care and consideration.

To support this, we're inviting staff to express interest in joining a new AI Working Group. This group will help shape how we can best use AI across the charity.

Find out more and submit your expression of interest by 16 January 2026 using the form here <https://forms.office.com/e/2xum6GChrX>

### **Health and Safety Success**

Slapton, Amersham, Bishops Wood and Preston Montford are the latest centres to get a gold standard in their recent Health and Safety audits. They all passed with excellence with all being well above the 90% mark.

On the Health and Safety theme, Vice Chair and Trustee Gill Miller wanted to pass on this message: *"At the recent Operational Health and Safety meeting it was very evident that there is an impressive high level of engagement with health and safety issues and compliance across the whole of Field Studies Council. Every single colleague deserves thanks and congratulation*

*for their contribution to creating such a positive health and safety culture throughout our organisation which adds so much to the enviable reputation of Field Studies Council."*

### **Sale of Properties**

Last week we received the deposit for Orietton and on Friday we also received the payment for Kindrogan. I'd like to thank the Infrastructure Team for the significant amount of work in getting the properties ready for sale including providing all the necessary information.

### **Welcome to Field Studies Council**

Olesia Holovko has joined the team at Millport as Casual Hospitality and Catering Assistant.

Best regards

Mark