

Thu 23/07/2026

Dear Colleagues,

With the start of the summer holidays, I'm aware that there is little respite for some staff as we transition from school bookings to our increasingly popular centre hire group bookings, leisure courses, Duke of Edinburgh residentials and summer camps. I know that these can be hard work, but diversification plays a big part in our financial resilience as well as our reach.

Cabinet Reshuffles

We started the week with our 10th Secretary of State for Education in 10 years. Lucy Powell, fairly instrumental in getting the Prime Minister into No10, is now in post. A quick canter through Lucy Powell's career indicates that her focus on matters educational have tended to be on early years and childcare but also post 16 education. A strong theme of reducing disadvantage tends to emerge as with the previous post holder, so that is likely to be a hook on which we continue to hang our arguments.

The new Secretary of State for DEFRA is Angela Eagle, and indications are that water and water quality will be quite an area of focus. DEFRA - and who runs it- is important for us because we are still waiting for the Access to Nature Strategy (due out last August) and that matters because nature based residentials for young people are supposed to be included as part of that strategy.

Reasons to be cheerful

I'm really pleased to be able to let you all know some good news relating to our fundraising and legacy work. We are not going to name the individual in this email but in January we received a £7K legacy which we were aware of, but since then we have received a further £664k which we did not expect, so it has come as a total surprise. Sam is very happy, as are the fundraising team. Careful consideration will be given to get the best possible use from this incredibly generous and very timely gift.

Enrichment Ambassadors

The Department of Education's Enrichment Framework launched earlier in the summer supports schools and colleges in England to plan, strengthen and review their enrichment offer. This offer is based around 5 key areas. Now Enrichment Ambassadors have been announced for each area and Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson has been appointed as the ambassador focusing specifically on Nature, Outdoor and Adventure. This is good news as the Baroness already has close links with the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The ambassador role will involve identifying and celebrating good practice inside and outside of schools, helping to shape and grow opportunities and making sure that opportunities are available to areas of the country and groups of children who would otherwise miss out. Each ambassador will help to drum up support within the sector to prioritise access to activities and opportunities for young people.

They will engage with potential partners to illustrate how and where they can fund provision that makes a real difference and offer new opportunities where they are most needed.

Special Mention

Congratulations to Margam's Amanda Gisby who has again triumphed at the British Powerlifting Championships in Manchester. An incredible week of competition resulted in:

- Class Winner – M1 U56 Class
- Best Lifter Award
- 4 World Records
- 4 European Records
- 4 British Records

Her championship performance set multiple new records while securing both the class title and the overall Best Lifter award. The team at Margam are quite rightly all very proud of Amanda.



Welcome to Field Studies Council

New starters this week:

Neil Rees has joined the team at Margam as Maintenance Officer

Shaun McWilliams has joined the team at Millport as Casual Deckhand

Also, this week:

Brian Ward has been promoted to the role of Maintenance Officer at Castle Head

Best regards

Mark