

# The Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales)

## Minutes of the fifteenth meeting

Held at the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, at 2 p.m. on Tuesday 23 November 2004.

**Present:** Allan Rogers, Chairman (BGS Board and Parliamentary Adviser)  
Chris King, Vice-Chairman (Earth Science Education Unit / Geological Society of London)  
David Bailey (British Geological Survey)  
Ian Thomas (National Stone Centre & Quarry Products Association)  
Colin Osborne (Royal Society for Chemistry)  
Dale Johnston (Geological Curators' Group)  
Malcolm Walker (Royal Meteorological Society)  
Peter Warren  
Cally Oldershaw (ESEF(EW) Development Officer)  
Roger Trend (Geographical Association)  
Peter Jones (UKRIGS)

### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from representatives of the following member organisations: Association for Science Education; Challenger Society; Earth Science Teachers' Association; Gemmological Association/Gem Testing Laboratory; Geologists' Association/Rockwatch; Health and Safety Executive; Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining; Open University; Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology; Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers.

### 2 Chairman's Introduction

- 2.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited round-table introductions. The Annual Conference, held on 19 October, had been very successful. Chairman thanked Foster Yeoman, Anglo American and IOM3 for their sponsorship of the event and Martin Whiteley, Ian Thomas, Chris King and David Bailey for their help on the day. He paid a special tribute to Cally Oldershaw for her contribution to the success of the event.
- 2.2 Gordon Riddler was helping to compile a Conference volume which would be presented to DFES with a view to encouraging greater support of earth science education. IT suggested that a mailing should be sent to organisations that had not been able to attend on 19 October, to inform them that the Conference volume would be available. A media release had been sent to selected contacts and would be added to the website. Chairman said he would press P Styles for his missing abstract.  
**Actions: D Bailey & Chairman**
- 2.3 CK noted that Geoscientist had agreed to publish an article on the Conference. C Oldershaw to contact Ted Nield (Geological Society of London) to discuss what was required.  
**Action: C Oldershaw**
- 2.4 It was agreed that a second conference should be held in 2005. After discussing suitable dates, it further agreed that a date in early December was preferred (moved: Chairman; seconded: PW). Annual Conference 2005 would be a standing item on the agenda for future meetings.  
**Action: D Bailey**
- 2.5 A joint application with Camborne School of Mines to the ALSF via ODPM had also been successful, providing up to £25k towards the costs of the Conference and other activities. The next steps would be to register the Forum as a charity and secure long-term funding.
- 2.6 Chairman reported that he had met the Secretary of State for Education who had indicated he would be happy to meet officers of the Forum. Chairman was also planning to meet a special adviser to the Science Minister.

### **3 Minutes of the fourteenth meeting, 21 September 2004**

The minutes of the fourteenth meeting were accepted as a true record, subject to minor corrections. DB to upload a copy to the ESEF(EW) website. **Action: D Bailey**

### **4 Matters arising**

*[Numbers in square brackets are paragraph numbers from the minutes of the previous meeting.]*

[12.3] *Jurassic Coast*: RT reported that the Jurassic Coast now has a full-time education co-ordinator; a two-year contract has been awarded in the first instance.

*Other matters arising were discussed under the appropriate agenda item.*

### **5 AGM Conference and Constitution**

See discussion under Agenda Item 2 above. Chairman asked Forum members to allow the officers to take this matter forward. **Action: Forum Officers**

### **6 Finance report**

See paras 2.1 and 2.4 above regarding income. There had been no outgoings so far.

### **7 Development Officer's report**

The Development Officer's activities had been focused on arrangements for the Annual Conference (see item 2 above). Copies of some of the Conference presentations were still needed to complete the Conference volume. **Action: C Oldershaw**

### **8 ESEF(EW) website**

A new section incorporating the Annual Conference programme, including downloadable copies of the speakers' abstracts and biographies had been added.

### **9 Potential collaborative projects**

Nothing to report. Chairman asked members to provide any examples in writing at future meetings.

### **10 SESEF update**

Nothing new to report. The next SESEF meeting was to be held on 24 November 2004.

### **11 Government policy issues**

11.1 IT reported that the House of Lords had recently debated the decline in educational fieldwork. C Oldershaw agreed to circulate the relevant section of Hansard. **Action: C Oldershaw**

11.2 The Secretary of State for Education had indicated that he would talk to the NASUWT concerning the negative comments about fieldwork on their website. There are moves by a number of organisations to promote school fieldwork. A report in *Geoscientist* of a recent case heard by the House of Lords and a radio interview with the Attorney General suggested that a 'common sense' approach was increasingly being applied to negligence cases brought against landowners. This was a welcome development for those organising field excursions.

### **12 Earth science education in Wales**

12.1 A paper was tabled outlining possible ways of raising awareness of the Forum in Wales. CK explained that this had been co-ordinated by Martin Whiteley with input from CK and PJ. The key proposal was a briefing about the Forum for the National Assembly. CK noted that the ESEU, which had been launched in Wales in 2003, had not taken off in the same way as other parts of the UK, despite close similarities in the curriculum. One possible contributing factor was a failure to appoint a Welsh-speaking facilitator.

12.2 Chairman thanked MW, CK and PJ for presenting the paper. He had met M Bassett of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales who had been very enthusiastic about the aims of the Forum. Chairman suggested that the officers of the Forum liaise with all the NMGW via M Bassett. **Action: Forum Officers**

- 12.3 After further discussion it was suggested that university earth science departments in Wales and Alan Cuthbertson (Minerals Planning Officer, Neath and Port Talbot) should also be contacted. Chairman invited IT to become part of a working group with the task of organising a one-day workshop.
- 12.4 IT reported that he had written to the NMGW expressing concern that no Earth Science Education Officer had been appointed to replace Geraint Price on his retirement from the post. He agreed to copy the reply from NMGW to the Chairman. **Action: I Thomas**
- 12.5 The role of RIGS groups and of the Geographical Association, ESTA and the QPA in Wales were discussed as well as communications between earth science groups in North and South Wales. Chairman agreed to develop the paper and re-present it at the next meeting. **Action: Chairman**

### 13 AOB

- 13.1 DB tabled details of a student careers competition being run by the University of Wales at Aberystwyth.
- 13.2 Malcolm Walker tabled literature describing professional and vocational accreditation schemes developed by the Royal Meteorological Society which were now recognised across Europe.
- 13.3 CK reported that the Geological Society of London had set up a small working group. It had twin objectives: to develop the educational remit of the Society, and to appoint a full-time educational officer. The group may review existing educational websites with a view to recommending ways to improve links and coherence between sites.
- 13.4 It was agreed that PW and DB should discuss how the ESEF website might be used to benefit all members (e.g. including a diary page) and present a paper at the next meeting. **Action: P Warren / D Bailey**
- 13.5 CK reported that the IUGS has set up a commission on earth science education. It will carry out a survey across member countries with a view to piloting ESEF-type activities. The UN had been asked to sponsor an International Year of Planet Earth, however, this would not now be in 2006, but might be in 2007.
- 13.6 PJ advised that the Petroleum Group of the GSL were seeking to sponsor four to six key geological sites relevant to the development of geological science 200 years ago. The deadline for nominations was the end of November.
- 13.7 IT mentioned that a consultation into the conservation of geological sites was being carried out. The deadline was 6 December. PJ to circulate information. **Action: P Jones**
- 13.8 PW suggested that some of the Livery Companies would have sufficient interest to support some activities at primary or secondary level. Chairman asked PW to pass details to C Oldershaw. **Action: P Warren**
- 13.9 PJ reminded members that the ESTA Conference would be held on 16–18 September at the University of Derby. C Oldershaw to circulate details. **Action: C Oldershaw**
- 13.10 C Oldershaw distributed a list of subjects discussed by the APESG. Two subjects for future meetings had been suggested by the Forum: Minerals and Health (Helen Turner) and Natural Disasters in Overseas UK territories (David Cope). Chairman noted that Forum members have a unique opportunity to contribute ideas to APESG officers. He asked members to forward ideas, particularly on the part played in natural disasters by the weather, to C Oldershaw. CK suggested that liabilities associated with educational fieldwork might be a suitable subject. **Action: Forum members**

### 14 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 2 p.m. on **Tuesday 1 February 2005** at IOM<sup>3</sup> in Carlton House Terrace.

David Bailey 10 January 2005