



Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales) Minutes of the forty-third meeting

Held in the Arthur Holmes meeting room, The Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. 1.30pm, 24 January 2012.

Present: Chris King, Chairman (Earth Science Education Unit)
Diane Aston (IOM3)
David Bailey (British Geological Survey)
Nic Bilham (Geological Society of London)
Steve Brace (RGS with IBG)
Martyn Bradley (Geology Trusts)
David Brook (London Geodiversity Partnership)
Susan Brown (Geologists' Association and Rockwatch)
Nikki Edwards (OCR)
Tom Hose (GeoConservationUK)
Cally Oldershaw
Judith Reed (Geographical Association)
Maggie Williams (Earth Science Teachers' Association)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Michael Howgate (Workers' Educational Association), Judi Lakin (Geological Society of London), Jacqui Malpas (Clwydian Range AONB), Isabel Markham (University of the Third Age), Joanna Mears (Geological Society of London), Peter Warren.

2 Minutes of the 42nd meeting, 6 December 2011

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting after minor amendments. A copy will be placed on the ESEF website.

Action: David Bailey

3 Matters arising

3.1 [*Agenda item 3.1*] *Geology teacher training*: C King summarised the situation regarding training for geology teachers. The TDA have made funding available for six places at the University of Keele; it is hoped this will continue but there is still some uncertainty for small courses and departments in all subjects. The overall plan is to move more teacher training into schools and away from university departments. The Earth Science Education Unit is run from Keele and has held meetings with stakeholders to devise a plan to establish the university as a centre of excellence supporting ESEU and PGCE training. The latter would possibly be achieved through summer schools with bursaries to students. This plan is currently unfunded, sources of funding are being sought.

3.2 [*Agenda item 3.3*] *National Geology Database*: The database had been proposed as an outcome of a previous ESEF discussion with Chris Darmon who had subsequently estimated start-up costs as £5k with a similar sum required annually to cover maintenance. C King reported that he had relayed to C Darmon the view of the Forum that given the costs, the project was unlikely to attract sponsorship. T Hose said he had raised the idea with GCUK who intended to discuss it at their forthcoming meeting. M Bradley added that if a version of the database could be established, local groups could be encouraged to report events in their areas. S Brown asked T Hose if he could write a short article on the matter for the GA magazine.

Action: T Hose

- 3.3 *[Agenda item 3.4] Code of conduct for rock coring:* C King had contacted CHUGD to ask if S Brown could speak at a future meeting. No reply yet.
- 3.4 *[Agenda item 3.5] International Conference on Geotourism 22/23 October 2012:* T Hose reported that several papers had been offered. The abstract deadline was in March, papers must have an analytical basis. S Brace said he had raised the issues with colleagues at the RGS and suggested that T Hose should also contact the Physical Geography Research Group at the RGS.
- 3.5 *[Agenda item 3.6] Earth science in the National Curriculum:* To be discussed under Agenda Item 10. C King said he would be circulating copies of the final document and highlighted the vote of thanks.
- 3.6 *[Agenda item 3.7] World Skills Environmental Science Competition:* D Bailey reported that the date of the UK event for World Skills in 2012 had yet to be announced. He agreed to circulate information about previous competitions and request a press release or flyer from Prospect.
- 3.7 *[Agenda item 7] Potential Collaborative Projects:* T Hose reported on a project based on Sustrans routes in Bristol. A scoping study will be completed by the end of the year. The end-product will be a route map linking geological sites with cycle routes. It is hoped the funding will be used mainly for training.
- 3.8 *[Agenda item 9] Practical experiments and field trips:* C King reported that the outdoor working group had convened a seminar as part of the ASE meeting in Liverpool. Professor Steve Jones was a member of the audience and there had been a good-sized audience. It was noted that the Geographical Association also had a special interest group in fieldwork which had produced a very good field guide. Fieldwork was still a requirement in the geography curriculum, but was only 'recommended' in the science curriculum.

4 Finance report

No significant change to financial position.

5 ESEF website (www.esef.org.uk)

There had been no additions to the content apart from the minutes of recent meetings.

6 All-Party Parliamentary Group for Earth and Environmental Sciences update

C Oldershaw reported that the dates of future meetings had not yet been fixed.

7 Potential collaborative projects

- 7.1 C King reported that the next IGC meeting would be held in Brisbane; the abstract deadline was in February. **Action: D Bailey to circulate information**
- 7.2 D Brook reported on two bids for Heritage Lottery Funds. Firstly, a project in the Thames Valley, at the second stage of the application, called 'London's Foundations, brick by brick'. The project recognises the importance of the west London brick fields and plans to actively involve more than 20,000 participants. It will use a 'floating classroom' containing tools and other artefacts. Schools will be able to produce their own bricks which will be incorporated into local projects. The project will run over the next two to three years and is supported by members of the Harrow and Hillingdon and other local geological societies. The second project was for work on Hampstead Heath involving the RSPB and Corporation of the City of London. More information was pending but there would be a geological element to the project.
- 7.3 M Bradley reported that the Hereford and Worcester Geology Trust had reached the second stage of an HLF application for a project on building stones.
- 7.4 D Brook said that the London Geodiversity Partnership had produced a leaflet funded by the Geologists' Association's Curry Fund. The leaflet described the Green Chain Geotrail along the River Thames and could be downloaded from the LGP website.

- 7.5 D Brook also reported that the Harrow and Hillingdon Geological Society would be putting on a display in Harrow Central Library between 8 and 18 February.
- 7.6 S Brace described the RGS Discovering Britain website (www.discoveringbritain.org) and said there were opportunities to add sections on geology and its influence on local landscapes.
- 7.7 S Brown said that the Geologists' Association and Geological Society of London with Wiley Blackwell's Geology Today magazine would be holding an online Minerals and Fossils event from 5-16 March.

Action: D Bailey to circulate information about events above where available

8 AOB

There was no other business to discuss.

9 Date of future meetings

The dates of future meetings would be:

- 1 May 2012 C King to a lead discussion on Earth Learning Idea.
- 16 Oct 2012 T Hose to convene presentations on fieldwork with John Reynolds (ESOS)
- 4 Dec 2012 Discussion to be confirmed.

Meetings to be at Geological Society apartments.

Action: N Bilham to confirm availability

10 Discussion on earth science in the National Curriculum

- 10.1 C King made a presentation outlining progress to date. The DfE had published an update on the National Curriculum Review on 19 December 2011. This set out a new timetable for the review.

D Bailey to circulate Powerpoint file (NB not for public dissemination)

- 10.2 N Bilham said that there had been a favourable response from the DfE to the recommendations submitted by the expert group. Their reply had picked up the dependency of which subjects are mandatory at each Key Stage. In general, it was welcome that the Geography and Science National Curricula would now be considered together, for implementation in 2014, rather than the original plan to schedule the reviews at different times.
- 10.3 S Brace reported that the RGS had met with the Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools, on 12 December 2011 and touched on earth science in the curriculum. The Minister had been supportive of physical geography having a greater role within geography as a subject in schools and expressed difficulty in seeing where earth science 'fits' within the other sciences.
- 10.4 J Reed said that feedback suggests that many science teachers would be relieved to lose responsibility for teaching earth science.
- 10.5 The DfE was expected to consult publicly on the review. N Bilham said he would contact the DfE to clarify when and where the next steps would take place. **Action: N Bilham**