



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

Held in the Arthur Holmes meeting room, The Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. 1.30pm, 14 May 2013.

Present: Chris King, Chairman (Earth Science Education Unit)
David Bailey (British Geological Survey)
Martyn Bradley (Geology Trusts)
David Brook (London Geodiversity Partnership)
Maggie Williams (ESTA and University of Liverpool)
Tom Hose (GeoConservationUK & University of Bristol)
Isabel Markham (U3A)
Hazel Gibson (University of Plymouth)
Joanne Mears (GSL)
Nikki Edwards (OCR)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Diane Aston (IOM3), Nic Bilham (GSL), Steve Brace (RGS & IBG), Susan Brown (Geologists' Association and Rockwatch), Duncan Hawley (Geographical Association), Cally Oldershaw, Nick Rogers (OU), and Peter Warren.

2 Minutes of the 46th meeting, 4 December 2012

The minutes of the 46th meeting were accepted as a true record. A copy will be placed on the ESEF website.

Action: D Bailey

3 Matters arising

3.1 [*Agenda item 3.2*] *National Curriculum consultation*: CK noted that no consultation had yet been announced concerning proposed changes to the KS4 curriculum; a draft curriculum had been published but no consultation had been announced to date.

3.2 CK expressed strong disappointment with the published draft curriculum, especially for Science at KS3 and KS4. He had written to the DfE on behalf of ESEU and ESEF. MW had responded on behalf of ESTA. The GSL had also responded at a late stage with a very well argued case that raised all the concerns expressed by Forum members and a copy could be viewed on the GSL website. The RGS and Geographical Association were also known to have responded. Several members had written personally to their MPs and some responses had been received from the Secretary of State for Education. Towards the end of the consultation period, PESGB and Oil & Gas UK had also made formal responses but copies had not been seen by Forum members.

3.3 It was noted that, in April 2013, the Home Office had published a "shortage occupation list" listing many earth science related occupations (including engineering geologist, hydrogeologist, geophysicist, geoscientist, geologist, geochemist, senior resource geologist and staff geologist in the mining sector, contaminated land specialist, geoenvironmental specialist, landfill engineer, geotechnical engineer among others).

3.4 DBailey suggested that links to the responses made by various organisations could be posted on the ESTA Facebook page. CK agreed and added that, if the draft was not altered, the outlook for earth science was not good.

- 3.5 *[Agenda item 3.5] Item on curriculum consultation for GCUK newsletter:* CK had written an item which had been published.
- 3.6 *[Agenda items 3.6 & 3.7] Training for secondary geology teachers:* It was noted that the Teaching Agency had now merged with the National College for School Leadership and from 1 April 2013 would be known as the National College for Teaching and Leadership. CK reported that he had still not received written confirmation that the training of geology teachers at Keele University would be funded. Only two applications for 2013/14 had been received so far, despite a lot of effort in publicising the availability of training.
- 3.7 However, ESEU had decided to run a week-long summer school for practising and recently trained science and geography teachers to learn about teaching A-level geology, starting in 2014. Participants would be geology graduates, the training would be intensive and there would be bursaries of £1500. OCR and WJEC had been consulted about arranging a meeting to devise the curriculum for the summer school.
- 3.8 JM suggested working together to avoid a clash between the ESEU Summer School and the Geoscience Education Academy hosted by GSL in September. This year the Geoscience Education Academy would be open to teachers taking PGCE in Science with the aim of attracting new teachers and encouraging like-minded teachers to network.
- 3.9 NE reported that the Geologists' Association were also considering starting an 'Introduction to Geology for Non-Geologists' training course.
- 3.10 NE advised that OCR had seen 2000 AS and 1000 A2 entries this year. A similar rise in numbers was expected for WJEC but although the number of students was rising, geology teaching remained threatened by the dwindling supply of teachers in future. D Brook asked whether the GSL could have any influence on Geology as an A-level entry requirement for accredited university courses. The arguments for and against this were discussed. CK noted that in 2010, 45% of applicants for BSc Geology courses had A-level Geology. In 2012 this figure was 43%. Yet the Russell Group of universities did not recommend Geology as a desirable A-level subject.
- 3.11 NE said that Dr Geoff Parks, Director of Admissions at Cambridge University, had helped devise the Russell Group recommendations for admissions. CK asked NE to approach Dr Parks on behalf of ESEF to discuss admissions requirements, and the place of Geology within them.
Action: N Edwards
- 3.12 TH noted that a lack of training for geological curators in museums was a theme emerging through the Geological Curators Group. JM suggested that TH should write a blog for the GSL and asked whether CK could write a blog about the statistics of A-level entry. These could also be published on the HEN website for further discussion.
Action: T Hose & C King
- 3.13 *[Agenda item 3.11] National Geology Database:* The January meeting of the GCUK had been cancelled and TH had corresponded with the GCUK. The GCUK database may move forward eventually, but funding will be an issue. TH and D Bailey to meet, if possible before the next meeting, to discuss.
Action: T Hose / D Bailey
- 3.14 *[Agenda item 3.12] International Conference on Geotourism 22/23 October 2012:* TH reported that the Conference book was in production; some contributions were still outstanding, but progress had been made.
- 3.15 *[Agenda item 3.13] Potential Collaborative Projects:* T H reported that the meeting with Bristol University planned to take place in February had to be cancelled because of poor weather.
- 3.16 *[Agenda item 3.14] 'Bus Pass Geology':* IM reported that the 'bus pass geology' project had also suffered from poor weather. TH offered to send some railway and cycling trail guides that might be helpful.
Action: T Hose

3.17 [Agenda item 3.15] *University of Warwick geological collections*: MB said that the collections had now been dispersed. NE asked what happens to rock collections that were no longer needed for teaching. D Bailey said that the BGS will accept well-sourced material and has also keeps some material in case of requests for teaching specimens from schools. MW added that the University of Liverpool had also provided space allowing her to store material temporarily pending distribution to schools.

4 Finance report

No significant changes to report.

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

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report. MB noted that fracking was topical and might be a good subject for discussion at a future meeting.

7 Potential collaborative projects

7.1 Earth Science Week: JM noted that the AGI co-ordinate an Earth Science Week in the USA. The GSL had decided to ‘soft launch’ a UK version as a collaborative opportunity for interested organisations to promote earth science. The official dates would be from 7 to 11 October 2013 but events taking place at the weekend could be included as part of the initiative. The Scarborough Rotunda Museum was involved. There would be a logo for the use of all organisations wishing to brand their events as part of Earth Science Week. CK suggested that flyers should be sent to the Geologists’ Association and RGS to help promote the initiative. TH requested a short item for the GCUK newsletter and suggested the GCUK Secretary should be contacted.

JM left the meeting.

7.2 D Bailey described a proposal by Jane Robb for project called ‘Place-Based Learning for Geographical, Environmental and Earth Science Education (GEES) in Developing and Disadvantaged Communities’. D Brook suggested the Shackleton Foundation as a potential source of funding for young entrepreneurs setting up projects for disadvantaged communities.

7.3 D Bailey reported that the BGS would be holding an Open Day at Keyworth on 8 June 2013 and asked members to help publicise the event.

7.4 D Bailey reported on plans to revise the BGS’s 1:1.5M scale geological map of Britain and Ireland. He would be seeking constructive criticism from teachers at the ESTA Secondary Workshop later in May. CK endorsed the plan and said that the Forum definitely supported it.

8 AOB

MW reported on the GSL’s National Schools Geology Challenge and Young Geoscientist competition. MW had set the questions for the past two years. In 2012 four schools had taken part, this year there had been six. Next year the challenge might be extended to include geography with geology to encourage more schools to take part.

9 Date of future meetings

15 Oct 2013	Duncan Hawley to speak on ‘The Geographical Association and the state of physical geography in schools’
3 December 2013	David Bailey to speak on ‘Education and the BGS’
4 March 2014	Hayden Bailey, President Designate of the Geologists’ Association to speak on links between education and industry (NE to confirm)
13 May 2014	Dr Anjana K Ford, Jurassic Coast Team, to speak on ‘The Big Jurassic Classroom gets Creative with Earth Science’

The business meeting closed at 3.00pm. M Bradley left the meeting.

There followed a presentation by **Hazel Gibson**, University of Plymouth, on '**Underground Britain: public perceptions of and attitudes to the subsurface**'

The meeting closed at 4.40pm.