



## **Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales)**

### **Minutes of the 63rd meeting**

Held in the Arthur Holmes Room, Geological Society, London. 1.00 pm, 16 May 2017.

#### **Present**

Chris King (ESEF)

Tom Hose (Geoconservation UK)

David Brook (London Geodiversity Partnership)

Pete Loader (Geol Soc)

Paul Denton (BGS) – attended later

Becky Parker (Director, Institute for Research in Schools) – attended later

#### **Apologies for absence:**

Annette Shelford (NHM Learning Team/Real World Science)

Duncan Hawley (Geographical Association)

Hazel Rymer (Open University)

Isabel Markham

John Stevenson (BGS)

Lesley Dunlop (English Geodiversity Forum)

Maggie Williams (Liverpool Uni.)

Matthew Parkes (National Museum of Ireland)

Nic Bilham (GSL)

Nikki Edwards (ESTA)

Steve Brace (RGS & IBG)

Susan Brown (Rockwatch)

#### **1. Talk /discussion**

Paul Denton, BGS – Making a Lego seismometer

#### **2 Minutes of the 62nd meeting, 28 March 2017**

The minutes of the 62nd meeting were accepted as a true record. A copy has been placed on the ESEF website. **Action: JS**

#### **3 Matters arising**

3.1 *National Curriculum (KS3 & 4 and A level)*

GCSE- and A-level geology

The reducing-trend of students opting to do geology GCSE; from 1000 students, nationally in 2016 to around 600-700 in 2017 was confirmed.

**At the 62<sup>nd</sup> meeting NE** reported that ESTA had recently received emails from two schools in Pembrokeshire that had been informed by their local authority that they must achieve minimum 23 students, combine their school classes or close the option to take geology at A-level.

[Update – due to an effective rearguard action, geology has been saved in those schools for the time being]

Further evidence was forthcoming that schools were discontinuing A-level geology.

The list of key facts that teachers can use in defending geology in schools was being developed by ESTA. These will include the fact that there is data showing that students who do geology A-level do better in geology than in their other subjects – and that geology is not easier. Discussion in the meeting concluded that this must be because of:

- better, more motivated teachers
- more interesting courses
- more relevant content

The discussion recommended that we ask the Geol. Soc. to re-run a ‘First destinations’ survey of recent graduates, using HFCE data (two similar surveys have been conducted by the Geol. Soc. in the past). **Action: PL**

**NE** is collaborating with **PL** to lobby the Department of Education to categorize GCSE geology as a science in both the Performance 8 listings and the English Baccalaureate. **NE** has produced a document showing that geology GCSE contains a lot of elements of the other sciences – the document was supported by ESEF

**Action: PL will contact Stephen Stanton of the DfE about these issues**

### 3.2 *Training for secondary geology teachers:*

The Keele Summer School for geology teacher training has seven or eight bursaried places for the 2017 course. Seven people have been recruited to these places so far

Three PGCE OAKS geology teachers will graduate this year – but will probably not take geology teaching jobs (one accepted a geography job, one seeking a geography job, one not willing to leave the Keele area). One training place is available in the OAKS SCITT for next year so far – but no applications have yet been received

### 3.3 *Geology for Non-Geologists training ‘Geolab’:*

No update was available

### 3.4 *National Geology Database*

No update was available

### 3.5 *Geological poster map of UK and Ireland*

**CK** reported that the map was launched at the 2017 Geographical Association conference at the University of Surrey in April.

### 3.6 *Mobilising the geoscience community’ project.*

**CK** noted that the ‘Strategy’ and ‘How to set an Earthcache’ documents had been finalised and circulated. Feedback in the meeting included:

- GCUK will support this – prefer dates around 2<sup>nd</sup> bank holiday
- Recommendation that groups leading fieldwork be advised to join GA as an affiliated group – for insurance purposes
- The documents will be resent to DB. **Action: CK**

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**The meeting was suspended at this point due to a fire alarm.  
It took around an hour for the fire engines to attend and put out the small fire in a  
ventilation duct.**

The items below were not discussed:

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3.7 *BESER 'Subject leadership development programme'*

**4 Finance report**

**5 ESEF website ([www.esef.org.uk](http://www.esef.org.uk))**

**6 Potential collaborative projects**

**7 ESEF Achievements**

**8 AOB**

**9 Dates of future meetings**

**10 October 2017** Hayden Bailey; 'What micro fossils do for the economy?'

**12 December 2017** Judi Lakin; 'About the Geological Society education programme'