

The Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales)

Minutes of the sixteenth meeting

Held at the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, at 2 p.m. on Tuesday 1 February 2005.

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)
Peter Warren
Peter Jones (UKRIGS)
Cally Oldershaw (ESEF(EW) Development Officer)
Lorraine Craig (Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers)
Susan Brown (Geologists' Association/Rockwatch)
Martin Whiteley (Earth Science Teachers' Association)
Elizabeth Clements (Quarry Products Association)
Alan Rhodes (Association for Science Education)
Rosie Smith (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology)
Peter Davies (Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining)
Liz Willcocks (SETNET)
Allan Cuthbertson

Chairman's Introduction

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited round-table introductions. He outlined the provisional programme for an international meeting on 'Natural disasters' that the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Earth Sciences will be organising with the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology in October.
- 1.2 The ESEF(EW) paper on the aims of the Forum and list of organisations that had signified their support will be updated and made available at meetings of the All-Party Parliamentary Group.

Action: C Oldershaw
- 1.3 The draft report of the ESEF(EW) 1st annual conference will be presented to the Minister of State for Higher Education, Dr Kim Howells MP, on Wednesday 9 February. Chairman, Vice-Chairman and an industry representative will attend. The Chairman outlined the message from the conference that he will take to the Minister and invited comments.
- 1.4 The final report will be published after the meeting. Comments and feedback are urgently invited from Forum members.

Action: Forum members
- 1.5 PJ noted that BGS and Environment Agency had said that there were job opportunities, but that the quality of undergraduates was not adequate for their employment needs.
- 1.6 MW asked whether the proposed advisory group would cover all levels or just HE/FE.
- 1.7 LC noted that at least 7 other advisory bodies had been set up by the DfES (History, Mathematics, Science and Engineering, Geography, Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and Design and Technology (D&T).

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from representatives of the following member organisations: Challenger Society; Gemmological Association/Gem Testing Laboratory; Health and Safety Executive; Open University; National Stone Centre, National Museums and Galleries of Wales; Geological Curators' Group; Royal Society of Chemistry; MIRO; CHUGD; Met. Office; Natural History Museum; Environment Agency; Subject Centre: Geography, Earth and Environmental Science (GEES); Geographical Association; Royal Meteorological Society.

3 Minutes of the fifteenth meeting, 23 November 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.]

[2.3] *Publications:* CO had contacted Ted Nield (Geoscientist) and Peter Doyle (Geology Today). Forum Members suggested other publications where conference information could be published. CO to draw up list.

Action: C Oldershaw

[2.4] *ASLF grant:* EC noted that 'time in kind' may be needed to enable payment of funds.

Action: C Oldershaw

[10] *SESEF:* CK noted that the SESEF meeting had taken place on 24 November

[12.4] *NMGW:* Letter had been circulated to Forum Officers.

[13.3] *GSL:* CK reported that a paper from the education working group was almost complete and will be presented to GSL Council.

[13.4] *ESEF website:* PW and DB have corresponded by email. Paper will be circulated.

Action: D Bailey

[13.7] *ODPM consultation:* PJ noted that report was issued as 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation'.

[13.8] *Livery Companies:* PW suggested that the Worshipful Company of Constructors might, given their professional background, consider supporting earth science in London schools. PW to forward information to CO.

Action P Warren

[13.9] *ESTA Conference:* PJ would forward details to CO to circulate once the programme was agreed.

Action P Jones / C Oldershaw

Other matters arising were discussed under the appropriate agenda item.

5 Earth science education in Wales

5.1 Allan Cuthbertson gave an outline of the situation in Wales. Comments included: student number applications, usually 200 – 300 were down to 120 in University College, Cardiff; AS level dropped by some schools who will revert to A level geology; more time needed for fieldwork; 2007 – 2012 NERC Strategy was in preparation. AC to send notes to DB to be circulated.

Action: A Cuthbertson / D Bailey

5.2 LC noted that Geography at GCSE would have major curriculum changes by 2007. A new Geography GCSE was being piloted. Information via OFSTED that Key Stage 3 (KS3, ages 11 – 14) was still being taught badly. Primary teachers (England, Wales and Scotland) were not being taught Earth sciences at PGCE.

5.3 The Chairman noted that Education in Wales is a devolved function with a Minister of Education Jane Davidson AM and that there was a separate examining board, the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC). A Welsh Assembly All-Party Earth Sciences Group is to be set up with Leighton Andrews AM as Chair. Joint launch of Group and ESEF(EW) Welsh 'branch' to raise awareness of ESEF(EW) in Wales. The Chairman gave a provisional list of invitees and asked Forum members to comment and add further suggestions.

5.4 PW noted that education matters between England and Wales were diverging and that local knowledge and local understanding of issues was important.

5.5 AC said that rather than having a 'Welsh branch', three meetings of the ESEF(EW) in London and one in Wales per year would perhaps resolve the problem.

6 AGM Conference and Constitution

Chairman asked Forum members to allow the officers to take this matter forward.

Action: Forum Officers

7 Finance report

Nothing to report.

8 Development Officer's report

The Development Officer's activities had been focused on the preparation of the Annual Conference Report.

8.1 General

1. Copies of the proforma template have been requested and one completed proforma has been received (GCG). Work continues on collating proformas received. The Chairman emphasised that completion and return of these simple proformas was a requirement of Forum members.
2. The database of contact details of Forum members has been updated following the last meeting.
3. A summary of expenses incurred during work for the Forum from August 2004 to November 2004 has been prepared.
4. Accounts have been confirmed with IOM3.
5. Action points in the minutes of the last meeting have been addressed.

8.2 New Forum Members

1. Allan Cuthbertson (Wales), Professor Mike Bassett (National Museums and Galleries of Wales) and Liz Wilcox (SETNET) will attend ESEF(EW) meetings.
2. Environment Agency, Anglo American and UKOOA have signified their support and will be added to the list.

8.3 Annual Conference 2004

1. Letters of thanks have been prepared and sent to all Chairs, Speakers and Rapporteurs.
2. Tapes of the conference have been transcribed.
3. First draft of the conference report has been prepared.
4. Summary report has been submitted to Camborne School of Mines as required.
5. Arrangements are in hand for printing of the final report.

8.4 Annual Conference 2005

1. Initial discussions on topics and speakers have taken place.
2. Provisional date – early December 2005.

8.5 All-Party Parliamentary Group for Earth Sciences

1. List of all meetings held has been circulated to Forum members and will be put on the ESEF(EW) website.
2. Suggestions from Forum Members for meetings have been passed to the Officers of the Group.
3. The Annual Christmas meeting was held, with a presentation given by Dr Jenny Huggett.
4. A meeting was held on 18 January on 'Keeping our water clean enough to drink – An overview of the EC Water Framework Directive and issues relating to its implementation in the UK' with a presentation by Dr Martin Griffiths (Head of the Water Framework Directive, Environment Agency).

5. A meeting is arranged for 22 February on 'The Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami – Using Geology to Save Lives' with BGS presentations including a presentation by Dr David Ovadia (Head of BGS International).
 6. A meeting is arranged for 15 March on 'mineral debt across international borders' (title tbc) with a presentation by Professor David Manning (Newcastle University).
 7. June meeting on 'Antarctica and Argentina – was the war worth fighting?' (tbc).
 8. July meeting on Creationism and/or Evolution (tbc).
 9. Negotiations with the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology (POST), for an international meeting 'Disasters Day' to take place in the House of Commons in October 2005 are in hand.
 10. November meeting on Building Stones and Cathedrals (tbc).
- 8.6 *ESEF(EW) in Wales*. Initial discussions have taken place.
- 8.7 *SETNET*. ESEF(EW) is now a member of SETNET. Reciprocal web links will be set up between ESEF(EW) and SETNET. **Action: L Willcocks / D Bailey**

9 ESEF(EW) website

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

10 Potential collaborative projects

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

11 SESEF update

CK attended a meeting on 24 November.

12 Government policy issues

The website link for the relevant section of Hansard was circulated to Forum members on 24 January. Nothing further to report.

13 AOB

13.1 LC reported that £350 million had been put into 74 centres for excellence. Further information on the HE Academy website.

13.2 PJ noted that at least five are Earth science related. Further information can be found in the newsletter of the Subject Centre: Geography, Earth and Environmental Science (GEES).

14 Dates of next two meetings

The date of the next meeting is 2 p.m. on **Tuesday 17 May 2005** at IOM³ in 1 Carlton House Terrace. The following meeting will be on **Tuesday 19 July** at 2 p.m.

End

Cally Oldershaw 1 February 2005