

The Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales)

Minutes of the seventeenth meeting

Held at the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, at 2 p.m. on Tuesday 17 May 2005.

Present: Allan Rogers, Chairman

Chris King, Vice-Chairman (Earth Science Education Unit/Geological Society of London)

David Bailey, Secretary (British Geological Survey)

Cally Oldershaw, ESEF(EW) Development Officer

Martyn Bradley (Geology Trusts)

Susan Brown (Geologists' Association/Rockwatch)

Liv Carroll (Capita Symonds/MIRO/Applied Earth Science Division of IOM³)

Lorraine Craig (Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers)

Peter Davies (Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining)

Leah Edwards (Camborne School of Mines)

Dale Johnston (Geological Curators' Group)

Emma Kemp (Royal Society of Chemistry)

Ian Thomas (National Stone Centre & Quarry Products Association)

Malcolm Walker (Royal Meteorological Society)

Peter Warren

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from representatives of the following member organisations: Association for Science Education, Earth Science Teachers' Association, Environment Agency, Gemmological Association/Gem Testing Laboratory, Geographical Association, Health and Safety Executive, UKRIGS.

2 Chairman's Introduction

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited round-table introductions.
- 1.2 The Chairman distributed copies of the report of the 2004 Annual Conference. A copy had been delivered to the Minister of State for Higher Education, Dr Kim Howells MP who said it was excellent. The Chairman congratulated Cally Oldershaw on an outstanding job in compiling the report which would be a useful resource.
- 1.3 The Chairman noted that the Forum had been intended to present the conference report to the Minister by February 2005; it had not been possible to do this in the planned timeframe. Therefore the Chairman, Chris King and Gordon Riddler met Dr Howells and proposed that the Ministry establish an earth science advisory committee. Dr Howells had required a business plan and Cally Oldershaw had prepared this. Chairman and Chris King had written an advisory report explaining the importance of earth science.
- 1.4 The Chairman read a letter dated 23 March from Dr Howells expressing support for the proposed advisory committee, which should now go ahead, subject to funding. Dr Howells had promised to raise the matter with the new Minister of State following the reshuffle resulting from the general election in May 2005. The Minister would decide who should sit on the advisory committee; it is to be hoped that members of the Forum will be represented.
- 1.5 Peter Warren suggested that copies of the conference report should be sent to Ministers in other government departments. The Chairman agreed that it was necessary to advance the Forum's links with industry and the DTI. Dr Howells had been sympathetic to the need to train practical scientists as well as blue-sky researchers.
- 1.6 The Chairman advised that a half-day meeting was planned in collaboration with the All-Party Parliamentary Earth Sciences Group and the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology. A venue in the Houses of Parliament would be preferred but could not be guaranteed because

of the ballot system for booking meeting rooms. The theme of the meeting would be the political, economic and social implications of 'Natural Disasters' with a particular focus on rapid-onset events. Contributions would be sought from earth scientists, policy-makers and leaders in business, industry, etc. The meeting was planned for the end of October and would be confirmed when the new parliamentary timetable had been announced. The meeting would be organised by POST and APESG with input from the Forum on educational aspects. The programme outline would be:

Session 1: earthquakes, tsunami, landslides, flooding, volcanic eruptions, mudflows, severe weather events, bush fires, etc.

Session 2: monitoring and early warning systems, risk reduction strategies, education and preparedness, etc.

Session 3: public health issues, insurance, political issues, national security etc.

Session 4: plenary.

- 1.7 The Chairman said that the second Annual Conference would be on the theme of 'Earth Science and Society'. Chris King advised that the conference would be held in December 2005 and would also be convened in association with POST and APESG. It was planned to hold three sessions between 2 p.m. and 5.30 p.m., followed by a reception. There would be a greater focus on education than at the previous conference. The number of delegates and venue would depend on funding. The Chairman said he would like to hold the conference in parliament and hoped that the collaboration with POST and APESG would be helpful in securing a venue. If sufficient funding could be found, he would like to aim for 500 delegates.

3 Minutes of the sixteenth meeting, 1 February 2005

The minutes of the sixteenth meeting were accepted as a true record, subject to minor corrections.

David Bailey 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.]

- [2.4] *ASLF grant:* Ian Thomas advised that 'time in kind' was not, in fact, relevant in this case, but may be relevant to some other funding sources which require matching funds and it would be worth members logging the time they spent on Forum activities.

- [5] *Earth science education in Wales:* The Chairman said that it had been proposed that a member of the Welsh Assembly would chair an all-party group in the Assembly. Allan Cuthbertson and Mike Bassett would help to cover the Welsh dimension. The general election had delayed the launch. The Chairman proposed that he, Peter Warren, Cally Oldershaw, Chris King, Mike Bassett, Allan Cuthbertson and Peter Jones should meet to progress the initiative.

Action: C Oldershaw to arrange meeting

5 Annual Meeting and Constitution

Discussion of the Annual Meeting 2005 and Constitution was deferred to Agenda Item 12.

6 Finance report

The Chairman reported that the first tranche of funding from ODPM in support of the 2004 conference had been received into the IOM³ account on behalf of the Forum. A further tranche was due shortly. The Chairman asked Cally Oldershaw to provide figures for the next meeting.

Action: C Oldershaw

7 Development Officer's report

- 7.1 Cally Oldershaw tabled a report of activities listing meetings held, correspondence, membership changes, and activities in connection with the Annual Conference and All-Party Parliamentary Group for Earth Sciences. Collation of members' proforma templates had now almost been completed.

7.2 Several new organisations had joined the Forum: English Nature, the Environment Agency, the Geology Trusts, and the National Soil Research Institute. Liv Carroll of Capita Symonds would attend meetings on behalf of the Applied Earth Science Division of IOM3 (and MIRO in the absence of Gordon Riddler).

7.3 Cally Oldershaw requested ideas for speakers and subjects for the Annual Conference 2005.

8 ESEF(EW) website

8.1 A discussion paper on the purpose and development of the ESEF(EW) website was tabled by Peter Warren and David Bailey.

8.2 It was agreed that a diary page would be created to promote major, collaborative events and provide links to the diary pages on member organisations' own websites. The Chairman asked members to submit details of suitable events for inclusion. David Bailey to implement. It was further agreed to add the Development Officers' phone details to the 'Contacts' page and to create a new page summarising (with hyperlinks) educational resources available on members' websites. **Action: D Bailey**

8.3 A summary of visitor statistics and downloads for the period January to April 2005 was tabled. Downloads of conference abstracts were currently 350 per month (total), downloads of meeting minutes were 160 per month (total for all meetings available). The BGS webmaster would carry out an analysis of the visitor log files covering the first year of operation of the website in June and would be presented at a future meeting. **Action: D Bailey**

9 Potential collaborative projects

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

10 SESEF update

Nothing to report; SESEF had not met in the period since the sixteenth meeting

11 Government policy issues

Nothing to report.

12 Charity Commission

12.1 The Chairman reminded members that the Forum was considering registering for charitable status as this would allow access to funding only available to charities. Some progress had been made but it was now necessary to proceed. Cally Oldershaw advised that the Charity Commission recommended adopting the 'Governing Document 3' model constitution for a charitable unincorporated association which would make registration a straightforward process.

12.2 Cally Oldershaw reported that the Charity Commission had confirmed that there would be no delay in processing the registration while the new Charities Act was being debated.

12.3 Peter Warren asked whether the Forum's aims and objectives could be stated in a way that would meet the public benefit requirement. Cally Oldershaw confirmed that this had been checked and would not present a problem. However, it would be necessary to ensure that the Forum's finances could be audited in a way that would meet the Charity Commission's requirements. She proposed that the Forum should adopt the 'tax year' as its financial year.

12.4 The Chairman reported that Angela Yeoman, Lord Oxburgh, Kevin Barron and Gordon Riddler had all agreed to act as trustees for the proposed charity. Susan Brown and Peter Warren also agreed to take on this role along with the Forum's officers (the Chairman, Chris King, Cally Oldershaw and David Bailey). The Chairman said he also planned to invite Bernard Rickinson to be a trustee.

12.5 Peter Warren suggested that eleven was a large number of trustees and expressed concern that it might prove cumbersome. Members should also be aware of the legal responsibilities of

trustees; the new Act would encourage greater scrutiny of charities. The Chairman noted this warning but felt that the proposed number of trustees would be workable and was necessary to reflect the diverse membership of the Forum. Cally Oldershaw agreed to circulate to the proposed trustees the Charity Commission's Governing Document 3 and advice for trustees.

13 AOB

There was no other business.

14 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be on **Tuesday 19 July 2005** at IOM³ in 1 Carlton House Terrace. It was agreed to bring forward the start of future meetings to 1.30 p.m. for the convenience of members travelling by rail.

David Bailey 1 July 2005