

The Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales)

Minutes of the twenty-third meeting

Held at the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday 21 November 2006.

Present: Allan Rogers, Chairman
David Bailey, Secretary (British Geological Survey)
Cally Oldershaw, ESEF(EW) Executive Officer
Martyn Bradley (Geology Trusts)
Chris Carlon (Anglo American plc)
Peter Davies (IOM³)
Peter Jones (UKRIGS)
Judi Lakin (Geological Society)
Roger Trend (Geographical Association)
Malcolm Walker (Royal Meteorological Society)
Peter Warren
Dawn Windley (Earth Science Teachers' Association)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Chris King, Vice Chairman (and Earth Science Education Unit) and representatives of the following member organisations: Cranfield University; Geologists' Association / Rockwatch; MIRO; Quarry Products Association; Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers); Royal School of Mines / Imperial College.

2 Chairman's introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the reasons for initiating the Forum. He reminded members that a subscription had been agreed at a previous meeting. SESEF was fortunate in having the support of the Scottish parliament and SNH. ESEF-Cymru had been established in conjunction with Cardiff University and the National Museum of Wales and it was hoped that financial support from could be secured from the Welsh Assembly and industry in Wales.

3 Minutes of the twenty-second meeting, 27 June 2006

The minutes of the twenty-second meeting were accepted as a true record with some minor corrections. D 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.]

- 4.1 *[4.1] Graduate First Destinations Survey:* Judi Lakin reported that she and Ted Nield would be meeting the originator of the previous surveys with the intention of repeating the exercise, providing matters relating to the Data Protection Act could be addressed.
- 4.2 *[4.4] Forum members to be invoiced:* Action had been done. It was agreed that the response would be reviewed at the next meeting.
- 4.3 *[6] Sustainable Schools:* QPA had submitted a response to the DfES consultation paper.
- 4.4 *[7] International Polar Year:* CO and Lorraine Craig had met. A meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Earth Sciences would be held on IPY. It will incorporate the political dimension as well as science and be aimed at decision makers. The message would be that the delicate ecosystem was threatened by the exploitation of minerals, transport, pollution. CO would follow up global invitations to all MPs with specific emails to particular MPs with likely constituency interests. **Action: C Oldershaw**

5 Fieldwork and Field Centres

- 5.1 Chairman said he had received a letter from the Field Studies Council. The FSC were concerned that coursework might be removed from the curriculum and that this would have an affect on fieldwork. RT noted that the recommendations were subject specific: it had been recommended that coursework in A-level history should continue and that coursework in A-level geography should not. CO reported that fieldwork was not compulsory in the recently published QCA specification for A-level geology.
- 5.2 CO would ask Rt Hon Kevin Barron to raise the matter with the Minister of State as a matter of urgency. **Action: C Oldershaw**

6 CPD course for teachers of geography GCSE on Groundwater project

- 6.1 PW and CO reported that 10 schools had been contacted following the groundwater project meeting. Some market research was needed to determine whether teachers would attend the proposed CPD course. There was some money left in the Groundwater Forum budget to cover the costs of the market research. It was hoped that teachers would help develop the CPD activities. Eventually the CPD was likely to involve a day or weekend in London. Another possibility was visiting a cluster of schools.
- 6.2 DW suggested that Environmental Science Teachers would also be interested in the course. AQA is the only examination board for this subject and could advise on which schools teach it.
- 6.3 MW noted that a number of organisations were working together to improve teaching of meteorology in Scotland, including universities. A DVD would be published soon. CO pointed out the CPD for teachers is compulsory in Scotland, but not in England (and that this is a problem for the Science Learning Centres).

7 Committee of the Heads of University Geoscience Departments

In the absence of Andy Rankin, this item was deferred to a later meeting.

8 Finance report

- 8.1 CO said that an end-of-year report had been received from IOM³. A modest amount of money remained in the Forum account, but some expenses had yet to be claimed.
- 8.2 MB reported that the National Lottery had accepted a submission for core-funding for the Geology Trusts. He would report on whether the submission had been successful at a later meeting. There would be another opportunity for the Forum to bid.

9 Executive Officer's report

- 9.1 CO reported that more information had been circulated to members. A meeting of the officers of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Earth Sciences would take place in January to determine the meetings programme for 2007. At least one meeting was usually on an educational theme. Members were asked to submit suitable subjects for future meetings. **Action: All**
- 9.2 CO, with Kim Polistina, had drafted a questionnaire on outdoor activities and asked members to complete it (circulated at the close of the meeting). The initial responses would help to refine the questionnaire and it could then be circulated more widely, perhaps to the Geological Society and IOM³.

10 ESEF(EW) website (www.esef.org.uk)

DB circulated some statistics showing that visitor sessions and downloads remain healthy. Some new pages have been prepared with information provided by members and new pages on the activities of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Earth Sciences. The updated site will be launched once some outstanding information for the APGES has been received. **Action: C Oldershaw**

11 SESEF update — Nothing to report.

12 Government policy issues — Nothing to report.

13 Annual Conference — Nothing to report. Waiting on new funding opportunities.

14 Potential collaborative projects

14.1 JL reported that the Geological Society was producing a KS3 online revision guide using some of the Bicentenary funds. Chris King was on the steering group. The GSL website was being upgraded and there would be improvements to the education pages.

14.2 DB reported that BGS would be holding a Schools Challenge Day in June 2007, the event would be a role-playing exercise for secondary schools on the theme 'Quarry or Not'.

14.3 CC reported that Anglo American was looking for suitable students via the Student Technical Experience Programme (STEP) for disciplines related to minerals extraction. The programme is growing with many students from different countries and now forms a fundamental part of recruitment. More could be done by inviting parents to speak about their careers in schools to convey that exciting jobs are available with opportunities to travel and to combat the attitude that it is not 'cool' to learn.

14.4 PD said that the IOM3 circulate newsletters to over 400 schools and provided an opportunity to promote careers and events for schools. Anglo American and Rio Tinto had put money into the Smallpeice Trust to run four-day residential courses in mineral exploration at Leeds University and Camborne School of Mines.

14.5 Chairman noted that Camborne and Leeds had received funding as a result of the Forum's intervention. Camborne had developed a website for teachers.

15 AOB

15.1 Chairman congratulated CO on her tenure as editor of Teaching Earth Science and noted that she would be retiring from that position as she had recently taken up a new job with ASE as a curriculum development manager.

15.2 CO reported that the ASE's scienceonestop.com website was being merged with a new website in January and launched at conference.

15.3 CO noted that Alan Rhodes was no longer able to attend Forum meetings.

15.4 MW mentioned the Earth, Weather, Oceans and Climate (EWOC) international conference. Children are now using iPods, wikis and blogs etc. to replace paper materials which are now looking very dated.

15.5 MB reported that he had attended the launch of Natural England in the Midlands. There had been no mention of geology in the presentations. The support for the wider pattern of activities that English Nature had carried out was changing. PJ had attended a talk by Sir Martin Doughty; biodiversity and conservation issues had been prominent, but not geodiversity or geological conservation. Chairman noted that there were no geologists on the NE board and said that the Forum should lobby for representatives from the earth sciences when the appointments are due for renewal.

16 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be at **1.30 p.m. on Tuesday 27 February 2007¹** at IOM³ in 1 Carlton House Terrace

David Bailey, March 2007

¹ Subsequently rescheduled for Tuesday 20 March 2007 to coincide with the next meeting of the APGES.