



## Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales) Minutes of the fortieth meeting

Held in the British Geological Survey meeting room, Natural History Museum, Exhibition Road, London. 1.30pm, 17 May 2011

**Present:** Chris King, Chairman (Earth Science Education Unit)  
David Bailey (British Geological Survey)  
Martyn Bradley (Geology Trusts)  
David Brook (London Geodiversity Partnership)  
Susan Brown (Geologists' Association and Rockwatch)  
Nikki Edwards (OCR)  
Tom Hose (Geoconservation UK)  
Cally Oldershaw

**Speaker:** Michael Murray (Heritage Lottery Fund)

### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Brace (RGS), Chris Carlon, Grace Kimble (Natural History Museum), Natasha Lee (Gloucestershire Geology Trust), Joanna Mears (Geological Society), Hazel Rymer (OU), Paul Smith (CHUGD Committee of Heads of University Geoscience Departments), Dave Waltham (CHUGD Committee of Heads of University Geoscience Departments), Peter Warren, Niki Whitburn (ESTA), Martin Whiteley (Geology Trusts), June Wright (British Geological Survey).

### 2 Minutes of the 39th meeting, 8 March 2011

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

**Action: David Bailey**

### 3 Matters arising

- 3.1 [*Agenda item 3.3*] C King reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Geological Society Education Committee. They are developing a strategy on careers events for students, possibly based around several regional events.
- 3.2 [*Agenda item 3.4*] *All-Party Parliamentary Group for Earth and Environmental Sciences*. C Oldershaw said the meeting on Shale Gas had been well-attended. About 20 people were expected for the All-Party Group meeting on 'Libya and its Oil' that evening. The dates of subsequent meetings were yet to be confirmed so Forum meetings were provisionally set for 18 October and 6 December. David Lambert (Geographical Association) and Mike Howgate (WEA Science) would be invited to future ESEF meetings. **Action: D Bailey**
- 3.3 [*Agenda item 3.5*] *Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects*: The Geological Society and CHUGD had drafted a letter to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills regarding the importance of geoscience to society and the economy.
- 3.4 [*Agenda item 7.1*] *Geology teacher training*: CK reported that a stakeholder meeting had been held to discuss the future for training geology teachers. Those attending had included representatives from the TDA, SCORE, ASE, CHUGD, GSL, OCR, WJEC, MPA, BGS, ESTA, Geologists' Association, Geographical Association, Oil & Gas UK, PESGB and ESEU. There

had been a lively discussion and a follow-up meeting would be held to clarify actions. TH asked whether a note of the meeting could be included in the next Geoconservation newsletter.

**Action: CK to forward.**

- 3.5 [Agenda item 7.2] *Leaflet on teacher training options*: uploaded to the ESTA website.
- 3.6 [Agenda item 7.3] *Admissions to university geoscience courses*: CK said that he had received admissions from UCAS. Of students applying for F600 degree courses (geology or earth science), 45% had an A-level or Scottish Higher qualification in Geology. Of students applying for F6\*\* degrees (combined subject courses including geology) 31% had an A-level or Higher in Geology. These figures underlined the importance of geology teaching in schools to the sustainability of university courses.
- 3.7 [Agenda item 10.1] *Letter to Secretary of State for DEFRA re ALSF*: TH confirmed he had drafted a letter, DB to check with J Wright whether the letter had been sent. Geoconservation UK have sent a similar letter, the Geology Trusts would also be writing. ALSF in Wales had indicated they were not keen on supporting further applications for geological projects as they would be prioritising community projects.
- 3.8 [Agenda item 10.2] *HLF*: Michael Murray to speak after the meeting.
- 3.9 [Geoscience in adult education discussion]: CK reported that C Darmon was working on a costed proposal. NE advised that there was a U3A geology specialist and she would forward contact details to MB. MB agreed to draft a short article for the U3A newsletter.

#### **4 Finance report**

No significant change to financial position. Invited speakers could claim expenses if unable to claim them from a parent organisation or employer.

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

There had been no additions to the content apart from the minutes of the 38th meeting. The basic visitor statistics were summarised.

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

Nothing further to report (see Agenda Item 3.2 above).

#### **7 Potential collaborative projects**

C King reported that C Darmon was preparing a costed proposal for a database of geological courses. There was discussion about the difficulty of arranging informal education events at venues such as local museums as funding opportunities diminish. The Bristol Dinosaur Project had secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and this might be a suitable route for other projects. It was agreed to wait for C Darmon's proposal before moving forward.

#### **8 AOB**

TH reported that 'geology' and 'geodiversity' were barely mentioned in Natural England's Corporate Plan. DB to check whether J Wright had circulated copies of the Corporate Plan to members. Action plans deal with local and community groups and initiatives. The UK leads the world in geodiversity initiatives. TH had drafted a letter and CK would review it before forwarding to Natural England to raise the issue.

**Action: D Bailey, C King**

#### **9 Dates of future meetings**

Dates of future meetings and suitable subjects for presentations were discussed.

- 18 Oct 2011 N Edwards to convene discussion on 'Adult Education' with WEA and/or U3A.  
6 Dec 2011 T Hose to convene discussion on 'Geotourism'

March 2012 D Bailey to convene discussion on new technologies and social media in communicating geoscience.

(All dates to be confirmed when future All-Party Group meeting dates known.)

C King offered to give a presentation on Earth Learning Idea at a future meeting.

**Action: N Edwards, T Hose, D Bailey**

Chris King thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.

**Agreed actions:**

| Agenda Item     | Subject   | Owner               | Due date              |
|-----------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 37/6            | All Party alterations to be communicated to D Bailey for Web update.                                      | C Oldershaw         | December 2010 meeting |
| 38/6            | All Party update of new arrangements  | J Wright            | Next meeting          |
| 39/3.3          | Circulate correspondence about GSL library and Careers Day  | C King & J Wright   | Before 40th meeting   |
| 39/10.1         | Draft letter to DEFRA re continuing funding for geoconservation   | T Hose & C King     | ASAP                  |
| 39/Presentation | Costed proposal for adult education database  | C Darmon            | Before 41st meeting   |
| 40/2            | Minutes of 39th meeting to be uploaded  | D Bailey            | ASAP                  |
| 40/3.2          | D Bailey to add David Lambert and Mike Howgate to future meetings   | D Bailey            | ASAP                  |
| 40/3.4          | C King to forward note about geology teacher training stakeholders' meeting to T Hose for GCUK newsletter | C King              | ASAP                  |
| 40/8            | D Bailey to check whether J Wright had circulated Natural England Corporate Plan                          | D Bailey / J Wright | ASAP                  |
|                 | C King to review draft letter to Natural England  | C King              | ASAP                  |
| 40/9            | N Edwards to convene discussion for 41st meeting (Oct) on Adult Education                                 | N Edwards           | Oct 2011              |
|                 | T Hose to convene discussion for 42nd meeting (Dec) on Geotourism   | T Hose              | Dec 2011              |
|                 | D Bailey to convene discussion for 43rd meeting (Mar) on New Technologies and Social Media                | D Bailey            | Mar 2012              |

## **Presentation**

### **HLF funding for geodiversity projects**

**by Michael Murray, London Development Manager**

CK welcomed Mr Murray and introduced the members present.

HLF do not currently fund many geological projects. Funding does support a number of landscape partnership projects that include an element of geology. There is guidance on the HLF website about applying for biodiversity projects and it is intended this will be broadened to include geodiversity.

Mr Murray went on to outline the HLF funding programme, the grants available and what should be included in an application for a geodiversity project.

The awards budget for 2011/12 had been increased to £255 million nationally and for 2012/13 would go up again to £300 million. One of the targeted programmes, Landscape Partnerships, was a potential source of funds for geodiversity projects and grants between £250,000 and £2 million were available. However, this programme was oversubscribed; other programmes include Heritage Grants for projects over £50,000 and Your Heritage for projects between £3000 and £50,000. For projects with budgets over £1 million, the HLF could fund up to 5% and up to 95% for smaller projects. Your Heritage projects could be funded at 100%. Development grants were available to assist proposers with applications for complex projects.

Other relevant programmes included Parks for People. This programme tends to focus on 'historic' heritage, but projects could include some geological element.

Landscape Partnerships could take 12 to 18 months for approval, but smaller grants could sometimes be approved in a matter of weeks. Unsuccessful applicants would be sent a letter with an explanation of the decision and, where appropriate, feedback to help refine the application for resubmission. Applications for large projects (Township Heritage Initiative and Landscape Partnership programmes) were assessed once a year, in April. Other projects were assessed more frequently.

Duration of projects: heritage projects can last up to 5 years, smaller grants tend to be for 1 year. HLF would not repeat-fund projects but it was sometimes possible to shape a successful project as a new application if the aims were sufficiently different - working at a new site or extending work already done into new areas.

Mr Murray described some successful projects focusing on biodiversity and archaeology, and discussed how similar projects with an emphasis on geodiversity could be developed. A sample geodiversity project might have the following aims:

- Manage and conserve a RIGS/LIGS site.
- Improve knowledge of geodiversity.
- Improve access to sites.

Activities could include

- Site condition surveys.
- Physical improvements to the site.
- Produce management plans for the site, involving local stakeholders.
- Train volunteers to develop management and conservation skills.
- Offer learning and participation activities for the public.

HLF would not fund academic research projects, but would consider supporting small elements of research if these were a key element of the project, especially if they contributed to the aims of 'learning and development'; this might include an M.Sc. student carrying out fieldwork. If a species associated with a project is identified as important in the local biodiversity action plan, the application will score highly. It may also be helpful to identify similar issues of geodiversity if these are raised in the LGAP, and there may be joint benefits to biodiversity and geodiversity. HLF are increasingly looking at digital means of enhancing learning and understanding, some virtual trips and virtual microscopes could form part of a successful application. Training in filming and editing video could also be part of a bid. (NB Projects over £1 million *must* include an element of training.)

Applicants would have to show the 'need' for the project; this could include the necessity to carry out investigations where exposures would only be accessible temporarily. Letters of support would be needed from any partners involved. It was acceptable for bids to include funding for transport, equipment and clothing for volunteers, especially if this helps break down barriers to diversity. It would be useful to indicate how the project aims would contribute to the LGAP targets. If schools applied, the project must be outside the normal curriculum

A budget sheet was included with all application forms to assist applicants with costings and it was possible to request pre-application feedback. Pre-application could be made online (1000-2000 words) explaining why the site is important, what work will be done, what it will cost and how long it will take. The regional development team would respond in writing. Applicants could also be made for web sites, mobile apps or games, providing they met the aims of the HLF.

Forum members thanked Mr Murray for his very helpful and positive presentation.