



Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales) Minutes of the forty-sixth meeting

Held in the Arthur Holmes meeting room, The Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. 1.30pm, 4 December 2012.

Present: Chris King, Chairman (Earth Science Education Unit)
David Bailey (British Geological Survey)
Nic Bilham (GSL)
Steve Brace (RGS & IBG)
Martyn Bradley (Geology Trusts)
David Brook (London Geodiversity Partnership)
Susan Brown (Geologists' Association and Rockwatch)
Nikki Edwards (OCR)
Tom Hose (GeoConservationUK & University of Bristol)
Isabel Markham (U3A)
Joanna Mears (GSL)
Cally Oldershaw
Peter Warren
Maggie Williams (ESTA and University of Liverpool)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Diane Aston (IOM3), Anjana Ford (Jurassic Coast World Heritage Team) Hazel Gibson (Plymouth University), Duncan Hawley (Geographical Association), Jacqui Malpas (Clwydian Range AONB), Martin Whiteley.

2 Minutes of the 45th meeting, 16 October 2012

A number of corrections to the minutes were tabled, particularly with reference to item 3.6 (National Geology Database). TH clarified the position: he was looking into the establishment of a new database through the facilities of GCUK. At the same time he was also researching into historical databases as examples of past practice and what might be learned from them. It seems that GCUK presently lacks the resources to develop this project except as a somewhat basic vehicle; however, it is in a position to initiate a scoping project along the lines and costs in the report to the 46th meeting. A copy including an amendment by TH to this item will be placed on the ESEF website.

Action: D Bailey

3 Matters arising

- 3.1 *[Agenda item 3.1] National Curriculum consultation:* CK reported that the National Curriculum Consultation was ongoing and that he had responded on behalf of the Forum. ESTA had also responded and it was thought that the Primary Group of ESTA had also commented.
- 3.2 MW said that the proposals for secondary education were light on detail and the intention was that this would allow more flexibility. The indication was that the emphasis was on content and that there were no comments on how subjects should be taught. There did not appear to be much change to the earth science content at secondary level, but the head of the ASE, Annette Smith, was reported to say this was not the final document. CK noted there was also a consultation on KS4 qualifications that was due to close on 10 December 2012 which was likely to have an impact on the National Curriculum.

- 3.3 NB noted that it would be unrealistic to expect the DfE to adopt all the suggestions put forward, but the position appeared to be better than it would have been if there had been no intervention by the Forum, Geological Society, RGS and other parties. The main sources for research in the proposals appeared to be international comparisons, academic research and the grid proposed by the GSL, ESTA, RGS and others. CK welcomed this news, and commented that this was the first time the whole earth science community had responded to a consultation in such a co-ordinated manner.
- 3.4 Proposals for the Primary curriculum had now been published. NB had responded to several errors and oversimplifications in the document and it was hoped these would be taken up.
- 3.5 TH asked if a short note could be drafted for the GCUK newsletter. CK said he would forward a copy of the note he had written for Geoscientist magazine. **Action: C King**
- 3.6 [*Agenda item 3.4*] *Training for secondary geology teachers at Keele University*: CK reminded members that the TDA had allocated funding for 6 trainees ‘for the foreseeable future’. The TDA had now been replaced by the Teaching Agency which would now be allocating places. Keele University had requested funding for 21 teacher trainees in Biology and Geology, but had only been allocated 7 places. In response to a query, the TA had requested more information on Geology and a decision was pending.
- 3.7 Recruitment to training geology teachers at Keele had been poor last year and this was being tackled in various ways. Career opportunities in teaching had been highlighted in Geoscientist and by visiting local university departments. It was noted that the government intended to move teacher training into schools. This was happening but was not well managed or structured at a national level. Problems were expected ahead and it was considered likely that not enough teachers would be trained. It was doubtful whether this approach would help to raise standards as in-school training had been shown inferior to HE-based teacher training.
- 3.8 MW said she had attended a meeting at which John Carr of the Teaching Agency had described a pilot project of 300 schools in the School Direct teacher training programme. It was expected that there would be 9000 placements next year, but not all of the schools in the scheme would be able to offer jobs to trainees at the end of their placements.
- 3.9 S Brace said that had been a change to the support for training for geography teachers. Trainees must now have a 2:1 or first class degree. There had been an increase in the academic quality of applicants to teacher training, but there had been structural problems similar to those already outlined. It was expected that the number of geography teacher trainees would remain at about 650 nationally, but that these would be redistributed across individual institutions.
- 3.10 There was a general discussion about the confusion surrounding how recruitment under School Direct would operate and indications that there may be a political agenda associated with the way HEIs have trained teachers as well as alleged collusion between teachers and examination boards. NE reported that OCR holds monthly meetings to discuss teaching malpractice. Perpetrators were banned from teaching the syllabus.
- 3.11 [*Agenda item 3.6*] *National Geology Database*: T Hose had spoken to GCUK colleagues. GCUK were considering a revamp of their website and looking at what could be developed from existing hardware and software. It was thought they might be able to host a bulleted list of events with hotlinks to other information, provide a calendar view of events by date and include Google maps. The initial set up costs were estimate to be £250, though this could rise to £1000 if a Wiki or other social media were included. Running costs were estimated at £500 to £3000 per annum, depending on the amount of maintenance required (from an hour a month to a day a month). The cheapest option would amount to about £2250 over three years. CK asked whether there would be substantial differences to the BGS’s GeoBritain Map. TH said there would be some overlap; there would be more links to local groups though it might be possible to include this information on the BGS map. Funding would have to be sourced. It was agreed that BGS should discuss opportunities for collaboration with GCUK. TH and D Bailey to set up a meeting. **Action: T Hose, D Bailey**

- 3.12 [Agenda item 3.8] *International Conference on Geotourism 22/23 October 2012*: TH tabled copies of the conference programme. D Brook said it had been a very good conference. SB agreed and added that the abstract booklet was excellent. TH reported that the costs of hosting the conference had been covered and 50 delegates had attended, including visitors from Australia, Poland and Russia, and 12 papers had been presented. ARUP had sponsored print costs and the British Society for the History of Science had sponsored the excursion. CK congratulated TH on behalf of the Forum and asked what was the RGS view of 'geotourism'. S Brace said he would ask colleagues for their views. IM said that geotourism was very popular with U3A members. TH said there would be a post-conference book; he would invite some of the speakers to write chapters and also some experts who couldn't attend.
- 3.13 [Agenda item 3.9] *Potential Collaborative Projects*: T Hose said a meeting with Bristol University was expected to take place in February. Work in the Bath area on William Smith sites was planned. A colleague was planning to look at Jurassic exposures in the south of the area. It was hoped that undergraduate students would take up sponsored placements.
- 3.14 IM reported that progress had also been made on the 'bus pass geology' project. U3A had offered to cover the expenses involved in completing the work.
- 3.15 MB mentioned the geological collection at the University of Warwick; there had been lots of interest, including from the University of Nottingham, a school in Liverpool and the Geology Group in Warwickshire.

4 Finance report

No significant changes to report.

5 ESEF website (www.esef.org.uk)

Nothing to report.

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

The presentation by Professor Herbert Huppert (University of Cambridge) with a discussion on the subject of Carbon Capture and Climate Change had taken place on 16 October and was well attended.

7 Potential collaborative projects

NB & JM gave a demonstration of the new Plate Tectonic animation on the GSL website. Pete Loader and Ian Kenyon of ESTA had been on the writing group for the project. The resource had been sponsored by Centrica. CK complimented the GSL on a splendid and unique resource, both accurate and up to date and demonstrating the value of collaboration. JM agreed to circulate the web address for the website.

Action: J Mears

8 AOB

- 8.1 EGU Vienna, April 2013: TH noted there would be a session on geodiversity and geoheritage in geoscience research were invited. JM reminded Forum members that there would be a GIFT workshop for teachers; the response from the UK had been good this year. The GSL would be funding teachers to attend through their schools affiliate scheme in addition to the funding available from GIFT/EGU.
- 8.2 History of Geology Conference, Manchester, July 2013: TH drew attention to this meeting. Planning was in hand but costs were likely to be fairly high. Registration would be open imminently.
- 8.3 World Skills Environmental Science Competition: D Bailey reported on the 2012 competition and confirmed that it would be run again as part of the UK Skills Show at the NEC, Birmingham, in November 2013.

- 8.4 CK reported that the latest earth science Olympiad had taken place in Argentina. The next one would be held in Russia.
- 8.5 The GSL Careers Day had been held at BGS Keyworth. Numbers had to be restricted because of the size of the venue and it was reported that some universities hadn't found out about the event until it was already fully subscribed.

9 Date of future meetings

The dates of future meetings:

15 Oct 2013 Date and discussion to be confirmed.

The business meeting closed at 3.00pm and was followed by a discussion on the Earth Science Teachers' Association by Maggie Williams.