



Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales) Minutes of the 62nd meeting

Held in the Arthur Holmes Room, Geological Society, London. 1.00 pm, 28 March 2017.

Present

Annette Thomas (Project Consultant at Subsea UK)
Charlotte Pike (UCL)
Chris King (ESEF)
Isabel Markham
John Stevenson (BGS)
Martyn Bradley (Geology Trusts & U3A)
Nikki Edwards (ESTA)
Susan Brown (Rockwatch)
Tom Hose (GeoConservationUK)

Apologies for absence:

Alex O'Rourke (BGS)
Cally Oldershaw
David Brook (London Geodiversity Partnership)
Duncan Hawley (Geographical Association)
Hazel Rymer (Open University)
Lesley Dunlop (English Geodiversity Forum)
Maggie Williams (Liverpool Uni.)
Pete Loader (ESTA)
Nic Bilham (GSL)
Steve Brace (RGS & IBG)

1. Talk /discussion

Charlotte Pike, UCL – about the London GeoBus

2 Minutes of the 61st meeting, 6 December 2016

The minutes of the 61st meeting were accepted as a true record. A copy has been placed on the ESEF website.

Action: JS

3 Matters arising

3. 1 *National Curriculum (KS3 & 4 and A level)*
GCSE- and A-level geology

CK reported that there is a reducing-trend of students opting to do geology GCSE; from 1000 students, nationally in 2016 to around 600-700 in 2017.

NE reported that ESTA had recently received emails from two schools in Pembrokeshire that had been informed by their local authority that they must achieve minimum 23 students, combine their

school classes or close the option to take geology at A-level. [Update – due to an effective rearguard action, geology has been saved in those schools for the time being]

CK reported that via ESTA, key facts for adding to letters stressing the importance of ‘why do we need geologists?’ will be prepared as ammunition to send to head teachers where geology is under threat. Iain Stewart and others are contributing to the content.

NE is lobbying the Department of Education to categorize GCSE geology as a science. A level geology is regarded as a science.

3.2 *Training for secondary geology teachers :*

The Keele Summer School for geology teacher training has seven bursaried places for the 2017 course. This is a reduction from eleven in previous years. More are being sought. This course will be run in the School of Geography, Geology and the Environment, Keele University

3.3 *Geology for Non-Geologists training ‘Geolab’:*

Twenty six people attended the most recent Geolab training event, which was held at Martley near Worcester. Two Geolab events per year are planned.

3.4 *National Geology Database*

JS reported that work is still ongoing, but slow due to staff absence. About 20 per cent of the Geological Association’s 145 ‘new sites’ have been added to the map.

3.5 *Geological poster map of UK and Ireland*

JS reported that, of the map is at the printers and is on schedule to launch at the 2017 Geographical Association conference at the University of Surrey in April.

3.6 *Mobilising the geoscience community’ project.*

CK provided an update on the ‘Mobilising the geoscience community’ workshop held in November 2016

[Following the meeting the ‘Strategy’ and ‘How to set an Earthcache’ documents were finalised and circulated – as attached to these minutes]

The circulation by email included the following points:

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We are hopeful that all groups affiliated to ESEF will nominate a ‘Mobilising the community’ representative who will undertake the following:

- please let us know you are willing to undertake this task
- please ask for the initiative to be an agenda item for a forthcoming meeting of your group, and let us know when this might be
- during that agenda item, please introduce everybody to the idea of an Earthcache-based field visit in the local area in the summer of 2018
- then take everybody outside the building and explore the local potential for an Earthcache, setting one if possible (ie deciding on the location and the questions to be asked)
- having fired everybody up for the idea, please ask them the questions at the foot of the strategy document (date?, name? logo? mobilising? advertising?) and record the responses
- then please have a further discussion around everyone's questions
- finally, please return a brief email report to me (John) at ESEF afterwards, letting us know the responses to the questions and how you think the initiative will progress with your group.

.....

Action All ESEF membership should respond, including canvassing opinion on possible names with their local groups and organisations.

Action JS will draw up a shortlist of names and then circulate an online poll to vote for a name.

The date of national geology ‘day’ needs to be set.

Action All: Choosing a date. Things to consider. Do we want families in holiday time or school students in term time.

(Half-way through May geology A-level projects need to submit their projects)

Setting an Earthcache

CK discussed a few tips and pitfalls of setting an Earthcache.

It is helpful to include a photograph of the cache. Care should be taken when entering map coordinates.

3.7 BESER 'Subject leadership development programme'

AT provided an update to the Building Earth Science Education Resilience (BESER) project. The aim of BESER is to provide the structure to deliver the training and support to ‘make teachers more confident’ and to develop the next generation of geology subject leaders.

Residual funding from the ESEU was carried over to develop BESER strategy and to continue to deliver CPD workshops for two years.

BESER held a workshop in Bristol in January 2016 to initiate the process of developing geology subject leaders. Feedback from the workshop informed on a draft a strategy.

Initial ideas include:

- translate societal and industrial needs into curriculum development;
- develop, write and prepare appropriate assessment of examinations;
- inspire the next generation of geology teachers;
- enable geoscience teachers to teach critical thinking skills and a range of other transferrable skills most effectively
- establish ways to support non specialists to deliver accurate and engaging Earth science though strategies to develop critical thinking skills;
- have business and organizational skills;
- be able to communicate and engage multiple stakeholders including business and government policy makers.
- Have skills to lead organisations

The Geological Society and the BGS were both considered as host organizations, but eventually viewed as less appropriate homes for teacher training. It is simply not the core business of either organisation.

ESTA was however seen as an appropriate ‘home’. This idea was put to ESTA Council at a meeting on March 4th and the proposal accepted. ESTA celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2017. This anniversary presents an opportunity to celebrate past achievements and plan for the future. The outcomes of BESER aim to guide aspects of ESTA’s future. Working with ESTA, BESER can offer exam writing workshops, outreach workshops and develop the routes to becoming chartered science teachers or chartered geologists. The network that ESTA can provide also helps to support the isolation that geology teachers may experience as a ‘rare breed’.

The issue of funding was also raised. BESER realizes the need for seed core funding and a sustainable source of long-term funding. It is planned that a further-developed strategy be launched at the 2017 ESTA conference in September 2017.

4 Finance report

No changes to report.

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

The website is up to date.

6 Potential collaborative projects

BGS and Geological Society have jointly produced a Plate Tectonics, Earthquakes and Volcanoes Passport Booklet to accompany a BGS giant floor map to deliver education workshops at the 2017 Lyme Regis Fossil Festival.

7 ESEF Achievements

The ESEF would like to pass on their congratulations to Tom Hose for editing and publishing Geoheritage and Geotourism.

8 AOB

Martyn Bradley has decided to step down as a U3A geology representative

9 Future talks and meeting dates

16 May 2017 Geology and art in geoeducation

Action JS contact an appropriate speaker

10 October 2017 What micro fossils do for the economy?

Hayden Bailey

Action NE to contact speaker

12 December 2017 U3A or Chris Darman (Geosupplies) TBC