

## ESD Forum – Report for 2013

At our meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> May which was held in Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, we had a members 'Show and Tell'. Various members gave us an insight into their various programmes and shared some very good ideas. After the AGM Andy gave us a tour of the site before we had our lunch.

The past year saw Sue retire from NIEL and as many of you know even better than me she was always a big supporter of EEF and latterly ESDF. I am delighted that Craig our new CEO is here today and from conversations we have had already I am in no doubt the work will continue.

During the past year I compiled 10 E-Bulletins which were sent to the members and thanks to Liz and Brigid the bulletin now goes into every school West of the Bann and in Belfast. I have been in negotiations with NEELB and SEELB who will be doing the same from September which is good news.

We also during the past year updated our website with some new added features and I have to say the analytics reflect more people are using the site which is great. We also are now on Twitter and Facebook my colleague Connor very kindly looks after all that, I haven't quite moved to the era of all that. I have continued to update the website regularly with member's news and events and other relevant information, please keep the information coming in.

The Management committee met 4 times during the past year.

Our ESD Day at Queens this year took on a different format in that it was part of 'Working with NGOs in the Classroom' day, Eco-Schools and RSPB took part and I think it's fair to say both felt the new format wasn't as good as the all day we ran previously. Claire McGlynn has now taken over from Lesley Emerson and this was her idea, I am due to have a meeting with Claire in June and will be raising my concerns with her.

We held two very successful ESD events in St Mary's in November one was in an afternoon and the second the following morning. Eco-Schools, Forest Service, Belfast City Council and RSPB all facilitated workshops and would have to say two very successful events. The students were brilliant. We will also be doing workshops in Stranmillis from Autumn 2014 so that is us back in the Belfast Universities. Forest Service was invited to do a work shop in Coleraine at very short notice, a huge thanks to Petra for facilitating that one. Also I am getting more and more enquires from students as a result of the ESD Days including being stopped in Abbey Centre one night, the message is definitely getting out there.

One of my highlights of the past year was looking after the education stream of the Challenge Fund, NIEL was awarded £2.3 million from the Carrier Bag Levy and we had 64 schools apply and all 64 were funded. Some fantastic projects were undertaken and we will be producing a separate report on the projects. This brought me into close contact with the teachers concerned and it was great to hear and see the evidence of exactly what is going on in our schools. This year we had students complete the site visits and Lorraine McLean has written a report on 'Environmental Education and the Challenge Fund', I have asked Lorraine to attend our next committee meeting to talk us through her findings.

NIEL is confident of being awarded another round of the challenge fund, so please check the website and read your emails as information will be sent out as soon as we get the go ahead.

Can I also take this opportunity to let you know NIEL has been awarded the Heritage Lottery Fund Catalyst Umbrella Programme £246,000 towards the delivery of a bespoke fundraising capacity building and training programme for the heritage sector of Northern Ireland.

NIEL is leading a partnership with three other organisations – Common Purpose; Supporting Communities NI; and the Business Institute, University of Ulster. The funding is enabling organisations to provide heritage groups with the tools needed to build capacity and improve their ability to tap into private funding across the UK. Further details on the programme's first training event in June 2014 and the full training programme are available from my colleague Murdo Murray at the NIEL office, all the details are in this leaflet and I do have a copy for each of you.

I also want to thank the Management Committee for their support during the past year you definitely make my job easier and I particularly want to thank Alyn and Catherine, their support has been invaluable.