

# Belonging to ASE – the tip of the iceberg

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I am Chair-Elect of ASE this year, working with Mary Whitehouse (current Chair) and Linda Needham (Past-Chair). Some years ago, these would have been names that I saw on research papers, as part of national programmes or delivering at national events, and here I find myself working alongside them in the Chair Trio. This exemplifies one of the key benefits that has kept me actively involved with ASE, since I was encouraged to join our local region group (Southern Counties) during my PGCE year at the University of Southampton – the chance to meet and work with a huge range of people involved in science education who I would otherwise not have met. And so I have benefitted from this interaction personally and professionally.

After joining the local region group, which organises events for teachers and technicians in our locality, I spent a couple of years hearing about various committees (11-19, Primary, Publications, etc.) and feeling like

the 'newbie'. However, through contributing to activities and events, and gradually becoming more involved, I learned more about ASE and how it works through its wonderful population of volunteer members. And my confidence grew. I was at ASE HQ to discuss the upcoming Annual Conference 2020 (at Reading) recently when four committees were meeting. So many 'big names' in science education were there, and I personally knew most of them!

Recent ASE Chairs have focused on the collective social and science education capital that underpins ASE, culminating in this year's #wearevolunteers badges. We have discussed the benefits of active membership of ASE at Education Group and this has led us to develop the 'Iceberg' analogy.

Simply, there are numerous benefits to ASE membership that we can identify and communicate – access to high quality journals and publications,

professional indemnity insurance, professional development programmes for and by members, and more. These are what we call the 'tangibles'. However, possibly even more important are the 'intangibles' – the extensive networking, becoming an author, being 'noticed', becoming an accredited teacher or technician and having our voices heard – individually and collectively. These intangibles, however, will only happen when you actively participate in ASE, be that through representation on various groups and committees, getting involved with local events or activities, or attending the plethora of events that ASE volunteers run.

So...don't wait! If you are a member (or not) and want to invigorate your practice, get involved with ASE: #wearevolunteers!

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ASE Chair Elect  
2018/2019



# Improve your network and enhance your skills... volunteering with ASE!

We recently said a sad and reluctant farewell to Janet McCartney, who retired from her position on our ASE regional committee. Janet has been a very active member of the Committee and she found that volunteering for ASE was the perfect match for her job as a local authority science consultant – both shared a common aim to improve science education for all. As we thanked Janet for her contribution over so many years, I started to reflect on volunteering for ASE.

I've been a member of ASE for a very long time, although to start with I wasn't using my membership to its full potential. I decided to attend a local CPD event, which was excellent in its own right and, while there, I was invited to join the regional committee. As a sole practitioner in a small department, it was great to meet other teachers with a passion for science education.

By becoming involved with the committee I helped to plan CPD events and expand my network of teachers from a range of settings across all phases of education. My involvement grew and I was encouraged to stand for our national committees: I've been a part of Education Group, Publications and the 11-19 Committee and have recently taken up the position of ASE Field Officer.

I thank the ASE (and the opportunities that being a volunteer offered) for the extensive network I have now. Being an ASE volunteer improved my teaching (through the sharing of ideas) and kept me sane by having a supportive network of colleagues (many of whom I now call friends) to lean on.

I asked colleagues why they volunteered for ASE and this is what they said:

*'I volunteered to join an ASE committee when I started working at IOE, i.e. when I was no longer working full time in a school. It had been impossible for me to attend the national conference unless I was speaking, prior to leaving the classroom. My rationale was that, after 20+ years of benefitting from journals and local events, it was time to give something back to the community that has supported me so well. What I get out of it is a good connection to teachers and schools and the opportunity for CPD through informed and in-depth discussions with teachers and academics on ASE committees' (Sheila, regional & 11-19 committees and teacher trainer).*

*'Through being an ASE volunteer, which started as a regional committee member many years ago, then being elected onto national committees and then as a Trustee, I have had unexpected opportunities to do things and meet people I wouldn't normally come across. I have found these experiences energising and always learn something good from them. Over the years as a volunteer within different roles, I have grown in confidence and knowledge about science and education. It is well worth the time and effort as I not only feel happy about supporting ASE but I get back so much' (Sally, regional committee and ASE Trustee).*

*'I have been a primary science leader for 10 years and have been encouraged, mentored and helped in transforming science in our school from just another subject to one that teachers like teaching and pupils like doing. I volunteered to help with ASE as I wanted to help and support others to achieve a positive change in their own classrooms or schools. I also get to mix and mingle with a great bunch of people who have great ideas and are doing amazing projects' (Sarah, regional committee and primary teacher).*

*'Great opportunity to meet more people with like minds and similar passions for science. It's amazing how many new friendships I've built from my volunteering with ASE' (Jane, regional committee and primary teacher).*

*'I volunteer because I want young people to have a positive experience of science in school that either inspires them to follow a career in science or helps them understand the world they live in' (Bel, regional committee and primary teacher).*

There are many ways you can volunteer for ASE:

- Host a TeachMeet, or speak at one
- Join a regional committee
- Sit on a national committee
- Write articles for ASE journals
- Join in #ASEchat on Twitter
- Introduce your colleagues to ASE membership

Remember, ASE is what our members and our volunteers make it, and what we want it to be! #WeAreTheASE

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