

BES news

From Europe

Summer 2020

Resourcing you to reach the next generation - www.besweb.com

Europe, with its 47 states and 731 million people, is considered to be the world's wealthiest and richest continent. In stark contrast however, it is the only continent where the church is in decline and is therefore the poorest in spiritual terms. Although Christianity is still the largest religion today, irreligion (the absence or rejection of any religion) and practical secularisation are strong. Atheism and agnosticism have increased and there is falling church attendance and membership in most European countries. It is thought that more than 700 million people have no personal relationship with Christ. Europe is now home to the smallest percentage of evangelical believers per capita in the world today, estimated to be 2.5%. Evangelicals face rampant materialism, deep secularism, arrogance, intrusive media and post modernism.

Yet, the Lord continues to build his Kingdom, and a lot of valuable work is happening on the continent through BES. Translation of Bibletime in most of the European languages, its design, publication, and distribution are progressing steadily. Approximately 15% of the population is under 15 years old, so through the use and study of Bibletime lessons, it is hoped that Europe's young people will grow in the knowledge of the Word of God.

Contents

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Covid-19 Albania
- 3 Belarus Czech Republic
- Croatia 4 France
- Ireland
- 5 Moldova Russia
- 6 Romania
- 7 Romania (Hungarian)
- 8 Ukraine
- 9 Spaii Turke UK
- 10 UK
- 11 Uk
- 12 Final Thought
 Prayer Diary
 Contact Information



Coronavirus COVID-19

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a substantial effect on BES. Our Headquarters in Northern Ireland, UK, closed in March due to Government restrictions, and the staff are working from home as best they can. International travel by the Trustees for auditing, training and encouragement has had to cease. Revival Movement stopped printing, and this has meant that all the printing orders for Bibletime A4 and A5 Booklets have been put on hold. Our Translation and Design Teams continue to do their work in lockdown but in challenging situations. Many of our BES Co-ordinators in Europe and around the rest of the world are facing the same lockdown measures that we have in the UK - severe restrictions on movement, recreational activities, industry, services and no church gatherings or school attendance for many months to come. This has provided many countries with opportunities to distribute the Bibletime materials where there had previously been none. Pray that we might all look to God for His guidance and wisdom to handle each situation that arises, and that the work of BES can continue unhindered in the future.

Albania

Lorenc & Gerta Tona

Lorenc and Gerta are the BES Coordinators in Albania and for many years have had little or no other support from indigenous workers. However, since the A Series has been translated into Albanian and published, Lorenc has been able to show the printed material to fellow believers. Rudi, a Christian worker in Mokra region, has recently distributed hundreds of Albanian Bibletime Lessons to children in the surrounding villages of Pogradec (see attached photo). During the Coronavirus pandemic, Lorenc has given the material to children roaming his neighbourhood streets with nothing to do and he has sent the first Albanian lessons through the post to two brothers in a village outside Lushnia City. These are small but very encouraging steps and God is providing new methods of communication and distribution during the Covid-19 crisis.

Through a fellow brother and good friend, Lorenc has introduced Bibletime in Albanian, into Amaro Tan School. It is a private Christian school in the Pogradec area teaching children from 3-14 years of age. One of the main aims of the school is to make the Word of God accessible and understandable to all children who attend. Marin Piqoni, the director of the school, says, "BES offers excellent Bible lessons appropriate for the different age levels in our school. The children love them! They are easy to use, colourful and interesting, and the children proactively engage with them. The teachers feel comfortable and confident delivering the lessons and they are structured in such a way that mixed ability classes can be taught using the same story. We are using the Bibletime lessons 5 days a week, so we are excited to be able to use all the Series, when it is translated and available."

Lorenc asks for prayer for: greater promotion opportunities so that more people will be aware of the availability of the Albanian Bibletime lessons and then ask for them; the on-going work of translation of B Series, their translation project for 2020; the work of the Spirit in their own children (Mikea and Matias) and their friends who are using Bibletime.









Belarus

Tim & Maryia Harhun

This year, the Postal Bible School in Belarus is 5 years old. Tim and his small team of young and proactive volunteers, post Bibletime lessons to around 3,000 children every month. The ministry has seen consistent growth and there is great excitement and encouragement with its continued expansion. Tim says that technological advancements have helped them to be more effective in their communication with students. Each student who registers with them can access their own personal account. This account enables the student to monitor their own learning progress, view the Bibletime lessons they have completed and order gifts with the points they have earned. He says they are also working on a mobile App that can significantly speed up the work of instructors. Prayer is requested for those children doing the Bibletime lessons that they will absorb the Word of God, and that the team will continue to feel energised and joyful in their service for the Lord.



Czech Republic

Karel Ouzky

Despite the entire Bibletime Series having been translated into the Czech language, the promotion of the material has been very difficult. The country's communist background and increased secularism have proved to be the most challenging barriers to its spread and usage. Praise God however, for 100 dedicated students from two churches who are using Bibletime. Also, with the recent launch of a new Facebook page, there has been some renewed interest in the lessons. Please pray for the encouraging promotion of God's Word via digital platforms like SunScool and a new website.

Croatia

Damir Strbad

Damir continues to promote Bibletime throughout the churches in Croatia with care, as there is conflict and suspicion between the different denominations. Registering BES as an independent association within Croatia could allow him to freely use, promote and distribute the material but this will take a lot of time, energy and legal work to make it happen. Damir would appreciate prayer in this matter.





France

Dorothy & Gerry Seed

Dorothy reports, "This year the French team is reviewing the whole B Series of booklets, with a view to sending new consignments of them to French-speaking Africa in 2021. The project is only really at the beginning but, we do trust that in due course we can complete the revision. Because of the Covid-19 crisis, we were able to promote the French lessons to the children of our local church here in Nantes. We could say that this was the launch of the lessons in France! We do not know if any of the families have chosen to use the lessons or not, but we do thank the Lord for this opportunity to make them known locally.

The plans to make the French lessons known more widely in France are not moving as quickly as we would have hoped. However, recently we sent some modifications for the French website, to make it simpler for people to navigate. We also hope to print flyers that the Emmaus workers in France are willing to enclose with the Emmaus courses they mail out to people. Should we propose paper-version lessons, or just via the site? This is a big question in a country like France where postal services are being used less and less. Thank you for your prayers."

Ireland

Gareth & Margaret McMeekin

Nicola from Germany, who has been working with PBS Ireland for almost a year, reflects on her journey and experiences as an Intern in Ireland. She says, "When I decided to take a year out, I struggled to find the perfect post because I had quite an exact list in my mind of what it should be like. Of course, this one perfect placement didn't immediately appear. At some point, I realised that I should submit the situation to God and leave it in His hands rather than struggling to sort it out on my own. Soon after this, I encountered Andreas Reh, the BES Coordinator in Austria, who put me in contact with PBS Ireland through the Enniskillen office in Northern Ireland."

God made it possible for Nicola to do an internship shared between two locations; PBS Ireland in County Cavan, Ireland and with the Hewitt family in County Armagh, Northern Ireland, who also needed help with some children's work.

Nicola says, "When I came to Ireland and settled in, I realised that all my original criteria had been met. I also got to know Kathryn, another intern at PBS Ireland, and we complimented each other – what she was good at I was not, and viceversa. During the year there were many different events going on beside the normal office work. One of the main things were the prizegivings. For this we visited most of the schools which received the Bibletime lessons. The team and I would sing a few songs with the children, tell them a story with a message of the Lord and let them pick their prizes. Home students and children from Sunday Schools were able to join the public prizegivings with their parents. It was such a busy time! I really enjoyed these occasions because as well as meeting the children, I also got to travel around Ireland and saw many places. However, as we travelled around the country, the Coronavirus pandemic began to spread, and in the end, we were only able to visit 25 prizegiving locations out of a total of 38 before we needed to stop.

The Coronavirus will change things here for many months and in recent weeks we have not travelled far. Even so, for some of the meetings with teenagers we set up online projects which presented challenges and needed creativity. We have been using video conferencing facilities like Zoom as well as sending activity packages through the post to bring the Christian message to these young people. So far, this year has been a great opportunity to learn many different things about the Lord, about the work of the Lord, about church, about life and much more. It's been great to see the possibilities of reaching so many children through the Bibletime lessons and further activities. I've really enjoyed this year and I'm sad that it will be over soon."





Moldova

Anatolii Slivca and Kushnir Tatiana, and Gabriel Hariuc

Anatolii and Kushnir coordinate their work together in Moldova. They write that it is such a great opportunity to serve the Lord using Bibletime. Since the beginning of the year, they have been able to present many children with a diploma certificate upon completion of their Bibletime courses. During their visits to churches and homes, Anatolii and Kushnir hold contests, games and quizzes on questions from the Bible. Much fun, joy and blessings are had at these prizegiving events. They have about 400 children doing Bibletime. There are also 45 trained teachers, serving in village Sunday Schools and children's clubs who use Bibletime to teach the children.

They say that despite the Covid-19 crisis, the team are still managing to get the courses to the children at home, either personally or through the post, despite it being late. They are confident that those children who have not received their Bibletime, will continue with their studies after the lockdown is over. They ask for prayer for the reliability of the postal service, for the Sunday School teachers, and that God will work in the hearts of the children who study the Bible, so that they will know the Lord.

Gabriel Hariuc reports that the use of Bibletime in the prison ministry has been amazing, with between 80-90 prisoners at meetings. He reports that there are about 300 students doing Bibletime and the NewLife courses through him, with some using it to learn English and many downloading the courses online. He says that people living in smaller villages are happy to receive the Bibletime resources, but those living in towns and cities are more reluctant. He asks for prayer in encouraging volunteers to help him with distribution, promotion and marking.







Russia

Svetlana

Svetlana is the coordinator of the children's ministry in Russia. From St Petersburg, she and Luba send a heartfelt greeting to all the staff of the Postal Bible Schools around the world! They say, "We rejoice with all those who serve children using the Bibletime programme, despite the difficult times of quarantine due to Covid-19".

This year, the Postal Bible School has seen another increase in students, and currently the team send out 2,000 Bibletime booklets each month to 22 regions throughout Russia. The Coronavirus has made the usual operating procedures difficult, but they have found there has been an increase of children from orthodox families who have signed up to the course. They report that people have enclosed encouraging letters with their completed Bibletime lessons which they send back to the team for marking.

One mother wrote, "Your Bibletime lessons helped us prepare spiritually for Easter. Every day the children immersed themselves in the atmosphere of that time, completing the answers, puzzles and colouring. The children love them and eagerly await their next Bibletime assignments."

Svetlana says that these letters, with such happy news, have brought the team great joy! She requests prayer for Luba who has been unwell, wisdom in reaching out to unchurched children and for an increase in new teachers and helpers dedicated to serving children during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Romania

Mihaela Vlas

The PBS work in Romania has just entered its 18th year of activity. Mihaela reports that up to now, they have seen the wonderful way the Lord has worked, adding both blessings and challenges, year after year, to the PBS work in her country.

The Bibletime lessons were translated into Romanian at the beginning of 2003 and have been used mainly as correspondence courses - sent to individuals by post from their office in Cluj. However, in addition to this, Mihaela estimates that 70,000 Bibletime booklets have been distributed to Romanian speaking children attending Sunday Schools and youth groups in other European countries and within Romania itself.

They currently have 3,900 active students in Romania. Mihaela states that during 2019, they received 852 new requests for Bibletime from home students, and this year have had an additional 424 requests from both parents and Sunday School teachers who want the children to receive the courses at home during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Mihaela says, "We have 218 prisoners completing the Bibletime courses and 16 former prisoners who are now free and they continue to study with the Bibletime material. To offer additional encouragement to these men, we now offer a service where they can write to us about their problems and a male psychologist, who is part of our team, will respond with Biblical advice".

She has also translated the NewLife courses and is now using 170 courses monthly, mostly in Bible study groups and some used as correspondence courses.

The Coronavirus pandemic has affected many aspects of the PBS work, in particular, the reduction of volunteer markers from 35 to 13. The prize giving events and Onesimus Christian Centre bookings have also been affected. As well as hosting Christian camps and conferences for other groups, the 3 summer camps for children and teenagers, and the many weekend meetings for adults, youths and families are all now uncertain.

Mihaela requests prayer for right decisions to be made for the camps and events at the Onesimus Christian Centre, for wisdom in keeping in contact with the campers they already know (mostly non-Christian) and for the PBS work in Romania to be relevant and a blessing in these times of uncertainty.







Romania (Hungarian)

Csaba Kabai

During 2004 the translation of Bibletime lessons from English into Hungarian began, and in 2006, 150 Bibletime lessons were sent out to Hungarian speaking children. Praise the Lord that the work has grown and thanks to Revival Movement, who print and ship out the Hungarian Bibletime lessons, Csaba reports that he now reaches over 300 Hungarian children in 18 different regions. However, life has changed since the Coronavirus pandemic, and in the interim, Csaba has printed the Bibletime lessons for 3 months on a printer at home. The prize-giving events and summer camp are now also under review and likely to be cancelled.

Here are two testimonies from students in their own words, who have received and completed Bibletime. Csaba says that these letters have brought great happiness and encouragement to their family.

"I don't even remember exactly when I signed up, there are a few years and since then I complete the lessons with joy. In the beginning I didn't even know how it will be, but this shaped my life, I could get to know the Lord and the Word better, my relationship with the Lord deepened. Every single story is instructive, I always learn something through lessons and try to put that into practice! Your visits also meant a lot, the conversations, it also made me think that we have to obey the Lord. I wish you would continue this work for a long time because it has results. The Lord will bless you to reach many people with the Good News".

Marjan writes, "For me, Bibletime helps me to get to know the stories better and get closer to God even for an hour! For some of my friends, it has become systematic to fill it in. They're doing it because they have to. Not for me! I'm always looking forward to it, because I know that every single occasion will surprise me again and again and I love doing the colouring and puzzles. There are stories I can't understand as I would like, and so I ask God's help to give me wisdom to understand the Word and get spiritual renewal. Thank you so much for the correspondence and sending them to us from far away!"

Please pray: Osaba is in need of financial support and wisdom for the future organisation of prizegivings and camps.





Ukraine

Kotok family

The Postal Bible School in Ukraine celebrates its 15th birthday this year. Ukraine gained religious freedom in 1991 and 6 years later, Christian schools, seminary and Bible colleges began to appear all over the country. The greatest demand for Bibletime was between 2010 – 2012 when many children's clubs and programmes were forming and several shops promoting Christian literature opened in Kiev. Today, the interest in the PBS programme remains high, and more than 5,000 students are studying with Bibletime throughout Ukraine. The appeal of Bibletime has been maintained by promoting prizegiving events, the issuing of diploma certificates to children and its introduction at different settings, including football clubs and rehabilitation centres for women. They have also worked with other contacts in neighbouring countries, like Belarus and Moldova.

The Bibletime programme has successfully been used at a rehabilitation centre in the region of Jitomir, where two Christian families moved in the year 2000. Their prayer was that a church would be built in their village. By 2004, a church and a rehabilitation centre for men had been built. This was soon followed by a centre for women with addictions and finally in 2014, a clinic for women and their children was opened. The children were introduced to the PBS programme and they began to use Bibletime, often with the help of their mothers. Prayers are requested for these children as their mothers move on to different stages of recovery, that they continue with their Bibletime studies.

The Kotok family report that, "In some areas, the Bibletime programme is used in schools, and last Autumn we began to use the Bibletime material in our local church here in Kiev. We have a football club for children in our church. Children from 4-12 years old come to training, many from unbelieving families. We showed them Bibletime, and now children, in addition to their football training, complete the Bibletime booklets. They earn points from completing their Bibletime lessons and other tasks in church. They seem to really enjoy it, and every two months the club, Sports Kids Community, gathers their players together for a party and give them a chance to convert their points into prizes. During the quarantine period of Covid-19, the children still had an opportunity to study the Word of God and submitted their work to us for marking in lots of ways. We praise the Lord that we are able to preach freely in our country and give children the opportunity of using such a wonderful series."





Spain

Gil & Carolyn Vargas

The translation of the BES materials into Spanish is a huge team effort. They finished the translation of the Bibletime syllabus over five years ago and since 2018 have been revising the entire A-C Series in A4 format to bring them up to date. Earlier this year, the team translated the A1-A6 Booklet and Teacher Guidelines into Spanish and this is now ready for printing. It is hoped that a container of Spanish Bibletime will be shipped to Argentina by Revival Movement later this year, however this is dependent upon the Coronavirus being brought under control. There is great interest from many other South American countries including Bolivia and Chile but due to the civil unrest and issues with customs burning material, it is impossible to ship Spanish Bibletime there at the moment.

The actual distribution of the courses in Spain has been limited and Bibletime is primarily being used as Sunday School materials. There is a lot of interest from the gypsy community and this is an area where Gil and the team are seeing great growth.

Pray for the SunScool App in Spanish, that there would be qualified Spanish speakers who could help in this work. Please pray for the four correctors in Spain: Susan in the North, Elena in the South, and Gil and Carolyn, in the centre of the country. What a blessing and responsibility it is to encourage young people to study the Word of God!

Turkey / Bulgaria

Ibrahim and the small team have made great progress in the translation of the Bibletime lessons. They have translated the entire Series into Turkish and are working on the Teacher Guidelines, which are progressing well, with only the C Series left to do. The Turkish Bibletime booklets have been promoted during various seminars in Ankara and via social media. Many students have requested copies, which have been emailed to them for completion. The response from the younger people has been encouraging as they like puzzles and games and to fill things in! He asks for prayer regarding the possible organisation of a virtual summer camp across various media platforms, for health and peace for the team, and that many parents would have fun with their children completing the Bibletime booklets during the Covid-19 pandemic.



UK - Dorset Postal Bible School, England

Stephen Gillham

Stephen reports, "Since the Coronavirus pandemic, things have changed considerably. We have had a number of new students and at present, we have 226 students on our list which is encouraging for us. We have irregular postal deliveries but, we are grateful that the Bibletime lessons for Spring and Summer were able to be printed. We are thankful for a Team of Markers who mark all the lessons regularly and that most of our students return the lessons month by month. Grace Goulding continues to do most of the work in running the Postal Bible School. We were thrilled recently when a mother was in touch with us. She and her seven brothers and sisters were very regular in our early days of Postal Bible School in Dorset. She now has seven of her own children who have just signed up for Bibletime lessons. Her brother has got two children who have also joined us, and it may well be that other siblings will send their children to us. It is a very large family and we are so pleased to have a new contact with them and to be able to help the next generation with Postal Bible School."

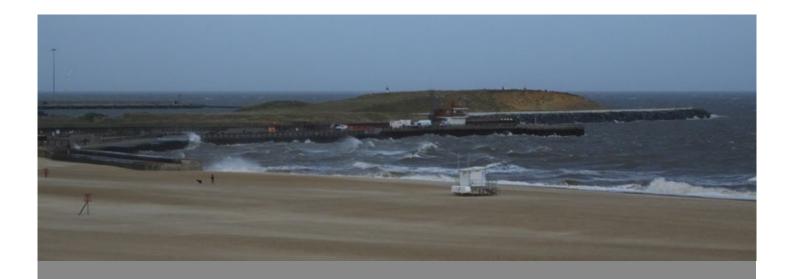
Please pray for this on-going work in Dorset and our students across the country.



London Postal Bible School, England

Charles Adocco

Charles reports that London Postal Bible School has recently been greatly encouraged with the addition of two new churches from the East and North of London using the material. There is also a new church plant in London which is using the NewLife material for their discipleship training. Charles says, "More recently I visited North London and met two young people who had gone through our Bibletime training programme. It was amazing to hear them say that they are now leading the children's work in their church". He says that they are grateful to God for the churches who continuously and consistently use the Bibletime materials to engage children and young people and to help them know the Lord. Please pray for the teachers; that they will be wise and faithful in all that they do as they plan for the future.



Norfolk Postal Bible School, England

Colin Wooden

It was early in the 1970s that the Norfolk Postal Bible School was launched on the agricultural show ground at Norwich and has maintained a steady number of students over the years since then. We currently have 130 students (approximately 20% of whom are 18 plus, including some senior citizens). There is on average, a 20% turnaround of students leaving and joining each year with most of the joiners coming from personal recommendations of friends and family. Our students are looked after by 18 teachers who each have a small 'class' of their own. As a Postal Bible School, we are I think, a little unusual in that we use the whole range of BES adult lessons.

Teachers meet four times a year for prayer, discussion, and planning, which includes an AGM in January. We still attend for outreach and promotion of Bibletime the Norfolk two-day agricultural show, and a Christian show-casing event in the Norwich city library. Both these events sadly are cancelled this year because of the Coronavirus pandemic. The good thing about the postal work is that we can continue with our students as normal and continue to look to the Lord for His guidance.

Each year in November we have a family day in Norwich for parents, students and friends, which is an afternoon of fun and games, a meal at teatime and a Bible-based round up to conclude. A great opportunity to meet up with the students and their families and we pray that this can go ahead this year.

One of our students in his seventies who joined up in July 2013, has completed 81 lessons having worked through the full adult series and is currently working on Gleaners, not missing a single month since he began.

At a local prayer meeting last year, I met a lady who told me how she had been brought up near Skibbereen in Ireland and became a Christian at the age of 10, doing the Postal Sunday School Lessons 58 years ago. She told me "I often think of how the Bibletime lessons gave me the greatest gift of all - salvation through Jesus Christ, and I would like Bert and Wendy to know that".

We are grateful to the Lord for His faithfulness and support down the years and look to Him for His blessing for the future.





The Holy Spirit is still at work! Due to the closure of all schools forcing children to remain at home, we are delighted to report an increase in applications from home students, with many applying through the BES website. There are 384 controlled primary schools in Northern Ireland. Currently we are sending lessons to 78 of them, with other PBS Centres sending to a further 21. This means that Bibletime is being used in 26% of this sector of NI Schools - praise God! Despite our print run being reduced for May and June, some schools decided to send out the paper copy of Bibletime in the pupil packs collected by due to take place during April, May and June. We will either reschedule these at a later how restrictions are lifted. Sadly, we have also taken the decision to cancel PBS camp this year. Many campers are disappointed, but we feel it would be unwise to proceed in the current circumstances. We are looking at a potential alternative later in the year. We thank God for His many blessings and we ask that you please pray with us for continued

Other News

Praise God for the Bibletime resources in German, Hungarian and Italian. Many children and teachers are downloading this material from the BES website.

Thank God for the progress made in translation and/or design of Bibletime into Armenian, Polish and Tajik. Pray for persistence and endurance to complete these projects.





A Final Thought by Mihaela Vlas

Ambassadors for Christ

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us." 2 Corinthians 5:20

"We have been given the privilege of representing our Lord in each of our European countries and have been entrusted with the message of love, hope and grace to pass on to the current and next generations. The Bibletime lessons are an important tool that help us to reach children and teenagers in so many ways across our nations.

Please pray with us, that as ambassadors for Christ, we will be ready to give His message to those who need it the most, especially in these really difficult and challenging times, and that children and young people, present and future, will long for a personal relationship with Him."



BES Deputation opportunity!

During the Coronavirus pandemic, BES would be happy to speak to a small group of people from your church or organisation via video conferencing to tell them more about the work of BES here in the UK and around the world. If you would like to arrange this with us or require more information, please contact Sam Balmer at **sam@besweb.com**

BES Prayer Diary

Last year, we produced the BES Prayer Diary giving details of the countries where BES is working. Free copies are available from the BES office in Enniskillen. We suggest that this Summer News edition is read with the Prayer Diary to give background, context and an understanding of the progress being made in each of the European nations since the Prayer Diary was originally written.



Silver Servers

Are you a grandparent? Could you help change the fact that many children don't know about Jesus? Silver Servers has been designed to give you everything you need. Through this website, there is on-line access to all of the Bibletime Resources free of charge! Register your interest and sign up to our online newsletter via the website: **www.silver-servers.org**.



Contact BES

Registered BES Office:

c/o Angela Johnston, 37 Belmore Street, Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, BT74 6AA

Telephone: 028 6632 2462 **Email:** info@besweb.com

Editor and Secretary of Trust:

Stephen Gillham -

stephen.gillham@besweb.com

International Secretary:

Sam Balmer - sam@besweb.com

BES Ambassador:

Bert Gray - bert@besweb.com

UK BES Trustees: Sam Balmer, Stephen Gillham, Allison Hill, Stuart Price, Andy Street, Stevie Walls.

Support BES

How to support BES

You can make a one-off donation or choose to support us regularly by cheque, standing order, or any other means. You could also consider leaving a legacy to BES, so we can continue bringing the Good News of Jesus to the next generation. For more information, contact vicky@besweb.com

Next BES News in Winter 2020 will be from The Americas and Australia.

Further copies of this BES news can be downloaded from www.besweb.com

The reuse of any information within BES News editions must only be done with the permission of BES.



BESnews Summer 2020 **Resourcing you to reach the next generation**

www.besweb.com Registered Charity: UK CIO 1186004, Eire 5880