

# The Geological Society of London

## COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 24 November 2016

PRESENT: Malcolm Brown (*Chair*), Rick Brassington, Jason Canning, Liv Carroll (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Nigel Cassidy, Chris Eccles (*Vice President, Chartership*), Marie Edmonds (*Secretary, Science*), Graham Goffey (*Treasurer*), Sarah Gordon, Tricia Henton, Rob Larter, Jennifer McKinley, David Norbury, Colin North (*Secretary, Publications*), Sheila Peacock, Christine Peirce, Nik Reynolds, Katherine Royse, Keith Seymour (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Alex Whittaker and Michael Young (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*)

APOLOGIES: David Hopkins and Naomi Jordan

In attendance: Nic Bilham (Director of Policy & Communications), Neal Marriott (Director of Publishing, Library & Information Services) Jonathan Silk (Director of Finance & Operations) and Stephanie Jones (Administrative Secretary)

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies from David Hopkins and Naomi Jordan were NOTED.

### 3. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2016

The minutes were APPROVED and a redacted version will be published on the website.

SJ

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

These are all in hand or covered elsewhere in the agenda with the exception of the following:-

4.1 Jonathan Silk will brief Council at their February meeting on interpreting the Society's financial statements.

JZS

4.2 *Membership of Standing Committees:* Nic Bilham and Colin North have not been able to progress work on the revised procedure for appointing members to Standing Committees and this has been held over.

CN  
NB

4.3 *Review of Society's Awards:* meeting arranged for 31 January.

### 5. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The directors reported on activity in their departments since the last meeting of Council.

#### 5.1 *Director of Finance & Operations (CM/49/16)*

Jonathan Silk said that work on the 2017 Budget is complete as are the review of Society Funds and Reserves and the exercise to select a new Investment Manager.

The management accounts to the end of September show a forecast year-end position of £166k surplus against an original budget for the year of £193k surplus.

The Finance & Planning Committee (FPC) reviewed the Investment Management tendering completed by the Investment Committee and endorsed the recommendation that Sarasin & Partners replace UBS. Council were asked to approve this recommendation on a simple majority basis by email. Twenty votes were received, all in approval. Council RATIFIED this decision.

A review of the Society Funds and Reserves has been completed and reviewed by both the auditors and the FPC. It is proposed that:-

- i. A new policy is implemented for the effective use of funds. This policy sets out how the Society aims to apply donations and legacies received and will encourage giving without restrictions on use and balance recognition of the donor with an appropriate lifetime of the fund itself that sits in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines on application of receipts to charitable purposes; and
- ii. A revised Reserves policy is implemented which sets target reserves at nine months / 75% of annual operational expenditure within a margin of +/- 20%. This should enable the Society to achieve a prudent and appropriate level of reserve cover within the next one to two years, and once this is achieved the Society will begin to budget for any subsequent surpluses to be invested.

Council APPROVED the two revised policies.

The review also identified all funds held by the Society as at 31 December 2015 and their correct classification in accordance with the Charities SORP 2015. The most notable change of classification arising from this investigation was in the COKE FUND which is reclassified from Restricted Income to Unrestricted General Funds. This moves £1.3m into those funds which make up the Society's Reserves.

Council NOTED the reclassification of the Coke Fund.

Rick Brassington said that when the Aberconway Medal was given by the Institution of Geologists it was presented every year but has now become every two years. He also pointed out that the correct name is 'Institution' not 'Institute' which appears in several places.

JZS

*Review of Standing List under Regulations R/FP/5 and R/FP/6:* when Council approved this list they requested that names be checked to determine if the individuals were still active and could demonstrate up-to-date CPD. This is in progress and as part of the review the Professional Committee is also considering how the list might be maintained and kept up-to-date on a more regular basis. A paper will come to February Council.

JZS

Progress has been made on investigating whether the Society might apply to award Chartered Engineer status and a paper will come to the February meeting of Council.

The Professional Committee has considered how it might encourage, in conjunction with Regional Groups, student chapters at universities. This will be developed further with a potential pilot involving the North West Regional Group.

The Professional Committee has also considered and agreed a proposal to extend eligibility for Candidate Fellow status for up to one membership year following graduation. Council APPROVED this in principle subject to the necessary amendment in Regulations which will be brought back to February Council.

JZS

*CRM/Finance system replacement:-* the 'discovery' stage of the project is largely complete and suppliers are working with staff on early prototypes and determination of what will be delivered at 'go-live' which is currently anticipated to be May 2017.

There have been no health and safety incidents at Burlington House or the Publishing House since the September meeting of Council. DSE assessments for all staff have been completed since the last meeting and no significant adjustments were required.

It is a requirement that the trustees as a matter of routine should take reasonable steps to assess and mitigate any risks to the charity's activities or beneficiaries and to confirm that any serious incidents have been reported as part of the annual return. Serious incidents include loss of funds, significant sums of money or other property donated from an unknown or unverified source and unlawful activity by a member of staff or trustee. Jonathan Silk said that there were no serious incidents to report since the last meeting of Council.

Principal activities prior to the next Council meeting will be:- complete 2016 Financial Year and prepare for the arrival of the auditors in mid February 2017; continue to move the CRM/Finance System Project through implementation stages; develop draft IT Strategy; and prepare for Audit tender in April 2017.

## 5.2 *Director of Policy & Communications (CM/39/16)*

Nic Bilham said the Society has been involved in an active programme of policy, education, outreach and other communications work over the past two months including another successful Earth Science Week. Nic Bilham briefed Council on the following topics from his report.

2018 will be the Year of Resources moving on from the Year of Risk in 2017. The Society is planning to hold a joint conference with the IUGS Resourcing Future Generations project in late 2017, hopefully linked to the annual Mines and Money Conference, leading towards the major IUGS meeting on Resourcing Future Generations in Vancouver in 2018. This was championed by Edmund Nickless who is on the executive committee of IUGS.

The first Bryan Lovell meeting is taking place today and tomorrow on 'Water, hazards and risk. Managing uncertainty in a changing world'.

The Society has responded to the following consultations and inquiries:-

- Department for Culture, Media and Sport: Review of Museums in England (October 2016)
- House of Lords EU Energy and Environment Sub-committee: Brexit: environment and climate change (November 2016)
- House of Commons Education Committee: The Impact of Exiting the European Union on Higher Education (November 2016) (joint response with University Geoscience UK)

Nic Bilham attended a round-table meeting with Sir John Kingman, interim chair of UK Research and Innovation, organised by the Campaign for Science and Engineering. A report will be produced and Council will be kept informed of developments.

The Society was approached by the BBC and is partnering with them on Terrific Scientific, a major new initiative aimed at 9-11 year olds launched this month, which will run over the next two years. The Society has developed resources and an experiment, which schools across the country will be encouraged to participate in, on the topic of water.

Earth Science Week was a great success, with more than 50 events taking place around the country. We collaborated with BGS on an innovative schools event focusing on groundwater and water supply in developing countries and the UK.

Nic Bilham attended the Geological Society of America's annual meeting in September. It was very useful to meet up with a number of the Society's colleagues

and discuss various initiatives. Regular progress reports will be made to the External Relations Committee.

Chris Eccles was not able to attend the Council Meeting of the European Federation of Geologists in Brussels last weekend and David Norbury was thanked for attending in his place with Nic Bilham. There were useful talks with European colleagues.

The International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG), one of our Associated Societies, has developed the 'Cape Town Statement on Geoethics' building on discussions at the IGC in August/September. Nic Bilham is on the committee of IAPG. Together with other internationally significant geoscience organisations, the Society has been invited to support the statement, and to promote it to our members. The statement does not attempt to mandate the 'geoethical promise', but advocates its adoption by early career geoscientists. It is not binding and the Society is not being asked to change its own codes of conduct. Council discussed the statement at length. Whilst they were broadly supportive of the principle there were aspects of the narrative with which they were not comfortable, particularly the 'promises', which were not well defined. Council was supportive of the importance of geoethics, but decided not to support the statement, as currently drafted. Nic Bilham will report back to IAPG.

NB

The Society was a sponsor of the Geology/Geography British Sign Language Glossary which was launched on 8 September at the British Science Festival in Swansea. This was part of the British Sign Language (BSL) Glossary Project team based at the Scottish Sensory Centre at the University of Edinburgh.

The Society submitted a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) Progression Framework to the Science Council in September, one of only seven organisations to submit at this stage. The framework will be launched on 15 December and it is hoped that the event will offer an opportunity to find out how the Framework supports planning and progress monitoring on DEI.

There was also discussion about the help the Society can give to organisations going through the Athena Swan process. Tricia Henton, Diversity Champion, said she is aware of the difficulties with providing evidence. There have been discussions and this will now be taken forward.

The Society is in discussion with the International Association for Geoscience Diversity (IAGD) about possible Associated Society status, and to explore how we can support establishment of a UK Chapter of the IAGD. We have also been invited to participate in an American Geosciences Institute (AGI) working group to develop guiding principles on harassment and other unacceptable behaviours, building on the recent AGI/Geological Society of America's leadership meeting.

A diversity@geolsoc.org.uk email address has been set up and will be made visible on the Society's website in order to more easily allow interested people to make suggestions. The Society's DEI work plan will be shared and Fellows will be encouraged to provide feedback.

Principal activities prior to the next Council meeting:- planning for the Year of Risk (2017) and Year of Resources (2018); continued planning for a GSL/UGUK/BGS/RAS workshop on future priorities for geoscience research; communication and implementation of the new strategy.

### 5.3 *Director of Publishing, Library & Information Services (CM/40/16)*

Neal Marriott said work and progress on priority issues are underway and in hand at both the Publishing House and the Library.

There were a number of key items in his report but in particular Neal Marriott highlighted:-

The development of the upgraded Lyell Collection platform is well in hand, with weekly calls with our developer ongoing. Launch is anticipated in February or March 2017.

Twenty-five book titles have been commissioned in 2016, and seventeen will have been published in print. Twenty-eight book titles are currently in various stages of production.

The Library has recruited one Library Assistant to help with the Library inventory and is the process of recruiting the second. The inventory process is due to commence in January 2017.

A new video guide to remote services has been created by Library staff and is available to Fellows: <http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Library-and-Information-Services/Library-Services/Remote-Services-for-Fellows>

The migration to the upgraded Lyell platform is going well, though HighWire's problems in transferring the focus of the relevant part of their workforce from India to Belfast have slowed progress a little. Nevertheless, it should still launch in Q1 2017.

We are currently working with agents internationally to renew subscriptions and attract new customers. The initial signs are promising and ahead of the same point last year.

The Society operates a hybrid open access model for all books and journals hosted on the Lyell Collection, subject to its published policy. Since implementation in 2013 take up of the Gold model (whereby the author pays a fee known as an Article Publication Charge or APC) has been in the order of 30-35 papers/year, or approximately 5-6% of the Society's published output. The Society's APC for Gold Open Access is £1500 with discounts available for Fellows and some authors from developing countries, and has not been increased since it was first implemented. A comparison with similar organisations publishing hybrid journals shows that our rate is very competitive.

Council APPROVED an increase in the Society's APC to £1600 in 2017 and reviews annually thereafter. Council also APPROVED amendments to the Open Access policy and delegated future responsibility for routine adjustments to this policy to the Publications Secretary.

NM

Principal activities prior to the next Council meeting are:- Continue work for launch of new HighWire platform; work closely with developers to ensure timely launch of Plate Tectonics Archive website; put in place arrangements for the management of the production of *Petroleum Geoscience*; finalise arrangements for North American subscription sales representation for 2017; and negotiate agreement for the subscription sales representation in SE Asia.

## 6. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

### 6.1 *Recruitment of the Executive Secretary (CM/52/16)*

Council APPROVED the process for the recruitment of the Executive Secretary.

### 6.2 *Report of the Officers' Meeting*

Malcolm Brown said the main item of business was the salary settlement for 2017 including some extraordinary salary adjustments to bring certain individuals' salaries in line with the market.

### 6.3 *Report of the Elections Committee*

There are four vacancies for ordinary members of Council. Six candidates have indicated a willingness to stand. We are also seeking the President-designate. One

person has indicated a willingness to stand and the Elections Committee has identified a number of individuals who will be approached in order to ascertain their interest.

## 7. PROPOSAL FOR A NEW SYSTEM FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CM/53/16)

Chris Eccles said the Chartership Committee recognised some time ago that the performance and recording of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) fell below the standard specified and expected of Fellows in too many cases, particularly those who hold the Chartered Scientist and European Geologist titles and Chartered Geologists, where CPD is compulsory. Consequently, the Chartership Committee commissioned a comprehensive web-based survey of the present CPD arrangements of a wide range of professional bodies, in order to assess the existing Society's requirements for CPD, in relation to current good practice. In June 2016, Council gave approval in principle to the revised CPD system but asked for more clarity about what counts towards CPD.

There was full discussion about the proposed changes to CPD. Questions were asked about the difficulties with complying for those with disabilities or working reduced hours. Chris Eccles said there are processes in place for special cases and exceptions will be reviewed, for example in the case of illness, but it is of the utmost importance that the highest standards are maintained. There was also discussion about providing evidence, particularly by academics. Chris Eccles said that a lot of the process is by self-declaration and if there was doubt about a person's record they would be asked to attend an interview.

The new process will be launched by email. It was suggested that members of Council are provided with a short presentation which they can make to their Regional Group. Nigel Cassidy said it would be helpful to persuade the disaffected of the benefits of CPD.

CE

Jonathan Silk said the CPD element is planned to be in the first release of the CRM system in May 2017. This will include a facility for individuals to attach a certificate to their record.

Council APPROVED the revised CPD system and the revision to Regulation R/FP/13. Chris Eccles and John Talbot were thanked for their work.

CE

*(post-meeting note: before putting the Regulation forward for publication on the website it was reviewed again by Chris Eccles and others to make some minor improvements to the wording, which were mainly typographical. There were more substantial changes made to the second paragraph of section 5.2 to address concerns raised by David Norbury. Council APPROVED the revised version of the Regulation which was published on the website and included with the archived set of Council papers.)*

## 8. AWARDS FOR 2017

The list of Award winners for 2017 is appended. Council agreed to award two Distinguished Service Awards and all four of the Funds. Council were reminded that this information is confidential until the Award winners have been notified and accepted.

## 9. 2017 BUDGET

The Finance & Planning committee considered the proposed budget for 2017 in detail at their November meeting and recommended it for approval.

Council were presented with a summary and analysis, including income and

expenditure for the year and capital expenditure plan for the next three years. An operating surplus of £22,362 and a net surplus of £126,115 (which takes into account movements on funds) were put forward.

An executive summary of the Society's financial plan for 2017 gave the following objectives:

- to set a balanced (breakeven) budget, taking into account reduced income from current activities and increased expenditure from new activities;
- to use the unrestricted Curry Fund to offset the cost of the Finance/CRM Project; to make a further provision to the designated Building Fund; and to continue to draw down the Fermor Fund endowment to offset certain publishing costs;
- to increase reserves by ensuring that operating costs do not exceed operating income and by transferring the burden of £132k of operating expenditure to Restricted Funds and Endowments; and
- to undertake increased capital expenditure to include the one-off implementation costs (£258k) of the new CRM System.

Council APPROVED the budget for 2017.

#### 10. STRATEGY FOR 2017-2027

Nic Bilham said the new Strategy has been under development throughout 2016 and was the subject of Council residentials in April and September and there have also been inputs from staff, committees, Specialist and Regional Groups.

Since September there has been development of the headline aims and an outline of the framing material, such as strapline, mission, and values.

Further input will be sought from staff at an All Staff meeting on 7 December.

Specific work still to be done includes:-

- Through-writing and/or wordsmithing;
- Cutting down the number of subsidiary aims or stepping stones in some areas; and adding them in others;
- Review outputs from the consultations with staff and Regional and Specialist Groups for further points to be included in the implementation/business plan notes.

There will be three documents:-

- Mini-handout: title, strapline, mission, values, headline aims
- Through-written version: title, strapline, mission, values, headline aims, sub-aims ("to do this we will ..."), stepping stones
- Implementation document/business plan (for internal use only)

It would be helpful to see a draft layout of these three documents

An outline schema for the implementation of the strategy was presented. Nic Bilham said he would welcome Council's comments and feedback on key points around introductory headlines, emerging themes and the way content is being framed.

During discussion the following points were made:-

NB

Council

- More content is required on how the Society serves science
- Use the word 'community' in place of 'society'
- Add 'international' into 'our values'
- Content is required about people. How is the work going to be done?
- Care must be taken not to over-promise. The Society has limited resources and we must work within those.
- Publishing is a Society's strength and should feature in all the headlines
- Kate Royse said she has worked in a similar plan for NERC and used Critical Success Factors identifying three things that must be done with aspirational items underneath

It was agreed that while it is important not to be over-ambitious this is a ten-year strategy and what can be done should not be under-estimated.

Nic Bilham said he would welcome further comments from Council. Work will continue with the committee chairs and directors with the aim of launching the strategy in early 2017. Sarah Gordon, Kate Royse and Malcolm Brown offered their assistance.

Council  
NB

Council were content to approve the final document by email, preferably in January with approval at February Council as a backstop.

NB

## 11. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/57/16)

The reports of the standing committees were NOTED.

## 12. ELECTIONS

### 12.1 *Fellowship (CM/58/16)*

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 24 November 2016.

### 12.2 *Chartered Geologists (CM/59/16)*

The applications from Fellows listed to become Chartered Geologists had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were AGREED by Council. Council also AGREED a further applicant – Lorenzo Meciani.

### 12.3 *Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/60/16)*

Council AGREED to elect as Candidate Fellows and Junior Candidate Fellows those applicants listed.

### 12.4 *European Geologists (CM/61/16)*

Council NOTED the names elected as European Geologists at the 21 October and 16 November meetings of the EFG.

### 12.5 *Chartered Scientist (CM/62/16)*

Council AGREED to elect as Chartered Scientist the applicant listed.

## 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### *Coutts – banking of cheques*

Jonathan Silk said that Coutts require the formal approval of Council to bank cheques on behalf of the Geological Society Publishing House. Council APPROVED the requirement.

## 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

1 February 2017.

## GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

### 2017 AWARDS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Award</b>
Prof Richard Alley	Pennsylvania State University	Wollaston Medal
Prof Rosalind Rickaby	University of Oxford	Lyell Medal
Prof Tim Elliott	University of Bristol	Murchison Medal
Prof John Walsh	University College Dublin	William Smith Medal
Dr Mark Anderson	Plymouth University	Coke Medal
Prof Ian Fairchild	University of Birmingham	Coke Medal
Prof Caroline Lear	Cardiff University	Bigsby Medal
Prof Mott T Greene	University of Washington	Sue Tyler Friedman Medal
Dr Richard Hinton	University of Edinburgh	Distinguished Service Award
Mr Ian Kenyon	Retired	Distinguished Service Award
Rotunda – The William Smith Museum of Geology		R H Worth Prize
Dr Russell Garwood	University of Manchester	Wollaston Fund
Dr Susannah Maidment	University of Brighton	Lyell Fund
Dr Sami Mikhail	University of St Andrews	Murchison Fund
Dr Richard Walters	University of Durham	William Smith Fund
	TBA	President's Award
	TBA	President's Award