

The Geological Society of London

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 20 September 2017

PRESENT: Malcolm Brown (*Chair*), John Booth, Rick Brassington, Jason Canning, Liv Carroll, Marie Edmonds (*Secretary, Science*), Graham Goffey (*Treasurer*), Sarah Gordon (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Tricia Henton, Naomi Jordan, Rob Larter, Jennifer McKinley, Colin North (*Secretary, Publications*), Sheila Peacock, Christine Peirce, Nik Reynolds, Nick Rogers (*President designate*), Katherine Royse (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Keith Seymour (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Jessica Smith and John Talbot (*Vice President, Chartership*)

APOLOGIES: Lesley Dunlop and Alex Whittaker

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

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Sheila Peacock said she is a Council member of the Royal Astronomical Society which is mentioned in the Space Review paper.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies from Lesley Dunlop and Alex Whittaker were NOTED.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2017

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

SJ

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 *Item 5.1:* Jonathan Silk to re-circulate the 'lessons learned' report from the 16 May fire evacuation.

JZS

4.2 *Item 5.2:* Investigation into DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) requirements for Regional Group Treasurers is ongoing.

4.3 *Item 5.3:* ICS spellings for terms in the Stratigraphic Column – an article will go into *Geoscientist*. Actions regarding advertising this policy to the UK and international geoscience community are in hand.

4.4 *Item 10: Risk Register Update* – regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Other matters are all in hand or covered elsewhere in the agenda.

5. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

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

5.1 *Executive Secretary (CM/47/17)*

Richard Hughes said his main task since the June meeting of Council had been the Business Plan which will be discussed in detail at the residential. Staff have participated with meetings in Bath and at Burlington House and he was very pleased

with the way in which staff have embraced the Plan.

Another activity was supporting the IT team in their immediate response to a ransomware attack.

Since the last meeting a representative of the Metropolitan Police has visited Burlington House to advise on security particularly from terrorist threat. He was impressed with the solid oak doors and said they should remain. Action is being taken to improve the security of the Piccadilly entrance further. The importance of constant vigilance as the key preventative measure has been stressed to staff who have been asked to wear their identity badges at all times and to challenge the identity of any person not wearing a visitor pass.

Another area where a cultural change is needed is in health and safety. It is now a standing item on the weekly meetings of the SLT and measures have been taken to make staff more aware of their responsibilities including a 'near miss' reporting procedure.

Main activities prior to the next Council meeting will be:- continuing work on the Business Plan and budget ready for sign off at November Council; continued progress on other internal system and process improvements; engagement with the Courtyard Societies group as chair and starting to build consensus for the 'counter-proposal'; attending GSA Seattle in October and due to be elected to the Board of GeoScienceWorld and will represent the Society at the GSW Board Meeting; attending the European Federation of Geologists meeting in Brussels in early November with Nic Bilham.

5.2 *Director of Finance & Operations (CM/48/17)*

Jonathan Silk said the summary Management Accounts to end June 2017 show a forecast year-end position of £335k surplus (including investment gains) against an original budget for the year of £22k surplus. Excluding gains this is a surplus of £135k.

Work has commenced on the 2018 Budget and the Finance & Planning Committee (FPC) has reviewed an initial draft. It is usual at this time to bring to Council proposals for staff pay for the following year but it has not been done because of the current Pay & Reward review which is due to report in November. Recommendations will be taken to November FPC and Council.

Orane Lewis, Financial Controller since late 2014, resigned and left the Society at the end of July. The role, as Head of Finance, is being covered on an interim basis by Celestin Mbakop while a permanent replacement is recruited.

The CRM system was intended to go live at the end of August but there are outstanding issues on set-up and testing. These are being worked through and the suppliers are due to give a definitive date for go live next week.

There was a very useful meeting with the Engineering Council as part of the process of the Society being able to offer Chartered Engineer status. John Talbot outlined the process being followed. There should be more updates at the next meeting.

Fellowship renewals for 2017 have been compiled and are slightly behind the estimated numbers (12,409 actual against 12,525 anticipated) but still represent a 1.0% increase over 2016 figures (12,289). Council was supportive of exit interviews of resigning Fellows. Naomi Jordan asked if there could be a discrepancy on the figures reported in Annex B to Jonathan Silk's report because of the switch between the old and the new systems. Jonathan Silk and Nic Bilham will investigate.

A review of IT will start next week and a progress report will be made at November Council.

JZS/NB

JZS

Health & Safety: there was a near miss incident in August involving a stacked pile of Library boxes. No-one was injured and the matter was followed up as a near miss and the boxes moved and stored more safely. As Richard Hughes reported, there is a lot of effort going into changing the culture around health and safety with weekly reports to the SLT and as a regular item at all staff meetings. There is also a revised Health & Safety policy under review. It was suggested that there are “five minute” presentations to staff on health & safety and Tricia Henton asked if there should be a member of Council with specific responsible for health & safety.

Historically the training budget has not been spent. The Society needs to invest in the training of its staff and since the employment of the HR Manager this is being more actively managed.

5.3 *Director of Policy & Communications (CM/49/17)*

Nic Bilham said the Year of Risk is progressing well as are plans for future themed years. The 7th annual Geoscience Education Academy was a great success.

The Society responded to the following consultations and inquiries:

- British Standards Institution: Consultation on Draft International Standard for Conceptual Site Models for Contaminated Sites (led by Contaminated Land Group) (August 2017)
- House of Lords Select Committee Consultation on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (September 2017)

Consideration is being given to responding to the consultation from the Migration Advisory Committee’s inquiry on the economic and social impacts of the UK’s exit from the European Union and in particular the impact on the Industrial Strategy. Council was asked to respond to the email from Florence Bullough, Policy Officer, if they considered we should do this and was reminded of the Society’s policy that we only comment if we have something to say.

Council

Briefing notes are in preparation on geoscience, industrial strategy and economic development; and on geoscience and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Richard Hughes and Nic Bilham met with Sarah Main, Director of CaSE (Campaign for Science and Engineering) to discuss our respective plans and objectives.

Work continues on the output report from the ‘Future Science’ research priorities meeting held in February with the BGS, RAS and UGUK. This will articulate a shared vision of research priorities to funders and other decision-makers. Nic Bilham will discuss moving this report forward with Marie Edmonds.

NB

Earth Science Week is at the beginning of October with over 50 events planned. Nic Bilham would like to hear from the Regional Groups if they have any events planned.

KS

Burlington House participated again in Open House. Numbers were slightly down on 2016 but over 1100 people visited with eleven staff volunteering to open the building.

The International Association for Geoscience Diversity (IAGD) has applied for Associated Society Status and have fulfilled the criteria set out for admission. They partnered with the Society on the June 2015 conference on accessible field work and confronting barriers to exclusion of people with disabilities and there has been recent discussion of how we can continue to work together. Council AGREED to confer Associated Society status on the IAGD.

The Society is currently completing its formal return for the Diversity Progression Framework which will enable us to benchmark our state of development in this area against other learned and professional bodies. The first event to support universities working to achieve or renew Athena SWAN status will be held on 22 September.

George Jameson, External Relations Officer, and Nic Bilham continued to participate in the AGI committee to develop guidelines on harassment and bullying. These are nearing completion.

Nic Bilham said that Nick Rogers will be chairing a review of the university course Accreditation Scheme. The intention is to start in early 2018. There are no formal terms of reference for this review yet and the membership has not been agreed although it is intended to have a mix of academics and representatives from industry. Andy Saunders, Accreditation Officer, is aware.

5.4 *Director of Publishing (CM/50/17)*

Neal Marriott said a revised Electronic License Agreement has been created by GeoScienceWorld to accommodate the anticipated growth in Open Access content in the aggregation. The Geological Society of America is one of the participating publishers and has announced its intention to expand its Open Access content and from next year there will be a new agreement in place.

Discussions are ongoing to agree an extended contract for the hosting of the Lyell Collection on HighWire which should be finalised by the end of September.

Recruitment for the three new posts at the Publishing House is progressing apart from the Development post which is proving more challenging. It may be necessary to re-visit the job description.

6. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

- 6.1 Council was saddened to hear of the recent and unexpected death of Kurt Keyser, Chief Scientific Editor of the Society's co-owned journal *Geochemistry: Exploration, Environment, Analysis*. Kurt was a research geochemist at Queens University in Ontario and was teaching in the field in Bermuda at the time of his death.

The President recorded the Society's condolences.

6.2 *Report of the Officers Meeting*

Matters discussed were mainly staff related, particularly the proposal for the new post of the Head of Development which Officers supported.

Officers also discussed the Awards Committee membership and some new members have been recruited. Malcolm Brown is compiling some criteria to encourage nominations for Awards from industry.

6.3 *Report of the Elections Committee*

Eight members of Council are due to retire in 2018:-

*Rick Brassington
Malcolm Brown
Liv Carroll
Marie Edmonds
Tricia Henton
Jenny McKinley
Colin North
Christine Peirce*

The Committee identified 24 possible candidates to approach in addition to those that come forward from the Fellowship. They also noted that a number of women are standing down. Colin North has volunteered to serve an extra year as Secretary Publications if no suitable candidate is forthcoming. The Committee also discussed the process for the election of the President-designate and the need to start this

earlier. Some potential names were identified.

7. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/51/17)

Council NOTED the reports of the standing committees.

Katherine Royse, Secretary Professional, said the main topics of the recent meeting of the Professional Committee were Fellowship numbers and Careers Day. The Committee was tasked with identifying more sponsors for Careers Day and ways of increasing attendance. The new Fellows Event was a great success and Mohammed Jahangir, Fellowship Services Manager, was thanked for his work and is being encouraged to organise more similar events. The Committee also wants to start understanding information around retaining Fellows.

8. GEOSCIENTIST (CM/52/17)

Graham Goffey said that Ted Nield, Editor, has indicated that he may retire in June 2018. There were no Terms of Reference for *Geoscientist* so these have been drafted with the input of Peter Styles, Editor in Chief, Ted Nield and Rick Brassington.

Geoscientist is funded by the Society and produces content within a framework essentially as prescribed on its establishment in 1991. Reflecting both the original establishment of *Geoscientist* on the amalgamation of the Society with the Institute of Geologists, and to a degree the development of independent traditions, *Geoscientist* is editorially independent of the Council and Secretariat of the Society.

It is distributed free to Fellows and is produced 11 times per annum in print and online editions, with the latter offering scope to include more in-depth material. Presently the main content is:-

- Two in-depth geological features
- Books and arts – reviews of recent books and exhibitions
- People – Geoscientists in the news and on the move
- Fellows Obituaries
- Soapbox – Fellows opinion piece
- Letters
- Society News
- From the Regions – occasional series highlighting Regional Group activities
- Society events calendar
- Full range of advertisements for geological services, products and jobs. The current expectation is that the Conference Office and Publishing House will supply enough adverts to cover two pages (i.e. one spread) in each edition, which might vary depending on (priority) paid advertising.

In addition, there are currently a crossword and cartoon (“Sticks and Stones”), which are perhaps best considered as optional content.

The draft Terms of Reference state that any new types of content beyond that listed will be undertaken through collaboration between the Society’s secretariat and the Editor and significant changes to the content will be endorsed via a revision to the Terms of Reference.

Graham Goffey explained the organisation of *Geoscientist* whereby the Editor in Chief is ultimately responsible to the Fellows of the Society and has overall responsibility for the content including legal compliance. This is an unpaid post. The Editor is responsible to the Editor in Chief for the timely production and content. There is an Editorial Advisory Panel whose primary role is to assist the Editor with regards to scientific content and it has a lesser advisory role in respect of overall magazine style and content. Members are appointed by the Editor and the Editor in Chief depending on need.

It is suggested in the Terms of Reference that the Editor in Chief will report to Fellows at the Annual General Meeting on activity during the previous year.

Council had a full discussion about the proposed Terms of Reference. There were concerns raised about the independence of *Geoscientist*, about which some members of Council were unaware, and whether younger Fellows understand this, and about reputational damage to the Society and how that risk is managed. It was suggested it is made clearer that it is independent.

Various changes to the Terms of Reference were suggested such as the arrangement by which the Editor in Chief is appointed and putting a five year time limit on the length of time the Editor in Chief serves. Also it was noted that the Editor in Chief could not be a Council member as this would compromise the editorial independence of *Geoscientist*. The wording around scientific integrity will also be strengthened. Graham Goffey will produce a new draft for discussion with Peter Styles and Ted Nield. On this basis, Council APPROVED the Terms of Reference. It was suggested that the final version is published in *Geoscientist*.

GG

Peter Styles is standing down as Editor in Chief at the end of 2017. Various names have been suggested to succeed him and he will be working with the Secretariat on this appointment.

9. BURLINGTON HOUSE SPACE REVIEW (CM/53/17)

Graham Goffey said during the first part of 2017 a group comprising three Officers (Graham Goffey, Colin North and Michael Young), the SLT, Marie Burke (HR Manager), Angela Edwards (Facilities Manager) and Fabienne Michaud (Library & Information Services Manager) met several times to review the current usage of Burlington House and to document suggestions/recommendations for future usage. This project arises from the Library Audit which has the potential to free up space.

Several key themes have emerged which are to some extent guiding current usage and should be important in implementing actions, including a focus on flexible room usage, on natural light for office spaces, to restrict Fellows/external usage to the ground and first floor rooms only (apart from toilets) and to develop a more conscious and planned approach to the overall décor and ambience of the building. It is also agreed that Burlington House is not suitably laid out to function as primarily a lettings space and in any case, the Library is a fundamental part of the utility of it.

Graham Goffey presented a comprehensive spreadsheet which had been shared with staff who contributed at an all staff meeting and by submitting written comments.

A number of actions have been identified and categorised as:-

- i. Recommendations for near term actions;
- ii. Suggestions for medium term actions; and
- iii. Considerations for longer term actions

Council had a full discussion about the report and in addition commented about the need to improve facilities for the display of posters, the improvements that are needed to communications (such as video conferencing and better conference phone facilities) and provision of baby changing facilities. Council was also concerned about the comfort of the staff. Sheila Peacock said that the History of Geology Group asked about consultation with Fellows about changes to Burlington House.

Council recognised that there are constraints to what can be done and what the Society might wish to do because of the layout of the building and the uncertainty surrounding the Lease, but there are improvements that need to be made.

Rick Brassington asked what changes can be made within the listing, and it was agreed that the Society will seek outside advice. JZS

Council APPROVED in principle the (i) recommendations for near term actions which it was noted are mostly of low cost and should be initiated as a priority. This will include replacing meeting room furniture to make it more flexible and easier to move. JZS

Council NOTED the suggestions for medium term actions and considerations for longer term actions and Graham Goffey asked for any more points to be sent to him. Council

10. ELECTIONS

Fellowship (CM/54/17)

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 20 September 2017.

Chartered Geologists (CM/55/17)

The applications from Fellows listed to become Chartered Geologists had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were AGREED by Council.

Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/56/17)

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

European Geologists (CM/57/17)

Council NOTED the names elected as European Geologists at the 14 September 2017 meeting of the European Federation of Geologists.

Chartered Scientist (CM/58/17)

Council AGREED to elect as Chartered Scientists those applicants listed.

11. INCOME DIVERSIFICATION, SKILLS, ORGANISATION DESIGN AND GOVERNANCE (CM/59/17)

Richard Hughes said one of the six high level themes of the Society's 10-year strategy is 'Strengthening the organisation'. Improving the Society's finances through income diversification and growth is a key objective within this theme, and to this end the Society commissioned a report from the Philanthropy Company (PC) earlier in 2017 on the potential for attracting philanthropic income. The recommendations of this report were approved 'in principle' by Council in June.

The Society does not have the specialist skills, experience or capacity to make progress so this paper presents specific proposals for implementing the key recommendations of the PC report into income generation. It recommends:-

- recruiting a suitably skilled and experienced 'Head of Development' to lead and support the implementation of the key recommendations of the PC report;
- using the services of the PC to assist in the recruitment process and to create a prioritised work plan for philanthropic income generation, and
- the principle of creating a new Corporate Development Committee that will report to Council and oversee all matters related to philanthropic and commercial income generation. The Finance & Planning Committee discussed who will chair this committee and it is likely to be a Vice President.

Council noted that an alternative to recruiting a Head of Development would be to use the services of PC but they did not believe this was a viable option if the Society wished to make significant progress with all aspects of income diversification.

Council discussed the parameters within which they would feel comfortable for any fundraising to be done. They were assured that the Society would not be involved in any practice which might be construed as intrusive in any way and in any event there are very strict regulations for fundraising.

Council APPROVED the recommendations to recruit a Head of Development, use the services of the Philanthropy Company to assist with this process and to create a prioritised work plan; and the principle of creating a new Corporate Development Committee. RH

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22 November 2017