

The Geological Society of London

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 4 July 2018

PRESENT: Nick Rogers (*Chair*), Tom Backhouse, Andrew Bloodworth, Jason Canning, Graham Goffey (*Treasurer*), Jim Griffiths, Naomi Jordan, Chris King, Rob Larter, Colin North (*Secretary, Publications*), Sheila Peacock, Nik Reynolds (*Vice President*), Keith Seymour (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Helen Smyth, John Talbot (*Vice President, Chartership*) and Alex Whittaker (*Secretary, Science*)

APOLOGIES: John Booth (*Vice President*), Lesley Dunlop, Sarah Gordon (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Bryne Ngwenya, Katherine Royse (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Jessica Smith and Rob Strachan

In attendance: Richard Hughes (Executive Secretary), Neal Marriott (Director of Publishing), Alex McPherson (Director of Finance & Operations) and Stephanie Jones (Administrative Secretary)

The formal proceedings of the meeting were preceded by a training session on the General Data Protection Regulations, led by Tom Hughes, GDPR consultant.

The new members of Council were welcomed: Tom Backhouse, Andrew Bloodworth, Jim Griffiths, Chris King, Bryne Ngwenya, Helen Smyth and Rob Strachan.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies NOTED from John Booth, Lesley Dunlop, Sarah Gordon, Bryne Ngwenya, Kate Royse, Jessica Smith and Rob Strachan.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18 APRIL 2018

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

SJ

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 *Item 6.3 – Launch event of UK Chapter of the International Association for Geoscience Diversity:* Naomi Jordan asked about progress following this launch event on 4 June. Richard Hughes will ask Dr Alicia Newton to follow up when she takes up her position in August.

RH

4.2 *Item 6.3 – Future Science report:* the meeting took place in February 2017 and this report is still outstanding. Alex Whittaker will follow up with Marie Edmonds.

AW

5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

5.1 *Society's Climate Change Statement*

Nick Rogers reported correspondence from Fellows and non Fellows and an open letter published on a blog suggesting that the Society's Climate Change Statement is dated and might be incorrect. In consultation with the Society's Head of Media and Communications, it was decided that there would not be a written response. Alex Whittaker, Science Secretary, will take this forward. Nick Rogers will keep Council informed if there is anything further to report.

AW

5.2 *Committees, Panels and Boards (CM/29/18)*

Colin North said there are some errors in the membership of the Publications & Information Committee and there are some changes to the membership of the Science Committee. These will be updated and Council NOTED the membership of the standing committee, the membership of committees, panels and boards which report to Council or to the committees of Council, meeting dates for Council and other committees for 2018/19, the standing list of principal items brought to each Council meeting and the expenses policy, particularly the request to make best use of discounted fares.

SJ

Colin North said the Regulation about the membership of standing committees requires re-visiting. For example, there are inconsistencies between the Publications & Information Committee and the Science Committee where the former is not permitted to recruit non-Fellows but the Science Committee is. In the modern publishing world it is of paramount importance that the Society has the expertise it needs.

Richard Hughes said that John Talbot will be overseeing a review of the Regulations and as part of this he will be consulting with the chairs.

JT

5.3 *Standing List under Regulations R/FP/5 and R/FP/6 (CM/30/18)*

Under Regulation R/FP/5 (Appeals Procedures) and R/FP/6 (Disciplinary Procedures) Council is obliged to maintain “a *Standing List of at least 25 experienced and longstanding Fellows who are not members of Council and who are able to act on Panels established under these Procedures. At least two thirds of the List shall be Chartered Geologists or Chartered Scientists. Fellows may resign from the List at any time, and Council may appoint replacements at any time. The names on the List will not be available to Fellows.*” Matters dealt with under these Regulations include appeals relating to non-election as a Fellow, non-validation of a Fellow as a Chartered Geologist, investigation and resolution of complaints brought by five or more Fellows for removal of a Fellow on grounds of significant misinformation relating to application for Fellowship or validation as a Chartered Geologist, and complaints against the code of conduct.

Council AGREED the membership of the Standing List. The number on the list is the minimum required under Regulation and John Talbot was asked to take this back to the Professional Committee to identify gaps and those who may be able to fill them, particularly taking into account that women are under-represented on the current list.

JT

Nick Rogers informed Council that Jessica Smith is taking over the role of Diversity Champion from Tricia Henton who stood down in June. He extended Council's thanks to her.

5.4 *Amendment to Regulation R/G/14: Award of Society Medals and Funds (CM/31/18)*

The time limit for the President's Award was recently reduced from ten years after the award of a first degree in geoscience or a cognate subject to five years. This was after a review of the Society's Awards chaired by Marie Edmonds, previous Secretary Science, and to differentiate it from the Funds. 2018 was the first year of use and, in practice, Malcolm Brown found this was too short.

Council APPROVED the amendment to the Regulation to increase the time limit for the President's Award to eight years from the award of first degree.

SJ

5.5 *Early Career Geoscience Network (CM/32/18)*

An objective was set in the Business Plan to establish an early career geoscientist group. A working group, convened by Nicole Duffin, has put together Terms of

Reference. Council NOTED this matter and asked Tom Backhouse, who is a member of this working group, to check progress

TB

5.6 *Honorary Fellow Nomination (CM/33/18)*

The External Relations Committee commended the nomination of Yildirim Dilek for Honorary Fellowship. Council AGREED to ask this nominee if he would accept the honour before advertising it in *Geoscientist* followed by formal election at an OGM.

RH

5.7 *Associated Society Status: North of England Institute of Mining & Mechanical Engineers (CM/34/18)*

The Society received an application for Associated Society status from the North of England Institute of Mining & Mechanical Engineers. Council APPROVED the application SUBJECT TO receiving confirmation that they have revised their membership structure to eliminate age restrictions, a piece of work they are already undertaking.

6. TREASURER'S BUSINESS

6.1 *Investment Policy (CM/35/18)*

The Trustees via the Finance & Planning Committee delegate responsibility for the Society's circa £6m investment portfolio to the Investment Committee (IC). The present Investment Policy (IP) has been updated utilising Charity Commission and Charities Aid Foundation guidance. The Terms of Reference of the IC have also been updated and together these documents ensure compliance with current charity law requirements and set the context, objectives, portfolio requirements and governance framework within which the IC oversees the Society's financial investments.

In addition, a working group of Council and the IC is considering the extent to which ethical requirements might be reflected in the IP. This process should be completed by the end of 2018 and will be brought to Council for approval. Any changes to the IP as a result of this work will be proposed as an amendment.

GG

Council suggested various amendments and additions and subject to these APPROVED the Investment Policy.

7. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

7.1 *Executive Secretary (CM/37/18)*

Richard Hughes gave a background briefing on the Burlington House lease situation for the benefit of new Trustees.

The first ever meeting of the Presidents and Executive Secretaries (and equivalents) of the five Courtyard societies (the others being the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Society of Antiquaries, Royal Astronomical Society and the Linnean Society) was hosted by the Society on 4 June to discuss issues related to the lease. Richard Hughes is currently chairing the Courtyard secretaries' group and subsequently chaired a separate meeting to take forward the actions agreed at this meeting.

The Charity Commission has recently made clear that safeguarding should be a governance priority for all charities, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk. The Education team is preparing a safeguarding policy for roll out later in 2018.

The following staff appointments have been made:-

- HR Advisor (Naomi Lindsay) – started April for initial six month period
- Head of Editorial Development (Maggie Simmons) – started early June
- Editor, Geoscientist (Amy Whitchurch) – started early June
- Director of Science & Communications (Alicia Newton) – starts late August
- Head of Development (Jenny Boland) – starts early September
- Director of Finance & Operations (Alex McPherson) – will convert from interim to full-time role in August

Overall progress on delivery of the 2018 Business Plan is good but there are some unavoidable delays to the delivery of some objectives due to staff departures. These should be brought back on track when the new appointees take up their positions. The two 'red' items are Chartered Engineer accreditation, covered later in this meeting, and the lease.

Richard Hughes clarified that the report brought to Council is a summary of the Business Plan and there is a much more detailed document behind it. The standing committees are responsible for their items, which the directors discuss at their regular meetings after which the Business Plan is updated. Richard Hughes agreed that it would be beneficial for the document to be held on a Sharepoint site to which Council members have access but currently there is not the staff capacity to take this forward. Nick Rogers said he would expect Council to look in detail at the 'red' items and perhaps the 'amber' but not to go into further detail. It was agreed that it could be confusing that 'business as usual items' are included particularly when they are then marked as 'complete'.

7.2 *Director of Finance & Operations (CM/38/18)*

Alex McPherson said the end May management accounts showed an adverse variance against budget of £122k mainly due to unforeseen legal and other costs. In addition, there was an unrealised reduction in the investment portfolio. A review of the way the accounts is prepared is in hand. There is usually a year-end forecast presented to Council at this time but Alex McPherson is still in discussion with budget holders and this will come to the September meeting of Council.

AMc

The Fellowship survey is now live and to date 1700 responses have been received.

The CRM system development is concluding towards the end of July. After final end to end testing the database will be refreshed and the system will be live. The cost of the project has overrun and Council was provided with a breakdown and explanation. Council was asked to approve additional funds of £109k which represents the difference between funds budgeted for 2018 and the anticipated eventual outturn. Alex McPherson will be making a post implementation report to the Finance & Planning Committee setting out the experience of the project and capturing lessons. Council APPROVED the additional funds of £109k.

Nik Reynolds said he had received complaints from a number of Fellows about the inability to complete CPD on line. He suggested that an explanation of the delays, perhaps in the e-newsletter, is required.

AMc

There were no Health & Safety matters to report although there were two 'near misses' at the Publishing House involving ceiling lighting. There were no injuries and action has been taken to replace the lighting.

There were several other matters that required the approval of Council:-

Overdraft facility of £250k:- the Bye-laws state that the Society cannot borrow money without the unanimous approval of Council. It has therefore become customary to ask each new Council for permission to seek an overdraft facility, should the need arise over the summer months when income is low. An overdraft facility avoids having to realise investments should the market be unfavourable.

All members of Council present AGREED that the Treasurer could seek an overdraft of up to £250k should the need arise and it was noted that if the facility is taken up the Treasurer will write advising Council. Those members of Council not present will be asked to give approval. (*Post meeting note: those members of Council not present in person at the meeting gave their approval.*)

SJ

Bank and mandates:- Council AGREED to delegate authority to the Finance & Planning Committee to amend bank account signatories as the need arises.

AMc

UBS investment account signatories:- Council AGREED to delegate authority to the Finance & Planning Committee to amend the UBS investment account signatories to facilitate a transfer of cash to investment managers, Sarasin

AMc

7.3 *Director of Science & Communications (CM/39/18)*

The report provided by Nic Bilham before his departure from the Society was NOTED. In particular, Richard Hughes drew attention to the agreement given by Council in June 2014 to two roles for the Society in respect of a new siting process for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for radioactive waste, prior to the publication of the July 2014 White Paper setting out preliminary actions to facilitate this process:

- One was to establish an Independent Review Panel for the planned national geological screening exercise. The work of this Panel is now complete.
- The other was to participate with other national academies and societies in a mechanism to facilitate access to individuals who could provide independent views on contested technical matters relating to the process. The model for this mechanism, known as the Third Party Expert View Mechanism, has been agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding between the parties. It will come into operation when the new siting process is launched later this year or early next.

The report says that the Society will be employing an intern to help with work on the Year of Risk outputs and Graham Goffey confirmed that this person will be paid.

The report contains a list of Society Representatives on Outside Bodies and Council was asked to inform Stephanie Jones of any gaps or errors.

Council

7.3a APPROVAL OF THE UK PALAEOCLIMATE SOCIETY AS AN AFFILIATED SPECIALIST GROUP OF THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

A submission was made to the Science Committee in October 2017 for the creation of this Special Interest Group. Marie Edmonds corresponded with Colin Summerhayes (lead proposer of the new group), Carrie Lear (interim President of the UK Palaeoclimate Society) and Sash Turchyn (Chair of the Marine Studies Group) and the Science Committee discussed a revised proposal in May 2018. The Science Committee supports this proposal, which also has the support of the Marine Studies Group, with which there is some potential overlap in subject area, and endorsements from many in the palaeoclimate community.

Alex Whittaker confirmed that all parties are content. The constitution will come to Council for approval. Council APPROVED that the UK Palaeoclimate Society becomes an Affiliated Specialist Group of the Geological Society.

AW

7.4 *Report of the Director of Publishing (CM/40/18)*

Neal Marriott said the subscription renewals process is well underway He reminded Council that this information is commercially sensitive and confidential to Council.

Angharad Hills, Head of Editorial Development and Commissioning, retired and has been replaced by Maggie Simmons. Her role is broader and has a greater emphasis on the strategic development of the Society's editorial activity.

It is expected that 19 or 20 titles will come out during this year.

Open Access continues to be a big and complex issue. More time than is available today is needed for Council discussion and a paper will come to September Council.

NM

8. REMOVAL OF FELLOWS FOR NON-PAYMENT OF THE 2018 FELLOWSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS (CM/41/18)

Council AGREED to remove from Fellowship those Fellows who had not paid their 2018 subscription by 30 June 2018 unless they were in discussion about their subscription with the Fellowship Office. The attrition rate is similar to previous years and the level of strike off is a worse case as some will have paid since the list was produced and others will be in the process of paying.

Council was asked to encourage as soon as possible those Fellows known to them to pay their subscription and remain in Fellowship.

Council

The Fellowship office will continue to make further strenuous efforts to secure late payments with an additional focus on those 39 Fellows with Chartered status.

Nik Reynolds asked if those with Chartered status have been submitting their CPD thereby confirming their activity. John Talbot said that work goes on in this area but there is scope to do further work on why Fellows, particularly those with Chartership, do not renew. Naomi Jordan asked if those on the list received the Fellowship survey and whether there is an exit survey. There is no exit survey but as existing Fellows they will have received the Fellowship survey.

9. CHARTERED ENGINEER PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION (CM/42/18)

The potential to increase and broaden the membership of the Society was discussed at the Council strategy meeting in April 2016 and it was agreed that an opportunity to achieve this goal lay in offering CEng professional accreditation. A number of individuals and committees took this forward and in February 2017 Council approved the proposal. Since that time mainly John Talbot and Bill Gaskarth, Chartership Officer have undertaken a substantial amount of work towards achieving the status of Licensed Body of the Engineering Council. This culminated in Council approving in February 2018 a number of amendments to Regulations in order to meet governance pre-conditions by the Engineering Council.

In December 2017, alerted to the Society's progress towards offering CEng through the Chartership newsletter, it became apparent that there was strong opposition to the initiative. The objections were set out in a paper, which was discussed at a meeting of interested parties on 1 May 2018 convened by Richard Hughes.

Council AGREED that the Society should terminate its progress towards offering CEng at this time and that the amendments made to Regulations and approved at February 2018 Council should be revoked.

Richard Hughes said there are some important lessons to learn from this process and a paper will be coming back to Council. John Talbot said he will be undertaking a review and capture of all the work done. Keith Seymour proposed a vote of thanks to John Talbot and Bill Gaskarth for their work.

Richard Hughes will speak to Ian Duncan, Chair of Ground Forum who attended the meeting on 1 May. A structured plan for communication with the Fellowship is needed. John Talbot will ask Bill Gaskarth to draft a piece for review by Richard Hughes and Kate Royse.

RH

JT

10. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/43/18)

Council NOTED the reports of the standing committees.

11. ELECTIONS

11.1 *Fellowship (CM/44/18)*

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 4 July 2018. It was suggested that these individuals are sent the Fellowship Survey.

11.2 *Chartered Geologists (CM/45/18)*

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

11.3 *Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/46/18)*

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

11.4 *European Geologists (CM/47/18)*

Council NOTED the names elected as European Geologists.

11.5 *Chartered Scientist (CM/48/18)*

Council AGREED to elect as Chartered Scientists those applicants listed.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 *Chartership*

John Talbot said that following the last Council election there is a reduction of chartered Trustees to twelve. He asked the other eleven to consider gaining chartership. Colin North said it is not clear how academics can maintain the CPD requirements. It was agreed to put this item onto the agenda for the September residential.

JT

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18 and 19 September 2018