

UNIVERSITY GEOSCIENCE UK

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 13:30 on 15 June 2017 at Burlington House

Present: Tim Minshull (Chair), Gordon Curry (Executive Secretary), Peter Burgess, Sian Davies-Vollum, Gerald Roberts

Apologies: Jon Gluyas, Tim Reston, Kevin Taylor

In attendance: George Jameson (Geological Society)

Actions

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies as set out above were noted.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes were approved.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Gordon indicated that he intends to cover additional items under his Executive Secretary report section.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Gordon reminded the committee that Tim Reston has been tasked with investigating whether or not the DELI data classifications are changing. Gordon has also made enquiries within his institution in Glasgow to see if they knew. From next year, it is likely that HESA will be directly taking over the coding process. It will take a number of years before any significant changes come to light.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE

Gordon informed the committee that Jon Gluyas, UGUK's Vice-Chair, who was due to take over as Chair in May 2018 has recently been appointed as the Head of Durham University's Energy Institute. Due to this Jon will not be able to continue beyond September, leaving the research agenda portfolio vacant. Jon has identified a colleague at Durham who he feels would be interested in joining the Executive and could take up the Vice Chair position.

However, It was felt by the committee that it may be difficult for a newly appointed member to become Chair so soon after joining.

Gordon added that Tim Reston, who has been overwhelmed with additional responsibilities within his institution, will not be able to continue overseeing the Employability portfolio.

Tim Minshull proposed that they should accept Jon's recommendation, Andy Aplin, to become a member of the Executive. Tim feels that Andy would be a valuable contributor. The committee agreed that it would be a good idea for members to consider who in their community they feel is active and enquire with them to see if they are welcoming to the idea of joining.

When considering who to contact, Tim clarified that those approached don't necessarily have to be a head of department but they should be in a senior role within their institution in order to adequately represent their department.

It was agreed that the more pressing issue concerned the need to appoint a Vice Chair as soon as possible. A newly appointed Vice Chair would then have almost a year to spend shadowing and familiarizing themselves with the role. Tim encouraged the Executive to think about whether they feel they could take on the role. Another option could see an Executive member being nominated.

Mark Anderson who was UGUK's previous Executive Secretary was suggested as a possible candidate. Tim will query this with Mark and inform the Committee of his decision. Rebecca Williams was another suggestion as a possible appointment and could take up the employability portfolio if she accepted. Gordon agreed to contact her while cc'ing Tim into the email correspondence. Gordon suggested that if Rebecca agrees she could take over Tim Reston's role in the internship project Gordon is running.

Rebecca and Mark will be contacted before an approach is made to Andy Aplin. This will offset the possibility of both accepting leaving the Deputy Chair with no portfolio

7. REPORT FROM THE JOINT HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Gordon outlined the main discussion points from the Joint Higher Education Committee meeting held earlier that day. The 'Future Science Priorities' meeting was discussed and is dealt with later in the minutes.

Gordon intends to circulate the revised AGI survey to the committee. The survey was modified to make it more relevant to the UK. If it is successful it will be an extremely useful source of data.

GC

The Geological Society will be holding an Athena SWAN workshop on September 22nd. Promotional material will be circulated through UGUK's membership. Peter indicated that he will be attending a talk in Liverpool on June 28th by Prof Jane Hill from the University of York's Biology Department. They are a Departmental Athena SWAN Gold Award holder. Peter will provide the committee with a short report on the event at its next meeting.

PB

The Society will be sending Gordon a draft programme of the Careers Day events taking place later this year in Keyworth and Edinburgh. He intends to circulate it to the membership and will invite suggestions on ways to improve it etc. At the morning meeting Gordon proposed that skills transferability should be included in order to showcase how geology graduates can apply their skillsets in non-earth science fields.

An example provided by Gordon to showcase this was the new MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, Jamie Stone, a geology graduate who previously worked in the oil industry for 13 years.

Internships were another topic covered at the earlier meeting. Gordon intends to write a letter to the heads of the Society's standing committees explaining to them the planned initiative to create a register of companies offering internships. The Society will inform all Fellows of the proposal. This will be carried out via survey monkey due to the fact that the response rate may be quite high for a specific email account to handle.

GC

The Joint Higher Education Committee discussed Degree Apprenticeships. Gordon will circulate the accompanying document to the Executive. The government has introduced new apprenticeship schemes, one of which equates to an undergraduate degree and another to an MSc. All companies within the UK with an annual turnover of over £3m will be required to pay a set percentage of their salary bill (0.5%) into a degree apprenticeship fund. The University of Portsmouth are involved in an Engineering Geology scheme. Gordon noted that the UK Ground Forum is very keen on this scheme.

Pete Loader informed the Joint higher Education Committee that he is writing a paper regarding the A-level Geology syllabus being totally revamped. He feels that Universities are uneasy with the changes and believes that this may hinder students taking up the subject at undergraduate level. A more detailed report will be written by Pete but in the meantime Gordon said that he would circulate his draft to the Executive.

GC

Florence Bullough, the Society's Policy Officer, presented her report on the Higher Education Bill. The majority of the bill was approved just before the general election and will see the creation of the Office for Students which will have research degree awarding powers. Gordon will circulate the paper to the Executive for information.

GC

8. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

i. *February 2017 meeting on 'Future Research Priorities'*

Tim reported on the progress of the 'Future Science Priorities' meeting which took place in February. This was discussed at the earlier Joint Higher Education Committee meeting. The outputs from the meeting have not progressed much since reporting at the last Executive meeting. This has been due, mainly, to Vicky Hards from BGS who was acting as coordinator leaving BGS shortly after the conference. Nic Bilham has volunteered to undertake the role Vicky had been designated in order to advance this. Tim added that he and Nic plan on discussing this very soon.

TM

Building on that meeting, a one day event in early 2018 looks set to be organised. This will focus on building relations between the research community and Industry. Planning for this will take place over the coming months and it is hoped that a proposal will be taken to the next meeting scheduled for November. Tim acknowledged that the outputs from the Future Science Priorities meeting will need to be produced before any announcements will be made on the 2018 event.

The 2018 meeting may take place outside of London although it was agreed that finding adequate space in a university during term time may prove difficult. The event will require a lecture theatre and break out rooms or a 'flexible space' which could be reconfigured to suit UGUK's needs. Gordon asked the committee to consider if they have any suggestions on possible venues. Peter proposed Liverpool but will need specific dates before making an approach. Tim will enquire with Nic Bilham to confirm dates.

PB / TM

9. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

i. *Employability Internship*

Gordon noted that, originally, Tim Reston was going to run the internship project with Gordon assisting. The project was nearly established at Birmingham but with Tim stepping down Gordon has taken it over. This is now underway. The interns will be locating geology graduates who have taken up interesting career paths outside of standard Geology occupations and building up profiles on each of them. The project should be concluded by the end of the summer.

ii. *November Thematic Meeting*

A point raised at the Joint Higher Education Committee meeting which will be useful for the thematic meeting is the fact that the Geological Society are in contact with WISE (the campaign for Women in Science and Engineering). The Society is discussing the possibility of becoming a member. The Executive suggested that it may be worthwhile endeavour to have a WISE representative give a talk at the November event. Gordon will write to Judi Lakin to follow up on this and possibly gather potential names to approach.

GC

Tim made the suggestion to look at other subject areas where there has been an improvement in recent years and enquire with them if they would be willing to give a speech. Another suggestion was to contact WISE directly to see if they could identify potential speakers.

With the thematic meeting being a half day event the Executive will need to identify 2 other speakers Prof Jane Hill, the lead on the York University Dept. of Biology Athena SWAN award, would be an excellent choice. Gerald stated that he will discuss this with his Assistant Dean to gain her thoughts on this. He will forward these to Gordon. It was agreed that having a representative from Industry would be a good idea.

GR

The meeting may also have a breakout or workshop session focusing on how to improve gender balance issues.

iii. *Membership and email circulation lists*

Gordon mentioned that Cambridge have sent him a list of their directorate, detailing positions etc., to be included on the circulation list. Gordon queried if there is a need for a second circulation list to be developed. Based on the fact that the Society tried to conduct a similar job and it proved quite difficult it was agreed that this may not be worthwhile.

iv. *Higher Education Network Meeting (January 2018)*

Gordon informed the Executive that he will be attending the Higher Education Network's meeting scheduled to take place at Plymouth University in January 2018. The meeting will have an EDINA workshop. When the programme has been finalised the Executive agreed to help promote it. Gordon will circulate the information he has to the Executive.

GC

v. *Internship Survey (Entire Geological Society Fellowship)*

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

vi. *Accreditation Committee of the Geological Society (Membership Survey)*

Gordon pointed out that the incoming President of the Geological Society, Nick Rogers, has been appointed as chair of the accreditation review panel. Gordon added that he will be representing UGUK on the panel. He asked the Executive if it would be a good idea to survey the UGUK membership to help feed into the review and they thought that it would be a beneficial action. Gordon will email the wider membership asking for their thoughts.

GC

vii *Role of UGUK (and mission statement)*

In Kevin's absence Gordon briefly summarized a point he had made regarding the remit of University Geoscience UK. He feels that the mission statement may not be a succinct depiction of the work UGUK does. It was agreed that it may be a good idea to expand the information on the website detailing the many areas UGUK work on. Examples given included acting as a clearing house for discussion and joining together to lobby on issues of concern.

Gordon will email the membership to invite thoughts on possible edits to the website in order to make it sharper etc.

10. REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

Kevin provided Gordon with a brief summary report on current activities. He will be sending out the invoices for this year's subscription fee. The finances are in a reasonably healthy position with a balance of £4725.00. This will cover all of the expected costs for the upcoming activities. He confirmed that the bank account is now under his control after transferring it from Derby.

11. REPORT FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Following a suggestion at a previous meeting Peter has been working on a video

competition. It is hoped that this will promote studying geoscience at University and is aimed at 16 – 18 year olds. He intends to circulate an email to the UGUK membership to gauge their support as well as asking for suggestions in identifying students they feel may be a good choice to make a video within each respective institution.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A brief discussion focused on ways to maximise attendance rates for the full meeting of the University Geoscience UK on November 30th. Some institutions infrequently attend and it was suggested to contact those and explain to them that if the head of department can't attend they should send a representative in their absence. Tim Minshull volunteered to contact those and enquire if they intend to go.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The following date were set, with the meetings to start at 13:30 at Burlington House:

- 29 November 2017