

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 13:30 on 16 March 2017 at Burlington House

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

Apologies: Tim Reston, Kevin Taylor

In attendance: George Jameson (GSL – External Relations Officer)

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 of the last meeting were approved.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**i. *Archiving of documents***

Gordon informed the committee that he talked with Mark Anderson and will be meeting him at a Higher Education Network (HEN) meeting being held in January 2018 in Plymouth. Gordon will take the opportunity to go through the archived UGUK files and determine if the physical copies require storage or can be dispensed with. The essential records and materials have already been digitized. In future all UGUK documents will be uploaded onto their website.

ii. *Accreditation*

Sian has been in contact with Andy Saunders, the Geological Society's Accreditation Officer, but stated that there have been no advancements thus far. Gordon pointed out that Nic Bilham is currently in a meeting discussing the Society's review of its accreditation scheme. Three members of the UGUK executive will be directly involved in this review.

Actions

iii. ***News items for UGUK website***

No news items have been received for uploading onto the UGUK website. An explanatory email was sent in November making members aware of this. It was agreed that a new email would be circulated to the membership. Gordon will write the email with the hope that it will encourage greater participation.

A second suggestion would be to identify a point of contact within each department who may be better suited to deal with this type of request rather than the Heads of School who may be too busy.

5. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The composition of the Executive Committee was noted.

6. **REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

Tim provided the committee with his report. This was split into 2 separate areas:

Report - Future Science - a vision for the next 25 years

The Future Science meeting took place on 21 – 22 February and was well attended. Tim, Sian and Gerald were in attendance. The feedback Tim received has been positive. A lot of work went in to ensuring that a broad cross-section of the geological community was represented.

The two-day event finished with a writing group who have been tasked with producing a report based on the findings from the meeting. This will be presented in two ways. One will be a long policy document covering the spectrum of potential future areas of geoscience research while the second will be a shorter summary document.

The structure of how the document will look was also decided at the meeting and it is expected that the report will be completed by the end of June.

There was a notable contrast in the talks given by representatives of NERC and those from Industry. From this, it would seem that there are two separate geoscience communities. However, this divide was not evident in the writing group. One of the main hopes of having this type of meeting is to bridge those sorts of perceived gaps.

Another interesting topic mentioned concerned the idea of 'citizen science' and how this could help in elevating the profile of the geosciences to a much wider audience. The astronomical community has already been quite successful with this and it was felt that this is something which should be taken into consideration

Tim added that there was enthusiasm for this to continue in the future. It looks extremely likely that there will be a follow up meeting next year but this will be a one day event as opposed to two. The Geological Society is fully supportive of this. Tim added that he may not reprise the role of overseeing the development of next year's meeting. This will be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting of

this committee.

Report - the Joint Higher Education Committee

It was agreed that from now on a report from the Joint Higher Education Committee will be included as a standing item at Executive meetings.

During the earlier meeting the committee discussed aligning future November meetings with a Geological Society London lecture. This would act as an added incentive for members to attend the two day meeting. This will begin in 2018 as the 2017 London lecture was already booked out.

The AGI student questionnaire will be released by May. The questionnaire highlights the intended careers pathways of those who respond. The version UGUK will release will be slightly edited to allow the survey to cater for the differences between UK and US third level institutions etc. A list will be developed in order to identify the best point of contact within each institution so as to ensure its effective dissemination.

The Geological Society offered to phone all of the UK's Geoscience departments and enquire who'd be the best person to get in touch with. The committee were in favour of this as it would be an extremely useful mailing list to have.

An explanatory email will be sent beforehand to the Heads of Departments and their administrative colleagues. This will outline the process stating that both will be emailed individually and allow them to decide how they want to carry out the proposed actions.

The Executive were content for the Society to carry out the collation of this information. George will inform Judi of this decision.

The possibility of holding an Athena SWAN workshop day in May or June at Burlington House was discussed earlier. The workshop will focus on the application process. The committee were receptive to the idea and would highlight this to departments once it has been finalised.

The Society's Careers and Industry Days were discussed due to a lower than expected attendance rates, especially at the Keyworth event. Discussions took place attempting to identify possible remedies for this. The Society may look into changing the location from BGS's Keyworth building for 2018.

7. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Gordon began his report by outlining his intention to regularly update the committee on current activities. The outcomes from November's 'Employability' meeting require further discussion. Previously it was agreed that UGUK funds would be used to carry out actions raised during that meeting. The two themes Gordon highlighted were data gathering and links with industry.

The Higher Education Networks flagship meeting in January 2018 will be focusing on Employability. If sufficient planning is given to this meeting it is possible that an e-publication could be produced outlining the outcomes from the meeting. This is similar to what the Computer Science community have done where they created a

book of best practice and examples of how to improve in underperforming areas. Gordon will be attending the HEN meeting and will keep the committee updated on its progress.

Discussions on how to increase attendance rates for HEN meetings led to the suggestion of expanding the number of disciplines and specialisms. If this is taken forward organisations such as the Institute of Environmental Sciences and the Royal Geographical Society could be invited to participate. The Petroleum Group are also quite keen on building links with UGUK.

The Ground Forum has been discussing degree apprenticeship schemes. These are similar to micro internships which were discussed at the November 'Employability' meeting. The prospect of setting up a list of companies who'd be interested in taking part in this scheme was considered. The companies involved in this would be willing to take on students for short-term internships. Gordon stated that he will draft a letter outlining the proposal and send it to the chairs of all Geological Society committees and groups. George will inform Nic of this action.

There is a short list on the Society's Careers Portal website but UGUK is keen on expanding this as it contains mostly large companies and would like to see the inclusion of smaller companies. Gordon will discuss this with Judi. Companies will need to inform UGUK when changes to their offered internships and placements take place in order to keep the site as up to date as possible.

The committee agreed to the proposal of having a student carry out a project on the topic of employability. It will focus on alumni / recent graduates and identify what they've been doing since their graduation. A lot of this information may be on websites such as LinkedIn. Some recent graduates will be approached enquiring if their story/profile can be uploaded onto the UGUK website. It will showcase the other areas of employment that a geoscience degree can lead to, such as finance, business etc. The project would most likely be a summer internship and the intern will be from either Glasgow or Birmingham. Gordon will discuss this matter further with Tim Reston.

Gordon pointed out that there have been suggestions that the way the DLHE data is collected and classified may be changing. The committee nominated Tim Reston to contact his university's Career Services Dept. to clarify whether this is true.

Gordon informed the committee that a response was submitted to the Research Excellence Framework consultation while the mineral strategy is awaiting a reply. The Geological Society intends to share an Industrial Strategy survey which will then be circulated throughout the UGUK membership.

A point raised, asked if the Executive needs to be more proactive in the way it deals with consultation responses. It was agreed that the executive should identify immediately whether or not it intends to submit a response. If a response is required a submission will be drafted and circulated for comments. Gordon and Tim will decide if responses are necessary and identify the relevant people to lead depending on their specialism. It was felt a system like this would be more effective than the current set-up.

8. REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

In his absence Kevin provided the committee with a financial overview to note. Gordon pointed out that he has not yet been registered as a signatory on the UGUK account. Half of the documentation was sent to Kevin and the other half to Gordon. However, Kevin has access to the account and is able to make payments.

The balance remains steady; it currently stands at £5,300.00. The invoices for next year's subscriptions will soon be sent out. However, the catering bill for the November meeting has not been received. The cost of the Future Science meeting totals £2,500.00. This bill will be divided by the 4 organisations that took part (University Geoscience UK, The Geological Society, British Geological Survey and the Royal Astronomical Society).

9. REPORTS FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Gordon raised an item, which he received from the Ground Forum. They have requested that UGUK provide them with a list of all PGT courses in the UK. This request will be passed on to the Engineering Group, as they would be better informed on this. Gordon will reply to them explaining this.

Peter raised the prospect of UGUK holding a video competition. The theme would focus on highlighting the fact that A-level students studying physics and chemistry can easily transfer these skills into geoscience related subjects at 3rd level. The winning video could be used as a marketing or promotional tool; this could be shared with departments and schools. The committee were receptive to the idea and requested that Peter draft a plan, which would include costs etc. This could be a national level competition. A small financial prize would be given to the winner.

Tim Reston recently joined the Society's Accreditation Committee and reiterated, in his report, the need for a better relationship with industry. One example given to remedy this would see the Ground Forum attend and speak at future HEN meetings. The Ground Forum is keen on setting up degree apprenticeships.

10. DATES, FORMAT AND THEMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS AND PROJECTS

Initial thoughts on the theme for the November meeting were considered. The overarching theme will be diversity, equality and inclusion with a possible focus on gender balance issues within the geosciences. Including Athena SWAN was suggested. Potentially having a panellist attend and discuss what they feel are barriers as well as examples of best practice.

There are two areas the meeting could focus on. The first would deal with gender balance at undergraduate level while the second would focus on why there are very few ethnicities represented at professorial level. Individuals were identified as possible participants. These included Jane Francis from the British Antarctic Survey and Prof Christopher Jackson from Imperial College London.

What the committee want to include are examples of good practice that each individual institution can adopt and potentially improve on. The challenge will be identifying the right people who can shine some light on these areas.

The Geological Society recently purchased HESA data; this could be presented at the meeting showing trends within the geosciences.

Jon suggested having BP's Chief Scientist, Dr Angela Strank, give a talk as she would be a high profile representative from industry who could discuss the barriers faced by women progressing through industry talking about her experiences and career path. Dr Joyce Neilson, University of Aberdeen, was another candidate put forward by Jon.

The meeting will be a half day as there will not be an evening lecture. The timetable should include talks focusing on the key problem areas followed by breakout groups to help frame the problem and identify potential pathways to success.

Academia may have to learn from industry so it was felt that it would be best if there is adequate representation from both sectors.

If the meeting is conducted in this way it was highlighted that gender balance issues at undergraduate level will not be covered. It will be too difficult to fit both into a half-day meeting.

Due to time constraints it was decided that this topic would be discussed at a meeting to be arranged within the next few weeks to clarify the outline for the November theme.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business discussed at the meeting.

LIST OF ACTIONS FROM MEETING

- 1** - Gordon to write email, asking members to send news items to George in order to upload to the UGUK website.
- 2** - Report from the Joint Higher Education Committee to be a standing item at the Executive meeting.
- 3** - Geological Society to contact all geoscience departments to identify the best point of contact to receive the AGI survey.
- 4** - Gordon to write to Chairs of Geological Society groups and/or committees explaining UGUK's plans to create a more detailed list of companies who offer short-term apprenticeships. Gordon will discuss this with Judi.
- 5** - Gordon and Tim to discuss employability project and decide the details.
- 6** - Tim Reston to enquire if DLHE data classification is changing.
- 7** - Peter to draft a proposal for the video competition.
- 8** - Organise a teleconference meeting to discuss the theme and programme for November meeting.