

Meeting of University Geoscience UK Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at 13:30 on 21 November 2016 at Burlington House

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

Apologies: Kevin Taylor (Treasurer), Peter Burgess

In Attendance: George Jameson (GSL - External Relations Officer)

Actions

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies as set out above were noted.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF AN OTHER BUSINESS

- i. ***Obituary Notice - Prof. Jon Davidson (covered in Reports from the Executive Secretary)***
- ii. ***Respond to Government Consultation on loans to PhD students? (covered in A.O.B)***

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE

Tim summarised the changes that have taken place recently within UGUK. Kevin Taylor has taken over from Hugh Rollinson as treasurer. Sally Greenwood, who has provided administrative services for a number of years, will be replaced by Margaret

Jackson. This is due to the change in Executive Secretary as Margaret works with Gordon.

Tim Reston will oversee the employability and employer relations remit. Gerald Roberts has taken on the postgraduate taught portfolio. Sian Davies-Vollum has taken on the undergraduate teaching portfolio.

6. REPORTS FROM THE CHAIR

Tim brought the committee up to speed on how the executive currently operates. Three meetings will take place each year that Gordon, Tim and Jon usually attend in person. Any member of the executive can, if they wish, attend in person or via skype. On the same day as the Executive meets the Joint Higher Education Committee (JHEC) meeting takes place with the Geological Society in the morning (only Tim, Jon, and Gordon attend the JHEC from UGUK).

At the JHEC meeting prior to this meeting, a number of topics were covered. These included UGUK's meeting structure, the AGI student survey, gender balance in geoscience, GSL Careers Day attendance levels and priorities for UGUK in 2017.

The AGI student employability survey will be circulated in 2017, for 2017 graduates, with the hope of a greater return rate than last year when the response rate was low. In 2016 it was felt that the timing of the NSS survey may have affected the AGI response rate. This will factor into the decision of the specific time to release it in 2017. There will be an option to modify the survey content to make it more specific to the UK rather than the US.

The proportion of women entering undergraduate studies within the geosciences is falling. The Geological Society plan to make contact with Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) regarding possible collaborative work to highlight and tackle this issue.

The Geological Society's Careers and Industry Day for university undergraduates took place recently in Keyworth, Nottingham. It wasn't as well attended as expected and as a result the Society has asked for UGUK to canvas their members, at tomorrow's meeting, to ascertain why this may have been (in particular why students who had registered did not turn up on the day).

Four topics have been identified as themes for the coming year. These include accreditation, employability, gender balance and research priorities.

i. *Discussion of Town Hall Meeting, February 2017*

Tim drew attention to the current progress for February 2017's Research Priorities meeting. The circular has not yet been sent out; it should be ready by the end of the week. The aim of the meeting is to generate a big picture vision for geoscience research in the UK.

This follows on from a meeting held in 2010 which attempted to achieve the same goal. The meeting in February will have a number of follow-up actions which should ensure it being more successful in generating sustainable outcomes.

It is hoped that this meeting will identify the big challenges affecting the geoscience community and allow the community to communicate these challenges effectively to the various scientific funding bodies.

A working group has been set up to oversee the organisation of the meeting and includes members from UGUK, GSL, RAS and BGS. The group will be identifying certain people in the community to represent their particular specialisms at this meeting. More information will be provided to the membership as it becomes available.

7. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

i. *Discussion of networking event and thematic meeting in November*

Gordon outlined the programme for tomorrow's thematic meeting on Employability. There will be a data presentation focusing on the findings of the Wakeham Report by Gordon. One potential issue to be discussed concerns the definition of non-graduate roles and how this may be adversely affecting the statistics.

Sally Fincher, Professor of Computing Education and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Kent, will be giving a talk on the response of the Computer Science community to the employability issues experienced by computer science graduates (which may provide some suggestions for possible responses that could be taken by the academic Geoscience community).

Gordon has prepared a booklet containing a number of questions for attendees to answer during the breakout session tomorrow. A plenary session will take place after this so that the thoughts of the delegates will be combined and a summary note produced afterwards.

ii. *Ground Forum Committee*

Gordon stated that his predecessor, Mark Anderson, has been attending the meetings of the Ground Forum. The Ground Forum represents the geotechnical community.

The Ground Forum has invited University Geoscience UK to become a formal member. If accepted UGUK would have a formal role in its decision making. This may help further UGUK's ambition to network and engage with industry. A representative of the Forum will be attending tomorrow's meeting which allows this to be discussed in greater detail with him.

Another option mentioned would be for UGUK to establish more formal links with relevant employer organisations such as PESGB to further its employability remit.

iii. *Mobilising Geoscience Community*

Mark Anderson attended a meeting on 17 November, organised by Prof. Chris King and the Earth Science Education Forum, titled "Mobilising the geoscience community behind an outreach/education initiative".

Many initiatives were highlighted during this. One of the more successful took place in Spain where 500+ experienced geoscientists across 50+ strategic locations in Spain ran field trips. Nearly 10,000 members of the public took part.

It was suggested that UGUK could replicate one of the projects outlined in the meeting. Running focus groups was also mentioned in order to create and test possible ideas.

A discussion took place which focused on the lack of understanding of the role of geoscience in society. One aspect focused on making geography more geological, within schools, as a way to improve understanding. This will be relayed to the GSL Education Department. Peter Burgess, given his remit, will attend any events such as this if they go ahead.

iv. ***Relationship with Employers and Employers Organisations (e.g. Ground Forum)***

Gordon acknowledged that there may be more effective ways to engage with employers and employer organisations.

Degree apprenticeships may act as a catalyst in improving relationships as many employer organisations seem to be very keen on establishing this. Under this scheme universities would supply the degree but the apprentice would be working with a particular company part-time. The new initiative was launched last year. It was felt that this would be an ideal reason to establish links with the Ground Forum, PESGB, and Carbon Capture & Storage Association etc.

v. ***Prof. Jon Davidson [6th Oct 2016 - former Chair of CHUGD]***

Gordon informed the committee of the recent passing of Prof. Jon Davidson, Professor of Earth Sciences at Durham University, after a long battle with leukaemia. He passed away on the 26 September 2016.

Jon played a key part in the formation of CHUGD, the precursor of University Geoscience UK. The committee wished to thank him and express their condolences. UGUK were represented at his funeral as Jon Gluyas attended. The Geological Society's former President Prof. David Manning was also in attendance.

This will be communicated at tomorrow's meeting.

vi. ***Archiving CHUGD documents***

Mark contacted Gordon to inform him that he has in his possession all of CHUGD's physical documentation. He enquired what UGUK would like to do with them. GSL were queried if they could take care of archiving them. Another solution would be to scan and save all of the documents and store them in an electronic format. Gordon will ask Mark about the volume of documentation there is to see whether archiving or scanning is the more convenient option.

GJ

GC

8. REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

Given that the newly appointed treasurer was not present at the meeting Gordon provided the committee with a brief summary of current goings-on. The process of moving the signatories of the account is ongoing. Two current members will need to be added. Gordon and Kevin have agreed to be the signatories. Hugh, the

previous treasurer, received correspondence from Barclays regarding this matter. It has not yet been finalised.

9. REPORTS FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Sian intimated that she will discuss the potential review of the Society's accreditation procedure with Andy Saunders at tomorrow's event. Andy is the Geological Society's Accreditation Officer.

SVD

It was decided that the Executive will produce information on the matter before raising it with the wider group.

The possibility of having accreditation as the theme of UGUK's thematic meeting was suggested. This could be tied in with a lecture the Society run in November 2017 with the aim of making the event more attractive to prospective attendees.

The matter of accreditation will be discussed at tomorrow's meeting. It will be placed under any other business.

Locating information on geotechnical MSc courses seems to be rather difficult as there is no definitive list. Currently these come under the remit of several different organisations (e.g. engineering). The Ground Forum has also enquired about a comprehensive list. Mark Anderson sought UGUK's permission to provide the Ground Forum with the list he prepared of UK geoscience MScs which does include some on geotechnical engineering. This list is contained within the administrative documents mentioned earlier in the meeting. Members can request this from Gordon if they would like to have an electronic copy. It was last updated in May 2015.

10. WEBSITE AND CAREERS PORTAL

Members were asked to provide George george.jameson@geolsoc.org.uk with any relevant news items in order to upload onto the UGUK webpage. This will be highlighted at tomorrow's meeting of the department heads.

All

11. DATES, FORMATS AND THEMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS AND PROJECTS

There will be meetings of the Joint Higher Education Committee and the Executive Committee in March and June 2017.

The next thematic meeting that's set to take place in November 2017. The theme of this has not been confirmed but accreditation looks like a possible topic which would be of widespread interest among the membership of UGUK. The November meeting will,

hopefully, coincide with an evening lecture organised by the Society with the aim of making it more attractive to prospective attendees.

Dates will be canvassed to the committee members in order to establish specific times and dates for 2017.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Respond to Government Consultation on loans to PhD students?

The committee discussed whether UGUK should respond to the government consultation on support for postgraduate study. The proposal would see PhD and research master's students being able to receive a loan of up to £25,000.

Given that, institutions will be submitting their own assessments it was agreed that UGUK would refrain from making a submission.