

The Geological Society of London

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 13 June 2012

The President confirmed that the Bye-laws in Section 9 relating to meetings had been observed. Under Paragraph 9.10, non-Fellows could be present but may not vote.

1. APOLOGIES

Noted.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 8 JUNE 2011

These were agreed.

3. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS

Two scrutineers were appointed for the ballots for Council and Officers, and Fellows were asked to vote for the new Council for 2012/13.

4. BALLOT FOR COUNCIL

The Ballot for Council was declared open.

5. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2011

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President said that he had visited the Publishing House in Bath and had toured the warehouse where all the Society's books and journals are kept, ready for despatch. The scholarship is obvious as it is in the Lower and Upper Libraries. Less obvious is the material wealth and its application. In the last 20 years the Society has evolved to anticipate what has been happening in society and what is happening in publishing. But is anyone is listening to geologists? Following the *Anthropocene* meeting at Burlington House in May 2011, the Society made the leader pages of *Nature*: "Geologists are used to dealing with heavy subjects ... does human impact on the planet deserve to be officially recognised?" *The Economist* also put the *Anthropocene* on its front cover. So people are listening to geologists and this makes it important that the Society speaks with one voice on questions of public interest. The Society is being asked to comment by those who make policy and laws on a whole range of matters that have a substantial impact on the income of those who work in the profession as a whole as well as the training of new entrants. Climate change is one example of public comment by the Society, and in 2011 we built on that firm ground with a statement on Rare Earth Elements drafted by a group drawn from a range of organisations important to the Fellows.

In 2011 the Society also combined forces in new ways. Letters went to Whitehall and Westminster on university funding and other matters over three signatures: CHUGD (Committee of Heads of University Geoscience

Departments), BGS (British Geological Survey) and the Society's, united in promoting a common message.

There is an increasingly effective unified voice from our community and in this the Society is greatly assisted by many Fellows. But if we are asked to comment on something about which we don't know enough then we keep quiet and it appears that this modesty in the face of questions that we cannot answer is beginning to gain real purchase for our public statements. This only works if the Fellowship joins in and amongst the 10k or so Fellows there is a wide range of depth and expertise and these are drawn on. These statements are polished by the staff at Burlington House and the Executive Secretary and his staff must be thanked for this. The President also thanked the Fellowship and those on Council for the robust discussion in trying to develop these new approaches. Elsewhere staff are working with schools, Regional and Specialist groups, conferences and lectures, organising the first-ever Poetry Day, and the President said that although it may be routine to thank the staff, routine would not do in this case. There is a rare energy and spirit about the staff and the President sent his heartfelt thanks and his very best wishes to David Shilston, Council, the Fellowship and staff for the vivid times that lie ahead.

SECRETARIES' REPORTS

External Relations

Professor Alan Lord, Secretary Foreign & External Affairs, reported on the following topics:

Science-led communications strategy. The Society continued to react to consultation requests and submissions included shale gas (on which the Society also gave oral evidence) and the Higher Education Commission on Postgraduate Education. Initiatives by the Society included a briefing note on Rare Earth Elements and Paul Henderson was thanked for chairing the expert group. In both cases the Society was scrupulous in giving opinion only where we have the expertise, pointing out areas where geosciences is relevant but overlooked and offering further assistance. There have been events for the public, policy-makers, media and others, for example a public briefing meeting on 18 June 2012 on shale gas designed for non-geologists to introduce them to the key issues from a geological aspect. The Development & Fundraising Committee has been liaising with business leaders and a City of London Geoscience Forum has been created to provide a means of communicating relevant areas of our discipline to the business community.

Collaborations. The Society worked closely with CHUGD, BGS and PESGB (Petroleum Society of Great Britain), among others, on various statements and consultations. A co-ordinated approach with appropriate partners is far more effective than a number of individual responses/submissions and while this involves time-consuming liaison it makes the final document stronger.

UNESCO - IUGS - IGCP. The Society is using its influence in IUGS (International Union of Geological Sciences) to encourage effective management and will be making representations in respect of the forthcoming IUGS Committee elections taking place at the 34th IGC (International Geological Congress) in Brisbane in August 2012. There was a strong UK presence at the IGCP (International Geoscience Programme) 40th anniversary conference

where Professor Iain Stewart gave an address. Professor Lord was pleased to report that Professor Edward Derbyshire, former Secretary, Foreign & External Affairs, will be presented with the *James Harrison Outstanding Achievement Award* during the 34th IGC. The Society, together with BGS, GSA (Geological Society of America) and AGI (American Geosciences Institute) are promoting a 'global geosciences initiative' at the 34th IGC which is designed to be a grass-roots research challenge of global, or major, significance,

Education and public outreach. The Society, supported by BP, hosted a five-day Geoscience Educational Academy designed to support science teachers who are not geoscientists.

Earth Science Week in October 2011 was organised to engage young people and the public in the theme "Our Ever Changing Earth". There was a schools poster competition (with PESGB) and the Society's first Poetry Day which was a great success.

Climate Week in March 2012 was a UK-wide event and activities included a schools poster competition to depict the Society's Climate Change Statement.

The Shell London Lectures continued to be a success with an afternoon and an evening lecture and live webcasts.

Professor Lord acknowledged the help of the staff, especially Nic Bilham, Sarah Day, Jo Mears and Judi Lakin. He also thanked Professor Allen, Science Secretary, for the close collaboration with the Science Committee.

Science

Professor Philip Allen, Secretary Science, said that the primary responsibility of the Science Committee was managing the Society's programme of scientific meetings and in this it took a proactive role in generating ideas for meetings. It continued to organise the Shell London Lectures and other popular lectures. It also organised leading edge science meetings in established and emerging fields and supported new and existing specialist groups by encouraging young and energetic scientists from diverse disciplines.

The first "Frontiers Meeting" was held in 2011. These meetings are designed particularly for early-career researchers and there is an opportunity for scientists with no previous experience of convening conferences to get involved. Registration is free. The first meeting *The Coupling of Tectonics and Surface Processes* was well received by over 100 attendees. There will be a meeting in 2012, *Nanoparticles in Geosciences*, which is being led by Professor David Vaughan.

As well as the full programme of meetings at Burlington House the Society ran a joint session with GSA at the EGU (European Geosciences Union) meeting in Vienna and at the GSA Annual Meeting.

There are new and continuing challenges. These include the facilitation of cross-disciplinary and integrative approaches to geoscientific problems. The Society also needs to continue to improve engagement with a younger generation of geoscientists working in emerging fields and to be involved in and lead strategic developments affecting UK geosciences. The Science

Committee worked closely with the External Relations Committee with Professor Alan Lord, chair of the latter, attending many Science Committee meetings. This joint working must continue to deliver the science-led communication strategy

Professor Allen said he had enjoyed his three, very busy years as Science Secretary. He thanked the members of the Science Committee. He also thanked the Conference Office manager, Secretary, Foreign & External Affairs, speakers and conveners, the Executive Secretary, the Head of Strategy & External Relations, the PA to the Executive Secretary and the Conference Office team. He wished Professor Jane Francis luck in her new role as Secretary, Science.

The President thanked Professor Allen for his tremendous contribution.

Professional

Mrs Tricia Henton, Secretary Professional Matters, said that it had been a good year building on the excellent work by her predecessor, Professor David Manning.

The Society has established a Geoscience Skills Forum to support the needs of academia, industry and individual professional geoscientists. The initial priority is to gather reliable data working with partners from academia and various industry sectors. Armed with this evidence the Society will be better placed to argue the case for geosciences to policy-makers and funders, to identify matters requiring particular attention, to provide students with careers advice and to ensure that degree accreditation serves employers' needs; and to support university departments in delivering relevant employability data to students.

The new validation process for Chartership is now well established with the number of Chartered Geologists growing steadily. The Society's involvement at each stage of the development of skills means that the Professional Committee is well placed to identify and respond to the needs of 'users' of geosciences skills and to act as an interface with universities as primary 'suppliers'. The accreditation scheme is being developed further with five postgraduate degree programme accredited, including Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia, and those Fellows who help with Chartership and Accreditation were thanked.

The Society has recently introduced company training schemes. The Register of Ground Engineering Professionals is now established. Establishing the equivalence of professional qualifications across national boundaries is important. The Society has agreed with the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and the Institute of Geologists of Ireland to recognise each other's professional titles and discussions continue with the American Institute of Professional Geologists and Geoscience Canada with a view to concluding similar arrangements.

The uptake of chartership needs to be broadened across the sectors particularly academe and the oil and gas industry.

Mrs Henton thanked all the people who gave their time so enthusiastically on a voluntary basis, the staff in the Fellowship Office, the Executive Secretary, the Head of Strategy and External Relations, who is working on the Geoscience Skills Forum, and the PA to the Executive Secretary.

Publications

Dr Jonathan Turner, Secretary Publications, said that the method of delivering published material is changing rapidly. There is a decline in demand for hard copies and publishers are looking to develop new services for consumers and authors. There is a blurring of the role of libraries and publishing houses. The Society's response to this was to merge the management of the Society's Library and Publishing House which has been brought together under Neal Marriott, in the new role of Director of Publishing, Library and Information Services.

An early priority is to continue with the implementation of the 2010 Library Review, chaired by Professor Styles, which recognised that the Library is a prime resource of the Society in monetary as well as scholarship value. An example of this new initiative is that the Society will implement the scanning of its map collection, starting with the East African Rift Valley. This will be a major project for 2012 which will serve several purposes, not least of which is to preserve for future generations a world-class resource that remains vulnerable while in paper form only. It will also enable wider use of the collection by providing digital access online; and where maps are of commercial interest to generate additional income to support library development.

2011 was another successful one at the Publishing House. Alongside journals, 21 new book titles contributed to a surplus from publishing of £539k. Recent books included significant Memoirs, *Neoproterozoic Glaciations* and *Arctic Petroleum Geology*.

Fellows can now access 80 online journals offside through the Library, a service for which more than 1100 are registered.

A series of new initiatives were rolled out to increase the attraction of Special Publications to editors and authors. One of these initiatives was that the Society is included in the Thomson-Reuters Web of Science Book Citation Index. Another was an innovative partnership with Elsevier with the launch of the Lyell Collection module on their *Geofacets* web-based geographic search tool. Early uptake has been encouraging with higher than expected royalties for the Society and the potential to increase pay-per-view income from the Lyell Collection significantly.

Dr Turner thanked the Director of Publishing, Library and Information Services and colleagues at the Publishing House, the editors and reviewers and the readers and contributors for excellent material.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Dr Adam Law, Treasurer, reported on a good year with the achievement of a financial surplus of £371k which has enabled more investment in educational outreach and into the Society's reserves. The bulk of this was generated by the outstanding performance of the Publishing House where a surplus of just over £539 was achieved, significantly greater than the budget target. He thanked the staff at the Publishing House.

The Society's investments performed better than budgeted by around £20k thanks to the wise recommendations of the Investment Committee. This success was in part due to an injection of £1m cash to the investment portfolio. Several meetings also performed beyond expectations particularly the Petroleum Group and the surplus generated was in excess of £20k.

The Fermor Fund was established 20 years ago and in celebration the Society will offer grants in 2012 of up to £25k to assist research in the subjects specified by Lady Fermor including ore genesis, planetary geology and Precambrian research.

Dr Law thanked his predecessor, Professor Fleet, for his diligence and attention over his term as Treasurer which had left the Society's finances in such a healthy state. He also thanked the staff who produce the financial information.

6. COMMENTS FROM FELLOWS

Dr Alexander Smith commented on the President's address and his call for the Society to speak with a unified voice. It must always be possible for the maverick with unorthodox views to be heard, for example the controversial article in *Geoscientist* about raindrop pits in Precambrian sediments, and he was concerned that there could be a danger of imposing orthodoxy more widely in scientific matters. The President replied that there was no question of this and that there would always be the opportunity for full scientific debate at the Society with opposing views. His comments were aimed at statements released by the Society where facts were established beyond reasonable doubt, for example the Climate Change statement.

Alan Lord said that, very importantly, the Editor of *Geoscientist* operates independently from the Officers and Council.

7. ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2011 AND APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET FOR 2012

Sir Mark Moody-Stuart proposed acceptance of the accounts for 2011 and the budget for 2012. Professor John Mather seconded the motion, which was passed *nem con*.

8. FELLOWSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2013

Following the principles agreed in previous years, Council reviewed the latest estimates of the total costs of Fellowship, and the most recent measures of inflation. These considerations inform rather than dictate the overall percentage increase in fees.

It was recommended that the fees for 2013 be increased by an overall average figure of 3.7%, an amount which is identical to the relevant annual rate of inflation as measured by RPI. This was considered the best compromise between keeping pace with above-inflation increase in Fellowship costs, and ensuring that the proposed increase is affordable and justifiable to Fellows.

There is a significant reduction in the rates for postgraduate students in light of the wish to recruit more of this group and the feedback about affordability from the Careers Day focus group. The '21 and under rate' has been merged with the '22 – 27' rate. This reflects the fact that this group can be expected to be in employment (and, if not, they should be able to claim a cheaper rate), and that any discount is better applied to those who are not earning a salary.

It was recommended to reduce the Concessions rate from £92.50 to £68.00, to bring it in line with the '27 and under' rate. The rate for full-time MSc students is reduced from £37.00 to £27.50 and that for full-time PhD students from £51.50 to £40.00.

An addition to Fellowship benefits is the Athens service. This provides electronic access to 86 journals to which our library holds a subscription and has been made a permanent core entitlement for all Fellows”

The following subscriptions for 2013 were agreed *nem con.*:

	2013 £
Junior Candidate Fellows	10.00
Candidate Fellows	15.00
One-off payment for undergraduate course	40.00
27 and under	68.00
28-33	125.50
34-59	191.00
34-59 (Overseas)	146.50
60-69	96.00
70+	66.00
Concessions	68.00
Full time postgraduate MSc	27.50
Full time postgraduate PhD	40.00
Joint Fellow supplement	56.00
CGeol supplement	29.50

Professor Styles welcomed the reductions in MSc and PhD subscriptions.

9. DEATHS

Fellows received a list read by the President of those Honorary Fellows and Fellows whose deaths had been reported since the last Annual General Meeting.

10. REPORT OF SCRUTINEERS ON THE BALLOT FOR COUNCIL

The President called upon the Scrutineers to read their report on the ballot for Council. Twenty-five votes were cast with no abstentions or spoilt papers. The following Fellows were duly elected to Council:

Mrs N K Ala, Mr M G Armitage, Miss S Brough, Professor R Butler, Professor N A Chapman, Mr D J Cragg, Professor J E Francis, Professor A J Fraser, Dr S A Gibson, Mrs M P Henton, Dr R A Hughes, Mr D A Jones, Dr A Law, Professor R J Lisle, Professor A R Lord, Mr P Maliphant, Dr B R Marker OBE, Professor S Marriott, Dr G Nichols, Mr D T Shilston, Dr C P Summerhayes, Professor J H Tellam and Dr J P Turner

The ballot for Officers then took place.

11. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

BDO Stoy Hayward was re-appointed as the Society's auditors for the coming year.

12. REPORT OF SCRUTINEERS ON THE BALLOT FOR OFFICERS

The President called upon the Scrutineers to read their report on the ballot for Officers. Twenty-nine votes were cast, with no abstentions or spoiled papers. The following were duly elected:

President	Mr D T Shilston
Vice Presidents	Mr P Maliphant
	Professor S Marriott
	Dr C P Summerhayes
Treasurer	Dr A Law
Secretary, Foreign & External Affairs	Professor A R Lord
Secretaries	Professor J E Francis
	Mrs M P Henton
	Dr J P Turner

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14. DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A provisional date for the next Annual General Meeting of 5 June 2013 was agreed.

15. VOTE OF THANKS

Dr Lovell was pleased to welcome Mr David Shilston as the first 'Engineering Geologist' President. He commended the system whereby the President designate serves on Council for a year before taking office. He also welcomed the new members of Council and thanked the continuing members of Council.

He thanked the Officers for the enormous amount of work they do.

He thanked the Committees, Specialist Groups, Regional Groups and Joint Associations for their sterling work during the year. He also thanked the Corporate Affiliates, particularly Shell for sponsorship of the Shell London lectures and other sponsors of Society events and the organisations who allowed their staff to participate in the committees and activities of the Society.

He thanked the retiring members of Council for their diligence and hard work during their terms of office. Retiring members of Council were:

Professor Philip Allen
Mr Malcolm Brown
Dr Bryan Lovell
Professor Stuart Monro
Professor David Vaughan
Mr Nick Walton

The President spoke of the donation to the Society of Dan Mckenzie's papers together with those of Ted Irving and Fred Vine. They are of considerable value and he was most grateful for this very generous gift, the archiving of which will be supported by donations for which he was also very grateful.

The President thanked the staff and said that the amount of work done in the last 20 years is not achieved with staff that is merely acquiescent. There has to be a spirit and involvement and both of these things are present. He thanked the Executive Secretary for his leadership of the staff and through him conveyed his thanks to all the staff.

Professor Lord thanked the President on behalf of the Fellowship for his service to the Society during his presidency.