

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 8 June 2016**

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

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Noted.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2015**

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 2016/17.

### **4. BALLOT FOR COUNCIL**

The Ballot for Council was declared open.

### **5. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2015**

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

In 2015 the Society said farewell to Edmund Nickless and the President thanked him for his long service. He welcomed Edmund's successor, Sarah Fray.

The themed years were launched in 2015, with the Year of Mud, and have taken off very well. We are now well into the 2016 theme, the Year of Water.

The Associated Societies scheme is now well established and growing. The latest addition is the International Association for Promoting Geoethics.

There was a new partnership with University Geoscience UK (formerly CHUGD) with whom the Society works increasingly closely on a wide range of matters relevant to the research and higher education sector. This is an important relationship as the Society works to improve its engagement with academic geoscientists and to ensure their needs are understood and met.

The Society continued to thrive in a changing world, one in which the need to communicate geoscience and its role in addressing the challenges faced by humanity is ever more urgent and the value of the geosciences ever more apparent. Our leading position in the rapidly-changing world of scholarly publishing was maintained and opportunities were grasped to reach out to new audiences through new media. These dynamic activities enable the Society to grow and flourish.

The Society signed up to the Science Council's diversity, equality and inclusion declaration in October 2014 and continued its commitment to it. This commitment will be at the heart of the new 10-year strategy, and plans for the next steps across a range of issues are under discussion. The Society is also a signatory to the American Geosciences Institute's consensus statement on inclusion of those living with disabilities.

A conference in June 2015 on confronting barriers to fieldwork for those with disabilities was very successful and well-received. This in turn influenced the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) STEMM Disability Advisory Committee's March 2016 conference on access to science for those with disabilities, ensuring that fieldwork was on the agenda.

Fellowship diversity monitoring was launched in early 2015 and more detailed analysis and background research have started to try to understand the implications of the data. The main value of the data will come over time as we are able to track changes in the characteristics of the Fellowship, and as we seek to make our activities, our organisation and our community more inclusive.

Unrelated to our own monitoring, there is some evidence (from the Higher Education Statistics Agency) of a declining proportion of women enrolling on undergraduate geoscience programmes. The Society is working with University Geoscience UK to understand the data better, and to consider can be done collectively do to address this. There is a strong representation by women on Council with 10 out of 23 in the last Council and 9 out of 23 after today's election.

The President thanked all 17 candidates who stood for Council, and to the more than 1,700 Fellows who voted for them.

Development of the new 10-year strategy is underway. As in 2006, when the Society's first 10-year strategy was being prepared and we were about to celebrate our bicentenary, there is a sense of energy and excitement about the opportunities that lie ahead.

The President said he had many people to thank for their support during his term of office. He thanked the staff, members of Council and Past Presidents in particular. He wished the Society, and his successor, Malcolm Brown, good luck.

## **SECRETARIES' REPORTS**

### ***External Relations***

Michael Young, Secretary for Foreign & External Affairs, thanked David Manning for his service and said he handled the post with great tact and diplomacy. He was also very grateful to his predecessor, Alan Lord, for his advice. He had exercised great wisdom in the role and had directed the Society in new directions.

Geology for Society was originally launched in 2014. It is aimed at parliamentarians, officials and other decision-makers, and sets out some of the ways in which geoscience matters to society, from meeting energy, water and raw materials needs to protecting the environment, engineering infrastructure and understanding climate change. It is supported by an extensive online portal which gathers together briefing documents, consultation responses, articles from *Geoscientist*, audio-visual content such as recordings of past London Lectures and more. The European version of the document was launched in June 2015 at the European Parliament in Brussels, in collaboration with the European Federation of Geologists (EFG) and some of its other national associations. The report is now published in 14 languages, including English, Welsh and Irish.

The Society continues to be active in EFG and there are more qualified European geologists in Britain than in other countries.

There were 18 responses to consultations during 2015, on a diverse range of topics including research funding, higher education teaching quality assurance (now taking shape as the so-called 'Teaching Excellence Framework' – TEF), science and the European Union (EU), radioactive waste management, investor confidence in the energy sector (for example re carbon capture and storage), and the impact of immigration policy on the science workforce. A number of these responses were prepared jointly with others, particularly with University Geoscience UK. Our new partnership with them means we are much better placed to respond on matters affecting the academic geoscience sector.

At the request of government, the Society established an Independent Review Panel to review plans prepared by Radioactive Waste Management Ltd (RWM) for national geological screening to support the search for a location for a geological disposal facility (GDF) for radioactive waste. It is pleasing that the Society was entrusted with this responsibility.

A survey was launched to ask Fellows what impact they think 'Brexit' or continued membership of the EU would have on geoscience and on their area of work. The results will be published in the next few days.

Internationally, the Society (for the UK) plays a leading role in European and global institutions. There was a joint session, with the Geological Society of America, at the European Geosciences Union conference in Vienna on groundwater contamination in developing countries, involvement in a geoethics session and other activities. Preparation is underway for the 35<sup>th</sup> International Geological Congress (IGC) in Cape Town, including the Council meeting of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). Edmund Nickless continues to chair Resourcing Future Generations for the IUGS and will be speaking in Cape Town.

The Society took the lead in organising a year-long programme of events, exhibitions and activities to celebrate 200 years of William Smith's map, involving many organisations across the country.

A major new online resource about career and study options in geoscience was launched in March 2016, aimed principally at students towards the end of their school years, undergraduates and postgraduates. It includes a huge amount of useful and accessible information, and development of the content will continue.

The list of 100 Great Geosites in the UK and Ireland was launched in October 2014. Further developments during 2015 included the launch of an app to explore the sites via mobile devices, a photo competition, and a 2016 calendar featuring the winning photos.

In October 2015 Earth Science Week featured over 50 events across the UK and Ireland, many focusing on the theme of geological time. A wide range of organisations were involved, and helped to engage a diverse audience of children and adults in geoscience.

The London Lectures continued to be a great success.

The reformed Geoconservation Committee is working well, and the annual geoconservation gathering is now well established. Various initiatives are being driven forward. It is hoped that the Society will be involved with the international conference on Geoparks which is being held in the UK in 2016.

Michael Young thanked the members of the External Relations Committee and its sub committees. He also thanked the many Fellows who contributed to consultations. He thanked Nic Bilham and his policy team for their support.

### **Science**

Marie Edmonds, Secretary Science, was not able to attend so the President gave her report.

The themed years, an idea from the 2014 Science Strategy, are working very well. They are intended to be cross-cutting, and to embrace the fundamental areas of research as well as economically and societally important applications. 2015 was the Year of Mud, 2016 is the Year of Water and 2017 will be the Year of Risk. The Science Committee will soon identify a theme for 2018 and will welcome suggestions.

Another outcome of the 2014 Science Strategy was a review of the Flagship Meetings and two new meeting series are being established:-

The *Janet Watson meetings* will bring together early career scientists in academia and industry with more experienced people. Feedback from the first meeting held in May 2016 on *'The Future of Hydrocarbon Exploration'* was very good.

The *Bryan Lovell meetings* will bring together a diverse range of geoscientists and others with a role to play in addressing societal changes. The first will be in November 2016 on *'Water, Hazards and Risk: managing uncertainty in a changing world'*.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Petroleum Geology of North West Europe Conference – the first of which was held in 1974 – was jointly organised with the Energy Institute and the PESGB. It was scientifically successful and well attended, demonstrating a continuing appetite to hear about cutting-edge petroleum geoscience research and its application even in such challenging times for that industry.

The 2015 Arthur Holmes meeting was on *'Tsunami Hazards and Risks: Using the Geological Record'*. This was the second joint meeting with the Geological Society of Japan on this topic and included a field visit to Shetland with the participation of early career scientists funded by the Sasakawa Foundation of Great Britain, and concluded with a reception at the Japanese Embassy.

### **Professional**

Natalyn Ala, Secretary Professional Matters, said that Fellowship numbers have continued to grow steadily each year over the past decade through recessions and fluctuations in the industries in which the Society's members work. There were 11,991 Fellows in July 2015 (up 3.3% from July 2014).

The Fellowship Development Strategy has been in place for a couple of years and at its heart is the diversity, equality and inclusion agenda. The Society must ensure that it is welcoming to all, that barriers to inclusion are identified and removed, and that our part is played in maximising the pool of skilled and talented geoscientists who will meet society's future needs.

The Regional and Specialist Groups are the main point of contact with the Society for many Fellows. Initiatives that started with the Regional Groups, such as the Schools Geology Challenge and the Early Careers Competition, are now an important part of the Society's activities at a national level. The Groups between them run an incredibly varied programme of conferences, evening meetings, careers events and outreach activities.

Twenty-five years of awarding the title of Chartered Geologist were celebrated in 2015 and Natalyn Ala thanked Bill Gaskarth, Chartership Officer, for his hard work in reaching out to professionals and academics. The cohort of Chartered Geologists has continued to grow steadily and there were 2592 in July 2015, an increase of 3.3% from July 2014. Chartership is increasingly appealing to geoscientists working in a wider range of sectors. Notably uptake in the oil and gas sector has increased, the first coming through the facilitated route for those with more than 20 years' experience and then those at an earlier stage of their career following this example.

Natalyn Ala said she had enjoyed her time on Council and as Professional Secretary. She thanked the Professional Committee for their commitment and also Chris Eccles, Vice President Chartership, David Jones, Vice President Regional Groups, and Bill Gaskarth. She wished her successor, Liv Carroll, the best of luck.

### **Publications**

Colin North, Secretary Publications, said the Society's Publishing House continued to thrive. There was a significant increase in full-text downloads of articles from the Lyell Collection which were up 31% on the 2014 figure to 862,000. The Society's journals are now available online in over 1000 institutions worldwide, through the Lyell Collection and GeoScienceWorld.

In 2015 the Society adopted a new publication data policy. This promotes open accessibility, discoverability and preservation of geoscience data. An important element of delivering this new policy was the launch in January 2016 of the Figshare portal, allowing supplementary data to the Society's publications to be accessed and cited more easily. Authors are encouraged to submit their full datasets as part of their supplementary material, ensuring open access to these data for other researchers and the wider public.

A new type of short review paper was introduced in the Journal of the Geological Society – 'the Review Focus'. They have been well used and other journals are looking at this approach.

Library services continued to develop during the year. A new e-book collection was launched in March 2015 and has proved popular. The number of e-journals available to Fellows now stands at over 100. A major step was taken towards digitising the extensive map collection, with the scanning and XML tagging of the African collection of over 3000 map sheets. There have been some issues with copyright but work continues, and it will help to preserve and secure the valuable information inherent in these maps, many of which are very rare, for future generations.

A new library catalogue was launched in early 2016 and is now available online with greatly improved functionality.

There were public engagement events run by the Library, including '*The Geologists' House*' which introduced visitors to the Society's unique William Smith collections, and '*First Geologist on the Moon*', beaming in Honorary Fellow and Apollo astronaut Harrison Schmitt in a screening of his 1973 lecture at the Society.

Colin North thanked the staff in the Publishing House and the Library.

### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Graham Goffey said that although the net income surplus in 2015 was £235k, compared with £694k in 2014, the Society was financially healthy with £390k to reserves. Fellowship numbers and income from the Publishing House continued to grow, but the depressed natural resources industries and weakening stock markets

meant a substantial reduction in income from investments, from some events such as those run by the Petroleum Group, and from Corporate Affiliates.

Publishing print sales continued to decline as expected, but usage of the Lyell Collection and the income this generates increased significantly.

Revised accounting practices allowed the Society to amend accounting treatment of so-called 'heritage assets' – primarily its holding of books and periodicals - which were valued at just under £15m in 2014. The revised balance sheet value in this category is just over £1m which gives a much clearer picture of the Society's financial position.

The Society's information technology systems are no longer fit for purpose and in particular the accounting and Fellowship services system. A significant project is underway to renew and upgrade these systems in order to improve the service to Fellows and to allow more effective working by staff.

Adam Law reported in 2015 that the Burlington House lease is under renegotiation. This is currently the subject of arbitration between the Society and other 'Courtyard Societies', excluding the Royal Academy, and the landlord (the Department for Communities and Local Government). The outcome is uncertain although it will undoubtedly mean an escalating increase in rent. There is determination amongst Council and the staff to maintain tenure.

The possibility of significant increases in the cost of the accommodation the Society needs to sustain its activities means that financial stability and growth must be at the heart of the new 10-year strategy. The impact that the downturn in the natural resources industries had on the financial outturn for 2015 underlined the continuing heavy reliance on these industries. The Society also continues to be highly dependent on surpluses from publishing to support core activities, and will need to diversify income streams as a matter of urgency to maintain its strength. A more commercial approach will inevitably be needed.

The Accounts for 2015 were approved by Council on 6 April 2016 and the Budget for 2016 on 25 November 2015. The meeting RECEIVED these two items.

## **6. COMMENTS FROM FELLOWS**

There were several questions and various concerns raised about the arrangement with the Royal Academy for some of their staff to use the Fellows' Room during building work. The President said that legal advice had been taken and that Council were aware of the arrangement. There was lengthy discussion with some Fellows continuing to voice their concerns.

Malcolm Brown, the incoming President, said a number of important matters had been raised which was helpful. It was important to recognise that the rent at Burlington House will increase and that unless there is income to pay this rent the Society will not be able maintain its tenancy in the longer term. He undertook to reflect further on the matter and report back to the Fellowship.

## **7. REPORT OF SCRUTINEERS ON THE BALLOT FOR COUNCIL**

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

Mr Rick Brassington, Mr Malcolm Brown, Dr Jason Canning, Miss Liv Carroll, Dr Nigel Cassidy, Mr Chris Eccles, Dr Marie Edmonds, Mr Graham Goffey, Dr Sarah Gordon, Mrs Tricia Henton, Mr David Hopkins, Ms Naomi Jordan, Dr Robert Larter, Dr Jennifer McKinley, Prof David Norbury, Dr Colin North, Dr Sheila Peacock, Mr Nicholas Reynolds, Dr Katherine Royse, Prof Christine Peirce, Mr Keith Seymour, Dr Alexander Whittaker and Mr Michael Young

The ballot for Officers then took place.

## **8. FELLOWSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2017**

Council agreed in April 2015 that Fellowship fee increases would be linked to the rate of Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) as measured in February of each year. The increase for 2016 was 0%, based upon a zero CPI rate rise as at February 2015. The CPI figure for February 2016 was 0.3%. The Finance & Planning committee recommended to Council not to increase Fellowship fees for 2017 on the basis that the total increase in the Society's fee income by applying this formula was minimal, that even a small rise would be unwelcome to those Fellows affected by the economic downturn in the extractive industries; and that in future years it may be necessary to increase fees above the rate provided by this formula. At its meeting on 6 April 2016 Council agreed to recommend to the Fellowship for approval no increase in the subscription rates for 2017. This is expected to be a one-off occurrence and fees are expected to rise in future years to keep pace with costs.

The following subscriptions for 2017 were agreed *nem con*:

	2017 £
Junior Candidate Fellows	10.00
Candidate Fellows	15.00
Candidate Fellow full course fee	40.00
27 and under	70.00
28-33	130.00
34-59	198.00
34-59 (Overseas)	152.00
60-64 (existing)	99.00
60-64 (new)	130.00
65-69	99.00
70+	68.00
Concessions	70.00
Full time postgraduate MSc	28.00
Full time postgraduate PhD	41.00

## **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. These names are attached at Annex A.

## **10. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

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

## **11. REPORT OF SCRUTINEERS ON THE BALLOT FOR OFFICERS**

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

President	Mr Malcolm Brown
Vice Presidents	Mr Chris Eccles
	Mr Keith Seymour
Treasurer	Mr Graham Goffey
Secretary, Foreign & External Affairs	Mr Michael Young
Secretaries	Miss Liv Carroll
	Dr Marie Edmonds
	Dr Colin North

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **13. VOTE OF THANKS**

David Manning welcomed Malcolm Brown as President. 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, the 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:

Mrs Natalyn Ala  
Dr Angela Coe  
Mr Jim Coppard  
Mrs Jane Dottridge  
Mr David Jones  
Prof David Manning  
Dr Lucy Slater

The President thanked the Executive Secretary for her leadership of the staff and through her conveyed his thanks to all the staff.

Malcolm Brown thanked David Manning on behalf of the Fellowship for his service to the Society during his presidency.

## **14. DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

A provisional date for the next Annual General Meeting of 7 June 2017 was agreed.

*John Armitage*  
*David Julian Bishopp*  
*Brian John Bluck*  
*Brian Chadwick*  
*Howard Colley*  
*Robert Vincent Davis*  
*William John French* (Honorary Treasurer)  
*Philip Arthur Garrett*  
*Michael Golden*  
*Donn S Gorsline*  
*Douglas Harley Haddow*  
*Arthur Feodor Hagner*  
*Alfred Brian Hawkins* (Editor QJEGH)  
*Alec James Kenyon-Smith* (Honorary Treasurer)  
*Sripadrao Kilpady*  
*Charles Frederick Kluth*  
*Albert Ludford*  
*John Bullamore Mackie*  
*John Bryan McNicholas*  
*Eileen Winifred Owen*  
*Joseph Piffaretti*  
*Jane Anne Plant*  
*Robert Millar Ramsden*  
*Eugen Seibold*  
*Robert Frederick Symes*  
*Alexander Puleston Terris*  
*George Theokritoff*  
*Robert Gilbert Thomas*  
*Roelof Van Der Merwe*  
*John Frederick Watson*  
*Robert Leslie Watts*  
*Leigh Dorrien Weston*  
*Christopher John Wood*  
*John Bucknall Wright*