

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 6 June 2019

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 6 JUNE 2018

These were agreed.

3. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS

Edmund Nickless and David Shilston were appointed as the scrutineers for the ballots for Council and Officers.

4. BALLOT FOR COUNCIL

The ballot for Council was declared open and Fellows were asked to vote for the new Council for 2019/2020.

5. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2018

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President said the scientific theme for 2018 was the Year of Resources and a busy programme kicked off with a flagship meeting on Lithium and peaked with the William Smith meeting on mineral resources at the frontier. He was surprised that some people do not realise that if something is not grown then it has to be taken out of the ground.

The Public Lecture series was taken out to the regions. These developed the Resources theme further but with some characteristically thought-provoking diversions into subjects such as dinosaur thought and behaviour and the role of the Geologist in capacity building, the latter given by Martin Smith who shared his fascinating experiences in Afghanistan.

Our Education Department was as busy as ever adding to our factsheets with one on mining and another on mineral resources plus a poster showing from where the various metals in smart phones come. Existing activities in Education and Outreach continue to grow; in particular the Schools and Early Career Challenge has been split into two separate days as a result of increasing entries from the regions.

Chartership continues to grow, emphasising the increasing importance of professional recognition in the workplace. This contrasts with the lack of growth in overall Fellowship numbers. The Fellowship survey was designed to develop an understanding of the underlying causes and will be the subject of a full analysis.

A number of long-standing staff members left in 2018. Nic Bilham, Director of Policy & Communications, was with the Society for over 20 years in various positions and was replaced by Alicia Newton as Director of Science & Communications. Maggie Simmons replaced Angharad Hills as Head of Editorial Development. Ted Nield retired as Editor of *Geoscientist* and was replaced by Amy Whitchurch. Alex McPherson replaced Jonathan Silk as Director of Finance & Operations. A new post of Head of Development was created and Jenny Boland is the first incumbent. Bill Gaskarth is also standing down after many years of great service as Chartership Officer. The President thanked all these people.

An important development was the introduction of a code of conduct for meetings and a safeguarding policy to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults during any Society event.

Council adopted the Society's 10-year strategy in 2017. The 2019 Business Plan was approved by Council in November 2018. Highlights include a review of Fellowship categories, diversifying income streams, strengthening the organisation and securing our future at Burlington House. This was developed after considerable work by Richard Hughes and the staff and the President said he would report on progress next year.

SECRETARIES' REPORTS

Professional

Prof Katherine Royse, Secretary Professional Matters, gave her report.

Fellowship numbers remained steady at 11,427 (2017 – 11,429) and 955 Students (2017 – 980). The prime focus in 2019 will be the analysis of the Fellowship survey to understand why we are remaining steady and not growing.

The number of Chartered Geologists in July 2018 was 2726 (2017 – 2719) and it is very pleasing to see the title is gradually establishing a foothold in new sectors, notably oil and gas.

The Society also offers the title of Chartered Scientist (under licence from the Science Council) and European Geologist, and the Society continues to admit by far the largest number (41% of all EurGeols) of any national association of the European Federation of Geologists (EFG).

The new online CPD system was launched in December 2018.

The Chartership Audit Committee carried out its first full internal review of chartership processes since 2011, examining the period from June 2016 to May 2017. During this time the annual number of chartership applications almost doubled from 112 to 205. The Committee found that high standards had been maintained and that issues identified in the previous audit had been largely addressed. Bill Gaskarth, who was awarded the EFG Medal of Merit in 2019, was rightly commended for his commitment, knowledge and hard work in the key role of Chartership Officer.

Accreditation of company training programmes continued to thrive with the addition of five new programmes, bringing the total to 36. The Society also accredited degree programmes at the University of Bristol and at Royal Holloway University of London. It was pleasing to report that there are now 175 accredited undergraduate programmes (including overseas and industrial placement variants) and 11 accredited MSc programmes.

External Relations

Dr Sarah Gordon, Secretary for Foreign & External Affairs, gave her report.

She said that 2018 saw the Society leverage the 'year of resources' and 'year of carbon'. Materials such as the minerals smart phone poster and a mineral resources card game were incorporated in the teacher packs, 150 of which were sent to teachers primarily in under-served areas in preparation of Earth Science Week. These initiatives spark a huge amount of dialogue which is core to what the Society does.

Eleven schools attended the finals of the National Schools Geology Challenge which is an annual event. Competition was stiff and Sarah Gordon congratulated all those who entered.

The Society responded to a wide range of inquiries and policy consultations during 2018. These included:-

- UK Government National Geospatial Strategy
- BEIS Select Committee Inquiry – Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage
- Science & Technology Committee – Balance and effectiveness of research and innovation spending
- Science & Technology Committee – Technologies for meeting clean growth emissions reduction targets.

Another highlight was a briefing note on Geology and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Society is represented on cross-party and all parliamentary groups on STEM in the UK and all devolved nations.

Our Honorary Fellows are individuals from any country in the world, including the UK, who have rendered significant service to science, and geoscience in particular, and who by association with the Society send out a clear message about our strategic aims and objectives. Two Honorary Fellows were elected in 2018 – Yildirim Dilek and Markku Iljina.

There was an increase in the Society's social media presence. There are 42.5k Twitter followers (+ 3.5k), 13,909 Facebook followers (+1.9k) and 1,363 followers on Instagram.

Science

Dr Alex Whittaker, Secretary Science, said the series of annual science themes has been a major success since it started in 2015 with the Year of Mud. 2018 was the Year of Resources, 2019 is the Year of Carbon, 2020 will be the Year of Life and 2021 the Year of Space. The themes are a great way of inspiring people and are intended to be cross-cutting and to embrace fundamental areas of research as well as economically and societally important applications. They inform both our scientific meetings programme and wider education and outreach activities, but not all of our conferences necessarily speak to these theme years.

There were ten public lectures in 2018 with lectures held in London, Aberdeen, Newcastle and Belfast.

The Science Committee has started to look at how we can most effectively direct our research grants and funds, to maximise the benefit to potential recipients (usually early in their careers) and our science, and this work will continue. This will be particularly valuable as we seek to grow the resources we are able to put into this vital area which

is a good way of encouraging early career people to become Fellows. Feedback from recipients is that the grants make a transformative effect. One of the criteria for receiving a grant is to write a report and it is pleasing to see the work done with the Society's funds.

There was a new scholarship funded by Zeiss for microscopy work. The total fund is £8k and there were two winners.

The Lyell Meeting took Mass Extinctions as its topic. Other meetings were:-

- Bryan Lovell meeting: Mining for the future
- Resources in extreme environments
- Eastern Mediterranean – an emerging major petroleum province
- Use of the deep subsurface in the UK: implications for groundwater resources?
- Marine minerals
- Lithium: From exploration to end user
- Seismic characterisation of carbonate platforms and reservoirs.

Our risk-related conferences included those on building resilience to geohazards, ground-related risk and transport infrastructure, flooding, and contaminated land risk assessment. There was another highly successful Janet Watson meeting, aimed at early career, 'A Data Explosion: the Impact of Big Data in Geoscience'.

The Science Committee continued to work at building closer links with the Specialist Groups with another successful annual gathering of Specialist Group chairs. This is a useful opportunity to share thinking among the groups and to keep them closely involved in the delivery of our science programme and other activities. A new affiliated Specialist Group was formed – the UK Palaeoclimate Society.

Publications

Dr Colin North, Secretary Publications, said he has commented in the past on the potential threat of Open Access and its impact on the Society's income. There were major developments in 2018 to which the Society had to react. Plan S from a coalition of major European research publishers was announced. The requirements of Plan S are a direct threat to the business models used by the Society and a wide range of similar learned and professional societies which channel publishing revenues to support their respective communities. The Society has responded to Plan S and over the last year the Publishing House staff have been considering options. One of these was joining with other organisations in a new entirely Open Access journal which will be a consortium of other learned societies. Colin North announced that this will be proceeding and will be run by GeoScienceWorld (GSW) who will undertake to bring it into existence and their board is underwriting the start-up cost. This venture is seen as one of the steps to diversifying activity. The Society's other, highly regarded journals will continue.

The Lyell Collection was a great initiative some years ago and it is paying off. Sales and usage continue to be strong. There were 1.5 million full text downloads – 25% up on 2017.

Petroleum Geoscience celebrates its 25th anniversary and will be launching a new section, *Energy Geoscience*, providing a new home for papers on non-petroleum, sub-surface geo-energy systems, such as long-term repositories for the geological sequestration of carbon, shorter-term cyclic storage of energy and lowering environmental risk.

Colin North congratulated the Library staff who have been very active. It is very important to get our material known to the wider world and let others share and make

good use of this resource. One of the ways of doing this is to participate in international cataloguing. The Library joined SUNCAT, a union catalogue allowing researchers, students and librarians to locate journals held in over 100 libraries across the UK. Work to join the newly-developed National Bibliographic Knowledgebase also began.

The Library staff were also involved in public outreach. Gold Rush! was a geological time-travelling treasure hunt as part of the Burlington House Courtyard Lates. Open House – which included a prehistoric monster hunt - had a record number of 1,812 visitors. History Day at Senate House was a conference attended by 65 library and archive exhibitors and over 300 postgraduate history students, researchers and writers from the UK and overseas. Colin North thanked all those who gave their time to make these events happen.

There were four exhibitions in the Lower Library:- A Stone Most Fit and Proper: Geology of the House of Parliament; The Life of Charles Moore: geologist and fossil collector; Brixham Cave and the Antiquity of Man; Mapping Africa – the mid-20th century rush for knowledge. All these events help the public to understand geology in relation to their lives.

The Library loaned four items to the Charles Dickens Museum for their Man of Science exhibition. On display from the Society's Special Collections were Roderick Murchison's geological hammer, Henry De La Beche's drawings 'Duria Antiquor' and 'Awful Changes' and William Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise.

Colin North said this was his final year as Publications Secretary. He thanked the staff at the Publishing House and the Library and commended them for their work.

Treasurer's Report

Mr Graham Goffey said the underlying financial performance for 2018 was broadly in line with prior year norms, although the expenditure included a number of items which can be regarded as exceptional and had an adverse effect.

Firstly, the back rent on Burlington House – for the last few years there has not been a lease in place. There is now a new lease and the Society has to catch up with the rent due which is very much higher than forecast.

Secondly, Alex McPherson, Director of Finance & Operations, carried out a detailed review of the balance sheet. There are two large items which are effectively negative adjustments to the Accounts which are an adjustment of £160k in the way we have been accounting for the cost of sales at the Publishing House; and write off of debtor balances of £60k.

The operating deficit for the year was -£0.33m (cf 2017 operating surplus £0.22m). The overall outcome was a deficit of -£0.65m (cf 2017 surplus £0.43m).

There was a significant fall in the investment fund, although most of this fall was subsequently recovered.

The Charity Commission require the Society to set a target for free reserves. At the end of 2018 we were below the target range, partly due to the fall in the value of the investment portfolio and the recovery will push this back up. More diligence is also required in tracking expenditure to various funds and a detailed review of fund attribution will be undertaken and is expected to increase free reserves.

The new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has not been without its challenges and the system has not gone live with functionality in an optimal way. It has been a difficult and complex process and is still very much a work in progress.

A great deal of work is being done under Alex McPherson to improve processes in the Finance Department.

A major piece of work was undertaken to develop and maximise the effectiveness of staff. There is a new remuneration structure, salaries were benchmarked and the performance management scheme reviewed.

The renewed Burlington House lease gives security of tenure until 2024 but with substantial rent increases which will be extremely difficult for the Society and most other Courtyard Societies to sustain for more than a few years. Legal and surveyor advice confirms that there is no basis on which to challenge the rents.

The landlord, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, understands the consequences of the escalating rent trajectory and a vast amount of work is being done to find a solution. These discussions are sensitive and it remains imperative that Fellows do not seek to lobby on behalf of the Society at this stage.

There has been a degree of contingency planning. Council's preference is to find a solution which provides long term tenure at Burlington House.

The President thanked the Secretaries and the Treasurer for their work on behalf of the Society.

The Accounts for 2018 were approved by Council on 3 May 2019 and the Budget for 2019 on 6 February 2019. Copies were available for inspection and the meeting RECEIVED these two items.

6. GEOSCIENTIST

Andy Fleet, Editor in Chief, gave his report. He said the big event of the year was the appointment of the new Editor, Amy Whitchurch. A survey of Fellows said they valued the format so the remit is to maintain this but to introduce new features, e.g. careers advice and conference reports.

A digital object identifier (DOI) system was introduced. This is a way of tracking and archiving digital content so that it is easier to find. The return of the crossword was welcomed and Andy Fleet thanked the compiler.

Looking forward, further refinement will continue. The tender for design and distribution is just starting and will include a new, more modern format and perhaps a biodegradable wrapper although the latter is an expensive option.

Andy Fleet reminded the meeting that *Geoscientist* is for the Fellows and is independent of Council. It is there for Fellows to express their opinions and views within certain lines of propriety. The Editor maintains the write to cut off correspondence once it starts to become repetitive. He asked Fellows to contribute to the magazine to keep it alive as an area of dialogue.

7. COMMENTS FROM FELLOWS

Mike Ridd questioned the Society's position on the current consensus of climate science.

He said that an article had been placed in the *Geoscientist* magazine's Soap Box section detailing his and others concerns. They feel sceptics are being frozen out of the conversation. An open letter was submitted and published in *Geoscientist* repeating their thoughts on this.

He added that a conference proposal was submitted on this subject; however, he has not received a response. He suggested that this is 'shutting down the debate'.

The President said that climate change is not in his area of expertise and therefore he cannot respond with any authority. He said the Society's statement on climate change is under review and a panel of experts will carry this out. He intends to present their open letter to the reviewing panel.

The Science Secretary, Alex Whittaker, outlined how conference proposals are decided and confirmed that the Committee reviewed the proposal and felt that it was lacking in certain areas. Their feedback was sent to the proposers. He added that he would be happy to discuss this further after the AGM.

8. REPORT OF SCRUTINEERS ON THE BALLOT FOR COUNCIL

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

Mr Thomas Backhouse, Mr Andrew Bloodworth, Mr John Booth, Dr Michael Daly, Ms Lesley Dunlop, Dr Joel Gill, Mr Graham Goffey, Dr Kathryn Goodenough, Dr Sarah Gordon, Prof James Griffiths, Prof Chris King, Mr Andrew Moore, Dr Bryne Ngwenya, Mr Nicholas Reynolds, Prof Nicholas Rogers, Prof Katherine Royse, Mrs Sarah Scott, Ms Gemma Sherwood, Miss Jessica Smith, Dr Helen Smyth, Prof Robin Strachan, Mr John Talbot and Dr Alexander Whittaker

The ballot for Officers then took place.

9. FELLOWSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2020

Since 2015 the annual increase in Fellowship Fees has been set with reference to the prevailing annual rate of Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation when proposals are considered for the following year in March and April. The rate of CPI for January 2019 was 1.8%. Inflation has recently been on a downward trend and in recent months has been fairly static. It is forecast to rise slightly in the coming months and though the effects of an exit from the EU is unknown, it is projected to be in the 2.0% - 2.2% range during 2020. It is an established principle that the Fellowship fees should be set at a level commensurate with the cost of providing fellowship services, therefore an increase in line with CPI is recommended.

At its meeting on 17 April Council agreed to recommend to the Fellowship an increase in the subscription rates for 2020 of 1.8%. Due to rounding, not all categories are adjusted and the maximum fee payable will be £214, up by £4 on the equivalent 2019 rate.

The following subscriptions for 2020 were AGREED:

	2020	Total members as at June 2019
	£	
Junior Candidate Fellows	10.00	154
Candidate Fellows	15.00	499
27 and under	75.00	1287
28-33	140.00	1337
34-59	214.00	4491
34-59 (Overseas)	164.00	839
60-64 65-69	138.00	542
	105.00	1101
70+	72.00	803
Full time postgraduate MSc	30.00	129
Full time postgraduate PhD	43.00	211

10. DEATHS

The President read a list of those Honorary Fellows and Fellows whose deaths had been reported since the last Annual General Meeting. These names are attached at Annex A.

11. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

The meeting APPROVED the appointment of RSM UK as the Society's Auditors.

12. REPORT OF SCRUTINEERS ON THE BALLOT FOR OFFICERS

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

President	Prof Nicholas Rogers
Vice Presidents	Mr John Booth
	Mr Nicholas Reynolds
	Miss Jessica Smith
	Mr John Talbot
Treasurer	Mr Graham Goffey
Secretary, Foreign & External Affairs	Dr Sarah Gordon
Secretaries	Prof Robin Strachan
	Prof Katherine Royse
	Dr Alexander Whittaker

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

14. VOTE OF THANKS

The President welcomed Michael Daly as the President-designate. He also welcomed the other 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:

Dr Jason Canning
Dr Naomi Jordan
Dr Robert Larter
Dr Colin North
Dr Sheila Peacock
Mr Keith Seymour

The President thanked the staff for their work.

15. DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The provisional date for the next Annual General Meeting is Thursday, 4 June 2020.

Robert Alexander Agar
Peter Marriott Barber
Barry Barnes
Edward Scudder Belt
James Bruce Blanche
Martin Harold Phillips Bott
Reginald Bradshaw
Wallace Broecker
Kevin Charles Anthony Burke
Raymond John Thomas Butler
David Francis Mackie Carmichael
John Alfred Catt
Patrick Cecil Hamilton Chillingworth
Keith Clayton
Herbert Basil Sutton Cooke
Barbara Charlotte Cornes
Christopher Michael Davies
Margaret Elsie Dobson
Alan Roy Drysdall
Brian Norman Fletcher
Daniel Walter Griffin
Gordon Herries-Davies - not a Fellow but author of Whatever is under the Earth
John Andrew Huckerby
David Martyn Ince
Richard Ireland
Richard Philip Boyd James
Edward Allan Jobbins
Nicholas Hugh Kempton
John Farquharson Lambert
Robert Ian Lawson
Peter Llewellyn
Edward Lynch
Aubrey William George Manning
Robert McQuillin
William Henry Max Matheson
Eldridge M Moores
Roy Alan Nicholls
Michael John Crossley Nutt
Miles Francis Osmaston
Brinley Roberts
Rogério Eduardo Boradalo Da Rocha
Michael Ryan
Godfrey John Shrimpton
Ian Morven Simpson
John Tarney
John James Veevers
Robert Keith Westhead
Owen Lister White
Andrew Gordon Whitham
Stephen John Whyatt
Nigel Harvey Trewin
Gerald J Wasserburg
Michael John Patterson Welland
John Brodie Wilson
David Richard Workman
Paul Lawrence Younger
Walter H Ziegler