

# The Geological Society of London

## COUNCIL

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

PRESENT: Nick Rogers (*Chair*), Andrew Bloodworth, John Booth (*Vice President*), Jason Canning, Graham Goffey (*Treasurer*), Sarah Gordon (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Jim Griffiths, Chris King, Colin North (*Secretary, Publications*), Sheila Peacock, Nik Reynolds (*Vice President*), Katherine Royse (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Keith Seymour (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Jessica Smith, Helen Smyth, John Talbot (*Vice President, Chartership*) and Alex Whittaker (*Secretary, Science*)

APOLOGIES: Tom Backhouse, Lesley Dunlop, Naomi Jordan, Rob Larter, Bryne Ngwenya and Rob Strachan

In attendance: Richard Hughes (Executive Secretary), Neal Marriott (Director of Publishing), Alex McPherson (Director of Finance & Operations), Alicia Newton (Director of Science & Communications) and Stephanie Jones (Administrative Secretary)

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Sheila Peacock is a member of the Council of the Royal Astronomical Society and may be conflicted on matters relating to the Burlington House lease and publishing.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies NOTED.

### 3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2018

The minutes were APPROVED. A version of the minutes will be published on the website, with an explanation if items have been removed or reduced.

SJ

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 *Future Science report*: Alicia Newton said a draft is being put together.

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4.2 *Review of Degree Accreditation Scheme* – Alicia Newton said the results from the employers survey are to hand and being put into report. The committee is meeting soon and one of their tasks will be to set a date for the completion of the review.

4.3 *President's Awards* – there are only a small number of nominations and Nick Rogers asked Council to consider and put forward candidates, in industry or academe, by the end of February. Candidates must be within 8 years of their first degree.

Council

4.4 *Safeguarding Policy* – the comments from November Council were incorporated. Judi Lakin and Amy Ball are completing their qualification and the policy will go live once our qualified Designated Safeguarding Officer is in place.

### 5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

5.1 *Report of Officers' Meeting*

Officers met this morning and the discussion was mainly about staffing matters. Alex McPherson gave a briefing on IT support, a matter of some concern which is being brought under control.

5.2 *Identification of the President-designate (CM/01/19)*

There were three nominations for President-designate. Under the Regulations Council is required to forward no more than two names to the Fellowship for election. Council held a secret ballot with the result that the Fellowship will be asked to decide between Prof Jonathan Craig and Dr Michael Daly.

- 5.3 *Ordinary members of Council* - there are seven nominations for the remaining five vacancies that will arise at the 6 June Annual General Meeting.

6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

- 6.1 *Executive Secretary* (CM/02/19)

Richard Hughes briefed Council on the Burlington House lease [confidential to Council].

Council was presented with a year-end summary of progress on the 2018 business plan which showed that the majority of business objectives were delivered on time, within budget and to required quality.

Richard Hughes attended the GeoscienceWorld Board meeting in Washington DC in mid December. He was elected Chair of the Board for a three-year term.

He attended the Hong Kong Regional Group dinner in late January, meeting with Hong Kong University and several local companies with accredited training programmes. He also went to Kuala Lumpur for discussions with the Malaysian Geological Society, Geological Survey and Board of Geologists about the potential for Fellowship and Chartership growth.

- 6.2 *Director of Finance & Operations* (CM/03/19)

Alex McPherson presented the draft December management accounts.

The statutory audit engagement has commenced.

Collection of 2019 renewals is progressing well with over 8k renewed to date.

The Fellowship Survey is 60 pages and Alex McPherson will work on producing some meaningful contextual conclusions which he will circulate to Council.

The CRM system is relatively stable and occasionally slow. Work continues in various areas around improving the system. A proposal is awaited from a CRM specialist for a data migration audit and review of project specification versus delivered system.

AMc

*IT* – a review of the recommendations of an IT review is underway. This includes long-term resourcing, disaster recovery and business continuity, as well as cloud migration review.

*Health & Safety* – no incidents at Burlington House or the Publishing House although there was a near miss at Burlington House when a member of staff tripped. Remedial action was taken. Defibrillator training received at the Publishing House and is being arranged at Burlington House.

Alex McPherson gave a report to Council on a fraud perpetrated on one of the specialist groups and the remedial actions taken (full report on item contains information which is confidential) Nik Reynolds suggested bringing together Treasurers of all the groups who have Society bank accounts for training.

6.3 *Director of Science & Communications (CM/04/19)*

Alicia Newton said the Geoscience Education Academy will go ahead in a reduced form. The Education Department will work with Jenny Boland, Head of Development, to raise sponsorship to build the event back up.

The Society has been involved in a number of ways with the ongoing work of DECC and latterly BEIS to support the development of a siting process for a geological disposal facility. It assisted in establishing a 'National Geological Screening Independent Review Panel' which reported directly to DECC and then BEIS. The final report of the panel was submitted in 2017 and is now available on the Society's website.

Following two years of declining applications for Earth science degree programmes, the Society will be working with University Geoscience UK to promote geology as a subject and a career.

The current conference registration system is becoming increasingly unstable. A third-party system is being investigated and a proposal will be taken to the Finance & Planning committee. For GSL-branded conferences we are moving away from printed abstract books to a pdf e-mailed to attendees and made available on the website.

6.4 *Report of the Director of Publishing (CM/05/19)*

Neal Marriott said that renewal notices for 2019 subscriptions were sent out in late summer 2018 with new prices and instructions for renewal. The CRM system is not generating the required reports so reporting on progress on the renewals is delayed but it is hoped the information will be available in the next week or two. A further report will come to April Council.

Publons, a reviewer recognition service, was launched and the initial response is positive. The Society has a 28% take up rate across its portfolio (Publons report an average uptake of 28%). The satisfaction rating across all Publons registered journals is 80% but for JGS it is 98% which is very pleasing.

A GSL published paper on the theoretical tsunami risks associated with the Anak Krakatau volcano has been widely referenced and cited since the actual December tsunami. Publishing House staff quickly identified the relevance of the paper, promoting it and making it freely available over the Christmas period. The result was article downloads in excess of 19k and an Altmetric score of 725, putting it in the top 5% of all research outputs featured on Altmetrics.

*Developing open access landscape – COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE AND CONFIDENTIAL TO COUNCIL*

7. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CM/06/19)

Jenny Boland, Head of Development, presented her report.

The Philanthropy Company undertook a fundraising audit on behalf of the Society in 2017. The purpose was to assess the potential for the Society to raise money from philanthropic sources. The findings from the Philanthropy Company's audit led to the recruitment of the Head of Development in September 2018.

The remit for the Head of Development is to devise, implement and manage a strategic approach to development and fundraising in order to create sustainable and substantial sources of income for the Society.

A Development Strategy has been prepared which outlines the Society's key funding priorities and potential income streams. There were four items which Council was

NM

asked to consider:-

*How to articulate the Society's 'Vision'*

Although it has a 10-year strategy, the Society currently has no clear 'vision statement' that identifies an over-arching purpose. A small group that works outside Council will be brought together to frame this statement.

RH

*Standing collection box in reception*

Council AGREED to place a collection box in reception but asked for a protocol to be put in place, not least to protect staff who will be handling the donations. They also suggested that, if possible, Gift Aid forms are available.

*Donation request included as part of Public Lecture presentation slides*

Council AGREED and slides to say for what donations are used.

*An 'honours board' to acknowledge legacy gifts of over £250,000*

Council AGREED but is the amount is correct.

Council endorsed the formation of a Development Committee and noted this will be a top priority for Richard Hughes once the lease work is completed.

The Development Strategy was APPROVED. Nick Rogers thanked Jenny Boland for her work on this document and the lease project where she is collating the information.

JB (all actions)

7. PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CHARTERSHIP APPLICATIONS (CM/07/19)

From the recent work involved in the Society's bid to be licensed to award CEng, it became apparent that the Society is lagging behind the Engineering Council and the Science Council, as well as many other chartered professional institutions, in the academic standards required of applicants for chartered status. John Talbot proposed that the Society considers increasing its current educational standard to a similar level to those for the two Councils mentioned above. This proposal was formulated in Chartership Committee and has the approval of the Professional Committee.

The Engineering and Science Councils require that their Chartership applicants have achieved an 'educational standard to at least Masters level, or equivalent via other learning' represented by one of the following routes: -

- i) An accredited or approved Bachelor's degree (BSc) with honours in Geoscience, plus either an appropriate Master's degree (MSc) or a Doctorate (PhD)
- ii) an accredited or approved integrated Master's degree, eg, MGeol, MSci, etc;
- iii) further learning to achieve Master's level educational knowledge.

Both i) & ii) are classed as exemplifying academic qualifications.

Council APPROVED the proposal in principal but asked for a written specification of the requirements to achieve route iii). Colin North and Alex Whittaker offered to assist with the drafting of these requirements. Andrew Bloodworth said this clarity is also important for scrutineers. The agreed statement will be posted on the website.

JT

8. 2019 BUDGET (CM/07/19)

Council approved the budget for 2019 at their November meeting. It was further considered in detail by the Finance & Planning Committee on 16 January 2019 and there are certain additions, viz, a budgeted non-cash investment gain and the use

and deployment of funds.

Alex McPherson said outgoings exceed income and he is working with budget holders to identify problem areas earlier.

Council NOTED the changes to the 2019 Budget.

10. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/09/19)

Council NOTED the reports of the standing committees.

11. ELECTIONS

11.1 *Fellowship (CM/10/19)*

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the Ordinary General Meeting on 28 November 2018.

11.2 *Chartered Geologists (CM/11/19)*

The applications from Fellows listed to become Chartered Geologists had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were AGREED by Council.

11.3 *Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/12/19)*

Council AGREED to elect as Candidate Fellows and Junior Candidate Fellows those applicants listed.

11.4 *Chartered Scientist (CM/13/19)*

Council AGREED to elect as Chartered Scientists those applicants listed.

11.5 *European Geologists (CM/14/19)*

Council APPROVED the names listed as European Geologists.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Council recorded its thanks to Janine Benn, Fellowship Services Secretary, and Angela Edwards, Facilities Manager, who are leaving the Society after service of nearly 40 and over 20 years respectively.

12.2 Richard Hughes asked Council members to keep their expense claims to a minimum, and in particular to take advantage of purchasing advance train fares.

Council

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17 April 2019

