

Council Meeting

28 February 2013
12:30-15:30

Charles 2, Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street,
London WC1N 2JU

Web Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

The President welcomed Council and observers and on behalf of Council, expressed gratitude to Dr William Marshall and Prof Martin Humphries, as this was their last Council Meeting. The President welcomed two new MO observers, Elaine Snell, British Neuroscience Association and Elizabeth Rollinson, Linnean Society. The President welcomed Gemma Garrett, who had been seconded from the Biochemical Society to cover maternity leave.

Action: Mark Downs (MD) to write to Prof Martin Humphries and express Council's gratitude for his contribution

Present: Prof Dame Nancy Rothwell (President)
Prof Chris Kirk (Honorary Secretary)
Dr William Marshall (Honorary Treasurer)
Prof Julia Buckingham
Dr Paul Brooker
Prof Peter Downes
Mr Tim Brigstocke
Dr Liz Lakin (by teleconference)
Dr Kim Hardie
Dr Pat Goodwin
Ms Sue Thorn

Observers: Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive
Ms Elizabeth Rollinson, Linnean Society
Ms Elaine Snell, British Neuroscience Association
Dr Laura Bellingan, Head of Science Policy
Mr Jon Kudlick, Director of Membership, Marketing & Communications
Ms Natasha Neill, Executive Officer
Ms Gemma Garrett, Head of Education

Nancy Rothwell
13/06/13

Ms Jen Crook (Minutes)

Apologies: Prof Chris Garland
Prof Rosie Hails
Prof John Coggins
Dr Jeremy Pritchard
Dr Aileen Allsop
Prof Martin Humphries
Dr Stephen Benn, Director of Parliamentary Affairs

1.1 Declaration of interests

No items declared.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 December 2012

2.1 Review of action points

All actions had either been completed or appeared on the Agenda.

2.2 Matters arising not on the Agenda

Nothing reported.

2.3 Approval of Minutes and web Minutes

Council approved the Minutes and web Minutes, with the addition of Prof Peter Downes as attendee.

2.4 Conflicts of interest

The President informed Council of her involvement with the Russell Group and CST.

3. Report from ETP

In the absence of the Chair of ETP the CEO gave a brief overview of the meeting referencing the paper Council had before them. Council discussed the debate around Scottish independence and agreed that the Society should provide a clear view whilst maintaining political neutrality. The A Level reform debate was a key area of concern. The President felt there was a need for a unified voice with the RSC and IoP but this would best be done through SCORE. Council thanked ETP for their work and report.

3.1 Accreditation

Liz Lakin (LL) reported that Accreditation was going well, with a good team in place, and was now seen as a major investment area. There had been a lot of interest in assessor training days and ten dates diaried over the next 2-3 months for Accreditation team members to visit HEIs. LL added that an extended AWG meeting in May will cover some of

the forward looking strategic approaches needed. Accreditation of one year *in vivo* (*animal science*) courses will also be taken forward. Council applauded the success of the accreditation programme.

MD reported on his meeting with David Willetts and Cogent highlighting that confusion existed over the overlap of accreditation and kite marking. The meeting had positively progressed this.

3.2 Science Policy

LB reported that there had been a recent meeting on Open Access, attended by 300+ delegates, but there was still much to be done on engagement with researchers. There was considerable other work as noted in the paper.

3.3 Research Dissemination Committee

This paper was for information and Council noted developments.

4. MMC Report

Sue Thorn (ST) reported positive membership figures, with a 20% overall increase since the start of the Society. ST felt positive about the new website drafts and congratulated the Membership Team.

The question was raised of how many Fellows the Society should have. Although organisationally very different The Royal Society for example, capped their number of Fellows. It was felt that there should be more information available detailing what Fellowship of the Society meant. The CEO noted there was guidance on the website. Council also felt that Fellowship should be equally attainable for all professionals such as teachers, but acknowledged that accumulating evidence in some professions would be more difficult than for academic members.

Council agreed that a drive was required to encourage student members to become full members.

JK reported that BBSRC had agreed to support Biology Week again this year. Natasha Neill (NN) had also been working with BBSRC on a blue plaque recognition scheme for biologists, due to be launched during Biology Week. A bid to the National Lottery was planned.

4.1 Regional Strategy

Council felt that a revised Regional Strategy would provide increased outreach. John Coggins (JC) and LL had expressed their concern about the Strategy and Council agreed that this was a sensitive important issue. Council supported an announcement only after consultation with branches about the regional grants initiatives.

The draft Strategy allowed for branch committees to continue in a different format alongside regional grants and recognition of the different political circumstances in the devolved nations, especially Scotland.

Action: TB to discuss the draft Strategy with key branch reps about options and implementation.

4.2 Membership Fees

The Finance Committee had concluded that membership fees should be increased and had discussed incentives for paying by direct debit as well as a small charge for those paying by credit card. Some members of Council felt that a quarterly direct debit fee may be better than one annual charge. Council were not wholly convinced by the Finance Committee recommendation to charge for the use of credit cards. Views were divergent. Council asked JK to take account of the debate and provide a paper for the Council which would be agreed electronically, for approval ahead of the AGM.

4.3 President's Medal

Awards would be made at the next AGM to Prof David Coates, Dr Roger Lock, Mrs Veronica Smith and Dr Alan Bedford.

5. Three Year Business Plan

MD provided a summary, highlighting the objectives and deliverables, suggesting that soft outcomes could be monitored via a membership survey. Council agreed the draft three year plan subject to any points of detail Council members may wish to submit. The President would arbitrate on any areas of contention.

6. Regulation Amendments

Chris Kirk (CK) noted that, following a response to changes and developments within the Society, the Bye-Laws had been written in such a way that most items could be changed by Council resolution in the form of Regulations. Council discussed the Distinguished Fellow grade and agreed that it should not be promoted and **approved the amended regulations.**

7. AGM Plans and Elections

NN reported that four Council terms were due to end at the next AGM. These were the Honorary Treasurer, Martin Humphries, Julia Buckingham and Peter Downes.

Two individual nominations had been received for the College of Individual Members, Richard Reece and David Blackburn, but Council had the right to co-opt in the event of gaps. Council were happy to re-appoint Prof Chris Kirk as Honorary Secretary. Prof Julia Buckingham agreed to stand again for the College of Organisational Members. Dr Pat Goodwin had been put forward for the Honorary Treasurer position. Council agreed her appointment. Council also agreed to elect Prof Downes to the Council-appointed place left vacant by the departure of Prof Martin Humphries.

8. Chief Executive's Report

On staffing, MD reported that the secondee from the Biochemical Society on a part-time basis, had now resigned. The Biochemical Society Policy Committee agreed to advertise a new joint post, initially for one year. Also, Gemma Garrett had been seconded from the Biochemical Society to cover the Head of Education's maternity leave.

The Marvin database software had been successfully developed. The IoP and the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (IMA) had since purchased the software for a small fee, plus on-going fee for three years.

9. CDH II

The Finance Committee had discussed the potential purchase of 107 Gray's Inn Road (CDH II) and were enthusiastic. MD reported that both properties would be owned jointly and CDH would be re-valued, with an aspiration to achieve 20% ownership each in the long run. Council noted it was not possible for the Society to achieve a 20% ownership in the foreseeable future.

One option was to purchase with the current sitting tenant and review after five years. Council preferred this model over other options. Neither the Finance Committee, Audit Committee or the Society's accountants had expressed any concerns regarding the purchase on financial grounds. Subject to all due diligence, Council were supportive of progressing this.

MD asked Council if they would be happy to agree the Finance Committee decision to proceed with a £250k investment of CDH II.

Decision: Council AGREED a £250k investment for CDH II plus costs after due diligence with final sign off delegated to the Honorary Officers with professional advice.

10. Report from Finance Committee

10.1 Draft Accounts for 2011-12

The final operational surplus of £56k was lower than the previous year (£380k) as the latter figure had included funds from the sale of Red Lion Court. Nonetheless it was ahead of budget (loss of £2k) at £79k including realisable investment returns. The total funds to be carried forward stood at £1.6m, which was £80k greater than the previous year. The Finance Committee asked Council to approve the accounts.

Decision: Council APPROVED the accounts for 2011-12

10.2 Going Concern and Auditors Letter

Council reviewed advice from Finance Committee and noted that the Society continued to be a going concern and agreed the Auditors letter.

The reserve fund need to be increased as the Society's policy was to reflect six months expenditure. The President expressed her thanks to the Finance Committee and congratulated the CEO on a successful year.

Decision: Council agreed that the Society was a going concern and agreed the new reserve fund of £560k.

10.3 Q1 Forecast for 2012-13

Council noted the Q1 forecast showing the Society was broadly on track with budget. There were no obvious concerns at this stage. Finance Committee had reviewed the position.

11. Committee Terms of Reference Sign Off

Council were happy with the amended Terms of Reference presented but added that they required further amendment in order to reflect the Society's revised vision in the new Business Plan.

12. AoB

On behalf of Council, the President thanked Dr William Marshall for his work as Honorary Treasurer and Prof Martin Humphries for his work on Council.

The next Council Meeting will be followed by a strategy session on 13 June 2013 at the Macdonald Hotel in Manchester.