

Council Meeting

5 June 2019

12:30-14:00

**Charles 1 & 2, Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street,
London, WC1N 2JU**

Web Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow (President)
Professor Richard Reece (Hon Secretary)
Dr Paul Brooker (Hon Treasurer)
Professor Nigel Brown
Professor Claire Wathes
Professor Hilary MacQueen
Professor Yvonne Barnett
Professor Jackie Hunter
Professor Patrick Hussey
Professor Patricia Kuwabara
Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore
Dr Louise Leong
Dr Jacqui Piner
Mr Terry Gould

Observers: Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive, Royal Society of Biology
Dr Laura Bellingan, Director of Policy & Public Affairs, Royal Society of Biology
Dr Doug Brown, British Society for Immunology
Ann Sutton, Consultant
Rachel Lambert-Forsyth, Director of Membership & Professional Affairs
Ana Ilic, Development Officer, Royal Society of Biology
Jen Crosk (Minutes), PA to CEO, Royal Society of Biology

Apologies: Professor Paul Hoskisson
Professor Caroline Austin
Professor Rebecca Oakey, Genetics Society
Dr Lucy Harper, Society for Applied Microbiology
Dr Hazel Norman, British Ecological Society
Mark Hollingsworth, Nutrition Society
Pamela Mortimer, Society for Experimental Biology

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Jono Bruun, British Pharmacological Society
Dariel Burdass, Physiological Society
Adam Hughes, Biochemical Society

The President welcomed two newly elected Trustees, Terry Gould and Jacqui Piner.

The President formally recorded her thanks to everyone involved in organising the AGM and Dr Kim Hardie for her Charter Lecture. There had been an excellent turnout at the event, held at the Law Society.

Two Fellows Lunches had recently been held, one by the President and Claire Wathes (CW) in Oxford and the other by Yvonne Barnett (YB) and Kim Hardie in Nottingham.

1.1 Declaration of interests

None reported.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 December 2018

2.1 Review of action points

All actions completed or appeared on the Agenda.

2.2 Matters arising not on the Agenda

None reported.

2.3 Approval of Minutes and Web Minutes

Council **APPROVED** the Minutes and Web Minutes subject to amendment of typographical errors including the omission of Hilary MacQueen from the membership of the Professional Affairs Committee.

2.4 Conflicts of interest

Jackie Hunter is currently working with GSK on their drug development project team. Julia Goodfellow has involvement with Porton Down via Public Health England.

3. Chief Executive's Report

Mark Downs (MD) updated Council on the wide range of recent activity, including the Accreditation Awards in Westminster and the NCI Conference. Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell had given a talk at the first Speaker's Lecture. This had been broadcast on the BBC and was available on the iPlayer parliamentary channel. Three RSB (past/present) Presidents had been in attendance.

Upcoming events included Links Day and the Education Awards.

The office relocation was scheduled for 6 June. In CDH1, two remaining organisations would be running the building for the final three months. Works to the new premises would be done in three phases. A risk register was in place and all staff had received online training in manual handling, fire safety and food handling.

MD wished to record that the Society would not be bound by the Landlords & Tenants Act 1954 and therefore, following completion of the ten year lease, would not have the right to remain in the property should the Landlord require us to vacate. Council **AGREED** this decision.

The President and Council wished to express their thanks to the CEO for getting this far in the process.

The President added that staff contracts and HR procedures needed to be updated and the Honorary Officers had been working with an external HR consultant to look at all aspects of this, including updating the CEO's employment contract. A consultation had taken place in relation to the amended employee contracts. The Grievance & Disciplinary Policy was being reviewed, along with the addition of wording around Capability. Some minor Regulations would need to be amended and would be brought to Council in September.

Action: Regulation amendments to be agreed at September Council Meeting.

MD made three Committee appointment proposals, the first for Mark Hollingsworth, CEO of the Nutrition Society to replace Jono Bruun on the Finance Committee. The second was the appointment of Mark Winterbottom as the new Editor of the JBE. Thirdly, for Daniel Ross, CEO of the Royal Society of Pathologists to replace Jon Misslebrook as a Pension Trustee.

MD reported that the Remuneration Committees had met and recommended a 2.5% cost of living pay award.

Council AGREED all three appointments.

4. Health & Safety

No incidents were reported.

Section A: Finance & Governance

5. Finance

5.1 Update from Finance Committee

The Honorary Treasurer (PB) reported that this had been the last meeting of Jono Bruun's term and Mark Hollingsworth had observed the meeting held in the morning. PB reminded Council that one vacancy still remained on the Committee and invited anyone interested to contact him by email.

Action: Council members interested in joining the Finance Committee to email Paul Brooker.

5.2 Minutes of the last Finance Committee Meeting

Council received the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 5 March.

5.3 Q2 Report

There is currently a positive £104k variance on the operational costs versus budget (which excludes CDH building sales). The report showed a phasing issue on Accreditation and membership which will rectify closer to budget for year end. The anniversary project officer had been also recruited post-budget with Council's agreement.

Despite the balance sheet showing a book price loss, the profit on the two buildings totalled approximately £500k in terms of capital gain, since 2011 and 2012.

PB reported a strong cash position and that the Committee will reconsider the level of working capital and short term investments required after the summer (and hopefully sale of CDH2).

PB reminded Council that fundraising has moved from a stand-alone committee to a standing item on the Finance Committee agenda.

Other immediate strategies are stakeholder management. This includes learning what the key issues are for each organisation and tailoring activity/information to their needs. Finally it will be important to take previous ideas from Fundraising Committee and build on them.

A dashboard or "traffic-light" system was proposed for monitoring a range of KPIs moving forward. PB suggested this should include looking at income by category/type of event. Finding a way of showing monetised membership benefit was also important.

There had been a proposal before FC to use an external agency to make calls to boost membership retention. FC gave approval a pilot scheme of 1000 members, and the related expenditure, subject to agreement from MPA committee.

There had now been three legacy advertisements in *The Biologist* as part of what is, necessarily, a long term strategy.

Section B: Policy & Strategy

6. Report from ESP Committee

Sarah-Jayne Blakemore (SJB) reported that the Committee had recently met. Five members had now completed their full term and six new members had been recruited, taking the Committee up to twelve members. The new members were Catriona Manville, Jamie McFadzean, Rebecca Robertson, Sara Rankin, Philip Young and Clari Burrell. Although responsibility for recruitment and appointment for ESP was delegated to the Chair, SJB welcomed comments on the proposed changes. No concerns were raised.

The Committee had discussed the NCI Conference, Valuing our Life Support Systems held in May, which covered the links between the natural world and health. Nineteen Fellows and members had attended an event organised by Alessandro Coatti and Jonathan Carruthers, to discuss the future of genetic technologies and how RSB might engage. An internal report will be produced.

6.1 Minutes of last ESP Meeting

Council received the Minutes of the last meeting which had since been signed without amendment.

7. Policy & Public Affairs

7.1 Policy & Public Affairs update

Council received an update paper for information.

LB highlighted the proposed Discovery Research project to be commissioned jointly with IoP and RSC. This will look at cases where fundamental research has led to demonstrable benefit. Council discussed the pros and cons of the proposal and raised concerns around potential duplication of work and crossover with university impact assessments. The president also noted that the timing may not be ideal and that the next spending review may only cover one year.

LB reported that these issues were live and under active consideration by the partners involving others such as Wellcome and the RS to discuss synergies. On balance, all had agreed that there was a gap in information to which this work might usefully contribute, whilst fully recognising the importance of all areas of research. PH noted that very recent university impact work will not be made public for some time and thus care was needed in terms of what periods were being considered by which audience.

8. Report from MPA Committee

8.1 Minutes of last MPA Meeting

Council received the Minutes of the last MPA meeting.

9. Membership & Professional Affairs

9.1 Membership & Professional Affairs update

RLF noted that the Society is currently recruiting for a new Events Officer.

A new register was now very likely covering biosafety.FY 2019-20.

Sub-licensing of Science Council registers has also now been agreed. The first pilot will be with the Biochemical Society.

RR noted that further detail on membership will be covered in the strategy session.

10. AoB

None reported.

The next meeting of Council will be held on Wednesday 11 September 2019.

