

Council Meeting

**16 February 2012
12:45-15:00**

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

Redacted Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

- Present: Dame Prof Nancy Rothwell, President
Prof David Coates, Honorary Secretary
Dr William Marshall, Honorary Treasurer
Dr Pat Goodwin
Dr Liz Lakin
Prof Pete Downes
Dr Paul Brooker
Dr Kim Hardie
Prof Keith Gull (via teleconference)
Prof Martin Humphries
Prof Julia Buckingham
Dr Aileen Allsop
Prof Robert Freedman
- Observers: Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive
Ms Jen Crosk (Minutes)
Dr Laura Bellingan (Section A)
Ms Rachel Lambert-Forsyth (Section A)
Mr Jon Kudlick (Section A)
Dr Stephen Benn (Section A)
Dr Simon Festing, Society for General Microbiology
Prof Richard Reece (Accreditation only)
- Apologies: Prof John Coggins
Ms Sue Thorn (Observer)
Mr Tim Brigstocke
Prof Rosie Hails
Dr Hazel Norman (Observer)

1.1 Declaration of interests

No conflicts of interest were reported.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2011

2.1 Review of action points

All action points were completed or appearing in the Agenda.

2.2 Matters arising not on the Agenda

None reported.

2.3 Approval of Minutes and redacted Minutes

Council **APPROVED** the Minutes and redacted Minutes

Section A: Policy & Strategy

3. Report from ETP

Robert Freedman (RBF), Chair of ETP reported that there had been significant activity on Accreditation and Science Policy. There had been an excellent response from schools and students for the biology competitions and RBF thanked the volunteers involved. The President noted that this was Professor Freedman's last meeting and that he would be stepping down as the ETP Chair. She thanked him for all his work for the Society.

3.1 Accreditation

Liz Lakin (LL) reported that further consideration was required for *in vivo* science and a working group would be looking specifically at this as it involved skills areas which did not fit neatly with the more generic nature of the Accreditation pilot. LL asked for Council approval for the launch and specifically for the focus on three core areas, with the possibility to offer subject bespoke accreditation where there was a demand. Council were keen to accredit further programmes but stressed the need to retain a focus on employability. Council also felt a wider communication strategy was required.

Council discussed the accreditation pilot reports, and approved four.

The President thanked LL for leading the Accreditation process and all those involved.

Decision: Council APPROVED the Accreditation decisions made.

3.2 Appointment of ETP Chair

Council discussed nominations and agreed on preferred candidate.

3.3 Scotland & Alasdair Allen meeting

Mark Downs (MD) reported that he had met with Alasdair Allen MSP at the Scottish Parliament and that the Society of Biology had been the first learned society to speak with him.

3.4 SCORE Chair

Decision: Council AGREED on the priority order for the next SCORE Chair.

4. MMC Report

Jon Kudlick (JK) reported that membership recruitment was on target for most grades but the MSB grade was still the weakest recruitment area. However, it was felt that the new member benefits would help recruitment.

4.1 Membership demographics

JK reported that 2,800 responses had been received for the membership survey, with many members not showing any dissatisfaction and 82% had reported membership being good value.

4.2 New membership benefits package

JK reported there was a need to offer more benefits for all membership levels and branches would be adding their recommendations. Council debated the options and were keen to consider these issues further.

Chris Kirk (CK) added that the CEO/President owners of Charles Darwin House (CDH) had discussed having a CDH grant, or three smaller grants, for people returning to research. Council were supportive of the concept.

Nuffield were moving away from their Undergraduate Bursary Scheme and hoped that other organisations could fill the gap. They had offered co-funding to help the transition over two years. 60 bursaries would be offered in 2012, with a further 60 in 2013 all through the Society with several member organisations involved as active partners. Council discussed the potential to consolidate all the other schemes to make one large one over time and were very supportive of an SB commitment to this. Rachel Lambert-Forsyth indicated the financial cost this year would be £7,200 for the Society.

Action: MD to look at arranging a Council Strategy session, possibly following the next Council meeting in Manchester

Action: The Chair asked for Council to feed any ideas on membership benefits back to JK

5. President's Medal

Decision: Council AGREED that recipients should be members, with a maximum of 2-3 medals awarded per year. Nominees should come from SIGS, MOs and branches.

Section B: Operational Issues

6. Chief Executive's Report

MD reported that much work had been done on accreditation and the technician's registers. As at April 2012, the Society would have doubled in staff since its formation. The President noted the excellent progress at the Society.

MD reported that despite the decrease in MO income, the number of MOs had actually increased from 70 to 92 over last year. This increase had been mainly due to the Plant Science Federation (UKPSF).

The Branch strategy had been reviewed and sent to branches.

7. Report from Finance Committee

William Marshall (WM) reported that the Finance Committee had met that day.

6.1 & 6.2 Draft Accounts for 2010-11 and Going Concern

There were two versions of the accounts, one full and one summary (which didn't include the notes). WM reported that the Finance Committee believed the reports to be accurate. He reported a healthy operational surplus of around £79k, with free reserves of £456k.

There had been a revaluation on the pension scheme following the additional payment of £750k, this should result in a deficit of around £300k.

WM thanked the Auditors and Accountants and asked Council to approve the Accounts for 2010-2011.

Decision: Council APPROVED the Trustee Report, AGREED that the Society was a going concern and authorised the Honorary Officers to sign the accounts.

Decision: Council AGREED the President could sign the accompanying auditor's letter

6.3 Q1 forecast for 2011-12

MD reported that the Society was on target to hit the break-even budget by the end of the year.

6.4 Space allocation at CDH

Council agreed to consider renting additional space on the first floor.

7. AGM plans and elections

MD reminded Council that the AGM was at 11.30am on 3 May. Two elections would take place, for Liz Lakin, the College of Individual Members and Keith Gull, the College of Organisational Members. MD would write to MOs and members inviting nominations. The President thanked David Coates (DC) for his support as Honorary Secretary and welcomed his successor Chris Kirk.

Decision: Council AGREED to the same AGM format as last year.

8. AoB

DC reported that CPD for Scottish teachers to support the Curriculum for Excellence was key to its success. There was a proposal to fund work on this, shared across the learned societies. Council felt this should be reviewed positively.

MD added that the Fellows Dinner would be held on 13 March.

The next Council meeting is 14 June 2012 in Manchester.