

## Council Meeting

**Wednesday 17 September 2014**  
**12:30-14:45**

**Essex Room, Grand Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, London WC2**

## WEB Minutes

### 1. Welcome and apologies

The President welcomed Council and observers, thanked MO observers for attending and gave apologies.

Present: Professor Dame Jean Thomas (President)  
Professor Chris Kirk (Hon Secretary)  
Dr Pat Goodwin (Hon Treasurer)  
Professor John Coggins  
Dr Kim Hardie  
Dr Jeremy Pritchard  
Professor David Blackbourn  
Professor Julia Buckingham  
Dr Liz Lakin  
Dr Aileen Allsop  
Professor Pete Downes

Observers: Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive  
Ms Rachel Lambert-Forsyth, Director of Education & Training  
Mr Jon Kudlick, Director of Membership, Marketing & Communication  
Dr Laura Bellingan, Director of Science Policy  
Ms Natasha Neill, Executive Officer  
Ms Jen Crosk (Minutes)  
Mr Phil Wheat, Chief Executive, SfAM  
Dr Helen Davies, Biochemical Society

Apologies: Dr Paul Brooker  
Professor Chris Garland  
Professor Rosie Hails  
Professor Richard Reece  
Mr Tim Brigstocke

Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU Tel: +44 (0)20 7685 2550 [info@societyofbiology.org](mailto:info@societyofbiology.org)  
[www.societyofbiology.org](http://www.societyofbiology.org)

Leon Heward-Mills, Chief Executive, Society for Endocrinology  
Paul Hutchinson, Chief Executive, Society for Experimental Biology  
Dr Peter Cotgreave, Chief Executive, Society for General Microbiology

1.1 Declaration of interests

No declarations were reported.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2014**

2.1 Review of action points

All actions had been completed or appeared in the Agenda.

2.2 Matters arising not on the Agenda

No matters reported.

2.3 Approval of Minutes and Web Minutes

Council **APPROVED** the Minutes and Web Minutes of the 20 June 2014 meeting.

2.3 Conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were reported.

**3. Chief Executive's Report**

Mark Downs (MD) reported that there had been a lot of activity since the last Council meeting, including Links Day, Accreditation Awards and the Brian Cox fundraising event. The Society continued to attract new MOs through direct approaches, with ten new MOs recruited since January. MD felt that the services now offered by the Society provided an attractive membership package.

A Royal title continued to be a key goal and Stephen Benn had been working on building relationships with Ministers and the Cabinet Office to encourage support. A letter would go out to supporters in due course, with the application submission due in early December at the latest. There was a risk that the application process could be delayed due to the upcoming general election but if successful, the Royal title would provide a major benefit, particularly for membership recruitment.

Following Council's discussion at the last Strategy Meeting in June 2013, a Hong Kong branch had now been formed and the Australian Institute of Biology were considering becoming a branch. The Society was now running a Secretariat for the European Federation for Biotechnology on behalf of SCI, SGM, BS and SfAM.

MD noted his thanks to the MOs for agreeing to increase their membership contribution and coming together to form the Enhanced Funders Group. This group consisted of the Biochemical Society, BES, BPS, BSI, SfAM, Society for Endocrinology, SEB and SGM.

MD noted that the Biochemical Society are now providing £90k for project related activity plus two full-time members of staff, in addition to their £61k MO fee. He went on to highlight that together with the BBSRC and AstraZeneca, this group now represented close to 80% of total MO funding.

MD reported that the fraud incident process had now been completed. Fraud training had been provided for all staff and systems had been reviewed. MD had written a letter of complaint to the Allied Irish Bank and Cardsave but this now concluded the process. **Council AGREED.**

MD added his thanks to Natasha Neill for her work on Biology Changing the World. The teacher guidance notes had now been produced and a poster, new app and the website were ready for launch.

Looking ahead here was a lot of activity planned around Biology Week and the CDH II development would require some resource.

## **Section A: Policy & Strategy**

### **4. Report from ETP**

Laura Bellingan (LB) provided a summary for information and added that there had been five new ETP Committee members recruited, these were: Andrew Treharne, Alan Raybould, Marcus Sangster, Joy Hinson and Diane Williamson. In order to improve communication both ways with SIGs, each had been connected with a member of ETP.

LB added that Friday 19 Sept was the deadline for the final submission on open access.

Following his recent attendance at an HEA Summit in Newcastle, Jeremy Pritchard (JP) reported concern from the HE teaching community regarding the decline of HEA funding, with this being further reduced over the next three years. HE teachers had been unaware of the support available on the Society website and via HUBS and felt there was an opportunity for more engagement with the Society. Council felt that direct contact with HE teachers would be positive and provide the potential for membership recruitment. JP confirmed that this would be discussed at HUBS and ETP then brought to Council at a future meeting.

### **5. Education & Training**

#### **5.1 IBO 2017 update on finances**

Rachel Lambert-Forsyth (RLF) reported that fundraising had been moving in a positive direction. Council remained uneasy about the prospect of the Society committing significant staff resource to fundraising for this and felt the challenge remained significant. MD proposed that UKBC could use their restricted fund to employ someone with fundraising experience on a fixed 9-12 month contract to undertake the fundraising work.

**Decision: Council AGREED to the continuation of fundraising for IBO 2017, with a review at the next Council Meeting and final decision at the June 2015 Council Meeting.**

**Action: RLF to write to Andy Treharne regarding possible funding from UKBC for an additional member of staff on a fixed 9-12 month part-time contract.**

## 5.2 Chartered Science Teacher Register

RLF provided a paper to Council for information on the application process. Council welcomed developments.

## 5.3 CBIol and CPD

RLF reported that the online system to audit CPD participation, launched in 2012, was working well and the full auditing system had been switched on for all other Registers except the Chartered Biologist register. Council were asked to consider a process for auditing CPD compliance requirements for members on the CBIol register. Council had a range of views.

## 6. Report from Accreditation

### 6.1 Accreditation – financial modelling

Liz Lakin (LL) reported that the first official UKCES funding round came to an end on 1 September and that an additional £90k had been awarded until March to underpin the launch of accreditation for “traditional” Bioscience Honours Degree programmes. LL wished to note recognition of the Accreditation team’s superb work.

## 7. Employers’ Engagement Group

Aileen Allsop (AA) noted her thanks to Jon Day and Lara Husain for their help in putting together a network of employers, including the academic community, to form this Special Interest Group (SIG). Representation was sought from all employers of biologists. All the individuals involved were particularly interested in accreditation but were keen to input to the Society’s responses to wider consultations.

**Decision: Council AGREEED to the set-up of the Employer Advisory Group as a Special Interest Group.**

**Action: Council to email AA with any suggested names for Chair.**

## 8. British Society for Ecological Medicine – membership

Council considered the request from BSEM to re-join the Society and have some of their courses accredited. BSEM had originally moved over from IoB as a full MO and their membership had lapsed.

**Decision: Council AGREED that the Society could not accept their application to re-join.**

**Action: JK to write to BSEM with Council's decision, explaining why.**

## **9. MMC update**

JK tabled a paper that had been omitted. This provided an update on membership recruitment, Biology Week, media and other issues. Council welcomed the excellent progress noting that although Bionet account for a chunk of recruitment the overall trend remains good, exceeding the 15,000 membership target a year early.

## **Section B: Finance**

### **10. Q3 forecast**

PG reported that the Finance Committee meeting that morning had not been quorate. She asked for Council approval for a new, twice-yearly process to look at new funding requests from Directors. This would only apply to new expenditure that did not have new income to support it. MD proposed that anything urgent could be agreed electronically by the Finance Committee.

MD added that it had been a better than expected year end, with a deficit of £109k currently forecast, which had been helped by increased MO contributions. The deficit primarily reflected accreditation expenditure where the grant income was received last year for expenditure this year.

### **11. Budget 2014-15**

MD reported that Finance Committee had agreed the proposed deficit budget. The assumptions were prudent, with no new income assumed. Council asked for confirmation that the Society's Reserves Policy would not be breached and that cash flow remained strong. MD confirmed this was the case.

**Decision: Council AGREED an overall deficit budget for 2014-15 of £308,000.**

### **12. Five year financial outlook**

As the Finance Committee had not been quorate, Council were asked to consider and agree the five year forecast and broad plan for the future. Cost savings would be made by withdrawing undergraduate research bursaries, reducing T&S and, hopefully, reducing the pension deficit expenditure. Expenses related to CDH would also fall/ income increase. The Finance Committee had agreed that this projection was realistic.

Finance Committee also tabled an amendment to the wording of the Reserves Policy for approval.

**Decision: Council AGREED to the five year financial outlook.**

**Decision: Council AGREED the revision to Reserves Policy wording.**

**13. AoB**

The next Council Meeting will be held on 10 December 2014 at Charles Darwin House.

CDH	Charles Darwin House
ETP	Education, Training & Policy Committee
MO	Member Organisation
UKBC	UK Biology Competitions
UKPSF	UK Plant Science Federation

*John Thomas*  
*10 December 2014*