

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 28 September 2011

PRESENT: J P B Lovell (*Chair*), P Allen (*Secretary, Science*), S Brough, M Brown, D Cragg, J E Francis, A J Fraser, S A Gibson, M P Henton (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), R A Hughes, A Law (*Treasurer*), R J Lisle, A R Lord (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), S Monro, D T Shilston (*President designate*), C P Summerhayes, J Tellam, J Turner (*Secretary, Publications*) and D J Vaughan

APOLOGIES: R W H Butler, P Maliphant, S Marriott and N R G Walton

In attendance: E F P Nickless (*Executive Secretary*), N Bilham (*Head of Strategy & External Relations*), M Kyriakides (*Head of Finance*) and S L Jones (*PA to Executive Secretary*)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies as above were noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chair made his standing declaration that he has been asked by the Chief Scientist in the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to advise on matters concerning the safety of the BGS cores and prospectively cores in general. The advice that he will give with respect to BGS cores will be in line with the position previously agreed by Council.

There were no other declarations of interests.

3. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2011

The minutes were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 BGS Core Store

Richard Hughes of the British Geological Survey reported that the transfer was proceeding smoothly. 30% of the cores and 24% of the cuttings had been moved. The publication of high resolution images on the BGS website had started and Richard Hughes urged members of Council to view these.

Council were pleased to hear that the transfer is proceeding well and thanked Richard Hughes for his reports throughout this process. They were content that future liaison on this matter should be between Bryan Lovell and Richard Hughes with only matters of concern brought to the attention of Council.

4.2 Geological Atlas of the London Basin (*CM/59/11*)

Council noted that Michael de Freitas had had a positive meeting with two senior underwriters. He will be providing them with a short statement outlining what would be required and they undertook to start generating a level of attention

through their networks. Council expressed their concern about the amount of work that might be involved in gathering the data and also the question of data ownership. The Executive Secretary said that these and other matters would be set out in a business plan which will come to Council for approval. The Executive Secretary will be meeting with Michael de Freitas and Andy Howard of the British Geological Survey on 17 October to review progress.

4.3 Removal of Fellows and Candidate Fellows for non-payment of the 2011 subscriptions (*CM/60/11*)

Council noted that 551 Fellows and Candidate Fellows were removed from Fellowship at the end of June.

4.4 Implementation of the Library Review (*CM/61/11*)

The Map Scanning Working Group met on 18 July. An action from that meeting was an audit identifying maps held of the East African Rift system which had been done. A prospectus had been produced which Malcolm Brown had agreed to use to test industry interest and possible sponsorship. Malcolm Brown said that from the contacts he had made so far he had had a positive response. He would welcome assistance with marketing particularly to the mining sector. Paul Johnson, Map Librarian, had advised that the donated scanner will be capable of scanning most of the Society's map holdings. There will be further discussion of the project at the Information Management Committee on 29 September. Malcolm Brown and Paul Johnson were thanked for their efforts.

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Richard Hughes, chair of Information Management Committee, said that the list of potential journals for cancellation would be discussed at their meeting on 29 September. Tom Sharpe, chairman of the Library Advisory Committee, had written to the specialist groups asking them to advise what they considered to be "core" journals. This information would enable an informed decision. Alan Lord commented that the specialist groups do not represent the whole range of geosciences disciplines and that this must be taken into account. Richard Hughes said that he was content with the current progress of the Library Review.

5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

5.1 Report of the Officers' meeting

The Officers met immediately preceding Council. Bryan Lovell reported that they had discussed possible travel disruption and its impact on the operation of Burlington House during the London Olympics. The Executive Secretary will be discussing with all the London staff at a meeting on 14 October.

5.2 Honorary Fellowships (*CM/62/11*)

See confidential annex.

5.3 Case for Geoscience (*CM/63/11*)

The Society had been active over the last six months in communicating with ministers, officials, parliamentarians and others advancing the "case for geosciences". This included working closely with CHUGD, BGS and others to present to government a unified voice for geoscience. A letter had been sent to David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, setting out the case for geology as a Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subject, and, another, in similar vein to Alan Langlands of the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

A joint submission with PESGB and the BGA was made to a parliamentary inquiry regarding the impact of the withdrawal of Masters funding by NERC and other Research Councils.

The Head of Strategy & External Relations said that some responses made by the Society had been as the result of requests but others were unsolicited. Responses are made selectively and are on matters clearly within the scope of the Society's knowledge.

Stuart Monro said that responsibility for higher education in Scotland is vested in the Scottish Parliament. There are a number of matters under review by the Scottish Funding Council who would welcome information and it may be timely to contact Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. Bryan Lovell to discuss with Stuart Monro.

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The Executive Secretary emphasised the importance of gathering hard data to support representations made by the Society. The work of the Geoscience Skills Forum (see separate minute) will be invaluable and will require input from members of Council.

5.4 Accreditation Panel Pool (CM/64/11)

The Accreditation Panel is charged with accrediting university undergraduate programmes and there is a pool of members from which Colin Scrutton selects names reflecting the particular emphasis of the programme applying for accreditation. Mike Harris, Director of Resource Assessment at Rio Tinto and a member of the External Relations Committee, had agreed to join the Panel. Council approved his appointment.

6. RARE EARTH ELEMENTS BRIEFING NOTE

A strategic priority identified by Council was to provide authoritative information to policy makers and others on the geological aspects of topical subjects. It was considered timely to develop a briefing note on the Rare Earth Elements (REE) given political and media focus on potential vulnerability of supply, the 2010 EU Critical Minerals Report and the Science & Technology Committee's inquiry into Strategic Metals.

An expert working group comprising Paul Henderson, John Gluyas, Gus Gunn, Frances Wall and Alan Woolley was convened. Alex Finlay also made significant contributions. The document is aimed principally at non-geologists with an interest in REE and Fellows with no specialist knowledge of REE. The draft was reviewed by three external reviewers (Judith Chegvidden, Jonathon Porritt and Malin Stein) who strongly endorsed the document and the approach taken and made helpful suggestions which improved the final document. It was also sent to the External Relations Committee who had responded positively.

Alan Lord suggested that an Executive Summary should be included. The Head of Strategy & External Relations said that work had started on the documents required and it was envisaged that there would be one page showing what the document contains.

Jane Francis said that NERC was about to do a large piece of work with an expert panel and so the Society's report was very timely. National Geographic had also recently published an article. It was agreed that the report will be sent to NERC.

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There is a short list of further topics in the ownership of the External Relations Committee. Members of Council were asked to forward suggestions for topics to the Head of Strategy & External Affairs for incorporation with this list and discussion at November Council.

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The process by which the Rare Earth Elements briefing note was developed was approved and its publication agreed.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (CM/42/11)

Council noted that there had been no reported incidents since their last meeting.

They also noted that an in-house manual handling course was being held on 13 October.

8. ELECTIONS

8.1 Fellowship (CM/67/11)

Council agreed to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed in CM/67/11 should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 28 September 2011.

8.2 Chartered Geologists (CM/68/11)

The applications from Fellows to become Chartered Geologists listed in CM/68/11 had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were agreed by Council.

8.3 Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/69/11)

Council agreed to elect those applicants listed in CM/69/11 as Candidate Fellows and Junior Candidate Fellows.

8.4 European Geologists (CM/70/11)

Council noted the names elected as European Geologists at the EFG meeting on 30 August.

9. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

9.1 Report of the Finance & Planning Committee (CM/71/11)

The main business of the committee was the 2012 Budget (see separate minute)

Council also noted that:

- a. Progress had been made on the Fermor Fund and written advice had been received from Farrer's. In light of this, the Executive Secretary and the Director of Finance would work on how the Fund could be used to support the Society's publications, meetings and other activities, and will come forward with a paper in November.
- b. The costs and income associated with Chartership validation and subsequent maintenance of the title were reviewed.
- c. The foreign cheque negotiation limit was discussed (see separate minute).
- d. In reviewing the draft July management accounts, the Committee

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discussed accounting treatment of book stock, and noted that this is to be reviewed. The Director of Publishing and the Head of Finance will report back to the Committee in May 2012.

- e. The latest version of the budget was discussed, and advice to Council was agreed on a number of points (see separate minute).
- f. Progress regarding Business Plan items was reviewed. The Committee discussed work done to date on the Geoscience Skills Forum (see separate minute).

9.2

Increase of the Society's foreign cheque negotiation limit (*CM/72/11*)

The Society's bankers, Coutts, suggested that the foreign cheque negotiation limit should be increased from our current level of £100k. This is the amount at which the Society gets immediate credit for foreign cheques. The matter was discussed by the Finance & Planning Committee who suggested the limit should be increased to £175k.

9.3

Council approved the increase in the Society's cheque negotiation limit to £175k.

July Management Accounts (*CM/73/11*)

The Treasurer reported that the outturn for July was £32k below budget due to book sales being £15k less than expected, cost of books sales £17k higher than budgeted and late costs for the Petroleum Group dinner which took place in June.

There had also been a shortfall in book sales income in August. It was noted that the re-printing policy is being reviewed and a report will be discussed by the Finance & Planning Committee.

The year-end forecast had been revised downwards to a surplus of £41k which was still £82k ahead of budget.

9.4

Investment Committee (*CM/74/11*)

Council noted the minutes of the Investment Committee meeting held on 21 July and the summary of investment performance for Q2 2011.

9.5

Serious Incident Reporting (*CM/75/11*)

Council noted that there had been no serious incidents to report since the last meeting.

10.

GEOSCIENCE SKILLS FORUM (*CM/76/11*)

The Geoscience Skills Forum was included in the Business Plan 2011-2013. Following discussion at June Council on the work done jointly with BGS and CHUGD to develop a line of argument set out in the source document "the case for geoscience" including future skills needs and the implications for the funding of university Earth science teaching, Tricia Henton had agreed to lead on this Society initiative with participation from Al Fraser and David Shilston.

Tricia Henton reported that work had progressed and emphasised the importance of ensuring that information gathered is factual. Whilst there are good data available from some sectors getting reliable figures from others will need time and effort.

It was proposed that a small group is convened to scope out the work and to understand better any resource needs. John Tellam volunteered to join such a group.

Council had a wide-ranging discussion. They recognised the importance of deciding what information and data are required before starting such a project and finding out what have already been gathered. It was suggested that CHUGD may have most of the information.

The Executive Secretary suggested that a sector is chosen to trial the process and this was agreed. The Head of Strategy & External Relations is meeting with Tricia Henton on 9 November to draft the budget bid.

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11. 2012 BUDGET (CM/77/11)

The Finance & Planning Committee discussed the 2012 budget at its meeting on 14 September. They reviewed the budget process, with which they were content, and the projected core surplus, which they considered was the best that could reasonably be budgeted. They acknowledged that the surplus was not large enough to finance all the proposed new bids while maintaining a break-even budget.

The Finance & Planning Committee recommended to Council that the increase in salary costs should be capped at 6%. The Executive Secretary explained the salary review process and said that the figure of 6% is the increase to the total salary cost and includes performance related pay, within band adjustments and any bonuses. The average increase for an individual member of staff will be 3.5 – 4.5%. Council agreed with this increase and instructed the Remuneration Committee accordingly. They asked that in future the amount for performance related pay and any special payments should be shown separately from the “across the board” increases.

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Council agreed that two bids should not be taken forward: development of an interactive online version of Geoscientist and funding a further year of the University Lecture series from reserves, noting that in respect of the latter the Science Secretary and Secretary Foreign and External Affairs will develop an alternative proposal for 2013 onwards.

Council agreed with the the prioritization of new activities as presented. Colin Summerhayes, Vice President with responsibility for Development & Fundraising, agreed to investigate obtaining sponsorship for all those items identified as attractive to potential sponsors.

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Council noted that the provision for the refurbishment of the Council Room at an estimated cost of £250k had been made and that if this expenditure went ahead in 2012 the cash balances remaining in the Burlington House Buildings fund would be £190k.

Council noted that work will continue on the budget and the final version will come to Council for approval at its November meeting.

12. BUSINESS PLAN 2011-2013 (CM/78/11)

The three updates to the Plan since June Council were:

- Tricia Henton was identified as overall champion for the Geoscience Skills

Forum; and she, David Shilston and Al Fraser as champions for their respective sectors (agreed at Council).

- The 'traffic light' for Emerging Geoscientists Action Group has been changed to orange (agreed at the last meeting of the Finance & Planning Committee).
- The 'traffic light' for Map Scanning had been changed to orange.

Samme Brough, as Council champion for the Emerging Geoscientist Action Group, and Tricia Henton, champion for the Geoscience Skills Forum, have discussed synergy between these projects and a report will be made to November Council.

Colin Summerhayes as Council champion for Capacity Building had been in discussion with the Head of Strategy & External Relations. This work will be progressed to the next stage and taken to the External Relations Committee before wider discussion at the next Council residential.

Council noted progress against the Business Plan.

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ROUTINE ITEMS

Council noted the following items, which were taken as read:-

13. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/79/11)

Information Management Committee
Science Committee

The Secretary, Professional Committee, gave a verbal update of the business of the last meeting. She also reminded Council about the Distinguished Geologists' Memorial Trust which had not received any applications. Members of Council were asked to put forward potential candidates, the criteria for which are on the website.

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14. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT (CM/80/11)

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is 30 November 2011.