

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 17 September 2008

PRESENT: L E Frostick (*Chair*), P Allen, I D Bartholomew, A M Carbray, E Derbyshire (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), A J Fleet (*Treasurer*), R Herrington, A Law, A Lord, J Ludden, D A C Manning (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), M O Rivett, N W Rogers (*Secretary, Publications*), J Turner and R A W Wood

APOLOGIES: M G Culshaw, M Daly, C M R Fowler, R E Holdsworth, J D Marshall, G W Tuckwell, A B Watts (*Secretary, Science*) and R S White

In attendance: E F P Nickless (*Executive Secretary*), N Bilham (*Data Manager*), M Kyriakides (*Finance Director*) and S L Culver (*PA to Executive Secretary*).

The President welcomed Dr Herrington to his first meeting of Council.

ESSENTIAL BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies as above were noted.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 18 JUNE 2008

These were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Society's representation on outside bodies

The Executive Secretary reported that he has written to all the representatives but only about half have submitted their report. He will send a reminder and it is hoped that all the reports will be available for the November meeting of Council.

3.2 Honorary Fellowship (CM/56/08)

The Executive Secretary reported that the Honorary Fellows elected at the Annual General Meeting:- Ian Dalziel, Eduardo de Mulder, Mohammad Asif Khan have written accepting the award. Paul Tapponnier has not and the Executive Secretary has written to him again asking him if he wishes to accept.

At its meeting on 18 June Council endorsed a further four candidates for Honorary Fellowship - Gwendy Hall, Sharon Mosher, Susan Solomon and James W Valentine. These names were notified to the Fellowship in the August issue of *Geoscientist* and will come forward for election at the Ordinary General Meeting following the Council meeting.

At its meeting on 2 September, the External Relations Committee considered three candidates for Honorary Fellowship but agreed to recommend only one, Prof Xu Xing. Council agreed the nomination of Xu Xing which will be advertised in

November *Geoscientist* and come forward for election on the Ordinary General Meeting in January 2009.

EN

Council noted that ERC is mindful of the need to increase representation from less developed countries and to improve gender balance, but that there is a lack of clarity concerning the responsibilities of Honorary Fellows and what it is that the Society wishes to achieve by honouring them in this way. The ERC has agreed to undertake a Strategic Review of Honorary Fellowships and to bring forward a new policy for discussion in Council.

ED

4. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

4.1 Shell Sponsorship (CM/57/08)

Council noted the issues raised by a Fellow in a discussion with the Executive Secretary, particularly his view that the Shell sponsorship had been accepted without the express approval of the Fellows and that Shell had been given a platform to voice their opinions on various issues. The Executive Secretary also reported that he had told the Fellow in response to his query about priority tickets for Fellows that the lectures were part of the Society's public outreach and were designed for a lay audience but that Fellows were welcome to apply for tickets.

In discussion Council agreed that sponsorship is a good thing for the Society but that there must be complete transparency about sponsorship arrangements and that Council, in deciding whether to accept sponsorship, must be mindful of charity law. They agreed that a policy should be drawn up which will be placed on the Society's website. This policy will include a statement that the views of the organisation providing sponsorship are not necessarily endorsed by the Society.

EN

4.2 Janet Watson Meeting (CM/58/08)

Council noted the outline arrangements for this meeting which has been arranged for 28 and 29 May 2009. The theme of the meeting is *Evolution of the continental crust*. A reception will be held on the evening of the first day after which a commissioned portrait of Janet Watson will be unveiled.

4.3 Geologists' Association (CM/59/08)

This is minuted in a confidential annex.

4.4 Elections Standing Committee (CM/60/08)

Council noted that the Elections Standing Committee met on 4 September and again today. The main items for discussion were nominations for the President-designate and new members of Council. The October *Geoscientist* will contain a call for nominations and the closing date is 9 January 2009. The chair reported that there has been a tradition of alternating between academe and government/industry for President-designate and that the focus for this election will be on the latter and taking forward the Society's strategy. The preferred choice would be someone from industry with government links.

Council was asked to reflect on possible candidates for President-designate and advise the Executive Secretary of names.

ALL

Council also noted that the Professional Committee has suggested that the chair of the newly-formed Chartership Committee should be a member of Council.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY (CM/61/08)

It was noted that there had been no accidents or near misses since the last meeting of

Council. The health & safety consultants are carrying out a risk assessment on 2 October and are compiling a new health & safety manual. The five year test on fixed wire circuits had been undertaken and the report was marked unsatisfactory. An electrician had been on site and the recommendations have been implemented. The counter terrorism session organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry was postponed due to insufficient attendees. This matter will be discussed at the next meeting of the Courtyard Societies on 2 October. A fire drill involving a mass evacuation of the Courtyard Societies took place on 25 June which was agreed to be both successful and instructive. There had been a positive response from staff at both Burlington House and the Publishing House to a request for more first aiders and training is taking place during September.

6. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

6.1 Report of the Management and Finance Committee (CM/62/08)

The minutes of the Management and Finance Committee meeting held on 4 September 2008 were noted. The substantive business of that meeting had been to consider the Budget for 2009 and the July management accounts. It was noted that the Committee had been pleased to see the improvement shown in these accounts.

6.2 July Management Accounts (CM/63/08)

Council noted that an apparent drop off in Fellowship subscription income and a reduction in room hire receipts seen in earlier months were no longer of concern and income is on or ahead of target. However, book sales income continues to disappoint but this mainly reflects slippage between months in the publication of books. In the August accounts the number of books published to date is expected to be back on target. Secretary, Publications commented that sales should pick up in the last quarter of the year.

6.3 Investment Panel (CM/64/08)

The Investment Panel met on 22 July. The Treasurer reported that UBS were relatively comfortable about reaching the £200k annual return expected in the budget. The Investment Panel had urged them to increase investments held in cash and this has been done. The Executive Secretary reported that these cash investments have been spread to alleviate the risk of loss over the £35k ceiling guarantee but that it would be impracticable to spread it so wide as to avoid this risk completely. The volatile market situation is being monitored closely.

6.4 Salary Review 2009 (CM/65/08)

This is minuted in a confidential annex.

6.5 Serious Incident Reporting (CM/66/08)

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

7. ELECTIONS

7.1 Fellowship (CM/67/08)

Council agreed to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed in CM/67/08 should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 17 September 2008.

7.2 Chartered Geologists and Chartered Scientist (CM/68/08)

The applications from Fellows to become Chartered Geologists and a Chartered Scientist listed in CM/68/08 had been approved by the Fellowship and Validation Committee and were agreed by Council.

7.3 Candidate Fellowship (CM/69/08)

Council agreed to elect those applicants listed in CM/69/08 as Candidate Fellows.

8. OVERSEAS LINKS AND ACTIVITIES 2007-2008 (CM/70/08)

A paper was presented to Council on the breadth of linkages between the Society and various overseas bodies. This was provided as the basis on which to begin to develop a more strategic approach to overseas links either on a country-by-country basis or with international scientific programmes such as the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) and within international bodies such as the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). The paper had been prompted by a concern that the Society's relationships with overseas bodies have developed piecemeal over time and there is no clear policy which determines with which bodies the Society has links and the nature of those links. In North America they are mainly driven by financial issues such as joint activity in publishing and reciprocal sending of publications and a development of joint meetings or spring from a wish for mutual recognition of professional qualification. In contrast within Europe there is a long history of working within the Association of European Geological Societies but there is no clear view as to why that activity is preferable to bilateral arrangements with, for example, national geological societies.

The Secretary, Foreign and External Affairs emphasised the importance of the Society's direct link to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which is through the IGCP. This is a joint IUGS-UNESCO initiative that, in turn, provides opportunities for UK visibility and influence in UNESCO's natural sciences programme.

During discussion Council agreed that there are a great many organisations and it would be impossible to link with all of them and that it is important to ensure that the Society's staff are not spread too thinly.

The External Relations Committee is preparing a policy paper which will be brought to Council. The Committee will be looking in particular at the strategies of the various organisations to identify where the closest synergies exist. The Secretary, Professional Matters asked to be kept advised of the development of this paper so that he can ensure that the interests of overseas Fellows are served.

9. CONSULTATIONS AND PARLIAMENTARY LINKS (CM/71/08)

The Secretary, Professional Matters tabled his draft response to the consultation on *Renewable Energy* (Department for Business and Regulatory Reform) which has a return date of 26 September. Various comments were noted and Council was asked to forward any further comments by 19 September.

The External Relations Committee is leading on a response to *Adapting the UK to climate change* (Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution) which has a return date of 11 October.

The Society was invited by the Environment Agency to comment on their guidance concerning *Surface storage of radioactive waste* and *Deep disposal of radioactive waste*. It was also noted that the Society has commented on various documents issued by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

The Society was asked to convene two discussion meetings by CoRWM (the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management). Two of its working groups –

Working Group A (looking at Deep Geological Disposal) and Working Group C (looking at current and future R&D) - wished to meet with representatives of learned societies, led by the Geological Society and also including IOM³ and the Mineralogical Society, in each case to support their investigations as they prepare to report to Government. The Society has also involved personnel from other institutions including NERC and BGS. The meeting with working group C took place on 11 September; that with working group A is scheduled for 13 November.

On 24 October, with the support of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Business and Regulatory Reform, the Society is organising a public information meeting with the working title of 'The Geological Disposal of Radioactive Waste: How Earth Scientists Characterise the Subsurface'. This meeting is aimed at a variety of audiences, including potential host communities for geological disposal facilities, non geologists, representatives of local authorities, voluntary groups and the aim is not only to inform but also to address what is perceived to be a lack of knowledge about what geologists can do. There will be an allocation of places for Fellows and information will be going on the website. The Data Manager would also welcome suggestions for other invitees. As the programme develops the Executive Secretary will advise Council.

On 18 September the President and other members of Council are meeting with Dr Miles Parker, Deputy Chief Scientist at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to discuss what role the Society can play in assisting the Department to meet its policy objectives. Topics for discussion will include sea level rise and coastal defence, soils and safeguarding water supplies.

Council were pleased to note that the Executive Secretary has been appointed to the Programme Sub Committee of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.

STRATEGIC MATTERS

10. PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING NEW CHARTERSHIP

The Secretary, Professional Matters tabled a report on the progress in implementing new Chartership arrangements and the changes to structure. He is satisfied that the proposed procedures compare favourably with those used by other bodies.

Council has adopted criteria for Chartership and the Professional Committee's task is to implement these in a practical way. The Committee has tried to identify a system which is more transparent and robust, accountable to the Fellowship, strengthens the status of Chartered Geologists and uses a process which will engage a greater proportion of the Society. It will use the Regional Groups more as a way of delivery.

The Committee had noted the Society's strategic goal to grow Chartership. At present CGeol is predominantly drawn from Engineering Geology, Environmental Geology, Hydrogeology etc. and it needs to grow in other parts of the Society. The initial focus will be on Petroleum Geology and the academic sector. The Society also offers CSci status and the Chartership process needs to encourage applicants for this.

A new system for the approval of applications for Chartered status is planned and interviews will be held at centres around the UK, the first of these being scheduled for 15 April 2009. There is a tight timetable to implement the new system which will be governed by the timetable of interview dates to ensure delivery of the process.

With regard to the changes to structure, three Panels will be established, with Council's approval, within the next three months:- the *Chartership Panel*, a *Chartership Audit Panel* and an *Appeals Advisory Panel*.

The *Chartership Panel* will be responsible for the execution of the Chartership application process supported by staff based in Burlington House. It will comprise a pool of 20 - 24 CGeols and CScis and will consider applications and allocate Scrutineers to each one. The Scrutineers will review the application and, following an interview with the candidate, pass their decision to the Chartership Panel who then recommends a decision to Council. The Chair of the Chartership Panel will be a member of Council. A new position, the Chartership Officer, will be a member of the Panel, acting as the professional interface between the Panel and applicants seeking information and advice. This post has been costed at £15,000 per annum. Members of the Chartership Panel will serve for between 3 and 5 years.

The *Chartership Audit Panel* will comprise 3 senior CGeols (or CScis) plus the chair of the Fellowship & Validation Committee for the first year (in a non-voting, advisory capacity) and will be responsible to Council for the scrutiny of the Chartership process. It will review the outcome of each year's activity and report on positive outcomes as well as issues that might require the process to be revised. Members will serve for between 3 and 5 years.

The *Appeals Advisory Panel* will comprise the Executive Secretary, Professional Secretary and Chair of the Accreditation Panel and, independent of the day-to-day Chartership process, will be responsible to Council for recommending a decision in circumstances where a candidate has appealed against the outcome of the normal Chartership process.

A new job description for the Scrutineers has been drawn up and it is intended to put out a call for Scrutineers in the November issue of *Geoscientist*. Recognition of the importance of the Scrutineer's work, which is voluntary, will be an important consideration for the Society overall.

It is also expected that candidates will have Mentors and the Regional Groups will have a vital role in matching candidates to Mentors.

The Chartership Officer will be employed by the Society to provide professional advice to Scrutineers. This person will be a senior CGeol who has previous experience of acting as a Scrutiner and with experience in an organisation which employs geologists from different fields.

With regard to implementation, all current applications for CGeol/CSci will be processed according to the existing rules. All applications received after 31 December will be processed according to the new system. Any outstanding applications will be processed at the April 2009 interview event. The composition of the three new Panels is essentially agreed in principle and will be announced once key individuals have confirmed their involvement. The announcement of the recruitment of additional Scrutineers in November *Geoscientist* will include further information about the new system.

Council agreed that the Professional Committee should proceed on the above basis, in particular:-

- Three Panels will be set up
- The chair of the Chartership Panel will be a member of Council
- The post of Chartership Officer will cost £15,000 per annum

11. BUSINESS PLAN 2008 - 2010 (CM/72/08)

There have been a variety of rates of progress. The Management and Finance Committee have discussed and recognised that good progress has been made and that where it has been less than hoped this was due to pressure on time of staff and officers. Some specific items were discussed:-

- New Chartership arrangements have been added as item R-14.
- With regard to Lifelong Learning (R-7) where no progress has been made, the Secretary, Professional Matters, said that he will review this item in conjunction with continual professional development and also with the change of the chair of the Education Committee. This will be done in 2009 when the new Chartership arrangements are up and running. He would welcome some assistance.

Review group recommendations (R items) that would entail additional core expenditure in 2009 are:-

- R-1 (Government engagement): £5k for additional expenses
- R-3 (Environment Group): £5k seed funding for meetings
- R-11 (Lyell Centre development): £13.5k one-off cost to acquire Fellows' remote access to Elsevier back content (note that this would be added to the library acquisition budget and would appear 'below the line', i.e. capital expenditure which is never depreciated, but which is included in the 'operating budget')
- R-12 (Meeting programme development): £10k additional funding to stimulate meetings in new and emerging areas
- R-13 (Marketing the Society): £10k for pilot projects
- R-14 (Improved Chartership arrangements - further plans): £15k annually for new Chartership Officer post

The Management and Finance Committee had agreed to commend these items to Council with the following changes:-

- R-11 (Lyell Centre development): the £13.5k required to acquire Fellows' remote access to Elsevier back content should be funded from savings within the existing library budget
- R-12 (Meeting programme development): only £5k additional funding should be made available for the science programme, and this should be devoted to the Janet Watson Meeting - stimulation of meetings in emerging areas of science should be funded from within the existing £10k annual allowance for supporting meetings

The total cost of these items is £40k and they have not been included in the core Budget. Council deferred the decision on these items pending discussion on the Budget.

12. BUDGET 2009 (CM/73/08)

The Treasurer emphasised that at this meeting Council is giving a steer and that the final Budget will come to the November meeting for approval. The Budget will continue to be refined taking into account the August and September management accounts. It will also go back to the Budget and Programme Committee and the Management and Finance Committee prior to Council.

The first consolidated version of the Budget showed a deficit of £336k after the cost of the library acquisition and business plan A and G items. Cost savings and the rescheduling of the expenditure of business plan items which it has not been possible to progress because of the lack of staff and officer time has achieved a saving of £180k. The core budget is in balance but there is a deficit of £187k reflecting Council's decision in June to fund business plan A and G items from reserves. The budget does not include R items and, if approved, these costs would also be funded from reserves.

Council agreed with the changes that have been made to the original Budget to bring the deficit down to £187k and also that the R items should be included. They were concerned at the loss of £5k towards Student Scholarships but accepted that this expenditure was deferred rather than deleted. There was general discussion about encouraging students and Dr Herrington suggested that this is something that could be done through the Regional Groups. He agreed to take this on and liaise with the Secretary, Professional Matters.

RH

Council also agreed the upper limit for the 2009 salary review which is minuted separately.

The Executive Secretary emphasised that, under charity legislation, reserves cannot be allowed just to accumulate and that when Council approved the business plan earlier in the year it was noted that there were implications for the 2009 Budget as well as during 2008.

ROUTINE ITEMS

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

13. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

13.1 External Relations Committee (CM/74/08)

14. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT (CM/75/08)

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Alex Carbray mentioned the recent article in *Geoscientist* about making representation on Council more representative of the Fellowship. The chair said this will be discussed at the next meeting of the Elections Standing Committee.

EN

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be at 2.00 pm on 26 November 2008