

The Geological Society

**PROFESSIONAL STANDING COMMITTEE**

Meeting at Burlington House, at 1.00pm on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009

**MINUTES**

Present: D Manning (Chair), E Nickless, V Banks, G Tuckwell, M Culshaw, A Carbray, B Gaskarth, P Maliphant, P Thorn, J Palmer, A Douglas.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from R Allington, T Berry, A Law, M Rivett, K Hiscock, R Williams, P Nathanail, J Lewis, A Lane, L Hollick and J Venus.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 8 <sup>th</sup> January were agreed as a true and accurate account.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
3.1	Item 5.2.3 - Awarding CGeol Status The issue of how long a candidate has to wait from interview to being awarded CGeol status by Council has not yet been addressed directly, but it is believed that this matter can be resolved during the process to schedule the interview dates for 2010.	AD
3.2	Item 12.2 – Forensic Geoscience No progress to date, GT to update at next meeting.	GT
3.3	Item 12.4 – Domain Names Nic Bilham will informally approach the individual concerned and ask if he would like to donate the domain names to the Society.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Chairman's Business</b>	
4.1	Acknowledging Scrutineer's Service As there are a number of flaws to the previous suggestion of issuing a certificate to all old system Scrutineers, BG has drafted a letter to be sent. The letter thanks Scrutineers for their past service and asks that, if not able to become a new style Scrutineer, they consider becoming mentors. Old system scrutineers in New Zealand and Hong Kong have already been approached in this way, as there are currently very few new Scrutineers from these locations.	AD
<b>5</b>	<b>Council Matters</b> No matters to report.	

6 CPD

DM's recent article in Geoscientist to initiate a debate on CPD within the Society and has had several responses, the majority of which are in favour of CPD. However, its standing as a worthwhile activity still needs to be built up within the profession. The Chartership Panel has also been canvassing its members - a summary of the responses received was tabled and formed the basis of a full discussion by the Committee, outlined below:

As CPD is currently compulsory for both CSci and EFG title holders it has been suggested it should become compulsory for CGeol. However, it would be difficult for those for whom CPD was not appropriate (eg fellows who have retired and are no longer in full time activity but want to keep their CGeol status) to be incorporated into the scheme. Some form of concessionary points system (possibly with no need to record activities under professional practice) may therefore need to be introduced, but this would require some amount of rebuild of the website. It was therefore agreed that CPD can not be made compulsory at the present time.

The existing on-line recording system is generally not thought to be fit for purpose. The categories are not immediately simple to understand and records are almost impossible to audit in any meaningful way. The Committee were advised that it is not currently possible to undertake a full scale review, as the current CPD section of the website cant be rebuilt. However, there are parts of the existing site that can be improved (eg categories can be more clearly defined etc), and some form of self reflection/validation should also be introduced into the process.

It was therefore agreed that better guidance on how to use the system should be created, as well as clearer definition for the categories and that once familiar with the existing site, it is not as complicated or difficult to use as it first appears. It was further agreed that a subgroup be tasked with looking at those elements of the current system that can be most easily improved and report back with suggestions by the next meeting. The group will comprise BG, MC and PT. Members of the CP should also be approached to ensure input from another areas such as academic, oil, paleontology.

BG  
MC  
PT  
AD

It has become clear there is a division between those parts of the profession where CPD is already deeply embedded (eg engineering) and those where it is seen as somewhat irrelevant (eg academic, petroleum). It was therefore agreed that the barrier between actively undertaking as distinct from the recording of CPD (which is where the reluctance seems to lie) needs to be broken down and that a 'hearts and minds' campaign should be mounted via Geoscientist etc to educate Fellows as to why CPD matters to them and dispel the belief that it is purely about completing forms and 'ticking boxes'.

DM advised that Fellows on a career break for any reason (including maternity leave, redundancy etc) should record this in the free text area and record a suitable number of pro-rata points then, when fully back to work, they should undergo the necessary CPD activities needed to refresh their knowledge.

## 7 Chartership

### 7.1 Process in Hong Kong

DM has not yet received a response from Martin Devonald on how the Chartership process will run in HK – DM to chase.

DM

BG has asked MD to ensure all Chartered members of the HKRG join the new Scrutineer system.

It was stressed that if any CGeols from HK visit the UK they should be encouraged to meet with BG or DM to discuss the new process.

### 7.2 N Scotland/Cornwall

It was acknowledged that applications from Fellows living on the very periphery of the UK may need to be dealt with separately to those from more central areas, and the need may therefore arise to hold one off interview days in these areas if necessary (although this would only be done for exceptional reasons). It was agreed that applications from these areas will be monitored in order find the most practical solution.

AD

### 7.3 Chartership Audit Panel

The composition of the CAP has now been finalised: Ruth Allington (Chair), Bob Chaplow, Vanessa Banks and Mike de Freitas.

### 7.4 Scrutineers' Day

The event held at Burlington House on 27<sup>th</sup> March was a great success, with over 80 Scrutineers in attendance. A paper was issued to the Committee summarising all the points made during the afternoon feedback session and the Q&A session that followed. These points will now be considered by the Chartership Panel who will then report back to the Professional Committee once they have been assessed.

GT/BG

A brief article about the event will be included in the next edition of Geoscientist. DM would like to see a much higher proportion of women represented as Scrutineers, and it was therefore suggested Geoscientist should also carry a call form more women to join the new system.

### 7.5 Guidance Documents

Guidance documents from the Petroleum & Hydrogeology groups have still to be received – DM to chase progress.

DM

A guidance document for near surface geophysics could be encouraged via the John Arthurs and the NSGG specialist group – GT to contact and progress.

GT

An Environmental document was also agreed to be desirable, and although this will not be possible without the existence of an Environmental Group, however PT offered to write a first draft - AD to send examples of the existing guidance documents to him. AD/PT

A guidance document on M-level equivalency report for CSci applicants will be published on the website shortly.

#### 7.6 Mentors

Although the idea to use Regional Groups in helping to find mentors was agreed to be a good one, and the Groups themselves are keen to help, concern was expressed as to how much additional work this may mean for the Groups, as the mechanics of the process have not been agreed and a workable scheme at BH therefore needs to be established before the process is rolled out to the Regional Groups. AD

It was agreed that mentors should be firmer in advising candidates that they might not yet be ready for Chartered status, and that sponsors should be held more accountable than at present for signing off applications from candidates that were not ready for Chartership.

### 8 Professional Development

#### 8.1 CEnv Status

It is fundamental that an Environment Group be firmly established before a decision is made on whether to award CEnv status, however the EG discussion in Council has been fragmentary and has now ground to a halt. An Environment Co-coordinating Committee is currently trying to put forward a series of themed meetings, and it was felt those who attend might be interested in serving on a full Environment Group Committee. DM met a prospective EG member at the Scrutineers Day who was keen to be involved and will therefore ask her to contact EN. VB suggested contacting Julian Andrews, and all Fellows who have said they are interested in the Environment could also be contacted and asked if they would like to be involved. DM

In the interim, criteria for awarding the title should be obtained from the Society for the Environment. AD

#### 8.2 Careers Day

Although very successful in the past, the format for the Careers Day needs to be modernised, and a new draft programme was issued to the Committee for discussion.

It was agreed that more interaction was needed with the students, and more time for q&a session/themed discussions, panels, workshops etc needed to be introduced. More focus should be given to activities that would help graduating students find employment (eg CV clinic etc). The day could also be rebranded as a Careers Fair, with greater emphasis placed on the exhibitors, however it was noted that it is not possible for all the students to look round the exhibition hall at the same time.

8.3 SiLC  
Update from Paul Nathaniel distributed to the committee.

8.4 Environment Group  
See 8.1 above

8.5 YGG  
MC has requested that a YGG webpage be created for the Society's site as there is currently no information available online. JV

BG recently met with reps from the Thames Valley & Western Regional Groups and has passed their contact details on to JV.

PM reported that the SWRG now has an Early Careers Geologists Subcommittee.

8.6 H&S Inspectorate Improvement Notices  
JL to update at next meeting.

## 9 **Accreditation Panel**

An application has now been received from Dhahran along with an application for re-accreditation from the West Indies. A new application from Derby University is believed to be imminent.

BG is actively looking to increase the number of MSc courses and has recently contacted all MSc course providers.

## 10 **Regional Groups**

RG Governance Report

MC was thanked for producing the Report. The recommendations were then discussed in full, summarised below:

*R1 – Regional Groups should remain under the Professional Committee for governance purposes*

Agreed.

*R2 – RGCC should be abolished & Chairs of Regional Groups become full members of Professional Committee*

Agreed this could be done provided the PC agenda was restructured to identify key issues and more items moved to report. It was also agreed that the agenda would need to go out well in advance in future in order for Regional Groups to delegate a representative. AD/DM

*R3 – Professional Committee agendas should include matters of strategic & operational importance to the Regional Groups*

Agreed. This will help increase the RGs' status and help ensure that the needs of fellows are being adequately met.

*R4 – YGG should come under Professional Committee for governance purposes and Chair of YGG become full member of the committee.*

Agreed.

*R5 – Position of VP for Regional Groups should remain and Terms of Reference be prepared for the role*

Agreed.

*R6 – Regional Groups need support and encouragement from the Society rather than abolition.*

Agreed.

*R7 – Current regional structure of the Regional Groups does not need altering.*

Agreed.

*R8 – Data on RG committee turn over and meeting attendance needs to be collated in order to monitor health of Regional Groups.*

Agreed. If a group was seen to be struggling Vice President will meet with committee members as soon as possible to give assistance and resolve any problems. One of the more successful groups could also be asked to mentor officers etc.

*R9 – Situation in Scotland is currently adequate.*

Agreed.

*R10 – RG constitution to be redrafted.*

Agreed.

*R11 – Role of the Regional Groups be expanded to include aspects of the changes in the Chartership process.*

Agreed.

MC stressed that he would like to see the report receiving Council approval before his term of office as VP came to an end. The report must now be circulated to the Science Committee and External Relations Committee before submitting to Council, however EN believed it should be possible for the report to be presented at the July Council meeting.

## 10.2 Solent RG

A new Regional Group, covering the Solent area, was approved by Council in January.

## 11 Chartership Panel

Inaugural meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February (see attached minutes).

## 12 Any Other Business

### 12.1 Promotion of Geology

VB noted that there is no mention of promotion of geology in the Code of Conduct and suggested this could be included. This item to be added to

AD

the main agenda for the next meeting in order to give time for a full discussion.

12.2 University Reps

The current University reps system needs to be improved. It was noted that the Regional Groups have very good contacts within Universities but that these contacts may not be in a position to carry out the tasks expected of the University reps. However, as this is a long standing problem, it was felt that the Regional Groups contact (in whatever capacity) may be the best level of contact the Society could achieve, and it was therefore agreed that the Regional Groups would be asked to provide details of their current contacts, contact details held for Accreditation could then be added to these to form a more comprehensive list.

AD

12.3 Careers in Geology

PM informed the committee of a new website, 'i-could', run by CRAC (Career Development Organisation) featuring profiles of individual careers, including Geology, and suggested the Society should aim to increase geological profiles included on the site.

12.4 Course Listings

PM expressed concern that the section containing the Regional Group events in Geoscientist often gets reduced, apparently to give enough space to the CPD endorsed courses, which are overwhelmingly provided by external companies. However, it was felt that Regional and Specialist Group events should be given priority - AD to raise with Ted Nield.

AD

13 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> June at 1.00pm

The Geological Society

**CHARTERSHIP PANEL**

Meeting at Burlington House, at 1.00pm on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**MINUTES**

Present: G Tuckwell (Chair), R Brassington, C Cox, D Cragg, J Dodds, P Dolan, C Eccles, B Gaskarth, M Hart, H Nattrass, P Whyley, A Douglas, J Benn.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from E Bailey, J Bloomfield, M Devonald, K Duff, R Evans, A Fletcher, T Jones, P Larkin, T Owens, J Pringle, T Radford, D Roberts, M Rogers, R Shaw, D Shilston, I Sims, G Taylor and M Whitehead.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Overview of the Panel</b> The Chartership Panel will report directly to the Professional Committee. The remit of the Panel is to cover all matters relating directly to the day to day logistics and mechanics of the new Chartership process, and the promotion of Chartership both internally and externally.  Not all Panel members would be invited to attend every Panel meeting, the composition of the members invited would depend on the specialisms of the applicants that had been interviewed at the preceding Interview Day. However, due to the severe weather conditions prior to this inaugural meeting, all members will be invited to attend the next meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> May.  A full list of current Panel members was issued. An exercise to ensure that the composition of the Panel is comprehensive, and that as many specialisms as possible are covered, has still to be completed.  Any Panel members who have not yet completed a Validated Scrutineer application were requested to do so.	AD  GT/BG
<b>3</b>	<b>Names for Election</b> A list of those Candidate Fellows, Honorary Fellows and Chartered Geologists elected at the Council meeting on 29 <sup>th</sup> January was issued for information.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Chartership Officer's Report</b> BG has now been in post for two weeks and has been working with the Fellowship Office to process the backlog of applications under the old chartership system.	

Visits have already been arranged to Mouchell, Halcrow and Wardell Armstrong, as well as to the Northern, South Wales, Thames Valley and Scotland Regional Group, to discuss the new Chartership process and BG is very keen to visit other Regional Groups, Specialist Groups and companies if they would like him to. GT added that it was hoped members of the Panel would also help disseminate information about the new criteria and application process to other staff within their workplace and it was agreed that all Panel members should be 'ambassadors' for the new Chartership system.

AD is currently drafting a simplified flow chart to illustrate the Chartership application process in order to make the completion of documentation at the various stages simpler to understand. AD

Four Specialist Groups have been tasked by the Professional Secretary to produce specialty specific guidance documents for CGeol applicants. At present the Academic guide has been completed and is now available on the website. The Engineering document is in final draft form awaiting completion, and the Hydrogeology and Petroleum documents have yet to be created.

## **5 Applications Report**

The Fellowship Office is currently working through a backlog of applications under the old system, as well as processing applications under the new system. It is hoped that all outstanding old applications will be cleared by the end of April. 12 applicants under the new system will be interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> April at Burlington House.

## **6 Interview Day Report**

No report tabled as interviews have not yet been held this year. A timetable of future interview days was issued.

It was suggested that holding interviews at Universities might send out the message that the Society was heavily linked to Academia. However, Universities are not the only locations being considered as venues for the Interview Days, and as Universities are increasingly being used for commercial meetings and events it was not felt this would pose a problem. Indeed, using Universities may actually help encourage Academics to apply for CGeol status.

## **7 Appeals**

All appeals by candidates under the new system will be considered by the Appeals Advisory Panel. At present this panel is made up of Executive Secretary, Professional Secretary and a third senior CGeol as yet to be decided upon. A flow chart detailing the appeals process will be produced shortly. AD

## **8 Reinstatement of Lapsed Chartered Status**

The regulation governing the reinstatement of lapsed CGeols (as practiced under the old system) was issued. At present Fellows are given a period of nine months grace from the date their subscriptions are due to the date they are finally struck off, and are contacted on at least four occasions over this period to remind them that their fees have not been paid. However, BG would like the revised draft of the CGeol regulations to emphasise the importance of not letting the title lapse, and would like to see the introduction of a new system where by any CGeols who are still practicing having not paid their fees are contacted by him personally prior to being struck off.

A report will be produced at the end of February which will show the exact number of CGeols yet to pay their 2009 fees and a suitable/practical plan of action can then be agreed. One option may be to require a lapsed fellow to pay back all fees that would have been incurred during the lapsed period and/or re-sit their Chartership interview before being allowed to reinstate. An annual reminder piece in the Geoscientist in November from the Professional Secretary should also be considered.

## **9 Scrutineers**

### **9.1 Locations of Interviews**

A recent application under the old system from a Fellow in Northern Ireland raised the question of whether candidates from NI (and the very north of Scotland, Cornwall etc) would be disadvantaged by having to travel great distances under the new system to attend an Interview Day - the possibility of holding one-off events in these locations on the same date as the national Interview Day should perhaps be considered. The Regional Groups might be approached to provide assistance with any such additional interview days.

### **9.2 Scrutineers Day 27<sup>th</sup> March**

Timetable for the event was issued to the panel. The Panel would, in future, be consulted as to what should be included in any subsequent Scrutineers' event as well as how often/where the days needed to be held. Volunteers from the Professional Committee have already been requested to help run the breakout sessions and any volunteers from the Panel would also be welcome.

The Fellowship Office will be recording on each Scrutineer's database record when they have attended an event and, although attendance at this particular day is not a pre-requisite for acting as a Scrutineer, it would be expected that all new Scrutineers would try and attend at least one such day in their first year.

Any Scrutineers who had attended an event would be expected to disseminate the information gained to their fellow Scrutineers at interview days and at work where ever possible.

## 10 CPD

The Professional Committee are currently looking at the Society's CPD scheme (ie whether or not it should be made compulsory, current definitions of the categories etc) and will be holding a full review in the second half of the year.

A full discussion was held by the Panel, with the main points summarised as follows:

- the system as it stands is felt to be inappropriate for geologists in Academia as they can easily reach the points total required each year, whereas Fellows in other fields can take much longer. It was therefore felt any new system should be tailored to different expertises, and more appropriate CPD points weighting should be introduced for different areas/activities
- some form of CPD weighting for courses/seminars etc was also needed
- making CPD compulsory for geologists in the oil industry could mean that the Society would potentially lose Fellows from this sector as there is no external/industrial driver for them to do this
- some way of ensuring that CGeols actually undertake CPD (rather than just go through the motions of recording it in order to comply with the on-line points based scheme) needed to be devised
- CPD should be relevant to an individual Fellow's wants/needs at a particular time in their career, and would clearly change over time for every individual. Consequently any 'fits all' system would not be fit for purpose and would possibly alienate Fellows if they felt it was irrelevant to them and did not meet their personal needs
- one alternative to CPD would could be for CGeols to face a 5 year re-validation interview rather than fill in years of 'irrelevant' CPD entries. It was felt that the Society was in danger of concentrating simply on creating the mechanics of an on-line CPD system rather than focusing on the actual activities of CPD
- at present the 3 year cycle offered by the Society seems out of step with other bodies. Any new system the Society introduces should tie in with EFG (an annual CPD cycle) and CSci (at present a 5 year CPD cycle, but changing to annual over the next few years).
- It was suggested that CPD has actually lost much of its credibility for the reasons mentioned above and consequently any move to

make it compulsory should be treated with great caution

All agreed that the Society's system must first be made workable for all Fellows before it considering a move to make it compulsory for CGeols to use.

David Manning (Professional Secretary) has recently drafted an article on CPD for publication in the March edition of Geoscientist in which he invites responses from all Fellows on the issues involved. It was suggested that in view of the discussion held by the Panel as noted above, PD/DC and BH take this opportunity to compose suitable responses putting forward the various points of view to stimulate debate. AD to check if DM is happy for his article to be circulated to PD/DC & MH prior to publication. AD/PD/DC/MH

#### 11 **Mentoring/Sponsors**

The Professional Committee is looking at ways to make it easier for CGeol applicants to find mentors/sponsors, and especially ways of involving Regional Groups in the process. BG is currently looking at ROPOs and reciprocal UK bodies with regards to compiling a definitive list of those the Society is happy for candidates to use as mentors/sponsors. BG

Information on mentors and sponsors will also be gained from the new interview 'exit' /questionnaire forms (see Item 13 below).

#### 12 **Promotion of Chartership**

It was noted that CSci and EFG will also be promoted along side CGeol.

#### 13 **Auditing**

Draft questionnaire forms for applicants/sponsors/scrutineers on the mechanics of the new process were issued to the panel. A number of amendments to all three forms were agreed.

#### 14 **Any other business**

A powerpoint presentation on the new process was issued to the panel. MH suggested that the M-level details under the CSci slide were misleading - AD to check with Science Council and amend where necessary. The colour scheme used for the slides will also be modified. AD

The Professional Committee and Council have taken the decision that the current CGeol application fee should not be increased at the same time the new system was being introduced, but that once the revised system had been run successfully for at least a year before it could be considered - Council are looking at reviewing fees generally and this would probably form part of that wider review.

#### 15 **Date of the next meeting**

The next Chartership Panel meetings will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 10<sup>th</sup> November, and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010.