

## MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held 1 April 2009

PRESENT: L Frostick (Chair), A Fleet, I Bartholomew, M Culshaw, E Derbyshire and N Rogers

APOLOGIES: A Law, D Manning and A Watts

With: E Nickless (Executive Secretary), N Bilham (Data Manager), M Kyriakides (Finance Director), N Marriott (Director of Publishing), and S Culver (PA to Executive Secretary)

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from A Law, D Manning and A Watts

#### 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 20 NOVEMBER 2008

These were agreed.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING

##### 3.1 *Development and Fundraising Committee (MFC/01/09)*

A prospectus outlining the work of the Society and identifying possible areas of collaboration with outside organisations has been printed. It was included with the delegate packs for PGCVII and sent with subscription renewals to the Corporate Affiliates. Those involved were commended for their work on what was regarded as a very attractive document. It was agreed that the word length will be reviewed if there is a re-print.

##### 3.2 *Donations Policy (MFC/02/09)*

Martin Culshaw expanded the policy drafted by the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary was asked to produce a further draft and circulate it with the minutes of the meeting. In addition to the points made by Martin Culshaw, wording will be included to make it clear that any applications which could be construed as a request for a research grant would not be considered.

##### 3.3 *Mary Anning Window (item 7.4)*

The Executive Secretary reported that the Society had made a donation towards this repair (the excess on the insurance) and that a letter had been received confirming that the restoration had been successfully completed and asking for thanks to be passed to the Society.

#### 4. HEALTH & SAFETY (MFC/03/09)

The Committee noted that the website administrator had received what was believed to be an electric shock. Electrical circuits and appliances had been checked and no faults found. The cause was thought to be the build up of static electricity and the carpeting had been treated with an anti static product. The Executive Secretary confirmed that this matter will be kept under review and regular treatment with anti

static products will take place.

## 5. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

### 5.1 *January Management Accounts (MFC/04/09)*

The January accounts were too early to show any particular trends. The Director of Publishing reported that since the January accounts had been prepared publishing results have been more positive, with journals slightly ahead and Lyell Collection income almost on budget. The Finance Director reported that the recently completed February accounts are showing positive figures for room hire, Fellowship and also investment income.

The Executive Secretary proposed that Fellowship rates for those Fellows who are unemployed should be reduced by half for a period of up to three years. The Committee agreed.

## 6. 2008 ACCOUNTS

### 6.1 *Minutes of Audit Panel Meeting (MFC/05/09)*

The Treasurer highlighted the following:-

*Library Valuation:* the current accounting treatment of the Library gives a distorted view of the wealth of the Society. The Auditors have indicated that changes in accounting standards for heritage assets may be changed and will be more favourable.  
*Specialist Groups:* the Panel were concerned about the lack of accounts from some of the Specialist Groups although the Auditors had not described this as a material issue. The inactivity of some of the groups was discussed generally and it was suggested by the Data Manager that this issue could be addressed through the business planning process, i.e. identifying those which may be moribund and suggesting what action needs to be taken. The Executive Secretary was asked to bring the matter to Council for discussion.

*Restricted Funds:* Farrers have been asked to provide advice on the use of these funds. Once the production of the annual accounts is complete the Finance Director will attempt to locate any documentation in the archives relating to the terms of gift.

*Endowments:* it was noted that a decision will be required on future revaluations if RPI becomes negative.

*UBS AAF01/06 report:* the Committee was concerned that UBS had not produced this report for the Auditors but noted that the Auditors will be following this up on a regular basis.

### 6.2 *Annual Report and Audited Accounts (MFC/06/09)*

The Committee noted that information from page 34 onwards does not form part of the statutory Accounts but is produced at the request of the Fellowship as an aid to understanding. An issue had been raised by the Audit Panel that the practice of spreading the Burlington House overhead across departments potentially gives an unjust picture of departmental performance. The Executive Secretary and Finance Director will review the presentation of this supplementary information for future accounts.

The Committee recommended the acceptance of the Annual Report and Audited Accounts to Council.

### 6.3 *Management Letter (MFC/07/09)*

The Finance Director confirmed that post audit he will circulate the points contained in the management letter to those responsible for taking action. He will give regular updates to the Committee on progress. Of particular importance is the requirement

EN

MK

EN  
MK

MK

to ensure that the bank reconciliation process at the Publishing House is undertaken regularly and he will put in place the necessary procedures, reporting progress to the Auditors quarterly.

## 7. REPORT OF THE TREASURER'S PANELS

### 7.1 *Investment Panel (MFC/08/09)*

There was concern about the performance of UBS Wealth Management particularly their perceived inactivity in managing the portfolio. It was agreed that it would not be appropriate for members of the Investment Panel to instruct the fund managers what to do and that it would be preferable to appoint people to the Panel who have more expertise and can challenge the fund managers. In this respect the Executive Secretary is meeting with a former stockbroker with a view to him joining the Investment Panel. The Committee agreed that if concern about the performance of the fund managers continues it may be necessary to consider making a change.

### 7.2 *Budget and Programme Committee (MFC/09/09)*

The 2009 Budget has been re-presented in line with the median case scenario. The timetable for the 2010 Budget has been agreed.

### 7.3 *Remuneration Panel (MFC/10/09)*

The actions identified by the Panel are in hand, namely the revision of the Method of Working and the table showing the distribution of staff throughout the bands.

EN

## 8. FELLOWSHIP FEES 2010 (MFC/11/09)

At its last meeting the Budget and Programme Committee discussed the level at which Fellowship fees for 2010 should be set. It was noted that Fellowship income for 2009 is expected fully to cover the costs of Fellowship services and that the RPI (the inflator which has previously been referred to when setting fees) was running at 0.1% in January. In the light of the recession it was felt that any increases in Fellowship fees were difficult to justify and the Budget and Programme Committee therefore recommended that Fellowship fees for 2010 should be held at 2009 levels. In order to ensure there is no shortfall in income it was proposed that only online access to the journal of a Fellow's choice would be included in the standard Fellowship fee and that a modest supplement be introduced for those who wish to continue to receive a paper copy. The Committee agreed with this recommendation but asked the Director of Publishing to investigate how perpetual access to those journals published during the membership period could be made available after Fellowship has been resigned.

NM

The Committee also agreed with the recommendation that in order to attract more student members that the Candidate Fellow fee be reduced to £15 in 2010 and that a new band of Junior Candidate Fellow at £10 be introduced for those still at school. The Committee suggested that the promotion of the latter category should be taken forward by the External Relations Committee through the Education Committee and that there might be interest in sponsorship through Corporate Affiliates. A link with Rockwatch also needs to be considered.

ED

## 9. FRIENDSHIP & SCHOOLS AFFILIATE SCHEMES (MFC/12/09)

### *Friendship Scheme*

The Shell London lectures had been well received with many regular attendees, some of whom have asked whether there is a scheme which would give them a more formal link with the Society and its activities. A "Friends of the Geological Society" scheme has been suggested with the following characteristics and benefits:-

- The scheme should be as simple as possible to administer with minimal use of staff time
- Potential Friends would be ineligible for election as Fellows of the Society insofar as they would not satisfy the requirement to have a degree in geology or a cognate science. Those who have such qualifications would be encouraged to become Fellows
- As Friends would not be Fellows they would not be able to vote on Society matters or to attend to Annual or Special General Meetings of the Society
- The Friendship Scheme would be run independently of the Fellowship database so there would be no impact on Fellowship renewals and all other activities that entails
- Friends would enjoy a minimal range of benefits selected to have no or minimal impact on other areas of Society business and to discourage Fellows from 'downgrading' their status
- Applications from Fellows to become Friends would be refused

Friends would:-

- Receive a monthly copy of Geoscientist (keeps them informed about the Society and forthcoming events)
- Be able to use the Library, for reference only
- Be invited to an annual 'Friends' event
- Receive a online-newsletter
- Have a personal subscription year beginning any month of the year

#### *Schools Affiliate Scheme*

This would be identical in all aspects to the Friendship Scheme except that it would involve organisational rather than individual membership. This reason for this scheme would be to increase the Society's visibility in schools and among children with an early interest in Earth sciences.

The Committee approved both schemes which will be put before the next meeting of Council to be noted under President's Business.

#### 10. VIRTUAL CONFERENCE SERVICES (*MFC/13/09*)

An outstanding item from the 2008-2010 business plan was to investigate and review options for delivering real time remote participation in conferences and other Society events. A paper was taken to the last meeting of the Information Management Committee which gave details of a system which has been identified called *Interwise*. This is owned by AT&T and is used by about 15 UK scientific schools and engineering institutions, including the IOP and ICE under an arrangement managed by the Engineering and Technology Board. Set up costs would be £2k and thereafter a flat fee of £350 per month would be charged entitling the Society to unlimited use of the service. The details of charging for remote access are yet to be finalised and the Finance Director will look into what VAT implications there may be.

The Committee agreed that this service should be trialled. It was noted that it may be possible to do this on President's Day.

EN

NB

11. STAFF CHANGES (MFC/14/09)

The Committee noted that:

- Carol Liddle, Designer, who joined the Society in 1997, sadly died at the end of February. The Director of Publishing is reviewing the long term need for a graphic designer in the Publishing House and whether the work would be better outsourced. In the meantime Cityprint are doing the page make of *Geoscientist* and Witherbys have been asked to do the design and page make of the Annual Review.
- Tristan Shorr joined the Society as part-time Library Assistant, replacing Gordon Alchin who left at the beginning of November.
- Alison Tucker, Marketing Co-ordinator at Bath, went on maternity leave from the middle of March and her post will be covered during this time by Samantha Kaye.
- Kerri Deegan, Events Co-ordinator, left the Society in February. A replacement has been recruited.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2 June 2009