

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 18 June 2008

PRESENT: L E Frostick (*Chair*), P Allen, I D Bartholomew, A M Carbray, M Daly, E Derbyshire (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), A J Fleet (*Treasurer*), A Law, J Ludden, M O Rivett (from item 11), N W Rogers (*Secretary, Publications*) G Tuckwell, A B Watts (*Secretary, Science*) and R A W Wood

APOLOGIES: M G Culshaw, M Fowler, R Herrington, R E Holdsworth, A Lord, D Manning (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), J Marshall, J Turner and R W 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 those new members of Council who had been elected at the AGM on 4 June.

ESSENTIAL BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies as above were noted.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 9 APRIL 2008

These were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Honorary Fellowship (*CM/33/08*)

The Secretary, Foreign and External Affairs, commended to Council the four candidates:-

Gwendy Hall, GEEA
Sharon Mosher, past President of the GSA and chair of *GeoScience World*
Susan Soloman, NOAA
James W Valentine, world-renowned palaeobiologist of Berkeley

These nominations will now be advertised in *Geoscientist* and go forward for election at the OGM on 17 September.

EN

The Secretary, Foreign and External Affairs also asked members of Council to put forward people for nomination, particularly taking into account the need to broaden the geographic spread and balance between the genders. Further nominations will be considered at the next meeting of the External Relations Committee on 2 September.

ALL

ED

4. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

4.1	<p>Dates of meetings of Council and sub-committees (<i>CM/34/08</i>)</p> <p>The list of known meeting dates as detailed in Annex A was noted. Members of Council were asked to advise Committee Secretaries if any dates were not convenient.</p>	ALL
4.2	<p>Institution of Geologists Plaque</p> <p>The President reported that the Plaque had been “unveiled” at the beginning of the Awards Presentation. Rick Brassington spoke on behalf of the former IG Committee and John Shanklin had written. The location of the IG “Jewel” and Plaque recording the history of the Institution and its predecessors has been well received although there had been a comment by Rick Brassington about the lack of representation from industry on Council. The President said that the first meeting of the Elections Standing Committee is on 4 September and asked members of Council to suggest Fellows from industry, for example the engineering and water sectors, who could be considered for election to Council.</p>	ALL
5.	<p>HEALTH AND SAFETY (<i>CM/35/08</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that there had been no accidents or near misses since the last meeting of Council. The Executive Secretary advised members of Council that they have a statutory responsibility as trustees for Health and Safety matters. It was noted that there is not a formal system whereby members of staff can report anything that looks “unsafe”. A new firm of Health and Safety consultants have been appointed and have made an inspection visit. The Executive Secretary will be taking forward action points arising from their report. It was noted that the counter terrorism session which was being organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry has been postponed but no new date has been set.</p>	EN
6.	<p>REPORT OF THE TREASURER</p>	
6.1	<p>Report of the Management and Finance Committee (<i>CM/36/08</i>)</p> <p>The minutes of the Management and Finance Committee meeting held on 5 June 2008 were noted. The substantive business of that meeting had been to consider the February, March and April management accounts. It was noted that the reduction in income and future expenditure is being closely monitored but that the Committee had agreed that it was important not to make “knee jerk” decisions. An improved system for collecting Fellowship dues has been implemented.</p>	
6.2	<p>April Management Accounts (<i>CM/37/08</i>)</p> <p>The reduction in book sales income was noted. In particular, there are signs that this income is dropping because of an earlier than anticipated use by Fellows of the Lyell Collection which is ahead of budget. The Publications Committee are reviewing a number of issues and a strategy document will come out of that review. Council members commented that they are aware, for example, of the apparent reduction in the status of academic publications and the problem of getting into ISI. Council suggested that it may be better to move towards the publication of specialist journals although turn round time would have to be reduced.</p>	NR
	<p>It was noted that the May management accounts will contain a year end forecast.</p>	MK
6.3	<p>Overdraft permission (<i>CM/38/08</i>)</p> <p>The Bye-laws stated that the Society could not borrow money without the unanimous approval of Council. It had therefore become customary to ask each new Council for</p>	

permission to seek an overdraft facility, should the need arise over the summer months when income was low. An overdraft facility would avoid having to realise investments should the market be unfavourable. All members of Council agreed that the Treasurer could seek an overdraft should the need arise: those members of Council not present would also be asked to give approval.

EN

6.4 Budget 2009 (CM/39/08)

An initial draft of the summary budget for 2009 has been prepared and considered by the Budget and Programme Committee, and subsequently by the Management and Finance Committee.

The Data Manager took Council through some of the detail of the budget. He explained that this will be the first time that the Society has considered using its reserves to achieve the Business Plan. It was recognised that it would be preferable to have a higher reserve than that currently identified (10% of budget) and that Council will have the opportunity to stop expenditure when forthcoming budgets are submitted for annual approval. It was noted, however, that under its lease the Society has an obligation to keep the internal fabric of the building in good order and the lease could be jeopardised if the landlord is not satisfied with this maintenance. With regard to the major expenditure (the Upper Library) it was noted that this is required not only to maintain the fabric of the building but also to improve environmental controls to protect the contents of the Library.

The budget for 2009 will be subject to refinement over the coming months and will be discussed by Council again at their meeting in September before final approval at the November Council meeting.

NB

6.5 Serious Incident Reporting (CM/40/08)

The auditors have drawn attention to the requirements of charity law and that the trustees as a matter of routine should take reasonable steps to assess and mitigate any risks to their charity's activities or beneficiaries, and to confirm that any serious incidents have been reported as part of the annual return. These incidents include significant loss of funds, significant sums of money or other property donated from an unknown or unverified source, unlawful activity by a member of staff or trustee including links to proscribed (banned) or terrorist organisations.

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

7. FELLOWSHIP MATTERS

Fellows to be struck off for non-payment of the 2008 subscription (CM/41/08)

Council agreed to remove from Fellowship those Fellows who had not paid their 2008 subscription by 30 June 2008 unless they are in discussion about their subscription with the Fellowship Office. Council was asked to encourage those Fellows known to them to pay their subscription and remain in Fellowship.

EN

ALL

8. ELECTIONS

8.1 Fellowship (CM/42/08)

Council agreed to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed in CM/42/08 should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 18 June 2008.

8.2 Chartered Geologists (CM/43/08)

The applications from Fellows to become Chartered Geologists listed in CM/43/08 had been approved by the Fellowship and Validation Committee and were agreed by Council.

8.3 Candidate Fellowship (CM/44/08)

Council agreed to elect those applicants listed in CM/44/08 as Candidate Fellows.

8.4 European Geologist (CM/45/08)

Council approved the list of European Geologists.

9. COMMITTEE AND PANEL MEMBERSHIP

9.1 Standing Committees (CM/46/08)

Membership of the Standing Committees was agreed. Council members were advised that they were welcome to sit on more than one Committee. A Law volunteered to join the Management and Finance Committee which was appreciated.

ALL

9.2 Disciplinary Panel (CM/47/08)

Membership of the Disciplinary Panel was agreed.

9.3 Committees and Panels (CM/48/08)

Council noted the membership of the Society's committees and panels. Council recorded their gratitude for the enormous amount of work done by volunteers to these Committees and Panels.

10. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES (CM/49/08)

The President confirmed that she will sit on the Presidents' Committee of the Science Council. The Executive Secretary confirmed that he has been invited to join the Planning Sub Committee of the Parliamentary and Science Committee.

Council was asked to advise if they knew of any other outside bodies on which the Society is represented. It was noted that Bob Symes represents the Society at the Camborne School of Mines and Mark Macklin sits on the Natural Sciences Committee of the UK National Commission for UNESCO, reporting to the ERC. Council suggested that the Society should be represented on CHUGD, BGS and the Royal Society's Science in Society programme [*it was discovered subsequent to the meeting that this programme has now finished*].

ALL

Council approved the list of representatives on outside bodies. It was agreed that the representatives should be asked to submit an annual report on the activities of the body on which they sit and advise how they have been able to represent the Society.

EN

STRATEGIC MATTERS

11. BUSINESS PLAN 2008-2010 (CM/50/08)

Members of Council who are responsible for Business Plan reviews (items R-1 - R-13)

were asked to note that their recommendations will be considered at the September Council meeting, and that decisions will be made at that point as to whether proposed actions for 2009 should go ahead, to allow preparation of the Budget to be completed by November. It was noted by Council that it is essential that all review groups conclude their work and send a final report to the Data Manager by 15 August at the latest. This report should include an assessment of the financial impact of any recommended actions, so that this can be incorporated into a budget presentation for inclusion with the Council papers.

ALL

The following actions against Reviews were noted:-

- R-4: Gaia: Earth Systems Science Group – Council was concerned that there has been no progress on this matter. The Executive Secretary will follow up with the Secretary of the Group and report back to the Science Committee. It was noted that the Council owner is Paul Henderson who has since retired from Council. Phil Allen expressed interest in taking on Council ownership.
- R-6: Regional Groups – it was noted that Martin Culshaw has written to Groups, there is a meeting on 16 July and it is planned to bring a report to the next meeting of Council.
- R-8: Virtual conferences – Council agreed that this is an important area of development and one which must be done well. It was suggested that the Information Management Committee set up an “Information Futures Group” with participation from younger people to brain storm ideas regarding communication and appealing to a young audience.

EN

NB

MC

NB

Council noted that the first meeting of the Development & Fundraising Committee is on 26 June. It will be chaired by Iain Bartholomew who asked Council members to consider items which may attract sponsorship. The Executive Secretary added that these ideas should include the business advantage being offered which will assist with “pitches”.

ALL/IB

Council agreed that cross-representation between the External Relations Committee and the Science Committee is vitally important and it would be helpful to find one person who is prepared to serve on both committees. The President confirmed that she wishes to attend both meetings. The secretaries of both Committees will liaise to identify a way forward.

ED/AW

With regard to the Society’s Strategy, Council discussed the use of the word “respected” “To be the respected public voice of geosciences in the UK,” and it was agreed that the Society also needs to have an opinion.

Council noted that a new Science & Communications Assistant is being recruited and that the Science and External Relations Committees will need to identify and drive what this person does. It was agreed that this person should put together a list of “hot topics” which should take account of what matters to the public and to the EU and ideas for taking them forward. The list and ideas will be discussed at the November Council meeting. Subjects were suggested such as sea level change (to be discussed at the William Smith meeting in September), talks at seaside village halls on sea level change, Powering Britain, engaging with Commonwealth countries, particularly in Africa. These topics will also be used to tell people what the Society does and to develop public statements. It was also suggested that meetings could take place with, for example, Chatham House, the Royal Society and Royal Engineers.

TN

ROUTINE ITEMS

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

12. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

12.1 External Relations Committee (CM/51/08)

12.2 Information Management Committee (CM/52/08)

12.3 Professional Committee (CM/53/08)

12.4 Science Committee (CM/54/08)

13. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT (CM/55/08)

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be at 2.00 pm on 17 September 2008