

THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held at Burlington House on Thursday 30 June at 2.00pm

Present: David Vaughan (Chair), Suzie Austen, Malcolm Brown (by phone), Richard Corfield, Andrew Dobrzanski, Dorothy Payne, Dave Quinn, Jane Smith

Apologies: Samme Brough, Richard Hughes, Mick Lee, Tom Sharpe and Will Watts

In attendance: Nic Bilham (Head of Strategy and External Relations), Sheila Meredith (Chief Librarian), Edmund Nickless (Executive Secretary) and Kholilur Rahman (Web Producer, Secretary to IMC)

Notes:

- i. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee were both unable to attend and sent their apologies. David Vaughan chaired the meeting in their absence.
- ii. The agenda was reordered to facilitate input from Malcolm Brown and Suzie Austen.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies as noted above.

Andy Fleet and Richard Herrington have stepped down from this Committee. As the former Treasurer, Andy will continue to serve on the Finance and Planning Committee. The Committee expressed its thanks to Andy and Richard for their time and contribution.

The Committee also welcomed in Suzie Austen, Malcolm Brown and Jane Smith. Mick Lee will join the Committee in September.

2. LIBRARY REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION (IMC/09/11)

The Library Advisory Committee (LAC), with assistance from Eileen Jamieson (Serials Librarian) has identified a list of journals at risk. Council asked the LAC to consider cost and usage. The LAC applied factors such as high cost-per-usage and low usage of journals, alongside overall subject coverage (see Annex A) and drew up a list of 'at risk' journals yielding a saving of £18k (see Annex B).

The LAC met on 24 June and has identified a number of titles which if cancelled will collectively yield £12k of saving. This amounts to approximately one third of the net sought reduction of £35k in cost for the year 2012 (the financial year is the calendar year). The other savings will be through economies, sales of duplicates and the beginning of an exploration of new income streams. Council agreed that when the cancellations are finalised they will be announced to the Fellowship.

The map scanning project prospectus (see Annex D) provides an outline of initial thoughts and preliminary costing. A small working group comprising of Malcolm Brown, Edmund Nickless, Richard Hughes, Paul Johnson (Map Librarian) and others will meet on 18 July to write an implementation plan.

Actions

The plan will address different scanning options, marketing etc. as well as a market survey, to identify whether there is indeed a market for such a product, and also whether there are other holders or cartographic providers who will work with us to fill gaps in our coverage. Dorothy Payne also offered to assist with filling any gaps in coverage.

The minutes of the LAC noted that the Fermor Fund could not be used to offset the budget cut in 2012. The Executive Secretary described the background of the Fermor Fund and explained that using the fund for this purpose rather than meeting costs from the general reserves would not affect the bottom line. The Executive Secretary noted that the fund should be used to purchase subscriptions selected in line with the terms of the bequest, but that this sits separately to the setting of the budget.

Jane Smith proposed the idea of exploring longer term solutions to make savings on journal subscriptions and approaching publishers as a consortium. The NHM has successfully made some savings via this approach. The Chief Librarian explained that this idea was explored but not achievable as the subject areas of the different membership organisations differ widely, and it was not possible to come to a suitable arrangement with the publishers as a consortium (but we have made progress on our own and managed to secure a deal for providing remote access to a number of journals). The Committee agreed that this highlights the need for a plan for growth, to develop the collection and to ensure its overall integrity.

The Committee agreed with the process which had been used to identify journals for cancellation. Usage data, though it has been collected only for a relatively short time (it will continue to be collected), was useful in informing decisions. It noted that the Fellowship and other library users were engaged via the town hall meeting, library data collection and survey. Collaboration with other libraries and memoranda of understandings between partner organisations have been reviewed. The Committee welcomed Council's wish to continue to keep the Fellowship informed about implementation of the library review, including about what journals will be cancelled.

The Executive Secretary suggested that the IMC could in the future make a statement outlining points about the library review, as well as information management as a whole, which will draw on areas of growth as well so as to illustrate the bigger picture.

The Secretary will forward the report of the library review group and the recommendations grid to newer members of the Committee.

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On the recommendation of IMC, Council has agreed that four working groups should be established to take forward the recommendations from the library review. The Committee now needs to convene these groups.

The Map Scanning and Delivery working group will be chaired by Richard Hughes, and the staff lead is the Executive Secretary. This group has been formed as noted above, and will meet soon. Others may be invited to join as the work of the group progresses. Suzie Austen noted that the Swedish Geological Survey have started an in-house project to digitise their map collection. Suzie will provide details of a contact involved with the project.

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The Finance and Access working group will need the involvement of the new Finance and Planning Committee, and also the Development and Fundraising Committee. There was discussion of the benefits available to Corporate Affiliates. The library review found that the benefits currently available to Corporate Affiliates are very generous in relation to the cost.

However, library services are not extensively used by most corporate affiliates (perhaps because they are not aware of the benefits), but very heavily used by a few, and this takes up a very significant portion of staff time. As such, there is a perverse incentive against promoting the service as it stands, as this is likely to place an increased burden on staff, and will raise costs without generating additional income. One of the key issues this group will therefore tackle is how we model the level of access and subscription costs of our Corporate Affiliates. It was agreed that once this new model is established, so that the benefits offered to corporate affiliates will at least pay its way, it is necessary to make clear and publicise the benefits available. In relation to journal cancellations, Suzie Austen also suggested asking Corporate Affiliates to sponsor journals that are relevant to them. The Committee agreed that these sorts of ideas should be explored by this group. Other areas to look at include the library pricing structure, and the view of the LAC on such matters is essential. The Executive Secretary is the lead staff member for this group, and he will write to relevant people inviting them to join the group. The Committee lead is yet to be determined. Suzie Austen and Richard Corfield volunteered to join this group.

EN

It was agreed that the Data Auditing of Collections including Archives and Storage working group does not need to be very big. The work of this group was commenced alongside the library review. Samme Brough acts as the Committee lead for this group, and the Chief Librarian is the staff lead.

The Changing Needs and How We Meet these Challenges working group will be chaired by Richard Hughes. This group will need to involve the External Relations Committee (ERC) as well as the Publications Management Committee (PMC). This will allow further exploration of the synergies and potential dependencies and conflicts recognising that the Society is both a publisher of geoscience content and a purchaser – this is something that the Library Review group looked at and recognised needed further exploration. David Vaughan has agreed to join the group to provide the link from the PMC.

3. REPORT OF THE LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (IMC/08/11)

The library staff felt that a library blog would help to market the library's services more widely. Jane Smith informed the Committee that the NHM's blog is very successful and provides an additional way of promoting their services, and enables them to link to what else is happening at the museum and partner organisations. Blogging functionality is currently being explored by the web team.

The Committee requested the LAC to look at general library charges at its next meeting, and to make recommendations about continuing or changing charges to this Committee.

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4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING

All actions from the last meeting are complete.

Suzie Austen identified a perception among some in the mining industry that there is a bias in the Society towards the hydrocarbons sector, for instance in CPD activity and the Chartership validation process. The Secretary will pass on Bill Gaskarth's contact details to Suzie to discuss the details of the CPD

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scheme.

6. UPDATE ON OTHER COMMITTEES (IMC/07/11)

Nic Bilham provided a written update on the main issues concerning the External Relations Committee.

7. BUSINESS PLAN AND IMC WORK PLAN (IMC/10/11)

The library plan, scanning of content and GIS items led by Richard Hughes and the Executive Secretary, are under way (see above).

The minutes of the LAC's last meeting notes that the IMC work plan task to investigate the display of library content for public information led by Tom Sharpe and the Chief Librarian will be discussed at its next meeting.

The task to investigate the display of library content for potential sponsorship will involve the Development and Fund Raising Committee and the Chief Librarian will act as staff lead. Nic Bilham will discuss the matter with the Secretary of that Committee.

NB

Archive cataloguing has been assigned to the Chief Librarian and Archivist, with the Committee lead as Tom Sharpe. Archiving software has been purchased, and will be installed.

For the Function and content of YGG pages item, Kholilur Rahman will act as staff lead, with Samme Brough and Andrew Dobrzanski acting as Committee leads. This task will be undertaken under the website upgrade and redesign project.

Real-time Virtual conferencing is currently under investigation by Kevin Perry (Network Administrator). Kholilur Rahman will act as the staff lead and David Quinn will act as the Committee lead.

The work plan was reviewed in light of the Society's business plan. Annex B displays the business plan in grid format, and highlights the first order projects of all the Committees. The grid displays the Library Plan and Archive Cataloguing as the IMC's first order projects. Each of these projects is further detailed in a standard format proforma project plan (Annex C) and this will allow Council to view information about all the projects at a glance. These plans also contain objectives and drivers that relate to the Strategy.

A meeting has been arranged with Richard Hughes, Kholilur Rahman and Nic Bilham to discuss the detail and update the proforma plans.

The Committee agreed that the work plan should be reviewed at every meeting.

8. HORIZON SCANNING (IMC/11/11)

The One Geology project's EU funding will end shortly. The plan is to incorporate it as a company in the UK or the Netherlands so that the project can continue.

There was no other update on the other standing items.

The National Science Foundation has embarked on a project to develop an 'integrated data cyberinfrastructure'. The Committee agreed to note that the

project was now in progress.

The British Library has joined hands with Google and has digitised some of their historical content.

It was noted that projects discussed under Horizon Scanning need not be data related/electronic projects. It can be projects related to library services, archiving etc.

9. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT (IMC/12/11)

The project initially set out to redesign the look and feel of the website. Our developers have informed us that the version of Jahia (our content management system) that we are currently using will stop being supported at the end of next year. They have advised us to extend the scope of this project to upgrade to the new version of the CMS alongside giving the website a new redesign treatment. There are risks associated with this in that we will be amongst the first to upgrade, the cost of the project will inevitably go up, the duration of the project will be extended with a launch date in the new year, but it will save us from having to repeat the redesign (with associated costs) if we later decided to upgrade, and it brings with it other benefits like social media functionality etc. which will be rolled out over the course of next year.

In considering how the website can be improved, David Quinn observed that it would be useful for sequential pages of the website to have easy access to the next and previous pages in the series so that the user does not have to navigate back to the top level to access the next/previous page of a series. He also felt that the display of second level navigation links on the homepage was very helpful, and user-friendly as opposed to having to go through a multitude of pages clicking buttons/links to narrow down the categories to find the content that was sought.

Richard Corfield suggested that as a user he had become quite familiar with the top level navigation headings and advised against any big change to the top level headings of the navigation. He also observed that the homepage takes a while to load compared with his BBC homepage even with numerous widgets bolted on to his BBC page.

David Vaughan asked about the development of blogs as it was important for the development of the Environment Network. It was noted that we will use current functionality to do what we can temporarily to meet these needs and then introduce 'true' blogging as the new functionality becomes available.

The Executive Secretary suggested that the headings could be reviewed to make them more descriptive of the content that resides therein.

10. SCIENCE AS A PUBLIC ENTERPRISE (IMC/13/11)

On 13 May 2011 The Royal Society announced that it is embarking on a new major policy study on the use of scientific information as it affects scientists and society (see Annexes A, B, and C for the related policy paper, terms of reference and details of the working group). An email request was sent to CaSE members which identifies four additional questions specific to those with disciplinary expertise (Annex D).

The view of the Committee was sought about how much effort should be put into this consultation. The Royal Society has launched a call for evidence –

the closing date for submissions is before 5 August 2011.

The Committee felt that it was not possible to do anything in great detail in the available time but felt it should certainly respond outlining specific issues in Earth Science that are relevant (One Geology, Geofacets etc.) and invite further discussion.

NB

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 29 September at 2:00pm.