

## COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 25 November 2009

PRESENT: L E Frostick (*Chair*), E Derbyshire (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), A J Fleet (*Treasurer*), C M R Fowler, R Herrington, R A Hughes, A Lord, B Lovell (*President designate*), M Daly, D A C Manning (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), S Marriott, S Monro, D J Vaughan and N R G Walton

APOLOGIES: P Allen (*Secretary, Science*), I D Bartholomew, M Brown, A Law, J Ludden, P Maliphant, G W Tuckwell, J D Marshall, and J Turner (*Secretary, Publications*)

In attendance: E F P Nickless (*Executive Secretary*), N Bilham (*Head of Strategy & External Relations*), M Kyriakides (*Head of Finance*) and S L Culver (*PA to Executive Secretary*)

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies as above were noted.

### ESSENTIAL BUSINESS

#### 2. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2009

These were agreed.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING

##### 3.1 Disciplinary Panel

Ruth Allington has joined the Panel. Richard Herrington confirmed that Jim Coppard has also agreed to join. The Executive Secretary will write to him. Their areas of expertise are the mining industry.

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##### 3.2 Environmental Audit

An audit by the Carbon Trust has been investigated but as the Society spends less than £50k per annum on energy they would make a charge. Council was asked to advise the Executive Secretary if they knew of alternative organisations that might carry out a survey or would help with funding. The Executive Secretary will investigate whether it would be possible to have a joint audit with the other Courtyard societies.

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##### 3.3 Variation of terms of Fermor Fund

The Executive Secretary has written to Patrick Fermor, care of his publishers, prior to approaching the Charity Commissioners about varying the terms of the bequest.

#### 4. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

##### 4.1 Programme for January Residential (CM/72/09)

During 2010 one of the major items of business for Council and the management team will be to write a business plan for the period 2011-2013. The January Residential Meeting will provide an initial opportunity to:

- review progress achieved so far
- set priorities for the next business planning period
- identify what needs to be done to complete the 2011-2013 business plan so that it can be signed off in November 2010 alongside the 2011 budget

The draft programme for the meeting was discussed. There were several suggestions made mainly around the development of practical skills for young geologists and how the Society could assist in this area. The programme will continue to be developed and Council members were asked to forward any further suggestions for topics and/or speakers to the Head of Strategy and External Relations.

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#### 4.2 Meeting calendar 2010/2011

The dates were noted. Further dates will be circulated by the Secretaries of the committees as they are arranged.

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#### 4.3 Elections Standing Committee

The Committee met immediately before the Council meeting. Five members of Council will be retiring at the June 2010 Annual General Meeting:- Iain Bartholomew, Edward Derbyshire, Mary Fowler, Lynne Frostick and Jim Marshall. A number of individuals have been approached concerning their willingness to stand for election to Council. The closing date for nominations is 8 January 2010.

#### 4.4 CoRWM report on Research and Development

The Society was involved in bringing together a number of learned societies to talk with CoRWM. The report of the CoRWM Working Group C has now been presented to Government. It was noted that a number of the points made by the Society were reflected in the recommendations.

#### 4.5 Consultations

The procedures for approval of responses to consultations are being revised and will come to Council through the External Relations Committee shortly. Council was given a list of consultations received in 2009 to which the Society has made a response.

The Head of Strategy and External Relations said that the RCEP consultation on the environmental impact of demographic change requires data sets. Council was asked to assist with providing these and the Head of Strategy and External Relations will write to them giving details of what is required.

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### 5. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

#### 5.1 Report of the Management & Finance Committee (CM/76/09)

The main item of the meeting held on 11 November was to consider the Budget for 2010. The Committee also noted that the hedge funds are being liquidated and the Society's investment managers had put forward a list of proposed stocks in which to invest the proceeds of this sale. The proceeds will be around £600k and it is proposed to invest this amount in 3 lots of £200k. The investment managers had also indicated that investment income will fall from £120k in 2009 to £110k in 2010 against a target of £200k. This figure was subsequently revised to £130k in 2010 in light of the reconfigured portfolio.

The Committee also noted that the number of new corporate affiliates is less than last year. Proposals for changes to the fee structure for corporate affiliates had been accepted. The number of corporate affiliates needs to be increased with representation from a wider spread of industry – the majority of members are in the hydrocarbons sector. The Vice President with responsibility for Development and Fundraising, Iain Bartholomew, will be making a presentation to April Council and in particular will be asking Council members to suggest names of companies to target for affiliation.

5.2 July Management Accounts (*CM/77/09*)

Book sales income and sales of back list books are ahead of budget and there has been a windfall income from PGC7. The year end projection is currently £175k better than budget.

5.3 Report of the Remuneration Panel (*CM/78/09*)

This item is minuted in a confidential annex.

5.4 Salary Review 2010 (*CM/79/09*)

This item is minuted in a confidential annex.

5.5 Serious Incident Reporting (*CM/80/09*)

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.

5.6 Report of the Audit Panel (*CM/81/09*)

Council noted the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October, and the suggestion of withdrawing recognition from specialist groups who do not provide their financial accounts. The latter point will form part of a wider discussion at the January residential about the structure of the specialist and regional groups. Council members were asked to urge those groups over which they may have some influence to lodge their accounts. The Risk Management report was discussed in detail and a paper will be coming to April Council when the accounts for 2009 are to be approved. There has been good progress on the management letter points.

The Executive Secretary reported that there are new criteria for charities to demonstrate public benefit and in future the Society's Annual Review will have to more directly identify those activities undertaken to further its charitable purposes for the public good. Ideas have been worked up to make the Annual Review not only of interest to the Fellowship but also of much wider appeal.

6. BUDGET 2010

Council was presented with version 3.3 of the budget for 2010 which incorporated recommendations made by the Budget & Programme Committee and the Management & Finance Committee.

The budget shows an expected deficit of just under £55k which the Management & Finance committee considered to be affordable, recognising that even in the worst case scenario the Society's free reserves would be expected to remain within the £800k - £1.2m target range previously agreed by Council. This target constitutes part of the Society's reserves policy, which is approved by our auditors as being consistent with the guidance of the Charity Commission. Even in the worst case scenario, the free reserves are projected to remain in this range at the end of 2010.

Council approved the budget for 2010 and was pleased to note that it has been possible to include the recruitment of a part-time archivist.

7. AWARD NOMINATIONS FOR 2010 (CM/83/09)

This item is minuted in a confidential annex.

8. ELECTIONS

8.1 Fellowship (CM/84/09)

Council agreed to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed in CM/84/09 should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 25 November 2009.

8.2 Chartered Geologists (CM/85/09)

The applications from Fellows to become Chartered Geologists listed in CM/85/09 had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were agreed by Council.

8.3 Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/86/09)

Council agreed to admit those applicants listed in CM/86/09 as Candidate Fellows and Junior Candidate Fellows.

8.4 European Geologists (CM/87/09)

Council noted the names listed for election as European Geologists at the European Federation of Geologists' meeting on 5 December 2009.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (CM/88/09)

Council noted that two incidents, for which accident reports were completed, had taken place since their last meeting:

- A member of staff at the Publishing House possibly pulled a muscle in her back whilst changing a light bulb. She was contacted and confirmed she was fine and no medical attention was required.
- One of the Society's contracted projectionists received a minor cut to his hand.

BBI alternative solutions carried out the fire risk assessment at Burlington House on 25 November.

Three further members of staff have attended the counter terrorism course.

10. BGS CORE STORE (CM/89/09)

The Society received notice of a comprehensive review of the BGS Information

Management Facilities, of which the Gilmerton and Loanhead (Edinburgh) core stores form part, by letter dated 12 January 2009.

That letter posed **three** options:

- i. Merge the storage facilities at Eskdalemuir, Gilmerton, Hartland and Loanhead into one facility in the greater Edinburgh area. This could be a new development on the existing Loanhead site.
- ii. Merge the storage facilities at Eskdalemuir, Gilmerton, Hartland and Wallingford onto the Keyworth site, north of the existing NGDC building
- iii. Move appropriate parts of the information managed by BGS to commercial storage.

The Society did not participate in the review which was undertaken by a consultancy, Tribal Group. In letters to the Society Fellows have questioned the adequacy of the consultative process, specifically whether those users most interested in the core material were approached and the accuracy of usage statistics.

Richard Hughes, Director of Information and Knowledge Exchange BGS, presented the reasons behind the decision of BGS to close the two core stores in Edinburgh and to relocate the collections in a state-of-the art purpose built facility in Keyworth. He said that BGS currently store collections of samples, cores, magnetic tapes and different media throughout the country at seven locations. The cost of running these locations is very high and their management needs to be improved. BGS is recognised by the National Archive as a place of deposit and as such their facilities are subject to inspection at any time. Loanhead was condemned as a place of storage by the National Archive about three years ago. No problems have been identified by the National Archive with Gilmerton but the building was constructed for a different purpose. It holds mostly cores and items from the continental shelf and storage is undertaken on behalf of the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) under a Memorandum of Understanding which includes access provisions. Gilmerton gets about 90 visits a year, 75% of which are from outside Scotland. This figure is based on invoice addresses.

BGS is facing considerable financial pressures. They are seeking to secure access to these important materials in perpetuity on behalf of the nation.

Tribal was asked to undertake a review of all facilities and to recommend options for improved management including cost reductions. The consultation was done by contacting representative groups rather than individuals. The recommendations were made by Tribal but decisions were made by BGS.

The Petroleum Group Committee had been asked for advice and Graham Goffey attended the meeting to make a presentation. The conclusion of the Committee's report is attached at Annex A.

The main concern is the preservation and transportation of the core material, recognised as a very valuable and irreplaceable national asset. The Petroleum Group was seeking assurance about what steps would be taken to move the core without causing damage. A Petroleum Group nominee has been invited to attend meeting(s) of the BGS Collections Advisory Committee and this was welcomed. Richard Hughes said that a representative of DECC has been invited to be involved in the discussions

on transportation. The Committee will also identify the more valuable items of core store.

It is rumoured that oil companies have been sending core material to landfill and there needs to be more dialogue on this.

It was suggested that photographs should be taken of the core and Richard Hughes said that this is being taken up particularly through operators who take photographs at various stages.

The Chair thanked Richard Hughes and Graham Goffey for their reports. The Society will be making representations to the BGS Board about its concerns, particularly transportation and minimisation of damage to the core, whilst recognising that BGS are the custodians of this nationally important material and its location is their decision. The Petroleum Group will be keeping a watching brief. Richard Hughes thanked the Petroleum Group for their very positive and sensible contribution to the debate.

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11. BUSINESS PLAN 2008-2010 (CM/90/09)

The latest version was noted. Key changes were:

- 2010 cost estimates have been updated in line with the budget.
- Growing Fellowship and Chartership, and promoting Chartership to industry, will not now start until early 2010 – these items have accordingly been marked as red (A-5, A-12, A-13).
- An Environment Network is to be launched (as agreed by Council in September), and A-16 has been updated to indicate this.
- A major Earth Systems Science meeting is being planned for late 2010, which is expected to be a key stage in developing the relationship of that group with the Society – the status of this item has been changed to green (A-17).
- The Science Committee's plans for development of the Society's meetings programme were discussed and approved by Council at its September meeting, and the status of this item has been updated accordingly (A-19 – see also A-16, A-30 and A-31).
- The Friends of the Geological Society scheme has been launched successfully, and a modest number have joined and paid (A-23).
- Following agreement of the Lifelong Learning strategy, an implementation plan has been agreed by the Education Committee, and delivery will be a high priority for the expanded Education Officer post (A-26).
- The Library Acquisitions Review has been added (A-29).
- The establishment of an annual 'Frontiers' conference at Burlington House, agreed in September, has been added as A-30.
- The plan to run a GSL-sponsored session at EGU, starting in 2011, has been added as A-31. (Although the first such occasion is beyond the end of the current business planning period, it will need to be planned during 2010.)
- The Petroleum Geology Conference series has been launched on the Lyell Collection (G-1).

It was noted that prioritisation of sponsorships projects for 2010 and the next business planning period will be a key area of discussion at the January residential and Council members were asked to advise the Head of Strategy & External Relations if they wished any further work done on these items before the January meeting.

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Council members were also asked to advise the Head of Strategy & External Relations of names for the video archive project.

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## ROUTINE ITEMS

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

12. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/91/09)

- Professional Committee
- Information Management Committee
- External Relations Committee
- Science Committee

At the request of the Professional Committee Council approved the following:

*that in circumstances where a Chartered Fellow (CGeol or CSci) has allowed his/her chartership to lapse for more than two years, as part of his/her reinstatement a charge of £250 should be made, reflecting the saving made by failing to keep up to date with subscriptions. Note that this would only apply to lapses through negligence, and not in circumstances where a Chartered Fellow has notified the Society of a career break, redundancy, or other matters beyond his/her control that affect the ability to pay.*

13. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT (CM/92/09)

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is 27/28 January 2010

The Chair asked members of Council to advise by the end of the month if they required accommodation for the night of 27 January.

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## **Petroleum Group Committee review of BGS decision to relocate offshore hydrocarbon cores from Gilmerton to Keyworth**

Summary – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009

### **Conclusions**

The Petroleum Group Committee ('PG') has endeavoured to offer a balanced and considered view to Council of GSL on the BGS decision to move core from Gilmerton to Keyworth. This view was informed by the committee's experience and that of the committee's colleagues, the 'Tribal' report, and PG discussions with BGS staff. PG considered the current facilities at Gilmerton and Keyworth, the intended new Keyworth facilities, usage patterns at Gilmerton and other related matters and concerns.

BGS evidently has the best intentions in its role as custodian and manager of the offshore core resource, and BGS staff running the various facilities are rightly credited in the Tribal report. However BGS is financially constrained, under pressure to reduce running costs and this context is evidently key to BGS' decision.

BGS assert Gilmerton usage is 20-25% from Scotland and whilst not an absolute or perfect measure, directionally this seems likely to be broadly reflective of use, although not all feel the statistic is truly representative. PG discussed with BGS what possibilities might exist to maintain Gilmerton but understands that site constraints and cost prohibit further substantive site development.

Current user facilities at Gilmerton are good but there are capacity limits. Current user facilities at Keyworth are less good but benefit from mechanised core handling, unlike Gilmerton. In the context of reducing BGS running costs through reducing number of sites and given the geographic spread of users, there is no optimum location for this core material. Keyworth is not a particularly accessible location but is not prohibitively inaccessible.

The planned new Keyworth site sounds like it will be a very good facility with two additional, large, confidential core viewing areas, mechanised handling and access to all the other on-site BGS facilities which may bring additional user benefits. A PG nominee has been invited to attend meeting(s) of the BGS Collections Advisory Committee meeting(s) where the facilities specifications are determined, in order to provide user input.

PG felt that an online core photographic archive could be a substantial additional resource to supplement the physical cores. For cost reasons this would best involve scanned original core photographs. BGS were enthusiastic about this possibility and will further explore with PG whether/how this could be realised. Additionally, PG considers that an industry-BGS dialogue would be beneficial regarding the possibility of BGS holding industry 'surplus' or e.g. resinated slab core on behalf of industry via a legacy storage payment mechanism.

Issues regarding transportation and preservation of core during transport were discussed at length. BGS has considerable experience in moving core from Gilmerton to Keyworth, albeit not on the large scale of the planned move, but has well-established general processes. BGS has agreed to publish in due course details of the intended preservation/transport process with the intent of re-assuring users of BGS' stated confidence that this material, which currently resides in cardboard boxes (see photos below), can be safely moved.

Preservation during transportation was the most widely stated concern of the PG. Whilst PG was sympathetic to BGS' constrained position, and to the aspirations around the new facility, until the packing/transport process has been analysed in further detail, costed and published, a



majority of PG committee members were unwilling to wholeheartedly support the planned move at this stage.

Given the financial constraints on BGS, it is to say the least unfortunate that the vocal public debate has focussed exclusively on the relatively narrow Gilmerton issue. BGS' decision is clearly driven by wider funding constraints which impact upon BGS ability to act as custodian of invaluable and essentially irreplaceable material which bears upon the UK's future energy security.