

# The Geological Society of London

## COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 7 February 2018

PRESENT: Malcolm Brown (*Chair*), John Booth, Lesley Dunlop, Marie Edmonds (*Secretary, Science*), Graham Goffey (*Treasurer*), Sarah Gordon (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Tricia Henton, Colin North (*Secretary, Publications*), Sheila Peacock, Nik Reynolds, Nick Rogers (*President designate*), Katherine Royse (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Keith Seymour (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Jessica Smith, John Talbot (*Vice President, Chartership*) and Alex Whittaker

APOLOGIES: Rick Brassington, Jason Canning, Liv Carroll, Naomi Jordan, Rob Larter, Jennifer McKinley and Christine Peirce

In attendance: Richard Hughes (Executive Secretary), Nic Bilham (Director of Policy & Communications), Neal Marriott (Director of Publishing), Jonathan Silk (Director of Finance & Operations) and Stephanie Jones (Administrative Secretary)

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies NOTED from Rick Brassington, Jason Canning, Liv Carroll, Naomi Jordan, Rob Larter, Jennifer McKinley and Christine Peirce.

### 3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2017

The minutes were APPROVED. A redacted version will be published on the website.

SJ

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 *6.3: Access to classic outcrops/permissions* – Nic Bilham said the Geoconservation Committee discussed this yesterday. It is not straightforward and remains on their agenda. The Society is working with the Geologists' Association and University Geoscience UK on a revision of the fieldwork code..

#### 4.2 *Burlington House Lease (CM/01/18)*

The paper provided an update on the ongoing discussions.

Council NOTED that Officers discussed this paper this morning and suggested convening a small working group, including external expertise, to engage in scenario planning. A meeting of all the Societies' Presidents was also suggested.

#### 4.3 *Progress on space review*

Access for the less mobile – the list of items that require planning permission is outstanding.

JZS

A group of staff, chaired by Malcolm Brown, has looked at the reception area to improve the lighting and signage and make it more welcoming. The cost of the proposals is around £18k and money has been set aside in the budget. The purchase of furniture that is more flexible and can be easily reconfigured to accommodate more work shop / class room type meetings is well advanced and has

been ordered for the Council Room and the former Fellows Room and, if successful, will be provided in the Arthur Holmes and William Buckland. Changes to the doorway between the former Fellows Room and the Main Library are also being investigated so that noise from meetings in that room does not disturb Fellows working in the Library. The disabled access lavatory is now situated on the ground floor.

## 5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

### 5.1 *Report of the Officers Meeting*

Matters discussed were mainly staff related.

### 5.2 *Report on nominations for Council*

Seven members of Council are due to retire in 2018:-

*Rick Brassington*

*Malcolm Brown*

*Liv Carroll*

*Marie Edmonds*

*Tricia Henton*

*Jennifer McKinley*

*Christine Peirce*

Nine nominations were received: Tom Backhouse, Andrew Bloodworth, Max Coleman, James Griffiths, Chris King, Bryne Ngwenya, Nigel Platt, Helen Smyth and Robin Strachan (who is endorsed by Council).

Electoral Reform Services are handling the election again this year and the email / post packs will be despatched on or around 12 February.

Tricia Henton gave her apologies for the April meeting of Council. Malcolm Brown thanked her for her contribution to Council, particularly as Diversity Champion.

## 6. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

### 6.1 *Executive Secretary (CM/02/18)*

Council NOTED Richard Hughes' report.

Twenty-three applications were received for the post of Editor, Geoscientist and five were selected for interview. First interviews are on 26 February.

There has been substantial progress on the Pay & Reward review. Work has also started on a revised set of roles and responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team in anticipation of the departure of Nic Bilham and Jonathan Silk.

The first meeting of the Wider Management Team was in early January with the main objectives of improving internal communications and cross-team working. Feedback indicated the meeting was most welcome. A view was expressed that staff feel remote from Council. Future meetings will be held in the two week period following Council meetings to give the opportunity to report back on the actions and discussion at Council.

The Library audit is complete and the data recorded will be analysed in the coming months to improve access to the collection and inform the Burlington House space review.

### 6.2 *Director of Finance & Operations (CM/03/18)*

Jonathan Silk highlighted the following points from his report:

The 2018 Budget is complete subject to Council approval; the forecast financial outturn for the 2017 year end continues to show an anticipated surplus ahead of budget with a projected operating surplus of £222k against the original budget deficit of (£57k).

The Finance & Planning committee reviewed the Risk Register and each member of the Senior Leadership Team gave a briefing on the key risks and actions in their areas. The Committee agreed that the unresolved matter of the lease remains at the highest level of risk. It was also agreed to raise compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to the highest level until it can be confirmed that mitigating controls are in place. The Society's auditors, RSM, produced a review and on the back of that Tom Hughes, who is GDPR accredited, joins the Society on 12 February to take the review forward to planning and implementation. This review will include use of data by the Regional and Specialist Groups, whatever their status. Council asked for a copy of the RSM report. There will be a progress report to Council in April.

JZS

The Investment Committee reviewed the first draft of an Investment Policy based upon Charity Commission guidelines. This is largely complete with the exception of the area of ethical investments. Graham Goffey is convening a meeting of the Investment Committee with the Society's investment managers, Sarasin & Partners, to explore the current situation with ethical investments and the options available, taking into account the sensitivities around this with our Corporate Affiliates. Nic Bilham and Florence Bullough will attend from the policy side. Malcolm Brown, John Booth, Lesley Dunlop, Sarah Gordon, Tricia Henton and Sheila Peacock volunteered to participate.

At their recent meeting, the Professional Committee discussed progress on the proposed Fellowship Survey that is aiming for completion within the first quarter of the year. It was agreed that the involvement of a specialist third party will greatly aid the framing of the questions as well as the mechanics of running the survey.

One or two issues, discovered in the final stages of testing the new CRM system, need to be resolved before going live. The Project Board anticipate 'soft' go live around the end of March.

The final report on the IT Review by Loyal Retainers was produced in December and presented to the Senior Leadership Team in mid-January. The report highlights areas for priority attention as well as options for addressing those priorities, with one of the top recommendations being the appointment of a Head of IT. Overall, the Society has challenges to address in order to improve its IT but the report also confirms that system and service provision to date are fundamentally sound. The recommendations will be taken forward once Business Plan items are completed. Council will be sent the report.

JZS

There were no Health & Safety items to report although there was a near miss when the table in the Arthur Holmes Room was dislodged from the wooden blocks on which it stands. There were no injuries but the incident highlights the need for progressing with the programme to introduce more flexible furniture into the meeting rooms. There was another near miss concerning overloading of storage shelves in a cupboard used by the Geologists' Association. These have been strengthened and reorganised.

### 6.3 *Director of Policy & Communications (CM/04/18)*

Nic Bilham said the Science Committee meets tomorrow and will discuss the theme for 2020. Tomorrow also sees a significant step forward in taking the Society's public lectures outside London when Malcolm Brown gives a lecture at the University of Aberdeen.

The Plate Tectonics story competition, open to everyone, is underway with a closing

date of 30 April. Nic Bilham showed Council the poster designed by the Education Department which will be sent to all school classes who submit an entry.

Nic Bilham attended the open session of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) and presented key points from the 2017 annual report. He also had a useful discussion with the new person at IGCP (UNESCO/IUGS International Geoscience Programme).

The Society is working with the UK representatives of the International Association for Geoscience Diversity on plans for a launch event for the UK Chapter at the Society on 4 June, and future joint activity.

Tricia Henton, Diversity Champion, said the Society has come a long way on matters relating to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion but there is more to do and it is important to monitor what is going on outside the Society and to keep making progress. Nic Bilham and George Jameson are doing a lot of good work.

Nic Bilham finished his report by saying he is working towards a smooth handover when he leaves the Society in June.

#### 6.4 *Director of Publishing (CM/05/18)*

Council NOTED the report from Neal Marriott who highlighted the following:-

Angharad Hills, Head of Editorial Development and Commissioning, is taking early retirement at the end of April. A review of the role and the recruitment process have started.

There has been significant progress with subscription renewals. There have not been any direct cancellations of the Lyell Collection and, compared to the same point last year, there is a 7% increase.

Planning for the implementation of GDPR in May 2018 has started.

The latest volume of the Petroleum Geology Conference Proceedings, PGC8, has just been published.

#### 7. CORPORATE AFFILIATES REPORT (CM/06/18)

The Corporate Affiliate Committee was created in mid 2001 to improve engagement with industry and to generate an additional income stream for the Society by inviting companies within the geoscience community to pay a fee in return for a set of benefits. The Committee, conscious of the Society's reliance on the hydrocarbons sector, initiated three initiatives aimed at widening the range of companies with which the Society interacts:-

- City of London Geoscience Forum – set up in late 2010 to engage with the finance and insurance sector;
- Mining Club – set up in 2014 to engage with small to mid-size mining companies; and
- Oil & Gas Network – set up in 2016 to engage with small to mid-cap energy companies.

Nic Bilham said the Committee, latterly chaired by Mike Armitage a former Vice President, has served the Society well over a number of years. It has created good momentum and it would be beneficial to retain such a committee, reporting to a wider committee responsible for development and fundraising. The Committee is supportive of the plans to recruit a Head of Development. Council said it would be useful in future for a trustee to sit on the Committee.

#### 8. PRESENTATION BY THE SECRETARY, SCIENCE

Marie Edmonds, Secretary Science, gave a presentation with Nic Bilham. The presentation stimulated discussion particularly about early career geoscientists and the funding environment and the possibility of the Society becoming a focal point through its research grants.

9. *Item confidential to Council.*

10. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/08/18)

Council NOTED the reports of the standing committees.

11. ELECTIONS

*Fellowship (CM/09/18)*

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 7 February 2018.

*Chartered Geologists (CM/10/18)*

The applications from Fellows listed to become Chartered Geologists had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were AGREED by Council.

*Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/11/18)*

Council AGREED to elect as Candidate Fellows and Junior Candidate Fellows those applicants listed.

*Chartered Scientist (CM/12/18)*

Council AGREED to elect as Chartered Scientists those applicants listed.

*European Geologists (CM/13/18)*

Council NOTED the names elected as European Geologists at the 19 December 2017 and 23 January 2018 meetings of the European Federation of Geologists.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sarah Gordon told Council that the Society is hosting a conference on 9 and 10 April: Lithium: From Exploration to End-User, co-convened with IOM3.

Kate Royse said there has been a request through the Professional Committee for a 'thank you' certificate or pin to present to Fellows who have served on committees. Council supported the proposal.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18 April 2018.