

# The Geological Society of London

## COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 22 November 2017

PRESENT: Malcolm Brown (*Chair*), John Booth, Rick Brassington, Jason Canning, Lesley Dunlop, Graham Goffey (*Treasurer*), Sarah Gordon (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Tricia Henton, Rob Larter, Colin North (*Secretary, Publications*), Sheila Peacock, Christine Peirce, Nik Reynolds, Katherine Royse (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Jessica Smith, John Talbot (*Vice President, Chartership*) and Alex Whittaker

APOLOGIES: Liv Carroll, Marie Edmonds (*Secretary, Science*), Naomi Jordan, Jennifer McKinley, Nick Rogers (*President designate*) and Keith Seymour (*Vice President, Regional Groups*)

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

John Booth declared that he knows one of the candidates for EurGeol. There were no other declarations.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies from Liv Carroll, Marie Edmonds, Naomi Jordan, Jennifer McKinley, Nick Rogers and Keith Seymour were NOTED.

### 3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

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

SJ

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

These are all in hand or covered elsewhere in the agenda.

### 5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

#### 5.1 *Report of the Officers Meeting*

Matters discussed were mainly staff related, particularly the proposal for the salary award for 2018, which Officers supported.

#### 5.2 *Report of the Elections Committee*

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

*Rick Brassington  
Malcolm Brown  
Liv Carroll  
Marie Edmonds  
Tricia Henton  
Jennifer McKinley  
Christine Peirce*

As reported at the last meeting of Council, Colin North was due to stand down but volunteered to serve an extra year as Secretary Publications if no suitable candidate is forthcoming. An active search will take place for his successor.

One nomination received from the Fellowship and another is expected. The committee discussed a list of names and approaches will be made to elicit interest.

Richard Hughes said that Marie Edmonds was awarded the 2017 Wager Medal by the IAVCEI (International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior), an extremely prestigious award. Council congratulated her and the President will write with formal congratulations.

MB

5.3 *Proposed guidelines to rank Award nominations from industry and government (CM/60/17)*

There are two medals which encourage nominations from industry – the William Smith and the Aberconway. It is more difficult to put together nominations for candidates from industry, mainly because of the confidentiality of their work and data. These guidelines propose criteria to assess and rank nominations from industry. The President consulted with Officers before taking them to the Awards committee on 1 November who recommend acceptance. The four broad areas proposed are:-

- Value created and evidence of personal impact
- Progression, Leadership or innovation in career
- External activity
- Strengths in other areas such as sustainability, ethics, support for diversity, services to community

Council asked for changes to the guidelines, such as changing 'Strengths in other areas' to 'Values' and also including reference to adherence to the Nolan Principles in Public Life. There was concern about some of the individual criteria but Council was assured that the person would be judged in the round.

With these changes, Council APPROVED the proposed guidelines to rank candidates from industry and government; and APPROVED the suggested changes to Regulation R/G/14. Council also APPROVED the inclusion of the Dewey Medal in the list of Society Awards.

SJ

5.4 *Awards 2018 (CM/61/17)*

The list of Award winners for 2018 is appended. Council were reminded that this information is confidential until the Award winners have been notified and have accepted.

6. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

6.1 *Executive Secretary (CM/62/17)*

Council NOTED the main activities since the last meeting and the main activities prior to the next Council meeting. Richard Hughes reported in more detail on the Burlington House lease. He has just taken over as chair of the Courtyard Secretaries group and will be meeting individually with the other societies.

6.2 *Director of Finance & Operations (CM/63/17)*

Jonathan Silk said the forecast financial outturn for the 2017 year-end continues to show a projected operating surplus of £222k against an original budget deficit of (£57k). He highlighted the following points from his report:

The Finance & Planning Committee (FPC) considered the budgeting assumptions for staff pay effective 1 January 2018 at its September meeting and progress on the Pay & Reward review at its November meeting. Officers discussed the proposal at their

meeting this morning and recommend approval. Council APPROVED the pay award for 2018.

The Chartership Audit Panel recently reported and their findings were generally positive, noting the increase in Chartership applications and reduction in deferrals (without any compromise on quality) since the previous audit in 2011. Recommendations were made that will be further considered by the Chartership Committee including formal documentation of all procedures and business continuity/succession planning around the current Chartership team. The Panel reports direct to Council and its report is available on request to Jonathan Silk.

Proposed changes to various Regulations arising from the Society's application to the Engineering Council for CEng licensed body status were discussed by the Professional Committee at its November meeting. They will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and then sent to Council during December for approval. This is being done outside Council's normal approval cycle to fit in with that of the Engineering Council.

The Society's auditors, RSM, are undertaking a General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) readiness review as the first stage to identifying issues with the Society's ability to comply with these Regulations which come into effect in May 2018. Council NOTED that this is likely to identify a series of options and changes that will need to be acted upon in Q1 of 2018.

JZS

It is intended to undertake a Fellowship Survey in the first quarter of 2018, a key element of gauging views on the Society priorities and the benefits of Fellowship, identified at the September Council residential meeting. This is a big undertaking which will be driven through the Professional committee with input from the other standing committees and the Senior Leadership Team. Richard Hughes said the main goals are a targeted Fellowship recruitment drive and a review of Fellowship categories. The Society also needs to understand why Fellows do not renew. There will also be a survey of those who do not become Fellows recognising that caution is required about using data under data protection regulations.

Graham Goffey asked about progress on the Space Review and in particular wheelchair access and access for the less mobile. Jonathan Silk said there is not an easy solution given the planning restrictions on the building. A group has been looking at what can be done in the short term including the provision of handrails. There are ramps available for wheelchair users and the ground floor WC is being converted into a wheelchair accessible facility. Jonathan Silk will provide Council with details of those items that require planning permission.

JZS

### 6.3 *Director of Policy & Communications (CM/64/17)*

Nic Bilham said it has been a busy and productive time since the last meeting of Council. The following items from his report were highlighted:-

The William Smith meeting on 50 Years of Plate Tectonics (3-5 October) was very successful with over 200 people attending in person and over 600 individuals and organisations watching online. There was significant media coverage and there is the possibility of a radio documentary in December. Over 50 events took place across the country to mark Earth Science Week with the theme 'Our Restless Earth' and the Society also supported events in India and DR Congo. During Earth Science week 'Plate Tectonic Stories' was launched, a set of online resources telling the plate tectonic history of the UK and Ireland through 20 sites, together with a competition, open to all ages, to tell a Plate Tectonic Story in any medium. The closing date is 30 April 2018 and Nic Bilham asked Council to spread the word.

Council

Flo Bullough, Policy Officer, has been in discussion with Geosciences Canada who are producing a document similar to 'Geology for Society'.

Plans to extend the Public Lecture series outside London are under discussion and in approaching speakers for 2018 they have been asked if they will speak outside London.

The Society completed its first formal return for the Diversity Progression Framework developed by the Science Council and the Royal Academy of Engineering. Thirty-five organisations made a return of which 21 were scientific and 14 engineering institutions. The Society came out somewhere ahead of the average across eight different categories. The workshop held in September to support university departments to achieve or renew Athena SWAN status was very well received. Seven departments were represented. Diversity, Equality and Inclusion is the theme of the annual thematic meeting of University Geoscience UK on 30 November.

Rob Larter asked about the progress of the Future Science report and said it is potentially important in influencing funding agencies so its delay is frustrating. Nic Bilham said the Society shares this frustration but this is not a Society-only initiative. He and Marie Edmonds are encouraging movement and the production of at least a draft report.

Colin North said the latest newsletter from the Geological Society of America has an item about access to classic outcrops and making geologists more responsible but an initial difficulty is finding out whom to contact to gain permissions. There is a similar issue in the UK. There may be an opportunity to collaborate with the GSA on this matter. This will be picked up by the Geoconservation Committee, of which Lesley Dunlop is a member and for which Flo Bullough provides the secretariat. Nic Bilham will contact Colin North before the next meeting of the committee.

NB

6.4 *Director of Publishing (CM/65/17)*

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

Quality assurance work has been ongoing on the Society's journal and ebook sites on GeoScienceWorld with the launch on the Silverchair platform at the beginning of this week.

The subscription renewals process is well underway with some early renewals from major subscribers. It will probably be February before there is a clear picture and Neal Marriott will report in more detail as matters progress.

NM

Fabienne Michaud and Anne Davenport were thanked for their work on the sale of the Special Publication Archive to ISTEEX in France.

7. 2017-2019 BUSINESS PLAN (CM/66/17)

Over recent months the Senior Leadership Team has been developing a Business plan that sets out how the Society's 2017-2027 Strategy will be delivered. Preparation of this plan has been communicated to all staff, consultation has taken place with senior staff and committees, and a draft was discussed at the September residential meeting.

The Business Plan is based upon the six, high level objectives of the Strategy broken down into a small number of themes, which in turn comprise specific objectives with stated deliverables. Most objectives are costed in the 2018 Budget. There are 90 objectives to tackle in the next three years and the Plan identifies the relative priority of each specific objective. There is a distinction between business as usual and new objectives.

The Business Plan will be used for the following purposes:-

- a. to link delivery of the strategy, *via* the Business Plan, to the Society's budget and financial planning cycle,

- b. to track and report progress to Council and committees on the delivery of strategic objectives,
- c. to clarify staff and committee responsibility and accountability for the delivery of strategic objectives, and
- d. to set team and personal performance objectives linked directly to the Society's ten-year strategy.

Sheila Peacock asked about Disaster Recovery particularly in relation to the backing up of CPD. Richard Hughes said that Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery are a high priority on his agenda. There is currently an independent audit underway of the entire IT infrastructure and an interim report shows some very clear options to take forward. Sheila Peacock commented on the item which includes reference to the need for excellence of conference output and was assured that the Conference Team was consulted on this item.

Richard Hughes said the Plan would be communicated to all staff. The committee chairs will have a responsibility to review each of the objectives for which they have whole or part responsibility on a regular basis and will report to Council on 'red' and 'amber' items. The President said he wants every meeting of Council to have on its agenda a report by one of the chairs of the standing committees and this will also be an opportunity to report on Business Plan items.

RH

Richard Hughes and the Senior Leadership Team were congratulated on putting the Plan together and it was APPROVED.

#### 8. 2018 BUDGET (CM/67/17)

Jonathan Silk said the aim in producing the budget was to get as close to break even as possible, break even being +/- £100k. The budget proposes an operating budget of (£12,011) net expenditure over income, reflecting increased expenditure on new activities in support of the Business Plan. After taking into account expected investment and foreign exchange gains, this provides for an accounting surplus of £157,989. The FPC considered the proposed budget for 2018 in detail at their November meeting and recommended it for approval. This included discussion about the continued contributions to the designated Buildings Fund and FPC agreed that it is too early to stop these contributions whilst there is uncertainty about the lease.

The budget includes the following proposals:-

- to continue to fund certain operational activity from reserves (i.e. Curry to fund CRM costs; Fermor to fund certain publishing activities) to the same level as in previous years (c. £234,000);
- to continue to add to the designated Buildings Fund against potential future lease-related costs (£150,000 provision in year); to use the unrestricted Curry Fund to offset the cost of the Finance/CRM Project; to make a further provision to the designated Building Fund against ongoing lease uncertainty; and to continue to draw down the Fermor Fund endowment to offset certain publishing costs;
- to maintain levels of free reserves within the target range of 80% - 120% of 9 months coverage of operational costs; and
- to maintain a cap on capital expenditure of c. £350,000.

The budget also includes a 'contingent list' of additional expenditure of £108,400 that the Society will take forward, in whole or in part, should the funding become available during the year.

In answer to a question from John Talbot, Jonathan Silk said there is provision for teleconferencing facilities but these may not be made available during 2018.

Council APPROVED the 2018 Budget.

9. PUBLISHING: SUCCESSES, FUTURE RISKS & BUSINESS PLAN

Neal Marriott gave a presentation, most of which was commercially sensitive. He will circulate the slides which are confidential to Council.

NM

10. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/68/17)

Council NOTED the reports of the standing committees.

11. ELECTIONS

*Fellowship (CM/69/17)*

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 22 November 2017.

*Chartered Geologists (CM/70/17)*

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/71/17)*

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

*European Geologists (CM/72/17)*

Council NOTED the names elected as European Geologists at the 14 November 2017 meeting of the European Federation of Geologists.

*Chartered Scientist (CM/73/17)*

Council AGREED to elect as Chartered Scientists those applicants listed.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

John Talbot said that the Professional and Chartership Committees have agreed that CGeols who are fully retired will be able to retain their title without the need to participate in CPD and would benefit from reduced subscriptions. This will be included in the revision to Regulations currently being drafted.

JT

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7 February 2018. Rob Larter gave his apologies.

# **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

## **GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON**

### **2018 AWARDS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Award</b>
Prof Terry Plank	Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University	Wollaston Medal
Prof Julian Dowdeswell	Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge	Lyell Medal
Prof Janne Blichert-Toft	CNRS and Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon	Murchison Medal
Dr Peter Dolan	Ikon Science Limited	William Smith Medal
Prof Jan Zalasiewicz	University of Leicester	Prestwich Medal
Prof Robert Holdsworth	Durham University	Coke Medal
Mr David Shilston	Atkins	Coke Medal
Girls into Geoscience	Plymouth University	R H Worth Award
Prof Simon Poulton	University of Leeds	Bigsby Medal
Dr Charlotte Adams	Durham University	Aberconway Medal
Dr Owen Weller	University of Cambridge	Wollaston Fund
Dr Amanda Owen	University of Glasgow	Lyell Fund
Dr George Cooper	Durham University	Murchison Fund
Dr Hannah Hughes	University of Exeter, Cambourne School of Mines	William Smith Fund
	TBA	President's Award
	TBA	President's Award