

The Geological Society of London

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 18 September 2018

PRESENT: Nick Rogers (*Chair*), Tom Backhouse, Andrew Bloodworth, John Booth (*Vice President*), Jason Canning, Lesley Dunlop, Graham Goffey (*Treasurer*), Sarah Gordon (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Jim Griffiths, Naomi Jordan, Chris King, Bryne Ngwenya, Colin North (*Secretary, Publications*), Sheila Peacock, Nik Reynolds (*Vice President*), Keith Seymour (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Jessica Smith, Helen Smyth, Rob Strachan, John Talbot (*Vice President, Chartership*) and Alex Whittaker (*Secretary, Science*)

APOLOGIES: Katherine Royse (*Secretary, Professional Matters*) and Rob Larter

In attendance: Richard Hughes (Executive Secretary), Neal Marriott (Director of Publishing), Alex McPherson (Director of Finance & Operations), Alicia Newton (Director of Science & Communications) and Stephanie Jones (Administrative Secretary)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Sheila Peacock is a member of the Council of the Royal Astronomical Society and may be conflicted on matters relating to the Burlington House lease and publishing.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies NOTED from Katherine Royse and Rob Larter.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 JULY 2018

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

SJ

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 *Item 4.2 – Launch event of UK Chapter of the International Association for Geoscience Diversity (DiG-UK):* Alicia Newton said the launch event earlier this summer was well attended. DiG-UK led a fully accessible field trip in Anglesey in early September, again very successful. A joint session has been proposed with the DiG-UK team for the EGU 2019 meeting on accessibility in fieldwork.

4.2 *Item 4.3 – Future Science report:* Alicia Newton is in touch with the convenors to decide the format of the report.

AN

4.3 *Item 5.1 – Climate Change Statement:* Alex Whittaker said there have been a number of approaches, including from Fellows, about the Society's statement on Climate Change. Prof Carrie Lear is leading a panel, which in carrying out this review will try to amalgamate the two current statements into a new statement that reflects current geoscientific understanding. That panel will report first to the Science Committee and then to Council. The intention is to complete the work in six months.

4.4 *Item 5.5 – Early Career Geoscience Network:* Tom Backhouse reported on progress:

- A committee has been formed chaired by Duncan Murdock;
- A call has been issued for volunteers;
- Terms of reference drafted by Georgina Worrall.

The next step is to convene and elect the members of the committee and hold a launch event. Tom Backhouse will email Council members for input and ideas.

TB

4.5 *Review of Degree Accreditation Scheme –* Colin North asked when the panel will

report. Alicia Newton said the review is ongoing, chaired by Bruce Yardley. She will report on progress at the next Council meeting.

AN

5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

5.1 *Report of Officers' Meeting*

The Officers met this morning where the discussion was mainly about staffing matters. Nick Rogers thanked Richard Hughes on behalf of the Society for his rebuilding of the Senior Leadership Team, and recruitment of other staff, over the past year.

5.2 *Report of the Elections Committee*

Six members of Council are due to retire in June 2019:-

Jason Canning
Naomi Jordan
Rob Larter
Colin North
Sheila Peacock
Keith Seymour

The call for nominations will be in October *Geoscientist* and on the website, and will be for the President-designate as well as for Council members. The closing date for nominations is 4 January 2019.

5.3 *Amendment to Regulation R/G/14: Award of Society Medals and Funds (CM/49/18)*

The office received an enquiry, not for the first time, asking if the Society gives posthumous awards.

Council AGREED to amend the Regulation such that the Society will not make posthumous awards with the exception that should the nominee die between the Council meeting where the award is decided and the subsequent President's Day then the award should stand. The following paragraph will be added to the Regulation:

The Society does not confer posthumous Awards with the exception that should the nominee die between the Council meeting where the Award is decided and the subsequent Awards ceremony then the Award will stand.

SJ

6. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE

6.1 *Executive Secretary (CM/50/18)*

Richard Hughes said the Burlington House lease remains the key issue and highest risk facing the Society and is the subject of discussion at the Council residential.

His report contained a number of highlights but he brought Council's attention to the following:-

The Senior Leadership Team is at full strength for the first time since early April, with Dr Alicia Newton taking up her role as Director of Science & Communications and Alex McPherson as Director of Finance & Operations. Jenny Boland joined as Head of Development in early September fulfilling the fundraising role supported by Council in late 2017.

An end Q3 progress update on the 2018 business plan will be provided in November. Business planning for 2019 is well underway. Consultation with the standing

committees will take place in the coming weeks with the objective of bringing a final draft to Council for approval in November.

RH &
SLT

Officers discussed the review of the pay, reward & performance management systems where there is strong progress. The intention is to use the new system for evaluating staff performance for the operating year 2018, which will start in Q1. The Finance & Planning committee will consider the financial aspects at their October meeting, and the outcome of the FPC discussions will be communicated to Officers in November prior to returning to Council for approval. Implementation before Q1 2019 will require roll-out and staff training to commence in November, and the conditionality of Officers' and Council approval will be emphasised to staff.

The European Commission released a statement that the EU will no longer recognise the EurGeol qualification obtained in the UK after 29 March 2019, and instead its recognition will be governed by national policies on professional qualifications. It is possible that this will have far-reaching consequences. The matter has been raised with the Secretary General of the European Federation of Geologists and will be discussed at their autumn Council meeting, which Richard Hughes will attend.

6.2 *Director of Finance & Operations (CM/51/18)*

Alex McPherson said there is a 'core' deficit of £116k forecast for the full year versus a budgeted deficit of £12k. Discretionary expenditure is being reviewed with budget holders to reduce and defer where possible. Publishing is having a strong year and their revenues are higher than anticipated. Room hire income is lower than anticipated which may be due to over-optimistic budgeting. Fellowship income is also down which in some part may be due to a demographic change. It is expected that some aged debtors will need to be written off which will go to the Finance & Planning committee for approval.

Graham Goffey said the deficit is large but the Society can absorb it. At their October meeting the Finance & Planning committee will look at what can be trimmed to pull back some of the deficit.

Alex McPherson said a top priority is to change the processes used by the Finance team and to instil more ownership into budget holders.

The Fellowship survey completed with around 2950 participants. A summary will be prepared for November Council.

AMc

The 'go-live' date for the CRM system is around 1 October. With regard to Fellowship renewals, there will be a 'soft start', most likely with Council members, before sending out to the full membership.

The Society is experiencing an increasing frequency of spoofing and phishing incidents and attempts to distribute malware from both outside and within the network. Some attacks are more worrying as they appear to come from within the Society and as ever people need to be vigilant. Password protocols, user and sender authentication and system configurations are being modified to ensure best practice. An external consultant with expertise in cyber security has been retained so we can ensure that the Society's systems are set up as securely as they can be. This is a high priority item and staff are aware of the potential for reputational damage.

There were no Health & Safety matters to report.

6.3 *Director of Science & Communications (CM/52/18)*

Alicia Newton was welcomed to her first meeting of Council. She said that following the departure of Nic Bilham and her arrival on 20 August, the heads of department

worked admirably to maintain outputs and activities. She highlighted the following items from her report:-

Georgina Worrall, Head of Events, is leaving the Society at the end of October.

Two public lectures will be held outside London: Charlotte Adams will repeat her talk at the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers; and Charlotte Bishop will repeat her lecture at Queen's University Belfast and at a schools group the next day.

The programme of conferences, outreach and education activities for the 2018 Year of Resources is well underway. The Minerals poster currently displayed in the Lower Library and a card game will be mailed to schools. The poster will be sent to Council members as an email attachment. More ideas are needed for the 2019 Year of Carbon which Alex Whittaker and Alicia Newton are discussing, and for which the specialist groups and community have been approached. Ideas from Council most welcome.

ALL

The Department for Exiting the European Union recently published a number of technical notices covering a 'no-deal Brexit' scenario. These included reports on Horizon 2020 funding and Erasmus+. These are on the 'Geoscience and the EU Referendum' webpage on the Society's website.

The Society is very pleased to be partnered with Zeiss on a scholarship for a microscopy project for postgraduates, which is open for entries.

Earth Science Week 2018 is 13 – 21 October. Amongst other initiatives, the Society has given 12 grants to individuals and organisations, including those in Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, to hold public events.

6.4 *Report of the Director of Publishing (CM/54/18)*

Neal Marriott said the subscription renewals process is all but complete. It has been a good year with renewals approximately 5% up on 2018 in revenue terms, and all major subscribers have renewed. He presented Council with details of the top subscribers. Colin North reminded Council that this information is commercially sensitive and confidential to Council. The number of Lyell Collection Complete subscribers has increased from 160 in 2017 to 165 in 2018.

There is a downturn in the number of books commissioned, in part due to the early retirement of Angharad Hills, Commissioning Editor.

Council will discuss the Society's open access publishing activities at its residential meeting tomorrow.

7. PRESENTATION BY VICE PRESIDENT, REGIONAL GROUPS

Keith Seymour gave a presentation on the work of the Regional Groups.

8. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/55/18)

Council NOTED the reports of the standing committees.

9. ELECTIONS

9.1 *Fellowship (CM/56/18)*

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the Ordinary General Meeting on 18 September 2018.

- 9.2 *Chartered Geologists (CM/57/18)*
The applications from Fellows listed to become Chartered Geologists had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were AGREED by Council.
- 9.3 *Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/58/18)*
Council AGREED to elect as Candidate Fellows and Junior Candidate Fellows those applicants listed.
- 9.4 *European Geologists (CM/59/18)*
Council APPROVED the names listed as European Geologists.
- 9.5 *Chartered Scientist (CM/60/18)*
Council AGREED to elect as Chartered Scientists those applicants listed.
10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
- 10.1 *Carbon Capture and Storage*
- Nick Rogers said he was approached by someone who is keen that the Society has a statement on Carbon Capture and Storage. This is in process and is on the Science Committee agenda.
11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
- 28 November 2018