

# UNIVERSITY GEOSCIENCE UK

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 13:30 on 27 July 2016 at Burlington House

Present: Tim Minshull (Chair), Mark Anderson (Executive Secretary), Peter Burgess, Gordon Curry

Apologies: Hugh Rollinson, Jon Gluyas, Sally Greenwood, Arlene Hunter, Dorrik Stow

In attendance: George Jameson (GSL – External Relations Officer)

### **Actions**

#### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies as set out above were noted.

#### **3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes were approved subject to the removal of section 8a.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE**

##### **4a Process of election**

The committee discussed how best to formalize the changes that the organisation intends to make in this respect. The issue here is with how best to inform the membership of the changes being made. At the previous meeting in February it was agreed that ordinary members would be informed of changes etc. via email correspondence. For the executive members this would be done at the full meetings in either February or November. Ordinary members will be given a week to respond to possible changes.

It was agreed that all future elections will be discussed through the executive with proposals being ratified by the membership through email.

##### **4b Proposed changes/additions**

This meeting will be Mark's last as the Executive Secretary. Gordon Curry will be replacing him. There is an issue with administrative support as Sally Greenwood has recently left her post at Plymouth University and as a result there has been practically no admin support since. There is an amount of money in place to cover the costs of admin support but this may not be as pressing an issue recently given that the Geological Society provides admin support to the Executive Committee and the Joint Higher Education Committee.

Mark will be forwarding on the mailing list to the other executive members.

**MA**

Given this it was suggested that admin support would be better suited to assist the Treasurer. In previous years Sally helped the Treasurer in subscription collections, welcome letters for membership changes etc. It was felt that this would make the role more attractive to the next Treasurer.

Mark informed the committee that he will contact Hugh in order to see if he can get admin support more locally as it would be somewhat inconvenient to transfer the bank account again.

**MA**

Gordon indicated that he has a particular person in mind for the admin support role but will wait and see what the new Treasurer intends to do before making a decision.

Sian Davies-Vollum from Derby University who has been earmarked to take over Gordon's role may now be asked to consider the role of Treasurer but will in the meantime, depending on Hugh's answer, carry on with the Undergraduate Teaching remit. Tim will be contacting her shortly.

**TM**

Tim approached Gerald Roberts to see if he would be interested in the role overseeing Postgraduate Taught Programmes and he would be happy to do so. Mark confirmed this with Dorrik Stow who is stepping down.

Tim had a conversation with Tim Reston (University of Birmingham) and he was receptive to the idea of joining the executive but didn't confirm.

It was mentioned by the committee that it would be a good idea to have a London (or southern England) based member given the amount of events taking place in the capital. Tim will inform the nominated individuals that their roles have been formalised

**TM**

Mark stated that he will download all the UGUK files on to a USB memory stick and post this to Gordon as well as sending him the email lists. Account signatories may need to be changed given the potential future membership role changes.

## **5. REPORTS FROM THE CHAIR**

### **Discussion of networking event and thematic meeting in November (21st and 22nd) at Burlington House**

Tim provided the executive with his thoughts on the potential thematic meeting to take place in November 2016. The thematic meeting would be the previously discussed town hall style meeting which would not be limited to the University Geoscience UK membership. There will also be a full meeting during this time. It was agreed at the JHEC meeting that the town-hall meeting should be postponed until February.

The possibility of embedding the potential employability project into this was discussed as this would ensure some output being advanced and would prove to

be useful for when the employability project gets underway and this would also potentially increase attendance rates.

It was decided that this topic of discussion would be picked up at a later stage in the meeting

## **6. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

### **i. Update on Consultations completed since February Meeting**

#### **TEF (Consultation Deadline 12th July) & Implications of EU referendum (GSL deadline: 8th August)**

Mark updated the committee on the TEF and the EU referendum consultations at the previous Joint Higher Education meeting and given this the committee agreed that there was no need to repeat these again. Mark will circulate the two responses he's received regarding the EU referendum to the committee members and Florence Bullough of GSL.

**MA**

### **ii. Format of JHEC and Executive Committee meetings**

The format of the July meetings was flipped as a result of the Geoscience Education Academy taking place at the same time. A question was raised to see if the committee wanted to keep it this way as it was thought that it worked quite well. It was suggested that there should be more emphasis put on encouraging members to attend virtually. It needs to be easy for members to join the meeting in order to further entice them. George will look into setting up video conferencing capabilities for the next meeting.

**GJ**

The committee came back to the point of whether or not to continue with having the JHEC meeting before the Executive meeting. This set up, it was mentioned, allowed the points raised to inform the Executive meeting but as a result the views of the Executive cannot be canvassed beforehand. If this current set up continues the Executive will need to have an agenda at least one week in advance to allow them adequate time to discuss matters. The equivalent of this meeting next year should take place at the end of June rather than July so as to offset the problem of people being on holiday or on field trips.

The committee agreed to continue with having the JHEC meeting taking place before the meeting of the Executive. A standing item will need to be embedded into the Executive meeting agenda to report to the rest of the members of the executive matters coming up as well as the tone of the discussion at the JHEC meeting.

The Committee provided Peter Burgess with a brief summary of what took place at the earlier meeting of the JHEC. This included the AGI exit survey, the proposed community style town hall meeting, gender balance issues, the Wakeham report and employability etc.

## **7. REPORT FROM THE TREASURER**

### **Membership fees**

In Hugh's absence Mark summarized the current position on membership fees etc. Mark began by stating that he will forward the information on to the other committee members.

**MA**

There has not been a significant increase on the balance given that last February's fieldwork meeting was quite expensive costing around £2,500, catering took up a significant chunk of this. The additional subscriptions for the coming year should restore the balance to a more healthy level. The organisation is still waiting to build up a healthy surplus so the finances will need to be kept in mind for potential future expenses such as employing additional staff, projects etc.

The organisation is waiting on 8 members who haven't yet paid for the year coming to an end. The new round on invoicing will be starting from the 1st of August and this will be at the new rate.

## **8. REPORTS FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

### **i. Outcome of FW meeting**

This was discussed in greater detail at the Joint Higher Education Committee meeting earlier in the day. It was felt that this stimulated discussion regarding accreditation and the role of fieldwork in accreditation which more closely aligns it with skills rather than the number of days. Mark stated that they intend to develop a document which would be advertised in Geoscientist which Departments could use as an informative piece to justify the value of fieldwork. This document would combine the perspectives of industry and accreditation officers.

### **ii. Actions from Wakeham – ‘unpicking geoscientist employment data from the ‘Earth, Marine and Environmental Science’ grouping**

Before discussing the actions from the Wakeham report, Tim summarised aspects of the JHEC meeting to clarify things for Peter.

In the follow up from the findings of the Wakeham report the committee feel that a project is needed to analyse geoscience employability statistics and this, given the changes in the membership of the executive, will most likely be overseen under a new member. Tim Reston has been approached for the role and would, given the scale of the project, need additional support for the proposed project.

**All**

The relevant earth science data is available from HESA and committee members will be enquiring within their own departments to see if the data sets were purchased.

Before obtaining the data from HESA, if required, the core questions which will need to be analysed need to be decided upon beforehand. Depending on what is available there may be a need to choose a bespoke package directly from

HESA. The option which is more cost effective will be chosen given that a postgraduate student could be employed to carry out the work for less than the bespoke package. Gordon indicated that he is happy to take the lead on this and will make the necessary enquiries to see if Glasgow has the data.

GC

It was also mentioned that the data research project may act as a feeding mechanism into determining the theme of the thematic meeting; the findings could give rise to key questions for input. The research will look back over the last 10 years to establish proper long term trends.

**iii. Public profile of Geoscience – student engagement, social media etc. / Outcome of GSL meeting with academics (May 2016)**

Gordon began by discussing the Academic consultation meeting held at the Geological Society in May. He noted that a theme which emerged from the discussion concerned geology not having the profile it deserved. Some feel that other organisations are currently doing a better job. It is felt that this is one of the main reasons as to why universities aren't as engaged with the Society as they could be.

The Royal Society's approach to Geo-engineering was used as an example of best practice listing all the relevant pros and cons of an issue. It is feared that inactivity in this area will drive a significant amount of students down the environmental route.

Another aspect which arose during this meeting concerned the need for the GSL journals to improve. One other main talking point focused on the potential of increasing the number of competitions, guest blog posts etc. which all would have beneficial outcomes in attracting younger audiences/members. It was suggested that members of the committee should be thinking about how best to approach this dilemma.

**9. WEBSITE**

Mark drew attention to the University Geoscience UK website saying that it could do with some additional information. Presently it is functioning in the same way as the old website as a repository for information. It was pointed out that having the website sit within the Geolsoc website allows visitors the potential to be able to peruse through a greater amount of geology related content which can only be a positive outcome.

GJ

Suggestions were made to figure out ways to make the website more up to date and user friendly. The site could potentially have a newsfeed component, social media feeds and possibly a message board where students could interact with one another. George agreed to discuss these possibilities with Liz Pedley to see what is possible and will then contact Gordon informing him what can be done.

**10. DATES, FORMAT AND THEMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS AND PROJECTS**

Rooms have been booked for the November meeting (21 & 22 mirroring last February's event). The committee discussed the possibilities that are available

with regards to themes etc. Gordon informed the committee that he will send an email to the membership informing them of the Wakeham report and the how the role of University Geoscience UK is to prepare for any potential threats this may have towards geoscience in general.

GC

It was suggested that an industry representative would be a good idea to have present so that they could inform the members and attendees on how University Geoscience UK is performing with regards to having students developing the right skillset being ready for professional careers after graduation.

This will need to be communicated soon so as to have this event in people's diaries. It is imperative that more department heads attend this and also the event should have a committee member from the Wakeham Report present to possibly give a presentation. It was felt that having this would increase interest in the event. Another suggestion made would be to invite a representative from HEFCE to summarize what they are doing in relation to this without replicating the Wakeham rep.

The communication which will go out to the membership will need to be carefully worded so as to not just send as a representative their employability lead but to also have somebody who can fully represent the full activity of their department.

Next February will have the community town style meeting.

A final point made before the meeting came to a close drew attention to possibly increasing the email activity between the members informing them of updates etc. so as to keep them in the loop.

As this was Mark's last meeting as the Executive Secretary, the committee members thanked him for his time and effort spent during his tenure.