

# The Geological Society of London

## COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 20 November 2019

PRESENT: Nick Rogers (*Chair*), Andrew Bloodworth, John Booth (*Vice President*), Mike Daly (*President-designate*), Lesley Dunlop, Joel Gill, Graham Goffey (*Treasurer*), Kathryn Goodenough, Sarah Gordon (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Chris King, Nik Reynolds (*Vice President*), Katherine Royse (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Gemma Sherwood (by phone), Jessica Smith (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Helen Smyth, Rob Strachan (*Secretary, Publications*), John Talbot (*Vice President, Chartership*) and Alex Whittaker (*Secretary, Science*)

APOLOGIES: Tom Backhouse, Jim Griffiths, Andrew Moore, Bryne Ngwenya and Sarah Scott

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. APOLOGIES

Apologies from Tom Backhouse, Jim Griffiths, Andrew Moore, Bryne Ngwenya and Sarah Scott were NOTED.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.

### 3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes were APPROVED. A version of the minutes will be published on the website, with an explanation if items have been removed or reduced.

SJ

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

#### 4.1 *Identification of new names to join the Standing List needed under Regulations R/FP/5 and R/FP/6 (CM/62/19)*

Council agreed the list at the June meeting but it was at the minimum number required. The Professional committee was tasked with identifying gaps in specialist areas and those who might fill them. Council APPROVED the revised list, noting that those identified will be asked if they are willing to join the list.

RH

### 5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

#### 5.1 *Report of Officers Meeting*

The Officers met this morning when the main items of business were staff-related and included the approval of the Pay Progression Scheme.

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

Five members of Council are due to retire in June 2020:-

Ms Lesley Dunlop  
Dr Sarah Gordon  
Prof Nick Rogers  
Prof Katherine Royse  
Mr John Talbot

One nomination form has been received and four others have said they will stand. Nominations from early career candidates would be particularly welcome and Nick

Rogers (NR) will draft a message to the Early Career Network to nominate a candidate from that group.

Joel Gill has agreed to stand as Secretary, Foreign and External Affairs and Jim Griffiths as Secretary, Professional.

A successor is required for Lesley Dunlop, Diversity Champion, who will draft a role description.

LD

5.3 *Awards 2020 (CM/63/19)*

Council AGREED the Awards for 2020 and the list is appended. Council were reminded that this information is confidential until the award winners have been notified and have accepted.

NR

NR said it was disappointing that the academic community did not put forward more nominations for the Funds, an area where the Society can encourage early career Earth scientists.

5.4 *Proposal to establish a new medal (CM/64/19)*

The Society was approached with a proposal to establish a new medal, contingent upon raising £50k, to recognise inspirational teachers at secondary level who have played a significant role in encouraging students to become professional geoscientists. In addition to a medal it was proposed to make a small donation to the recipient's school to provide field equipment, if the nominee was still actively teaching geology. The proposal was recommended by the Awards committee who discussed it at their meeting on 4 November.

Council discussed the proposal at length. Whilst grateful for the approach, they were not convinced that a medal would have a great impact on promoting education. They were concerned about the narrowness of the award and the ability to get nominations year after year. Council has also previously expressed a reticence to add more medals and needs to adopt a more strategic approach when considering proposals for new awards. Teaching excellence has previously been recognised by the R H Worth Award and consideration could also be given to awarding Honorary Fellowship.

Council REJECTED the proposal. Alicia Newton (AN) will draft a response for NR to send to the proposer.

AN

6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

6.1 *Executive Secretary (CM/65/19)*

Richard Hughes (RH) drew attention to the following items:-

*Education and Fieldwork Fund*

RH told September Council that a former trustee of the Society wished to donate a substantial sum to support 'education and geological fieldwork' for which an Education and Fieldwork Fund would be created as a specific fundraising priority. It has emerged from further communications that the person is not able to commit such a large sum so it has been decided not to proceed with the creation of this Fund. A paper discussing fundraising priorities will come to February 2020 Council.

RH

*Burlington House Lease (confidential to Council)*

*Development Committee*

The first meeting of the Development Committee, chaired by Malcolm Brown, took place on 31 October with its final membership of:-

- Malcolm Brown, past-President (Chair)
- John Talbot, VP Chartership

- Iain Bartholomew
- Peter Dolan
- Mark Steeves
- Yvonne Rainey, formerly of the Philanthropy Company where she led the 2016-17 review of fundraising potential at the Society. She is now Director of Development at Exeter College, Oxford
- Jim Coppard
- Jenny Boland
- Richard Hughes

A paper for February 2020 Council on potential fundraising priorities will also cover compliance matters related to fundraising by charities.

#### *Complaints*

RH informed Council that he is currently managing two complaints against Fellows and Chartered Geologists for alleged contraventions of the Code of Conduct. RH said that depending on the deliberations of the investigating panel, the Society would have an obligation to escalate a complaint to any/all appropriate authorities.

#### 6.2 *Director of Finance & Operations (CM/66/19)*

AMc presented Council with the September management accounts and said the financial situation is showing improvement. There is still a deficit of £500k arising mainly from higher rent on Burlington House, a reduction in Fellowship income, lower revenue from events and facilities hire and costs associated with the CRM project, but taking into account a strong investment performance there was a surplus at end September of around £170k. Caution is still advised. He is preparing a report on funds reserves and will report to February Council.

AMc

The Sage/CRM synchronisation testing has concluded with a predominantly successful outcome. Deployment to the live environment is the final step but there is no guarantee it will work as successfully.

A member of staff received an electric shock from a damaged electrical heater. It has been replaced and all hard-wired electrical heaters have been examined for a similar defect. AMc confirmed that the Society is PAT-tested every year.

#### 6.2(i) 2020 COST OF LIVING PROPOSAL (CM/67/19)

As recommended by the Finance & Planning committee, Council APPROVED the award to staff of a 2% cost of living award for 2020.

#### 6.3 *Director of Science & Communications (CM/68/19)*

AN said the Education Team has been busy with outreach work including visits to primary schools in Newham and Euston and also attendance at the Yorkshire Fossil Festival.

The Society featured heavily in a report from Scientists for Global Responsibility called "Irresponsible Science?" with the report flagging "very high" levels of event sponsorship and corporate membership with fossil fuel companies. Also, the Sunday Times reported on the calls for the Royal Society to drop fossil fuel companies from its investment portfolio and this report discussed the role of and income from the Petroleum Group. There was some activity on Twitter but no requests for information or statements so no formal response was made.

Additionally, a Society Fellow publicised his resignation from the Society citing the support received by the Society from fossil fuel industries. The Society was asked for a statement and there was quite a bit of comment on Twitter.

Whilst mindful of supporting petroleum and mining geologists, Council will need to consider how to manage this issue. RH said this is already under consideration and in particular the Society needs to:-

- put in place its ethical investment policy
- put in place appropriate checks to screen new patrons' policies towards anthropogenic climate change
- elaborate on the statement about the work Earth scientists do around carbon capture and storage, etc.

Sarah Gordon will work with the Science committee and staff on a form of words.

The rest of the report was NOTED.

#### 6.4 *Director of Publishing (CM/69/19)*

Neal Marriott (NM) said Mike Daly, Graham Goffey and Rob Strachan visited the Publishing House on 14 November.

The 2020 subscription renewal is now well underway with the first major renewal already received and at least three new subscribers signed up. The bulk of renewals are expected between now and end January.

An author satisfaction survey is ongoing, co-ordinated across Editorial, Production and Sales & Marketing teams. Approximately 24k recipients have been invited to participate. The survey will close at the end of November and the results used to improve service in 2020 and onwards.

GeoScienceWorld has announced the acquisition of Lithosphere, formerly belonging to and published by the Geological Society of America, as the vehicle for its new Open Access Community Journal. It will be open for new submissions in January 2020 and will launch with its new content in March 2020.

The recruitment of the new Director of Publishing is underway with an appointment anticipated in Q1 2020.

NR thanked NM for his service as Director of Publishing for the last 18 years. He will be staying at the Society for the time being as Project Manager for the Library Review.

#### 7. LIBRARY REVIEW (CM/70/19)

The draft Terms of Reference for the 2020 Library Review were presented to Council in September. Each of the standing committees was then asked to comment. There was relatively little input but useful comments from the Finance & Planning committee and NM.

A substantial commentary was received from the Library Users Group (LUG), via the Publications & Information committee, and the chair of the LUG also wrote to some Council members expressing the group's views. Some of the LUG's comments have been taken into account in the final draft of the Terms of Reference. Other comments were more relevant to the review rather than the Terms of Reference.

NM has agreed to manage the review. NR approached Hazel Rymer, Open University, long-standing Fellow and former member of Council to chair the review. The OU library came under her responsibility and there are similarities with the Society's library because of the wide number of remote users. Council AGREED with this appointment. RH and NM will make further approaches for review group members.

Council APPROVED the Terms of Reference.

SG

RH  
NM

8. 2019 BUSINESS PLAN (CM/71/19)

RH said the Society operates a three-year rolling business plan. He presented progress on the delivery of the 2019 plan to the end of Q3.

The objectives of the Publishing House are generally on track. RH reported in more detail on some of the amber and red items:-

- There has been a downturn in the conference programme. The new Head of Events is in post and is beginning to plan on its revival. The Conference Working Group is due to meet again which AN will organise.
- Development of the website put on hold due to budgetary constraints.
- A date is required for the group reviewing the Degree Accreditation Scheme to meet.
- The creation of a network of university champions was put on hold pending the membership categories review. Council suggested that the university champions work can start independently of the review. RH and AN to discuss. It was noted that the membership categories review will inform the fees for 2021 which will need approval at the June AGM.

AN

AN

RH

AN

Mike Daly suggested putting together a plan of what changes might be made to Burlington House if the lease is secured.

Council noted that brand alignment will be removed from the 2020 plan.

RH briefed Council on the development of the 2020 Business Plan. He said it has become evident in the last few weeks that there is some stress in the organisation. For the wellbeing of the staff the Senior Leadership Team will review the draft. It will be circulated to Council before the February meeting.

RH

9. 2020 BUDGET (CM/72/19)

AMc said the budget has undergone a number of iterations since September, reducing the net budget from a deficit of £411k to a deficit of £230k. The Senior Leadership Team feels that by presenting a budget with a lower net deficit by either further increasing revenue, reducing expenditure or both, there is a risk of either preparing an unachievable and unrealistic budget, or costs will be so reduced that the ability of the Society to fulfil its Fellowship and charitable objectives will be severely impaired.

Operationally, the Society is budgeted in 2020 to generate a surplus of £220,024 which becomes a £230,376 deficit after applying depreciation.

An unrealised investment portfolio gain of 3% is budgeted yielding an accounting deficit of £44k. By cautious utilisation of restricted and endowment fund sources, a modest surplus is budgeted to be generated in the region of £74k. This should have a small positive effect on the free reserve.

Graham Goffey said the Burlington House rent has increased at the same time as Fellowship numbers have declined and also revenue from conferences and events, but it is indisputable that the Society is spending more than it is bringing in which is not sustainable in the long term.

Council APPROVED the budget for 2020.

10. POSSIBLE CHARTERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEES MERGER (CM/73/19)

John Talbot introduced the paper. He said there is very considerable similarity in the actual functions of these committees which particularly came to his notice when he

chaired both committees during the indisposition of Kate Royse, Secretary, Professional. Kate Royse said the purpose of the proposal is to streamline the workflow. The opportunity will also be taken to review the Terms of Reference of both committees.

Council was content for work to continue on the proposal which will be brought back to February Council for approval. Council members were asked to send their comments to John Talbot.

JT  
Council

11. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/74/19)

Council NOTED the reports of the standing committees.

12. ELECTIONS

12.1 *Fellowship (CM/75/19)*

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the Ordinary General Meeting on 20 November 2019.

12.2 *Chartered Geologists (CM/76/19)*

The applications from Fellows listed to become Chartered Geologists had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were AGREED by Council. Council also AGREED that additional candidates who were due to be interviewed on Friday, 22 November could be elected by email. These names will be added to the schedule.

*Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/77/19)*

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

*European Geologist (CM/78/19)*

12.4 Council APPROVED those applicants listed as European Geologists.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NR drew Council's attention to his update on the Society's stance on climate change in November *Geoscientist*. Bruce Yardley had contacted him to commend and offer his support.

The update to the Society's Climate Change Statement will be reviewed at Science Committee in February 2020.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

5 February 2020



## GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

### 2020 AWARDS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Award</b>
Prof Barbara Romanowicz	Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris	Wollaston Medal
Prof Rachel Wood	University of Edinburgh	Lyell Medal
Prof Katharine Cashman	University of Bristol	Murchison Medal
Dr Alastair Ruffell	Queens University Belfast	William Smith Medal
Dr Kristján Saemundsson	Retired	Prestwich Medal
Prof Alastair Robertson	University of Edinburgh	Dewey Medal
Prof Sandra Herbert	University of Maryland	Sue Tyler Friedman Medal
Prof Richard Davies	Newcastle University	Coke Medal
Prof Lisa McNeill	University of Southampton	Coke Medal
Dr Bill Gaskarth	Retired	Distinguished Service Award
Prof Bridget Wade	University College London	Bigsby Medal
Dr Andrew Newton	Queens University Belfast	Wollaston Fund
Dr Thomas Hearing	University of Ghent	Lyell Fund
Dr Alexander Dunhill	University of Leeds	Murchison Fund
Ms Emma Jude	BP Exploration	William Smith Fund