

Council Meeting

**Thursday 12 September 2013
12:30-14:30**

**Lion Court Conference Centre, 25 Procter Street, Holborn,
London, WC1V 6NY**

Web Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

The President welcomed new Council member Prof David Blackburn, Council and Observers. Judith Willetts, British Society for Immunology joined as a new observer.

Present: Prof Dame Nancy Rothwell (President)
Prof Chris Kirk (Hon Secretary)
Dr Pat Goodwin (Hon Treasurer)
Dr Liz Lakin
Dr Kim Hardie
Prof Richard Reece
Prof John Coggins
Dr Jeremy Pritchard
Prof David Blackburn
Prof Rosie Hails
Prof Chris Garland
Ms Sue Thorn
Dr Aileen Allsop

Nancy Rothwell
12/9/13

Observers: Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive
Ms Elaine Snell, British Neuroscience Association (observer)
Ms Judith Willetts, British Society for Immunology (observer)
Mr Jon Kudlick, Director of Membership, Marketing & Communication
Dr Laura Bellingan, Head of Science Policy
Ms Natasha Neill, Executive Officer
Ms Gemma Garrett, Head of Education

Dr Stephen Benn, Director of Parliamentary Affairs
Ms Jen Crosk (Minutes)

Apologies: Prof Julia Buckingham
Prof Pete Downes
Dr Paul Brooker
Mr Tim Brigstocke
Dr Cliff Collis, Professional Registers & Training Manager

1.1 Declaration of interests

No new declarations were reported

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 June 2013

2.1 Review of action points

All actions had been completed or appeared within the Agenda.

2.2 Matters arising not on the Agenda

No matters were raised.

2.3 Approval of Minutes and Web Minutes

Council approved the Minutes and Web Minutes.

2.4 Declaration of interests

Sue Thorn (ST) reported that she had been carrying out consultancy work for the BPS. The President confirmed that she would be joining the Royal Society Council and Pat Goodwin (PG) declared that she had been elected onto the Council of SGM.

Section A: Policy & Strategy

3. Report from ETP

Gemma Garrett (GG) gave an update on the A Level and GCSE process. GCSEs in Science were originally to be introduced for first teaching in September 2015. Council were pleased that this has now been delayed by a year to Sept 2016. However, Maths and further Maths would still be introduced in 2015. The Society had been disappointed that Science A Levels will still be introduced in September 2015, whilst Maths A Levels had been delayed to 2016. SCORE had released a public statement condemning the decision and the Society still had concerns that the assessment process would not be resolved within this timescale.

SCORE will be writing to Ofqual outlining the Society's concerns but also its on-going willingness to engage with the process.

The Russell group had now set up the A Level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB), which currently did not have any subject panels. A meeting was being scheduled with DFE, SCORE and ALCAB for the near future.

JP gave an update on the Higher Education Teaching Project and asked for examples of people who had been promoted on the basis of their teaching achievements

Council discussed the CSciTeach application to the Science Council and agreed to proceed.

Decision: Council APPROVED continuation of the CSciTeach license application.

On Open Access, LB reported that the Finch Group were holding a “one year on” meeting in September and asked Council for any comments before 24 September.

LB offered to update Council on the Natural Capital Initiative outside the meeting.

4. Accreditation

Liz Lakin (LL) thanked the Accreditation team for organising the successful Accreditation award ceremony at Kew, which was attended by 100 people. The Royal Veterinary College, Manchester University and York University had received accreditation at the ceremony.

Lara Husain had started in early September as an Employer Engagement Officer and Dr Julian Mitchell had joined the Accreditation Working Group (AWG). LL added that an advert was being put together to recruit more AWG members: candidates from the water/food industry or Sabbatical Officers at Student Unions would be particularly helpful. Council were asked to direct any potential candidates to the website or advertisement.

4.1 UKCES Audit Report

The Society was now halfway through the funding period and the UKCES had carried out an internal audit. Council welcomed the report.

4.2 Approval of forecast for Accreditation

The Accreditation forecast had been approved by the Finance Committee.

4.3 Three year undergraduate Degree Accreditation

LL reminded Council that the current Accreditation programme primarily covers integrated 4/5 year Masters research courses in Scotland and 4 year integrated Masters (or three plus one) courses in England/Wales. She highlighted the need to explore accrediting traditional undergraduate degrees (TUD) across the UK. .

MD added that he had discussed kitemarking in a recent meeting with BIS. All agreed that, whilst there wasn't a case for kitemarking, accreditation of TUDs should consider broader employability skills. The AWG had meet in July and agreed to move forward with the development of a procedure to accredit undergraduate degrees subject to Council approval.

Decision: Council APPROVED the further exploration and early stage development of an accreditation programme for traditional undergraduate degrees. They noted the need to review funding for any full programme.

4.4 International Recognition

LL asked Council for approval of the statement before them.

Council agreed an amendment of the statement for inclusion in the terms and conditions to:-

“The International Recognition process will be conducted in accordance with English Law and the Society of Biology’s code of practice*. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office must deem travel within the country of concern is safe for all, from time of application to time of visit.”

*As part of the International Recognition process, the assessment panel will also consider issues relating to diversity and openness.

Decision: Council APPROVED the amended statement for inclusion in the terms and conditions

5. MMC Report

Sue Thorn (ST) reported that membership numbers continued to increase, with figures for all categories higher than twelve months ago but highlighted the continuing need to increase MSB numbers. The house spider survey was going well, with 3,500 App downloads to date. The next MMC Committee Meeting was in October and ST asked Council to consider its function going forward. She suggested that a wider range of participants, meeting once a year, with discussion via email as one option. She also proposed that having entered her fourth year as Chair it was appropriate for her to step down.

Penny Fletcher had joined the team as Events & Public Engagement Manager and David Urry, Regional Co-Ordinator, was due to start on Monday.

An MO meeting had been scheduled for 11 December with Research Funding as the theme and would tie-in with the seasonal reception in Parliament. The next Branches meeting was due on 12 November and Council were invited to attend, especially those in the College of Individual Members. This would look at geographical coverage amongst other general proposals for development.

MD reported that a Christmas catalogue would be enclosed in the next issue of The Biologist.

The Finance Committee had looked at the forecast/budget for the coming year and felt that more unrestricted monies were required. Membership fees had now been frozen for the past four years and two increase options were proposed. The first suggested a continued freeze but asked

members to donate an extra amount, which would be eligible for gift aid, to potentially bringing in an extra £10k, as well as increasing the Fellowship rate from £162 to £168. The second option was to increase MSB by £4 and FSB by £6, ensuring a similar percentage increase. A different fee structure existed for those not in employment for ten years and this would remain frozen but include a donate option. Paperless direct debits were due to commence in April 2014.

Decision: Council AGREED to the increase in membership fees of £4 for MSB and £6 for FSB

ST reported that David Slingsby would be due to stand down as Editor of the JBE next year. She added that David had made a major contribution to the JBE. Council requested an MMC proposal for MMC Committee changes and the process for David Slingsby's replacement at the next Council meeting.

6. Report from Science Policy

Laura Bellingan (LB) reported that she had been involved in a project to commission data collection by economists at Imperial looking at Government funding for science since 2010 and its impact / impact of the flat cash settlement. The interim data should be available next week and LB asked Council for any views on how and when this data should be used and in what format.

Decision: Council AGREED a preference for launch around the autumn statement.

7. Professional Registers & Training

7.1 New Training Officer & update on courses & events

Following decisions at the June Council Awayday, a new person had been recruited to develop the training programme. MD invited Council to email Cliff Collis with any thoughts on course locations and subjects.

7.2 Overview of Technician's Register

MD reported that progress on the Technician's Register had been slower than expected but this had been experienced universally. The Society was not due to receive any further funding from Gatsby and the Registers' on-going development should be monitored.

Section B: Operational Issues

8. Regulations

Council were asked to agree changes to the Regulations in order that they covered both members and those on the Society's professional registers.

Decision: Council AGREED amendments to Regulations as given

9. Report from Finance Committee

9.1 Q3 Forecast 2012-2013

MD reported that the year end forecast showed a small surplus that would be better than budget. He also highlighted the possible impact of accruals this year and next. The Finance Committee supported the forecast.

9.2 Budget for 2013-2014

Finance Committee had reviewed the budget in detail and recommended Council accept the CEO's proposals for a deficit budget. All noted that it was a prudent budget with a number of possible new income streams not included. The membership fee increases had not been included for example

Decision: Council AGREED a deficit budget with close monitoring to ensure flexible income/expenditure is adjusted to achieve or better the proposal given.

10. Chief Executive's Report

MD highlighted the invitation by Andrew Miller to give evidence with him to the Commons Select Committee on standards reviewing the role of Associate Parliamentary groups. He noted this was a sign that the Society was growing in reputation as any science body could have been invited as an alternative.

MD reminded Council that the new President should be formally appointed. MD had met with Professor Dame Jean Thomas at Council's request, and she would attend a Council Meeting in either December or March subject to their agreement.

Decision: Council AGREED on the appointment of Professor Dame Jean Thomas as the Society's new President

MD reported that he had agreed to take on the UK Secretariat function for the European Federation for Biotechnology currently operated by SCI. BS, SfAM, SCI and SGM were all members. A restricted fund would be transferred to the Society to underpin these new costs.

On CDH II, MD invited Council to email if they wished to see a copy of the Finance Committee update. The building was due to be ready for occupation in May 2014 following agreement to build an extra floor. The sitting tenant was due to move out in October 2013. Project managers had been appointed.

11. UKPSF Appointments

Prof Jim Beynon, Chair of the UKPSF had written to Council asking for approval for changes to the Executive Committee. Prof Christine Raines had stepped down and it was proposed that Dr Ruth Bastow and Prof Vicky Buchanan-Wollaston join the Executive Committee.

Decision: Council APPROVED the two UKPSF appointments.

12. AOB: Next Council meeting Thursday 12 December at Charles Darwin House.

