

The Geological Society of London

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting on 21 September 2022 held at Burlington House (with some remote attendance).

PRESENT: Ruth Allington (*President*), Mark Anderson (online), Mark Allen (online), Anna Bird, Natasha Dowey (online), Holly Fisher, Jennie Gilbert (*Secretary, Science*), Joel Gill (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Martin Griffin, Jim Griffiths (*Secretary, Professional & Chartership*), Michael Kehinde, Dan Le Heron, Ben Lepley, Pete Loader, Keith Myers (*Treasurer*), John Perry, Gemma Sherwood (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Rob Strachan (*Secretary, Publications*), Lucy Thomas (online) and Lucy Williams

APOLOGIES: Jo Alexander, Neil Frewin and Amanda Owen

In attendance: Richard Hughes (*outgoing Executive Secretary*), Simon Thompson (*incoming Chief Executive*), Michael Clayton (*Director of Finance & Operations*), Alicia Newton (*Director of Science & Communications*), Maggie Simmons (*Director of Publishing*) and Christina Marron (*Executive Assistant*).

1. APOLOGIES

Ruth Allington (RA) NOTED apologies from Jo Alexander, Neil Frewin and Amanda Owen. She welcomed Simon Thompson (ST) to take on role of Chief Executive from 1 November 2022.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Joel Gill (JGi) presented a declaration of interest in relation to item 9 noting that he serves on charity that receive £3k grant annually from the IUGS.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2022

Minutes were APPROVED.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Standing Committees List (*CM/32/22*): **Action:** Christina Marron to add to SharePoint. Risk Register: action to separate out actions by status is underway. All other action items NOTED as actioned or discussed within agenda items.

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5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS (*confidential to Council*)

Report of Officers Meeting (verbal)

Richard Hughes (RH) noted the update on HR matters including:

- The approval of the proposal to move one staff member to a permanent contract and an agency staff member to a contracted role.
- Discussion regarding two new roles.
- Discussion on the COLA increase with an agreed action to prepare a three-year financial plan to look at sustainability.
- Item confidential to Council
- To continue without receptionist cover at Burlington House on Monday and Friday due to low visitor numbers.
- H&S: The Facilities and Building Manager has completed a NEBOSH course.

Ben Lepley (BL) asked about pre-pandemic visitor numbers. RH did not have the exact data to hand but said it had been more with the use of library but also as base for Fellows in London between meetings: the move to virtual meetings meant people were travelling into London less.

Election Committee

RA said the Society is seeking nominations for new Council members and a President candidate for 2023 for the seven Council members standing down.

Action: Council asked to think of names for Council and President Designate.

RA noted three Officer roles would become vacant: Dan Le Heron was starred candidate to succeed as Secretary, Publications.

Action: Council members to request more information if interested in role of Secretary, Professional or Foreign and External Affairs.

There was a discussion regarding Vice Presidents (VPs) including suggestions for: a VP EDI to separate out EDI from ERC to ensure it is on all Committees' agendas; a VP Chartership to champion Chartership; and potentially a VP Early Careers to help early career membership growth.

NOTE: There can be up to four VPs: they do not have to have remit but it can be beneficial in order to champion certain areas.

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6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

Executive Secretary's report (CM/48/22)

- RH started with thanking to outgoing Director of Science and Communications, Alicia Newton (AN), for her sterling contribution. JGi added thanks from the External Relations Committee (ERC) and Science Committee. RH noted recruitment for a new Director of Science and Engagement is well underway.

RH picked out key points from his report:

- Some Business Plan (BP) objectives were amber due to some roles been vacant for a time but should now progress with a new Education Officer and Policy Officer appointed. Other objectives are impacted by CRM matters and the website project.
- The 2023 budget and BP cycle is underway. The draft budget is in papers and the business plan can be viewed via SharePoint. The BP 2023 will be presented to all Standing Committees as well as the incoming Chief Executive for input prior to seeking approval at November Council.
- Item confidential to Council.
- There was discussion at Officers' meeting in regards a Science Officer to take forward the science themes
- The move to open access continues with 47 institutions signed up and the next step may be to look to sector specific packages.
- Membership has stabilised. Next year it is hoped to look at fees structures specific to developing countries.
- CPD training revenue growth will be another area of focus.

Council discussed potential CPD training opportunities. Richard noted Lucy Williams (LW) has taken over as the Chair of the Training Committee that is looking at other areas of CPD training to take forward, e.g. mining, environmental based on available areas of expertise. RA noted opportunities for cross collaboration with other organisations as well as networking benefits. RH said a business model for growth would be taken forward with possibly more resources invested to drive growth.

Action: Council members invited to put forward suggestions for CPD training that would address gaps in the market.

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Director of Publishing (CM/49/22):

Maggie Simmons (MS) spoke to key highlights from her report:

- Successful migration to Atypon: to time, budget, and well embedded with staff and users.
- Publishing House (PH) revenue is ahead of budget: the loss in third party royalties revenue has been compensated for by archive sales; and 47 organisations have now signed up to Transformative Read and Publish access including the UKRI BGS and Antarctic Survey.

- Eleven new books will be published by year-end including Deciphering Earth's History the first volume of a new Geology in Practice series. This series puts theoretical concepts into practical examples: it has new approach, new price bracket and is an exciting development.
- JGS has a new Editor-in-Chief, Yildirim Dilek, and new Deputy Editor, Anna Bird.
- Item confidential to Council.
- The US has announced public access for federally funded research from 2026 so PH will look at its response strategy.

MS said current challenges include syncing issues with the online bookshop CRM payment gateway. This makes processing high volume of sales unviable and has impacted significantly on bookshop revenue. Michael Clayton has met with the CRM provider's CEO to escalate matter. Another possible challenge will be the upcoming Lyell subscription renewals which will coincide with large scale digital projects.

MS spoke briefly to future activities including commissioning for the *Geoenergy* journal.

Director of Science and Communications (CM/50/22)

Alicia Newton (AN) spoke to key points from her report:

- The ongoing work to grow the scientific themes including updates to the current website to better promote these themes.
- The Energy Geoscience 2023 conference held jointly with PESGB in Aberdeen in May 2023 has received a positive response in terms of abstracts. It will be a good model for future meetings which are envisioned to take place every 2-3 years.
- CPD: as discussed work is ongoing to grow the CPD programme.
- Glastonbury: the GSL's booth was the most visited in the science tent and the Society is invited back to exhibit for free in future years. In addition, an interview with Head of Policy and Communications has received over 6k views.
- Society's Student Volunteer Network run with support from STEM Ambassadors and Bluewater sponsorship: recruitment has focussed on three London universities with their volunteers going out to 2-3 schools in deprived areas with follow up activities to maintain engagement.
- University Champions: four universities have agreed to take part in the initial pilot.
- Finance and Planning Committee (FPC) approved the website RFP document.
- The Society served as a partner and a member of the steering group for the EQUATOR research grant: which saw many successes and was reported in a pre-print.

Council discussed whether the Society's Student Volunteer Network could focus on other areas other than London which is better performing overall. AN said it was a pilot project with the aim is take the network out to other parts of the UK.

Action: Council invited to put forward suggestions for where else it could be rolled out following the pilot.

Joel Gill (JGi) queried safeguarding measures in place. AN said the Society partners Stem Ambassadors will carry out required checks and training.

Pete Loader (PL) re progress on accreditation training for Geology teachers. AN said the new Education Officer was currently working GEON roll out but her next area of focus would be geology teacher accreditation.

Michael Kehinde (MK) noted it would be good to consider international Fellows and how the Society could support them with its network of expertise.

Director of Finance and Operations (CM/51/22)

Including July management accounts and 2022 outturn.

Michael Clayton (MC) spoke briefly to his report and management accounts noting that the Finance and Planning Committee (FPC) had looked at management accounts in

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detail at its meeting, and the risk register report was in a separate dedicated session. Questions were invited from Council but none were raised. Council NOTED the reports.

7. CRM FUNDING PROPOSAL (CM/52/22)

Commercially confidential.

8. DRAFT 2023 BUDGET (CM/53/22)

Action: Any questions in regards the draft budget 2023 can be submitted to Michael. These will be gathered with a response circulated to all.
Natasha Dowe joined the meeting online.

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MC

COLA increase: It was noted it was not yet possible to know the final CPI: currently 10% but will need to wait till end of year with price cap to see what final CPI will be.

Keith Myers (KM) noted that in the past 3-4 years the Society has had a small operating surplus with additional capex being separate to the surplus. KM noted that with the significant increase in inflation the 2023 budget would look at a range of COLA increases.

Discussion confidential to Council.

RA said all factors would be considered and a decision made at November Council. She said if a decision is made to run a deficit it needs to ensure there is clear reasoning to do, e.g. to invest in staff and staff retention.

Discussion confidential to Council.

RA noted Council were comfortable with a modest deficit to support staff and ensure retention.

9. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/54/22)

JGi invited all committees to consider possible nominees for Honorary Fellowship. Council NOTED reports.

10. IUGS Membership Level (CM/55/22)

RA asked if Council had any questions in regards the proposed change in membership level.
Council APPROVED move from level 6 to level 7 membership.

11. ELECTIONS (CM/56/22 – CM/60/22)

Fellowship (CM/56/22)

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the Ordinary General Meeting on 22 June 2022.

Chartered Geologists (CM/57/22)

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/58/22)

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

European Geologists (CM/59/22)

Council AGREED the applicant listed as European Geologist.

Chartered Scientist (CM/60/22)
Council AGREED the applicant listed as Chartered Scientist.

KM said it would be good to contrast numbers with previous Council meetings.

12. BURLINGTON HOUSE: UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH FELLOWSHIP (CM/61/22)

RH noted considerable activity since the June Council meeting including a meeting with Michael Gove and Courtyard Societies and a further follow up meetings with other governmental representatives.

Since then, he and KM had met with a key departmental figure, SD, with responsibility for BH. SD gave a clear message that although the government would like Courtyard Societies to stay, it continues to expect full market rent by end of full lease term. In a further follow up email he confirmed peppercorn rent would not be an option but said government would be sympathetic re dilapidations costs if the Society chose to relocate.

Discussion confidential to Council.

13. BYE-LAWS REVIEW (CM/63/22)

Council NOTED the paper, the project update and timeline. No questions were raised. *Mark Anderson and Natasha Dowey left the meeting.*

14. CLIMATE CHANGE STATEMENT (CM/64/22)

KM and Lucy Thomas (LT) proposed rephrasing or removal of the sentence "Our investment portfolio selection and management criteria include environmental, social and governance factors in order to ensure alignment with Paris Agreement targets".

Action: Council agreed to remove sentence. AN to make update.

Council APPROVED the position statement on the basis that sentence is taken out.

AN

15. INCLUSIVITY PROTOCOL ON EVENTS (CM/65/22)

AN noted that in the past convenors may not have been as mindful when identifying locations and/or speakers of supporting diversity and ensuring an inclusive environment. The Inclusivity Protocol will provide guidance with a checklist to ensure that convenors consider diversity in their programme and also inclusive venues.

Jennie Gilbert (JGt) suggested that each section of the checklists leading reference EDI directly, e.g. PLANNING: "With respect to EDI, have the following considerations been taken into account?" **Action:** AN to ensure checklist updated to include.

Council APPROVED the protocol, the updated checklist and toolkit for convenors.

AN

SOCIETY AWARDS REVIEW (CM/66/22)

AN noted the struggle to get independent nominations from Fellows in particular for Early Career and Aberconway awards. She said the review will help to look what might be the potential blockers. She said other similar societies and organisations had carried out a review of their Awards programme.

The Council said it would be good to outline a potential timeline and how outcomes will be taken forward. It suggested the review panel be independent and unfamiliar to the current Society Awards.

Action: Update TORs to detail protected characteristics.

Council APPROVED the TORs on the basis of the above update to include protected characteristics.

CM

16. AOB: Noted issues to access SharePoint links. CM to look into.

CM

DATES OF 2022 MEETINGS: 23 November 2022.