

The Geological Society of London

COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting on 2 February 2022.

PRESENT: Mike Daly (*Chair*), Jo Alexander, Ruth Allington (*President Designate*), Neil Frewin, Jennie Gilbert, Joel Gill (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Kathryn Goodenough, Martin Griffin, Jim Griffiths (*Secretary, Professional & Chartership*), Michael Kehinde, Pete Loader, Andrew Moore, Keith Myers (*Treasurer*), Sarah Scott, Jessica Smith (Vice President, Regional Groups), Gemma Sherwood, Rob Strachan (*Secretary, Publications*), Lucy Thomas, Alex Whittaker (*Secretary, Science*) and Lucy Williams

APOLOGIES: Mark Allen, Amanda Owen and John Perry

In attendance: Richard Hughes (*Executive Secretary*), Alex McPherson (*Director of Finance & Operations*), Alicia Newton (*Director of Science & Communications*), Maggie Simmons (*Director of Publishing*) and Christina Marron (*Executive Assistant*).
Item 11: David Shilston (*Chair, Relocation Project Group*)
Item 12: David Boyt
Item 13: Jenni Barclay (*Chair, Memorialisation Policy Group*)

1. APOLOGIES

Mike Daly (MD) NOTED apologies from Mark Allen, Amanda Owen and John Perry. Other Council members advised they were able to join the meeting late or leave early: Lucy Williams, Lucy Thomas, Neil Frewin, Ruth Allington, Pete Loader, and Kathryn Goodenough.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None noted.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2021

Minutes were APPROVED.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising: All other actions NOTED as actioned or discussed within today's agenda items.

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

Report of Officers Meeting (verbal)

Richard Hughes (RH) highlighted some key matters discussed:

Staff turnover is higher than normal (6 resignations in 3 months). Salary benchmarking shows the Society as in line with other charities.

Hybrid working will recommence 8 February but with a need for flexibility in some areas.

Chartership Officer: good progress made with a strong candidate pool.

Digital Steering Group's work reported to Officers for the first time including the three-year digital strategy and roadmap.

Facilities: BH will be reopening to staff next week and to Fellows Tues-Thursday in the short-term.

RH announced his intention to retire end October or later if required. MD said an appointment committee group has been convened which Ruth Allington (RA) will chair. The group includes MD, Keith Myers (KM), Farhana Begum - HR Manager (FB) and Sally Gibson (University of Cambridge). A candidate proposal will be brought to Council for the final decision and approval.

MD and RA thanked for Richard for his work.

Report of Elections Committee; Council Elections

Nine candidates will stand for the six vacancies. Civica Election Services (CES) will run preliminary ballot will go live on 10 February 2022.

Gemma Sherwood will put forward as VP Regional and Jennie Gilbert, Secretary Science at the AGM.

Jim Griffiths (JGr) noted the VP Chartership is still vacant but there have been preliminary discussions regarding possible candidates.

6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

Executive Secretary's report (CM/01/22)

RH picked out key points from his year progress report:

- The Society ended 2021 in a good financial position due to portfolio gains and an operational surplus.
- New Fellowship categories structure was approved and rolled out: renewals are ahead of the same point last year.
- Great work from the Science and Communications team and its outreach and policy work: including presence at COP26, appointment of recruitment of theme leaders and Spacescapes exhibition.

Kathryn Goodenough (KG) joined meeting

- The Publishing House performed well with highlights including the January 2021 launch of ESCubed, progress on transformative agreements etc.
- Fundraising had a positive *pro bono* support and legacy giving.

RH thanked staff and SLT for all their efforts.

RH said other items of note were:

- Changes to byelaws discussed at September's Council strategy meeting will progress via Neal Marriott.
- Mary Anning painting loan request form Lyme Regis Museum.

Sarah Scott (SS) joined the meeting.

Director of Publishing (CM/02/22)

- Lyell collection subscriptions for 2021 were 7 fewer than 2020. Lyell Collection subscription income came in on target with the sale of archives making up for a drop in royalties.
- An agreement was negotiated with JISC for higher education institutions in the UK.
- The migration from Highwire to Atypon is on track. Preliminary work is complete and can now move into the build process with a view to launch 22 June.

Director of Science and Communications (CM/03/22)

- 2022 is the Year of Sustainability
- Bluewater have offered 2-year sponsorship of education project to train undergraduates to teach geological concepts in the classroom
- CPD courses continue to expand and the working group is looking at new opportunities.
- The Web discovery project is underway and on track.

Pete Loader (PL) joined the meeting.

Council discussed the Bluewater sponsored education project. Key points raised: LW suggested collaboration with North Sea Core in regards educational resources.

AN

Joel Gill (JGi) recommended a review of Safeguarding Policy and processes prior to the implementation of the project. AN and JGi to follow up.

AN/JGi

Specialist Groups (CM/04/22)

Alicia explained the specialist group model had developed in an ad hoc way in the past and is confusing to SGs and Society staff. Currently there are three types of specialist group: 1. Owned completely by the Society, 2. Owned by the Society and another parent body and 3 Affiliated.

Under the new model the Specialist Groups (SGs) will fall under two categories:

1. Professional and Scientific Interest Groups (PSIG)

2. Affiliated Groups

The Specialist Groups (SGs) were consulted spring/summer 2021 and are supportive of the new structure. Each group will have its own handbook: the first group will have a clear understanding of their benefits, grants etc. and the second group are independent and will have their own constitution. The Science Committee also supports the new model.

Neil Frewin (NF) asked if there was an annual SG summit. AN said there is an annual AGM and she would like to introduce PSIG quarterly drop ins.

Alex Whittaker said the new model would ensure a more level playing field for all SGs.

Andrew Moore said SGs should be more engaged in CPD course development.

Council NOTED the new Specialist Group model.

Director of Finance and Operations (CM/05/22)

Including November management accounts and 2021 outturn.

Alex McPherson (AMc) spoke to key points:

- Audit: The Finance team have commenced preparations with material shared through the auditors RSM's portal. The audit begins on 14 February.
- Fellowship: 2022 shows a good uptake of renewals compared to the same time in 2021. Chord, a telemarketing organisation, will support again with renewals follow up.

November Management Accounts

- Full year forecast indicates a positive surplus of over £0.5m mostly due to the portfolio growth.
- Preliminary December figures indicate the outturn will be better than those presented previously. AMc noted the surplus but does not take into account year-end adjustments e.g. asset impairment, bad debt provision and other accounting provisions.
- KM said it was a good year relative to budget but revenue £0.5m less than last year.
- AMc/KM said CPD revenue was an exciting area of potential income growth.

7. GEOFUTURES AND FERMOR FUND (CM/06/22)

A Futures fund was discussed at the September Council but the November Finance and Planning Committee (FPC) had expressed concerns at releasing £2m due to the BH situation. Council in November proposed a release of £250K in reserves that FPC has NOTED.

RH explained that the Fermor Fund is an expendable endowment fund. There had been the misconception over a number of years that the fund could only be spent on pre-Cambrian research but legal advice sought in 2011 clarified that the scope of the fund was much broader and could be spent on minerals research as set out in the paper.

Discussion confidential to Council.

Council APPROVED the drawing down of £1m over three years from the Fermor Fund to invest in critical energy transition mineral and materials research.

Council APPROVED the convening of an oversight committee to oversee both the Futures and Fermor Funds, with consideration of the administrative matters discussed.

8. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/07/22)
Council NOTED reports.

9. ELECTIONS (CM/8/22 – CM/11/22)

Fellowship (CM/8/22)

Council AGREED to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the Ordinary General Meeting on 2 February 2022

Chartered Geologists (CM/9/22)

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/10/22)

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

European Geologist (CM/11/22)

Council AGREED those applicants listed as European Geologists.

Note: they were no pending applicants for Chartered Scientist.

10. BURLINGTON HOUSE (CM/12/22) - CONFIDENTIAL

David Shilston, Relocations Project Group's Chair joined the meeting.

RH reported he had spoken with with Greg Clark MP who was supportive of the Courtyard Societies situation but said the Societies should be realistic in terms of Government's priorities.

DS presented the report of the Relocation Project Phase 1 working group, noting the diversity of the working group. He summarised the approach and presented the key recommendations:

1. Moving to premises of c. 5,600 sq ft in central London is the optimal long-term solution for the future premises of the GS, should it have to leave BH.
2. To underpin a decision as to whether to rent or purchase premises away from Burlington House, the Finance and Planning Committee should revisit the existing long-term financial models of the GS's finances.
3. A fully exhaustive property search must be carried out if the GS decides to relocate from Burlington House.
4. A specialist project management company should be used to manage any relocation from Burlington House.

The Council praised the report and thanked David Shilston and the group for their work.

Discussion confidential to Council.

Council ACCEPTED the project group's recommendations.

Discussion confidential to Council.

David Shilston left the meeting.

11. NEW GEOSCIENCE JOURNAL PROPOSAL (CM/13/22)

David Boyt, Head of the Editorial Development joined the meeting.

MS said the FPC had previously approved the financial aspects of the FPC proposal.

David Boyt (DB) presented his paper and the key points:

- The journal responds to the changing energy landscape and new emerging fields.
- EAGE and GSL will have split ownership agreement of journal (50/50).
- It will be published by GS.
- It will be a hybrid open access journal: online only.
- Journal will be a sister journal to Petroleum Geoscience (PG).
- It is hoped to do soft launch later 2022 and open for submissions Jan 2023.
- Proposal has been approved by GSL, PIC, FPC and EAGE's board.
- Addresses a gap in the energy geoscience and transition community.

Discussion confidential to Council

Council APPROVED the proposal for the new geoscience journal.

MD thanked DB for his presentation.

12. MEMORIALISATION POLICY (CM/13/22)

Jenni Barclay (JB), Chair of the Memorialisation Policy working group explained that the paper outlines the context of work, the policy and recommendations to Council to enable implementation. The work stemmed from the TORs set by Council and looks at recommendations to address past deeds and practises that do not align with the current GS values.

She said the policy and recommendations are a framework through which to look at the artefacts and collections and assess potential changes that may need to be made. JB said, in most cases, the suggestion is to provide a contextualisation alongside artefacts and collections. It also gives advice re displays: not giving prioritisation to artefacts or paintings that are controversial.

JGi said it was an excellent piece of work. He noted in regards social injustice people have varied views of what is acceptable or unacceptable. JB noted the group's diversity, explaining this would encourage a balance of views to be expressed.

KM asked regarding future work involved. JB said that it would require resources input from historians and other communities: it will need people and time.

AN to make edits to ensure it integrates new Purpose, Mission, Vision and Values. RH said governance and accountability should be added in. JB said it was important to maintain momentum the working group. RH said he would work with AN and JB to ensure it takes into account governance and accountability.

Council APPROVED the direction and policy in principle and agreed Richard, Alicia and JB to finalise offline. Council also AGREED that decisions on specific actions should be the responsibility of Council based on recommendations from the group.

KM said it was important to think of prioritisation of workloads.

Council thanked JB for her work and leadership of the working group.

RH/AN

13. AOB

None noted. RH reiterated the need to keep BH developments confidential.

PL said Prof Chris King, previous Council Member, is very unwell and wanted to pass on a message of farewell to all his colleagues. PL read out his email and Council noted Prof Chris King's huge contribution to geoscience.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 6 APRIL 2022 (Other 2022 dates: 22 June, 21 & 22 September and 23 November)