

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 27 November 2013

PRESENT: David Shilston (*Chair*), Natalyn Ala, Mike Armitage (*Vice president, Corporate Affiliates*), Rob Butler, Neil Chapman, Jim Coppard, David Cragg (*Vice president, Chartership*), Jane Dottridge, Chris Eccles, Al Fraser (*Secretary, Science*), David Jones (*Vice president, Regional Groups*), Adam Law (*Treasurer*), Alan Lord (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), David Manning (*President designate*), Brian Marker, Gary Nichols and Michael Young

APOLOGIES: Angela Coe, Marie Edmonds, Tricia Henton (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Richard Lisle, Lucy Slater and Jonathan Turner (*Secretary, Publications*)

In attendance: Edmund Nickless (Executive Secretary), Nic Bilham (Head of Strategy & External Relations), Neal Marriott (Director of Publishing, Library & Information Services), Stephanie Jones (PA to Executive Secretary) and Jim Halliday (items 8 and 9)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies as above were noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2013

The minutes were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 *Geoconservation Committee (CM/74/13)*

Rob Butler, Chair of the Geoconservation Committee, said that membership of the committee has been revised to bring its activities closer into the business of the Society and expectations of the Fellowship. The membership is:- Rob Butler (Chair), Richard Bevins, Lesley Dunlop, Howard Falcon-Lang, Sally Gibson, John Gordon, Peter Kokelaar, Kirstin Lemon, Angus Miller, Gary Nichols and Paul Smith. The Committee met on 10 October 2013 and agreed the draft terms of reference. A full report of that meeting will be given to the External Relations Committee, to which the Geoconservation Committee reports, in February 2014. Rob Butler thanked Council and others for their ideas and suggestions for the membership of the Committee and its terms of reference.

5. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2013

The minutes were agreed.

6. MATTERS ARISING (*CM/75/13*)

6.1 *Shale UK Conference*

The Memorandum of Understanding was agreed with Adam Law and signed by

Edmund Nickless. The conference has been announced and the programme is well developed. It will take place on 4 – 5 March 2014 at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London.

6.2 *Society's Climate Change Statement*

The External Relations Committee reviewed a completed draft of the addendum to the 2010 Climate change Statement and noted that it was considerably more technical and detailed than the original statement. A non-technical introduction and summary will be circulated to the Committee for sign off and it is intended to publish the addendum by the end of November.

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7. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

7.1 *Report of the Elections Committee*

There are five vacancies on Council and five Fellows have indicated a willingness to stand.

7.2 *Report of the Officers' Meeting*

The main items of business were staff-related and will be covered in the Report of the Treasurer later in the agenda.

7.3 *Outcomes and progress from the September residential (CM/76/13)*

Council discussed two strategic matters at their last residential:- development of a science strategy and development of a Fellowship recruitment and retention plan.

The key proposal relating to the science strategy was to establish “thematic years” which was welcomed by the Science & External Relations Committee, Publications & Information Committee and Science Committee. It was discussed at the November meeting of SERC and there will be further development but it is proposed to designate 2015 “Year of Mud”. Al Fraser said work continues on engagement with the Specialist Groups and that the draft science strategy will be put to Council at their February meeting. Council AGREED with the proposal to designate 2015 “Year of Mud”.

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The Professional Committee and members of staff are developing the Fellowship recruitment and retention plan, and it is intended to bring a completed plan to February Council for approval. Edmund Nickless said the new online application process for Fellowship has been operational for two months in which time there have been just over 350 applicants. David Cragg said there is an upward trend in those applying for Chartership which will require more scrutineers and mentors. This is being addressed.

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7.4 *Memorandum of Understanding: Mineralogical Society of America (CM/77/13)*

David Vaughan, previous member of Council and current President of the Mineralogical Society of America, is keen to encourage closer working between our two societies. The Memorandum provides a basis to put co-operation between the two Societies on a more formal basis and to explore new initiatives such as joint meetings. Council APPROVED the Memorandum of Understanding.

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8. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Adam Law said Graeme Etheridge, Director of Operations, has resigned and will leave the Society on 29 November. A replacement is being recruited but in the interim Jim Halliday, from FD Solutions, will be providing assistance with all matters relating to the Society's finances. Jim Halliday joined the meeting for the Treasurer's report. Adam Law thanked staff and members of the Finance & Planning Committee for their work on the budget for 2014.

8.1 *Serious Incident Report (CM/78/13)*

The auditors have drawn attention to the requirements of charity law that the trustees as a matter of routine should take reasonable steps to assess and mitigate any risks to their charity's activities or beneficiaries, and to confirm that any serious incidents have been reported as part of the annual return. These incidents include significant loss of funds, significant sums of money or other property donated from an unknown or unverified source, unlawful activity by a member of staff or trustee including links to proscribed (banned) or terrorist organisations.

Council NOTED that there have been no serious incidents to report since the last meeting.

8.2 *Report of the Finance and Planning Committee (CM/79/13)*

The main items of discussion were the Budget for 2014 (which is taken later on the agenda) and review of the September Management Accounts. The Committee also approved the creation of the post of Online Development Editor, which will focus on the development of new online products and services, and associated changes in staff reporting structures at the Publishing House.

8.3 *Report of the Investment Committee*

The Investment Committee met on 4 November. David Jenkins retired from the Committee after 13 years of service and Peter Rigg and Keith Nunn joined. It was a robust meeting with UBS, the Society's investment managers, being challenged on the quality of their advice and service. The Committee will continue with the move from fixed rate bonds into equity as and when high yield bonds come to maturity. UBS require four resolutions and Council RESOLVED the following:-

1. Michael Kyriakides to be removed as the current Power of Attorney.
2. Jim Halliday will be able to request information, such as valuations, balances and cash statements but is not authorised to act on the account.
3. Online access to be removed for Michael Kyriakides and David Jenkins.
4. Andrew Fleet is to be removed as an authorised signatory.

8.4 *September Management Accounts (CM/80/13)*

The latest forecast outturn position for the year suggests an operating surplus for 2013 of £145k compared with a budgeted deficit of just under £38k. September showed a small deficit mainly because of timing differences. Council NOTED the accounts.

8.5 *Stephen John Mills Bequest (CM/81/13)*

The Society has received a bequest from Stephen John Mills, a Fellow of the Society from 1988 until his death in January 2012. The Society is one of nine residuary legatees and has received an interim payment of CAD 35k. The bequest is unrestricted.

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Council AGREED to establish a designated fund in the memory of Stephen John Mills. The Society has several funds which are not being actively used and Council AGREED that Adam Law will chair a small group to establish how to use the Stephen John Mills Fund and other funds. A draft policy will come to April Council.

9. BUDGET 2014 (CM/82/13)

Council discussed the emerging budget at their September meeting. Version 2.0 of the budget was reviewed by the Finance & Planning Committee at its 13 November meeting.

Adam Law apologised that Council was not presented with a final budget for approval, as is usual at November Council, but the resignation of the Director of Operations had delayed its preparation. Council was presented with details of the changes from Version 2.0 to Version 3.0. Version 2.0 showed a deficit of £55k which was not acceptable to the Finance & Planning Committee. It is currently expected that Version 3.0 will show a surplus of £700.

The 2010 Review of the Library recommended reducing its net operating costs by £105k over three years ending 2014. An increasing number of journal titles are now taken online rather than as print and to meet the final year net cost reduction target it is proposed to migrate some journal titles from print plus online to on-line only. This will generate savings of about £11k. Council APPROVED the proposal.

The Finance & Planning Committee had noted that the previously agreed project to replace the Society's contacts database (at an estimated cost of £350k) will be funded from reserves. The Committee had also considered other project bids and was supportive of the bid to create a Geosites Database and recommended to Council that the project should proceed subject to further work being done to clarify the scope of the project and hence its cost. Council AGREED with these proposals.

Council asked about surpluses. Edmund Nickless said that one of the matters of concern is the cost of occupying Burlington House, not only the maintenance the interior, such as the refurbishment of the Council Room, but also the external fabric. The managing agents have recently prepared an estimate of work required and the cost to the Society, in the year in which the work is done, will be in the order of £350 – 400k. It was necessary to build reserves to fund such work but also to be able to undertake business critical investments such as replacement of the contacts database and to fund new initiatives. Also, as a charity, there has to be caution about accumulating high levels of reserves unless there is a clearly defined objective in so doing.

Council noted the summary organised by directorate, income and expenditure for sponsored projects, expenditure from reserves on previously agreed business plan projects and the departmental summaries for each directorate and the corporate centre. They also noted the project bids and recommendations.

Council AGREED the budget for 2014 on the basis of the information presented.

Salary Review for 2014
See confidential annexe.

10. AWARDS FOR 2014 (CM/83/13)

See confidential annex.

11. AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS (CM/84/13)

The following regulations, which relate to Fellowship and Professional matters, have been reviewed and updated, initially by a working group consisting of David Cragg, Bill Gaskarth, Tricia Henton, Edmund Nickless and Mohammed Jahangir.

- R/FP/1: Nomination and Election of New Fellows
- R/FP/2: Criteria and Procedure for Validation as a Chartered Geologist
- R/FP/3: Rules for Candidate Fellows and Junior Candidate Fellows
- R/FP/5: Appeal Procedures
- R/FP/6: Disciplinary Procedures
- R/FP/7: Code of Conduct
- R/FP/8: Accreditation of Degrees
- R/FP/9: Subscription and Fees
- R/FP/10: Election and Renewal of the Title of European Geologist
- R/FP/11: Criteria and Procedure for Chartered Scientist
- R/FP/13: Continuing Professional Development

There has been much discussion by the Professional and Chartership committees about the changes required to the Regulations to bring them into line with current working practice. Some of the changes are substantive and others are minor changes for clarification and corrections to grammar, punctuation, etc.

Council APPROVED the amendments to the above Regulations with the exception of R/FP/1, R/FP/2 and R/FP/11, where Council identified some inconsistencies in the wording. The Executive Secretary agreed to circulate for approval proposed revisions to the tabled texts.

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At their meeting in November 2011, Council removed the age restrictions for awards and put in their place full time equivalent experience. The Awards Committee discussed the criteria for the Bigsby medal at their November meeting and recommended to Council that “25 years full time equivalent research” is more appropriate and is commensurate with the original age limit of 45 specified in the endowment. Council APPROVED the change to Regulation R/G/14 “Award of Society Medals and Funds”.

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The Awards Committee also discussed the process for the identification of Honorary Fellows. There were no nominations put forward to the May 2013 meeting of the committee and none in November. The current cohort is ageing and in the absence of nominations it will inevitably decline rapidly. The committee agreed with Alan Lord that lead responsibility for making recommendations to Council for the award of Honorary Fellowship would be better placed with the External Relations Committee rather than the Awards Committee. Council APPROVED the change to Regulation R/FP/4 “Nomination

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and Election of Honorary Fellows”.

12. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/85/13)

Council noted the reports, which were taken as read, of the Publications & Information Committee and the Science & External Relations Committee.

In the absence of the Secretary, Professional Matters, Natalyn Ala reported on the last meeting of the Professional Committee where the main items of business were the amendments to the Regulations, mentoring guidelines, a campaign to recruit mentors and the re-launch of the scheme and the re-design of the Chartered Geologist logo. The initiative to encourage those with 20 plus years experience to apply for chartered status has proved successful and 14 applicants have been interviewed to date, a further four have applied and 26 are interested in applying. Edmund Nickless said a similar scheme for Chartered Scientists has been agreed with the Science Council. Careers Day at Keyworth was very successful with around 400 attendees; 230 attended a similar event in Edinburgh. Members of Council and staff were thanked for their attendance. David Jones reported that the Student Societies scheme has been launched and eight universities have already signed up.

13. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (CM/86/13)

Council NOTED the report.

14. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLISHING, LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES (CM/87/13)

Council NOTED the report.

15. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF STRATEGY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS (CM/88/13)

Council NOTED the report.

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (CM/89/13)

Council NOTED there had been no reported incidents since the last meeting of Council.

17. ELECTIONS

Fellowship (CM/90/13)

Council agreed to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 27 November 2013.

Chartered Geologists (CM/91/13)

The applications from Fellows to become Chartered Geologists listed had been approved by the Chartership Panel and were agreed by Council.

Candidate and Junior Candidate Fellowship (CM/92/13)

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

European Geologists (CM/93/13)

Council noted the names put forward for election as European Geologists.

Chartered Scientists (CM/94/13)

Council agreed to elect those applicants listed as Chartered Scientists.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18.1 *European Federation of Geologists*

David Manning said the 2015 Summer Council meeting of EFG will be held in Newcastle and will be a field-based event, currently titled "Mining in a Crowded Country". Chris Eccles said the Ukraine had joined the EFG.

18.2 *Regional Groups*

David Jones encouraged members of Council to visit their Regional Groups.

18.3 *Joint Conference with AusIMM*

Mike Armitage said this conference, held in Cardiff in October, was successful and attended by over 200 delegates. AusIMM have indicated that they will wish to run this event at two or three year intervals. Mike Armitage was thanked for his efforts.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is 5 February 2014. The start time may be earlier to allow for essential business items and a review progress of agreed actions arising from the September residential.