

## COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 26 November 2014

PRESENT: David Manning (*Chair*), Natalyn Ala (*Secretary, Professional Matters*), Mike Armitage (*Vice President, Corporate Affiliates*), Nigel Cassidy, Neil Chapman, Angela Coe, Jim Coppard, David Cragg (*Vice President, Chartership*), Jane Dottridge, Chris Eccles, Al Fraser (*Secretary, Science*), Graham Goffey (*Treasurer designate*), Tricia Henton, David Jones (*Vice President, Regional Groups*), Adam Law (*Treasurer*), Alan Lord (*Secretary, External and Foreign Affairs*), Brian Marker, David Norbury, Colin North (*Secretary, Publications*), Keith Seymour and Michael Young

APOLOGIES: Marie Edmonds, David Hopkins, Gary Nichols and Lucy Slater

In attendance: Edmund Nickless (Executive Secretary), Nic Bilham (Director of Policy & Communications), Neal Marriott (Director of Publishing, Library & Information Services), Jonathan Silk (Director of Finance & Operations), Stephanie Jones (PA to Executive Secretary) and Zachary Lamdin (for item 10 only)

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies as above were NOTED.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.

#### 3. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2014

The minutes were AGREED.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA (*CM/83/14*)

Council NOTED that:-

##### 4.1 *Associated Society Status*

Six of the 14 overseas organisations invited to take up Associated Society status have accepted. The remaining eight will continue to be chased for their responses. Web pages for the scheme are under construction with a view to launching at the beginning of 2015. The launch of the overseas Associated Societies scheme will serve as a platform for extending invitations to domestic affiliated organisations.

##### 4.2 *Recruitment of Accreditation Officer*

Colin Scrutton, Accreditation Officer, is retiring in May 2015. The post was advertised in *Geoscientist* and four applicants are being interviewed by Mark Anderson (Secretary, CHUGD), Colin Scrutton and Edmund Nickless on 9 December.

#### 5. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

##### 5.1 *Matter for ratification: Chartership Appeal*

See confidential annex.

5.2 *Report of the British Geological Survey Advisory Committee*  
David Manning, as President of the Society, is invited to attend the advisory committee which was held on 6 and 7 November. The main item on the agenda was the future governance of BGS which is a matter of negotiation between the Chief Executive of BGS and NERC. The main concern for the Society is the preservation of the collections and data and that these are kept available. This is clearly understood by BGS. There was also discussion on the requirement by BGS for independent validation of their staff and in particular the attainment of Chartership. The second day comprised presentations by BGS scientists.

5.3 *Report of the Elections Committee*  
There are nine vacancies for ordinary members of Council and eight Fellows have indicated a willingness to stand including the two co-opted members of Council. A President-designate is also being sought and one person has indicated a willingness to stand and another has been approached. The Elections Committee is keen that there are sufficient candidates to cause an election but wishes to avoid an excess and to ensure a balance of expertise on Council. Members of Council who may know of possible candidates were asked to talk to Edmund Nickless who is co-ordinating approaches. It is also anticipated that nominations will come forward from the Fellowship.

5.4 *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.

5.5 *Letter from Professor David Smythe*  
David Manning told Council that he has offered to meet with Professor Smythe at a mutually agreeable time but a date is yet to be fixed.

5.6 *American Geosciences Institute (AGI) Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct (CM/84/14)*  
At the beginning of December 2013 the Society agreed to be a signatory to the AGI's Consensus Statement on Ethics in Geosciences. One of the outcomes of this was to develop and promote a common Code of Ethics for geoscientists. Edmund Nickless is a member of the drafting committee. A Consensus Draft of Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct was presented to a joint meeting of the AGI member societies and Geological Society of America (GSA) associated societies at a meeting during the GSA annual meeting in October. The Guidelines are intended to be an aspirational document and will not be binding on any AGI member society or its members, but member societies are being invited to adopt the Guidelines to whatever degree is felt appropriate.

The Professional Committee discussed the Guidelines at their meeting on 20 November and saw them as a helpful input to any future revision of the Society's Codes of Conduct.

Council AGREED IN PRINCIPLE that the Society should adopt the Guidelines and responsibility for their review and passing any feedback to the AGI was remitted to the Professional Committee. Council members were asked to pass any comments to Natalyn Ala for reporting to the Professional Committee.

## 6. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

*Confirmed minutes of Council Meeting held on 26 November 2014*

Council

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NA

6.1 *Serious Incident Report (CM/85/14)*

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.

6.2 *Report of the Investment Committee (CM/86/14)*

The Investment Committee met on 17 October. Peter Rigg has stood down as a result of moving abroad. The current membership is five people and the committee has gone out to seek new members to increase the membership to seven plus the Chair. The fund managers, UBS, gave a warning about possible difficulties in achieving the £250k income target in 2015. They have been asked to provide a modelled set of options for approaches to managing the portfolio over the next year which will be circulated to committee members by the end of December. This exercise will be repeated in the middle of the year to better inform the 2016 budget.

6.3 *September Management Accounts (CM/87/14)*

As a result of a budgeting error, September is showing an apparent deficit of £241k against a surplus budget of £26k. The latest forecast outturn position suggests an operating surplus for 2014 of £400k compared with a budgeted deficit of £79k. The Lyell Collection, book sales and conference department performed particularly well.

7. REPORT OF THE FINANCE & PLANNING COMMITTEE

7.1 *Report of the Finance and Planning Committee (CM/88/14)*

The main items of discussion were the Budget for 2015, the current position in respect of the renewal of the Burlington House lease, review of the September Management Accounts and a mechanism within the evolving financial strategy that links the Business Plan to the Budget and allows closer control of surpluses by the Committee and Council. A paper will come to the February meeting of Council.

JS

7.2 *Burlington House Lease (CM/89/14)*

See confidential annex.

7.3 *Budget 2015 (CM/90/14)*

Council discussed the budget at their September meeting. Version 6 of the budget was discussed by the Finance & Planning committee at its 12 November meeting. The key points are:-

- that the 'Core' surplus (on day-to-day activities of the Society) was similar in 2015 to the 2014 expected outturn, at just over £600k;
- that the 'Additional Activities' cover what has previously been labelled as 'Business Plan' and 'Projects', and that expenditure on these reduces the

accounting surplus to £283k (*Adjusted to £243k once the additional bids are included*);

- that other provisions, primarily for acquisition of library books and transfers to designated reserves, further reduce the net surplus to £137k (*£97k after the additional bids are included*)
- that it is this net surplus that becomes the contingency 'pot' against which bids submitted during 2015 might be placed.
- The main differences between 2014 expected outturn and the 2015 budget is the inclusion in 'Additional Activities' of a provision for building works of £250k. This is to cover the potential costs that are likely to be charged by the landlord for maintenance and repair of the external fabric of Burlington House after the new lease is signed in 2015. There is also a significant increase in the Capital Budget to reflect a £180k provision for the CRM/ Finance System Replacement Project – it is currently assumed that this will commence in 2015 and take place over two years, with a similar provision in 2016.

The Finance & Planning Committee approved the following bids for inclusion in the budget:-

- i. to increase the hours of one of the Society's Education Officers in order to take forward new initiatives;
- ii. to provide for a 1-year temporary position of Education Administrative Officer to support the activities of the Science, Education and Communications team;
- iii. to provide a one-off grant to Geology for Global Development, a not-for-profit organization that promotes geology within the context of international development (£2k in 2015); and
- iv. to support a collaboration of learned societies in funding an individual to represent their scientific and charitable interests within a parliamentary context (£5k over 3 years from 2014).

Council APPROVED the budget for 2015.

### **Salary Review 2015**

See confidential annex.

#### **7.4 Outcomes from September residential (CM/91/14)**

The notes from this meeting have been circulated to Council. There are actions particularly on the chairs of the main committees and there will be an update to February Council on progress.

NB

Nic Bilham was thanked for his work.

#### **8. AWARDS FOR 2015 (CM/92/14)**

See confidential annex.

#### **9. APPEALS REVIEW (CM/93/14)**

It was reported at September Council that in the last year three appeals for non-validation as a Chartered Geologist have come to Council and two more were in process. In view of the exceptional number of appeals David Shilston, former

President, and Tricia Henton, former Secretary Professional Matters, were asked by Council to carry out a review to see if there were any common issues.

Council AGREED that the recommendations identified in the report should be remitted to the Professional Committee for review and action as appropriate.

NA

Natalyn Ala said that some of the recommendations have already been actioned such as improving clarity on the website and she would welcome comments from Council on these changes.

Council

10. DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE (CM/94/14)

Tricia Henton, Diversity Champion, thanked Edmund Nickless and Zachary Lamdin for their input. She said the following action has already been taken:-

- On 6 October the Geological Society became a signatory to the Science Council Declaration on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion.
- She has written to all Society staff to communicate this new strategic priority and to invite input. She has also written a piece for the December/January *Geoscientist* to inform the Fellowship of this new commitment.
- Dedicated web pages are now available to promote the Society's commitment to diversity at [www.geolsoc.org.uk/diversity](http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/diversity)

The following action is in hand:

- A Diversity Review Outline identifying planned forward action has been drafted. This document identifies key areas where action might be implemented over the next two years;
- A high level audit of the Society's website and other key communications will be carried out by consultants to identify unconscious bias and ways the Society might better promote its commitment to inclusion;
- A Diversity Monitoring form has been drafted. This form will be included with application forms for new joiners and existing Fellows will be invited to complete the form online. Monitoring will begin from the end of January 2015 to allow time for building and testing the online platform. Tricia Henton confirmed that information will be held in a way compliant with data protection legislation.

Council NOTED the progress to date and that this will be a standing item on the agenda. They also welcomed the suggestion that all reporting committees include Diversity, Equality & Inclusion as a standing agenda item. Council members were asked to send any further comments to Edmund Nickless.

Council

11. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE (CM/95/14)

Council NOTED the reports.

12. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES (CM/96/14)

Council NOTED the brief report of when the committees met.

Al Fraser said the Science Committee met on 22 October and worked to a new agenda structure which put more emphasis on reporting between the Science Committee and the Specialist Groups via assigned Science Committee “tags”. It was agreed that a small working group will be formed of committee and staff members to review the status of the current Flagship meetings and to make recommendations regarding any requirement for additional such events. A report will be made to February Council.

AF

#### *Shale UK 2015*

The Science Committee are supportive of proceeding with this event. The agenda has been drafted and it is progressing well.

#### *Membership of Science Committee*

Active steps are being taken to find two student or early career members of the Committee via Twitter and Facebook. Progress will be reported to February Council.

AF

### 12.1 *Report of the Professional Committee (CM/97/14)*

Natalyn Ala said that main items discussed at the Professional Committee meeting held on 19 November had been covered earlier in the agenda such as the Appeals Review by David Shilston and Tricia Henton and also the re-design of the Chartership web pages. This re-design followed discussion at the Chartership Committee about the need for some dedicated web pages for Scrutineers to help with the Scrutineering process, the main objective being to provide adequate information for the Applicants, Scrutineers, Sponsors and Mentors to ensure full understanding of the process and what is required, and that the information is transparent and easily accessible to the relevant parties. Natalyn Ala encouraged Council members to look at these web pages and forward comments.

Council

Chris Eccles, who is one of the Society’s delegates, attended the Council of the European Federation of Geologists meeting in Brussels, with Edmund Nickless and Nic Bilham, on 22-23 November. The main points of discussion were:-

- i. Attracting and retaining National Associations (NAs) (i.e. member bodies).
- ii. Mutual recognition agreements with Canada, South Africa and Australia.
- iii. Reinvigorating EFG Panels of Experts on topics of political interest.
- iv. Gathering data from NAs in preparation for the revised EU Professional Qualifications Directive, in respect of university and later professional training standards.
- v. Developing the value of the EurGeol title.
- vi. Translation and February 2015 launch of European edition of GSL ‘Geology for Society’ report (7 languages so far).
- vii. EFG’s 2015 budget (core turnover is of the order of €120k).
- viii. Horizon 2020 (H2020) projects

Item iii: Edmund Nickless will be addressing.

Item viii: EFG is inviting its NAs to participate, potentially at two levels (basic and additional), in two projects. The overall scope is:

- INTRAW (International Cooperation on Raw Materials) – to map and develop new cooperation opportunities related to raw materials between Europe and other developed nations.
- KINDRA (Knowledge Inventory for Hydrogeology Research) – to create

an inventory of existing research and data, and to use this to identify critical research challenges.

EFG will distribute funds it receives from the European Commission for this purpose to those NAs that agree to take part. All participating NAs will receive the same fixed amount for each of the projects to which they contribute, in respect of a basic work package. NAs will also have the option of carrying out additional work, and further funding will be distributed in respect of this work, in proportion to the effort expended and its perceived impact.

Natalyn Ala said there was concern at the Professional Committee about the time involved for staff particularly for KINDRA. Chris Eccles reported that it is proposed that it will be undertaken by a temporary member of staff (ideally a recent MSc graduate) with modest supervisory input and the best estimate is that the funds on offer will cover the associated costs.

David Norbury said that the Society is a founding member of EFG and as such should participate. David Manning said the agreements have been carefully scrutinised and are not open-ended.

Council AGREED that the President should sign the agreements for GSL to participate in both INTRAW and KINDRA but in doing so should talk with the Hydrogeology Group and other organisations such as the Groundwater Forum.

DM  
NB

## 12.2 *Report of the Publications & Information Committee*

Colin North said that the committee met on 13 November and was preceded by the Chief Editors' Forum.

The committee felt it is important that the Library space review is progressed and as part of that pick up points raised at the September Council residential about looking at the building from a diversity and inclusion point of view. A small group is being formed which will comprise the chair of the Library Users Group and others and will meet in January. It is planned to bring a report to February Council.

CN

The committee also discussed the technology that supports the Lyell Collection. It is important to keep this up to date and Neal Marriott and Publishing House staff brought forward a list of technological improvements to meet the needs of subscribers. Some items are covered in the budget for 2015 but there might be a need to bring extra items to the Finance & Planning Committee.

### *Code of Publishing Ethics (CM/98/14)*

The Publications and Information Committee has recently approved a number of changes to the Code of Publishing Ethics, which is covered by Regulation R/FP/7, to take into account situations that have been brought to its attention. These issues include:

- Peer review after author revisions
- Sample and data collection
- Breaches of the Code.

Since the Regulation was last approved the name of the committee has changed from Publications Management Committee to Publications & Information Committee. Colin North said that the recommended amendments cover current issues. The committee is looking at other issues and it may be necessary to re-visit the regulation and make further recommendations for amendment. The committee is also formulating a tighter protocol

Council APPROVED the amendments to Regulation R/FP/7.

*New literature search pricing structure (CM/99/14)*

At the February 2013 Council residential members of Council identified a need from corporate organisations for expert literature searches and recommended a separate higher priced literature searching service for Corporate Affiliates. The Library Users Group approved the proposed pricing structure in June 2014.

Council APPROVED the new literature search pricing structure.

*Open access discount for Fellows (CM/100/14)*

The Society implemented its policy on open access on 1 April 2013 in order to comply with new policies announced by Research Councils UK. Since then authors publishing in any of our owned, co-owned or contract published journals, or any of our book series hosted on the Lyell Collection, may publish via a Gold or Green open access route.

In the case of Gold open access the author is charged a fee (Article Processing Charge, or APC) which contributes towards the cost of publication, and the article concerned is then made freely available online to all users.

The Gold OA APC is currently £1500, and Council have agreed that a discount of £250 should be available for Fellows. In applying this discount the Publishing House has implemented a requirement that at least 50% of the authors of such a paper must be Fellows of the Society, in order to avoid the (albeit unlikely) possibility of an author group adding an additional author who is a Fellow simply to qualify for the discount. This provision, however, has recently been challenged as unfair and not a true representation of Council's policy. It is proposed, therefore to amend the Society's Open Access policy by revising clause 4 as follows:

*APC charges will be reviewed for each coming calendar year, and may be waived for (eg) commissioned articles. A discount will be available for papers where the first author, or at least 50% of the authors, are Fellows of the Society, and discounts may be offered to authors from developing countries.*

Council APPROVED to change to the Society's Open Access policy.

12.3 *Report of the Science & External Relations Committee*

Alan Lord said discussion at the last meeting had been the delivery plan for the Science Strategy and the thematic years. 2015 is the Year of Mud and 2016 the Year of Water. The Science Committee has been asked to look at the years beyond.

The Geoconservation Committee held a very successful meeting on 24 November. Rob Butler who chairs the committee has done an outstanding job in revitalising it, assisted by Florence Bullough.

12.4 *Independent Review Panel – national geological screening (CM/101/14) (Natalyn Ala declared that she may have a conflict of interest)*

Alan Lord reminded Council that at its June meeting, at the request of the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC), it was agreed that the Society would establish an independent panel to review the guidance for national geological screening to be developed by Radioactive Waste Management Ltd

(RWM). The White Paper was published in July and RWM held an event at Burlington House on 30 September to launch the national geological screening process. Edmund Nickless and Nic Bilham have met with staff from RWM to understand how they plan to manage the work. Terms of reference have now been agreed with DECC and the Society can now start work on putting together the independent panel.

The key appointment will be the chair and from that other members of the panel will be selected.

Council had a full discussion and APPROVED the proposed methodology for identifying panel members and remitted the detail of selecting this panel to David Manning.

EN  
NB

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (*CM/102/14*)

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

14. ELECTIONS

*Fellowship (CM/103/14)*

Council agreed to recommend to the Fellowship that those candidates listed should be elected as Fellows at the OGM on 26 November 2014.

*Chartered Geologists (CM/104/14)*

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/105/14)*

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

*European Geologists (CM/106/14)*

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

*Chartered Scientists (CM/107/14)*

Council agreed to elect those applicants listed as Chartered Scientists.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

*Topics for February meeting of Council*

One of the items coming forward will be a draft of the financial strategy. Council members were asked to consider other items and inform Edmund Nickless.

Council

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is 4 February 2015. Edmund Nickless said there is scope at this meeting for an earlier start if members of Council wish longer discussion time for strategic items.