



*Advancing
Astronomy and
Geophysics*

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9th February 2018

1. Attendance, Apologies and Introduction

PRESENT: Professor John Zarnecki (JZ), Professor Mike Cruise (MC), Dr Nigel Berman (NB), Professor Lyndsay Fletcher (LF), Professor Mark Lester (ML), Professor Ian Crawford (IC), Dr Caitriona Jackman (CJ), Professor Steve Miller (SM), Dr Paul Daniels (PAD), Professor Brad Gibson (BG), Dr Sheila Peacock (SP), Professor Stephen Serjeant (SS), Professor Michael Watson (MW), Dr Clare Watt (CW) and Mr Mark Woodland (MWd) and Dr Megan Argo (MA) (via Skype)

APOLOGIES: Dr Mandy Bailey, Mr Charlie Barclay, Professor Mike Bode, Professor Hiranya Peiris, Professor Yvonne Elsworth and Professor Giovanna Tinetti

IN ATTENDANCE: Philip Diamond (PD), Executive Director; Dr Robert Massey (RM), Deputy Executive Director; Sue Bullivant, Agency Minute Taker

JZ welcome PD to his first RAS Council meeting.

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting on December 8th December 2017 were approved subject to corrections:

1. Attendees BG, IC and MC to be added to list of attendees.
- 5.6 SP is not a Professor

Re 5.7 of December Minutes: SM said a paper is being prepared for the March Council meeting. Yvonne Elsworth will need to discuss this paper with Hiranya Peiris before it comes to Council.

Action: PD to contact Yvonne Elsworth

NB said that it would not be possible to keep the financial benefit of the award at the current level if the number of recipients increased. Hiranya Peiris will need to factor this in.

Action: PD to add to March Council meeting agenda

Re 7.1 of December Minutes:

Action: PD to agree a form of words with SS to clarify the summary discussion and action on anonymity of Board editors of MNRAS.

Re 5.12 of December Minutes: PD said there had been some quality assurance issues regarding the safeguarding guidance document and it would not be put on the website at the moment. PD would look at quality assurance processes. RM pointed out that the document went to proof readers and external experts including the NSPCC. It is also very long and an executive summary would be helpful. RM pointed out that the document had been through many stages including the NSPCC and is mainly a guide for staff.

Action: The document will be corrected and an Executive Summary added before being uploaded to the website PD/RM.

3. President's Business

JZ attended the American Astronomical Society (AAS) meeting for the first time in Washington in early January. He was well received and met AAS President Christine Jones, and Executive Officer Kevin Marvel. There was much goodwill towards the RAS. JZ introduced the plenary lecture given by RAS Gold medallist Nick Kaiser. There was a reception for RAS Fellows hosted by Sue Bowler and OUP representatives, which went very well.

Issues: Joint RAS/AAS membership: a jointly discounted membership arrangement similar to those with IOP and the Geological Society would be worth looking into. Some RAS Fellows were not aware they could attend the reception. It was noted that the event had been flagged to all Fellows and was featured in the conference Programme, on Twitter etc. It was suggested that all Fellows be invited in future, as not all subscribe to the e-bulletin.

Action: JZ/ED to write to AAS about a memorandum of understanding between the two societies

JZ attended a number of recent RAS events including the excellent public lecture given by Anu Ojha of the National Space Centre. These take place only in London; JZ suggested they could move around the country.

JZ attended an ESA Horizon 2000 symposium, in honour of Roger Bonnet's (former Director of ESA) 80th birthday. JZ met the new ESA Director of Science, Günther Hasinger. He will be attending NAM/EWASS.

4. Treasurer's Business

4.1 Treasurers Report

In summary:

- Salaries: NB proposed that staff receive a cost of living rise with the exception of new staff who started in the final quarter of 2017; one member of staff received a larger increase in recognition of additional responsibilities.
- A cost of living rise is not an RAS policy as of right, but
- We have loyal staff and it is good to show our appreciation of them, retaining staff is cheaper than recruiting
- The estimated salary bill for next year is £926,700

Key discussion points:

Are there gender discrepancies regarding pay?

Salaries could be benchmarked.

Action: NB to send revised budget to Council members

It was commented that financial documents be provided to Council earlier to give them enough time to consider. This request was noted.

Council agreed the Treasurers paper's recommended salary increase for staff.

5. Organisation & Structure

5.1 Presentation by the University of Bath (Carole Mundell) for NAM 2020 (brought forward and took place at the beginning of the meeting)

Professor Mundell (CM) and Kevin McCormick (KM) outlined the advantages of the RAS choosing this venue for the NAM 2020 event. NB requested a detailed price list (**Action: CM**). KM said the average cost of a Travelodge in Bath was £129 and accommodation at the university would be cheaper. It was pointed out that many people now use AirBnB.

CM said that this event was due to take place in July which is peak season. Bath had very good relationships with hotels in the city if delegates would prefer that. Bath is basing their estimates on 500 delegates. Regarding "G" side: CM said that Bath is part of the GW4 group with Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter Universities. They will be able to provide support, and CM would engage with that community; there is also a group of Atmospheric Physicists in the Engineering Department who she can link with.

It was suggested that involvement with some of the RAS200 partners, e.g. Prince's Trust, Girl Guides etc. would be welcome; would there be facilities for them? CM said that Heather Featherstone is Bath's head of engagement. Bath does a lot of work with local communities and could scale that up. They receive a lot of visits from schools and would welcome family groups. CM said that setting up core SOC should encompass local communities; she is keen to make this international and to ensure Bath can accommodate all.

Regarding dates, CM said they had considered the timing of graduations and events in the city etc.; before July there would be exams. Many go abroad in school holidays and an event is already booked in for August.

In response to a query about the site being across two buildings, and a wish to mix communities in the same spaces, CM said that it would not be necessary to use two buildings. The landings are open for poster sessions etc; she invited Council members to visit the site. The Edge is a working arts centre and a reception is planned there. Bath have overbooked so can be flexible - it will be easy to move from one building to another.

It was suggested that the positive thing about NAM is that people mix. There are some techniques for mixing including learning sessions etc. CM said there is a Bath Institute for Learning and they will also learn from previous NAMs. CM's brief to KM was for the maximum flexibility.

JZ asked about connections with Industry.

CM there would be stalls available for publishers; Rolls Royce; Aerospace, Goldman Sachs etc. The event would be a magnet for them; these companies are looking for talent. Marketing is carried out by KM's team. All partners go through an ethics

approval; CM would be happy to work with the RAS to identify appropriate partners and would draw from that subset.

CM and KM withdrew to allow Council to discuss their proposal. Council approved adopting Bath as hosts of NAM 2020 subject to financial approval.

PD advised that a formal legal contract should be drafted and ready for Council at the May meeting.

Action: NB/PD/RM and the Bath team to draw up a contract.

CM and KM returned and JZ confirmed that Council were happy with their proposal subject to financial approval, and that they should proceed to work with PD, NB and RM.

5.2 RAS Council Elections

Council members were asked to check the tabled paper carefully.

Key points:

Only two candidates were standing for (A), can more be encouraged to put their names forward? How can we encourage a better spread of institutions represented, and also candidates not affiliated to academic institutions. It was suggested that a “meet the council” Q and A session at NAM might encourage future applicants. It was noted that there would not be a Council meeting at this year’s NAM.

Action: LF asked that Council read the paper in particular the covering guidance for voting and send comments to her.

Actions: PD On the balloting list, the final sentence needs to say ‘Any papers with more than one box marked for Secretary (A) or more than four boxes marked for Councillor, or containing other writing, will not be counted.’ There should be a strict deadline for biographies and submissions to Council should come with the rest of papers, not tabled. Candidates’ names to be randomized rather than appearing in alphabetical order.

The office should filter biographies containing inappropriate material Include a sentence “all candidates have agreed to abide by the RAS Code of Conduct”

5.3 Scrutineers

Senior Secretary LF announced that the 2018 Scrutineers would be David Waltham (Holloway); Andrew Norton (Open); Sara Russell (Natural History Museum)

5.4 RAS website upgrade

Council were informed that a soft launch was planned and that RM was happy with progress. Staff training had been arranged; it was hoped the website would be launched in March.

Action: RM to arrange preview of website for March meeting.

5.6 Update on EWASS/NAM

RM said he has visited Liverpool: registration had passed 1,000 and is expected to exceed 1,500. There were some high profile guests including Clare Moody, MEP and Chi Onwurah MP. STFC were still being chased regarding the content of the Community Session. He was trying to get the UK Space Agency to send a representative to this event. NB asked all to register if they have not already done so as dinner is becoming booked up. We will have to build our own media site. RM reassured Council that support was provided for anyone who had experienced harassment at NAM meetings. BG said that some local organisations at previous conferences had felt disconnected from this event and had not always received thanks and acknowledgement for their work. RM said there was an opportunity at the closing ceremony to offer thanks to those who had contributed. These concerns were noted.

Action: RM to provide list of RAS attendees

5.7 RAS 2018 Research Fellowships Update

MC reported that there had been 76 applicants, whittled down to 18 for independent references (x 3 each) and then brought down to 6, 7 or 8. Some had received offers of jobs by the time we contacted them. It was a very high quality cadre. Annette Webb worked very hard on the administration, and we should consider how much time the RAS can devote to this. Interviews will take place next week. Standards were very high. The new website may alleviate some of the workload. It was suggested that we were accepting applicants too far down their career path. Concern was expressed that the RAS was doing the work of Government. It was commented that the scheme has enhanced our reputation. BG pointed out that one third of the membership are international and wondered if they would feel disadvantaged. There have been non UK nationals applying, who might no longer be eligible after Brexit.

5.7 Caroline Herschel Prize Lectureship

LF summarised the proposal for partnership. The William Herschel Society is based in Bath. This lecture is for early-career female astronomers. It is noted that we do not have representation on the committee and that references are not required. Council felt that there should be at least one reference. The proposal was approved subject to:

- 1) A requirement for references to confirm that applicants were accomplished public speakers.
- 2) The RAS has input to the selection process
- 3) Clarification as to how the position would be advertised as being supported by the RAS
- 4) Resolving a concern about contravening the Equalities Act or the Charity Commission requirements for a lectureship that is exclusively for women
- 5) Thought being given to the eligibility of transgender applicants

Action: PD to seek legal advice on 4) and 5) and report back.

5.10 Astronomical Heritage Committee

Susan McKenna-Lawlor had been invited to join the committee because of her involvement with Newgrange in Ireland. This was approved by Council.

5.11 RAS 2020

Kathy Whaler had agreed to join the planning group. Work commitments meant that Emma Bunce had declined.

Buckingham Palace to be contacted in order to invite representatives of the Royal Family to a stargazing event.

Action: PD to draft a letter to Buckingham Palace requesting their involvement in the 2020 celebrations

5.12 REF 2021 Selection Panel

Yvonne Elsworth has represented RAS on this selection committee. HEFCE will publish the sub-panel members shortly.

5.13 CDAG Minutes

These minutes were noted by Council.

5.14 RAS 200

SM said that launch of the Planets 360 would take place in the Space Centre in Leicester on the evening of 28th February and would be a black tie event hosted by Jon Culshaw. SM would speak at the event. The next meeting of the committee would be at the RAS on 7th March 2018.

Action: Council members to contact SM regarding events which might interest them.

6. Policy and Public Engagement

6.2 Letter to Science and Technology Committee Brexit Summit

We have been invited to send a representative.

7. Publications

7.1 GJI Minutes

JZ had attended the meeting and said he was impressed by the amount of work and detail involved.

8. Other

8.1 Officers Reports

Regarding resignations it was believed that often these were due to old age, poor health or cost of membership.

Council approved the list of new Fellows

First Name	Last Name	Town	Country	Sponsor
Alyssa	Drake	West Malling	UK	Robert Massey
Abigail	Chown	Bath	UK	Carolyn Villforth
	Jordana			
Nuria	Mitjans	Bath	UK	Carolyn Villforth
Ashley	Spindler	Farnborough	UK	Andrew Norton
Hongming	Tang	Manchester	UK	Anna Scaife
Gerald	Leung	Glasgow	UK	Nicolas Labrosse

David	Ross	Southsea	UK	Andrew Norton
Affonso	de Rosa Gonzalez-	Leighton Buzzard	UK	Martin Hardcastle
Elena	Egea	St Albans	UK	Martin Hardcastle
Maya	Horton	Hatfield	UK	Martin Hardcastle
Kristan	Boyett	Oxford	UK	Andrew Bunker
Romain	Meyer	London	UK	Ian Howarth
Sam	Waters	Cranleigh	UK	Daisuke Kawata
Patrick	Gilliland	Evesham	UK	Peter Williamson
Mark	Townley	Brockmoor	UK	Peter Williamson
Jeffrey	Thompson	Balcombe	UK	Ian Crawford
Trevor	Davies	Khorog GBAO	Tajikistan	John Reid
Sofia	Kalamatianou	London	UK	Simon Steel
Aaron	Jones	Edgbaston	UK	Alberto Vecchio
Richard	Grimes	Aberystwyth	UK	Balazs Pinter
Joe	Bentley	Birmingham	UK	Alberto Vecchio
Thomas	Dickson	Fulham	UK	Poshak Gandhi
Charles	Draper	Bath	UK	Michael Edmunds
Tomas	Muller Bravo	Southampton	UK	Mark Sullivan
Shaun	May	Caergwrle	UK	John Stott
Josephine	Seed	Teleford	UK	Andrew Norton
Aurora	Sicilia-Aguilar	Dundee	UK	Vivienne Wild
Matthew	Temple	Cambridge	UK	Robert Carswell
Marvin	Huddleston	Mesquite	USA	Robert Garfinkle
Matthew	Allcock	Rossendale	UK	Ben Snow
Omakshi	Agiwal	London	UK	Michele Dougherty
David	Keitel	Glasgow	UK	Graham Woan
Christopher	Duffy	Glasgow	UK	Graham Woan
Michael	Wright	Dennyloanhead	UK	Graham Woan
Fiona	Porter	Glasgow	UK	Graham Woan
Tom	Kimpson	Dorking	UK	Silvia Zane
John	Hope	Bath	UK	Carolyn Villforth
Hendrik	van Eerten	Bath	UK	Carolyn Villforth
Jade	Eyles	Northampton	UK	Jessica Johnson
Maria	Vincenzi	Southsea	UK	Robert Crittenden
Peter	Wyper	Durham	UK	Anthony Yeates
Andre	Chicrala	Newcastle	UK	Shaun Bloomfield
Nikki	Zabel	Cardiff	UK	Eve North
Melissa	Brobby	Gravesend	UK	Francisco Diego
Jack	Parsons	Clacton-on-Sea	UK	Andrew Norton
Jonathan	Carrick	Lancaster	UK	Isobel Hook
Jesper	Skottfelt	Milton Keynes	UK	Colin Snodgrass
Chris	Joly	London	UK	Francisco Diego
Alexander	Bader	Lancaster	UK	Licia Ray
Christopher	Lorch Barbeito	Lancaster	UK	Licia Ray
Usue	Edreira	Surbiton	UK	Andrew Norton
Miika	Pursiainen	Southampton	UK	Michael J. Childress
Terence	Williams	Anglesey	UK	Membership committee
Charles	Reynolds	Newport	UK	Membership committee

Thomas	Martin	London	UK	Francisco Diego
James	Salmon	London	UK	Francisco Diego
Nicholas	Rawlinson	Cambridge	UK	Jenny Collier
Chris	Duffy	Washington	UK	Roy Alexander
Tarje	Nissen-Meyer	Oxford	UK	Benjamin Fernando
Ben	McDermott	Cambridge	UK	Jonathan Mound
Wendy	Clark	Felsted	UK	Neil Norman
Tom	Winder	Cambridge	UK	David Lyness
Paolo	Pagano		UK	Ineke De Moortel
				Membership
Calum	Turner	Argyll & Bute	UK	committee
Jacqueline	Gruhn	London	UK	Francisco Diego
James	Ward	Leeds	UK	Andy Nowacki
Daniel	Clarkson	London	UK	Andrew Norton
Elizabeth	Elmer	Nottingham	UK	Rachel Asquith
			Hong	Membership
Dave	Choi	Kowloon	Kong	committee
		Kingston Upon		
Sakir	Ahmed	Thames	UK	Francisco Diego
				Membership
Adam	Woodhouse	Leeds	UK	Committee
Lewis	Whitehouse	London	UK	Ian Howarth
Honghong	Wu	Dorking	UK	Daniel Verscharen
Andrew	Leven	Coventry	UK	Thomas Marsh
Andrea	Mazzella	London	UK	Francisco Diego
Javier	Rosales	London	UK	Simon Steel
Candice	Tait	London	UK	Francisco Diego
Adam	Parkes Bowen	Wigston	UK	John Bridges
Stefano	Akram	London	UK	Francisco Diego

8.2 Minutes of ordinary meetings

JZ pointed out these did not indicate who had chaired the meetings; MC chaired in January. It was noted that Alan Stern is NOT a member of NASA.

Action: PD Information on who chaired the meeting should be recorded in future.

9. Any other business

Appointment of additional MNRAS editor with knowledge of Solar Physics – noted BG asked if affiliated societies should provide report to RAS Council? JZ said that affiliated groups, MOUs etc. need to be reviewed. PD said he would find the MOUs;

Action: PD to gather information to report to a future meeting

Trustees-Only item on Council Agenda

JZ said that the Institute of Physics had an item at the beginning of each Council meeting “Trustees Only” which was discussed without staff present. He suggested that the RAS introduce this. Staff to advise JZ before each meeting if there is something they wish to raise under this item. This should be a standing item of 30 minutes. **Agreed by Council.**

Additional Candidate for Honorary Fellowship

MC said that Don Kurtz had told him he had sent in a nomination but had not been contacted. ML said this case was very generic nomination and needed further work and the panel did not have a chance to review a more detailed nomination.

Action: PD to add to March agenda

PD gave a verbal report on his first impressions in his new role saying that he had received a warm welcome which had been much appreciated. Regarding the infrastructure of the RAS, he noted that there was no HR department although some support was received from an outside source, Croner. He believed this left the organisation slightly vulnerable so he has increased the level of support from Croner who will now look at terms of employment, the staff handbook etc and would keep us updated regarding changes in legislation. They will support us with any grievances which may arise.

Legal Support: PD has arranged a meeting with the RAS solicitors, Bristow's, to clarify our business relationship with them.

Bullying and harassment questionnaire PD had looked at this with JZ and believed that some aspects were more detailed than necessary, he has suggested some modifications. He will liaise with Stacey Habergham over these changes.

2020 Celebrations: PD has re-convened the planning group for March. The projects will be costed and he will work with the Treasurer to submit a budget to Council for approval. This may include the cost of a Project Manager. PD had made contact with the Genetics Society who also have a 100th anniversary soon, and met with their newly appointed Project Manager. They plan to spend £500 000 - £700 000 on celebrations. PD has asked her to present to the 2020 planning group. It is hoped that proposals will be ready for the next Council meeting in March.

BAA: There is a shortage of space in the building. A letter serving notice and suggesting a move to a smaller office was sent in December. We are discussing the options with them.

GDPR: EU directive on Data Protection. We are obliged to comply with this, regardless of Brexit. The RAS IT manager, Steven Pryer, has attended a training course and will provide a report for March's Council meeting. PD will seek external scrutiny of this report and will decide if we need additional external expertise.

Lease: This is still ongoing; we are still not in receipt of the latest lease. The Royal Society of Chemistry has received theirs, but it does not include the future level of rent. The conditions in the new lease are similar to their existing one. PD attended a meeting of the Burlington House Courtyard Society; there have been continuing problems with managing agents GVA for work not carried out. The societies are working with Lord Cormack, who is quietly advocating our position to Government ministers. In the meantime we are obtaining a valuation of the Courtyard properties to see if we could afford to buy the freehold and if so make an offer to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

9.1 Garden Party

Hiranyia Peiris and Catriona Jackman will represent the RAS

9.2 Date of July Council Meeting

Action: PD to send date to Council to be confirmed (nominally 6th July)

Council rose at 3.20 p.m.



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Professor J. Zarnecki

9th March 2018