

DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 February 2021 held via Zoom

1. Attendance and Apologies

PRESENT:

Prof Emma Bunce (EB); President and Chair
Dr Nigel Berman (NB); Treasurer;
Dr Mandy Bailey (MB); A Secretary;
Prof Lyndsay Fletcher (LF); Senior Secretary;
Prof Mark Lester (ML); G Secretary;
Prof Steve Miller (SM); Vice President, G;
Dr Paul Daniels (PAD) Vice President, A;
Dr Megan Argo (MA); Vice President (A);
Dr Claire Foullon (CF) ;
Dr Jane MacArthur (JM);
Dr Matt Middleton (MM); joined at 10.50
Professor William Chaplin; joined at 10.46
Prof Lorraine Hanlon (LH);
Prof Phil Charles (PC);
Dr Colin Snodgrass (CS);
Dr Arvind Parmar (AP) joined at 11,12

APOLOGIES:

Mr Martin Lunn (ML);
Professor Mahesh Anand (MHA); Vice President (G)
Mr Kevin Kilburn (KK).
Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU);
Dr Hannah Dalgleish (HD);

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Philip Diamond (PD), Executive Director;
Dr Robert Massey, (RM) Deputy Executive Director and Policy;
Ms Siobhan Adeusi (SA) Executive Assistant and Office Manager.

2. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

2.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 11 December 2020, were APPROVED by Council subject to the following corrections:

5.4 MAH should be MHA (Mahesh Anand)

5.5 Burlington House update, the sentence 'the other Societies would like the RAS to join' should be removed

2.2. The Action Status Report was received by Council. PD gave the following updates:

4. It was agreed to schedule a meeting to discuss the format of meetings and value of overseas lecturers visiting for SDMs

3. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS – Confidential discussion - redacted

4. TREASURER'S BUSINESS

4.1 Treasurer's Report (including staff salaries) Staff members left the meeting whilst the discussion re salaries took place.

The staff salaries uplift was AGREED by Council.

The Treasurer asked Council to approve the appointment of a professional trustee for the pension fund.

EB asked for Council to vote on this proposal. It was AGREED

4.2 The Bank Account Statements were received by Council

4.3 The Budget December 2020 was received by Council and was APPROVED

4.5 The New journal title 'RAS Methods: Data Science, Software & Instrumentation' was received by Council

5. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

5.1 The paperwork for RAS Council Elections 2021 was received by Council. Nominated Councilors were asked to leave the meeting.

LF reported that three nominees have withdrawn, and that the remaining nominees will be making short videos to support their applications.

The paperwork was APPROVED subject to two formatting amendments.

ACTION: Office to correct the formatting amendments.

5.2 NAM update by Prof Carole Mundell, matter taken at 10.15

Prof Mundell gave an overview of the plans thus far; the following points were noted:

- There have been 73 proposals, a draft schedule has been sent to the SOC (scientific organising committee)
- The organisers are receiving significant support from the university events team
- The organisers have been trialling various online platforms and will be doing audience testing with students, and also a live dress rehearsal
- It is not clear yet whether the deposit for the Awards Dinner at the Aeronautical museum will be refunded

In response to comments and questions, Prof Mundell made the following points:

- An online meeting is a good opportunity to attract more international participants, and the organisers will consider other time zones when setting the programme.

- The organisers have discussed the issue of live signing for the plenaries
- The organisers are considering keeping recorded plenaries for viewing later however this may raise an issue of memory capacity
- Outreach and engagement in an online setting is a challenge, however the organisers are working for example the Herschel museum and engaging PhD students to do Q&As with school children
- The RAS online poster competition last year worked well, so they could use that software or possibly Gathertown.

EB suggested that the Early Career Network may be useful for support.

ACTION: Put ECN in touch with CM

- There may not be much change to the registration fees as there is income loss due to being online (accommodation etc). However, the organisers are working with alumni and sponsors to support costs
- Prof Mundell has regular briefing meetings with PD

EB thanked Prof Mundell for attending the meeting, and for her useful update.

5.3 The CDAG Committee Meeting Minutes were received by Council

It was commented that the format of the CDAG and RAS 200 minutes could be improved.

ACTION: Office to agree standard format for all RAS Minutes

5.4 The RAS200 Committee Meeting Minutes were received by Council

5.5 The Astronomical Heritage Committee Meeting Minutes were received by Council

5.6 The SAGA proposal paper, outlining a collaboration with the Society on astronomy themed holidays was received by Council. PD gave an overview of the scheme and asked Council to approve the next steps.

MB remarked that the invited speakers to SAGA holidays should have expenses reimbursed.

LF commented that SAGA should be made aware that the RAS can offer geophysics in addition to astronomy

NB suggested that the existing contract with Cunard should be checked for an exclusivity clause.

ACTION: PD to check this

JM advised that the possibility of environmental impact should be a consideration when decision making.

It was AGREED that PD should investigate further.

ACTION: PD to take the next steps.

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6 POLICY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

61/b The Carbon Audit document and audit report were received by Council

RM gave an overview, which was followed by a discussion. There was a general agreement that carbon credits were not a long term solution.

EB thanked RM for his work on this; the Sustainability Group are happy to continue working on this.

Council AGREED to continue the work on sustainability.

6.2 The Equity in STEM workforce paper was received by Council.

7 OTHER

7.1 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meetings January, 2021 were APPROVED by Council

7.2 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting December 2020 were APPROVED by Council

7.3 The Membership Officer's Report was received by Council and was APPROVED.

SM remarked that he would like to see more demographic information of those leaving the fellowship and suggested it could be shared with the Membership Committee before their resignation is put before Council.

ACTION: ML to take this to the Membership Committee

PD remarked that more detailed reports were provided for Council awaydays, and this will be brought to the next Membership Committee meeting

ACTION: PD to contact Mike Hapgood (chair of Membership Committee)

PD also reported that one action from the last awayday has not yet been completed, the Membership and E&O committees meeting.

8. AOB

MB updated Council on changes to this year's SDM organisers. She also reported that so far she hasn't received any offers to organise programmes for the next sessions starting October 2021.

ACTION: Office to organise reminder to Fellows and on social media.

SM reported that he got an RAS200 question aired on Gardeners' Question Time. It will be on their website after the Sunday (3pm) repeat. Part of the advice was to track down the 13 seeds that were taken to the Moon on one of the Apollo missions, and that were returned to the UK. SM was seeking advice as to what had happened to them.

Council rose at 13.03

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12 February 2021

