

DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 December 2021, via Zoom

1. Attendance and Apologies

PRESENT:

Prof Emma Bunce (EB); President and Chair
Prof Mike Edmunds (ME); President Elect
Dr Nigel Berman (NB); Treasurer;
Dr Mandy Bailey (MB); Senior Secretary;
Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU); A Secretary;
Prof Mark Lester (MLE); G Secretary;
Prof Nick Rawlinson (NR); Vice President (G)
Prof Steve Miller (SM); Vice President, (G);
Prof Ian Robson (IR); Vice President, (A);
Dr Megan Argo (MA); Vice President (A);
Dr Jane MacArthur (JM);
Prof Phil Charles (PC);
Dr Colin Snodgrass (CS);
Dr Arvind Parmar (AP)
Mr Martin Lunn (ML);
Dr Hannah Dalglish (HD)
Prof Caroline Smith (CLS)
Dr Jasmine Kaur Sandhu (JKS)
Prof Belinda Wilkes (BW)
Dr Jo Barstow (JB)

APOLOGIES:

Dr Matt Middleton (MM)

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 Council Meeting 8 October 2021 were received by Council and were APPROVED

2.2 The Action Status Report was received by Council. PD gave an update as follows:

5.1 Organisation and Structure

- RAS has consulted with the solicitor regarding BAA keeping Burlington House as their address
- A gift was purchased for the outgoing A&G designer, Paul Johnson
- PD made successful approaches to Carole Mundell and Jocelyn Bell Burnell regarding sitting on the panel for the new Herschel Medal

3. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

3.1 Council discussed the strategy paper.

EB reported that the Officers met to agree a process and timescales.

ACTION: Steering Group to draft the Mission Statement by 31 December. Co-ordinated by EB/ME/PD

ACTION: Council to inform President/PD of areas of interest or skills set in order to populate the sub groups.

MA suggested that the Early Careers Network should be included in the membership sub group

ACTION: Include Early Careers Network in membership sub group PD

MLE advised that the sub groups should not work in isolation, as there are cross overs in some groups e.g. membership and property or property and Heritage.

4. TREASURER'S BUSINESS

4.1a The Treasurer's Report was received by Council.

4.1b The budget for 2022 was received by Council.

NB reported that the budget was written assuming that there will not be a full programme of work, due to the continuing pandemic.

There is a small deficit of £120K, although an expected legacy of £140K will offset the deficit.

IR asked about staff pay rises. NB replied that this is done in consultation with the Executive Director. The Executive Director provides context data from other similar organisations. The Treasurer aims to maintain staff salary values in line with inflation. Recommendations are approved by Council in private session.

The budget was APPROVED by Council

4.1c The updated Risk Register was received by Council.

4.2 The Statement of accounts were received by Council.

5. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

5.1 The Executive Director updated Council as follows:

- Burlington House: The Property Group met and agreed to interview a short list of property space planners to review the use of the building.
- NB attended a meeting with the Landlord and representatives from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Two proposals were considered
 - Re-designating New Burlington house as a *heritage asset* which may allow a rent agreement on a more favourable basis
 - Making an application with the other Societies to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to make the property more outward facing with the public.

Thus far, there has been no response.

Lord Cormack who advocates on behalf of the Society of Antiquaries wrote to the Secretary of State at DCMS, Nadine Dorries in order to brief her on the situation. As a result, her special policy advisor attended a meeting yesterday with representatives of the Courtyard Societies. The Executive Director attended this meeting for the Society. The special advisor will report back to DCMS

PD reported that the launch of the timeline was a success and thanked RAS staff in particular Sue Bowler, Sian Prosser and Lucinda Offer.
EB echoed the thanks.

5.1a Council received the paper proposing a process for putting forward members of the community for Honours.
Council AGREED the proposal.

ACTION The Executive Director to take the process forward

5.2 Council received the document RAS Council Elections 2021.
MLE and SM left the meeting for the discussion.

MB reported that all positions were covered, that there was a good range of nominees including two international nominees.
Council APPROVED the nominations.

5.3 The Awards Committee Reports were received by Council.

SM gave a brief overview of the G awards. He raised the point about diversity of applicants for the Winton medal and suggested that the wording on the website be modified to reflect the fact that the RAS understands issues faced by women and carers during the pandemic.

ACTION: New wording to be written by panel chairs and EB

MA gave a brief overview of the A awards as follows:

There were many more nominations in total this year than in the last few years. On the face of it this is good news, although the overall total is inflated by the higher than usual number of people nominated for multiple awards simultaneously.

- Despite the record number of total nominations, the panel noted that once again there is a distinct lack of gender balance in the nominees.
- There was a disappointing lack of overall diversity, both in the nominees, but also in the nominators.

MA expressed the hope that changes implemented as a consequence of the awards review will improve the situation.

All the awards were APPROVED by Council.

5.4 The update on RAS200 by Jenesys, was taken at 10.15. Sarah Jenkins (SJ) from Jenesys gave a presentation, after which Council was invited to ask questions. Lucinda Offer, Education & Outreach officer was also in attendance for this section.

SJ reported the following:

- Information collected from 2021 demonstrates a change in attitudes to include 'softer skills' not just STEM
- There had been direct engagement with 131,000 people by the end of 2020
- £687,000 had been drawn down as of October 2021
- The project allowed organisations to use their own audience expertise, to reach those harder to connect with, e.g. carers
- Clarity around deliverables is required
- Comms are very important, especially with larger organisations with a faster staff turnover
- A PR strategy is also needed

SM reported that he hoped to have an in person meeting for partners in 2022. He also remarked that the RAS needs to maintain relationships with the partners, and that there will be a genuine legacy from the project.

SM also reported that some partners, e.g. Care for Carers, were able to attract other funding, as a result of their connections with the RAS.

PD remarked that an evaluation process is very important and should be built into future projects.

SJ suggested that if further information would help the Education & Outreach Working Strategy sub-Group, to let her know.

ACTION: PD to communicate the dates to SJ once agreed

5.5 Approach to proposed Scrutineers

PD requested approval to approach Peter Grimley and Sean Ryan to act as scrutineers for the Council elections in 2022.

The Request was APPROVED by Council

ACTION: Council to suggest a third person to PD

6. POLICY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

6.1 The Budget and spending review 2021 was received by Council.

6.2 The US Decadal Review was received by Council

6.3 The Diversity in STEM paper was received by Council.

The Deputy Executive Director presented a paper summarising the Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry into Diversity in STEM. The RAS will respond to this, using the previous work for the All Party Parliamentary Group on Diversity and Inclusion in STEM as a starting point, which will be augmented by the findings of the RAS Bullying and Harassment Survey.

He invited members of Council to consider the terms of reference of the investigation, and to send in comments by email. Suggestions and points raised included the need to check Institute of Physics evidence, to consult the Astronomy and Geophysics Forums, to look at the low number of A level Physics students, to consider course content at undergraduate level and whether that is affecting the supply to postgraduate courses, and to consider data on hiring, retention and departures in university departments.

Action: Deputy Executive Director to send request for input to Astronomy and Geophysics Forums.

7. PUBLICATIONS

7.1 The Minutes of RASTI Board meeting were received by Council.

7.2 The update on RASTI was received by Council

PD reported that papers have already been submitted for consideration. He thanked Kim Clube, Publications Manager, for her key role in getting the new journal off the ground.

8. OTHER

8.1 The Membership Officers Reports, were APPROVED by Council

8.2 The Grants awarded in 2021 paper was received by Council

8.3 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 8 October, were received by Council and APPROVED

8.4 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 12 November, were received by Council and APPROVED

8.5 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 19 November, were received by Council and APPROVED

9. AOB

CS raised the issue of scientific funding in Brazil; subscriptions to some journals are very high. He asked if the RAS could do anything to help with MNRAS.

ACTION: NB to talk to OUP about this matter.

Council rose at 12.42

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