

DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 March 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; left meeting at 12.48
Prof Steve Miller (SM); Vice President, G;
Dr Paul Daniels (PAD) Vice President, A;
Dr Megan Argo (MA); Vice President (A);
Dr Jane MacArthur (JM);
Professor William Chaplin (WC); joined at 10.09
Prof Lorraine Hanlon (LH); joined at 11.08
Prof Phil Charles (PC);
Dr Colin Snodgrass (CS);
Dr Arvind Parmar (AP)
Mr Martin Lunn (ML);
Professor Mahesh Anand (MHA); Vice President (G)
Mr Kevin Kilburn (KK).
Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU); joined at 10.10
Dr Hannah Dalgleish (HD);

APOLOGIES:

Dr Claire Foullon (CF) ;
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 AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 12th February 2021, were APPROVED subject to the following amendments:
 3. Correct the spelling of Mike Daly
 - 5.2 Change Dr Mundell to Professor for consistency
 3. President's Business, add the missing word 'relationship' before 'with the courtyard'.

Matters arising

5.2 HD commented that the price of the NAM should be consistent with it being online. Other organisations had negative feedback for setting the price for online meetings too high.

RM reported that the matter has been discussed at the Local Organising Committee (LOC) and priority will be given to the less affluent.

2.2 Action Status report

PD updated on the following:

5.3. Standardisation of Minutes, Office is organising a meeting of committee secretaries in order to agree a standard format for Minutes

5.6 Appointment of Scrutineers, Peter Grimley has agreed to be a scrutineer. This was APPROVED by Council.

2.3 Withdrawal of Council nominees (LF) Nominated Council members left the meeting. LF updated Council that there have been two further withdrawals from the election ballot but she assured Council that it will not have a detrimental effect as all vacant positions still have enough candidates.

3. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

3.1 Council received a paper on the Awards review. The President reported that over 600 people had completed the online survey, 90% of whom were fellows. She then gave a presentation with an overview of data collected thus far.

HD comment re nominators. LF remarked that in her early career days she did not know how to write a good nominations letter and suggested that workshops would be helpful.

ACTION: LF/Office set up a workshop for writing nomination letters

The President thanked the panel for their work and also thanked the Awards and Grants Officer Nush Cole for her excellent support.

LF commented that the phrase under A2.2 'single piece of work' needs clarifying. In addition, words suggested as replacements for distinguished/eloquent were authoritative and engaging.

ACTION: EB to undertake these tasks.

Council APPROVED the continuation of the work, in particular the short-term actions, as follows:

A2.1 Jackson-Gwilt Medal: Change the remit to reflect both Astronomy and Geophysics, not necessarily to be awarded every year, but allow the possibility to award in each area annually. Broaden criteria to include teamwork in addition to individual accomplishment.

A2.2 Website wording: Reword the Herschel, Eddington, Chapman, Price and Jackson-Gwilt to highlight it is a single piece of work and is thus suitable for early career researchers.

A2.3 Emerging science: Highlight explicitly in the criteria for various awards where relevant.

A2.4 Service award: Strengthen criteria for excellence, include teamwork.

A2.5 Group achievement award: Explicitly include amateurs working with professionals.

A2.6 Outreach: Explicitly include amateur contributions, encourage team submissions.

A2.7 Keith Runcorn and other thesis prizes: Clarify scientific remit. Open up nominations to non-Fellows as well as Fellows in order to be consistent with our other awards

A2.8 Lectures eligibility: Remove referral to being distinguished/eloquent.

4. TREASURER'S BUSINESS

4.1 Council received the Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer outlined his proposal to increase the general price by £5. Many Councillors disagreed with this so it was put to a vote. The proposal was NOT APPROVED.

NB thanked Council for their views and suggested that the fee structure be reviewed.

ACTION: All to send suggestions to NB

CS asked whether members could be asked whether they would prefer gift-aid or tax relief on their subscription.

ACTION: NB to consider a letter to members to ask opinion on the options.

EB thanked the Treasurer.

NB reported that Aline Pensions were appointed as pension trustees.

ACTION: NB will report back on if they will be sole or join existing group.

NB reported that the new journal contract was well underway, guided by PD.

4.2 The Bank Account Statements were received by Council.

5. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

5.1 Executive Director's update

The Executive Director updated Council on the following matters:

- There are 576 UK members of the IAU, of which 26 are junior members. Applications this year number 46 in total of which 15 were for junior membership.
- The contract with the public relations consultancy group AprilSix, who are working on the campaign to resolve our Burlington House lease issues, has been signed. The group had a meeting to discuss engaging stakeholders and influential people that may be able to help. PD asked Council for suggestions. The next step will be to communicate with members.

EB asked if the communications would be drafted by the RAS or AprilSix

ACTIONS: PD to check with AprilSix

All to think about people of influence who they know that may be able to offer support

CS asked if any of the London Mayoral candidates had been informed.

ACTION: PD to mention to AprilSix

5.2 Council received the RAS Library Committee update and APPROVED the new member.

5.3 Council received the Update on Disciplinary Procedure

PD updated Council on the working group meeting with the RAS solicitors. He asked Council to approve the establishment of the recommended committees (Screening, Disciplinary and Appeals Panel), then to write the Terms of Reference.

Some Councillors were unsure about the sequencing of the process.
PD noted that a flowchart explaining this will be produced.

ACTIONS: PD to address with the solicitors.

PD also agreed to add a line regarding reporting to Council, to be incorporated in the TOR.

Council APPROVED the formation of the committees and the writing of TOR.

5.4 Council received a paper on RAS Grants matched funding

Representatives of the Early Career Network wrote to the Trustees expressing concern that RAS grants for studies require evidence of application for matching funding from other sources with the majority of grants being awarded on that basis. They suggested that matched funding is more easily obtained at wealthier institutions. They proposed that match-funding be viewed as a desirable component of an application, rather than as a required one. They also asked that the definition of match-funding be made clear (for instance, can a postgraduate student use the travel stipend attached to their PhD as a source of match-funding?)

HD reported that many students do not have access to match funding. She did benefit from matched funding but not for travel grants.

ACTION: Grants Committee to look into this more closely

5.5 Council received the E&O Committee Meeting Minutes.

6. POLICY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Council received the paper on UK Horizon Europe

7. OTHER

7.1 Council received the Awards Committees paperwork, which was APPROVED subject to the following amendments:

SM requested the transfer of one of the applicants for the Runcorn thesis prize to the Patricia Tomkins thesis prize.

7.2 Council received the Membership Officer's report, which was APPROVED.

SM suggested asking retired Fellows to join the RAS Friends

ACTION: PD to follow up with the Membership Committee

7.3 Council received the Minutes of the Ordinary Meetings February, 2021 which were approved.

8. AOB

CS commented on the tradition of having Council meetings on the same days as SDMs and suggested that this should be reviewed.

ACTION: Add to agenda for SDM format meeting

MB reported that as there were insufficient offers to organise A SDMs, she has asked for another call to go out.

EB offered Council's congratulations to Sheila Kanani who recently gave birth.

PAD asked if the agenda could be sent as a separate document in future.

ACTION: Office to organise this.

Council rose at 13.11

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12 March 2021