

**Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 March 2023,
at Burlington House and via Zoom**

1. Attendance and Apologies

PRESENT:

Prof Mike Edmunds (ME); President and Chair;
Dr Nigel Berman (NB); Treasurer;
Dr Mandy Bailey (MB); Senior Secretary;
Dr Jo Barstow (JB);
Prof Stephen Eales (SE); Vice President A
Prof Mark Lester (MLE); G Secretary;
Prof Steve Miller (SM);
Prof Ian Robson (IR); Vice President, (A);
Prof Phil Charles (PC);
Prof Colin Snodgrass (CS);
Dr Arvind Parmar (AP)
Dr Hannah Dalglish (HD)
Dr Jasmine Kaur Sandhu (JKS)
Ms Patricia Tomkin (PT)
Prof Clare Watt; Vice President, (G);
Prof Belinda Wilkes (BW)
Prof Silvia Zane (SZ)

APOLOGIES:

Prof Nick Rawlinson (NR); Vice President (G)
Prof Caroline Smith (CLS)
Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU); A Secretary;

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Philip Diamond (PD), Executive Director;
Dr Robert Massey, (RM) Deputy Executive Director;
Mrs Liz Baker (LB), Publishing Manager

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

- 2.1 The Minutes of Council Meeting on 10 February 2023 were **approved** subject to the following amendments:
Dr Joanne Barstow to be corrected to Dr Joanna Barstow

Point 3, to be rephrased to: Winners of the RAS thesis prize should be advised of the substantial European Astronomical Society thesis prize and encouraged to apply if eligible.

2.2 MLE had no sight of the nomination paperwork highlighted in point 5.2.

SE Additional sponsors still being sought for NAM – exploring ECN options.

JB volunteered to join the Fellowship working group.

OK will meet the chair of CDAG when he is next in London.

3. President's Business

- Norman Lockyer Fellowship: has been awarded to Christopher Osborne, Glasgow University.
- ME wrote to Michelle Donelan about Horizon Europe money seeking clarity over future of previously allocated money. RM the guarantee for applicants has been extended for a further 3 months.

4. Treasurer's Business

- Subscription rates discussed ahead of AGM approval. Council **approved** a modest £10 increase to the full subscription rate. No change for students or concessions.
- To attract and retain members Council support the introduction of a monthly direct debit option to be introduced as soon as practicable. PD looking to implement for 2024.
- Ongoing work on a flightpath to pass on ownership of the defined benefit pension scheme.

4.1 Treasurer's report **approved**.

4.1 and 4.1b Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference proposals discussed and merits debated. Council voted for the Remuneration Committee to look at all staff salaries, not solely executive pay.

It was agreed that:

- i) Finance Committee should meet 3 times per year.
- ii) The Remuneration Committee to be a sub-committee of Finance Committee.
- iii) The Terms of Reference for Finance Committee to be reviewed to include the Remuneration Committee.
- iv) A revised ToR for Finance Committee to be prepared for next Council Meeting.

5. Organisation and Structure

5.1 Update received from PD on the journal changes to an Open Access (OA) publishing model from 2024. The press release was issued on 1 March and was emailed to the Editors and Fellows in advance. FAQs are available on the journal websites.

ACTION: links to be sent to Council (RM). The Publishing Managers will continue to respond to queries and the FAQs will be updated in response to particular queries.

Colleagues of SZ and SE have expressed concern about the new OA policy. NB the changing funder and publishing landscape have driven the decision that Council approved in 2022. PD a meeting has been organised for 24 March with MNRAS editors as further reassurance is required about the changes.

Society of Antiquaries of London has received a Government response on rent for Burlington House. A date is being sought for a meeting with Baroness Scott. NB value of the Courtyard given in the 2018 PwC's report commissioned by the joint societies has been rejected by Government representatives. PD to seek a long-term plan with the Property Courtyard Group. The RAS Strategy is progressing. Feedback from February Outreach Group meeting being incorporated. Membership Strategy Group needs more resources.

ACTION: PD to meet with individual strategy groups and report back to Council. IAU elections are coming up. Important for the RAS to be represented.

ACTION: details to be circulated.

5.2 Astronomical Heritage Committee minutes were received by Council.

5.3 RAS200: Presentation to Council by Sarah Jenkins Jenesys

Summative Feedback for RAS 7 years after implementation of RAS200 project. Total project reach reported an audience of 203k leaving a valuable legacy. Progression evidenced for individuals and partner organisations from RAS funding. Full report to be received for end of March.

Jenesys was thanked for their work. MB noted the value of RAS200 would not have been known without evaluation. SM agreed RAS200 has made the RAS more engaged and outward looking. PD other activity could be evaluated. ME recommended inclusion in strategy documentation.

5.4 NAM 2024. Council received a presentation by Brad Gibson on preparations at Hull for NAM 2024. Meeting to be organised by the EA Milne Centre for Astrophysics and will follow a similar programme plan to NAM 2017 with the support of Hull's conference and events coordinators. Proposals to include hybrid attendance and a range of public events. Anticipated 25% increase in costs to host the meeting.

POST MEETING: In an online vote, Council APPROVED Hull University to host NAM 2024

5.5 NB left the meeting for this item. The RAS Treasurer's honorarium was **approved**.

5.6 Minutes of Library Committee meeting were received by Council.

5.7 Minutes of CDAG Committee meeting were received by Council.

ME raised the report on bullying and harassment, and a possible launch event, stressing the sensitivity of the issue. RM Sheila Kanani is putting together a group of specialist representatives to consider recommendations for RAS and other organisations following the report. Council to see recommendations for Action Plan before they are made public.

5.8 Minutes of RAS200 Dec 2022 Committee meeting were received by Council.

5.9 Minutes of RAS200 Jan 2023 Committee meeting were received by Council.

6. Policy

- 6.1 Department for Science, Innovation and Technology information received by Council. More ministers have been appointed. RM to keep Council informed of developments.
- 6.2 Lords Science and Technology inquiry into the effects of Light and Noise Pollution on Human Health: RAS response received by Council. HD worked with RM on the response.

7. Other

- 7.1 Officers' Report – Membership was received by Council and **approved**. Alisa Barry's name to be corrected in report. Brian Murphy applied in January but has yet to be listed. Application to be checked.
- 7.2 Minutes of Ordinary Meetings February, 2023, **approved**. Beatrice did not give a talk, to be arranged for another date. Ashley King spoke however he was not named in the minutes. Minutes need to be checked that the correct speaker names are listed.

8. AOB

- 8.1 Suggested the title of 'RAS Ordinary Meeting' is changed. MB to look to options. Council member suggestions to be sent to MB.
- 8.2 The RAS should recruit student members from the various astronomy summer schools being organised.
- 8.3 RAS membership material should be sent to new PhD students in October each year. Department contacts need updating.
- 8.4 Electronic voting should be considered to reduce administration at meetings. MB ask to be sent the link to test the new voting platform.

Council rose at 15.25

10 March 2023

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