



*Advancing
Astronomy and
Geophysics*

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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**MINUTES
COUNCIL MEETING
8th FEBRUARY 2013
AT 11:00 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM**

1. INTRODUCTION AND ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Professor D.J. Southwood, Professor F. Honary, Professor B.E. Parsons, Dr. S.A. Mitton, Professor C. Tadhunter, Professor A.M. Cruise, Professor M.A. Barstow, Professor I.A. Crawford, Dr. L. Fletcher, Ms Mandy Bailey, Professor R.J. Davis, Professor D.W. Hughes, Dr. G.H. Jones, Professor D.W. Kurtz, Dr. A. Norton, Dr. S. Peacock, Professor R.E. Spencer, Professor Y. Elsworth, Dr. H.J. Fraser, and Professor S. Miller

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms P. Mortimer (Executive Secretary) and Dr. R. Massey (Deputy Executive Secretary)

APOLOGIES: Mr C.E. Barclay

The President opened the meeting and noted that three Councillors, Prof. Steve Miller, Dr. Andrew Norton and Ms. Mandy Bailey, would not be present for the full meeting as they were attending Astrofest. It was noted that in order to allow as many members of Council as possible to discuss the agenda item on RAS Elections 2013 (item 6.1) this would be discussed early, after agenda item 3.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 14th December 2012 were approved with a number of minor changes.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising were covered under other agenda items.

4. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

4.1 Astronomy Forum

The Astronomy Forum is scheduled for 12th February, the CEO from STFC will present on their budget for 2013/14, the spending review for 2015/16 and the triennial review of Research Councils.

4.2 External Geophysics Forum

The first meeting of the external Geophysics Forum was cancelled because of snow in the London area. The President held an introductory teleconference instead. A key issue raised by participants was that in addition to NERC they would like to engage with STFC on cross over science subjects that now fall to STFC following changes in responsibility within the Research Councils. The meeting has been rescheduled for 15th March 2013.

4.3 James Dungey

The President was pleased to report that the James Dungey 90th birthday celebrations had been very successful, with around 80 people attending the lecture held in the Geological Society and 130 at the evening celebration at Imperial. A & G plans to publish a short report of the lecture and an article written by the President on the Festspiel.

5. TREASURER'S BUSINESS

The Treasurer introduced his report.

5.1 Membership Subscriptions for 2014

The Treasurer proposed that membership subscriptions are uplifted by the Consumers Price Index, currently 2.7%.

The rates, uplifted from 2012 by the CPI will be:

	2012	2013 Proposed
Rate 1	£27	£28
Rate 2	£68	£70
Rate 3	£103	£106

The reduced rates for the first year of membership would be:

Rate 1R	£1	£1
Rate 2R	£45	£46
Rate 3R	£68	£70

Council agreed with the suggested uplift that will be presented for approval at the AGM in May 2013.

5.2 Staff Remuneration Package

The Treasurer reminded Council that the Murrin Report on staff remuneration, accepted by Council in October 2011, recommended that the existing pay structure should be maintained,

including an annual increment based on a cost-of-living increase, rooted in the RPI, and subject to annual approval by the Council. As such he proposed the following increases for 2013.

Effective date	RPI	% Increase in RPI	% Increase in Staff remuneration	MNRAS		GJI		Treasurer £/yr	A&G Production contract £/per issue
				Editor in Chief £/yr	Editors £/yr	Editor in Chief £/yr	Editors £/yr		
31/12/11	239.4			7,470	4,980	1,260	840	4,980	3,015
31/12/12	246.8	3.09	3.1	7,710	5,140	1,305	870	5,140	3,110

The Treasurer and Deputy Executive Secretary withdrew as the increases would pertain to themselves. The Executive Secretary did not withdraw as her salary is linked to academic pay scales, based on the Higher Education Single Pay Spine, documented by UCU (University and College Union.)

It was noted that:

- due to staff changes the Society's overall salary budget and pension costs outlined in the Operations Plan will reduce this year.
- the Murdin report had recommended that the Society carry out a study of the market comparability of staff salaries every few years and that this is planned for 2014/15.

Professor Y. Elsworth proposed that the application of RPI or CPI could be a topic for discussion at the Away Day.

Council approved the proposed increase in staff remuneration.

5.3 Pension Scheme Update

The Treasurer advised that the Society operates two pension schemes, a small defined benefit scheme with 2 active members (and 16 pensioners/preserved members) and a defined contribution scheme with 10 active members. The pension schemes are overseen by a separate set of Trustees, namely Prof. Cruise, Prof. Barstow and Mr Struthers. Both pension schemes will be revalued by a firm of actuaries for audit purposes with January 1st 2013 as the valuation date.

The defined benefit scheme will reduce to one active member later in 2013 and this represents a particular challenge given that the contributions and proceeds will not be averaged across many individual career patterns.

The Society has been paying £53k per year into the defined benefit pension scheme to bring it into balance over five years but the untimely death of Peter Hingley has reduced the future

commitments and the result of the revaluation may be a substantially different financial picture for this fund.

It was noted that the Trustees of the Pension Fund had met to agree the disbursement of the Death in Service benefits to Peter Hingley's beneficiary.

Council noted the intended revaluation of the pension schemes.

5.4 Appointment of Auditors

In line with best practice, the Society had market tested the provision of its audit services. A small working group comprising the Treasurer, RAS accountant, Executive Secretary, Dr Kieren Leech, Prof. Allan Willis and Mr J. Gonsalves analysed bids from six companies experienced in auditing in the charity sector, and called four companies to interview. A unanimous decision was reached to seek the appointment of Buzzacott as the auditors for both the main accounts and the RAS.

Council agreed the proposed appointment of Buzzacott as auditors for the Societies main accounts and pension scheme accounts that will be presented for approval at the AGM in May 2013.

5.5 Proposed Open Access Charges

Council noted the following:

- the RCUK has published guidelines on Open Access publishing and that these require research council grant holders to publish in journals that provide the means to publish in open access format.
- both MNRAS and GJI are compliant with these guidelines.
- for authors wishing to use the publishers OA procedures an Author Processing Charge (APC) will be required.
- the Society has set APCs at a level consistent with that suggested by the Finch Report on Open access Publishing
 - The APC for MNRAS has been set at £1450 per article.
 - The APC for GJI has been set at £1500 per article.
- authors of articles published in MNRAS and GJI have the right to post pre-prints, re-prints and the publisher's formatted pdf on various repositories without paying APCs.

There was some discussion on the difference in approach taken by authors for MNRAS and GJI and, the former make significant use of ArXiv, a repository for pre-publication articles, whilst this is not normal practice for the former. It was suggested that the Geophysics community should consider using a similar system.

5.6 Investment Policy

The Treasurer had drafted a statement of the Society's investment policy that confirms compliance with charity law and sets out the principles for investment.

There was some discussion on who was responsible for determining which investment activities might threaten the charitable purposes of the society. It was agreed that the ultimate responsibility rests with the Trustees, (Council members). It was noted that Society does not

have a bespoke investment portfolio, rather a financial investment package managed by Newton, overseen by the Finance Committee.

It was agreed that Council would be given the opportunity to review the investment package, perhaps as an adjunct to the new Councillor induction brief. **ACTION: Treasurer**

Council agreed the following investment policy:

“ The Royal Astronomical Society invests funds in order to provide income to support its charitable purposes and to provide for future uncertainties in compliance with the guidelines issued by the UK Charity Commissioners. Investment is made according to the following principles:

- 1. Funds will be invested in stable, legally constituted bodies chosen to maximise the Society’s investment income in the medium and long term.*
- 2. No investment will be made in any financial concern whose activities in practice threaten the charitable purposes of the Society, namely the encouragement of Astronomy, Geophysics and related subjects.*
- 3. No investment shall be made in a financial concern if there is evidence that they would be disapproved of by a majority of RAS members.*
- 4. No investment will be made in the manufacture or marketing of tobacco products“*

The investment policy will be publicly displayed on the Society’s website.

5.7 Bequest Criteria for Medals and Awards

The Treasurer reminded Council that changes to Hannah Jackson nee Gwilt and Price Medals and the Fowler Award were agreed at the last Council meeting (C(2012/12)9.3), subject to these not violating the terms of any bequests. He advised that historical precedence for justifiable changes being made to the conditions of award were possible provided they were agreed with the Charity Commission.

The proposed changes to the Hannah Jackson nee Gwilt medal and Fowler Award were agreed. Prof. D. Hughes expressed his concern that the Hannah Jackson nee Gwilt medal was to be only to be awarded in celebration of the history of astronomy once every five years. The Chairs of the Awards Committee explained that this amendment had been made to improve the chance of an award being made under the history of astronomy category as very few proposals had been received previously. Prof. D. Hughes advised that the RAS Astronomy and Heritage Committee may propose that a new medal is established to celebrate the history of astronomy. The Treasurer advised that it would be advantageous to make such a proposal alongside the receipt of a specific bequest.

The President declared a conflict of interest, as he was a benefactor of the Price Medal, he asked Council to postpone deliberations on amending this award until he is out of Office.

5.8 Accounts for NAM 2012

Council noted the financial outcome of NAM 2012.

6. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

6.1 RAS ELECTIONS 2013

Professor Martin Barstow was not present for this agenda item, as he has a conflict of interest as a Presidential candidate.

A. Election of President

Council were reminded of the process agreed at the December meeting:

- Council would consider the merits of the three suggestions proposed by the PEC and decide on their preferred candidate.
- This name and the names of the two individuals nominated by the membership would appear on the ballot paper, without any indication of the proposers (whether that is from the membership or from Council.)
- An explanatory note for the membership would be provided alongside the ballot paperwork.
- In future the PEC would only be established if required at the start of December and informal approaches made to individuals in January.

Members of the PEC briefed Council on the individuals they have suggested as candidates for President. Curriculum vitae for the three individuals had been tabled.

Council discussed the merits of the individuals suggested by the PEC, including their existing appointments and time available to carry out the duties of President, their breadth of interest across the spectrum of subjects that the RAS supports and promotes. A vote was taken and the preferred candidate chosen.

It was noted that all the individuals who had been either nominated by the Fellowship or suggested by the PEC were aware of the specific circumstances of holding a ballot this year and happy to continue with the process.

There was some reiteration of the discussion held at the December Council meeting on how to manage the suggestions made by the PEC. It was agreed that Council would proceed as agreed at the December meeting (set out in bullets above).

Dr Helen Fraser expressed her significant opposition to the agreed position and emphasised how important it is for this situation not to arise again; the establishment of the PEC later in the year, after Fellowship nominations are known, should ensure this does not occur again.

Prof. Steven Miller also expressed his significant opposition to the position taken by Council and asked the President to explain the results of Council deliberations to the unsuccessful PEC suggested candidates.

It was agreed that the PEC will only be established if inadequate or unsatisfactory candidates were proposed from the Fellowship. Council would review the ballot paper in December and finalise the ballot paper at the February meeting. This topic could be discussed at the RAS Away Day once the President-elect is in post.

B. Election of Officers, Vice Presidents and Councillors

Council had been provided with short pen pictures of the perspective Councillors, except for T.G Priya who was yet to provide details¹. It was noted that Dr Sohan Jheeta had agreed to be considered as a G candidate rather than an A candidate.

C. Approval of balloting list

Council reviewed the ballot list. The following process points were agreed: the A or G distinction would not be made for Presidential candidates. For all entries on the ballot paper, first name, initials and surname would be displayed, titles would not be displayed.

It was noted that the two Vice President positions are unopposed. Council approved these two positions.

Council will agree on a name for the position of A Secretary out of committee.

D. Supporting paperwork to the RAS Elections 2013

The Executive Secretary advised that she would make minor amendments to the explanatory note on the election process and seek approval out of committee by email.

Council will also be asked to approve the Letter to Fellows, signed by the Senior Secretary, inviting the membership to vote, setting out the voting procedures, providing the biographical details of candidates and likely composition of Council in 2013.

The President reminded Council that the specific discussion (with names of candidates) held under this agenda item is confidential.

6.2 2012 Annual report (planning)

Council noted the timetable for drafting and approving the 2012 Annual report. The Executive Secretary advised that the Treasurer and Executive will work with the new auditors and accountant to refresh the format of the annual report for next year.

6.3 Membership of the Committee on Diversity in Astronomy and Geophysics (CDiAG)

Dr Lyndsay Fletcher introduced the paper from CDiAG and thanked Dr. Sheila Peacock for her efforts to secure a G member for CDiAG. It was noted that the committee could benefit from G representation and a member can be co-opted at a later date.

Council approved the appointment of Prof. Vik Dhillon and Ms Mandy Bailey as members for 3 year terms

6.4 Progress report: improvements to the Electronic Infrastructure and review of Burlington House (BH) computers and servers

Prof. Ralph Spencer introduced a paper from the IT and communications working group on replacing BH PCs and server, installing a Community server and a hearing induction loop.

Key points were:

- Good news, the AV update is working well and the dedicated broadband service is expected to be fitted in BH within 2 weeks.

- A quote from the existing IT provider had been received to replace the 12 desktop PCs, the installation cost quoted was considered too high. Others tenders will be sought.
- The procurement of the network server should be done concurrently with the procurement of the PCs. One quote had been received, further quotations will be sought.
- Quotes had been received for community server annual running costs. It was recommended that the Society trial this for at least one year.
- The hearing induction loop in the lecture theatre has never worked. A quote had been received for the installation of a new induction loop driver and receiver.

There was some discussion on disposal of existing PCs. The Deputy Exec Sec advised that under a the 2005 Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment the original supplier is required to dispose of any computer equipment supplied. He would check on this position. It was agreed that otherwise the Society would offer the computers to the membership.

ACTION: Deputy Exec Sec

The ratio of backup capacity to memory space for the community server was queried. It was agreed that this would be looked into by the IT group. Also, it was noted that SQL database is not currently seen as a requirement but that it would be prudent to ensure that adding this requirement at a later date is feasible.

ACTION: IT and Communication Group

Council agreed a budget of up to £11 352 for the purchase and installation of new PCs, a budget of £8782 for the network server, that there should be a one year trial of the community server and a budget of £993.27 for the replacement of the induction loop service.

The financial figures on the cost to rent a community server were unclear. Subject to clarification Council agreed a budget of up to £1 763 for the community server.

ACTION: Deputy Exec Sec to clarify

6.5 RAS Away Day

The RAS Away Day will be held on 13/14 June 2012 in Sandbanks Hotel, Poole. Accommodation will be provided on the evenings of the 12th and 13th June 2013. The meeting will start at 09 30 on Thurs 13th June and end at lunchtime on Friday 14th June. A draft agenda will be discussed at the Council meeting in March 2013.

6.6 NAM 2013 update

The Deputy Exec. Sec advised that the website www.NAM2013.co.uk has been established, registration already works on the site. The Conference programme is not available yet. It has been agreed that the community session will be held on Wednesday 3rd July 2013. The President reminded Council that a Council meeting is scheduled for Friday 5th July and that volunteers to judge the poster sessions are required.

7. POLICY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

7.1 Draft impact booklets

The Astronomy booklet is progressing well.

Further examples on the G side are welcomed. It was agreed that existing G material should be circulated to the Geophysicist JISC mail list. **ACTION: Deputy Exec Sec**

7.2 Lords Science and Technology Committee: Inquiry into Open Access: Response from the Royal Astronomical Society

The Deputy Exec. Sec noted that two parts of Government had separately opened inquiries into Open Access in the last month. BIS are also looking into OA. He noted that timescales for response are very tight not providing the opportunity for circulating the papers to a wider stakeholder audience, such as the University POC list.

Council noted the RAS response to the Lords Science and Technology Committee Inquiry into Open Access.

8. PUBLICATIONS

Council noted the Minutes of the GJI Editorial Board Meeting, held in December 2012.

9. OTHER

9.1 Update on International engagement

The Executive Secretary briefed on the RAS visit to the American Astronomical Society's (AAS) winter meeting at the start of January in Long Beach, California. The Treasurer, Exec. Sec. and Publishing Director from OUP, Mr Ian Russell had hosted a drinks reception. It was well received. 52 RAS Fellows had booked to attend and around 80 attended on the day including a few members of the AAS Council.

It was noted that there are many lessons to ponder and possibly learn from the organisation of the AAS meeting.

The Executive Secretary had also attended the European Astronomical Society's meeting of affiliated societies in Rolle at the end of January 2013. It was noted that whilst the policy paper on increased EAS engagement in Brussels well received, no progress was made. The majority of countries attending the EAS meeting have very limited resources and showed little interest in providing resources to support such an initiative. The German Astronomical society, who hold a similar position to the RAS on this matter were not present. The President (and possibly Council) of the EAS are very reluctant to consider a move away from the EAS being a membership organisation.

On a positive note, the EAS Council have agreed to additional EAS secretariat support, they hope to fund this from increasing the number of organisational members.

6.2 Patrick Moore Commemoration

The working group established at the December Council meeting met prior to this Council meeting. Dr Helen Fraser has kindly agreed to chair the working group. They are at the early stages of considering options to celebrate the role Patrick Moore had in promoting amateur observing and encouraging amateurs and professionals into the subject. The working group plans to contact the executors of Patrick Moore's will, the Sky at Night Company, BAA and SPA to ensure that any proposals are aligned to ongoing plans.

Prof. Don Kurtz had been asked to pass on the concerns of a Fellow over Patrick Moore's distasteful political views. Dr Helen Fraser reassured Council that the working group are mindful of this and the focus of any commemoration would be work done to support astronomy.

9.3 RAS Harrison Clock Regulator

The Executive Secretary updated Council on the RAS Harrison Clock Regulator from a short brief provided by Prof. Mike Edmunds, the Chair of RAS Astronomy and Heritage Committee.

Council were reminded that Prof. Roger Davies had signed the agreement between the Horological Society, National Maritime Museum (NMM) and the RAS in May 2012. It transpires that NMM have a few amendments to make to the agreement. It was noted that the clock show case has been damaged but no damage has been done to the clock.

Prof. Mike Edmunds will provide a further report for the March Council meeting. He will invite Jonathan Betts, the NMM (and World) expert on Harrison clocks to give a short presentation at an ordinary RAS meeting towards the end of the year.

9.4 Officers Reports

Council noted the report and approved the following candidates for Fellowship:

Surname	First Name	Town/ University	Sponsor
Czajkowski	Michael	Lincolnshire	Roger O'Brien
Dharmawardena	Thavisha-Erandinie	London	Ian Howarth
Kraus	Elisa	St. Leonards on Sea	Dr Joanna F. Jarvis
McDowell	Ian	London	I.A. Crawford
Sriskantha	Hari	The University of Edinburgh	Maximilian Ruffert

Wellbrock	Anne	MSSL	Chris Arridge
Wozniakiewicz	Penelope	University of Kent	Samuel Duddy
Anthony	Margaret	London	Prof. J.P. Emerson
Bekaert	David	University of Leeds	Gregory A. Houseman
Breedt	Elmé	University of Warwick	Thomas Richard Marsh
Fegan	Emma	Abingdon	Peter Grindrod
Firth	Robert	University of Southampton	Mark Sullivan
Gillaspy	Andrew	Lewes	Membership Committee
Griffiths	Gareth	Bristol	Diana M Worrall
Harrison	Richard	Liverpool John Moores University	Ivan Baldry
Hattle	Paul	Winchester	A.J. Norton
Hirschi	Raphael	Keele University	Mandy Bailey
Hoggard	Mark	Cambridge University	Jonathan Paul
Keoghan	Rebecca	London	Prof. J.P. Emerson
Lee	Arrow	MSSL	Robert D. Bentley
Leitan	Tamara	Henley-On-Thames	I. Crawford
Lovell	Joshua	Cambridge University	M.S. Longair
Mowatt	Jessica	Porthmadog, Gwynedd	Prof. Ray Sharples
Natário	Carla	St. Albans	Dr Tim Gledhill
O'Gorman	Eamon	Woodsgift, Co. Kilkenny	Prof. Graham M. Harper

O'Hara	Jennifer	Univesrity of St. Andrews	Prof. Alan Hood
Parker	Michael	University of Cambridge	A.C. Fabian
Parker	Becky	Canterbury	J. Zarnecki
Pascual	Natalia	CESPAR, The Open University	Dr HJ Fraser
Pollo	Agnieszka	National Centre for Nuclear Research, Warsaw	Eryk Infeld
Poole	Wil	MSSL	Colin Forsyth
Salmon	David	Didcot	Prof. Ralph Spencer
Schwenzer	Susanne	The Open University	Professor Colin Pillinger
Sergison	Darryl	St. Denis, Cornwall	Tim Naylor
Stuart	Graham	University of Leeds	G.A. Houseman
Tabatabaei	Alireza	London	Membership Committee
Torry	Adam	Powys	Andrew Norton
Walmswell	Joseph	University of Cambridge	Dr John J. Eldridge
Withers	Paul	Boston University, USA	Andrew J. Ball

10. AOB

10.1 Geophysics representation in the RAS

Prof. Barry Parsons expressed his concerns that solid earth Geophysics is not as active as it should be in the Society, for example in regards to providing speakers for discussion meetings, where the main focus is seen as the BGA led meeting. It was agreed that it is

important to encourage more active participation in RAS discussion meetings that reach students and early career scientists.

It was agreed that options to encourage an increased G membership, (such as combined membership with Geological Society) could be considered at the Away Day as part of the longer term financial planning agenda item.

It was noted that the RAS POCs did not cover the full G geographical remit.

Dr Sheila Peacock kindly volunteered to be an additional RAS POC and will review the POC list with Prof. Parsons with the intention of securing additional G POCs.

ACTION: Prof. Parsons and Dr Peacock

10.2 Conflict of Interest Forms

The Exec. Sec asked Council to send their completed Conflict of Interest Forms to the Events and Awards Officer.

10.3 Garden party invitations

The Exec. Sec advised that the RAS has been offered 4 tickets (2 x2) for the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 6th June 2013 and that anyone who has not previously attended and would like to do so should send her an email by Wednesday 13th February. A ballot will be conducted.

10.4 Triennial Review

The President advised the RAS had been invited to respond to the consultation on the Triennial Review of Research Councils. Council members and RAS Points of Contact have been asked to provide input. It will be an agenda item at the forthcoming Astronomy meeting.

Council rose at 15:40.

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D. J. Southwood
President

08 March 2013