

C(2018/04) 3.

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 March 2018

1. Attendance & Apologies

Present: Professor John Zarnecki (JZ), Professor Mike Cruise (MC), Dr Nigel Berman (NB), Mr Charles Barclay (CB), Professor Mark Lester (ML), Professor Ian Crawford (IC), Professor Steve Miller (SM), Dr Paul Daniels (PAD), Dr Sheila Peacock (SP), Professor Hiranya Peiris (HP), Professor Stephen Serjeant (SS), Professor Michael Watson (MW), Dr Mandy Bailey (MB), Professor Yvonne Elsworth (YE), Professor Giovanna Tinetti (GT) and Dr Megan Argo (MA) (via Skype)

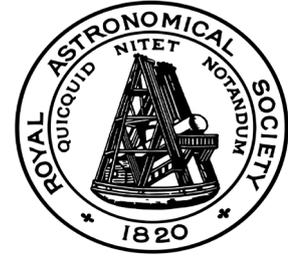
Apologies, Professor Mike Bode, Professor Brad Gibson Dr Clare Watt, Mr Mark Woodland, Dr Caitriona Jackman and Professor Lyndsay Fletcher

In Attendance: Philip Diamond (PD), Executive Director; Dr Robert Massey (RM), Deputy Executive Director

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting on 9 February 2018 were approved subject to corrections:

- Dr Paul Daniels initials to be changed to PAD to avoid confusion with Philip Diamond's initials PD and in relation to actions
- The discussion about the Carers' Grant for NAM and other conferences in item 5.8 to be taken out for confidentiality



3. President's Business

JZ reported that President of the EAS, not be able to attend EWASS/NAM for health reasons. PD will organise a card passing on Council's good wishes for a speedy recovery.

PD provided an update on the legal advice provided about the Herschel prize. PD updated on his enquiries with Buckingham Palace requesting their involvement in the 2020 celebrations, and reported that the invitation will be extended to the younger members of the royal family. **Action: PD to action**

Regarding the additional candidate for Honorary Fellowship, PD noted MC's suggestion for Don Kurtz to be contacted about the nomination Don submitted.

Action: PD to action

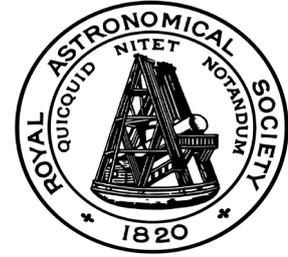
JZ attended the Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists, which recognises exceptional individuals and their accomplishments in physical and life sciences, chemistry, engineering and mathematics.

JZ reported that he and 9 others have received invitations to attend the Brexit Summit. On a query of whether there is a formal relationship between the EU and ESA, it was reported that ESA was set up before the EU and although the EU does not have its own space agency at the moment it is likely to do so in 5 years time.

4. Treasurer's Business

In summary:

- The AGM to be informed of the intended subscription rates for 2019.
- No society or club structured as a charity could both allow some of its members to offset subscriptions against personal taxation while others used Gift Aid to boost value of their subscriptions to the society
- It was agreed last year for RAS to retain the ability to offset and stop claiming Gift Aid, resulting in loss income approximately £14,000 per annum
- It is in order to make good some of that loss of income that NB is proposing for subscription rates to increase over the cost of living, targeted as much as possible to those who benefit from the offset.
- The proposed increases are modest:
 - £5 or less for all but full rate members,



- where it rises to £10, many of those will be able to claim 40% of that back, so in effect just £6 increase
- NB noted that membership subscriptions are one of the three main sources of RAS income making up about 20% and this must be protected and this is the aim of the proposed increases for 2019.

JZ invited comments from the Council:

- will be another £10 increase or will this be a one-off increase? NB responded this will be a one-off increase and hopefully a gentler rise next year.
- membership subscription fees for most professional societies are usually in the range of £400 a year or more, and RAS are unusually low in the rates charged to students
- NB requested for the council to allow people who Gift Aid to continue to do so if they so wish

Council deferred a decision until after the Budget discussion.

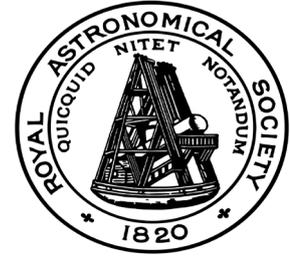
Budget:

- NB presented the budget and noted that it is not a cash flow but a budget
- The society cash flow is good; it has good reserves and can easily be considered as a going concern. However, it was noted that the society is spending all the money that comes in on an annual basis. Therefore, if RAS wants to fund new projects it will need to reduce expenditure in other areas
- We are carrying significant reserves. If we have to spend those reserves we will not have the income for doing day to day activities.
- Due diligence suggest that the Society should look at generating alternative income streams.
- NB recommended we should develop legacy giving
- Council agreed that the Treasurer's proposal should be put before the AGM.

5.1. First draft of Annual Report

PD presented the first draft of the annual report. Feedback on this and the near final version was requested. The document will be circulated to be reviewed and finalised in advance of the AGM in May. **(Action: PD to action)**

Break for Lunch.



5.2. Arrangements for the AGM and 2017 AGM Minutes, for information

PD noted that this item is for information only and if any members have any comments they should communicate those to him. SM asked whether he would get the 5 minutes he normally gets every year at the AGM and PD noted this.

5.3. Proposal for splitting the Fowler Award

Following an action from December's Council, HP and SM co-presented a proposal to have separate awards covering theory and observation

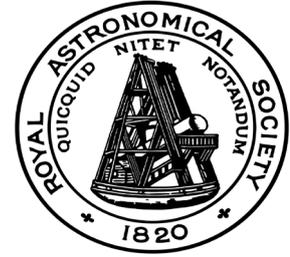
- The RAS 'A' awards panels in 2017 noted and reported to the Council an imbalance between theory and observation in the Fowler awards in astronomy. The imbalance in the awards has also been noted by the broader astronomy community
- This proposal seeks to rebalance the RAS Fowler awards to be more equitable given the structure of the field

The ensuing discussion was inconclusive about the need to split the awards. It was felt that this issue was specific to the A side and not a G problem, but if it was agreed that an A split was necessary, G would also be split.

- **Resolved:** Council asked for further information to be obtained by the office and a decision made at the next Council meeting

5.4. RAS 2018 Research Fellowships

MC presented and reported that two excellent candidates were selected from 76 applicants, many of whom were extremely high quality. Each of the 76 applicants attached two references to their application. Three additional, independent, references were sought for each of the 18 candidates long listed and these were used in the selection to the final 8 interviewees. Candidates were asked to give a 5 minute oral overview of their background including the work proposed for the fellowship. This was followed by about 10-15 minutes of detailed scientific questions from panel members.



MC highlighted four issues for future fellowship rounds and the following comments ensued:

- concern that we are picking up references without soliciting candidates' approval and permission
- the difficulty that can arise as a result of the rule that there is only one fellowship per institution i.e. potentially not being able to select exceptional candidates.

5.5. Lift repair

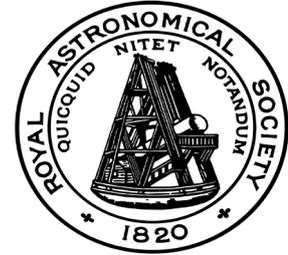
PD presented the report outlining that agreement is sought from the Council to progress the repair of the RAS lift. The plan was to delay this work until we knew more about the lease situation at Burlington House, however recent faults and new legislation have highlighted the need to carry out the work as soon as possible. PD noted the health and safety issues, access for people with mobility issues and for someone claustrophobic the issue can be a traumatic experience. The cost quoted for this work to be done is £18490 + VAT

- Council approved the lift repair work

5.6. RAS 2020 Planning

PD provided the following updates:

- This is opportunity for us to raise our profile
- There are 18-20 proposals
- We don't have a budget and we can't do this without knowing how much money that goes in for activities such as audio recordings, British Library updating and cataloguing, exhibitions, etc.
- PD noted he needs a budget to drive this forward
- A part-time Project Manager is needed to consolidate all the activities, who would come in for 3 days in a week
- PD noted he could cost up a budget for the next Council meeting but we need to calibrate the ambitions
- Council were supportive of the recruitment of a Project Manager. It was noted that the bicentenary celebrations could help with a fundraising campaign to purchase permanent premises in Burlington House or elsewhere if that became a possibility.



- **Action: PD to draw up measures of success for the Project Manager initiative to the Council in a future meeting**
- RM reported that an enquiry had been received from John Hearnshaw of the Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand regarding participation in the 2020 celebrations– a reply has been sent.

5.7. 2019 Committees membership

Council approved membership of the awards committee.

Council wished to see better representation of the G community on the International Committee.

Action: Members of Council to submit names from G community to PD, and once agreed with the Chair of the Committee, an updated list will be circulated for approval.

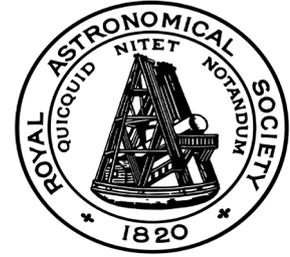
6.1. A & G Article: the RAS at the Brexit science summit

RM presented the article. RM noted that as the date of departure in March 2019 draws closer, the RAS is stepping up its work to make the case for a Brexit deal that allows continued partnerships between UK astronomers and geophysicists and our peers in the EU. RM urged members to feel to get in touch with him if they had any comments on Brexit or any other policy area in this period of evidence gathering to make our case throughout the rest of 2018.

7.1. Officers Reports, for approval of candidates proposed for Fellowship

The new candidates on the list were approved for Fellowship.

7.2. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held in February 2018 for approval



The Council approved the Minutes.

AOB

RAS Website upgrade:

RM confirmed the RAS website upgrade is progressing well.

Other upcoming events:

- MB noted special discussions meeting process in place
- SM noted Prince's Trusts Awards ceremony coming up and he will be in liaison with Prince's Trusts Awards
- SS noted for PD to remind forthcoming Publications Management Committee meeting to discuss the editorial anonymity issue