



*Advancing
Astronomy and
Geophysics*

DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8th February 2019

1. Attendance, Apologies and Introduction

PRESENT:

Prof Mike Cruise (MC), President and Chair;
Dr Nigel Berman (NB), Treasurer;
Prof Lyndsay Fletcher (LF), Senior Secretary;
Prof Mark Lester (ML), G Secretary;
Prof Anton Ziolkowski (AZ), Vice President, G;
Mr Charles Barclay (CB), Vice President A (by telephone);
Prof Ian Crawford, (IC) Vice President (G);
Dr Paul Daniels (PAD);
Dr Sheila Peacock (SP);
Dr Megan Argo (MA);
Prof Steve Miller (SM);
Mr Kevin Kilburn (KK);
Dr Claire Foullon (CF);
Prof Lorraine Hanlon (LH);
Dr Stacey Habbergham-Mawson (SHM), Vice President (A);
Prof William Chaplin (WC);

APOLOGIES:

Dr Mandy Bailey (MB), A Secretary;
Dr Clare Watt (CW);
Prof Giovanna Tinetti (GT);
Prof Mike Watson (MW);
Dr Jane MacArthur (JM)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Philip Diamond (PD), Executive Director;
Dr Robert Massey (RM), Deputy Executive Director;
Ms Siobhan Adeusi (SA), Executive Assistant

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting on December 14th December 2018 were approved subject to corrections to the attendance list as follows:

- a. Prof Ian Crawford was present
- b. Prof Lyndsay Fletcher's name was corrected
- c. Dr Stacey Habbergham-Mawson's name was corrected

Dr Foullon asked that acronyms should be spelled out in full in the first instance of useage, for example: Specialist Discussion Meeting (SDM).

Other items in the minutes:

It was agreed by Council that the paragraph relating to the Burlington House lease should be redacted from the public version for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

An issue raised by Prof Crawford had not been recorded in the minutes. This related to the definition of the awards and he had stated that:

- In the Chapman and Price awards –a “single specific investigation” for which these awards are made need not necessarily be for a single paper, and
- In the Fowler and Winton awards – The Committee suggests that rather than the “time of nomination” being the relevant deadline the deadline should be “close of nominations” for completion of the PhD, so that the validity of nominations does not depend on the (arbitrary) date of nomination.

3. President’s Business

3.2 The President reported on his activities since the last meeting:

He chaired the RAS Committee chairs meeting which was useful and welcomed by Committee chairs. There were several agreed actions including: the use of information provided during membership assessment to inform Council of possible Council members having specific, non-astronomical or geophysical skills; Committee chairs to copy their budget requests to the chair of the Finance Committee prior to being sent to Council for approval and the editor of A&G should be made ex officio member of the International Committee in recognition of the important role A&G plays in keeping contact with our overseas members.

The President attended the AAS winter meeting in Seattle. Professor Sir James Hough gave an excellent historical talk about the development of gravitational wave detectors. This was part of the RAS-AAS agreement to share medal winners’ lectures. The RAS held an evening reception at the AAS in Seattle which was well attended and much appreciated by those who came. The CEO of the AAS gave a short and positive speech as did the RAS Executive Director and President.

The RAS Fellowship panel met via telecon to shortlist some candidates for interview. There was good agreement on the final list of five candidates. The interviews will be held on February 22nd.

The President attended the UKRI meeting to discuss the Infrastructure Roadmap. A draft document had been available for comment but needs quite a lot of reformatting.

SHM remarked that the President hadn’t mentioned the recent Points of Contact meeting that he had attended. She found it a very positive experience, in particular it was good to hear about what young people wanted.

She suggested that it should be an annual event. The President agreed with that assessment of the meeting and a report would be available at the next Council meeting.

3.2 A written report from the EAS meeting in Paris was provided.

The EAS meeting was very useful. The EAS has changed its membership fee structure which may make joint meetings with RAS more difficult in future. He also advised that the French government are unhappy with the cost of the Astronomy & Astrophysics journal. He was also asked (at short notice) to make a presentation on RAS publishing activity and compared open access to the current subscription based model. In order to achieve high quality publications there needed to be informed and independent peer reviewing and a well edited version of record. Whether in Open Access or in the subscription model, achieving these objectives will cost money.

4. Treasurer's Business

4.1 Treasurer's Report

The treasurer reported that the rent demand for the period of the lease up to 2015 has now been received and is higher than expected. There is a wish to wind up the DB pension scheme, and in order to do this the Pension Scheme trustees need to review the governing documents (deeds and rules). The Death in Service benefit scheme enjoyed by our staff is being reviewed by our pension advisers.

All RAS staff members left the room for the next points.

The Treasurer proposed a cost of living increase for staff who had been in service for more than 3 months and also asked for Council to agree some salary increases proposed by the Executive Director for individuals to acknowledge their additional responsibilities.

Council agreed to the cost of living increase and the individual salary increases.

The main discussion of the Treasurer's report concerned the rent demand on Burlington House and how the RAS would deal with it, given that it was higher than the amount put aside for this purpose. NB said that it would be covered from the reserves. There were also some questions regarding the budget deficit but MC asked if that conversation could be deferred to another date, important as it was, because the discussion about the lease was a priority at this meeting.

The president drew Council's attention to the Action Status report and asked if it could form a part of the minutes in future. It was also suggested that they should be presented in such a way that the actions related more clearly to the minutes.

Action: Office in conjunction with MC

5. Organisation & Structure

5.1 RAS Council Elections

LF reported on the letter to fellows encouraging them to vote in Council elections, and highlighted that this year there are five Councillor positions open, four for the usual term of three years and one for one year due to the resignation of a Councillor.

SM requested that nominees were listed alphabetically under each category and this was agreed.

Action: Office to amend document before it is sent out.

5.2 Burlington House lease - confidential discussion redacted

5.3 RAS 2020/brand

Christine Losecaat delivered a presentation to provoke input for the design brief for the re-brand. CL had previously presented to staff on the plans for 2020 and their thoughts and ideas on this were already incorporated into the presentation. The main points from the discussion were:

- **Motto:**

Some Councillors like the Latin motto and want to retain it, some don't. It also seems that we currently have two slightly different translations in use, neither of which are believed to be correct.

ACTION: NB to agree the correct translation.

- **Telescope Emblem**

Most agreed that the telescope image in the current logo is difficult to reproduce although there is some affection for the emblem. The use of a telescope unfortunately does not represent geophysics and it is also not the way most astrophysicists observe the Universe these days.

It was agreed that we could look at retaining some of the heritage assets of the current brand for formal materials (e.g. medals / Fellow Certificates) and develop a more contemporary brand for everyday use. There was a suggestion that we might explore the use of waves in any graphic rendition as it covers electromagnetic, seismic, gravitational and heat waves. A roundel shape was also favoured by some, representing both the Earth and Stars.

- **Strapline:**

Many Councillors did not want to lose the word 'advancing' from the strapline. Christine Losecaat would like to come back with alternative suggestions as it is a heavily used generic word in many learned society's strap lines.

- **Core Purpose:**

Some Councillors did not like the use of the word 'humanity' in the suggested core mission as it carries religious connotations. It was agreed that the line 'Understanding humanity's place in the universe' be replaced with: 'Understanding our planet and the Universe' around us'.

There was some discussion around the words 'world-leading scientists' as Councillors felt that they did not want to position themselves / recognise themselves as 'globally the best'. CL suggested losing the word 'world's' and just referring to Fellows as leading scientists in the fields of astronomy and geophysics. However some Council members were still unhappy with the phrase.

- **Values:**

The values presented to Council were generally felt to be appropriate. It was pointed out that some of the values, as presented, were descriptions rather than values and just needed a simple rewrite whilst retaining the meaning.

It was agreed to add a value on being open and inclusive

It was agreed that the use of the word humanity in the context of our values was acceptable.

It was agreed that we should make reference to 'safeguarding our future'

5.4 CDAG Minutes

The minutes from the CDAG meeting were noted by Council. SHM commented that the committee was down on numbers and asked if there should be a call for new members. SP offered to find a solid earth geophysicist for the committee. ML has not yet finished his term and should remain on committee until a replacement is found.

Action: SP and SHM to find new committee member

5.5 RAS 200 Minutes

The Minutes from the RAS 200 meeting were noted. SM reported that the grants fall into two categories namely really good and the not so good. SM described the issues with a few of the projects.

LF commented that the minutes were hard to follow as it appeared that some of the narrative should come under actions.

Action: Office to work on format of minutes

5.6 EOC Minutes

The minutes of the EOC meeting were noted. CB commented that he was not present in person at the meeting, but had dialled in.

Action: Office to correct the minutes

In response to a question about the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing RM reported that we were working with the IAU and also contributing to the Woolwich Moon festival

5.7 Library Committee Minutes

The Library Committee minutes were noted.

5.8 Review of Code of Conduct

SM gave an overview of the document produced by the working group and distributed to Council. The working group proposed to separate the code from the disciplinary procedures and they attempted to ensure the code covered all eventualities.

Council discussed various scenarios that the code needs to cover and asked where it would come into play, for example if fellow A bullied fellow B but off the RAS premises, would the code apply? MC reported that RAS was taking

legal advice on generic issues and that advice would guide the revisions to the code. LH commented that if a fellow informs us of bullying/harassment etc. then the RAS has at least a pastoral responsibility and this should be recognised.

PD suggested that there needs to be something in the code about breaking the law and levels of misbehaviour outside of the RAS which we would consider unacceptable.

It was also suggested that looking at the language in the code of conduct for meetings may be necessary.

SM asked for comments to be sent to him.

Action: Council to send comments to SM

6. Policy and Public Engagement

Papers 6.1-6.3 were noted.

6.4 Plan S

Paper 6.4 was noted, SP declared that she was on the Publishing Committee of the Geological Society and hence had a conflict of interest.

There was a brief discussion regarding the implications of Plan S, with comments from PAD who suggested that if the charges for Open Access in the RAS journals were too high, people will publish elsewhere.

7. Other

7.1 Minutes of the Ordinary meetings

The minutes of the ordinary Meetings were agreed.

7.2 Officer's report (Membership)

The nominations for membership were approved by Council

7.3 Royal Garden Party

RAS were offered 4 places at the Garden Party in Buckingham Palace.

Council members were asked to let PD know by Monday 11 February if they wanted to be nominated.

7.4 Date of July Council Meeting

The date of the July Council Meeting was agreed as 3 July.

8. AOB

PD reported on the Code of Conduct case which is being investigated. The Officers will meet soon to make a decision on how to proceed before reporting back to Council.

SP reported that the Geological Society are celebrating a year of space in 2021 and suggested that RAS could participate in some cross-courtyard activities related to this.

Council rose at 3.30 p.m.

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Professor Mike Cruise

8th March 2019