

DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 December 2019

1. Attendance and Apologies

PRESENT:

Prof Emma Bunce (EB) President-Elect and Chair
Dr Nigel Berman (NB), Treasurer;
Dr Mandy Bailey (MB), A Secretary;
Prof Mark Lester (ML), G Secretary;
Prof Anton Ziolkowski (AZ), Vice President, G;
Dr Paul Daniels (PAD) Vice President, A;
Dr Mahesh Anand (MAH), Vice President, G
Dr Megan Argo (MA);
Prof William Chaplin (WC);
Dr Jane MacArthur (JM);
Prof Lorraine Hanlon (LH);
Dr Claire Follon (CF);
Mr Martin Lunn (MLL);
Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU);

APOLOGIES:

Prof Mike Cruise (MC), President;
Prof Steve Miller (SM);
Prof Lyndsay Fletcher (LF). Senior Secretary;
Dr Stacey Habergham-Mawson (SHM), Vice President (A);
Mr Kevin Kilburn (KK);
Ms Indhu Varatharajan (IV);
Dr Clare Watt (CW);
Dr Matt Middleton (MM);

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

2.1 Minutes of October 11 2019

The Minutes of October 11 2019 were APPROVED by Council

2.2 Action Status Report

5.3 It was agreed that nominees should be asked to provide a biography with their nomination in order that Council can make an informed decision when considering the nominations.

ACTION: membership Officer and SA to review the form

Public policy topics:

RM advised that climate change would be covered in the external public lectures taking place as part of the bicentenary celebrations.

5.5 MB brought a point previously raised by LF regarding the difficulty of reading some minutes.

ACTION: Office to provide a standard template for minutes

3. President's Business

The President's' business was noted in his absence

4. Treasurer's Business

4.1 Treasurer's Report

The Budget:

- There is only a small shortfall; much of which relates to the 2020 activities which are time limited
- The investments have done well and recovered some losses from last year
- There have been two requests for funding from committees following a call earlier in the year

Budget APPROVED

CF commented that previously Council had discussed asking universities to contribute to the cost of the fellowships.

EB said she will put this onto the agenda for the next fellowships meeting.

ACTION: EB

Sian Prosser (SP), RAS librarian would like to hold the LISA (Library and Information Services in Astronomy) conference London this year, hosted by the RAS. There will be some financial risk attached which could be mitigated by sponsorship. It will require a time commitment from SP plus IT support.

APPROVED in principle subject to the Treasurer and Executive Director being satisfied that the regulatory, reputational and financial risks can properly be managed.

4.2 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts was received by Council.

4.3. Updated Risk Register

Some amendments had been made in relation to succession planning and the building.

PD commented that Council should read and feed back on the register but also think about other risks. He also suggested that each risk should be assigned someone to be responsible for it.

ACTIONS: Treasurer

Council to review register

PD to add this to the ASR

5. Organisation and Structure

5.1. RAS Council elections

MA was asked to leave the room as she had been nominated for a position on Council. RM commented that there were only two women on the list of nominees.

EB asked if we should do more to seek nominees.

PD remarked the one candidate had not specified whether or not they were an A or G applicant.

ACTION: PD to write to them and ask.

The list was APPROVED by Council.

5.2 Burlington House lease update

PD gave a report on the situation as follows:

- There has been no activity by civil servants in the run up to the General Election
- The rent demand had an increase of 12% but this was reduced to 8% with no reason was given. It is possibly because the Societies were asked to undertake much work in relation to a potential new lease
- Negotiations will resume once the election is over and it is known who is the relevant Minister to engage with

5.3 Awards Committee Report

PAD took as over as Chair from SHM. Discussions went well. Both panels agreed that the Agnes Mary Clark medal should go to the Heritage Committee, as it was better placed to determine the recipient.

APPROVED by Council

ACTION: PD to contact the Chair of the Heritage Committee to discuss.

CF commented that she was concerned about the number of nominations received.

ML responded that there are more nominations received than in previous years. He will ask the Awards and Grants officer to do a breakdown on nominations over the last five years, and will report back.

LH remarked that the citation for the A gold medal winner did not read well. She offered to re-write it.

ACTION: LH to re-write the citation

AZ thanked ML for his work on the G panel.

Council APPROVED the award winners

EB suggested that panel chairs consolidate ideas and write a paper for consideration at a future meeting.

ACTION: Awards Committee chairs to provide a 'suggestions for change to the process' document to be discussed at a future Council meeting

Thanks were also given to the Awards and Grants Officer, Nush Cole.

5.4 Library Annex project update

The Library project update was received by Council.

5.6 Minutes of RAS200 Sky and Earth

The Minutes of RAS200 Sky and Earth Committee Meeting were received by Council.

5.7 Minutes of CDAG

The Minutes of the CDAG meeting were received by Council. PD asked Council if they wished to undertake disability awareness training. No-one requested this.

5.8 Approach to Scrutineers

PD asked for Council's approval to approach the following people to ask if they wish to be scrutineers for the election to Council:

1. Gail Campbell
2. Andrew Norton
3. Peter Grimley
4. Sean Ryan

Council APPROVED the approach.

ACTION: PD to write to the proposed scrutineers.

5.9 New Chair for membership Committee

ML reported that the Chair, Richard Holme, had stood down and there had been two applications for the role, Mike Hapgood and (name redacted).

Council voted for Mike Hapgood.

ACTION: PD to write to both applicants

5.11 Membership of CDAG committee for approval

ML was listed as VP, this is incorrect.

The Committee was APPROVED by Council.

5.12 New code of Conduct

This item will be discussed at the next meeting as the principals involved were not in attendance at the meeting.

ACTION: All to send comments to SM

6. Strategy – away day outcomes

The following recommendations were APPROVED:

- Deferring Open Access for one year
- Creating a working group for a new OA journal

ACTION: interested parties to email PD

- The property paper with financial information for March
- The creation of a Property working group

ACTION: Interested parties to let PD know and PD to convene

PD asked Council if they want to investigate setting up a youth scheme. This was following a paper presented by MC at the away day. The following comments were made:

- It could cost the RAS more than it will generate
 - Is this the right age group to target? May be better and under graduate level
 - MC's proposition is costly but maybe it is possible to do it more cheaply?
 - The E& O committee could be asked to write a paper
 - RM is already working on ideas for an early careers network for 2020
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- It was suggested that RAS materials could be sent to schools and that visits could also be made. It was pointed out that the E&O team are very small with little capacity for this.
 - It was suggested that the E&O committee and Membership committee have a joint meeting to work through ideas.

ACTION: PD to contact chairs

- PD suggested another away day

ACTION: Office to send dates

7. Bicentenary

7.1 200th Anniversary update

PD gave an overview of events to celebrate the bicentenary:

- The running order of events for the gala reception on January 23
- The RAS stamps will be launched on 31 January
- The deadline to commenting on the new trademark is 22 January, after which we can use it freely subject to no challenge
- The podcasts will begin in January
- There will be a holding page on the RAS website, which will be populated
- The planetarium will be set up on 14 February and be running until 28 February
- The Council members will be photographed using old style plates. This will require sitting for some time

ACTION: Council to inform PD if they are not interested in this process

- A Parliamentary reception will be held in November
- Public Lectures will also take place around the country
- Both the History of Science and the Herschel Museums will hold exhibitions of our artefacts

7.2 Licensing

Council requested a paper outlining the outcome of the work the licensing companies would undertake for us.

ACTION: PD to request a paper from Christine Losecaat

8. POLICY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

8.1 GCSE Astronomy: awards for top candidates

8.2 Changes and Choices: Advice on future frameworks for international collaboration on research and innovation

8.3 The UK's research and innovation infrastructure: opportunities to grow our capability

8.4 Political party election manifestos 2019

The above papers were received by Council

9 Other

9.1 Officers Reports

The Membership Officer's report was received by Council and all nominations for membership were APPROVED

9.2 Confidential discussion - redacted

9.3 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 11 October

9.4 Minutes of the ordinary Meeting 8 November

The above Minutes were received and APPROVED by Council

10. AOB

Council rose at 15.00

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Professor Emma Bunce

13 December 2019