



*Advancing  
Astronomy and  
Geophysics*

## **DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11 October 2019**

### **1. Attendance and Apologies**

#### **PRESENT:**

Prof Mike Cruise (MC), President and Chair;  
Prof Emma Bunce (EB) President-Elect;  
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 (MA), Vice President, G Dr  
Megan Argo (MA); via skype  
Prof William Chaplin (WC);  
Prof Steve Miller (SM);  
Dr Jane MacArthur (JM);  
Prof Lorraine Hanlon (LH);  
Dr Claire Follon (CF); Mr  
Martin Lunn (MLL);  
Dr Matt Middleton (MM); via skype

#### **APOLOGIES:**

Prof Lyndsay Fletcher (LF). Senior Secretary;  
Dr Stacey Habbergham-Mawson (SHM), Vice President (A);  
Mr Kevin Kilburn (KK);  
Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU);  
Ms Indhu Varatharajan (IV);  
Dr Clare Watt (CW);

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

Confidential discussion - redacted

### **2. Minutes & Matters Arising**

2.1 Minutes of May 10 2019

CF asked if the reinstatement of (name redacted) is correct.

Action: Office will check with the Membership Officer.

## 2.2 Minutes of July 3 2019

MB advised that a member of the A' Awards panel has stepped down due to ill health. It was proposed that Ian Howarth replace them. **Council approved the new panel member.**

## 2.3 Action Status Report

The Action Status Report was received by Council. PD gave an overview of the actions since the May meeting.

ML commented that some of the older actions need to be closed off.

ACTION PD and MC to meet to discuss.

## 3. President's Business

Council received the President's report outlining his activities since the July Council meeting. Questions were asked about the Bicentenary Gala Event on January 23 2020, with the following points made:

- Her Majesty the Queen was invited but cannot attend.
- Martin Rees will be giving a talk.
- The celebrations are currently on budget.
- The capacity of the venue is 250 people.
- Invited guests include Council and partners; research groups/departments will be asked to invite some young people. RAS staff and past Presidents will also be invited in addition to some participants in RAS200 projects.
- Fellows will be invited to apply for tickets on a first come first serve basis

## 4. Treasurer's Business

### 4.1 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts was received by Council.

### 4.2 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer asked Council to approve the new signatories for the pension fund as the current list is outdated.

APPROVED by Council.

The Treasurer reminded Council that committees requiring budgets need to do so via the Treasurer, with the following information:

1. Amount requested;
2. The three most recent years spend;
3. Details of the proposed use of the budget; and
4. Explanations if there is a large variance between 1 and 2 above.

## 5. Organisation and Structure

5.1 The AGM Minutes were received by Council and AGREED.  
PD remarked that there will be guidance given to the scrutineers on their roles and responsibilities next year.

### 5.2 Executive Director's Update

The Executive Director gave an update of the following matters:

The lease

RAS has received a holding email from MHCLG. Changes to ministerial responsibilities has delayed the proposed discussions, individually with the Courtyard Societies, The Society should consider other options.

Building issues

The recent water ingress caused damage to the staff room and lift shaft. The ED had to push hard with the Landlord's agents to get a contractor to try and fix the issue. The broken tiles will be replaced, the ED is waiting for the schedule.

NAM 2020

The first meeting of the NAM Steering group took place with Robert Massey in attendance and Kim Clube and Sue Bowler participating via telephone. Due to the lack of a suitable venue in Bath for the Awards Dinner, it will take place at the Bristol Aerospace Museum. There will be opportunities for other public events to take place at other Bath venues, e.g. the Herschel Museum.

Open House 2019

This event was very successful with over 400 attendees. PD thanked the staff and volunteers, in particular, Sian Prosser the librarian.

PAD asked if staff contracts contained a clause about working at the weekends. NB remarked that the front office staff already work long hours during the week and he is not sure that there is a need to hire extra staff for weekends. RM confirmed that when a previous librarian opened the library one Saturday per month there were very few attendees.

### 5.3 Call for nominations for election to Council.

CF remarked that the nominations form was very old fashioned and perhaps that part could be done via email. NB said that it would not be possible to verify the signatures if the electronic and hard copies were mixed. A query was raised regarding getting the nominators signatures in time and perhaps for email addresses should be requested.

**ACTION:** Office to review form.

The Form and Letter were APPROVED by Council subject to a change on the letter from: "and delivers the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up"

to: "and delivers the charitable outcomes required". **Action Office**

### 5.4 Update on Code of Conduct

PD thanked the group for their work on updating the Code. It will be discussed at the next Council Meeting.

SM asked that comments be sent to the group.

## **5.5 Update on bicentenary**

Council received an update on activities for the bicentenary celebrations.

## **6. POLICY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Report on EWASS and EAS business**

The Deputy Executive Director gave a report on the societies' business meeting that took place at EWASS in Lyon in June. The new membership scheme is working well, with around 2,000 people from European member societies exercising their right to join the EAS. EWASS 2020 will be held in Leiden (two weeks before NAM) and subsequently in Krakow or Copenhagen. Mike Bode, the EAS special representative in Brussels, met various MEPs, but the then imminent European elections meant that many were campaigning and the European Parliament committees (and other governance structures) will not be reconstituted until the autumn. EWASS in Leiden will include a careers event, and RM offered to help with this.

### **6.2 Science and technology Committee – Balance of spending**

The Council received the paper on the Science and technology Committee's Balance of Spending.

### **6.3 NAM 2019 coverage**

Council received two papers detailing press coverage of NAM 2019

### **6.4 Draft Policy Process**

The Council approved the new Policy Process document. The Deputy Executive Director gave a brief overview of the approach, including a new Policy Group, which he invited members of Council to join.

AZ commented that RAS policy positions on Global Warming should focus on the science. RM remarked that the RAS, with other learned societies, signed a Climate Communique before the 2015 Paris Conference. This urged governments to demonstrate leadership by recognising the risks climate change poses, embracing appropriate policy and technological responses, and seizing the opportunities of low-carbon and climate-resilient growth. See <https://ras.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-06/21-07-15-climate-communique.PDF>

MC asked if there is a need for an open and informed debate and possibly doing some events around this matter.

NB thought a debate was an excellent idea, but care is needed to promote good science. The RAS should not be involved in areas where they have little expertise.

ACTION: All to think about suitable subjects for debate.

MLL said that anything that we put out must be suitable for the general public to understand.

### **6.5 LGBT+ Report**

PD gave an over view of the report which was received by Council. He asked Council to consider which of the recommendations RAS should follow.

NB asked if we could institute an award or medal.

PD suggested an award or possibly grant for promoting diversity.

MC proposed that the Officers consider the matter of an award.

ML suggested an award for services to inclusivity. He also suggested training for Council may be required, in response to the report

## 7. PUBLICATIONS

### 7.1 Minutes of the MNRAS Committee

Minutes of the MNRAS Committee meeting were received by Council.

A question was asked regarding whether or not the anonymity of authors caused an issue, but Council were advised that it did not.

## 8 Other

### 8.1 Officer's report, candidates for Fellowship

The candidates for fellowship were APPROVED by Council.

NB suggested that we need data on when students move on to full membership.

ACTION: NB to look at this with the membership officer

SM asked if the Membership Committee look at the list of new Fellows closely.

ML replied that those re-applying are reviewed. New candidates have two effective routes, PhD students and those applicants not following the standard route. There is no other check, unless a concern is raised. The Membership Committee has not met in some time therefore The process needs review. Action Office to discuss with Membership Committee

MC said he will raise the matter of vetting applicants in the 'Lessons Learned' paper that he will write once the Code of Conduct matter has reached its conclusion.

### 8.2 Grant Status Report

The Grant Status Report was received by Council in long and short form.

MC confirmed that Council prefer the long version and would like an additional column for the name of the institution to be added. Action Office to amend

## 9. AOB

Confidential discussion - redacted

SM remarked that he is liaising with SA regarding his attendance at the AAS meeting in January. This will be held in Honolulu, Hawaii. The RAS will not issue a statement about the controversy relating to the telescope.

Council rose at 15.00

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**Mike Cruise**

**3 July 2019 Professor**