

DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14 February 2020

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 Lyndsay Fletcher (LF), Senior Secretary;
Prof Mark Lester (ML), G Secretary; (via skype from 13.45)
Prof Anton Ziolkowski (AZ), Vice President, G;
Dr Paul Daniels (PAD) Vice President, A;
Dr Megan Argo (MA); via skype
Prof William Chaplin (WC);
Mr Kevin Kilburn (KK);
Mr Martin Lunn (MLL);
Dr Jane MacArthur (JM);
Prof Steve Miller (SM);
Dr Matt Middleton (MM);
Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU);
Dr Clare Watt (CW);

APOLOGIES:

Prof Mike Cruise (MC), President;
Prof Mahesh Anand (MAH), Vice President, G
Dr Claire Foullon (CF);
Dr Stacey Habergham-Mawson (SHM), Vice President (A);
Prof Lorraine Hanlon (LH);
Ms Indhu Varatharajan (IV);

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 December 13 2019

The Minutes of December 13 2019 were APPROVED by Council subject to the following amendments:

MA attended in person, not via skype

4.3 ACTIONS: Council to review Risk Register, PD to add to Action Status Report

5.9 Worrall is spelt incorrectly

2.2 Licensing update

The Council received an update paper by Christine Losecaat.

In answer to a query about CL's role in the licensing initiative, PD clarified that CL was facilitating the initiative, using her contacts in the business to bring a proposal to the trustees, but of course the decision on whether to take this forward would lie ultimately with Council. JM asked if it would be possible to do it in stages rather than spending £15k in one go.

PD suggested convening a group similar to the brand working group, which would have delegated authority.

ACTION: PD to ask CL for more information, then bring back to Council.

2.3 Action Status Report (ASR)

PD reported that the Publishing Working group meeting has been set up and scrutineers have been appointed as follows:

- Andrew Norton
- Gail Campbell
- Sean Ryan

EB suggested that 4. Treasurer's Report relating to universities contributing to Fellowship costs, be rewritten to read that she will talk to the Fellowship Committee.

MB commented that the template for minutes had not been actioned. MC had previously suggested a standard template for all minutes.

ACTION: PD

ACTION: PD and EB to review ASR to remove completed actions.

3. President's Business

The President Elect reported on her activities since the last meeting:

- On 16 January she attended the unveiling of a green plaque in honour of William Pearson.
- On the 23 January the Society held its Bicentenary Gala Reception at the Langham. The President Elect delivered the Presidential Address. She reported that it was very good event and thanked PD and the team.
- She chaired an interesting and useful Astronomy Forum on 6 February, organised by RM and held in the RAS lecture theatre.

It was noted that there were few geophysics attendees, and a question was asked as to whether a separate forum be set up. RM commented that this had been tried in the past but was not very well attended, especially as there are many subdivisions.

EB commented that she was also surprised by the low attendance. LF reported that the meetings used to be more discursive, whereas now there are more presentations followed by questions.

PD commented that the meeting will have difficulty attracting policy and funding representatives from Government and Government Agencies if it is seen to be badly attended.

ACTION: EB and RM to follow up with ways to increase attendance

4. Treasurer's Business

4.1 Treasurer's Report

SA and RM left the room. Council discussed the staff salary increase. This was APPROVED by Council.

4.2 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts was received by Council.

5. Organisation and Structure

5.1. RAS Council elections

Council received the paperwork for Council nominations.

LF commented that the formatting needed attention.

NB asked whether or not Council should consider removing the paper vote, due to the very small number received each year.

MB reported that she knows of at least one fellow that does not have any access to email.

LF suggested that fellows are asked if they want to receive paperwork.

Paperwork APPROVED, subject to formatting amendments.

ACTION: Office to send the letter to LF

5.2 Burlington House lease update – confidential discussion - redacted

5.3 RAS 2020 /Brand update

PD briefed Council on feedback he had received on the new brand. Most responses were very positive. PD was grateful to the President for his role in making this happen.

5.4 Review of Code of Conduct

Council received the Code review paper.

SM reported that he had not received any comments from Council and therefore could the new code be adopted?

Council agreed that it was a very good document, however PD asked for more time to review it in conjunction with the RAS' lawyers. Also, it needs to be done in tandem with the revised disciplinary process.

ACTION: PD to contact RAS's lawyer re the timeline for reviewing the document and to review the anonymous online reporting form

It was agreed that ML could join the group to review the disciplinary process.

5.5a Report from the AAS meeting

Council received a report from SM on the AAS meeting in Hawaii. It was a very large meeting. He introduced the RAS Gold Medal Winner, Robert Kennicut's excellent talk. The two RAS events went well and were well attended. In addition, Josh Nall attended on behalf of the RAS and also delivered a very good lecture.

5.5b Proposal

SM proposed that the RAS produce guidelines for people travelling to or making use of data from places where there might be sensitivities regarding disputed historical and cultural issues, particularly in relation to indigenous and first nations rights and traditions.

MA has some experience in this area and has offered to help.
PD suggested contacting the IAU to see what they are already doing.

ACTION: PD to contact the IAU

5.6 E&O committee meeting

The Minutes of the E&O Committee Meeting were received by Council.

6. Policy and Public engagement

The following documents were received by Council:

- Science and Technology Select Committee
- General Election
- Megaconstellations

EB thanked RM for his input, in particular for the paper on megaconstellations

7. Other

7.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting January

The Minutes were APPROVED subject to the following amendment:
The Formula was read by the Treasurer, not the President Elect.

7.2 Officers report – membership

The Council received the nominations for Fellowship. All were APPROVED.
Council wished to know why fellows are leaving.

ACTION: Office to ask the Membership Officer for this information

7.3 Update on the Code of Conduct matter

A separate note of the discussion was made.

7.4 Royal Garden Party

MA and MAH will represent the Society at the Royal Garden Party on 27 May 2020.

7.5 Date of July Council meeting

This year, the meeting will be held on the morning of 16 July

8. AOB

PD announced that EB has been invited to appear on 'The Life Scientific' on May 19. A radio 4 production hosted by Professor Jim Al Khalili. It will be recorded in front of a live audience in the RAS lecture theatre.

Council rose at 15.30

.....
Professor Emma Bunce

14 February 2020