

**DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 February 2023, at Burlington House and Zoom**

**1. Attendance and Apologies**

**PRESENT:**

Prof Mike Edmunds (ME); President and Chair  
Dr Nigel Berman (NB); Treasurer;  
Dr Mandy Bailey (MB); Senior Secretary;  
Prof Mark Lester (MLE); G Secretary;  
Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU); A Secretary  
Prof Ian Robson (IR); Vice President, (A);  
Prof Stephen Eales (SE); Vice President (A)  
Prof Nick Rawlinson (NR); Vice President (G)  
Prof Phil Charles (PC);  
Prof Colin Snodgrass (CS);  
Dr Arvind Parmar (AP)  
Dr Hannah Dagleish (HD)  
Prof Caroline Smith (CLS)  
Dr Jasmine Kaur Sandhu (JKS) online  
Mrs Patricia Tomkins (PT;); (A)  
Dr Olivia Keenan (OK); (A)

**APOLOGIES:**

Prof Clare Watt (CW); Vice President (G)  
Prof Silvia Zane (SZ);  
Prof Belinda Wilkes (BW)  
Dr Joanne Barstow (JB)  
Prof Steve Miller (SM)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

## **2. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING**

2.1 The Minutes of Council Meeting on 9 December 2022 were APPROVED subject to the following amendments:

SM was not at the meeting

Colin Snodgrass is now a Prof, not a Doctor

### **3. President's Business**

Change Tom Martin to Tom Marsh

#### **4.1c Risk Register**

CLS, the NHM are not working with juststopoil, they are working to prevent issues with them.

6.6 JWST response from NASA: What was agreed at the last Council meeting requires updating as Council agreed that due to NASA's report, either the acronym or full name can be used.

Action on OK check with AAS re policy should be an action on RM

2.2 The Action Status Report was received by Council. PD reported that all actions from the last Council meeting were completed.

## **3. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS**

The President reported on the following matters:

- He attended the EAS meeting in Geneva, which was attended by representatives from 31 countries
- The award for their thesis prize is quite substantial. It was suggested that winners of the RAS thesis prizes be advised of this award and to encouraged to apply if eligible

**ACTION:** Awards officer

- RM's work on dark skies policy is very much appreciated by the European Societies.
- The EAS meeting will be held in Poland this year, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of July

#### **4. TREASURER'S BUSINESS**

4.1a&b The Treasurer reported minor amendments to the budget, which include a contingency for digitising the library and an uplift for staff.

This will be a negative budget, but the breakeven is normally achieved by the year end. The Treasurer thanked Mark Piper the RAS accountant for his help in preparing the budget.

The budget was formally accepted.

Staff present were recused from the meeting whilst the Treasurer presented his recommendations for staff salaries. These were revised after discussion and agreed.

Council agreed that a Remuneration sub-committee be set up to review staff salaries in future years. The sub-committee would be comprised of the President, Treasurer and Senior Secretary. Terms of reference will be submitted to a future meeting for approval.

Action: President and Treasurer

The Treasurer also reported that he had attended the AAS meeting in January. The RAS Gold medal winner's (George Efstathiou) plenary lecture was well received as was the reception for George which was attended by RAS Fellows and other guests. The Treasurer observed that industry sponsors were present at the conference, looking to recruit young researchers to their companies.

SE on Local Organising Committee for this year's NAM said that they are trying to get sponsors but would like some assistance with finding appropriate industry contacts.

ACTION: RM to talk to the Early Careers Network regarding this, and also contact Winton who sponsor RAS early career awards.

4.2 The Statement of accounts was received by Council

#### **5. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE**

5.1 The Executive Director updated Council on the following:

- The Caroline Herschel Medal award ceremony will be held on 13 April
- Baroness Scott visited two of the courtyard societies' buildings; the RAS had items on display for the visit. The Societies should receive a proposal from Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding the lease within 5 weeks. Once the proposal has been received, next steps can be agreed.

CLS commented that Michelle Donelan, Secretary of State for Science and Innovation is very keen on cultural heritage and science should be engaged with.

ACTION: PD to raise with the Courtyard Societies

- Council received the paper on RAS fellowships, which contained the following suggestions:
  - To retain 3 year Fellowships
  - To streamline the process
  - Moving the timetable to avoid conflicts with other fellowships awarded

Council AGREED to retain Fellowships.

**ACTION:** Form small working group working group to review Fellowships and report back to Council in July. PD

NB suggested that the Society should work towards merging the Norman Lockyer fund with RAS general reserves.

ME asked for a paper to be brought to the next Council meeting.

CLS said that she would be very happy to talk to SP regarding the library strategy. She would also talk to Lisa Cardy, head of libraries and archives at the NHM.

- An additional Council meeting took place on 3 February. Council was asked to vote on a date for moving to Open Access. It was agreed to move GJI and MNRAS journals in 2024. It was recommended that the terms and conditions for Editors and process for recruitment need to be reviewed.

**ACTION:** The PMC meeting will be held in April after which MLE and NB will report back to Council

5.2 The Nominations paperwork for RAS Council Elections 2023 was received, and APPROVED subject to adding the ballot sheet before the biographies.

5.3 Astronomical Heritage Committee Meeting Minutes will be submitted in the next meeting.

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

6.1 The RAS sustainability policy: guidelines for grant applicants document was received by Council and AGREED subject to a minor revision.

**ACTION:** RM to work with Awards and Grants Officer to update guidelines on RAS website

6.2 The paper Draft guidance: charities use of social media was received by Council

6.2a The RAS Social Media Policy was received by Council

RM remarked that the policy is not designed to discourage Trustees from using social media, just to warn them to exercise caution.

NB remarked that the RAS Social Media Policy needs updating.

ACTION: RM to work with the Science Council to review the RAS Social Media policy

ACTION: Council to send feedback on current policy to RM

6.3 The paper Call for Evidence: An inquiry into the effects of artificial light and noise on human health was received by Council

RM reported that HD has done a lot of work on this area.

HD reported that the enquiry was as a result of evidence HD gave to the Lords Science and Technology Committee held last year.

## **7. Publications**

7.1 The Minutes from the GJI Editorial Board Meeting were received by Council

## **8. OTHER**

8.1 The Membership Officer's Report was received by Council and was APPROVED

MB reminded Council of their duty to read the list of nominees.

8.2 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting December 2022 were received by Council and were APPROVED

8.3 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meetings January 2023 were received by Council and were APPROVED

## **9. AOB**

CS asked if it was possible to organise a SDM outside of London. It was agreed that organisers will be given the option of asking for this when they submit their proposals.

ACTION: Secretaries to review holding SDMs outside of London. SE and CS interested in joining the group.

PD reported that Ian Crawford had excused himself as a scrutineer as he has nominated somebody for Council. Josh Nall agreed to take his place. Council AGREED to this change.

RM reported that the RAS was repeating the demographic survey and asked if any Council member was interested in helping. OK volunteered.

ME asked that papers for Council are submitted at least a week before the meeting.

Council rose at 14.22

.....

**10 February 2023**