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Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 October 2023, at Burlington House and via Zoom

1. Attendance and Apologies

PRESENT:

Prof Mike Edmunds (ME); President and Chair Prof
Mike Lockwood (MLO); President Elect online Prof
Mike Cruise (MC); Interim Treasurer
Prof Mark Lester (MLE); Senior Secretary; Dr
Sheona Urquhart (SU); A Secretary
Dr Matt Middleton (MM); Vice President, (A);
Prof Stephen Eales (SE); Vice President (A) Prof
Clare Watt (CW); Vice President (G)
Prof Andrew Curtis (ACU) Vice president G online Dr
Jasmine Kaur Sandhu (JKS) (G)
Mrs Patricia Tomkins (PT;) (A) Dr
Olivia Keenan (OK); (A)
Prof Belinda Wilkes (BW) online
Dr Joanna Barstow (JB)
Prof Steve Miller (SM)
Prof Alan Cayless (ACA) A
Dr Imogen Gingell (IG) G online Dr
Ashley Spindler (AS) A online
Prof Silvia Zane (SZ); online/in person Prof
Derek Ward Thompson (DWT) A

APOLOGIES:

Prof Caroline Smith (CLS)
Dr Jasmine Sandhu Kaur (JSK)
Prof James Hammond (JH) G Secretary

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

The President reminded members of Council to complete their Conflict of Interest forms, if they had not already done so.

2. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

2.1 The Minutes of the meeting 5 July 2023, were APPROVED

Matters Arising:

2.1 b IAU Code of Conduct (BV harassment issue)

It was agreed that the RAS Code of Conduct would be revised with a small addition. Multiple nominations to Council by one individual

This was investigated by PD. The individual had organised a series of lectures at his home institution that were attended by students, so he took the opportunity to encourage those attending to join the RAS.

2.2 Action Status Report **for information**

PD updated Council on some actions from the report:

- JB matter
- Minutes from the Finance Committee will come to Council.

A brief discussion took place on whether or not the Finance Committee could have non- Fellows on it. It was agreed that this could be considered during a governance review, in addition to other matters.

- RM reported that a letter had been sent to Debra Elmegreen regarding the IAU naming conventions matter.

ACTION: RM to circulate the letter to Council

3. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

3.1 Confidential item redacted

3.2 Update on monthly payments for Direct Debits

RM reported on the status of the plan to offer monthly direct debits to fellows paying the full subscription rate. He is confident that it will be rolled out in a timely fashion.

4. TREASURER'S BUSINESS

4.1 The Treasurer's Report was received by Council.

MC updated Council on his activities since taking the role of Interim Treasurer. He assured Council that he had conducted due diligence on all the organisations financial matters, including the investments and assured Council that everything was in order.

Heritage Assets will be reviewed with the librarian in the week following this meeting.

The contract with OUP has been signed by the RAS. The RAS are guaranteed a minimum income of £1250000 per annum. If there is no profit, or less than expected the contract both parties may need to re-negotiate the terms of the contract in that eventuality.

SM commented that OUP do not market the RAS journals as vigorously as some of their others.

ACA reported that there was no mention of Space on their website.

ACTION: PD to raise the matter with them.

4.1 b The document HSBC Mandate was received by Council.

Council were asked to APPROVE the new names on the bank mandate. They were APPROVED

4.2 The Statement of Accounts was received by Council.

4.3 Considerations concerning the RAS occupancy of New Burlington House CONFIDENTIAL

MC reported that he has taken an overview of the situation and considered the options available.

It was suggested that assets could be sold if necessary to meet the proposed cost of a long lease.

5. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

5.1 Director's Update

- PD reported that the Social Media Officer Gurjeet Kahlon, had left to take up a role at

the IOP. Her successor will be starting at the end of November.

- RAS had responded to the annual request by the Royal Society to apply for funding to pay for part of the IAU subscription. RAS had circulated the annual call to

Fellows to join the IAU. ME asked Council to send him any concerns about the IAU. He will discuss these with Diana Worrall, IAU Assistant General Secretary.

- The transition to Open Access came into effect on 1 October. MNRAS received double the usual papers in September, as a consequence, submissions have fallen. It is too early to assess the impact of the transition. Regular reports will be sent to Council.

PD asked Council to send any questions to him, so he can raise them with OUP.

5.1 b Property Options – update from the Property Group CONFIDENTIAL – Confidential Item Redacted

5.1 c The document on amending the conditions for Room Hire was received by Council. Council APPROVED reverting to the previous procedure.

5.2 The Call for nominations letter for elections to RAS Council was received by Council.

MLE suggested a change to the letter to add the option of attending some meetings online.

POST MEETING: An amendment was made to the numbers of A& G candidates required.

5.2 b The Nominations Form was received by Council and APPROVED.

5.3 The CDAG Minutes July 2023 were received by Council.

5.4 The document Bullying and Harassment survey: Actions and recommendations was received by Council.

The recommendations will be incorporated into the report. ME clarified that although the recommendations will go into the report, there is no agreement that the RAS will adopt them all at the moment.

ACTION: SM to check that the recommendations do not clash with the RAS Code of Conduct.

ACTION: Council to send specific comments to PD within 2 weeks, with a follow up by OK/SM/MLE

6. POLICY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

6.1 The Science, Innovation and Technology Committee: inquiry into UK Astronomy was received by Council.

ACTION: RM asked Council to read the TOR and send any comments to him.

6.2. The paper UK Space Agency: Consultation on Orbital Liabilities, Insurance, Charging and Space Sustainability was received by Council.

ACTION: RM asked Council to send any comments to him.

6.3. The paper Horizon Europe was received by Council.

6.4 The paper Shadow Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology was received by Council.

6.5 The paper House of Lords Science and Technology Committee
The neglected pollutants: the effects of artificial light and noise on human health was received by Council.

7. OTHER

7.1 The Membership Officers Reports was received by Council. All proposed fellows were APPROVED.

8. AOB

SM reported that the RAS200 Report was being compiled and will be ready soon.

PD reported that the John Brown Inaugural lecture has been arranged for December 5, and will take place in Glasgow.

Council Rose at: 15.12 13 October 2023