Interests, loyalties and conflicts statement

All Council members have financial and other interests. Sometimes those interests give rise to conflicts, potential conflicts, or the potential for the appearance of conflicts. For example, most Council members are usually employed by institutions in which there are other members of the Society who may be applying for grants, standing for election, or nominating colleagues for prizes or positions.

The law recognises that such conflicts of interest or conflicts of loyalty are unavoidable, and requires that they need to be dealt with in a transparent manner. Some of these matters are formally regulated by Section 11 of the Articles of Association but Council seeks to ensure that where appropriate, it does more than merely follow the letter of these rules.

All Council members complete a register of interests before taking office, and this is a public document. As a standing item on the Council agenda, the President reminds all Council members at all meetings to check and if necessary update their entries on the Register. At the July meeting each year, hard copies of current entries are provided to facilitate this process.
Council members are expected to declare *any* interest which may give rise, in the opinion of a reasonable person, to a conflict or the appearance of a conflict, in relation to a matter under consideration by Council.

The Articles of Association and the Charities Act define certain people (such as close relatives of Council members), whose interests are relevant in considering conflicts, but in view of the nature of the Society's business, Council also attempts to manage conflicts in relation to colleagues of Council members. For example, where the Prizes Panel is considering nominations from a particular institution, it would expect a member of the Panel employed by that institution to declare an interest, and potentially to refrain from taking part in the relevant discussion, depending on the closeness of the association.

It is a matter for Council to consider the appropriate and proportionate response to any declared interest, which might range from merely noting it and deciding that it is not a material consideration through to requiring a member of Council to leave the room during consideration of the matter at hand.

At its 372 Meeting (July 2017), Council agreed that no member of Council who is candidate for any Council-appointed post should sit on the Appointments Panel, even in relation to other posts under consideration.

At its 375 Meeting (March 2018), it was agreed that Council members would not in future be eligible to nominate for any Society prizes or Council-appointed positions, so as to minimise the number of potential conflicts of interest that may arise.