

## Minutes of the 399 meeting of Council

**Friday 07 July 9:00-13:00 GMT**

**Venue: Hybrid meeting held at 14-16 Meredith Street, London and via Zoom**

**Present:**

Gurdyal Besra (President, in the Chair)

Robin May (Treasurer)

Karen Robinson (General Secretary)

Paul Hoskisson (co-Chair of Building Communities Committee)

Gill Elliott (co-Chair of Building Communities Committee)

Tina Joshi (co-Chair of Impact and Influence Committee)

José Bengoechea (co-Chair of Sustainability Committee)

Jo Kite (Chair of Early Career Microbiologists' Forum Executive Committee)

Sarah Maddocks (co-Chair of Sustainability Committee) - items 04-07 only

Laura Bowater (Elected Member)

David Clarke (Elected Member)

Nigel Brown (Elected Member)

Andrew Edwards (Elected Member)

Kim Hardie (Elected Member)

Alan McNally (Elected Member)

**In attendance:**

Peter Cotgreave (Chief Executive)

Joanne Manning (Chief Operations Officer)

Sarah Buckman (Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer)

Curtis Asante (Associate Director of Engagement and Insight)

Charlotte Mitchell (Associate Director of Communications, Brand and Audiences)

Glyn Owen (Executive Governance Officer)

### **1.1 Apologies for absence and welcome to new attendees**

The President welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that apologies had been received from Catrin Moore (co-Chair of Impact and Influence Committee), Sharon Brookes (Elected Member), Sarah Maddocks (co-Chair of Sustainability Committee) who would be present for only part of the meeting, and Rosie Waterton (Executive Governance Manager). José Bengoechea (co-Chair of Sustainability Committee) and Curtis Asante (Associate Director of Engagement and Insight) attended virtually via Zoom and Sarah Maddocks joined virtually for Items 04-07.

### **1.2 Declaration of any new conflicts of interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

### **1.3 Minutes of the 398 meeting of Council**

The Minutes of the 398 Meeting of Council were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

### **1.4 Matters arising from the minutes and action points**

The Chief Executive reported that all actions were either completed, were in train or the matters were included as substantive items on the agenda of the current meeting.

He drew particular attention to the miscellaneous points from the 'Any Other Business' item of the 398 meeting, which were all either completed or in progress. He drew specific attention to the interview undertaken with former President Sir David Hopwood which would be published on his forthcoming ninetieth birthday on 19 August 2023.

## **2. Finance Committee**

The Treasurer reported on this item.

### **2.1.1 Investments update**

The Treasurer gave a brief summary of the investments update noted in Finance Committee's 180 report to Council. A key point that the Treasurer wished Council to note was that the Society's investment portfolio was performing strongly given current circumstances, but that even such strong performance would not be able to sustain the current budget deficit indefinitely. As such, the Treasurer advised Council to act with the assumption that the investment portfolio would not yield greater returns, and hence that the deficit must be resolved via other sources of income over the longer term.

In 2023 there had been a total of £850k in drawdowns from the investment portfolio. This included £350k in May 2023 and a further £500k in two tranches of £250k in June and July. At the end of May, the investment portfolio was worth £10.7M compared to £11M in May 2022. The Finance Committee's analysis noted that a long term sustainable level of drawdowns would be ~£430k a year. It also noted that drawdowns would be necessary for at least the next 12-18 months, and discussions should take place with Evelyn Partners about structuring the portfolio to manage these most cost effectively.

Finance Committee had received updates from colleagues at Evelyn Partners during its meeting. Evelyn Partners reported on the performance of the portfolio, noting that it was up 4.6% for the year to the end of the May 2023. They also confirmed that it was up a further 1% to the end of June. Over the longer term, the portfolio was up 32% since inception. Evelyn Partners noted that this was behind the CPI+4% target in the short term but they emphasised that the mandate had been achieved over a longer term.

When queried regarding the flexibility provided the portfolio's current structure, Evelyn Partners noted that they were likely to keep the structure broadly as it was, maintaining equities at the higher limit, because doing so was always likely to provide higher returns. They noted that such a strategy was subject to further information about future cashflow requirements i.e. future drawdowns.

### **2.1.2 Management Accounts – to May 2023**

Council noted the draft management accounts to 31 May 2023. These showed a surplus of £433k with overall income and expenditure broadly as expected. The report noted that it was still too early in the year to fully estimate the final outturn. However, a reforecast budget for 2023 had been included in the 180 Finance Committee meeting paper 180-07 with the outturn expected to be a deficit of £951k, slightly better than the original budget.

Finance Committee had noted that journal income so far for 2023 was very slightly behind budget, following the flip of *Microbiology* to Open Access, although subscription income had exceeded budget. Events income was strong following a successful Annual Conference and the Society's first Focused Meeting in Canada. Expenditure was higher than originally budgeted due to several reasons outlined in the reforecast. These included payroll and other staff costs being higher than originally expected following the now full population of the staff restructure. Also included was the decision to directly run the Federation of Infection Societies (FIS) conference in November and a slight increase in various supplier costs due to inflation-related reasons.

The Committee had also noted that despite the recent drawdowns on the investments, the investment gain for 2023 so far was not insignificant at £360k.

### **2.1.3 Annual report and summary of audit 2022**

The Chief Operations Officer gave a brief account of the Society's audit process and outcome for 2022, noting that there were no material weaknesses and that the auditors issued an unmodified audit opinion. She continued that the audit and Annual Report were given full consideration at the Audit, Risk and Evaluation Committee on 12 May.

Council agreed to the Finance Committee's recommendation to approve the Annual Report 2022. Council noted its thanks to the staff responsible for the audit and to JS2 Ltd for a very smooth audit process.

### **2.1.4 Expenses for international Council members**

At the 180 Finance Committee meeting, the Chief Executive had asked the Committee to consider some potential rules for expenses for international Council members given that the Society's intentions to increase its international impact would entail welcoming trustees from a wider range of countries.

The Committee recommended to Council that the Society should adopt a 'fixed per capita' model when budgeting for these costs. They recommended a contribution of £2,500 towards accommodation costs (likely to cover two weeks of short-term accommodation) and travel costs in line with the rules currently used by the Society to reimburse travel for other events should be offered to Kalai Mathee as an incoming international Council member.

Council noted that these figures were not out of line with what the Society covered for international conference speakers. It also noted that, although it would make provision to provide these contributions, Council members should be encouraged to find funds to cover these costs from other sources where possible.

Council approved this budget for the short term, noting that a paper for a formal proposal with permanent rules would be brought to the September meeting of Finance Committee. This paper

should include recognition that early career members of Council and those from low and middle income countries would face different financial challenges, to ensure there was no financial barrier to their attendance.

#### **2.1.5 Budget reforecast 2023 and initial budget proposal 2024**

The Treasurer explained that although the current deficit could be weathered for the next ~3 years, it would not be sustainable for the long term. He asked that Council bear this in mind when taking decisions about forthcoming review items and other proposals. As in previous years, a full budget would be brought to Council for approval in September, based on Council's reaction to the initial draft.

Noting that membership and Annual Conference registration fees were a significant source of income for the Society, Finance Committee recommended an uplift in these rates. Concern was expressed regarding whether raising these fees was a wise course of action given the prevailing cost of living crisis in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, and the fact that early career members were less likely to be able to afford paying increased fees to the Society. It was noted, however, that it was very common for members' institutions to pay such fees on their behalf, including early career members. It was also noted that the uplift in fees recommended by the Finance Committee did not exceed the uplifts already carried out by similar organisations.

Council supported the proposal to raise membership fees for each membership category as follows, subject to approval by the membership at the 2023 AGM in September:

- Full membership – Raise from £92 (2023) to £122 (2024)
- Full Concessionary membership – Raise from £41 (2023) to £61 (2024)
- Postgraduate membership – Raise from £41 (2023) to £61 (2024)
- Undergraduate membership – Raise from £18 (2023) to £25 (2024)
- Affiliate membership – Free

The Treasurer pointed out that the proposed uplift in conference fees was lower in proportion for early career members' categories to ensure that they did not bear a disproportionately larger burden during the uplift given their career stage.

Council approved the proposal for Annual Conference fees to be raised for each membership category as follows:

- Non-members - Raise from £287 (2023) to £344 (2024)
- Full member – Raise from £162 (2023) to £194 (2024)
- Concessionary member – Raise from £91 (2023) to £100 (2024)
- Affiliate – Raise from £241 (2023) to £265 (2024)
- Student member – Raise from £80 (2023) to £88 (2024)

### 2.1.6 Persons of significant control register

After reviewing the names that should be listed on the Society's statutory Register of Persons of Significant Control, Finance Committee recommended to Council that the Society should submit a blank register for 2023, as in previous years.

Council approved the Finance Committee recommendation to submit a blank register to Companies House, as has been done in previous years.

**Action 01: Chief Operations Officer to submit a blank register of Persons of Significant Control to Companies House.**

### 2.1.7 Fundraising update

At the 180 Finance Committee meeting, the Chief Operations Officer had reported that the Unlocking Potential campaign had continued to generate income and that donations stood at just under £14k, with these coming from both members and non-members. Staff were working on increasing donations by revising the action plan produced in 2022 and building relationships with potential industry partners. Early indications and anecdotal feedback regarding the grant scheme had been positive and suggested that it was achieving its purpose.

The Chief Executive updated Council on the status of the legacy from Royall Tyler Moore which had been outstanding for a significant period of time. Previously, the executors of the estate had informed the Society of the legacy and the Society had obtained a copy of the will from the Northern Ireland Probate Registry, but despite the fact that probate had been granted in 2016, the executors had not communicated any further details, nor had they responded to requests for information. A formal complaint would be submitted on the Society's behalf by our own lawyers, both to the executors of the estate (who were solicitors based in Belfast) and their professional regulator, within the coming weeks. The Chief Operations Officer undertook to update Council on this matter at the 400 meeting of Council in September.

The Chief Executive also noted that the probate valuation of the estate appeared to be inconsistent with other publicly available information, and caution should be exercised not to spend more time and effort than the legacy justified.

**Action 02: Chief Operations Officer to update Council on the status of the complaint against the Executors of the estate at the 400 meeting of Council on 8 September 2023.**

### 2.1.8 Update on significant operational matters

The operational update included information on the remaining recruitment that had taken place this quarter. All of the roles included in the paper were also included on the organisation chart appended in the Finance Committee's 180report to Council.

#### 2.1.9 A. Contingency budget statement

The statement included the previously approved item for the 31st International Conference on Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology.

#### B. Approval of contingency items

There were no further contingency items to approve.

### **2.2.1 Collated finance papers**

These were taken as read.

### **2.3.1 Annual update from the Audit, Risk and Evaluation Committee**

The External Chair of the Audit, Risk and Evaluation Committee sent apologies for his absence and presented this item via a pre-recorded video message.

The External Chair explained that the main topic of the previous Committee meetings had been evaluation, including the new evaluation framework being drafted by staff. He reported that a draft had now been developed and looked forward to discussing its implementation at the November 2023 meeting.

The External Chair reported that the statutory audit for 2022 had gone very smoothly, and that the auditors had only noted three minor items. Additionally, he explained that new auditing standards included an increased focus on fraud and prevention. He had therefore run a workshop on the issue with the entire staff of the Society, to identify any additional measures that might be desirable.

Regarding risk, the Committee had been working to make some changes to the Critical Risk Register, including an update to the risk headings to better fall in line with Council's draft risk appetite statement and these would be presented to Council at a future meeting.

At Andrew Edwards' proposal, elected Council member on this Committee, Council expressed its thanks to Andrew Wilson for his efforts.

## **3. President/Chief Executive business**

### **3.1.1 General business/report back from CEO**

The President highlighted the success of the Annual Conference that had taken place in Birmingham in April.

The Chief Executive informed Council that the Executive Governance Manager would be on parental leave from November 2023, and that arrangements would be made to ensure continued support during her absence. He undertook to pass on Council's best wishes to her.

The Chief Executive also reported on the visits he had made with senior colleagues across the country to various Council members in their home institutions. He noted how positive the visits had been, and how he and the other staff attending had had enlightening conversations with microbiologists at all levels. In particular, he noted the value that early career members placed on the Prize Lecturer programme, the value that students and postdoctoral research assistants found in the Society's work, and the insights into the help that both members and non-members could offer in response to the challenges and opportunities of the Society's Knocking Out AMR project.

The visits to Council members' institutions illustrated to the Chief Executive the importance of discussions outside of formal meetings, and he observed that these had led to new ideas on how to communicate with members in industry and with the ECM Forum. The Chief Executive thanked the members of Council who had recently hosted staff and those who were in the process of scheduling visits.

### 3.2.1 Outcomes from the Thursday session

The Chief Executive reported on the Thursday session of Council held on 6 July 2023 which had comprised an informal, interactive session between staff and Council. He noted positive responses from the staff who had attended the session and took the positive engagement as evidence of the willingness of both staff and Council to adapt to challenging circumstances and ambition for the future.

#### **Strategic Forward Look – Introducing Items 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5**

To introduce items 3.3-3.5 the Chief Executive began by thanking everyone involved, including staff and members, who had been generous with their time and effort, demonstrating both that they cared deeply about the Society and that they understood the need for real and meaningful change. He drew particular attention to the very considerable workloads of both the General Secretary, Karen Robinson, and the Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer, Sarah Buckman, in bringing the reviews to fruition.

He observed that the basic premise, thoroughly borne out by the exercises, was that in order to thrive in the coming years, and to implement Council's strategy successfully, the Society would need transformation in some important areas whilst retaining its core identity.

Papers 399-04 to 399-06 set out operational recommendations to realise this, but on a more fundamental level, it would require an attitudinal approach that was consistent with the stated ambition of the strategy in three key areas. First, Council would need to give proper consideration to the community it claimed to encompass, noting that repeatedly in the meetings and workshops that led to the three papers (and various discussions in other contexts and forums) there had been a sense of a mismatch, sometimes subtle but undoubtedly very real, between the community the Society claimed to include and represent and the experience of some scientists whose primary subjects of interest were microbes. Second, for the foreseeable future, the financial sustainability of the Society would be dependent on the business model of scientific publishing, which was rapidly changing. The nature of the customer base would change fundamentally, and the Society would need substantial adaptation. Third, while the Society's values and purpose had never changed, the external circumstances had and continued to do so. Making Council's ambition a reality would require a sense of self-belief that was not always evident in the Society's current processes.

In addition, Council noted that the time available to members in the governance structure was more limited than ever before and the changing nature of the business meant that more and more, it was dependent on real expertise and experience in the staff. To be sufficiently nimble and agile in the future, there would necessarily be changes in the nature of the relationship between staff and members.

In addition to the formal minutes of the 399 meeting, Council agreed that a short summary should be produced, detailing each of these three transformation areas and the plans to achieve them. This summary should then be provided to incoming Council members to give them a sense of the Society's agreed longer-term trajectory, to justify the risks we were taking to future Council members and make them transparent, and to mitigate reversals on key decisions.

**Action 03: Chief Executive to prepare summary of key decisions included in the reviews for incoming Council members.**

### 3.3.1 Review of Divisions and Editorial Boards update

The General Secretary reported on this item.

At its 387 Meeting in December 2022, Council had agreed that the General Secretary should lead a review to consider the make-up, roles and responsibilities of the Divisions and Editorial Boards, and facilitate closer working between these groups to create a pipeline of content from events into the Society's journals. This would be necessary to secure the organisation's future financial stability. It was recognised that the roles of these groups may no longer be fit for purpose as the Society moved into a new strategic period.

A Working Group, chaired by the General Secretary and comprised of Council members and representatives from Divisions and Editorial Boards both past and present, had been convened to steer the review, analyse information and provide insight into the experiences of both Divisions and Editorial Boards.

The General Secretary drew Council's attention to Section 3 of paper 399-04, *Summary of recommendations*. She noted that several of the recommendations were already in progress and asked Council to give particular consideration to points 6, 10, 11 and 4, in that order.

*6. Reconsideration should be given to the taxonomic Divisions to ensure these fit with the current understanding of the microbiology landscape, journal scopes and journal content drives. The roles and numbers of Division members should be reviewed and reduced where necessary.*

Gill Elliott reported that the Scientific Conferences Panel had met to discuss the review, and particularly the potential revision of the taxonomic Divisions. The Panel had clearly recognised the reasons behind the proposal, but was strongly opposed to changing the taxonomic Divisions as these were working well. The Divisions expressed renewed enthusiasm for cross-divisional working, having journal Editors sit on Divisions, and inviting Editors to have meaningful engagement with and input into the Annual Conference programme planning at an earlier stage in the process, before attending Divisions Day.

It was noted, however, that the size of the Virus and Prokaryotic Divisions had become larger over recent years and could be reduced. In addition, there was no specific Journal in the Society's current portfolio which served as a 'home' for Eukaryotic Microbiology.

The Chief Executive reminded Council that the paper noted that the Irish Division fulfilled a different role from the taxonomic Divisions and hence should not be judged against the same model of alignment with journals.

Council agreed to retain the taxonomic categories of the Divisions, and agreed that the staff should draw up new timelines and processes that would more closely involve the journals in the organisation of Annual Conference sessions and events. There was also agreement to reduce the size of the larger divisions.

*10. The expenses policy and compensation of everyone attending Annual Conference should be reviewed to ensure value for money/cost effectiveness.*

Council approved this recommendation, and discussed a number of ways that expenses for staff and governance members attending Annual Conference might be reduced.



It was pointed out that reducing the number of people attending Annual Conference as members of the Society's governance structure (including Division members) would deliver cost savings. Some Divisions were reducing their numbers anyway, but others were much more resistant this. For many members, serving on a Division is their first contribution to the Society's governance structure. Reducing numbers on Divisions could adversely affect the Society's capacity to bring new members into governance.

Council also considered whether all of the expenses currently associated with Annual Conference were necessary. For example, the number of days for which staff and members were invited to stay, and the standard of accommodation they received. It may, for example, be more cost effective to accommodate staff and members in hotels of a slightly lower standard. The Chief Executive pointed out that, because of the negotiations and discounts commonly applied to corporate bookings, the margin of negotiation on a large group booking with a higher quality hotel compared to that of a lower quality hotel might make the prospective savings substantially less significant than might at first be thought likely.

*11. Council should investigate the potential cost savings from organising a biennial Annual Conference, with additional small and/or international meetings in the intervening year.*

Council considered the various risks and benefits of holding Annual Conference biennially, as well as some of the practical limitations on how such an initiative could be put into practice.

The Chief Operations Officer advised Council that the Society had secured venue bookings for future Annual Conferences as far in advance as 2028. Considering the financial commitments involved with future bookings and the feasibility of recovering them, she estimated that the earliest that the Society could feasibly not have an Annual Conference would be 2026, which was set to take place in Belfast.

Although the benefits of attending a Microbiology Society conference could in some cases be fulfilled by other organisations, the Society's Annual Conference was acknowledged as a key mechanism for engaging with new early career members and maintaining relationships with them in future years. It was noted that some PhD students could only have the opportunity to attend one biennial Annual Conference during their three years of study.

Council noted that it would need to significantly strengthen and diversify the range of events it offered, opening up more opportunities for the Society. The annual Early Career Conference should be recognised as a valuable place for early career researchers to present their work; a hybrid events programme (including online conferences) should be set up; and events that appealed to priority audiences such as those in industry would need to be developed. The process by which this richer events programme was developed would need to be substantially different from the current mechanisms, with an explicit recognition that relying on traditional proposals from the existing membership was unlikely to succeed. Council and the staff would need to take a more active role in defining the strategic direction of the programme as a whole, with the explicit expectations of delivering content for the Society's journals.

Council agreed that it should investigate working towards cancelling the Annual Conference in 2026 and building a richer programme of alternatives in line with its strategy in the meantime. A decision

about subsequent years would be taken once more progress had been made and Council was in possession of clearer information.

*4. Council should investigate the possible introduction of an academy/fellowship scheme as a way of getting inaugural content from high profile and well-networked microbiologists and build loyalty to the Society from Prize winners.*

Following a brief discussion outlining their first impressions of the proposal, Council agreed that the benefits of such a scheme could be considerable if it were to be managed well. They approved the recommendation, noting that such a scheme would need to be clearly distinguished from the similar schemes offered by other microbiology organisations and that it would need careful development to ensure that the costs and effort were maximally applied to delivering the scheme's strategic aims.

Council approved all of the recommendations included in the General Secretary's Divisions and Editorial Boards review, except for item 6, as detailed above.

**Action 04: Chief Executive and staff to draw up plans to deliver the recommendations, and integrate them into the overall implementation plan for the Society's strategy.**

#### **3.4.1 Comprehensive Review of Everything**

The Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer reported on this item.

The primary goal of the Review of Everything was to identify ways in which the Society could take advantage of untapped opportunities to achieve its aims and do so in a more cost-effective manner. It had proceeded with the background assumption that it was a priority to continue to support those disproportionately affected by the current economic crisis, particularly Early Career Members.

The Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer emphasised that the Society was at a crucial moment in terms of securing its long-term future and so it was essential that Council considered both the Society's expenditure and new opportunities for it to generate income. She noted that many of the recommendations presented as part of this item were proposed with long term sustainability in mind. Some of the suggested activities would require investment in the short term but would be expected to have payoffs regarding journals and membership engagement which would be essential for the Society's long-term success.

#### **Recommendations for increasing and diversifying income**

As well as the uplift in membership rates and event registration fees, a review of current membership categories was noted as something which could expose some opportunities to increase income from membership fees. The Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer reported how conversations with collaborators with industry had raised the possibility of corporate membership. The current arrangements regarding affiliate membership were raised as an area in need of review because of the vast proportion of Society members who were affiliate members and the disproportionate number of affiliate members who resided in low- and middle-income countries who could be better supported.

The Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer asked Council to bear in mind that the pricing model for the Society's suite of journals would need to become more aggressive and more flexible in its approach from 2025. The pricing model would need to change to account both for the forthcoming flip to open access for all journals and for increased international commerce given that not all

countries, and hence not all institutions, operated according to a financial year identical to the Society's.

Council queried which areas staff had identified as the best opportunities to increase cost-effectiveness and generate income. It was noted that while Society events had the greatest opportunities for doing so, the Society's suite of journals remained at the core of its financial sustainability. As such, reviewing strategies for generating income from the Society's publishing operations would be just as important as generating income from events. There were also some contracts which the Society held with third-parties which, subject to careful review, could be terminated by taking certain tasks in house and finding more fit-for-purpose suppliers for others.

With regard to its journals, the Society possessed some key advantages relative to other organisations when using them as a source of income. It was noted that the Society's status as a charity and a community-led membership organisation was a point of leverage that could be used in messaging to encourage authors to publish with the Society. Such strategies had already been deployed at Annual Conference 2023 with messaging noting specifically how income from journals fed back into benefits for members. It was also noted that there was increasing awareness in the field regarding the community benefits of publishing with an organisation like the Society compared to large corporate publishers, but that these would need to be emphasised to potential authors.

Council anticipated several challenges that would need to be overcome to make the Society's journals successful. Ensuring that the journals had good quality Editors and an efficient review process with a quick turnaround time would be key, especially as the flip to open access led to a model where business depended on customer relations with individual authors. Improving Society journals in this regard would require greater agility with regards to keeping Editors in, or removing them from, posts as well as investment into training for new reviewers and messaging to recruit them. The journals' impact factors and fitness for purpose were also raised.

It was agreed that the staff should conduct a comprehensive review of the Society's suite of journals to ensure these were the right ones for the future and to consider potentially launching new titles.

Council considered whether *Microbiology Today (MT)* was an effective use of resources, and noted that the biggest cost was in staff time. The current practice of producing and distributing a print version was no longer cost effective or justifiable with regards to environmental sustainability. Similarly, the highly detailed Annual Report was also deemed to be an inefficient use of staff resource. It was suggested instead that the staff should be better utilised in supporting the new *Micro Perspectives* front matter and other journal-related initiatives.

A workshop held as part of the Champions Review had revealed that the Champions were enthusiastic about playing a role in the Society's public engagement with their communities. Council noted that the Knocking Out AMR project could take advantage of this. The Society was already working with organisations such as BSAC and previous Prize Lecture winners to engage the public with the Antibiotic Guardians initiative in collaboration with the Society. Cross-organisational collaboration was also identified as an opportunity to increase the public profile of AMR, such as the Royal Society's recent request to have the Society encourage its members to participate in the Royal Society's pairing scheme.

Council approved the recommendations of the Review of Everything with two substantive additions – (i) the print edition of *Microbiology Today* should eventually be discontinued and the content transformed into front matter and other means of communicating with the members, as part of an overall overhaul of communication and (ii) the Society should conduct a full and thorough review of the Society’s suite of journals as soon as possible, including product development of potential new titles if appropriate.

**Action 05: Chief Executive and staff to produce plans to ensure the delivery of the recommendations of the Review of Everything, and integrate them into the Society’s overall strategy implementation plan.**

**Action 06: Head of Engagement and Storytelling to develop a plan for transforming *Microbiology Today* into front matter content and content for other means of communicating with members.**

**Action 07: Head of Scientific Programmes to conduct a comprehensive review of the suite of Society journals, to include product development of potential new titles if appropriate.**

### **3.5.1 General Secretary’s Group Report**

Council was invited to consider the General Secretary’s Group report and discuss all the recommendations put forward following committee meetings and those in relation to EDI and budget 2024.

#### **Policy discussion on AI language models such as ChatGPT being used by journal authors**

Council noted that the emergence of AI language models such as ChatGPT were likely to have a significant impact on how authors prepared journal submissions. The Society’s journals should have a policy for handling manuscripts that used such models, in order to keep up with the field.

Council agreed that a blanket ban would not be an appropriate response to these developments, as authors could benefit from use of AI language models to improve manuscript quality. It was also significant that the Russell Group had recently released their policy on AI language models which was not a blanket ban.

Council resolved that the Society’s journals should not permit the generation of data or images via AI models, but that it was not opposed to the deployment of AI language models to assist with text editing. The issue would need to be discussed by Publishing Panel to refine the detail.

**Action 08: Head of Scientific Programmes to ensure AI policy is discussed by the Publishing Panel.**

#### **Considering hosting Annual Conference outside of the UK and Ireland given the Society’s international outlook**

Council resolved that although it was not in principle opposed to hosting Annual Conference outside of the UK and Ireland, it was not a priority to do so.

Given the sustainability issue of having thousands of delegates largely from the UK and Ireland fly abroad, it was suggested as an alternative that the Society cultivate communities of members abroad in a similar manner to the Irish Division. It was noted that there was an existing community of highly active members in a part of West Africa. Investing in this community of members to help build on

their existing initiatives could be a good opportunity to trial events outside of the UK and Ireland for the first time.

### **Improving integration of the ECM Forum into Society activities**

Council recognised that active engagement of early career members is an essential part of the Society's longevity. However there were some problems with the ECM co-Chairing scheme at Annual Conference. There appeared to be some hostility towards ECM co-Chairs, and other co-Chairs did not take proper account of the Chairs' notes which resulted in failure to respect proper pronunciation of speakers' names.

Council agreed that it should continue to support the ECM Summer Conference, that it should offer more training to equip ECM members to chair sessions and review for journals. It also resolved to involve ECM co-Chairs earlier in the organisational process, such as in the session planning and invitations stage.

### **Members Panel**

The Members Panel had expressed concerns to the General Secretary that Council was not always committed to EDI, and that Council did not sufficiently present visible, diverse role models. Although there had been some success with EDI-related initiatives, for example the well-attended LGBTQ+ Social at Annual Conference, it was clear that more needed to be done if the Society was to meet its stated values.

Following its ratification of incoming incumbents for Appointed and Elected Positions on Council and Committees [items 3.10.1 and 3.11.1], Council noted the distinct lack of diversity among candidates. It was noted that some action had already been taken to try and encourage diversity, including extending deadlines with emphasised messaging, personal approaches, and the seekers group established by Council at its 397 Meeting in December 2022. Unfortunately these actions had not been successful thus far. Council was asked to consider further action that should be taken to increase the diversity of applicants, in all protected characteristics.

Council considered various factors which may explain the lack of diversity among applicants. These included a lack of mentorship available to early career members for putting together strong applications, deficiencies in the way job descriptions were written, and lack of understanding of the role of Council and other Committees within the Society. During the course of the EDI initiatives undertaken during this round of appointments, Council also learned that applicants had other reasons not to apply – for example some applicants who were approached to request an application reported that they did not have capacity to take on additional responsibilities. It was reported that individuals with specific characteristics were often asked to take on a disproportionately greater number of responsibilities. Council also noted that it did not currently collect information on EDI when seeking expression of interest in Council Appointed Positions. Council further noted that elections included a strong element of name recognition and agreed that in future it would be better for the candidates' statements to be anonymised.

As well as ethnicity, Council noted that its composition was weak with regard to diversity of career stage. Council discussed how it might increase accessibility for early career members, noting that two key factors were the approachability of Council and the lesser degree of control that early career members had over their own workload. Suggestions for alleviating these factors included increased

opportunities to interact with Council informally to mitigate intimidation and creating a margin of discretion with regards to expectation of early career members to increase flexibility.

Council agreed that it needed to take significant steps to produce different outcomes such that the diversity of its community and of the membership were better represented in its decision making structures.

As a first step, Council resolved to invite the Members Panel to the Thursday session of the next in-person meeting of Council in December 2023, with a view to committing to actions that would make a significant difference to the diversity of decision-making bodies in the Society. It recommended that members who wished to attend should be offered expenses to travel to London as well as the option to join virtually if needed.

It was noted that the implications of EDI-related activities and resource would then need to be considered from a budgetary perspective.

**Action 09 Chief Executive to invite the members of the Members Panel to attend the Thursday session of the 401 meeting of Council in December 2023, including paying travel and accommodation expenses and an option to join virtually if needed.**

#### **Introduction of the EDI Prize**

The EDI Prize that Council had previously agreed was on course to be introduced in 2024 and more details would come to Council in September. It would be necessary to make this prize as straightforward as possible in order to guarantee nominations, and to consider when and where to award this prize in order to maximise its visibility. The Members Panel had expressed concern about the plan to present the EDI Prize alongside the Outreach Prize at the Society showcase, rather than at Annual Conference, making it less visible to members.

The next meeting of the General Secretary's Group had been scheduled for 7 November 2023, and incoming co-Chairs Geertje van Keulen (Sustainability Committee) and Kalai Mathee (Building Communities Committee) would be invited as observers.

#### **3.6.1 Annual Conference evaluation**

The Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer referred Council to paper 399-07 for the full evaluation of Annual Conference 2023. She noted that operational recommendations from feedback were being implemented where possible, e.g. poster session improvements, additional overflow rooms. Implementation of further delegate suggestions was being considered, including the re-introduction of alcohol to parts of the event.

#### **3.7.1 Statement on content funded by the Russian state**

The Chief Executive reminded Council that it had taken the decision at an extraordinary meeting in March 2022 that it would not progress any journal content which was funded by the Russian state or which originated from an institution which had supported the war in Ukraine. To date, 25 papers had been submitted which met at least one of these criteria. Of those 25, 12 had been withdrawn by the authors, seven had already been accepted at the time of the decision and put on hold by publishing staff, five remained paused at either the initial submission stage or the peer review stage, and one

had been issued a pre-screen rejection as being out of scope. There were two additional papers which had corrected their funding statements to remove acknowledgement of Russian money.

A recent survey of the Society membership found that 75% of members sitting on the governance structure supported the ban of publication of content from Russian Institutions in Society journals. Resistance to this ban was strongest amongst the Early Career Microbiologists' Forum, whose Executive Committee decided unanimously to rescind the statement. The primary concern of the ECM Forum was that, although it was in principle not an unreasonable policy, the Society's current stance was in danger of arbitrarily discriminating between different human rights issues in different countries, in this case cherry picking for a conflict which had a higher profile in British and western-European media than problems in other parts of the world.

Jo Kite (Chair of Early Career Microbiologists' Forum Executive Committee) and Alan McNally (Elected Member) presented paper 399-08, where they outlined the following four alternative policies which the Society could adopt regarding journal content and the war in Ukraine:

1. A ban on all publications from the 12 universities suspended by EUA
2. Allowing publications from Russian institutions outwith the EUA suspensions
3. A ban on publications from all Russian institutions
4. Allowing publication from all Russian institutions

Council agreed overall that the second policy was best aligned with the Society's values and set the best precedent for any similar situations which may arise from future conflicts. It was pointed out that there was no clear consensus among organisations similar to the Society or the field of microbiology at large on how to handle this scenario. This policy did, however, bring the Society more in line with the tone set by other organisations and allowed for individuals to publish under a neutral affiliation, akin to athletes being allowed to compete but not under a national flag. It also offered criteria which could be applied more consistently to other conflicts. In response to a concern that individual academics in non-suspended institutions may publicly support the war, Council noted that risks regarding authors' problematic personal beliefs were always present and that beliefs on this topic should be managed no differently to other sensitive topics.

It was pointed out that discussion of this topic was initiated by the journal Editors who had not had an opportunity to contribute on this occasion and that they should be consulted further before making any public statement.

**Action 10: The Associate Director of Communications, Brand and Audiences to develop a new statement in line with option 2 (allowing publications from Russian institutions out with the EUA suspensions) for consultation with the journal Editors-in-Chief, before publication in response to the feedback received.**

### 3.8.1 Composition of Council and Committees

This document was taken as read.

### 3.9.1 Membership report

The Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer presented the membership report, drawing Council's attention specifically to sections 2.1 and 2.2 on the Champions Scheme. She asked that Council take

notice of these sections to increase their awareness of the Champions' work. The Champions Review recommendations would be reported to Council at the 400 meeting of Council in September 2023.

Council approved the list of incoming members.

It was noted that the influx of new members from North America was likely related to the Society's successful first event in that region, the *Candida and Candidiasis* meeting in Montreal, Canada in May.

### **3.10.1 Council appointed positions**

At its 398 Meeting in March 2023, Council had delegated to the General Secretary authority to convene an Appointments Panel after the closing date for nominations for Council appointed positions.

The panel was comprised of the General Secretary Karen Robinson (Chair), Council Members Laura Bowater, Jo Kite and Sharon Brookes, and Edward Cunningham-Oakes (co-Chair of the Members Panel).

The Appointments Panel wished to note their disappointment with the lack of diversity in the nominations they received, particularly with regard to the lack of candidates from historically marginalised groups.

Kim Hardie left the meeting for that part of this agenda item that dealt with the appointment of the co-Chair of Building Communities Committee, for which she was a candidate.

#### Co-Chair-Elect of Sustainability Committee

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Christine Edwards as co-Chair-Elect of Sustainability Committee for one year from January 2024 – December 2024 and three years as co-Chair from January 2025 – December 2027.

#### Co-Chair-Elect of Impact and Influence Committee

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Jonathan Cox as Co-chair-elect of Impact and Influence Committee for one year from January 2024 – December 2024 and three years as co-Chair from January 2025 – December 2027.

#### Co-Chair-Elect of the Building Communities Committee and Chair-Elect of the Publishing Panel

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Kim Hardie as co-Chair-Elect of the Building Communities Committee and Chair-Elect of the Publishing Panel for one year from January 2024 – December 2024 and three years as co-Chair from January 2025 – December 2027.

#### Co-Chair-Elect of the Building Communities Committee and Chair-Elect of the Scientific Conferences Panel

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Nicolas Locker as co-Chair-Elect of the Building Communities Committee and Chair-Elect of the Scientific Conferences Panel for two years from January 2024 – December 2025 and two years as co-Chair from January 2026 – December 2027.



Council approved the Appointments Panel's recommendation that Marguerite Clyne be considered a preferred candidate for either Impact and Influence co-Chair or Sustainability co-Chair in the event that either of Jonathan Cox or Christine Edwards were unable to proceed with their appointment. It also resolved to ensure that Marguerite Clyne was contacted to express appreciation for submitting such a strong application.

It was noted that Nicolas Tucker's name was misspelled in the documents, and that this should be corrected.

Following Council's approval of the appointment process for Division Chairs-Elect at its 398 meeting in March 2023, the appointment of the Chair-Elect positions on the Society's Divisions was overseen by a separate Appointments Panel chaired by Gill Elliott in her capacity as Chair of the Scientific Conferences Panel (SCP). The Panel's core composition also included the Chair-Elect of SCP Kalai Mathee.

The Panel wished to express their gratitude to the Committee co-Chairs who were key in ensuring a sufficient number of candidates.

#### Chair-Elect of the Eukaryotic Division

The Panel was comprised of Anastasios Tsaousis, Alison Smith, Joanna Parish, David Clarke, and Kalai Mathee.

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Robert Hirt as Chair-Elect of the Eukaryotic Division for two years from January 2024 – December 2025 and Chair as two years from January 2026 – December 2027

#### Chair-Elect of the Irish Division

The Panel was comprised of Joanna Parish, David Clarke, Gerald Barry, Jerry Reen and Kalai Mathee.

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Florence Abram as Chair-Elect of the Irish Division for two years from January 2024 – December 2025 and Chair as two years from January 2026 – December 2027

Council agreed that Pauline Scanlan should be contacted with positive feedback on her application, with encouragement to re-apply in the near future.

#### Chair-Elect of the Prokaryotic Division

The Panel was comprised of Martin Welch, Christopher Cooper, Matthew Reeves, David Clarke and Kalai Mathee.

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Dany Beste as Chair-Elect of the Prokaryotic Division for two years from January 2024 – December 2025 and Chair as two years from January 2026 – December 2027

Gill Elliott declared a conflict of interest with the appointment of this position, noting that she stepped away from the meeting during the Panel's deliberation for it.

#### Chair-Elect of the Virus Division

The Panel was comprised of Joanna Parish, Matthew Reeves, Martin Welch, David Clarke and Kalai Mathee.

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Ed Hutchinson as Chair-Elect of the Virus Division for two years from January 2024 – December 2025 and Chair as two years from January 2026 – December 2027

#### Federation of Infection Sciences (FIS) Chair-Elect

The FIS Chair-Elect was appointed by a separate Appointments Panel who considered applications via e-mail before coming to a decision. The Panel was comprised of Tina Joshi, Paul Hoskisson and Gill Elliott.

Council approved the Appointments Panel recommendation to appoint Joey Shepherd as Chair-Elect of the Federation of Infection Sciences for two years from January 2024 – December 2025 and Chair as two years from January 2026 – December 2027

At its 398 Meeting in March 2023, Council noted a number of editorial positions that would need to be filled as soon as convenient. The positions were advertised, and in accordance with Council's agreed process, the Chair of the Publishing Panel convened an editorial appointments panel on 30 May. Council had already approved the Editorial Appointments Panel by email, and agreed that the decisions should be recorded in the minutes of the present meeting.

The Panel consisted of Paul Hoskisson, Paul Duprex, Willem van Schaik, Eva Heinz and Catrin Moore.

#### Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of General Virology*

Council approved the panel recommendation to appoint Joanna Parish as Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of General Virology*.

#### Editor-in-Chief of *Microbiology*

Council approved the panel recommendation to appoint Andrew Preston as Editor-in-Chief of *Microbiology*

#### Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Microbiology*

Council approved the recommendation from the Panel to appoint Sarah Maddocks and Steve Diggle as co-Deputy Editors-in-Chief of *Microbiology* on the condition that the incoming Editor-in-Chief was comfortable with a co-Deputy Editors-in-Chief set-up.

Following this decision, Andrew Preston was contacted and warmly welcomed the opportunity of having co-Deputy Editors-in-Chief.

### **3.11.1 2023 Society election results**

Council received the voting data and summary results of the 2023 elections and ratified the results as follows.

#### **Council**

The following members were elected:

Lorena Fernández-Martínez



Sheila Patrick  
George Salmond

**Prokaryotic Division**

**Clinical Microbiology**

Mathew Diggle  
Stephan Heeb

**Prokaryote Genetics**

Bruno Francesco de Oliveira

**Prokaryote Molecular Biology**

Conor Feehily

**Virus Division**

**Clinical Virology**

Anna Smielewska

**Positive strand RNA Virology**

Edward Emmott

**Negative Strand RNA Virology**

Benjamin Brennan

**Early Career Microbiologist Forum Executive Committee**

**ECM Forum Executive Committee Representative for Impact and Influence Committee**

Isobel Garratt

**ECM Forum Executive Committee Representative for Publishing Panel**

Lilly Cummins

**ECM Forum Executive Committee Representative for Prokaryotic Division**

Kasia Parfitt

**ECM Forum Executive Committee Representative for Scientific Conferences Panel**

David Mark

**ECM Forum Executive Committee Representative for Sustainability Committee**

Matthew Whelan

**ECM Forum Executive Committee Representative for Virus Division**

Rowan Casey

Council ratified the appointment of the following positions that had been uncontested and thus not gone to election.

#### **Council and Chair-elect of the ECM Forum Executive Committee**

Jack Ferguson

#### **Building Communities Committee**

Ankita Priyadarshini

#### **Impact and Influence Committee**

Tadhg Ó'Cróinín

Joan Geoghegan

Joseph Acolatse

Jody Winter

#### **Sustainability Committee**

Douglas Browning

Sara Henderson

#### **Eukaryotic Division**

Campbell Gourlay

Maria Rosa Domingo Sananes

Girish Beedessee

Fiona Henriquez

#### **Irish Division**

Rebecca Owens

John Kenny

Stephen Kelly

#### **Virus Division**

Lindsay Broadbent

Council noted that Committee and Division Chairs may choose to co-opt members to any positions left unfilled following the results of the election.

**Action 11: Chief Executive, via the Executive Governance Manager, to inform successful and unsuccessful candidates of the outcome of the elections and appointments processes.**

#### **3.12.1 Speaking Up Policy**

At its 398 Meeting in March 2023, Council had requested “a whistleblowing policy,” based on its decision to nominate two of its number as contacts for members of staff who wished to raise any concerns that they felt unable to raise with HR in the normal way.

A policy had been drafted incorporating comments from the Society’s lawyers and also incorporated comments from the two nominated trustees. Where possible, it drew on the NHS Speaking Up policy, including replacing the phrase ‘whistleblowing’ with ‘speaking up’.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the Speaking Up Policy would allow complainants to 'Speak up' by three means as opposed to the conventional single means via Human Resources:

1. By raising an issue with Human Resources in the normal way.
2. By raising an issue directly to two appointed trustees with appointed responsibility as staff liaisons, currently Alan McNally and Catrin Moore.
3. By Public Interest Disclosure as set out in legislation.

It was noted that speaking up directly to the appointed trustees would entail individuals submitting their statement via an email address hosted on the Society's servers which the trustees would be able to access. This was to avoid data protection concerns related to storing such information in trustees' personal or institutional e-mail inboxes.

It was also noted that the two trustees appointed to the Speaking Up policy would be named personally in the staff handbook. These names would be updated each time there was a changeover of trustees to avoid ambiguity.

It was agreed that any Council member who received a concern directly from a member of staff should forward it to the trustees' Society email address, with the exception of any cases where the concern in question related to one or both of the nominated trustees, in which case it would be a matter for HR.

With this amendment, Council approved the introduction of the proposed Speaking Up Policy.

**Action 12: The Chief Executive to amend the Speaking Up Policy as agreed and to incorporate the Speaking Up Policy into the staff handbook.**

### **3.13.1 2023 Outreach Prize**

Kim Hardie left the meeting for this agenda item.

The General Secretary updated Council on the Prizes Panel. As the Outreach Prize Lecture was to be featured at the Society Showcase in October, Council was asked to approve the recommendation for the 2023 winner at its July meeting. The Panel was chaired by the Treasurer in this instance, as the General Secretary had conflicts of interest with two of the nominations. Kim Hardie's project had scored the highest, but all were of high quality. Council approved the 2023 Microbiology Outreach Prize be awarded to Kim Hardie for her 'Spread the message, not the germs' project.

The General Secretary noted the well-balanced composition of the Prizes Panel for the Outreach Prize, which had a variety of career stages and geographic location as well as an even gender balance. The Prizes Panel would remain the same for the Prize Lectures, notwithstanding conflicts of interest.

**Action 13: The Associate Director of Engagement and Insight to ensure the Outreach Prize Winner be invited to the 2023 Society Showcase.**

### **3.14.1 Draft 2023 AGM Papers**

The Chief Executive drew attention to a mistake in the draft papers relating to the timeline for the appointment of proxies and undertook to correct it.

Subject to this correction, Council approved the draft AGM papers and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make minor necessary amendments.

### **3.15.1 Covid-19 Inquiry update**

Due to time constraints, Council was asked to refer to the information already circulated via the Chief Executive's weekly email updates for further details about the Society's ongoing involvement with the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry.

The Chief Executive further reported that the Society was unlikely to be called on to provide oral evidence for Module 1 of the Inquiry, but that its statement was being used by counsel to the Inquiry.

As previously noted, the Society's lawyers had advised that the Society should apply to be a core participant in a later module of the Inquiry relating to Test and Trace. This would likely be Module 7 or later, which would not start until early 2024 at the earliest, and probably later.

### **3.16.1 Environmental Project update**

The Chief Executive reminded Council that at its 395 meeting in July 2022, it had agreed to establish a working group to develop an Environmental Impact Plan. Progress on the establishment of this group was put on hold due to staff resourcing limitations but was now being taken forward by the newly appointed Executive Governance Officer.

A call-out had recently been sent to members who had previously expressed interest and to members of all Committees. Responses were received from 16 members confirming their interest, and two were received from members of Committees. An outgoing member of Council had agreed to chair the working group.

Efforts to recruit additional members from the Committees would continue. A further update on progress would be delivered at the 401 meeting of Council in December followed by a substantive report in 2024.

**Action 14: Executive Governance Officer to provide progress update on recruitment for the Environmental Working Group in time for the 400 meeting of Council on 8 September 2023.**

## **4. Strategy implementation**

### **4.1.1 Strategy implementation plan**

Due to time constraints and the fact that most of the material detailed in this paper had been covered in other discussions during the meeting, the Chief Executive drew Council's attention to the small number of key points on the cover paper.

First, he noted that some changes arising from this plan had already yielded results, for example the use of poster stickers and business cards at Annual Conference 2023 to encourage submission to journals, but that many changes would only have a discernible effect in the long term. Council was asked to consider a long-term outlook when assessing these changes in September.

Second, the Chief Executive noted that some would be needed regarding how best to use the time of members in the Society's governance structure. As the Council sought to internationalise the governance structure, the Society would need to be sure that it was realistic about what it could

expect from members given their various time commitments and must be able to adapt expectations and task allocations quickly to ensure that matters could be progressed in a timely manner.

## 5. Committee business (for information only)

### 5.1.1 Building Communities Committee Minutes – October 2022

The minutes were taken as read.

### 5.2.1 ECM Executive Committee Minutes – October 2022

The minutes were taken as read.

### 5.3.1 Impact and Influence Committee Minutes – October 2022

The minutes were taken as read.

### 5.4.1 Sustainability Committee Minutes – October 2022

The minutes were taken as read.

## 6. AOB

There was no other business.

## 7. Closed session of Council

Staff left the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1pm.

## Action table

Actions from the 397 meeting of Council				
09	3.6	to take forward the General Secretary's Group recommendations and the approved introduction of an EDI activities prize.	Chief Programmes and Partnerships Officer	Agenda item 3.7.
Actions from the 398 meeting of Council				
2.	1.4	Progress with setting up a Society WeChat account and develop FAQs and statement ahead of its launch.	The Head of Marketing and Development	Full update provided as part of agenda item 4.1.
14	5	To contact the Chair of the Publishing Panel. discuss further collaboration with the Australian Microbiology Society.	The Associate Director of Global Inclusion	Ongoing. Initial discussions had and plans to include as part of a wider society affiliations strategy.
Actions from the 399 meeting of Council				
01	2.1.6	To submit a blank register of Persons of Significant Control to Companies House.	Chief Operations Officer	Completed.
02	2.1.7	To update Council on the status of the complaint against the Executors of the estate	Chief Operations Officer	Update provided through the Finance

		at the 400 meeting of Council on 8 September 2023.		committee key points paper.
<b>03</b>	<b>3.2.1</b>	To prepare summary of key decisions included in the reviews for incoming Council members.	Chief Executive	Ongoing to be included with paperwork ahead of the incoming trustee inductions.
<b>04</b>	<b>3.3.1</b>	To draw up plans to deliver the recommendations, and integrate them into the overall implementation plan for the Society's strategy.	Chief Executive and staff	Agenda item 4.1
<b>05</b>	<b>3.4.1</b>	To produce plans to ensure the delivery of the recommendations of the Review of Everything, and integrate them into the Society's overall strategy implementation plan.	Chief Executive and staff	Agenda item 4.1
<b>06</b>	<b>3.4.1</b>	To develop a plan for transforming <i>Microbiology Today</i> into front matter content and content for other means of communicating with members.	Head of Engagement and Storytelling	Update included under agenda item 4.1
<b>07</b>	<b>3.4.1</b>	To conduct a comprehensive review of the suite of Society journals, to include product development of potential new titles if appropriate.	Head of Scientific Programmes	Recruitment has been instigated for a Publishing Manager position who will take the lead on this review.
<b>08</b>	<b>3.5.1</b>	To ensure AI policy is discussed by the Publishing Panel.	Head of Scientific Programmes	Publishing Panel scheduled for October and this will feature on the agenda.
<b>09</b>		To invite the members of the Members Panel to attend the Thursday session of the 401 meeting of Council in December 2023, including paying travel and accommodation expenses and an option to join virtually if needed.	Chief Executive	Completed.
<b>10</b>	<b>3.7.1</b>	To develop a new statement in line with option 2 (allowing publications from Russian institutions out with the EUA suspensions) for consultation with the journal Editors-in-Chief, before publication in response to the feedback received.	The Associate Director of Communications, Brand and Audiences	Options to be discussed with Publishing Panel in October.



<b>11</b>	<b>3.11.1</b>	To inform successful and unsuccessful candidates of the outcome of the elections and appointments processes.	Chief Executive, via the Executive Governance Manager.	Completed.
<b>12</b>	<b>3.12.1</b>	To amend the Speaking Up Policy as agreed and to incorporate the Speaking Up Policy into the staff handbook.	The Chief Executive	Completed.
<b>13</b>	<b>3.13.1</b>	To ensure the Outreach Prize Winner be invited to the 2023 Society Showcase.	The Associate Director of Engagement and Insight	Completed.