

353 - SGM Council Meeting - Minutes

Minutes of the 353rd meeting of Council held on Monday 3 September 2012 12:30-14:00

Venue: Social Sciences Room 0.21, Warwick Conference Centre

Present

Hilary Lappin-Scott, (in the Chair)

Colin Harwood

David Blackburn

Evelyn Doyle

Ian Henderson

Jo Verran

Karen Robinson

Mark Harris

Nigel Brown

Paul Hoskisson

In attendance

Simon Festing (Chief Executive)

Leighton Chipperfield (Head of Publishing)

Sara Burton (incoming Chair of Professional Development Committee)

01. Apologies for Absence & welcome to new attendees

Apologies were received from Gary Rowley, Charles Penn, Andrew Davison, Maggie Smith, and John Sinclair.

Sara Burton and Leighton Chipperfield were welcomed to their first Council meeting.

02. Minutes of the 352nd Meeting of Council

The minutes of the meetings were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

03. Matters arising from the minutes

There is still a need to progress the Heatley-Payne Travel Award with ASM.

Council agreed that the issue of international work would come back to a future Council meeting.

Council noted that SfAM has supported the joint bid for FEMS.

Rita Colwell has accepted the 2014 SGM Prize Medal.

04. Redactions

Council agreed that there should be no redactions for the minutes of the 352 meeting.

President/Secretary/Chief Executive Business

05. General business / Marlborough House items

Council noted that Marlborough House staff members in the Publications Department are being relatively positive despite the inevitable uncertainty that plans to restructure the Department raises for them. Council appreciated that staff continue to work in a highly professional and productive manner.

06. Update of Society bank mandate

Council approved the following changes: Hilary Lappin-Scott to be removed, Nigel Brown and Leighton Chipperfield to be added.

07. Council appointments

Council approved Colin Harwood remaining as Treasurer, and Charles Penn as Chair of Publications Committee, both for one year.

In the case of the Treasurer the intention is to find a replacement who could ideally shadow for the last six months of the year. A Working Group was agreed; membership to be David Blackbourn (Chair), Nigel Brown, Ian Henderson and Mark Harris.

In the case of the Chair of Publications Committee, Council will negotiate with Prof Penn during the year as to whether he would be prepared to serve a full term or to find a replacement.

Working Groups for the search for a new Treasurer and General Secretary would report back to the Council meeting in November. Person specifications are required for both posts.

Council agreed to advertise for nominations again for the post of Editor of Microbiology Today. The post-holder will be permanently co-opted onto the Communications Committee.

Council noted the nomination of Karen Robinson as the next Deputy Meetings Officer from September 2013. [*Post-meeting note*: following the AGM, the incoming President with the support of Council Officers, recommended that the appointment of the Deputy Meetings Officer should be an open and transparent process].

08. Council Committees – membership, and meeting schedules

Council noted gaps in the membership of the Communications and Professional Development Committees, and agreed to announce at the AGM that special elections would take place. Jo Verran and Sara Burton would identify generic skills which would be useful, and it was agreed that as part of the election process, candidates will be asked to provide a brief biography.

These two new committees would meet as soon as reasonably possible.

09. Office Location Review – interim report from Working Group

Council noted that the Working Group met that morning. It considered various submitted papers, and has asked for more information, specifically full costings and human resource implications for any move.

The Working Group agreed the proposed remit for its work, and recognised that input will be needed from staff. Staff have also requested an independent look at the issues, and Professor Brian Spratt (Imperial College) has been identified by the staff reference group. The intention of the Working Group is to meet in October and make recommendation to Council for consideration in November.

Council noted the need for a quick decision, as this issue is creating prolonged uncertainty for staff, and has implications for likely recruitment in the near future to the publications department. Council noted that this is an issue which is likely to impact heavily on staff, and that all relevant considerations need to be taken into account, including SGM's responsibilities as a good employer.

10. Preparation for AGM – any further matters

None were noted.

Finance and administration

11. Update

Council noted that the second-quarter finances were on target.

Professional Development & Scientific Conferences

12. Update

Council noted that the numbers at Warwick were a little down on the previous year, but the proportion of paying delegates had risen. The next meeting is at Manchester Central on 25-28 March, followed by the Autumn 2013 on 2-4 September meeting at the University of Sussex.

Policy & Communications

13. Update

Council noted that there had been a successful meeting with Peter Boriello to consider the composition of the panel to develop the SGM statement on STIs.

Council noted that the customer relations management (CRM) system is due to go live in October, and the redesigned website in January 2013.

Publications

14. Introduction from of Head of Publishing and future timetable

The new Head of Publishing provided the following verbal report:

Current operations are running smoothly, and staff members continue to perform professionally and effectively in challenging circumstances. As such, no major changes to the day-to-day operations of the journals are envisaged during the review period. Outstanding decisions that have been awaiting the Head of Publishing's appointment are being taken forward; this includes a review of appropriate bibliometric resources for staff and Editors. Current staff are being involved in various matters of Journal development.

The Head of Publishing outlined a two step process for his review: a) the development of a coherent and sustainable strategy for all aspects of publishing at SGM, with appropriate key initiatives, tactics, and measures of success; b) the development of an organisational structure to execute the strategy. The strategy will require synergies with other departments and a holistic view of the wider issues impacting the field and the Society.

The intention is to have a high-level view of the strategy and some key initiatives in place for discussion at the November council meeting. Following this, work will commence on the appropriate organisational structure and job profiles.

The Head of Publishing intends to meet with a wide range of stakeholders to provide input to the strategy, including key institutions, other societies, authors, librarians, and suppliers. A feedback program will be developed to gain better insights from stakeholders, particularly authors, on an ongoing basis.

A high priority is being given to recruitment for the Sales and Marketing Manager role. The Head of Publishing aims to begin advertising the role by the end of September.

Council agreed that the Microbiology page charges were to be dropped. The Head of Publishing will liaise with the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor of Microbiology on the timing and communication for this change.

15. Next Meeting of Council

Date: 9 November, 2012, 9.00 a.m.

Venue: Marlborough House, Spencers Wood, Reading, RG7 1AG

AOBs

1. Council agreed to change the of name Treasurer's Committee to Finance Committee
2. Council agreed that SGM should take a more proactive role to tackle diversity issues in a variety of ways. This would be taken forward initially by the Policy Committee. Council agreed to invite Hilary Lappin-Scott to be diversity champion, (as an informal role, not on Council).

Action Points - Post meeting report back

1. *Jane Westwell to speak to Jo Verran about progressing the Heatley-Payne Travel Award: ✓*
ASM has approved the change of rules to the Heatley-Payne Award to give the opportunity to teaching fellows to present at ASMCUE and visit an institution for the purpose of carrying out a piece of pedagogic research or learning a new pedagogic methodology. The SGM website (<http://www.sgm.ac.uk/grants/hb-hp.cfm>) and grant application forms have been amended to reflect this change.
2. *MH staff to organise meetings of Working Groups for the selection process for the Treasurer and General Secretary: ✓* these will be held on the Thursday prior to the November Council meeting.
3. *MH staff to initiate election process for committees: ✓* we are expecting the results to be ready for the November Council meeting.
4. *Chairs of two new committees to organise dates for meetings: ✓* meetings were held for both the Communications Committee and the Professional Development Committee on 24 October.
5. *Microbiology page charges to be dropped: ✓* this will happen from 1st December 2012.