

Minutes of the 371 meeting of Council

Friday 3 March 2017 09:00-12:30

Venue: Charles Darwin House 2

Attendees:

Neil Gow (President, in the Chair)
Christopher Thomas (Treasurer)
Maggie Smith (General Secretary)
Charles Dorman (Chair of Publishing Committee)
Pat Goodwin (Chair of Policy Committee)
Karen Robinson (Chair of Scientific Conferences Committee)
Helen Brown (Chair of the Early Career Microbiologists' Forum Executive Committee)
Steve Oliver (Elected Member)
Mike Skinner (Elected Member)
Nicola Stonehouse (Elected Member)
Paul Kellam (Elected Member)
George Salmond (Elected Member)

In attendance:

Peter Cotgreave (Chief Executive)
Sarah Buckman (Director of Strategy and Members' Programmes)
Leighton Chipperfield (Director of Commercial Affairs)
Joanne Morley (Chief Operations Officer)
Gillian Perry-Bland (Governance and Operations Executive)

01. Apologies for absence & welcome to new attendees

The President formally welcomed Council to the 371 meeting and welcomed Gillian Perry- Bland to the Society. Apologies were received from David Bhella, David Pearce and David Whitworth. Paul Kellam offered his apologies for not attending the pre-council meeting on the 2 March.

02. Declaration of any new conflicts of interest

None were declared. All members were reminded that they have a responsibility for their own conflicts of interest and to notify the Society of any new conflicts that may arise.

03. Minutes of the 370 Meeting of Council

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the 370 meeting of Council.

04. Matters arising from the minutes and action points

The President noted that a new Council representative for Equality and Diversity needed to be appointed. Nicola Stonehouse expressed an interest in standing for this. The President thanked her and accepted her offer to serve as the Council representative for Equality and Diversity.

2 President / Chief Executive Business

2.1 General business /Report back from CEO

a) Staffing

The Chief Executive reported that interviews had taken place and new members of staff had started. Francesca Everard was the new Managing Editor and Alexandra Howat was the new Editorial Coordinator. Gillian Perry-Bland was the new member of staff responsible for governance and would be the first point of contact for Council on all administrative matters.

b) Prizes and Nominations

Maggie Smith noted that the wording around prizes on the website had been updated to be clearer and now noted that awards were given based on the information having been provided in good faith. George Salmond noted that the previous wording was open to debate and question. The deadline for prize nominations was 7 June, later than in previous years. Council agreed that a more proactive campaign was needed to encourage more diversity in nominations and nominators, particularly since there were few female nominees. The President requested that Council think hard about potential nominees.

Steve Oliver, Helen Brown and Nicola Stonehouse would form the prizes panel that would review the prize nominations with the General Secretary. There would then be a review of the Prizes process.

c) General Business

The Chief Executive reported that following expressions of interest from some of the journal editors, he had discussed with the Natural History Museum the possibility of holding a joint summit on microbiological taxonomy. Council agreed to continue to the discussions, and to go ahead with nominating some representatives to a joint steering committee.

The President updated Council on the progress regarding the possibility of producing a television programme related to microbiology (under the working title *The Invisible Planet*). Other societies had been approached for their support, and the President had received many letters of support.

2.2 Dr Robert Ryan

This item was minuted separately, and the minutes are annexed as an Appendix.

2.3 Composition of Council and Committees

Council noted the paper circulated in advance.

The President noted that the current list of committees was accurate and up to date and it was taken as correct.

Pat Goodwin requested that future versions indicated the representatives on each committee for international matters and for equality and diversity.

2.4 New Members List

Council accepted the list of incoming members.

The President noted that it was encouraging to see an increased number of new early career members on the list.

2.5 Council appointed positions

The Chief Executive reminded Council that there were two vacancies that needed to be filled this year: Chair-elect of the Scientific Conferences Committee and Chair-elect of Policy Committee, both of whom would automatically become Chairs and therefore members of Council in due course. Karen Robinson, David Bhella, Paul Kellam will form the appointments panel chaired by the General Secretary.

The Chief Executive also reminded Council that there would be an election for Chair of the Early Career Microbiologists' Forum Executive Committee to follow Helen Brown. He also noted that two Elected members of Council, Mike Skinner and David Pearce, would come to the end of their terms on Council at the end of 2017. It had been identified that, in terms of gender diversity, female representation was much smaller on Council currently. Council discussed and agreed that the Society needed to encourage more younger and early career microbiologists, as well as more virologists, and those from Ireland.

2.6 Outcomes from Thursday session

The President noted the wealth of ideas generated from the Thursday session on the development of the Society's strategy for 2018-2022, and thanks everyone for their valuable contributions. These ideas would be fed into the process and the first draft strategy would be circulated to Council in April for comment.

2.7 Microbiome Report

The Chair of the Policy Committee thanked the Policy Officer for his tremendous dedication and hard work on this project. The outcome of this work would be two documents; one would be an overview and the other a full report. There would be a Microbiome session at the Annual Conference as well as a feature in the May edition of *Microbiology Today* and several blog posts. Pat Goodwin also noted that the intention was that the report would be launched in June and circulated to Council by email for comment in advance.

The President confirmed that he would be happy to look over the report in detail. Paul Kellam also agreed to review the report in detail.

2.8 Critical Risk Register

Council noted the updated risk register and the Chief Executive confirmed that we would be working with our new auditors to develop the risk register further during 2017.

3.0 Finance and Operations

3.1 Finance and Operations key points

The Treasurer summarised the update paper circulated to Council before this meeting and confirmed that it was happy to accept the recommendations set out in the paper.

Council agreed that staff would receive a 3% pay rise on 1 April. It was noted that a message was to go to all staff that they were doing an excellent job and that Council highly valued their efforts. Council approved the Chief Executive's request to inform staff on the decision within the next few days, in advance of the minutes being approved.

3.2 Collated Finance papers

Steve Oliver expressed some concerns on the performance of the investment portfolio and the Treasurer advised that he would be talking to Asset Risk Consultants (ARC) who monitor the Society's investments, regarding the issues raised and seek further guidance. ARC would be attending the Finance and Operations Committee in July.

The President agreed with this and confirmed that this is a priority for Finance and Operations Committee.

4 ECM Forum

4.1 Update from Chair

Helen Brown had no additional information to add but reminded Council of the vacancies on the Early Career Microbiologists' Forum Executive Committee that would be up for election in 2017.

5 Policy

5.1 Climate Change Communique

The Chief Executive reminded Council that in July 2015, the Society had signed a Climate Change Communique, jointly with a number of other Societies. An updated version of this had now been drafted and provided in the papers. Council agreed that the Society should be a signatory on the new document.

5.2 Policy Committee Key Points and update

Council noted the paper circulated in advance.

5.3 Policy Committee Minutes

The minutes were noted.

6. Communications

6.1 Antibiotics Unearthed Update

Council noted the paper circulated in advance.

6.2 Communications Committee key points and update

Council noted the paper circulated in advance.

The President raised concerns that there had been a drop in the web stats for *MicrobiologyOnline*, and particularly mentioned that the January figures seemed to be lower than usual. The Chief Operations Officer had spoken to the Head of Communications who was looking in to the reasons why. This would be reported back to Council in July.

7. Scientific Conferences

7.1 Scientific Conferences key points and update

The Director of Strategy and Members' Programmes confirmed it had been a very busy time with over 900 abstract submissions, which was extremely positive but posed a challenge in terms of space to exhibit the posters. Council noted that there had been a significant increase in registrations for this year's Conference over previous years.

It was agreed that Council would let the Governance and Operations Executive know which days they wanted to attend the Annual Conference and she would complete the registration process for them.

7.2 Scientific Conferences minutes

The minutes were noted.

8. Publishing

8.1 Publishing Committee key points and update

Council noted the paper circulated in advance.

9. Professional Development

9.1 Professional Development Committee key points and update

The President noted an increase of 15% in membership during 2016 which was very positive.

10 AOB

The President thanked the Director of Commercial Affairs for his dedication and hard work at the Society, as this will be his last meeting. He wished him all the very best for the future.

The meeting closed at 12.40pm.