

Draft Minutes of the Science Council's General Meeting held online on Wednesday 22nd November 2023

Chair

Adam Donnan (AD)

Member Bodies present

Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine

Association for Science Education

British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences

Institute of Biomedical Science

Institute of Mathematics and its Applications

Institute of Physics

Institute of Science and Technology

Institution of Chemical Engineers

Institution of Environmental Sciences

Operational Research Society

Royal Society of Biology

Royal Society of Chemistry

Society for Natural Sciences

Society of Cosmetic Scientists

Society of Dyers and Colourists

Also in attendance

Trustees: Mark Finnie (Honorary Treasurer), Dr Jade Hall, Ruth Kaufman, Matthew Davies

Dr Chris Westcott, Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

Staff in attendance

Jane Banks, External Relationships Manager

Tom Cheek, Apprenticeship Lead

Yasmin Finch, Senior Registration Officer

Della Freeth (DF), Chief Executive

Hamid Habib, Finance and Corporate Services Officer

Jennifer Larwood, Registration and Licensing Manager

Ryana Mercer, Senior Policy Officer

Edyta Nowicka, Senior Registration and Licensing Officer

Oliver O'Hanlon, Corporate Services and Governance Manager

Brian Wagenbach, Member Engagement Manager

Peigu Zhao, Marketing and Communications Officer

Apologies

Geological Society

Members not in attendance

Association of Neurophysiological Scientists; Association for Simulated Practice in Healthcare; Association of Anatomical Pathology Technology; Biochemical Society; British Psychological Society; British Society of Soil Scientists; Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management; Institute of Animal Technology; Institute of Corrosion; Institute of Food Science &

Technology; Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology; Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining Institute of Water; Nuclear Institute; Oil and Colour Chemists' Association; Royal Astronomical Society; Royal College of Podiatry; Royal Meteorological Society; The Organisation for Professionals in Regulatory Affairs.

23.3.1 Welcome from the Chair of the Board, Adam Donnan

AD welcomed attendees. He confirmed that the resolutions proposed at the AGM were passed unanimously via email post-meeting. He welcomed new staff members of the Science Council to their first General Meeting and thanked trustees, volunteers and Members for their continued support.

23.3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting were approved.

23.3.3 Update on the search for the next President of the Science Council

AD said that the Board had reflected on a shortlist of candidates and approaches had been made. Candidates were complementary about the Science Council but said that they couldn't take on the role owing to existing commitments. The Nominations Committee will continue to oversee the recruitment process and AD invited Members to suggest potential candidates for the role. The next scheduled opportunity to elect the President is the Annual General Meeting in Summer 2024, but an Extraordinary General Meeting can be called to elect the President should the Board consider this to be an appropriate option.

23.3.4 Report from the Chief Executive, Della Freeth

Since joining the Science Council DF said that she had prioritised getting to know the team and recruiting new members of staff. She had also met with several Members and other key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of their activities and relationship to the Science Council. She invited Members with whom she had not yet met to contact her to arrange a meeting. She thanked Members for their support for the Workforce Skills and Celebration of Science events.

23.3.5 Presentation and discussion on the Science Council's funding model: principles and choices for long-term financial sustainability, growth and impact

DF provided an overview of the Science Council's funding model and invited Members to discuss some principles and choices to inform planning for 2024 and beyond. Discussion focused on the operation and consequences of the current funding models for registration, membership and licensing, creating a 'retired' registration category and diversification of income. Key points made in discussion included:

Consequences of the current funding models for registration, membership and licensing

- Members acknowledged that the cost of servicing smaller organisations can be greater than for larger ones and increasing the lower cap incrementally was supported.
- Some smaller Members noted that a significant fee increase would require them to increase their fees which could influence whether they continue in membership.
- Although the membership fee is based on a Member's overall membership numbers, for larger Members, the number of scientists in membership can be relatively low.
- There was a consensus that one approach to increasing the membership fee could be to do so incrementally over 2-3 years. It is worth exploring a model that includes overseas members, as they are currently excluded from the membership fee calculation.

- For professional qualifications, price is often an indicator of quality. RSci and RSciTech are very low and should be raised to signify their quality and status.
- The administrative burden and resources needed to hold a licence is a greater barrier than cost to increasing take-up of other licences.
- Larger Members value the ability to hold multiple licences as it can serve niche areas within their membership.
- For some Members, not all the registers will be relevant, so a single licence fee could disincentivise take-up.
- Increasing the Development Licence fee to support costs was supported.

Creating a 'retired' registration category

- The general consensus was that the Science Council shouldn't introduce this category and that such a category is more appropriate for individual Members to hold.
- It can be hard to establish whether someone is retired and several Members stated that they require retired individuals to provide evidence of CPD to maintain their registration status through existing routes. One Member stated that it is removing its retired membership category.

Diversification of income

- Members supported the principle of diversifying income to take the pressure off other fees and enable the Science Council to offer greater benefits to Members.
- Ensuring that the Science Council does not compete with Members and identifying a unique space where it can operate in line with its core objectives was considered important.
- The Employer Champion scheme and event sponsorship were suggested as two areas to explore further.

DF thanked Members for their feedback. She said that proposals will be tabled at the next Board meeting and a decision on the fees from 2025 onward will be communicated to Members in January.

23.3.6 Forthcoming meetings

AD informed Members of the dates for General Meetings in 2024.

23.3.7 Any other business

There was no other business and the meeting ended at 12.20pm.

Signed Date: