

## Council Members and Trustees of the Society of Biology: AGM 2011

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1. The Transitional Arrangements Regulation (0.1) was approved through the Council of the Institute of Biology, and the Council of the Biosciences Federation;
2. All Council members, and their terms of office, were confirmed at the first Annual General Meeting of the Society of Biology on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010;
3. Terms of office were agreed as follows (year of last AGM):
  - a. President: Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell DBE FRS FMedSci FSB FRCP(Hon) (2014)
  - b. Honorary Secretary: Professor David Coates FSB (2012)
  - c. Honorary Treasurer: Dr William Marshall FRCP FRCPath FRCPEdin FSB (2013)
  - d. Council members from the College of Individual Members
    - i. Ms Liz Lakin FSB (2012)
    - ii. Professor Peter Downes OBE FRSE (2013)
    - iii. **Mr Tim Brigstocke MBE FSB, Chair of the CIM (2014)**
    - iv. **Election 2011 (2015)**
  - e. Council members from the College of Member Organisations
    - i. Professor Keith Gull CBE FRS FMedSci (2012)
    - ii. Professor Julia Buckingham DSc FBPharmacolS (2013)
    - iii. **Professor John Coggins OBE FRSE FSB, Chair of the CMO (2014)**
    - iv. **Election 2011 (2015)**
  - f. Council members appointed by Council
    - i. Dr Aileen Allsop (2012)
    - ii. Professor Martin Humphries FMedSci (2013)
    - iii. **Professor Rosemary Hails MBE CBiol FSB (2014)**
    - iv. **Dr Paul Brooker FSB (2015)**

*Names in **bold** have been elected/appointed since the creation of the Society of Biology*

DC/v.4/20110411

## **Council Meeting**

**8 December 2011**

**Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU**

### **Redacted Minutes**

1. Welcome and apologies

The President welcomed members and noted apologies. She also welcomed Dr Stephen Benn, who joined the Society on 1 November as Director of Parliamentary Affairs.

Present: Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell  
Dr William Marshall  
Dr Aileen Allsop  
Dr Pat Goodwin  
Dr Liz Lakin  
Professor Rosie Hails  
Professor Pete Downes  
Dr Paul Brooker  
Professor John Coggins  
Dr Kim Hardie  
Professor Keith Gull (via teleconference)

Observers: Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive  
Professor Robert Freedman  
Ms Jen Crosk (Minutes)  
Mr Jon Kudlick (Section A)  
Ms Jackie Caine (Section A)  
Ms Rachel Lambert-Forsyth (Section A)  
Dr Laura Bellingan (Section A)  
Dr Stephen Benn (Section A)  
Dr Jenna Stevens-Smith (Section A)  
Dr Cliff Collis (Section A)

Apologies: Professor David Coates, Honorary Secretary  
Mr Tim Brigstocke  
Professor Martin Humphries  
Professor Julia Buckingham  
Dr Simon Festing (Observer)

Dr Hazel Norman (Observer)  
Ms Sue Thorn

### 1.1 Declaration of interests

Following discussion at the Council meeting in September, it was agreed that it would be standard policy for Council to declare any interests (at the start of each meeting), as well as any gifts received which exceeded £30 in value. The Register of Interests would be available within 21 days to anyone who submitted a written request. Council agreed the draft policy. No conflicts of interests were declared for the meeting.

## 2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 September 2011

### 2.1 Review of action points

All items completed or to appear later on the Agenda.

### 2.2 Matters arising not on the Agenda

No matters were raised.

### 2.3 Approval of Minutes and redacted Minutes

The full and redacted Minutes of 15 September were approved.

## **Section A: Policy & Strategy**

### 3. Report from ETP

Robert Freedman (RBF) reported that the ETP Committee had met in November and there had been extraordinary growth in activity. Much of the activity related to Government funding policies. There had been some positive news but there was still a lot of work going forward. RBF reported that huge numbers were taking part in the UKBC competitions and suggested the ETP Committee needed to work with the MMC committee in some areas such as CPD. He recommended a focus on the number of teachers given our significant education work. He reported that the NCI had done fantastic work, linking a range of important bodies and was currently seeking longer term funding for sustainability. There was work currently being done on a workshop to bring ecologists/economists together, this would be at Charles Darwin House in May, with involvement from Ian Bateman. Also, the Society for General Microbiology were working with us to take forward the topic of human health and the environment.

HUBS had now formally been set up as a Special Interest Group (SIG), with two meetings per year, one focussing on teaching and the other on the wider HEI issues. Council felt it was important to make best use of the expertise in HUBS. RBF confirmed that a couple of people had been identified to work with HUBS and this would be followed up.

### 3.1 Accreditation

Liz Lakin (LL) reported that there had been staff changes and thanked Mike Trevethick for spearheading the evaluation process. Natasha Neill had now been recruited as a Qualifications and Skills Officer. LL reported sustainable funding remained an issue but that the GIF (Growth and Innovation Fund) bid had now been redrafted for submission in the next round. The pilot was now well under way, with six assessments going through the process. LL would report back to Council in February with recommendations on which courses to offer accreditation. The evaluation process was running parallel, with feedback received at every stage. A well-attended consultation event had been held in October to look at the future and possible areas of expansion.

RBF confirmed that CPD was picking up further registrations. The MARVIN software was currently being tested and the roll-out would mean that Members and Fellows could log their own CPD and regularly update their profile. This would enable the Society to be more rigorous in its scrutiny.

RLF reported that on the National Curriculum Review, an informal advisory group with BES and SGM had been advising civil servants. Ministers were currently in discussion on this but no clear decisions had yet been made.

### 3.2 Appointment of SCORE Chair

Graham Hutchins of the University of Cardiff was the current Chair of SCORE and was due to stand down in 2013. Council were asked if they had any suggestions for a replacement.

### 3.2 Science Policy update

Laura Bellingan (LB) reported that a Wellcome Trust letter to the Home Secretary on immigration had been signed and issued today.

LL noted that Caroline Wallace's work in Scotland is making a real difference and was greatly appreciated.

### 3.4 Parliamentary Affairs

SB reported that he would like to help put the Society on the map politically. He felt that the profile for biology was not as high as it should be in Westminster and now was the time to change it. SB had seen David Willetts with HUBS recently. SB confirmed that David Willetts had agreed to speak at the accreditation launch event on 20 March in the House of Commons. He reported that during National Science Week, schools would come and quiz the Select Committee, with the Society leading the event. A Parliamentary Links day had been arranged for June, with support from David Willetts.

Council felt that the Society should be hosting single, large impact events. The Society currently needed to gain the trust of smaller organisations, as it was in a position to hold better, larger events in which we could include them. Council felt that the Society should have a banner listing MOs, which should be taken to all events where the Society banner is displayed. The Chair suggested that Council have a longer session on representing Member Organisations at the next meeting.

Paul Brooker (PB) reminded Council that the new/revised Animal Procedures Act was due in May/June/July. The Society had done a good job in lobbying but this was an opportunity to liaise with members of Parliament and there would be a lot of media attention. LB added that MPs had been visiting research facilities to gain a better understanding of the issues.

### 3.5 Appointment of new ETP Chair

Council wanted to ensure MOs felt that they were involved and there should be a process where the job description was available and MOs could nominate.

### 3.6 A strategy for Scotland

John Coggins (JC) reported on the Scotland branch. A well attended public meeting had been held on 19 November on food security and this had been the first time the Scotland branch had reached out to its membership in this way. Events in the coming year included a reinvigorated meeting with teachers, with a good speaker line up.

Council added that the scientific community would need to think about devolution and the potential challenges it gave to science teaching and funding.

## 4. Mycology task force & Special Interest Group

LB reported that there was a proposal to set up a Task Force on Fungal Science in order to get cohesion in mycology and identify the challenges. David Hawksworth had been approached and was interested in the model the Society were using for special interest groups. This was an opportunity to support smaller MOs. Keith Gull (KG) added that this had been attempted around 15 years ago but had not moved forward. He added that the Society should speak to the British Mycology Society and others and agreed to provide contacts.

## 5. Plant Science Federation – a SIG (Special interest group) of the Society

The Plant Sciences SIG had now been launched at a very successful event. Jackie Caine reported that the Gatsby funding application had been successful, providing nearly £100k over three years for a new post of Plant Science Executive Officer plus other activity. The SEB were also providing £12k of funding per annum, plus a further £10k for the first conference. Council congratulated those involved in obtaining the Gatsby and SEB funding and the launch.

## 6. Technician's Register

Cliff Collis spoke on behalf of Mike Trevethick and confirmed that a grant of c£200k had been obtained from Gatsby to start a new Technicians Register. This register would allow this to be seen as a profession rather than a role. Six other licence bodies, including RSC, had been established. The Society had formed an Advisory Committee, which consisted of one rep from Gatsby and the Science Council and two from industry and Islington College. The aim was to achieve 1,500 technicians and 500 registered scientists registrations within two years and marketing material was currently being prepared to promote the register. Council congratulated the Registers team on their work.

## 7. MMC Report

Jon Kudlick (JK) reported that 385 members had been elected and 50 were being chased for payment. It had been a positive quarter compared to a figure of 312 for last year. The next edition of *The Biologist* was due out next week, it included an article on detox products, with the Daily Mail possibly running a piece on the article. *The Biologist* survey comparing the magazine before and after the redesign had received positive results. The online stats continued to increase, with the highest ever unique visitors for November at 16,000, compared to 11,000 last year. A new publication on 'who we are' had been printed.

On staff, Joseph Milton would be leaving on 9 December and a replacement had been recruited to start mid-January. A new Press Officer, Rebecca Nesbit would be starting mid-February.

JK reported that a number of Fellows had objected to practising Chiropractors/homeopaths being Fellows. Council felt that there should only be concern if the member was using their Society of Biology membership when promoting their chiropractic or similar work: in some way suggesting support or credibility. Council felt that the Chartered status would not be such an issue as it could not be awarded to someone practising pseudo-science as the basis for chartership. Council felt that the Code of Conduct should be the basis for any decision, especially in relation to bringing the Society into disrepute.

### 7.1 Analysis of past and future events

Jenna Stevens-Smith (JSS) advised Council her current priority was evaluation of branches and creating an event strategy with them. A survey had been sent to branches and their Committees to ask what they felt their role was within the organisation and what they felt worked, as well as what didn't. Some branches felt that it wasn't their role to recruit new members. Council wanted to congratulate the Membership team on the increase in membership and asked to see the membership demographics at each meeting. JSS added that MARVIN would significantly enable the provision of breakdowns on demographics, sex and age groupings.

### 7.2 The Biologist & Ben Goldacre Complaint

Council discussed the feedback since the Ben Goldacre article and felt there was a need to ensure the Editorial Board was not compromised noting that it was important to look

forward. Council agreed that the new revised systems were now much more appropriate. Council asked for the revised guidelines and changes be noted on the website

## **Section B: Operational Issues**

### **8. Chief Executive's Report**

MD reported that the Society would be running a new Register of Animal Technicians.

He added that the Society had been present at all three party conferences, where there had been a lot of coverage, with MD speaking at four fringe events, all with a Minister or shadow minister present.

The Society had now doubled its staff numbers from that of two years ago and a new person was due to start in April to work on the Plant Sciences side.

### **9. Finance**

#### 9.1 Draft Accounts for 2010-11

WM reported that the figures for 2010-11 were as yet unaudited but that the total 2011 net income suggested a small surplus. Council congratulated MD on coming under budget for the move and on the Society's financial performance over the year.

#### 9.2 Management Accounts for 2011-12

MD reported that the Pension Trustees had met on 15 November and would reconvene in February/March.

MD proposed moving ahead with the development of a £50k membership benefits package now. This would be informed in part by the January members' survey Council agreed.

### **10. Code of Conduct & Disciplinary + other Regulations**

MD reported that due to the move towards Chartered Scientist and Technicians, there would be a need to provide more detail on the Code of Conduct and to have a disciplinary Regulation. Council agreed the drafts.

### **11. Election of the Chair for the ASG**

MD reported that Professor Clive Page's tenure as Chair of the ASG was coming to an end. The ASG could nominate a new Chair, who would then need to be approved by Council. Nominations would be sought.

### **12. Approval of draft regulations**

MD requested Council's approval for draft regulations and highlighted that some Council members would need to be re-elected. Professor David Coates would be stepping down as Honorary



Secretary and Professor Chris Kirk, CEO of the Biochemical Society had agreed to take up the role from the next AGM. He will have retired from the Biochemical Society by that time,

### **13. Process and award of the President's medal**

The President's Medal had been much appreciated by members and had previously been awarded to longstanding branch members. MD felt that the requirement of ten years' service was no longer appropriate and it was a good time to revamp the criteria, making it broader. Council Agreed.

### **14. AoB**

Date of next meeting, Thursday 16 February 2012 at Charles Darwin House.



## **Council Meeting**

**15 September 2011**

### **Action Points**

1. Write to BPS and PhySoc to ask how they wished to proceed on Accreditation and suggest a meeting MD
2. Write a policy on public viewing of Council declaration of interest details DC
3. Email 2012 meeting dates to Council JC

## **Council Meeting**

**15 September 2011  
12:45-15:15**

**Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU**

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Welcome and apologies**

The President welcomed members and noted apologies. She also welcomed Hazel Norman of the British Ecological Society as a Member Organisation observer. The Linnean Society had decided not to be an observer at this point (while a new Executive director is recruited) and the Society for General Microbiology had agreed to become an observer commencing from the December Council meeting.

Present: Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell  
Professor David Coates  
Dr William Marshall  
Dr Aileen Allsop  
Professor Martin Humphries  
Dr Pat Goodwin  
Dr Liz Lakin  
Professor Rosie Hails  
Dr Paul Brooker  
Mr Tim Brigstocke  
Professor John Coggins

Observers: Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive  
Hazel Norman, British Ecological Society  
Ms Sue Thorn  
Professor Robert Freedman  
Ms Jen Crosk (Minutes)  
Mr Jon Kudlick (Section A)  
Dr Laura Bellingan (Section A)

Apologies: Professor Keith Gull  
Professor Pete Downes  
Professor Julia Buckingham  
Dr Kim Hardie

## **2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 June 2011**

### 2.1 Review of action points

1. Council supported an approach to Dr Chris Kirk of the Biochemical Society for the Honorary Secretary position for next year. A revised job description had been written and approved. Chris Kirk will retire from the Biochemical Society after April 2012 and had agreed, in principle, to the appointment.
2. Membership drive: some suggestions had been put forward for potential membership by Council members. This remains an on-going priority.
3. Done.
4. David Coates (DC) would explore whether a Regulation is required for the affiliate grade.
5. Done.
6. Mark Downs (MD) had met, and Liz Lakin (LL) had interviewed, Stephen Benn and he had given his reassurance that he had no personal party alliance and would put forward the views of the Society to all parties in a non-partisan way. LL was fully in support of proceeding with Stephen's appointment. MD would be setting up a series of briefing sessions for Stephen, as well as putting him in touch with David Pruce of Understanding Animal Research (UAR), to ensure that he was fully briefed. A steering group would be meeting and setting a broad agenda, with animal science and the higher education white paper being priorities. If Council wished to brief Stephen on any areas, this could be arranged by contacting MD or Nancy Rothwell (NR).
7. Speaker list: this would be on hold until the membership database and contact management system had been set up, to ensure correct recording of information.

### 2.2 Matters not arising on the Agenda

Review of Council and Officers to be raised at the December Council Meeting.

### 2.3 Approval of Minutes, redacted Minutes and Away-day notes

Council approved the Minutes, Redacted Minutes and Away-day notes.

## **Section A: Policy & Strategy**

### **3. Report from ETP**

Robert Freedman (RF) reported that the ETP Committee had met at the end of August and celebrated the success of students at the British Olympiad. There had been good work in establishing a Plant Sciences Federation, which was to become a special interest group.

The new Technician programme would improve the status of biology technicians. Accreditation continued to roll forward, with a pilot under way and evaluation taking place.

### 3.1 Key messages for HEFC & OLS Consultations

Laura Bellingan (LB) reported that she had been working with the Animal Sciences Group on the use animals in research. She also reported that the Coalition had formed an agreed response, with views from the Society and the Animal Sciences Group, whilst being mindful of competing views. A unified document had been sent to the Home Office but it would not be published until the appropriate media lines are in place. Some organisations were already publishing their responses and LB was currently working on a briefing document. There was the possibility of some animal rights activists saying that the Society was throwing away standards. RF reported that a meeting had been held with the RSPCA. This had been about potentially running a training course aimed at people trained with GM animals. RF would be contacting them again to see how the Society could be involved.

LB confirmed that responses to the Consultation on the White Paper were coming through thick and fast. Eva Sharpe had put together a response from the Society and RF would be looking at this. LB added that the Society was keeping up with the volume of consultations but needed to be selective.

### 3.2 Accreditation

Liz Lakin (LL) gave an update. The pilot was due to end in February/early March and a launch event would be held. A consultation was taking place on 17 October with twenty responses received to date. We had failed on the GIF bid but received feedback advising us to put forward a joint bid with other sector councils and discussions had already taken place with Cogent. It was felt that it would be important for the Society to also put its own bid forward. Aileen Allsop reported that *in vivo* had been disappointing, with only one response and MD added that there had been ongoing tension in this area as some preferred outcomes based more around specific techniques.

**Action: MD to write to BPS and PhySoc to ask how they wished to proceed and to suggest a meeting.**

## 4. Report on MMC activity

Sue Thorn (ST) reported that the MMC Committee were developing a more standard feedback system with a rolling annual cycle of activity to ensure all key areas were covered.

A new strategic plan for membership had been discussed at the last meeting which included school membership for 14-18 year olds from the New Year. MSB grade numbers continued to be a concern, with overall retention reduced this year. The membership numbers were at break-even for the current quarter. There was a possibility that the member lapsing decision may need reverting back to twelve months. Fellowship, however, was doing very well.

ST added that the brand had been refreshed to match the new style, with postcards awaited for student membership.

The new Biologist was now out and Jon Kudlick (JK) handed out a briefing paper regarding the current issue, which contained an article entitled 'Mother Superior?'. The article had received negative attention on The Guardian website, where the criticism revolved around the writer cherry picking comments to fit his views. This was an emotive issue and therefore received more attention than usual. It was always stated in The Biologist that the views of the author were not ours but it could have been made clearer at the end of the article. Moreover, it should have been made clearer that this was an opinion piece. The Editorial Board would ensure the peer review is robust and any future articles by the same author would be scrutinised and possibly include a counter argument. MD reported that the media coverage had been balanced and that the author was measured with his comments.

Council felt that something could be put in the next issue of The Biologist, mentioning the media coverage and stating that it had provoked a lot of comments, whilst welcoming member views.

There had been a launch of the Science Communication Report at the British Science Festival in Bradford. The event had gone well and MD reported that around forty journalists had attended and that MOs had enjoyed being involved in the event.

William Marshall (WM) raised concern from the Fellows about pseudo scientists and JK confirmed that a meeting with The Biologist Editorial Board would be held to discuss the Society's response.

## **5. New contact(s) management system**

MD reported that the current membership database was due for renewal at a cost of around £30k plus £5k p.a. therefore making it a good time to look at creating a new system. MD added that Guido Gybels (GG) had met with staff to discuss their requirements, then developed a My SQL database from scratch. This is based on open standards.

GG presented the new contact management system, named Marvin. The system took the way in which the Society engaged its information into a new environment. Marvin is a database with multiple layers that represent the system. External people would be able to engage through the external API. Marvin would be located in the second floor server room at Charles Darwin House and there was potential for it to be moved to the Cloud in the future. The Society's website would be able to interact with Marvin, as well as remote users. Protective security measures had been put in place. Marvin was due to go live internally for staff and our membership in November.

## **6. Branches – next steps**

This had been an unfinished item from the Council Awayday. MD reported that the South Wales branch had closed 6-9 months ago and the new Wessex branch had started up. The branches were hugely variable in quality and range of work, with attendance better at some

events than others. MOs felt engagement was important and this was a positive way of improving recruitment but it was not working the way it should at the moment. The branches expenditure for this year was £26k, with £30k budgeted for next year. There was discussion about whether branches needed to have individual bank accounts or whether it would work better with a central system, with branches given a pretty cash allocation. All agreed that better use could be made of branches.

MD felt branches should have closer linkage to local universities and a radical change to structure, adding that it would be worth looking at the way they operate and taking some of the administration away. Showing branches what support they could get and what they could achieve would be a positive step forward. Branches had been feeling threatened and wanted to maintain their independence. Branches possibly were not aware of how much the Society had changed. Council agreed this was an ongoing area and that MD should lead this and then feedback.

## **7. Education – new priority areas**

MD reported that the Education policy agenda was coming together well. One area currently being worked on was re-establishing the Teachers Network that previously existed. This would be a virtual group that the Society could rely on as a broader net for views. A mentoring system was being discussed, possibly for early careers scientists but more was required on careers. Two new careers booklets had been published, one aimed at graduates which had been completed with advice from across MOs and showed different careers for graduates and application advice. The other was a careers booklet for pre-university students. Both publications were available in hard copy or PDF.

## **8. Book Awards**

WM reported that the General Secretary at the Society of Authors would be changing and following a meeting with her it had been agreed that they could provide administration support for approximately £3k, with us organising and paying for the judging and award ceremony. It was possible that this cost could be underwritten or grant income sought

NR felt there was a possibility that the Society could receive support for the award, possibly using the name of the sponsor for the prize.

## **Section B: Operational Issues – JK and LB left the meeting**

### **9. Chief Executive's Report**

MD reported that Daya Nithianandan had died after collapsing at work and that the Society would not seek a replacement for the post. The incident had been reported to the Health & Safety Executive and Camden Council had been in contact with MD but there was no requirement for any follow up. CDH had reviewed its first aid processes as a result.

Justine Williamson, a long serving member of staff from the IoB had left and Jenna Stevens-Smith had been recruited into a modified role. The Society would be recruiting a new person for media and Stephen Benn's appointment was due to commence on 1 November.

MD reported that he would be attending all three party conferences and running a fringe event at each with the Science Council on the topic of skills. This would be the first time that the Society had been involved in the party conferences.

There had been two new MOs, Oxford University Press and Bioscience KTN. MD reported that there had been many new e-newsletters coming out (or planned) which covered teachers, pharma biotech and students.

MD reported that there had been a Fellows lunch in Manchester, with two more scheduled in Edinburgh and London for October. MD had met with two Chief Scientific Advisors and was due to meet Prof Anne Glover in October. MD had met with the Department of Transport to discuss bioterrorism, containment and movement of people and they had shown interest in ecology and biodiversity, inviting the Society to brief them on these areas.

MD reported that good entries had been received for the Science Communication and Photography Awards in November. The UK Plant Sciences Federation would also launch on 23 November.

On Toxicology, the register panel had met the day before and agreed that the work should move over to the Society. It was agreed that their website would close and that the Society would have dedicated pages on its website to cover this area. The new membership database would allow much better servicing. Agreement was required from the British Toxicology Society but MD did not foresee any problems with this.

## **10. Revised/updated Business Plan**

MD reported that revision of the Business Plan had been discussed in a separate group, with a further discussion at the Council away-day. The decision was taken not to seek any major changes this far into the Business Plan. At the away-day, MD had picked out a few items for discussion around modifications to the mission statement before looking to have a new three year plan. Council agreed the proposals.

## **11. Finance**

### **a. Management Accounts for 2010-11 (Paper 10)**

WM reported that the Finance Committee meeting had been held on 15 September. The new structure for the Finance Committee was due to be reviewed after its first twelve months and the Committee was formally looking at terms of reference for any necessary updates.

WM reported that the financial performance for the current year, with one month left in the year, showed a surplus of approximately £13k, against a budget figure of £9k. He added that this figure had been set prior to the anticipated move to Charles Darwin House. The overall statement of financial activity for the year would, however, show a loss due to the £750k one-off payment made to the pension fund, this



payment would reduce or eliminate the need to make additional payments to the fund.

The increase in staff expenditure had been small, despite the huge increase in activity and Council asked for their formal appreciation to be fed back to staff.

b. Budget for 2011-12 (Paper 11)

WM reported that the budget for 2011-12 had been reviewed in detail and that the Finance Committee were happy to recommend this to Council. On the pension scheme, it was anticipated that the Society would have no deficit or be in surplus due to the stock market improvement and the extra payment made, thus freeing up around £160k. WM added that some significant liabilities within the pension scheme would reduce over the next few years due to the death of Daya Nithianandan and two older staff members taking their pension. WM reported a possible further annual saving of £20k but this would require discussion between himself and MD due to its sensitive nature. The next valuation of the pension fund was due at the end of October. The Finance Committee had agreed that if there was no deficit in the pension fund, £50k should be spent on improving membership benefit by way of grants and subsidised activity.

The Society bid for funding on Accreditation was not successful but as this was an area in which Ministers were extremely interested, with high reputational risk, work would need to continue, taking the route of becoming self-financing. Another permanent member of staff was required for Accreditation and this had been accounted for in the budget. Council agreed.

MD added that six new staff would be joining the Society, four full-time and two part-time. Stephen Benn was due to start on 1 November and would be invited to speak to Council in December.

**Decision: Council approved the budget for 2011-12 and the Reserves Policy**

WM reported that the Society had produced a risk register of activities undertaken by the Society and that this would be a good activity for the newly formed Audit Committee to consider. The Committee would be Chaired by Daniel Ross and cover the internal workings of the organization but not finance.

WM asked Council to agree the auditors fee of £8,500k, recommending that we continue with the current auditors. Given the review of cash flow, reserves and budgeted expenditure had been positive WM also asked Council to agree that the Society was a going concern for the next 12 months.

**Decision: Council agreed to continuing with the auditors and the £8,500 fee**

**Decision: Council agreed the Society was a going concern for the next 12 months**

## **12. Declaration of Interests and Related Party Transactions**

MD submitted new Declaration of Interest and Related Party Transaction forms to Council for 2011, to be completed and returned to Jen Crosk by the end of September. The Declaration of interests would now be collated annually by MD for review by David Coates (DC). Declaration of Interests was now to become an Agenda item at the beginning of each Council Meeting.

**Action: DC to write a policy on public viewing of Council declaration of interest details**

## **13. Approval of HUBS and UKPSF Constitutions**

Council were asked to approve the formal set up of HUBS and the UK Plant Sciences Federation as special interest groups. DC reported that HUBS, in its existing format, would make a grant to the new Society SIG and then look to wind up once the new HUBs SIG was up and running.

**Decision: Council approved the draft constitutions of the HUBS and UK Plant Sciences Federation special interest groups**

## **14. Date of meetings in 2012**

Jen Crosk to distribute Council dates for 2012 by email.

## **15. AOB**

No other business was reported.