

Council Meeting

Wednesday 16 December 2015
12:30-15:00

Charles 1 & 2, Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU

WEB Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

The President welcomed Council and staff, thanked the Member Organisation observer for attending and gave apologies.

Present: Professor Dame Jean Thomas (President)
Professor Chris Kirk (Hon Secretary)
Dr Pat Goodwin (Hon Treasurer)
Professor Julia Buckingham
Dr Kim Hardie
Dr Liz Lakin
Professor Richard Reece
Professor David Blackburn
Professor Chris Garland
Dr Jeremy Pritchard

Observers: Dr Mark Downs, Chief Executive
Mr Jon Kudlick, Director of Membership, Marketing & Communication
Dr Laura Bellingan, Director of Science Policy
Ms Ana Ilic, Executive Assistant
Mr John Misselbrook, Biochemical Society

Apologies: Professor John Coggins
Professor Pete Downes
Dr Paul Brooker
Dr Aileen Allsop
Mr Tim Brigstocke
Ms Jo Revill, British Society for Immunology
Mr Ian Russell, Society for Endocrinology

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The Royal title was still progressing and the Secretary to the Privy Council had seen the proposed changes to the Charter. The Society would only be amending its title as any further rewording of the Charter itself would cost £6,000. The amendment was yet to be passed following further explanation from the Society in relation to changes to the Bylaws.

Two members of staff would be going on maternity leave. Maternity cover would be sought for the Accreditation post and possibly for the staff member working on NCI. The new area of MO secretariat services was going well, with three organisations now up and running and a fourth to be launched shortly.

Section A: Finance & Governance

4. Finance

4.1 Budget update

At the last meeting the Finance Committee (FC) and Council looked at forecast and budget, which led to a very small surplus, with a deficit the following year. As requested, additional costs were built in to allow greater flexibility with future salaries and project work. The deficit last year is expected to be close to £100k, around a third of what was forecast. It was noted that this will improve cash flow. The two new grants reported above should bring the Society close to a break-even position for 2015-16 (all other things being equal).

4.2 Report from the Finance Committee

Pat Goodwin (PG) reported cash flow was on target during October and November. The IBO 2017 was in the same position, with no further sponsorship achieved since Council's last meeting. She noted that the Committee had approved additional expenditure on maternity cover.

FC discussed ways to remedy the risk of Enhanced MOs withdrawing support at short notice and it was agreed that John Coggins and three MO reps (DB, JB and CG) would have an email discussion on how to demonstrate what we are doing for, and with, them more effectively. Council wished to thank the Biochemical Society for renewing their Enhanced MO membership and the additional support they kindly provide and the Society for Experimental Biology's new £20k grant for UKPSF.

The CDH financial position had been noted and MD was asked to keep Finance Committee/ Council up to date with progress.

MD reported he had been in discussion with Punter Southall regarding the Society's Pension scheme and that they had provided options for improvement. One suggestion had been to defer the purchase of annuities and use direct payments from the pension fund to support pensioners. The FC had agreed to ask Punter Southall to provide a detailed proposal, including options, on how we can move forward. The Society's investments were another area that needed to be reviewed.

through particularly strongly during the ETP discussion. Council asked what were the core things across the sector we should be concerned about.

MD noted that a short and focussed response would be best in helping to get our messages read by senior officials. The President asked whether we were also responding on behalf of our MOs as we need to avoid duplication. SC noted that most MOs were contributing to the RSB response.

MD had met with BIS, who were actively encouraging people to respond to the Nurse review through the TEF consultation.

Council discussed potential key messages. These included concerns that directly linking fees to the TEF outcome could reduce social mobility and access; the lack of real metrics for measuring teaching excellence and the need to assess teaching on a departmental level.

Action: Council to email Sarah Cox with any comments or questions that can be left unanswered.

Action: Sarah Cox to continue on the basis of producing an executive summary.

7. Accreditation update

Liz Lakin (LL) reported that Accreditation was financially on track and expressed her thanks to the FC for agreement to maternity cover for one member of staff. LL noted her thanks to Paul Trimmer and the team. Invitations to the awards ceremony on 14 April would be going out shortly. LL asked Council to contact her if they had any links with employers or industry whom we might invite to the awards ceremony.

There is currently a large cohort of degrees coming through for accreditation. The DAC committee had discussed expanding their work, to cover stand-alone masters and this was now ready for launch.

Foundation degrees were currently outside the normal remit of the committee but there was community support to start considering this. The accreditation team were currently reviewing options and hoped to consult further.

8. Science Policy

8.1 UKPSF

The UKPSF AGM had taken place recently, where it was agreed to bring more of the operation in-house to reflect the reduction in funds. Council debated whether it was more appropriate to set up the UKPSF as a special-interest group still or a policy committee. It was clear there are pros and cons both ways but on balance it was agreed that a committee might be more appropriate.

Council **AGREED** to the retention of UKPSF branding and the new governance proposal, setting up the UKPSF as a policy committee.

Action: Liz Lakin to provide a paper and draft terms of reference for the next Council meeting.

10. Three Year Plan

Council were given a printed version of the Three Year Plan.

11. AoB

The next Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 March 2016 in CDH2.

Jan Thomas
9 March 2016