

**DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 December 2022, at Burlington House and Zoom**

**1. Attendance and Apologies**

**PRESENT:**

Prof Mike Edmunds (ME); President and Chair  
Dr Nigel Berman (NB); Treasurer;  
Dr Mandy Bailey (MB); Senior Secretary;  
Prof Mark Lester (MLE); G Secretary;  
Prof Ian Robson (IR); Vice President, (A);  
Prof Stephen Eales (SE); Vice President (A) online  
Prof Nick Rawlinson (NR); Vice President (G) online  
Prof Clare Watt (CW); Vice President (G) online  
Prof Phil Charles (PC);  
Prof Colin Snodgrass (CS); online  
Dr Arvind Parmar (AP)  
Dr Hannah Dalglish (HD)  
Prof Caroline Smith (CLS)  
Prof Belinda Wilkes (BW)  
Dr Jo Barstow (JB)  
Dr Jasmine Kaur Sandhu (JKS) online  
Prof Steve Miller (SM); (G)  
Mrs Patricia Tomkins (PT;); (A)  
Dr Olivia Keenan (OK); (A)  
Prof Silvia Zane (SZ);(A)

**APOLOGIES:**

Dr Sheona Urquhart (SU); A Secretary  
Dr Joanne Barstow (JB)  
Prof Steve Miller (SM)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Philip Diamond (PD), Executive Director;  
Dr Robert Massey, (RM) Deputy Executive Director and Policy;  
Ms Siobhan Adeusi (SA) Executive Assistant and Office Manager

**2. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING**

2.1 The Minutes of Council Meeting on 14 October 2022 were APPROVED subject to the following amendment:

Dr Hannah Dalglish attended in person, not online.

2.2 The Action Status Report was received by Council. All actions from the last Council meeting were completed.

### 3. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

The President reported on the following matters:

#### ESA

- A meeting of the ESA Council of ministers had taken place. It had been decided that there will be a push in the next round of funding to ensure science is not left out.
- CS remarked that his department is not on the Astronomy Forum list

ACTION: RM to check.

The meeting with Roger Davies, President of the European Astronomical Society (EAS) could not take place and will be rearranged.

The President will attend an EAS business meeting in Geneva on January 18.

Confidential matter- redacted

#### Tom Marsh

- The president reported the sad news that RAS fellow Tom Marsh's body had been found and identified in Chile.
- MB reported that a full obituary will be printed in April's A&G
- The President suggested that a letter of condolence from Council should be sent to the family.

ACTION: PD to write letter

#### Meeting with Courtyard counterparts

- The president attended a dinner with his courtyard counterparts. The Geol Soc are pushing with Government on the lease issue, but nothing can be done until February. The Courtyard is keen to continue work together on public outreach, possibly having a joint event.

#### Confidential matter - Editorial Board matter

- The president reported that the MNRAS editors were very concerned about the RAS OA plans, after they had been informed of the plans for the journal at a specially convened meeting. Their issues relate to not being involved in the process and disagreement with philosophy behind OA.
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- Council agreed to meet with the MNRAS Board w/c 19 December.

ACTION: PD to set up the meeting with input from OUP. Information to be distributed beforehand.

- The Board of the Geophysical Journal International had also been informed of the plans at their Board meeting. They were broadly content with the strategy.

#### **4. TREASURER'S BUSINESS**

4.1a&b The Treasurer's Report including the draft budget were received by Council.

The treasurer reported that it was not final and that finances relating to strategy projects were not in there yet.

ME asked for provisional acceptance on the budget, and to bring it back for the next Council meeting, to allow more time for Council members to review it.

4.1c The updated Risk Register was received by Council.

CLS asked if eco activism and terrorism should be combined. The Natural History Museum is working to prevent threats to security at the building from organisations like *Just Stop Oil (juststopoil.org)*

ME replied that terrorism risks are tracked by the government and are deemed more serious than eco activists.

PD remarked that the imminent threat of power outages would be disruptive for the RAS.

ME suggested that a short protocol be distributed to Council.

ACTION: Write protocol PD

4.2 The Statement of accounts was received by Council

#### **5. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE**

5.1 The Executive Director updated Council on the strategy:

- PD thanked Council for attending the awayday and for their input. He asked for comments on the Mission, vision and values statement to be sent to him

ACTION: All to send comments to PD

- The Library & Heritage group were in broad agreement and the objectives were well set out.
- The Membership group are keen to support early career members.
- There are suggestions for changing some subscription rates e.g. allowing re-joining with no penalty and allowing a parental leave break

ACTION: All to send comments to PD

5.2 The ballot list for RAS Council Elections 2023 was received, and APPROVED.

ME reminded Council that the information is confidential until it is published.

MB reported that two positions were available; Secretary G and VP (A)., however there is a list of suitable fellows to approach to ask if they would be interested in standing.

ME asked Council to rank the list in order of preference.

ACTION: PD to contact prospective candidates to ask if they are interested in standing.

5.3 The Awards Committee Reports were received by Council and were APPROVED. IR reported that there was a huge variation in the quality of applications.

PD suggested that a meeting of VPs and secretaries be convened to discuss issues raised, to bring recommendations to future panels. The Awards Review panel could also be invited, alongside BW.

ACTION: PD

NR reported similar issues with the G awards and suggested that more guidance should be given to nominators.

ME thanked all members of the panels for their work.

5.4 The Education & Outreach Committee Minutes were received by Council

5.5 The RAS200 Committee minutes were received by Council

CLS asked when the RAS200 project will be finishing.

ME responded that it will finish in February after which a short paper about its legacy will be prepared for Council.

5.6 The CDAG Minutes were received by Council

5.7 Ben Fernando (BF), CDAG Chair, was introduced to Council. He asked Council to contact him with ideas for projects that they would like the committee to undertake, bearing in mind the committee's constraints as a group of volunteers.

ME asked BF to prepare a paper for Council, outlining some ideas for projects, including costs/resources etc.

The following points were made during the discussion:

- The Bullying and Harassment survey painted a grim picture of the situation in academia, however the RAS can only influence our own community.
- BF can be connected with SepNet

ACTION: OK to do this.

- Minorities joining the Society should be made to feel welcome.
- Some research facilities ask grantees to demonstrate how they engage with diversity issues; perhaps the RAS should consider also doing this.
- The gender balance of awards nominees is something that needs to be continuously monitored.

ME introduced a matter brought to Council by JK, which relates to using the terms 'women, men and non-binary' rather than male and female.

Action CDAG to discuss this issue and provide advice

## **6. POLICY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

6.1 The paper Internal Communications Review: Terms of Reference was received by Council.

RM was tasked to review internal communications and has convened a group to do this. The group consists of Gurjeet Kahlon, RAS Social media officer, RAS Membership Officer, Taj Panesor, IOP Head of Membership, Jasmine Kaur, Sue Bowler and Jane MacArthur. The review should be completed by spring.

6.2 The Horizon Europe update was received by Council

6.3 The Autumn statement was received by Council

6.4 The Sustainability policy: travel guidelines was received by Council

MLE commented that grant applications were usually from PhD students and the policy may deter them from applying for a travel grant.

ME suggested that some wording was amended, then brought back to the next Council meeting.

**ACTION:** RM to amend for February Council meeting.

6.5 The Ofcom Space Spectrum Strategy was received by Council

6.6 The response from NASA on JWST naming was received by Council

6.6a The Letter from UK Space Agency was received by Council

6.6b The letter from NASA was received by Council

6.6c The Note from Dr Joanna Barstow was received by Council

Council agreed that the RAS will use the acronym JWST for the time being, and that a statement to that effect would be disseminated.

**ACTION:** RM to draft a statement and send to OK and CLS.

6.7 The paper on UK space strategy and UK satellite infrastructure was received by Council

RM reported that we sent a letter to the US Federal Communications Commission, who agreed to grant SpaceX a partial licence, and appear to have taken the concerns of the astronomical community into account.

## **7. Publications**

7.1 The Minutes from MNRAS meeting were received by Council

**8. OTHER**

- 8.1 The Membership Officers Reports, for approval of candidates proposed for Fellowship, were received by Council. All new fellows were APPROVED
- 8.2 The Grants awarded in 2022 paper was received by Council
- 8.3 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 14 October were received by Council and APPROVED subject a check on the date of next meeting.
- 8.4 The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 11 November were received by Council and APPROVED

**9. AOB**

MLE reminded Council about the call for sessions for NAM

BW reminded Council of the February SDM, organised by the Education and Outreach team/committee.

Council rose at 15.30

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**9 December 2022**