

## South Wales Branch Royal Society of Biology AGM

6.15pm, Mon 16 November 2015; Room C/0.13, The Sir Martin Evans Building, Cardiff University

### Minutes (Unconfirmed)

**Those Present** - Mr Almero Barnard (University Engagement Officer), Dr Rachel Coombe, Dr Beatrix Fahnert (Chair), Dr Rowena Jenkins (Secretary), Dr Karen Reed (Public/Schools Engagement Officer), Mr Csaba Sárosi, Dr Henrietta Standley, Dr Stephen Rutherford, John Vincent (Treasurer), Dianne Edwards.

**1) Apologies** – Professor Lynne Boddy FRSB, Dr Claire Price, Professor Denis Murphy.

### 2) Report from Chair –

#### Background

Following a call by the then Regional Coordinator David Urry to canvass potential interest in a branch, there was an initial meeting (09 Oct 2014). Potential goals and aims of a branch were discussed and expressions of interest were made to become involved in the Branch Committee.

At the first full meeting (19 Nov 2015) committee members and officers were voted in. Since then altogether 8 meetings took place (Wednesday evenings).

There were initially 18 Branch Committee Members (Mr Almero Barnard MRSB, Mr John Barnes AMRSB, Dr Rachel Coombe CBiol MRSB, Dr Beatrix Fahnert FRSB, Ms Beth Halliday CBiol MRSB, Mr Nigel Hodge CBiol MRSB, Dr Rowena Jenkins MRSB, Mr Gareth Morgan, Professor Denis Murphy FRSB, Dr Claire Price MRSB, Dr Molly Price-Jones FRSB, Dr Karen Reed, Dr Stephen Rutherford FRSB, Mr Csaba Sárosi, Ms Hannah Seifert, Dr Henrietta Standley MRSB, Mr John Starzewski CBiol MRSB, John Vincent CBiol MRSB. Two formally stepped down subsequently.

Chair - Dr Beatrix Fahnert FRSB

Treasurer – John Vincent CBiol MRSB

Secretary – Dr Rowena Jenkins MRSB

University Engagement Officer – Ms Hannah Seifert, stepped down, Mr Almero Barnard MRSB took over

Schools Engagement Officer – Dr Karen Reed

Public Engagement Officer – Dr Molly Price-Jones FRSB, stepped down, role combined with School Engagement Officer then

The branch has an online presence as part of the RSB online presence, where contact information and committee members are listed, and event announcements and reports are housed.

The Branch Committee contacted the North Wales branch regarding their policy on Welsh translations to have a common approach. Discussions are ongoing.

#### Branch focus

Although there are many aspects that the Branch Committee considers worth covering, the short and mid term focus is on the next generation of biologists (the young biologist/university engagement) and the citizen scientist/public engagement, because these have a high impact and are in line with the RSB objectives.

#### Events

The Branch should offer two events every six months including joint events and participation at bigger events.

#### Events (as reported in The Biologist)

- Inaugural Event: Panel Discussion Battling Infection 16 Mar 2015, almost 200 visitors, successful format, excellent feedback from visitors, created ideas for further panel events

Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JU +44 (0)20 7685 2550 [info@rsb.org.uk](mailto:info@rsb.org.uk) [www.rsb.org.uk](http://www.rsb.org.uk)

- Go Wild! Wildlife on your doorstep 06 June 2015, branch stand offering activities around looking for animals in soil samples at the event organised by Caerphilly County Borough on the Panside Community Woodland Park
- Demystifying DNA and its role in Cancer 24 Oct 2015, branch stand offering DNA extraction from strawberries and cheek cell staining for observation under the microscope at the Cardiff Cancer Research Open Day

#### Branch Presence at Events

- Beating Cancer Sooner in Wales (27 Feb 2015)
- Science and the Assembly (Energy and the Environment) (19 May 2015)
- Cells, Genes, Mutations and Cancer (17 April 2015)
- Cancer Awareness Roadshow (24 Jun 2015)
- Biology Rocks (10 Oct 2015)

#### Potential Future Events

- Invasive species
- Panels (e.g. on Pandemics; Vaccinations; Dementia)
- Fascination of Plants
- Wales Biodiversity Partnership
- Bioblitz
- Joint Event with Western Branch Summer 2016 - Glow Worms

#### **Other Activities**

The branch could arrange visits of companies for undergraduates (related to career planning).

It is planned to develop a bank of "Talking Heads" videos for schools as useful career development information.

In addition to contacts with HEIs in the branch area, there are contacts with BioWales, Wales Biodiversity Partnership and MediWales.

### **3) Report from Treasurer –**

#### **Expenditure this year:**

£39.80 (Speaker expenses),

Income £0.00

#### **Estimated costs for the next year:**

Event catering: £400

Marketing £200

Speaker expenses £300

Event Equipment £100

Total Costs £1000

We have also been allocated £750 budget for committee expenses; suggested use includes things such as: Branch administration, catering for committee, travel expenses, room hire and general costs. Advice is to try and spend some of this money or risk losing it in future years.

### **4) Report from Secretary –**

Meetings over the last year attended well by a core of people, Wednesday nights proved difficult for some people. Both Molly Price Jones and Hannah Seifert stepped down during the year.

The following people from the committee have not expressed an interest in remaining on the committee:

Mr John Barnes AMRSB, Ms Beth Halliday CBiol MRSB, Mr Nigel Hodge CBiol MRSB, Mr Gareth Morgan, Mr John Starzewski CBiol MRSB.

All Officers have reported that they are happy to continue in their roles as they presently stand.

## 5) Report from Other Officers –

**University Engagement Officer** – As yet has not had much of an opportunity to engage with this role but will aim to get more done in the coming year. The North Wales branch of the Royal Society of Biology have responded about their Welsh language policy and more information will be forthcoming.

**Public/Schools Engagement Officer** – Events this year have been popular and well attended; the society was represented as recently as 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at Techniquest. Good links with the Cardiff University engagement officer allows the branch to link in with suitable events.

## 6) Branch Committee Membership

Membership for the coming year includes:

Mr Almero Barnard MRSB, Dr Rachel Coombe CBiol MRSB, Dr Beatrix Fahnert FRSB, Dr Rowena Jenkins MRSB, Professor Denis Murphy FRSB, Dr Claire Price MRSB, Dr Karen Reed, Dr Stephen Rutherford FRSB, Mr Csaba Sárosi, Dr Henrietta Standley MRSB, John Vincent CBiol MRSB

## 7) AOB

Professor Dianne Edwards FRSB of the Linnean Society attended the meeting to suggest that there is potential for a link between the regional branches of the RSOB and the Linnean Society. They would like to have more activity outside London, Manchester and Leeds and potentially we could share lectures. Currently they are running monthly lunchtime lectures that have a buy in of £250. The secretary will contact Dianne about future collaborative efforts.

## 8) Close AGM