

## MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting

Held at The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London WC2A IPL

at 14:30 on Wednesday 15 May 2019

### 1. Welcome

The President, Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow FRSB, welcomed everyone to the Society's tenth AGM and highlighted that the RSB continues to evolve and that 2019 is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

The President asked for any amendments to the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 2 May 2018. There were none. No proxy votes had been received.

**The Minutes of the previous AGM were ACCEPTED as a true record.**

**Proposer: Hilary McQueen FRSB, seconder: Kate Baillie.**

### 2. CEO Report

Dr Mark Downs (MD) gave an update on the last financial year 2017-18 plus highlights of a few events since then.

The 2017-18 financial year was the last in its latest Strategic Three Year Plan. The plan focused on the Society's Unified Voice, Broad Reach, Professional Membership, and Citizen Science and Public Engagement. Over the year the Society delivered on its objectives, including submitting regular consultations to Government on behalf of the bioscience community, launching accreditation of international degrees and opening two new branches in Australasia and Hong Kong.

The Society's two principal advisory committees also saw a change in their governance structure. The Education and Science Policy Committee (ESP) was formed out of the previous Education, Training and Policy Committee. Following a call to members, a new Chair and members were elected to the Committee. A new Membership and Professional Affairs Committee (MPA) has taken on the work of training and education alongside membership.

The Society is very reliant on its members to carry out the work it undertakes and thanked both the individual members and Member Organisations for their support. MD highlighted that the Society peaked at 18,300 members in 2018 and thanked the Members Organisations who work and collaborate closely with the RSB, especially the nine Strategic Partners.

Through the Society's 19 branches over 120 volunteer-led events were held last year, and the RSB is highly appreciative of the great work that all the volunteers do. MD called for applications to join branch committees, especially from younger members.

Accreditation of biology degrees has seen continual growth and the programme has now expanded into international accreditation, as well as a joint Doctoral Training initiative with RSC and IOP.

The Society continued to support professional progress through local and regional events, and has been working to improve access by expanding into online training courses. A Chartered Biologist fee was introduced to support and improve the recognition and to bring this Chartership more in line with other sectors. 2018 also saw the first HE Technician of the Year Award and the Society will continue to work to acknowledge outstanding individuals across the bioscience sector.

Biology Week in 2017 was a highlight of the annual outreach and engagement calendar and a strong social media campaign was developed in 2018 including #ImABiologist that reached over 6 million people online and over a thousand biologists shared their stories and photos.

The RSB works alongside other STEM learned societies to hold events in Parliament and engage government on science & education policy issues, responding to government consultations and engaging Society members at events such as Links Day and Voice of the Future. One of the calendar's highlights was the launch of the RSB's *Growing the Future* plant science report in the Houses of Parliament in January 2019 with much of the preparatory work taking place in FY 2017-18.

Alongside the long standing *Biologist* magazine and *Journal of Biological Education*, the Society also recently launched a series of Oxford Biology Primers (books) aiming to have 30-40 editions over time. In partnership with Portland Press and the Biochemical Society, the RSB also launched the *Emerging Topics in Life Sciences* journal which is published bimonthly and is in its second year. The Society will continue to work on behalf of the bioscience sector on publication policy to assess how open access proposals such as Plan S may affect Member Organisations and the sector as a whole.

The coming year sees the launch of the new strategic plan, *Biology Changing the World* and focuses on themes to inspire, influence, support and evolve. October 2019 to September 2020 will also be an anniversary year for the RSB, celebrating 10 years since the launch of the Society and 40 years since the Royal Charter was granted to the Institute of Biology. The year will be used to highlight the achievements of the biosciences, impacts of the RSB and its future goals.

MD noted his thanks to all members and member organisations for their help and support.

### **3. Receive and consider the Annual Report and Accounts**

Dr Paul Brooker (PB), Honorary Treasurer, gave an overview of the Society's annual accounts. He thanked both of his predecessors for keeping a healthy balance and especially Dr Pat Goodwin who had been Treasurer during the first half of the financial year.

The financial year 2016-2017 has ended on an operational surplus of £22,000. This was partly due to very prudent planning in the previous year and strategic cost reduction measures in a number of areas. The Society's total funds, at the end of the year also increased, totalling £2,510k compared to £2,299k in the previous year.

PB highlighted that 72% on the Society's income came from individual member and Member Organisation subscriptions and was grateful for all members for their involvement. Particular thanks were due to those member organisations who have provided additional resource: the Biochemical Society; British Ecological Society; British Pharmacological Society; Genetics Society; Nutrition

Society; Physiological Society; Society for Applied Microbiology; Society for Experimental Biology; AstraZeneca; the BBSRC; and the Wellcome Trust.

The year ahead will see a major financial change with the Society selling its offices at Charles Darwin House 1 and 2, and moving to rented property. This will require careful financial planning and will affect the RSB's investment strategy. However, despite low property prices due to uncertainty over Brexit, both CDH1 and 2 and expected to show a capital gain over the purchase price.

PB thanked the RSB Chief Executive, finance team, the Finance and Audit Committees, and auditors haysmacintyre in aiding with the smooth running of the Society finances.

#### **4. Voting on Resolutions**

The meeting voted to accept the annual report and accounts; no proxy votes were received and all those present voted in favour by a show of hands.

Proposer: Dr Laura Bellingan FRSB; seconder: Dr Lucy Harper

**It was RESOLVED that the annual report and accounts for 2017-2018 were accepted by the meeting as a true record.**

The meeting voted to allow Council to appoint haysmacintyre as the Society's auditors and to set their remuneration. No proxy votes had been received, and all attendees voted in favour of the resolution by a show of hands.

Proposer: Dr Pat Goodwin FRSB; seconder: Mr Jonathan Shields MRSB.

**It was RESOLVED that Council will appoint haysmacintyre for the audit of the financial year 2018-19 and to set their remuneration.**

#### **5. Election of Council Members**

Professor Richard Reece (RR) reminded members of the constitution of Council. Three of the members are Honorary Officers (President, Secretary and Treasurer), four members are appointed from the College of Individual Members, and four from the College of Organisation Members. A further four members are appointed by Council to fill any skill gaps.

This year there were no vacancies in the College of Organisational Members. In the College of Individual Members, the second term for Dr Kim Hardie came to an end.

Following a call to Individual Members, five nominations were received and Dr Jacqui Piner was elected to the Society's Council. The voting turnout was 15.1%. RR urged members to engage with the RSB and vote in future elections.

There was one previously standing vacancy amongst Council-appointed members. To broaden the skills and diversity of the Board, a skills audit of Council members was carried out in 2018. As a result, Terry Gould has been elected into the role and brings legal expertise to the Board.

#### **6. Confirmation of Honorary Officers**

The President reminded members that the Society's Honorary Officers are Council elected and must be reappointed on an annual basis for a maximum of five years. She confirmed that Professor

Richard Reece has been reappointed as Honorary Secretary for his third term and Dr Paul Brooked as Honorary Treasurer for his second term.

## **7. AOB**

There being no other business, the President brought the meeting to a close at 15:15.