

---

## Minutes of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Biochemical Society

---

*The 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at 15:00 on Monday, 1 December 2014 at Charles Darwin House (Roger Street, London).*

There were 50 members present:

President: Professor Ron Laskey (Chair)

David Baulcombe	Keith Dakin-White	Lauren Miller	Cassandra Terry
Josie Beeley	Matthew Davies	Bernadette Moore	Freddie Theodoulou
Robert Beynon	Anne Dell	Richard Napier	David Timson
Sangita Bhatti	David Fell	Maria O'Connell	Louise Usher
Jeremy Brown	Eoin Fleming	Anselm Ogbedeh	Alan Wallace
Steve Busby	Keith Foster	Mark Pfuhl	Nicholas Watmough
David Carling	Andy Gooden	Christopher Pudney	Michelle West
Jeremy Carlton	Sheila Graham	Michael Rosemeyer	Andrew Wu
Sreenivas Chavali	Terri Grassby	Yasmin Schulte	Stephen Yarwood
Emma Clayton	Nicola Gray	Peter Shepherd	Mariola Zaleska
Joel Clopon	Fraser Macmillan	Rachel Simmonds	
Chris Cooper	Mary McCaffrey	Christopher Stanley	
Tim Dafforn	Gwyn McCreanor	Karthic Swaminathan	

---

**The meeting started with one minute silence to commemorate those members who died in 2014.**

### **14/01 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Jim Caunt (Chair, Theme Panel V), Richard Reece (Chair, Portland Press Board) Dave Scott (Chair, Theme Panel II) and Maria O'Connell (Chair, Theme Panel VI).

### **14/02 Minutes of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting (Monday, 02 December 2013)**

The Minutes of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting held on 02 December 2013 were approved as a true and accurate account of the meeting.

### **14/03 Annual Report and Statutory Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2014**

The Annual report and statutory Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2014 were noted by the membership and received into the record of the Society.

## **14/04 Report of Chief Executive, Biochemical Society and Managing Director, Portland Press**

The Chief Executive of the Biochemical Society and Managing Director of Portland Press Ltd presented an update on current Group activities and progress in achieving the strategic priorities set for the period 2014-2018. The following summarises the content of the presentation:

### **Membership, Marketing and communications**

During 2014 the Society had successfully grown its membership to over 7000 – the highest level since 2000. To further engage members in the Annual General Meeting (which in previous years had had notably poor attendance), the event had been reorganized to include the Colworth Medal lecture and a member reception. This had seen an encouraging increase in attendance from 4 members (in addition to the Council) last year, to 40 this year.

### **International Activities**

An international strategy had been developed for the entire Biochemical Society group, with priority given to countries that were central to the strategic objectives of the Society and Portland Press Ltd, in addition to countries where strong relationships already exist. Relationships had been strengthened with FEBS, including the publication of articles in *The Biochemist* celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A themed collection of research papers from 22 FEBS member nations from the *Biochemical Journal*, *Biochemical Society Transactions* and *Clinical Science* had been free to access between August and October. Additionally, plans were underway for the Society to organize a symposium on 'Bioenergy and Metabolism' in collaboration with the Brazilian Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SBBq) at the triennial IUBMB Congress in August 2015.

### **Marketing and Communications**

A branding review was currently underway. The Society was working with Spencer Du Bois, a branding agency which had undertaken branding work for other similar societies such as RSC and BPS, had recently completed the research phase of the project. The next phase would be to produce the visual branding identity. It was intended that this phase should be completed by mid-February, with options for review and approval at the meeting of the Executive Committee in January.

Also, the Society had increased its presence on social media. Twitter had grown by 2500 followers and was receiving 70,000 views a month. A 100% increase in web traffic from Google had also been seen.

### **Industry**

The Society had formed a sub-committee of the Policy Committee to investigate potential ways of increasing the number of members from industry and biotech. This had been a key priority in the strategic plan for the next 5 years. The first meeting had been held in September 2014 with the focus of identifying a practicable definition of industry and identifying sectors to form the focus of initial efforts.

Following this meeting, it was agreed to include the following areas: Drug discovery: pharma

(small molecule), biopharma (biologics), CROs and CMOs, Agrochemicals (including biofuels), Consumer goods, Food formulation, Equipment manufacturers and suppliers, Consumables manufacturers and suppliers, Diagnostics industry and Biomaterials. The initial focus of work would be on drug discovery, agrichemicals and diagnostics.

The current and historical 'industry' presence within the Biochemical Society's individual membership was researched throughout Summer 2014: approx. 6% of the current membership is based in industry (252 members in 2014), 75% of the members in industry are UK-based, London and Cambridge are regional hubs, the majority of industry members appear to be engaged in drug discovery.

Corporate partnership packages and industry-related individual member benefits offered by other organisations/ societies were also benchmarked during Summer 2014.

Relevant industry-related events were attended including the European Congress of Biotechnology (July 2014) and ON Helix (June 2014) to gain an understanding of industry perceptions of the Society and its member benefits. A public engagement event on anti-microbial resistance had also been held at the Edinburgh conference, organized by the Education department and SGM.

The Society had continued its engagement with the Drug Discovery Pathways Group (BS, RSC, BPS and Society of Biology) and substantial media coverage had been generated as a result of a joint statement issued by the 4 Societies, around the Astra-Zeneca/Pfizer merger discussions.

An Industry focus group will be held in January 2015 with representatives from key sectors identified by the industry sub-committee for the Biochemical Society (drug discovery, agrochemicals and diagnostics) and from a range of organizations (from SMEs to big pharma).

### **Scientific Meetings**

A key objective of the Society's five year strategy pertaining to scientific meetings, initial research had been conducted into the production of a mid-size 500 delegate meeting on Human Therapeutics. Potential venues were currently being investigated.

During 2014 a varied programme of meetings, workshops and training events had taken place attracting a total 1611 delegates. Of these meetings, 9 had been organised in collaboration with sister societies.

### **Education, Training and Public engagement**

Following the refocussing of the Educational Department's activities on ages 15 and upwards, the following activities had taken place, including:

- Running career fairs and producing material to support members giving talks in schools.
- Arranging a CPD course to support teaching of A' level biochemistry which was likely to be repeated; Organizing an Understanding Scientific Publishing workshop in collaboration with Biochemical Journal for PhD students and post-docs.
- Using Technology to engage students in Higher Education workshop.

The Society had received a record number of applications (191) for Summer Vacation

Studentships and had funded 41. Moreover, it had sponsored 5 summer lab placements via the In2Science programme, designed to engage students from underprivileged backgrounds.

To engage directly with the public, the Society had organized a hands-on event Medicine Makers on drug design in collaboration with the British Pharmacological Society. Working with the Society for General Microbiology, 2 lectures had been held on antibiotic resistance. A public lecture on Epigenetics had been held at the British Science Festival. In collaboration with the Physiological Society a public panel discussion entitled "Separating the Fat from the Fiction" had been held at the Edinburgh Science Festival.

### **Charles Darwin House**

As part of the collaboration of societies based at CDH, the Biochemical Society continued to share Accounting/Treasury and Network Support services. Additionally, 2014 had seen the introduction of a new Human Resource service shared between the Biochemical Society and the Society for General Microbiology.

The refurbishment of CDH2 at 107 Grays Inn Road was ongoing. The estimated completion date was 21 March 2015. Delays had occurred primarily due to issues related to planning permission.

### **Collaboration with the Society of Biology**

Following the strategy retreat, the Biochemical Society had agreed to fund the Society of Biology with 1% of its turnover, (£54,170) making it a part of the 'Enhanced Funders Group' along with 7 other Societies. In addition, the Society agreed to fund a further 1.5% of turnover (£82,065) for the development of a number of projects including: 'Gopher Science', the 'Big Biology Box', a number of public engagement factsheets and a supplement on Biochemistry in The Biologist.

### **Science Policy**

As part of the strategy to develop Science policy work with the Society of Biology, the Biochemical Society had fed into consultation responses to the Smith Commission (October 2014), to the Independent Review of the Implementation of RCUK Policy on Open Access (September 2014), to the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills consultation on a Science & Innovation Strategy (August 2014) and to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills consultation on the Proposals for Long term Capital Investment in Science and Research (July 2014).

In order to increase member awareness and involvement in science policy activities, the Society had added a section on Policy Matters in The Biochemist and had published 19 policy related blog entries.

The Biochemical Society had developed Policy statements on Antimicrobial Resistance, Diversity in the Science Sector, and Biochemistry Skills for Drug Discovery.

The Biochemical Society had started increasing links with other organizations while strengthening its relationship with the Society of Biology. This was achieved by co-ordinating the Policy Lunchbox programme of events with Society of Biology, Society for General

Microbiology, Society of Experimental Biology and British Ecological Society. It had also supported Parliamentary events to promote the Society of Biology as a unified voice for the biosciences.

In conjunction with the Society of Biology and Higher Education Academy, the Biochemical Society had produced a report on the status of practical work in undergraduate bioscience degrees.

In line with the strategy to reposition the Society's gender equality work, the Biochemical Society had re-launched the Stay Connected Bursaries, the Diversity in Science grants for women in science and had promoted the 2015 awards to encourage a greater gender balance in nominations.

### **Publishing**

During 2014 there was an increase in the Impact Factor of all Biochemical Society owned journals and a new edition of Cell Signalling Biology was launched in September. Portland Press had been working on the transition to a new publishing platform in collaboration with HighWire which would be launched in Spring 2015. This platform would deliver a number of benefits including better visibility and discoverability of PPL journal content as well as increased usage.

Following the HINARI Research4Life scheme, Portland Press continued to waive or reduce charges for processing articles for authors in low or middle income countries.

In 2015, there were plans for The Biochemist to cover topics such as: Coenzymes, RNA, Antibiotics & Antibiotic Resistance, Longevity and 'What Makes Us Human?'

### **Portland Customer Services**

Following the strategy retreat, it had been agreed that the Society would invest in the development of PCS so that it would become a profit making division of Portland Press Ltd by 2018 with a mid-term appraisal of progress in 2015. However, due to IWA HQ, the largest client of PCS, terminating their contract and subsequent terminations from other clients, and with no new business on the horizon, the Portland Press Board decided to cease service provision to external clients in Publishing and Membership Fulfilment, Treasury, Web Hosting, and Association Management services by the end of 2015. This would allow Portland Press to refocus on delivering and growing a full-service publishing service and continuing to provide conference services to external clients through the existing meetings team. Biochemical Society journal fulfilment would be incorporated in the Publishing Department while Society membership fulfilment would move into the Membership Department.

### **Governance and Group Projects**

The CEO reported that due to the high costs associated with the provision of IT services, the strategy retreat had commissioned a review on IT infrastructure and staffing. A working group had been established to oversee this project which would report its findings and recommendations to the Finance Committee which would then pass its comments to the Executive Committee for decision.

Additionally a full review of all Society governance (including documentation, policies, processes and legislation) was underway. Final recommendations would be presented to the Executive Committee for comment mid-2015 and to the membership at the Annual General Meeting at the end of 2015.

The CEO thanked all staff, honorary officers, Trustees, committee members, Local Ambassadors, Editors/reviewers, Themed Panel Members, Membership at Large and sister Societies with which the Society had collaborated for their contribution over the past year, without whose help the activities outlined above would not have happened.

#### **14/05 Chair's comments**

The Chair reflected on the past three years, noting that substantial but necessary changes had taken place during his tenure. He was pleased that the Society had grown to 7000 members, the highest level since 2000, and welcomed the prospect of a stable financial situation following the conclusion of the reviews currently underway. He noted the importance of greater collaboration with the Society of Biology and the increased presence of the Biochemical Society on the international stage, in particular via strengthened presence in China and the USA.

The Chair wished the Society every success in the future and expressed gratitude to the staff of the Society for their efforts during his period of office.

#### **14/06 Archive Report**

Dr John Lagnado, the Honorary Archivist for the Society, gave a presentation regarding the Society's archive.

The members were informed that the main body of the Society's archive has been held at the Wellcome Institute Library since 2008 while smaller components were held at the University of London repository in Egham, Surrey, and at the Science Museum.

He was pleased to report that in October 2014, Fred Sanger's family had donated his correspondence, photograph and document archive to the Society. These have now been deposited in the Wellcome Library. Professor Sanger's family had also expressed their desire to donate further correspondence to the collection.

In the coming year, the audio-visual material and institutional records archive will be transferred to the Wellcome Library. This will include additional cataloguing work to increase accessibility and usability.

Additionally, the Honorary Archivist is in conversation with a number of Science Historians to utilize the Biochemical Society archive in meetings, and in educational activity, in collaboration with the Society Education and Training Department.

#### **14/07 Report of Auditors**

The auditors work had been completed for the year and there were no matters of which they were aware which would require further action. The report of the Auditors Grant Thornton UK LLP was received into the record of the Society.

## **14/08 Appointment of Auditors for financial year ended 30 June 2015**

The firm Grant Thornton UK LLP offered themselves for reappointment as the Auditors of the Society. This motion was unanimously approved by the members in attendance.

## **14/09 Retiring Officers and Members of Council**

The Society offered a vote of thanks to the following officers and members of council who would be retiring from their positions at the end of 2014:

**Professor Ron Laskey** as President, Biochemical Society

**Professor David Fell** as Chair, Policy Committee

**Professor Peter Shepherd** as Chair, *Biochemical Journal* Editorial Board

**Dr Stephen Yarwood** as a member of Council

## **14/10 Retiring Members of Committees**

The Society offered a vote of thanks to the following members who had retired/would be retiring from the below committees by the end of 2014:

### **Awards Committee**

Dr Martin Green

Dr Peter Finan

### **General Travel Grants**

Dr Frank Michelangeli

### **Education Committee**

Dr Dave Colthurst

Dr Becky Bowden

## **14/11 Retiring Members of Editorial Boards**

The Society offered a vote of thanks to the following retiring members of the Society's editorial boards:

### **Outgoing Chair of *Biochemical Journal* Editorial Board**

Peter Shepherd

### **Editorial Committee of the *Biochemical Journal* :**

Dick Hoekstra

### ***Biochemical Journal* Editorial Board:**

Terri Attwood

Barry Halliwell

George Panayotou

Jon Sayers

Noel Buckley

Marcelo Kazanietz

Zoran Radič

Nigel Savery

Ye-Guang Chen

Klaus Lingelbach

Frances Sharom

Hong-Wei Xue

Victor Darley Usmar

Barbara Mulloy

Harald Stenmark

Roberto Docampo  
Angela Dulhunty

Andrew Munro  
Hassan Naim

Nicholas Tonks  
Ram Sasisekharan

**Clinical Science Editorial Board:**

Ian Young  
Anna Kurdowska  
Ake Sjöholm

**14/12 Elections**

**14/12.1 President**

Following the conclusion of the presidential term of Professor Ron Laskey, Professor Sir David Baulcombe had been duly elected in line with the procedures as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Society. The membership recognized this election.

Professor Sir David would commence in this role from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

**14/12.2 Chair, Policy Committee**

Following the conclusion of Professor David Fell's term of service as Chair of the Policy Committee, Professor Tim Dafforn had been duly elected in line with the procedures set up in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Society. The membership recognized this election.

Professor Dafforn would commence his role from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

**14/12.3 Ordinary Member, Council**

Following the announcement of vacancies at the beginning of the year, Professor Mary McCaffrey had been duly elected in line with the procedures set up in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Society. Professor McCaffrey would commence in this role from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

**14/12.4 Ordinary Member, Council**

Following the announcement of vacancies at the beginning of the year, Dr Jeremy Brown had been duly elected in line with the procedures set up in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Society. Dr Brown would commence in this role from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

**14/13 Appointments**

The President reminded the membership that the role of Chair of the *Biochemical Journal* Editorial Board was appointed by Council following recommendations from the Editorial Board and members of Portland Press Limited Board.

**14/13.1 Chair, Editorial Board of *Biochemical Journal***

Following the process outlined above, Professor David Carling had been duly appointed as the Chair of the Editorial Board of the *Biochemical Journal*.

Professor Carling would commence in his role from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

**Current Officers**

The membership recognised the current post-holders as detailed below:

<b>Ron Laskey</b>	<i>President (outgoing)</i>
<b>Stephen Busby</b>	<i>Chair, Executive Committee</i>
<b>Anne Dell</b>	<i>Vice-Chair, Executive Committee</i>
<b>Nick Watmough</b>	<i>Honorary Treasurer</i>
<b>Rob Beynon</b>	<i>Chair, Education Committee</i>
<b>David Fell</b>	<i>Chair, Policy Committee (outgoing)</i>
<b>Sheila Graham</b>	<i>Honorary Meetings Secretary</i>
<b>Nicola Gray</b>	<i>Honorary Membership Secretary</i>
<b>Richard Reece</b>	<i>Chair, PPL Board of Directors</i>
<b>Peter Shepherd</b>	<i>Chair, Biochemical Journal, Editorial Board (outgoing)</i>
<b>Chris Cooper</b>	<i>Ordinary Member, Executive Committee nominated by Council</i>
<b>Alan Wallace</b>	<i>Ordinary Member, Executive Committee nominated by Council</i>
<b>David Timson</b>	<i>Elected by Membership</i>
<b>Stephen Yarwood</b>	<i>Elected by Membership (outgoing)</i>
<b>Vacant</b>	<i>Elected by Membership</i>
<b>Vacant</b>	<i>Elected by Membership</i>
<b>Michelle West</b>	<i>Chair, Theme Panel I</i>
<b>David Scott</b>	<i>Chair, Theme Panel II</i>
<b>Fraser MacMillan</b>	<i>Chair, Theme Panel III</i>
<b>Jeremy Carlton</b>	<i>Chair, Theme Panel IV</i>
<b>Jim Caunt</b>	<i>Chair, Theme Panel V</i>
<b>Maria O'Connell</b>	<i>Chair, Theme Panel VI</i>
<b>John (Eoin) Flemming</b>	<i>Chair, Irish Area Section</i>
<b>David Baulcombe</b>	<i>President (incoming)</i>

<b>Tim Dafforn</b>	<i>Chair, Policy Committee (incoming)</i>
<b>David Carling</b>	<i>Chair, Biochemical Journal, Editorial Board (incoming)</i>
<b>Jeremy Brown</b>	<i>Elected by Membership (incoming)</i>
<b>Mary McCaffrey</b>	<i>Elected by Membership (incoming)</i>

**14/15 Vacancies**

The Membership noted that elections for 3 Ordinary members of Council would be held in 2015.

**14/16 Honorary Members of the Biochemical Society**

The membership unanimously confirmed the election of Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow as an Honorary Member of the Society.

**14/17 Membership Subscription Fees 2015 and 2016**

The membership confirmed the fees for membership subscription for the year 2015 and 2016 as detailed below:

Full	£73
Early Career	£41
Associate	£31
Postgraduate	£19
Undergraduate	£10
New Emeritus	£19

Lifetime fees at retiring age:

55 to 60	£420
61 to 66	£290
67 and above	£210

- End -