

Minutes of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee Annual General Meeting

Held on **Monday 10th September 2018** at 4.30 pm
in the Boothroyd Room, Portcullis House.

1. Minutes of previous AGM (17th July 2017)

A copy of the minutes of the last AGM had been e mailed to all members.
An abridged version, including all the resolutions, had been published in the Annual Report and on the P&SC web-site.

The minutes were duly approved and signed.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Mr John Lowe had suggested at the previous AGM that there could be an Annual Lecture hosted by the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee with an address by a key industrial figure.

It was agreed that the possibility of an annual 'Prestige Lecture' would be explored.

2. Election of Officers, Vice-Presidents and Advisory Panel and Council for 2018/19

The Chairman advised that the following had confirmed their willingness to be re-elected as Officers of the Committee:

Chairman	Mr Stephen Metcalfe MP
Deputy Chairman:	Ms Chi Onwurah MP
Hon Treasurer:	The Lord Willis of Knaresborough
Hon Secretary	Ms Carol Monaghan MP

Professor Ian Haines proposed that the above Officers be re-elected, this seconded by Mr David Youdan and agreed nem-con.

The Chairman advised that the following had confirmed their willingness to be re-elected as President and Vice-Presidents of the Committee, and to serve on the Advisory Panel:

President	Lord Oxburgh
Vice-Presidents:	Mr Paul Ridout
	Dr Stephen Benn
	Mr Atti Emezc
	Professor Ian Haines
	Dr Guy Hembury
	Ms Doris-Ann Williams
	Professor Francesca Medda

Advisory Panel: Mr David Youdan
 Dr David Dent
 Ms Rebecca Purvis

The Chairman also advised that Sir Peter Bottomley MP had also agreed to be elected as a Vice-President.

Mr Paul Ridout proposed that the above Vice-Presidents and members of the Advisory Panel be elected, this was seconded by Professor Ian Haines and agreed nem-con.

3. Election of Life Members

The Committee may from time to time elect life members who, on retirement from Parliament or their institution, qualify by having served the Committee either as officers or in some other capacity and given valuable service to it.

There were no Members elected in this category for 2018.

4. To Receive the Annual Report for 2017

The Annual Report for 2017 had been posted to all members.

It contained a foreword by Dr Stephen Benn, Vice- President, a report on the programme by the Chairman, membership lists, minutes of the previous AGM and a list of meetings held in 2017.

During the 2017 year meetings had been held on disruptive technologies, broadband, mental health issues, space research, human fungal diseases, fire-resistant materials, data and science and food manufacturing.

A morning seminar which took place during National Science Week had been on the subject of 'Holes' – fracking, carbon capture and storage, radioactive waste disposal, mineral extraction, sink holes and biodiversity and mining.

The STEM for BRITAIN poster exhibition and competition for early-stage researchers, also held in Parliament during Science Week, was again very well attended.

The October 2017 meeting had focused on Science Priorities for Brexit and the need to provide opportunity for UK research and innovation to continue to compete on a global stage.

The Annual Lunch had been held in November with Lisa Anson, President of both Astra Zeneca and ABPI, and Sinead Lynch, Chair of UK Shell as the Guests of Honour.

It was proposed from the Chair that the Annual Report should be accepted and this was agreed nem-con.

5.1 To Receive the Financial Statement for 2017

The Financial report had been circulated to all members.

The Chairman advised that the Accounts had been prepared by Peter Watts FCA, Shaw Gibbs following the death of Philip Macdonald, the Committee's accountant for many years, who had died unexpectedly earlier in the year.

It was noted that income from membership continued to decline. The deficit of -£8.9k was lower than forecasted, and less than for the previous year, mainly due to savings in staff costs.

The Council had appointed a working group to look at membership and steps would be taken to increase membership and the income from subscriptions.

Science in Parliament was now being published quarterly and income would be generated from advertising.

It was also noted that Stem for Britain 2018 had made a small surplus.

David Youdan proposed that the Financial Statement for 2017 be accepted, this was seconded by Atti Emezc and agreed nem-con.

5.2 Estimates for Income and Expenditure for 2018

The revised 2018 Estimates for Income and Expenditure, had been e-mailed to all members.

It was noted that there would be a saving on staff costs but due to the overall decline in membership there was still an expected deficit for 2018 of -£9.6k

The Chairman advised that chasing late payments of subscriptions would be a priority and Dr Isabel Spence had been appointed on a free-lance basis to assist with this.

Council had appointed a Working Group to look at membership and income from subscriptions.

Mr Paul Ridout proposed that the revised Financial Estimates for 2018 be accepted, this was seconded by Professor Ian Haines and agreed nem-con

5.3 Subscription Rates for 2019

A paper with the proposal for increased subscription rates for 2019 had been circulated.

The Chairman advised that Council, as part of its ongoing review of membership and finance, had recommended that subscription rates should be increased for 2019 as follows:

The subscription for Commercial Members should increase by £30.00 or by 10%, whichever is the greater;
the subscription for Universities, Scientific and Technical Organisations and Associate Members should increase by £30.00;
the subscription for Individual Members should be increased by £25.00.

It was noted that there had not been an increase in subscription levels for the past seven years.

Large organisations with more than 500 employees should not have a problem with the proposed increase but small start-up enterprises, who could benefit from membership, may have difficulty in funding the annual subscription. It was suggested that there might be a separate membership category for small innovative enterprises and that this should be considered as part of the membership review.

It was also suggested that accepting payment by credit card might encourage prompt payment of subscriptions and that this should be given further consideration.

It was agreed that Council would be asked to produce a policy for future subscription increases and that subscription rates should be reviewed annually.

David Dent proposed that the subscription rates for 2019 should be increased as above, this was seconded by David Youdan and agreed nem-con.

6. Report from the Council

The report had been circulated to all members.

6.1 Management and Staffing matters

The Chairman reported that Professor Alan Malcolm retired as Executive Secretary in the Spring of 2017, having completed five years of service and was succeeded by Dr Isabel Spence who took over his role. Isabel subsequently resigned in the Spring of 2018.

Dr William Duncan, formerly Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, was appointed on a consultancy basis as interim Director from late May 2018, assisted by Karen Smith who provides administrative support to the Committee.

Leigh Jeffes had been appointed as a consultant to STEM for Britain, working alongside Sue Wharton who coordinates the applications and judging process. The Committee's Secretariat now had the oversight of delivery of STEM for Britain. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Isabel for all her work on behalf of the Committee and to William for stepping into the role. He also thanked Leigh for organising STEM for Britain, Karen for her role in assisting William and John Slater for his ongoing support and help.

The Chairman advised that he would be undertaking a review of the staff resources needed to deliver the work of the Committee.

6.2 Membership:

The Chairman advised that Council had welcomed the University of Portsmouth and the Nutrition Society as new members in 2017 and also Professor Derek Clements-Croome and Philip Greenish who had joined as individual members

The Council were also pleased to elect Professor Alan Malcolm as a Life Member

Unfortunately, during 2017 thirteen members decided not to renew their membership.

Two of the most common reasons given for not renewing membership were constraint on finances and that the key contact person within the respective organisation had moved on.

The Committee's finances had also been adversely affected by members who were consistently in arrears with their membership subscriptions.

The Working Group, looking at membership income and recruitment, had come up with a number of recommendations and Council would be formulating a strategy to take these forward.

6.3 Programme:

The Committee's future programme of meetings would be :

Wednesday 17th October 9.30 to 12.00 - morning discussion on automated vehicles.

Monday 12th November 5.30pm - Major infrastructure projects.

Tuesday 20th November Annual Lunch.

Tuesday 4th December 5.30pm = Brexit discussion.

The Programme Committee would be meeting in October to plan the programme of events for 2019.

6.4 Science in Parliament

It was noted that Science in Parliament is now being published quarterly and providing much needed income.

6.5 STEM for Britain

It was noted that the 2017 STEM for Britain poster competition had again been very well attended by Parliamentarians.

The day had been divided into three separate exhibitions, providing early-stage researchers with an opportunity to show to Parliamentarians the first-class research being undertaken in British universities and research institutions. The three exhibitions included posters on Physics and Chemistry, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, Biological and Biomedical Sciences. Medals and cash prizes were awarded in each discipline.

6.6 GDPR

A paper on GDPR has been circulated

Council had reviewed the Committee's compliance with the Data Protection Legislation. A copy of the Committee's Privacy Statement had been sent to all members and was also available on the Committee's website.

The Policy will be reviewed by Council every two years

6.7 Social Media

It was noted that the statistics for the web-site show increasing interest.

The Committee's Twitter presence continued to grow and 'Live' tweeting at the Committee's discussion meetings was engaging a wider audience.

The Chairman thanked Paul Ridout and Doris-Ann Williams for their help with managing the Committee's Twitter presence.

7 Appointment of Accountant

A paper had been circulated to all members.

Following the unexpected death of Philip Macdonald it was necessary to appoint a new Accountant.

Council had recommended the appointment of Peter Watts FCA, Shaw Gibbs, as Accountant for the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.

Peter's area of expertise includes audit, accounts software, SME's and business strategy and Peter would provide accountancy services for P&SC for 2018 on the same fee basis that Philip Macdonald would have charged.

The appointment of Peter Watts was proposed by John Slater, seconded by David Youdan and agreed nem-con.

The Annual General Meeting closed at 5.10 pm