

BIOLOGY CHANGING THE WORLD

ROYAL SOCIETY OF BIOLOGY
STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2021



WELCOME

to the Royal Society of Biology's plan for the next
three years: *Biology Changing the World*

Whether it is supporting food production for a growing population, fighting antimicrobial resistance or helping life on Earth adapt to climate change, biology has a central role in addressing our most pressing global challenges.

The science of biology is also evolving at a pace never seen before. It is the most diverse of all the sciences, with an ever-increasing range of specialists generating unprecedented amounts of data on everything from cancer genes to the world's great ecosystems. Exciting developments in areas like gene-editing and synthetic biology are allowing us to repurpose and redesign the building blocks of life.

Together with peers across the sciences and in maths and engineering, biologists are building the interdisciplinary approach required to address the complex and inter-connected challenges our societies and planet face. Biology truly is the science of the 21st century, with biological research and its applications affecting every aspect of daily life – from our fuel to our food, from pharmaceuticals to farming, from human health to the health of our environment. Biologists are needed now more than ever.

Supporting biologists at all stages of their careers, and enthusing a new generation of biologists, are crucial roles for the RSB. This means supporting and valuing teachers and developing a new biology curriculum framework, and access to training and career development resources. We will also continue to provide unified responses to government policy consultations, support parliamentarians on science issues, and develop novel approaches to outreach and engagement.

The coming years will be critical for biology and science more widely. Potential changes to the UK's relationship with the European Union, alongside the new Government industrial strategy and the formation of a new overarching research funding body, UKRI, will create both opportunity and uncertainty.

The breadth of the RSB's membership – from school pupils to Nobel laureates, working in the public, private and charity sectors – provides us with a unique, holistic viewpoint of the life sciences, underpinned by evidence-based perspectives in policy, education and research.

When combined with the experience and reach of almost 100 Member Organisations, the local knowledge of our branches, and the focus of our special interest groups and committees, we have become a leading voice and advocate for the life sciences.

In this strategy the RSB sets out its vision for the next three years: to Inspire, Support and Influence biology and biologists; and to Evolve as an organisation to better meet the needs of both our members and the public.

During a period of considerable environmental, scientific and political change, our goal is to ensure biology continues to change the world for the better.

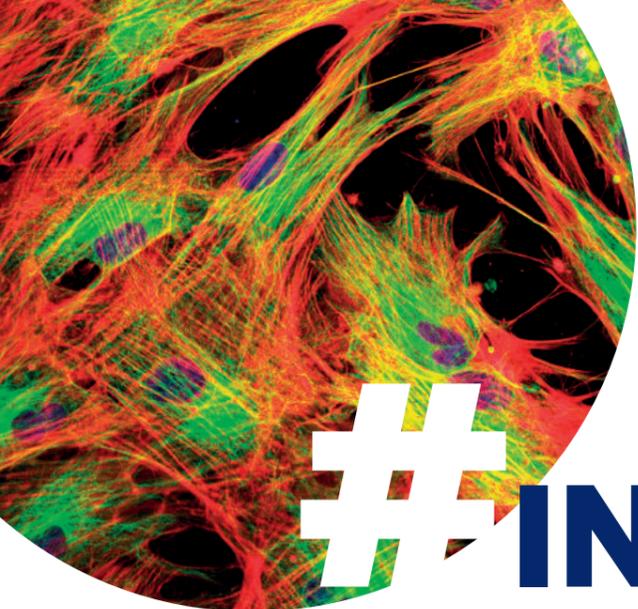
Dr Mark Downs CSci FRSB
Chief executive

Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow CBiol FRSB
President

You can find
more information
about our business
plan and track our
progress towards our
goals at
rsb.org.uk/plan

BIOSCIENCES FOR ALL

The RSB is committed to promoting inclusive, accessible and diverse participation in the life sciences. We are developing a new strategy document to enhance how we consider and promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. Some of our key ambitions in this area can be found in blue circles throughout this document. The strategy can be found in full at rsb.org.uk/plan



#INSPIRE

Inspiring interest in bioscience and the natural world is a key part of what we do. Through our events, outreach work, competitions and publications, we help communicate the true value of biology and inspire the next generation of biologists.



Our activities stimulate important conversations about biology and how it can help in responding to the major challenges facing the planet. Our work also aims to challenge the stereotypes of science and scientists, and tackle barriers to inclusion in scientific subjects.

The RSB runs a varied and impactful calendar of outreach and engagement events, running activities at fairs, museums, street festivals, exhibitions and beyond to spread the word about biology. Our branches run inspiring events in each region of the UK and, increasingly, overseas.

News of our work and our members' work reaches millions of people a year via our digital communication channels, and our flagship publication *The Biologist* has been chronicling the best of bioscience for over 65 years.

These activities culminate in our annual celebration of the life sciences, Biology Week, when our work to inspire as many people as possible intensifies during seven days of biology-themed events, activities and campaigns.

BIOSCIENCES FOR ALL

To create a bioscience environment that attracts and benefits from a variety of experiences, skills and qualities, the RSB will proactively promote equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion in schools and higher education, in the workplace, in training and in biology activities for the public.

- ▲ The Society will use its communication channels to highlight our values, supporting and voicing the needs of RSB members and the wider bioscience and STEM community.

- ▲ The Society will continue to create inclusive and accessible activities, with diverse representation among speakers, panels and in the audience at our events.

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS WE WILL ...

Expand our suite of outreach events and grow the impact of our digital communication channels. We will aim to engage a wider diversity of audiences with biology, with more inspiring local events delivered through our regional branches. We'll use our 10th anniversary to celebrate our work and the achievements of bioscience over the past decade, while looking ahead to what the next 10 years of cutting-edge life science might bring.



#INSPIRE WE AIM TO:

Increase the number of events for people to get involved with during Biology Week by 50%, reaching

150
BIOLOGY
WEEK EVENTS
worldwide by
2021

Develop a programme celebrating the RSB's

10TH
ANNIVERSARY

and the 40th anniversary of our Royal Charter with a lasting impact for science, running from October 2019 to September 2020

Increase the number of new readers visiting *The Biologist* online by

50% by
2020,
helping inspire greater interest in the breadth of biology and the work of the RSB



#INFLUENCE

Life science encompasses everything from biomolecules to ecosystems, and biologists work in areas as diverse as cancer medicine, crop science and synthetic biology. The RSB brings together views from across all areas of the life sciences, whether from industry, charities or the public sector, providing a unified voice to influence policy and affect positive change.



Our policy team responds to dozens of government consultations and inquiries each year – helping inform policy-making with scientific evidence, and achieve positive outcomes in policy that affects biology and biologists. We have strong links to Westminster and the parliaments of each of the devolved nations, and our science policy newsletter is read by more than 22,000 people.

By connecting our members and Member Organisations, working with societies in other disciplines, and through our various special interest groups and committees, we help develop resources to meet the needs of the sector and advance the case for bioscience.

Our education and accreditation teams work to ensure standards in UK science teaching are high, and that biology curricula are comprehensive and inspiring. Our journals help disseminate important research in biology education and emerging life science topics, while our communication work ensures the impact of the biosciences is heard loud and clear.

BIOSCIENCES FOR ALL

As a professional and membership body, the RSB will encourage and advance inclusion and accessibility in its own practices and across the biosciences, including by championing, communicating and connecting leading practice among Member Organisations.

- ▲ The RSB aims to be a leader in this area for the sector and will publish a short, up-to-date statement of our intent and values relating to inclusion and diversity.
- ▲ The Society is setting up a diversity working group for Member Organisations to share best practice in diversity and inclusion in their activities.

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS WE WILL ...

Grow our membership to ensure seamless representation across all of bioscience, and increase collaboration and coordination with other learned societies on shared messages. We'll build on our reputation as a leading provider of impartial, evidence-based advice on science and education policy, ensuring the RSB is seen as the leading voice for biology by UK governments, employers, universities, teachers, parents and individuals.



#INFLUENCE WE AIM TO:

By 2020 publish a **CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK** to support a **BIOLOGY CURRICULUM**

for ages 5-19



Develop a formal process to help measure the **IMPACT OF SCIENCE POLICY ACTIVITY** across the life sciences by **2020**

Strengthen **LINKS TO OUR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**, ensuring they can effectively contribute to RSB's work and broadening our influence



#SUPPORT

The Society supports 18,000 bioscientists in the UK and abroad and almost 100 Member Organisations. Being a member means being part of one of the largest networks of bioscientists in the world.



We provide grants to help our members travel, develop skills, or put on events; our careers advice and training helps biologists at all levels further their careers, and our professional registers help our members demonstrate their abilities and competence to employers.

We offer a range of networking opportunities to help facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Our accreditation programme ensures that biology degree programmes in the UK and overseas provide bioscience graduates with the skills employers need, and through grants and our regional branches we support local life science events and activities.

We act as a central facilitator for a huge range of collaborative projects, events and activities involving our Member Organisations and the wider bioscience community, and offer valuable administrative support to smaller scientific societies and organisations.

BIOSCIENCES FOR ALL

The Society wishes to see people of all backgrounds and circumstances have equal opportunities to flourish, succeed and contribute to the advancement of biological knowledge.

▲ We will continue to work towards ensuring that the membership of the Society reflects the diversity of the wider biosciences community, and identify communities who are under-represented in the Society's membership.

▲ Our 'biosciences for all' work and returners working group will build on earlier work that encourages a diversity of career paths.

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS WE WILL ...

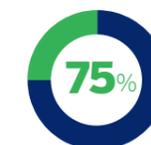
Improve our support for students and early-career biologists and align it closely with our professional registers, helping ensure more rapid professional development for the next generation of biologists. We will also provide broader training opportunities to support members and potential members seeking to further their careers in the life sciences.



#SUPPORT WE AIM TO:

Create a new package of support for **EARLY-CAREER** biologists by **2020** to help support our members' progression throughout each career stage

Support the delivery of quality higher education in the UK by ensuring



of UK institutions achieve accreditation for bioscience-based degree programmes

by **2021**

Support life science students through an **EXTENSIVE SERIES OF BIOSCIENCE 'PRIMER' TEXTBOOKS,**

with at least five titles in 2019 and a further 10 by late

2020

DEVELOP 10 NEW ONLINE COURSES

by 2021, helping to ensure better access to training for bioscientists who cannot easily attend courses where they are physically delivered



#EVOLVE

In 2018 the RSB hit its highest ever figures for individual membership, reaching more than 18,000 members. But as well as growing our network and reach, we must make sure we are representative of modern bioscience and responsive to the evolving needs of the sector.



We are working to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the biosciences and in our activities, ensuring the best minds are working in bioscience and spreading the message that biology is for everyone.

As well as this, we are growing our network of Member Organisations to broaden our reach and ensure we represent all areas of bioscience. And we are working on new projects, fundraising ideas and a legacy scheme to ensure that the Society is in as strong a position as possible to help support biology and biologists long into the future.



#EVOLVE WE AIM TO:

Grow as a community of biologists by achieving a total membership of at least **21,000** and ensuring retention rates



across all professional member grades by 2021

Increase **VISIBILITY** and **ACCESS TO OUR SERVICES**

by developing a new website by the end of

2020

Sign up **100 RSB AMBASSADORS**

by 2020, strengthening our connection to industrial and academic organisations across the UK

Recruit **NEW MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

to ensure established and **EMERGING SPECIALISMS** are all represented

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS WE WILL ...

Use surveys and other feedback mechanisms to better understand our members and the services they want from us. We'll strengthen regional links with local organisations and branches and seek new members and Member Organisations in emerging areas of the life sciences. And we'll evolve our degree accreditation and training programmes to reflect current and future employability and skills requirements.

BIOSCIENCES FOR ALL

It is important that the governance of the RSB should represent the wider membership of the Society and bioscience community, and that it works to encourage a life science sector that attracts and benefits from a variety of experiences, skills and qualities.

▲ Each of the RSB's committees and special interest groups will appoint an ambassador for diversity and inclusion. They will be responsible for promoting and overseeing diversity and inclusion across the activities of their respective committees and identifying areas for improvement.

▲ We will also begin reporting annually on key diversity and inclusion metrics from all areas of our work to the RSB Council.

RSB TIMELINE

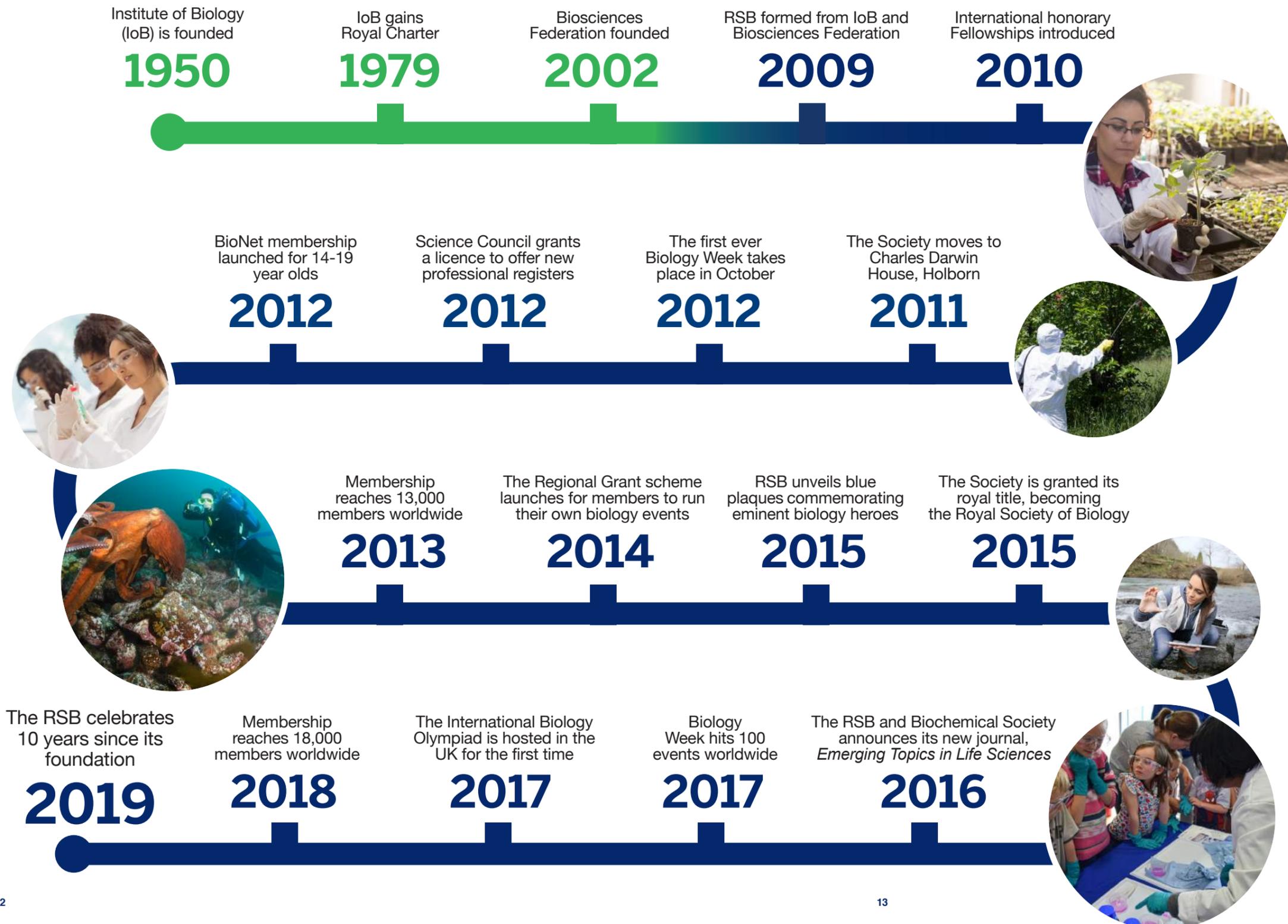
A DECADE OF MAKING AN IMPACT IN BIOLOGY

As the RSB celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2019-20, we also celebrate 40 years since our predecessor organisation, the Institute of Biology, was granted a Royal Charter to represent the UK's biologists.

A year of special activities is planned, with an increased focus on the way in which biology is 'Changing the World'. We want to highlight our achievements over the past decade and those of our members and Member Organisations, who together are contributing to an exciting future for biology.

We will be hosting a range of talks, discussions and activities; commissioning articles on the last 10 years and the next decade in bioscience; and launching fresh campaigns and competitions. We have commissioned a film with ITN Productions on how biology is addressing global challenges, and we will be making additional funding available for grants and awards.

As this celebratory year begins, we want to ensure the Society offers greater impact than ever for our members and the public. Some of the impact we have already achieved will be set out in a series of case studies on our website (rsb.org.uk/plan) with more updates appearing here as milestones are reached over the next three years.



MAKING IT WORK

Finance and infrastructure for the next three years

The number of grants, events, professional registers and training courses we offer is set to increase over the next three years – providing support to the entire breadth of our membership, from students to professional and retired biologists, and boosting the impact of our work.

These plans will be financed through an increasing diversification of income and membership growth of at least 3,000 individual members. Building on developments over the past three years, income is anticipated to grow in each of the next three years.

There will be some important one-off costs, including the development of a new website, which will help improve access to our resources and services, and our move to a new headquarters in central London with improved facilities for visiting members.

The Society will also support the delivery of a year-long celebration of our 10th anniversary and the 40th anniversary of the award of our Royal Charter with a new dedicated member of staff to ensure a coherent and impactful programme of activity.

Regional branches and other volunteer-led groups and committees remain an essential part of the Society's infrastructure, working in partnership with a full-time professional workforce of up to 40 staff during the period of the plan. The sale of our current office buildings, of which the Society is a co-owner, will provide new investment capital that will allow a modest annual income to further support the work of the Society.

OUR BOARD AND COMMITTEES

The Society's Board of Trustees (Council) are supported in their work by governance committees such as the Finance and Audit committee, with strategy delivered through the Membership and Professional Affairs (MPA) and Education and Science Policy (ESP) committees. All the Society's committees and special interest groups will proactively support our equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Membership Organisations are essential to our work. We would like to thank all of our [strategic partners](#), key funders and other supporting organisations for their continued support.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND PROJECTED GROWTH

