

## **Unapproved Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2019**

The eleventh annual general meeting of the Royal Society of Biology in Scotland Branch Committee took place from **13.00 on Saturday, 12th October 2019**, at Kelvin Hall, 1445 Argyle Street, Glasgow G3 8AW.

**Present were** Kevin O'Dell (Chair), Russ Clare (Treasurer), Andrew Spiers (Secretary) and 17 other members.

11.0 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and no apologies had been received.

11.1 The minutes of the tenth annual general meeting of the Scottish Branch Council held on Saturday, 13th October 2018, at the Roslin Institute, Easter Bush, EH25 9RG, were approved as a correct record.

11.2 There were no matters arising from the minutes other than agenda items.

11.3 Annual Reports:

11.3.1 Chair's Report

The Scotland Branch of the Royal Society of Scotland is unusual in that in addition to the activities that the other UK branches undertake, we have a somewhat broader remit that reflects the unique status of the devolved Scottish Government at Holyrood. So in addition to the role that I play as Chair of the Scottish Branch, we also have two Deputy Chairs, namely Nicola Marchant (Deputy Chair: Policy) and Jacqueline Nairn (Deputy Chair: Education). I'd like to start by thanking both of them for all their hard work throughout the last year. It is worth noting that on pages 9 and 10 of the RSB's 10th Anniversary Issue of *The Biologist*, the article about the panel of 14 Key Figures in RSB history included 3 members of the Scottish Branch, David Coates, John Coggins & Liz Lakin.

i. Policy (Nicola Marchant)

Nicola has liaised with HQ in London on multiple policy issues, canvassing opinion on issues that directly or indirectly impinge on Scotland and are of interest to our members. In much of this work she has been well supported by Chas Nelson, and we appreciate all the work they have done on behalf of the Scottish Branch. Policy documents that we have contributed to include GDPR, Gene Editing Technology, Possibility of Policy Late Events being held outside London, Open Access publication enquiry, 2020 is the year of Plant Health, Scottish Parliament enquiry into subject

choices in secondary schools, Impact of Br\*\*it on Universities and Colleges, and Scottish Parliament enquiry on climate and the environment.

ii. Education & Outreach (Jacqueline Nairn)

Jacquelyn has organized a number of events for the 2019 and 2020 sessions, and we are very grateful for the work that she has put into this. These event include AGM and Symposium, Careers event University of Stirling, 10th Anniversary Event with Dame Professor Sue Black (late May 2020 in Aberdeen), and Blue Plaque: John Bostock (Hay Fever pioneer: October 2020 in Edinburgh).

iii. Branch Activity

*MoSSFest: Mugdock Country Park: October 2018*

The Middle of Scotland Science Festival (MoSSFest) is a free Science Festival that is organised by Jane Magill, who recently retired from her role with the Royal Society of Biology. We very much appreciate all the work that Jane has put into organizing this event over many years. The event was attended by around 1500 people. We had a Royal Society of Biology in Scotland stall on the theme of 'Can Eating Insects Save the World' that was hosted by students form the third year if the Genetics Degree Programme at the University if Glasgow.

*Science and The Parliament: November 2018*

This annual event is organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry on behalf of the Learned Societies in Scotland, and several members of the Scottish Branch were able to attend, as were staff from HQ in London, and we thank them for their work on the day. From the perspective of the Royal Society of Biology in Scotland, our activity at this event is organised by Janice Barr who will be stepping down from her role with the branch this year, and we very much appreciate all the work she has put into this over many years. This event is important to us for two key reasons, firstly it is an opportunity for us to meet members of the Scottish Parliament, and secondly it is the event at which we present awards to the students who received the best examination results in Higher Biology, Higher Human Biology and Advanced Higher Biology.

*24th Annual RSB Scotland Annual Teachers' Meeting, Roslin Institute: May 2019*

This all-day meeting for teachers was once again organised on behalf of the Royal Society of Biology in Scotland by Jack Jackson. This was not only the 24th Annual Teachers Meeting, but also the 24th meeting organised by Jack, which in itself is a remarkable achievement and something that the Scottish Branch very much appreciate. We also thank SSERC for their continued financial and practical support and the Roslin Institute for hosting the event. After a few years of falling attendances Jack revamped the event this year and by any measure this was a great success, as the number of attending teachers increased dramatically to 120 and all aspects of the feedback received were very positive.

*Twilight Biology, Kelvin Hall Glasgow: May 2019*

We hosted our first Twilight Biology event in response to requests from teachers for material that will bring alive the new and modified topics within the revised Advanced Higher Biology curriculum. This was a collaboration between Kevin O'Dell if the Scottish Branch and Margaret Cook of the Scottish Quaiifications Agency. The theme on the event was 'Selection', with five 15-minute pitches made by researchers from the University of Glasgow. Materal from the meeting is available n the SQA website. 40 teachers attended and all aspects of the feedback were very positive.

#### iv. Other Branch Activities

##### *SYNAPSE*

SYNAPSE is an on-line forum and resource-sharing facility jointly organised and supported by SSERC and the Scottish Branch that continues to thrive. Approximately 90% of Secondary School Biology Teachers have signed up to SYNAPSE, and we very much appreciate the support from SERC.

##### *Relationship with HQ in London*

Many of the members of the Scottish Branch Committee have previously commented on the fact that they feel RSB HQ in London is not as informed about devolved issues in Scotland as we would perhaps like them to be. Therefore David Coates has written a document for HQ explaining the difference political landscapes between Scotland and London, with particular reference to devolved powers.

##### *Outreach Champion*

This is an award for an undergraduate who has made the most significant contribution to Public Engagement of Biology in Scotland in the previous year. This is organised by Janice Barr, who is stepping down from the branch committee, and we'd like to thank Janice for all her hard work on selecting the Outreach Champion over many years. This year's top three were 1<sup>st</sup>, Caitlin MacInnis from the University of Dundee; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Alex Gilmore from the University of St Andrews; and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Chloe McAdam from the University of Strathclyde.

##### *Glasgow City of Science & Innovation*

Following on from the retirement of Jane Magill, the RSBS representative on Glasgow City of Science and Innovation will be Kevin O'Dell. We'd like to thank Jane for all the work she's undertaken in this role over many years.

##### *All Branches Group*

Nicola Marchant attended the All Branches Group meeting, and Kevin O'Dell has recently been co-opted onto the All Branches Group committee.

##### *Learned Societies Group*

John Coggins has stepped down from his role in the Learned Societies Group, and we thank him for the work he has done with the group over many years. Liz Lakin will continue with her role on the group, and John has been replaced by Kevin O'Dell.

##### *National Qualifications Support Group*

Kevin O'Dell has continued in his role at the National Qualifications Support Group for Biology teaching.

#### v. And Finally

Can we also thank our treasurer, Ross Clare, for his work throughout the year. Can we also thank David Coates for his many years of work as Secretary of the Branch, and Andrew Spiers to has slipped seamlessly into that role over the last year.

*No questions were raised about the report.*

#### 11.3.2 Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported that due to storm warnings, one of the four annual Council meetings was cancelled in 2019. An attempt was being made to move away from

printed material for the AGM and Council meetings with PDFs sent by email before each meeting. A poll will be held shortly to determine the dates of the Council meetings in 2020.

*No questions were raised about the report.*

### 11.3.3 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that:

- i. The RSB financial year runs from 1 October to 30 September.
- ii. RSB Scotland does not have its own bank account, and branch accounts are maintained by finance staff at HQ. The financial statements reported here are informal and are based on spending records retained within the branch for the financial year 2018/19.
- iii. RSB Scotland receives a RSB branch allocation of £1,500.00 to cover administrative costs, the AGM and Symposium, and branch members (mainly committee members) travel expenses.
- iv. In common with financial year 2017/18, approximately one third only of the allocation was spent (£553.37). Savings were due to Roslin Institute's provision of accommodation and facilities for the AGM at no cost, reliance on the Roslin Institute's cafeteria rather than bespoke catering for refreshments at the AGM, and to only a small proportion of entitled travel expenses claimed throughout the year.
- v. Branch events are supported by RSB's Event Fund to a maximum of £500.00 per event to cover accommodation, catering, marketing, materials and speaker expenses.
- vi. The separate RSB outreach budget was the source of support for the branch's contribution to the Middle of Scotland Science Festival in October 2018.
- vii. The annual Biology Teachers Meeting, a signature branch event for 24 years, ran in May 2019 without RSB financial support. There were no attendee charges thanks to a grant from SSERC, and to provision of accommodation and facilities by Roslin Institute at no cost.

*No questions were raised about the report.*

*Informal accounts summary of income and expenditure 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019*

<b>General Branch Income</b>		<b>Branch Event Income</b>	
RSB Branch Allocation	<b>£1,500.00</b>	RSB Event Funds up to £500.00 per event	
[Covers branch administration, travel, AGM]			
<b>General Branch Expenditure</b>		<b>Branch Event Expenditure</b>	
AGM and Symposium		Midlothian Science Festival	<b>£144.71</b>
Speakers' expenses	86.72		
Branch travel	466.65		
<b>Total General Expenditure</b>	<b>£553.37</b>		

Note: The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Teachers Meeting was independent of RSB funding. There was no attendee entry fee thanks to a SSERC Grant and Roslin Institute accommodation and facilities at no cost.

- 11.4 Confirmation of Office-bearers, Election of Branch Committee Members and Co-option of Branch Committee Members:
- 11.4.1 Confirmation of Office-bearers was by approved by acclamation.
  - 11.4.2 David Burt was elected to the Branch Committee as an ordinary member for a second term, *proposed by Liz Lanki, seconded by David Coates.*
  - 11.4.3 David Coates was co-opted to the Branch Committee for one year, *proposed by Jacqueline Nairn, seconded by Russ Clare.*
- 11.5 There was no other business and the meeting closed at 13:30.

(These minutes will not be approved until the next AGM in 2020.)