

Unapproved Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2022

The (delayed) fourteenth annual general meeting of the Royal Society of Biology (RSB) in Scotland Branch Committee took place from **11:15 on Saturday, 11th February 2023**, at the University of Glasgow and online.

- Present were*** Committee members: David Coates (Chair), John Coggins, Kevin O'Dell (Depute Chair for Outreach), Russ Clare (Treasurer), Alastair MacPherson, Andrew Spiers (Secretary), Nicola Vietch; and 12 other members.
- On-line*** Committee members: Nicola Marchant (Committee member) and Nigel Brown (RSB Chair of the Branches Working Group); and
- Quorum*** The meeting was attended by a quorum (one third of the total elected committee members and honorary officers) and so having valid proceedings.
- Note*** The Secretary records that although some members attended the AGM on-line, they were not able to communicate directly.

14.0 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from two Committee members: Chas Nelson (Depute Chair for Policy) and Bethan Wood.

14.1 The minutes of the thirteenth annual general meeting of the RSB in Scotland Branch Committee held on Saturday, 5th February 2022, on-line, were approved as a correct record.

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

14.3 Annual Reports:

14.3.1 Chair's Report

The Chair focussed on the need to move forward following the lifting of Covid19 restrictions and to re-engage with Scottish members. The following excerpts are from his presentation:

- i. **What would we like to do?** Our initial aim would be to meet the

members and get your views on what they would like, and what would work in your locations.

Use branch committee meetings, which take place at least four times a year, at various locations around Scotland and would be open to all members, for coffee and biscuits and perhaps local talks.

We are not suggesting an expansion of the Committee – small committed committees work quite well – but what we would like to develop is a wider engaged group who come together (blended or face-to-face) once, at most twice, a year – a way to engage and inform members while seeking their input into Branch activities.

- ii. **What do we propose?** Several smaller meetings around Scotland focused on local members and local issues.

One or two members of the branch committee would travel to your area to support a local event, with the ideas coming from you, and us helping with organisation, planning and contacts.

Volunteers in areas we don't currently cover: Dumfries and Galloway, the Borders, the North East, Highlands and Islands, with no requirement to join the committee.

The branch committee is embracing hybrid working – ideal for an area the size of Scotland to ensure representation from all regions – but with a presumption of in-room presence for the key Honorary Officers (Chair etc.).

Training opportunities for different key committee roles (Chair and Depute Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer) for those who might wish to join the committee.

A short discussion of the Chair's report followed.

14.3.2 Depute Chair for Policy

The Depute Chair for Policy sent his apologies and a brief review of activities was outlined by the Chair.

- i. Maintained active engagement with HQ through an observer's role on the Science Education & Policy committee.
- ii. Fed into RSB Science Policy & Science Education Priorities (to be published early 2023).
- iii. Made contributions through the RSE Learned Societies Group (directly and through HQ) to the Scottish Government's National Discussion on Education and the Consultation on Enhanced data collection for educational improvement.
- iv. Looking to engage with volunteers who would like to support RSB in Scotland and HQ activity on policy matters relating to Scotland but with a Scottish lens.

No questions were raised about the report.

14.3.3 Depute Chair for Outreach

The Depute Chair provided a brief review of activities.

- i. Annual Teacher's Meeting, co-hosted with SSERC and originally scheduled for May 2021, went ahead at the Moredun Research Institute in May 2022. The President's Medal awarded to Jack Jackson (RSB in Scotland) at the virtual RSB in Scotland on 19 May 2021 for his efforts in running the Annual Meetings was awarded in person at this event.
- ii. Science and the Parliament, organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry on behalf of the Learned Societies, was held at the Scottish Parliament / Dynamic Earth on 23 November 2022. This was attended by David Coates, Chas Nelson and Andrew Spiers (RSB in Scotland Committee members) and further supported by Susie Rabin and Freya Gadson-Bolton from HQ. At this event, prizes for Higher Biology (Sarah Fulton, Woodfarm High School), Higher Human Biology (Andrew Le Poidevin, Bridge of Don Academy) and Advanced Higher Biology (Annabel Davies, The High School of Glasgow) were awarded, and the winner of the RSB in Scotland Outreach Champion 2022 was announced (Alice Brooks, University of Strathclyde).
- iii. Initial Teacher Training Conferences organised with the support of the Institute of Physics and the Royal Society of Chemistry was held on 10 October 2022.
- iv. Synapse, the forum for Biology Teachers in Scotland and originally established by the RSB in Scotland, is now supported and managed by Annie McRobbie, SSERC. Approximately 90% of Scottish teachers are members.
- v. Learned Societies Group has met several times and a key issue has been how the Education sector can recover from the impact of Covid-19. The Learned Societies Group also commented on a variety of Scottish Government Education Policy Reviews, including the National Discussion on Education, the Louise Hayward Review of Qualifications and Assessment and the future of Education Scotland and the SQA.

No questions were raised about the report.

14.3.4 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the RSB in Scotland branch balance for the financial year ending 30 September 2022 was £1,407.50 and that the balance was taken back by HQ.

The Treasurer also provided an interim report for the current financial year, 1 October – 11 February 2023, which was £1,099.68 following expenditure on travel costs and a screen and webcam for online meetings.

No questions were raised about the report.

14.3.5 Secretary's Report

The Secretary made a brief report.

- i. This AGM had originally been scheduled for November 2022 was delayed because of limited resources and the decision to focus on the Science and the Parliament event the week before.
- ii. RSB in Scotland has 1,410 members as of the end of 2022.
- iii. The RSB is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and the statistics for the RSB in Scotland are available from HQ.
- iv. Four branch meetings were held in 2022: April (virtual), July (hybrid), September (hybrid) & December (virtual).

No questions were raised about the report.

14.4 Confirmation of Office-bearers, Election of Branch Committee Members and Co-option of Branch Committee Members.

It was agreed that confirmation and elections would be conducted by acclamation of the members present at the AGM and a note made that members attending on-line were not able to vote; emails had been received during the AGM but none were about the confirmation or elections.

The members were reminded that under the RSB in Scotland Constitution the committee can have a maximum of twenty members; the suggested election of the members listed below would not exceed that maximum.

It was also agreed that the Tenure of Office restrictions limiting office holders in the same capacity for a period of more than five consecutive years, and ordinary members of committee for more than 10 consecutive years, should be waived at this AGM, as the impact of Covid19 meant that we were not working under 'normal times'. However, this agreement would need to be considered for the next AGM. Finally, the AGM was also reminded that office holders did not have to complete their full tenure and that memberships could be reevaluated at the next AGM if necessary.

14.4.1 Confirmation of Office-bearers. Confirmation of David Coates (Chair), Chas Nelson (Depute Chair for Policy), Kevin O'Dell (Depute Chair for Outreach), Russ Clare (Treasurer), and Andrew Spiers (Secretary), was by approved by acclamation; no dissension.

14.4.2 Election of Branch Committee members. Paul Downie, Asheleigh Kitchiner (present on-line), and Glenn Masson, were elected by acclamation; no dissension.

12.4.3 Co-option of Branch Committee Members. None.

14.5 Any other business.

14.5.1 RSB HQ Up-date

Nigel Brown (RSB Chair of the Branches Working Group) attended the AGM on-line but was unable to communicate with the meeting and the Chair presented his notes.

- i. Professor Sir Ian Boyd was installed as the new President and Claire Wathes has replaced Richard Reece as Honorary Secretary. Susie Rabin is the new Associate Director of Parliamentary and Public Affairs and Dr Arianne Matlin is the new Associate Director for Science Policy.
- ii. The Ambassador scheme has been relaunched and hopefully will support good Branch engagement with local schools and universities.
- iii. The RSB wishes to increase membership, encourage more women at Fellowship level, and see more diversity in Branch committees.
- iv. Council is looking at strategic priorities over the next five years and will evolve the the 3-year Vision Statement and Strategy 2022–2024 to fit.

14.6 The was no other business and the meeting closed at 13:55.

(These minutes will not be approved until the next AGM in November 2023.)