



COUNCIL
Thursday, 21 October 2021
Burlington House and via Zoom

Strategic Discussion 11.30-13.00
Formal meeting 13.30

Prof. Martin Millett, President, in the Chair

Present: Mr Stephen Dunmore, Treasurer
Dr Heather Sebire, Hon. Secretary
Prof. John Hines, Vice-President
Dr Sam Lucy, Vice-President
Dr Tim Schroder
Ms Victoria Bryant
Prof. Roey Sweet
Dr Bob Bewley
Dr Emily Cole
Dr Sam Lucy

In attendance: Mr John Lewis, General Secretary
Ms Dunia Garcia-Ontiveros, Head of Library and Museum Collections (formal meeting only)
Dr Linda Grant, Governance Manager
Mr Dominic Wallis, Head of Development (formal meeting only)

Apologies: Nathalie Cohen, Vince Gaffney, John Cooper

Strategic Discussion 11.30-13.00

BH Campaign and lease

The Gen. Sec. summarised what had happened since the last Council meeting on July 1 2021:

- i) The campaign had kept up political pressure on the Government via Westminster, the press, and personal lobbying. David Attenborough's letter to the Prime Minister got a delayed response with the familiar rhetoric of having made a 'generous offer', and that negotiations would continue. The Gen. Sec. and HoL&MC had an unhelpful meeting with the Arts Council about the threat to the collection. The Gen. Sec. had written letters to the heads of the British Museum and National Gallery advising them that long-term loans to those institutions were under threat: both letters were acknowledged.
- ii) The Gen. Sec. had received an email in September from Simon D'Arcy which appeared constructive: it continues to insist on the Societies offering full public access and 'commercialising'. The President noted that the Society should be prepared to accept some of this Government 'spin' in future negotiations.
- iii) Adrian Babbage, who helped with work on KM, has offered guidance on how BH could be redesignated as a heritage asset in line with Treasury rules: such a redesignation would allow public benefit as valued in the PwC report to be offset against rent, making the lease affordable. However, the Societies will have to lobby

- for this. The future focus of the campaign should be to a) persuade the Department of State that this is a fair and productive outcome, and b) persuade the other Courtyard Societies to align with this strategy.
- iv) A joint meeting between the Courtyard Societies and Simon D'Arcy has been proposed for 11 November 2021. In advance of this meeting, a proposal on how BH could be redesignated a heritage asset needs to be agreed.: In the meantime, the Society is also pursuing political back-channel access to Michael Gove.
 - v) The Gen. Sec. reported that while the Courtyard Societies, apart from the Royal Society of Chemistry, continue to work together, The Geological Society and RAS cannot contribute further to the cost of AprilSix. SAL and the Linnean Society continue to be closely aligned. The Geological Society plan to downsize, move to the first floor of their apartments and rent out the ground floor, and the Gen. Sec. warned that there is a danger that the Government might see this as a commercial solution for SAL and other Societies to follow.
 - vi) A valuer who specialises in heritage assets has been identified. The President asked that if anyone has a contact at Somerset House to let him know. It was acknowledged that the Somerset House deal required an Act of Parliament; the proposed SAL route of redesignation can be signed off by the Minister.
 - vii) It was agreed that a further c.10k could be spent on keeping on AprilSix to the end of the year; and that professional advice on the valuation of BH as a heritage asset must be paid for.
 - viii) It was agreed that the opening offer in the negotiation of BH rent should start at around [REDACTED], and that the Society might want to take up the offer of rent freezes/rent-free periods.
 - ix) The President discussed two scenarios for Plan B:
 - a. JL gave an update on the Smithfield option, noting that it would not be available until 2027-30, and that the terms of occupancy and other details are still to be made clear. It was agreed to keep this option in play for the moment.
 - b. It was agreed that the President would start exploring partnership arrangements to enable the Society to stay in central London including with the Diocese of London, National Trust and Historic Royal Palace properties, with SAL assets on display as part of a rental agreement.
 - c. It was agreed that sale of the collection, or parts of the collection, would be the last resort as a survival strategy for the Society.

The informal part of the meeting closed at 13.00.

Formal Council Meeting 13.30

[Head of Library and Museum Collection, Head of Development, Head of Finance joined the meeting]

- 33/21 The President welcomed the incoming Head of Finance, Katy Drake, and apologies were noted.
- 34/21 Minutes and Matters arising
 - i) The minutes of the Council Meeting of 1 July 2021, having been circulated, were approved and signed.
 - ii) [24/21 v] **ACTION** The President is to write a short piece for SALON on the EDWG report. The report itself has been posted on the Society website on the Governance page.
 - iii) [32/21 ii] The President reported that there has been strong interest in the advertised Gen. Sec./CEO position. An external member of the appointment panel has not yet

been found: due to sensitivities around the lease it was not possible to co-opt someone from one of the other Courtyard Societies. The HoL&MC is a full member of the appointment panel.

35/21 Diversity/Inclusivity – Actions and Timetable

A paper having been circulated with an action plan and timetable, the President noted that Council is responsible for monitoring and supervising the Society's Diversity strategy. He also noted that due to staff pressures, some dates might slip. The action plan was approved.

36/21 Terms of Reference for Advisory Committees and Affiliate Scheme

- i) All Committee Terms of Reference, having been circulated, it was noted that the liaison between committees should be reviewed. **ACTION:** All Committee Chairs.
- ii) It was also noted that the entire Committee structure will be reviewed under the new General Secretary to ensure they reflect the areas where the Society currently operates and where staff and Council require advice.
- i) The draft ToR for the Fellowship Committee, having been previously circulated, were approved.
- ii) The Head of Development gave an update on the Affiliate Members Scheme:
 - a. c.50 Fellows responded to the consultation, the majority in favour of the scheme.
 - b. The National Heritage Fund has indicated that it would not fund the scheme as outlined initially as it does not meet diversity/inclusion targets, but that they would consider funding an outreach scheme that delivered affiliates.
 - c. The Gen. Sec. noted that the scheme needs to be self-funding and to deliver financial benefits as well as having positive outcomes in terms of social inclusion.
 - d. The President noted that Fellowship should be perceived as being an opportunity to contribute to the Society.
 - e. The EDWG survey could include some questions aimed at understanding what Fellows perceive as the benefits of Fellowship as opposed to Affiliate membership.
 - f. It was agreed that the HoD would present a more detailed budget and scheme outline at December Council.

[13.55 Samantha Lucy joined the meeting]

37/21 BH Campaign

Council formally approved the decisions agreed at the morning strategy session.

38/21 Treasurer's Report

Papers having been previously circulated, the Treasurer reported:

- i) On subscription debt, there are 66 Fellows to be removed after having been chased repeatedly in 2020/2021.
- ii) On subscription increase for 2022, Finance Committee had recommended an increase from £184 to £188, but Council decided on and agreed an increase to £190 p.a.
- iii) On USS pension, the increase that came in on 1 October 2021 was less than expected: staff now pay 9.8%, employer 21.4%. 31.2% of SAL's salary cost is going on pensions. The USS scheme deficit has come down £10m from the previous figure. New Society staff are being employed by Lampada with a separate pension scheme. The Gen. Sec. reminded Council that his successor needs to be USS to keep SAL in the scheme. Pensions remains high on the risk register.
- iv) Confidential item: [REDACTED]
- v) The audit has been scheduled to take place 13 December 2021-10 January 2022, and reports will go to Finance Committee on 24 February 2022 and Council on 10

March 2022. Q2 Management Accounts will be presented to Finance Committee on 18 November, and the Annual Accounts will be presented to Fellows at the 2022 AGM.

- vi) The Gen. Sec. reported that there have been problems with Ecclesiastical, the Society's insurer, and broker, with the premium having doubled for reduced cover. He recommended that before the contract is renewed in July 2022, that Council/Gen. Sec. do a strategic review of what should be insured and at what cost, and do a search/review exercise for both insurer and broker. **ACTION:** It was agreed that the Gen. Sec. and Treasurer should discuss setting up a working group jointly with Finance Committee and take professional advice.

39/21 Q2 Progress Report

The Q2 report having been circulated, the Gen. Sec. noted highlights:

- i) Room hire is starting to pick up again, though attendance at in-person events continues low.
- ii) Image requests are now making a small profit.
- iii) The Governance Manager reported on the development of a new balloting system that has been taking place over the summer, with a go-live date of 1 December 2021.
- iv) The 2022 'Future of Archaeology' conference needs more work: Dr Sadie Watson was thanked for her help.

40/21 Collection Loan Requests

Library/Collection Committee minutes of 3 June 2021 having been previously circulated, Council approved the recommendations from Library/Collection Committee:

- i) Request from the Kremlin Museums was declined.
- ii) Request from the Museum of London was agreed in principle, but requires more information closer to the time, and the Society reserves to right to decline.

41/21 Kelmscott

- i) The Gen. Sec. reported that a completion certificate has been received for KM, with focus now going to the décor. Opening will be at the start of April 2022.
- ii) Fundraising is positive with £180k underspend from the grant which is being used to support 3 staff posts for an additional year.

42/21 Nominations for Council Officers and Trustees

Draft letter and form having been circulated, these were approved for mailing.

43/21 Declarations of Disqualification

The Governance Manager reported these have now all been received.

44/21 Nominations, resignations and deaths of Fellows

The Gen. Sec. reported that since 1 July 2021, there have been 13 Fellows deceased, 1 resignation: the current total is 3,070 Fellows (before the 66 to be removed [38/21i.]) No ballots have taken place over the summer and will recommence from 4 November 2021.

45/21 AOB

The President reported that the BM Trustee nominated by the Society had reached the end of his term: Council approved that Chris Gosden be renewed for a further term.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 15.25.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 9 December 2021 at 11.30 am

Martin Millett, President
Linda Grant, Governance Manager

November 2021