



**Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting of the Royal Microscopical Society
which took place on Friday 30 September 2016 at The Geological Society, Burlington House,
Piccadilly, London**

Present: Professor Pete Nellist (President), Professor Michelle Peckham (Vice-President), Dr Debbie Stokes (International Secretary), Dr Lynne Joyce (Honorary Treasurer), Dr Peter O'Toole (Honorary Secretary Science – Life), Professor Rik Brydson (Honorary Secretary Science – Physical), Dr Susan Anderson (Chair, Honorary Secretary Education), Dr Helena Aegerter, Dr Simon Ameer-Beg, Mr Paul Balas, Mr Eric Bennett, Mr Steve Cham, Ms Hong Chang, Mr Savvas Christofi, Dr Lucy Collinson, Mr Leslie Franchi, Dr Robert Francis, Dr Richard Grenfell, Dr Pippa Hawes, Professor Beverley Inkson, Mr Chris Kennedy, Dr Roland Kröger, Mr David McCarthy, Ms Denise McLean, Mr Stephen Metcalfe, Mr Jean-Yves Mugnier, Mrs Niga Nawroly, Dr Chris Parmenter, Professor Maddy Parsons, Mr Alan Poole, Professor Klaus Qvortrup, Dr Natalie Reznikov, Mr Peter Sainsbury, Mr Ralf Schniersmeier, Mr Leslie Stump, Dr Nadezda Tarakina, Professor Paul Verkade, Dr Claire Wells, Ms Karen Collins (RMS Administrator), Ms Allison Winton (RMS Event Director) and Dr Zdravka Dragnevska FRMS (RMS Committee Secretary).

1. To receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Dr Kesara Anamthawat-Jónsson, Professor Paul French and Mr Alex Sossick.

2. To receive and adopt the Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting

The Minutes were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. To consider any Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. To receive and adopt the Annual Report for the year to 31st December 2015

Professor Nellist reminded those present that the Society is a charity and all charities must have an objective. The Society's objective is "To promote the advancement of microscopical science by such means as the discussion and publication of research into improvements in the construction and mode of application of microscopes and into those branches of science where microscopy is important."

In pursuit of this object, Council has a Five-year Strategy that was first ratified by Council in April 2005, subsequently updated for 2009 and has been reviewed annually since November 2013. The Annual Report for 2015 covered the four key areas contained within the strategy for 2013-2017; Events, Publishing, Outreach and Membership. Progress towards the goals within the strategy are reviewed regularly by the Executive Committee and reported to Council.

The RMS had organised and supported over 12 significant events in 2015, attracting 467 attendees (excluding mmc2015). The mmc series ran in consecutive years 2014 and 2015 to move the event to odd years, and for the first time incorporated EMAG. The 2015 event had a strong programme and had featured 6 world class plenary lectures, 6 parallel sessions, technical workshops, major trade exhibition, poster sessions, a learning zone and a number of associated satellite meetings and workshops. The congress had attracted 703 conference delegates, 662 exhibition visitors and 400 scientific abstracts.

There had been 6 RMS meetings; the 8th Bio-Imaging Facility Managers meeting attracting 149 delegates, the Electron Backscatter Diffraction meeting with 68 delegates, the Botanical Microscopy meeting had 53 delegates, the Scanning Probe Microscopy, and the Frontiers of Biolmaging meetings had taken place during mmc2015, and Advances in Cytometry (49). The inaugural EM-UK Meeting had been held at mmc2015 and this was to develop into an annual meeting for EM Facility Managers from 2016 onwards. All of the meetings were well-attended and had associated exhibitions.

Five RMS courses had been organised; the Light Microscopy School with 18 delegates, the course on 'Getting the most from your confocal' with 9 delegates, the Electron Microscopy school had attracted 22 delegates and 'The Big Freeze' – a course in Cryo Techniques for Electron Microscopy which had 13 delegates. The Flow Cytometry course attracted 30 delegates.

One RMS workshop had been held in 2015 which was 'How to colour EM images using Photoshop' and had 22 delegates.

In addition, the RMS had supported a number of other key events including the EMBO/MRC course in Plymouth, the Scottish User Group Meeting in Glasgow, the Cryo Microscopy Group Meeting in Birmingham, Recent appointees in materials science (RAMS) in Warwick, Nanotec 15 in Oxford, Malvern Festival of Innovation, the Edinburgh Tropism Exhibition, Oxford Biomedical Imaging Festival, the Society for Electron Microscopy Meeting in London (the RMS Beginners Competition was held at this meeting) and the Tomography for Scientific Advancement Symposium held at the University of Manchester.

The RMS successfully ran associated exhibitions at many of its events and in 2015 sponsorship was gained from 136 stand space bookings. The Facility managers meeting was supported by 30 companies who had the opportunity to give short techno bites

The Society supports its members in attending conferences in order to share their research and advance their careers. This allowed them to visit some very pleasant locations. Reports from selected bursary winners appear within *infocus*. In 2015, 13 travel bursaries were awarded to enable members to attend microscopy events all over the world and 21 travel bursaries to assist members in attending the mmc2015 conference. In addition, 22 travel bursaries had been awarded to assist with attending the mmc2015 exhibition.

The Journal of Microscopy had been in good health. 243 papers had been submitted during the year which was a 29% increase on the previous year, and of these submission, 141 had been accepted for publication. The Impact Factor had risen again from 2.15 to 2.33. The Short Invited Review series had continued and 34 papers had been published since the launch in 211.

All articles had been published online as 'Early View' ahead of print publication, this had allowed hot topic papers to be fast-tracked. An Open Access option had been available for authors to publish in the online open version of the journal, with a range of creative commons licences. 15 online open papers were published during 2015. In association with John Wiley, successful publishing workshops had been held at mmc2015, aimed at guiding early career researchers through the publication process. The Journal had been promoted at 35 global conferences by the publisher John Wiley.

infocus had continued to be well-received and this had covered a broad range of topics. In 2015 *infocus* had published 4 issues made up of 484 pages all with colour images, which had been over a 20% increase on 2014. There had been an interesting range of content including a total of 20 feature articles, 21 reports, 3 book reviews, regular features such as the calendar, news, journal of microscopy information, new RMS member details, Corporate Member profiles, new product information and company news. An Editorial Board had been established from members of each science section committee to encourage submissions, suggest articles and promote *infocus* at conferences and events. The Scientific Editors of *infocus*, Professor Watson and Dr Burden had been working hard to ensure that the magazine continued to develop and members were reminded that they should consider writing articles and that the editors were always looking for book reviewers. The RMS-Wiley book series had been progressing steadily with 4 books published, 8 contracted and a further 2 ideas under discussion. Published books had been well-received and members were reminded that new titles were always being sought.

During 2015 the website had around 35,000 unique visitors which had been slightly lower than in 2014. However, a separate mmc2015 website had over 25,000 unique views. The average visitor duration on the site had dropped further in 2015 from 3.34 to 2.38 which had been disappointing but 72% of visits from mobiles and 66% from tablets had been new sessions which had suggested that users had been directly accessing pages through social media, and therefore not searching the site to find what they are looking for. This would have explained the visitor duration drop. 50% of the traffic had been from the UK but there had also been a significant number of visitors from USA, Europe, India and Canada, which had demonstrated the international nature of the Society.

In December 2015 phase I of the new RMS website had been launched – the improved site had featured new layout and navigation and had been designed to increase visitor duration by displaying relevant content to keep the attention of visitors to the site. In addition to the website, the Society had used Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to publicise events, news items, publications and other items of interest. Facebook page likes had been up 24%, Twitter followers up 36% and LinkedIn followers up by 39%. A new Microscope Activity Kit Facebook page had been established in 2015 which had attracted over 120 likes.

The Primary school focussed Microscope Activity Kit (MAK) scheme had continued to grow. In 2015 the kits had reached 17,141 children and the number of students now reached through this scheme exceeded 40,000. 5 kits had been lodged with the Primary Science Teaching Trust and it was hoped to expand this partnership further in 2016. 4 kits had been sent to

Ireland – 2 with a University of Galway initiative and 2 with an initiative funded by the Science Foundation Ireland. The RMS worked with partners to assemble, distribute and re-stock the Activity Kits between loans.

9 candidates were enrolled on the RMS Diploma course with 2 having graduated in 2015, making a total of 3 having graduated so far.

The Microscope Activity Kits had been promoted at the Association for Science Education annual exhibition in Reading, the Inverness Science Festival, the Malvern Festival of Innovation and the Wychwood Fair in Oxfordshire

The AMFES initiative continued, however, the RMS also supported the Microscope Activity Kits and some of the AMFES funds had been used for this project.

A programme of education outreach events had been run during mmc2015 with over 340 attending talks. A day of science outreach for children had been held in March in collaboration with the Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers and several other institutions, to celebrate the 350 year anniversary of Hooke's Micrographia. 250 children had attended the event.

179 new members had joined the Society in 2015 which had been an increase of 65% on the 109 new members who had joined in 2014. A further 18 members had re-joined the Society during 2015. An active membership of 1,379 had been achieved as at 31 December 2015 which had represented an increase of 119 on the 2014 figure. Of these 151 had been students and 62 had been Corporate Members. The Society had been encouraged by the numbers of student members and 89 students had joined in 2015 and there had been a range of offers for students at different levels of study to encourage them to join. The Society was grateful for the support given by Corporate Members and 5 new companies had joined in 2015. The RMS was proud to be a truly International Society with a wide geographical spread of members – 1003 from the UK, 181 from the rest of Europe and 195 from outside of Europe. A great deal of effort had been put in to recruiting and retaining members and staff had attended all RMS meetings and various other events, actively recruiting. Existing members were reminded that they could also play their part by introducing new members.

Adopting the annual report had been proposed by Dr Debbie Stokes and seconded by Dr Pippa Hawes. All had been in favour of the report.

5. To receive and adopt the Annual Accounts for the year to 31st December 2015

The Financial year January to December 2015 had total incoming resources of £1,639K (£1,619K) which had reflected the fact that both 2014 and 2015 were years of the mmc series event. The overall value of the Society's funds, including property and other investments was £3.936M (£4.075). Total expenditure had been £1,726K (£1,575K) which had given rise to a deficit of £139K. This had been expected and had been in line with the budgeted forecast.

At 31 December 2015 the total assets of the Society, less the liabilities had stood at £3.908M (£4.049M) which had meant a decrease in assets of £140K (inc £128K).

The deficit had been largely due to the loss suffered on the investment portfolio of almost £52K, in addition to a drop in publications income of nearly £22K. Significant investment had been made in improvements to the building and IT and infrastructure which had been funded by free reserves.

Generated Funds were made up of income from the property, investments and voluntary income. The Restaurant had brought in £10K (£20.3K) with the decrease being due to rent owing while refurbishment had taken place which had subsequently been made up. The flat was no longer rented out through a letting agent, but could be rented on an ad hoc basis or used by committee members attending meetings. Voluntary income (AMFES) had been £4.5K (£10.4K). The income to the AMFES fund was the result of the great work of Peter Evennett and Chris Hammond who received donations of old microscopes from various sources and restored and repaired them for sale to local microscopy groups. Thanks were expressed to them for their continued support. Total investment income in 2015 had been £87K (£83.5K).

Charitable activities had included meetings and courses, publications and the membership. RMS Publications (Journal of Microscopy and infocus) had generated income of £628K (£650K), with allocated costs of £414K (£431K). Income from membership subscriptions had remained stable at £95K (£95K). Total income from Meetings had been £88K (£90K) and income from courses had been £122K (£122K). Meetings & Courses had returned a planned deficit of £139K (£130K).

The level of donations and grants in 2015 had been £30K (£16K), which had included investment in further Microscope Activity Kits. Contributions to microscopes in education via AMFES had been £425 (£0), these had included 4 requests from primary schools for a grant to purchase approved microscopes, together with some funding provided for PAGEANT, a charity providing educational resources for children in the Gambia.

Governance costs cover the activities which provide the governance infrastructure. These activities allow the charity to operate, as distinct from supporting its charitable or income generation activities. Governance Costs had included fees payable to the auditors, legal fees, expenses associated with Council, the Executive Committee and the Science Sections, together with a number of other items including a proportion of staff salaries. The cost for 2015 had been £37K (£37K) which had represented 2.3% (2.3%) of total income.

The value of the equities managed by Investec stood at £2.151M (£2.853M) Fixed interest securities were £547K (£558K) and cash deposits £64K (£84K). The Society's investment policy requires fixed interest securities (including cash holdings) to be equivalent to twenty four months operating costs for the Society.

The total return on investments in the Investec portfolio was 1.1% over the year which compares to a return of 2.7% in the APCIMS balanced, but 1.0% in the FTSE Allshare over the corresponding period. The APCIMS indices are designed for use as a basis for reviewing the asset allocation and structure of a portfolio with fund managers or stockbrokers and a benchmark for assessing and comparing the performance of discretionary fund managers. At the end of 2015, the value of the Charities Property Fund had been £59K (£55K) and the value of all investments had stood at £2.823M (£2.908M).

In December 2015, Council had ratified the budget for 2016 and Planned expenditure for 2016 would include £46K on the IT and infrastructure project (the actual cost would be higher, but this would be capitalised over a 3 year period). There would be £36K potential expenditure on additional MAKs would be spent as required, with a further £21K in running costs for the scheme if the full planned allocation of 100 MAKs were achieved. £8K would be spent on Summer Studentships. This would result in a deficit of just over £200K with £80K as agreed expenditure from reserves. The trading deficit would therefore be in the region of £120K. However, the budget is prudently prepared with a pessimistic expectation of income and a 'worse case' anticipation of expenses.

Professor Nellist had outlined the plans for 2016 and beyond which had been to continue to deliver a successful events programme to raise the profile of the Society within the scientific community and Increase its presence on Social Media, together with making further updates to website to make it more accessible on mobile devices. The Society would provide resources to improve the public understanding of science and microscopy, and increase the number of Microscope Activity Kits available up to 100 as demand requires, engaging with selected third parties to broaden the reach of the kits still further. The Society would aim to represent the interests of microscopy and microscopists to funding agencies and government and increase membership numbers by keeping subscription rates low and recruiting at events. The Society would continue to monitor developments in Open Access and improve infrastructure, particularly the CRM database, and seek ISO27001 accreditation – the standard for data security.

Adopting the annual accounts had been proposed by Dr Lucy Collinson and seconded by Professor Rik Brydson, all had been in favour.

6. To resolve that the officers for 2016/17 be elected.

There being no other nominations, the Council nominations had been duly elected as follows:

President	Professor Michelle Peckham
Vice-President	Professor Pete Nellist
International Secretary	Dr Debbie Stokes
Honorary Treasurer	Dr Lynne Joyce
Executive Honorary Secretary	Professor Chris Hawes Hon FRMS
Honorary Secretary Education	Dr Susan Anderson
Honorary Secretary Science (Biological)	Dr Peter O'Toole
Honorary Secretary Science (Physical)	Professor Rik Brydson

7. To resolve that the Ordinary Members of Council for 2016/2017 be elected.

There being no other nominations the following Ordinary Members of Council were duly elected:

Dr Kesara Anamthawat-Jónsson

Mr Eric Bennett
Dr Lucy Collinson
Dr Sarah Haigh
Dr Pippa Hawes
Professor Martin Leahy
Mr Ricardo Morilla

It was also noted that Professor Paul French was co-opted onto Council. Chairs of the six Science Sections are also members of Council, and these were Dr Alex Sossick, Dr Claire Wells, Dr Paul Verkade, Professor Beverley Inkson, Dr Terry McMaster, and Dr Richard Grenfell.

8. To consider Any Other Business

Professor Michelle Peckham thanked those Council members who had completed their terms of office – Mr Chris Kennedy had finished his term as ordinary member of council but had been invited to attend as Honorary Historian. Dr Simon Ameer Beg and Dr Steve Briddon would also finish their terms as chair of the Light Microscopy Committee and the Life Sciences Committee respectively.

Professor Tony Wilson Hon FRMS had come to the end of his term as Vice-President, and a presentation was made to him to thank him for his many years of service to the Society, in his roles as Journal of Microscopy General Editor, President, Vice President, LM Section Chair, Executive Honorary Secretary and Council Member.

Professor Peckham also thanked Professor Pete Nellist for his 3 years as President, and for all his hard work, particularly in expanding out MMC to bring in the EM community through EMAG.