

Royal Statistical Society

Minutes of the 188th Annual General Meeting held on
Wednesday 14th September 2022, 1:00pm-1.30pm
RSS International Conference
P&J Live, East Burn Road, Stoneywood, Aberdeen, AB21 9FX

Present: Professor Sylvia Richardson (RSS President, in the Chair), Officers, Fellows of the Society and guests.

In attendance: Stian Westlake, Chief Executive; Nicola Emmerson, Director of Membership and Professional Affairs.

Attending Remotely: Kevin Barnes, Honorary Treasurer; Jo Fishwell, Governance Manager

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The President, Sylvia Richardson, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that resolutions would only be passed by this meeting where the majority of attendees voted in favour of them. The voting process was explained, and attendees were reminded that only members of the Society were eligible to vote.

2. MINUTES OF LAST YEAR'S MEETING

The President asked members to review last year's AGM minutes, held on Wednesday, September 8th 2021, at RSS Conference in Manchester.

RESOLUTION: The 187th Annual General Meeting minutes were approved as an accurate account of the meeting.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE SOCIETY'S WORK

The President and Stian Westlake, the Society's Chief Executive, gave an overview of the Society's work over the past twelve months. Some of the key points included:

- The Society's Data Science Strategy has been developed with the help of the Data Science task force. In 2022 the Society launched the Alliance for Data Science professionals, appointed two joint editors of the new RSS Data Science Journal and developed plans, with the Alan Turing Institute, for an online data science platform called Data Science Central.
- The Society's Campaigning Priorities, including the formation of a Campaigns Advisory Group, chaired by Christl Donnelly (VP for External Affairs), drawing up a work plan for the Education and Statistical Advisory Group, chaired by Sophie Carr (VP for Education), and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion task force, Chaired by Eugenie Hunsicker (HO for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion).

- The Society has engaged in various campaigning activities, including delivering four Covid evidence sessions throughout April and July; the write-ups from these sessions will form part of the RSS's submission to the Covid enquiry. The Society has also been working on campaigns on the cost of living and developing work on statistics and climate change.
- The Society has begun a project on the future of 12 Errol Street. A building task force met for the first six months of 2022 and provided a list of recommendations that the Council has reviewed. The Trustees have instructed the CEO to investigate each option, including seeking funding to improve the premises; Council intends to revisit the plans and come to a decision in early 2023.
- The Society has changed journal publisher from Wiley to OUP. The RSS looks forward to working with OUP in the coming year. The Society expects a drop in journal income from 2023; management is working on a plan to mitigate this loss..
- In 2022 the Society had to run a new process to select a President-elect. Fellows are aware that the Council have selected Andrew Garrett as their nominee. Therefore, the Fellows now have six weeks to provide the name of any willing alternative candidate to trigger an election. The next Presidential term will start on January 1st 2023.
- Trustees intend to review the presidential nominating process that is due to begin again in early 2023 to nominate and subsequently appoint the 2025 President; Fellows are encouraged to nominate via email to s.westlake@rss.org.uk

On behalf of the Society, the President thanked everyone involved in the Society's activities and events this year, including Fellows who have delivered events via Groups and Sections.

Members suggested the Society consider the process of seeking royal patronage in 2023; The President agreed to discuss royal patronages with the Trustees at an upcoming meeting.

4. 2021 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The President welcomed Kevin Barnes, RSS Honorary Treasurer, to the meeting, who presented the Society's 2021 financial year-end accounts, noting:

- 2021 was heavily affected by Covid, which impacted events and training activities.
- There was an increase in income of £230k compared to the previous year but remained considerably below 2019 levels. Increases in 2021 mostly came from running conference in-person, training and an 8% increase in membership income, with high retention of members.
- Expenditure was constant, increasing by £31k over 2020, leading to a surplus for 2021 of 3.5% of income from charitable and other operational activities.
- There were then two non-operational items that impacted the total level of reserves. The first was an increase in the investment portfolio's value during the year, and the second was an improvement in the accounting value of the pension deficit. Taking the operational surplus along with these two items, the total value of reserves increased to £2,974,000 as of December 31st 2021. £2.5m of the total is unrestricted funds.
- There are some pressures on the horizon that the Trustees and Management Team are considering as part of the following budget setting, which includes a reduced journal income from next year, doubling pension contributions from this year and potential building costs, and rising inflation.

RESOLUTION: The AGM approved the Annual report and audited accounts for 2021 as an accurate and fair report on the normal financial activities of the Society in the year ending December 31st 2021.

5. MEMBER SUBSCRIPTION RATES

The CEO presented Council's decision for the 2023 membership subscriptions as follows:

As of January 1st 2023:

- The basic member subscription, shall be increased by £3, equating to £145 per annum for a standard member;
- the additional CStat fee shall be held at £46;
- the additional GradStat fee shall be held at £10 per annum;
- the Data Analyst fee shall be £145 in line with the basic member subscription; any changes to Data Analyst subscriptions will reflect that of the standard membership;
- the additional journal subscription rate will remain at £42 per journal;
- the Direct Debit discount of £5 will be abolished
- the concession for members in economically developing area countries or on a career break, and who do not pay by Direct Debit, shall be increased but tapered, from 50% to 60% next year, 60% to 70% the following year and so on
- the new Data Science Certificate subscription rate will mirror that of the CStat fee at £46 per annum in addition to the basic member subscription; any changes to CStat subscriptions will be reflected in the Data Science Certificate fee.

6. ELECTION OF THE AUDITOR

The Honorary Treasurer advised that Sayer Vincent has been the Society's auditors for several years and noted the high-quality, professional service that the Society has received from Sayer Vincent.

RESOLUTION: Members agreed to appoint Sayer Vincent of Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TL as the Society's auditors, to hold the office until the next Annual General Meeting concludes.

Prepared by:

Signature of RSS President: