

**Yorkshire branch Annual General Meeting
Saturday 16 November 2019 | University of Hull**

Minutes

1. Introduction and welcome

2. Apologies: Val Randall, Chris Collins, Tayyebah Vafaee, Richard Reece-Jones, Ben Stevenson

3. Review of committee roles

Graham Bonwick has taken up the role of Treasurer, as of the previous AGM. Steve Picksley stood down as Secretary at this time, but all other Committee roles have been retained i.e. Chair: Lynda Partridge, Vice-Chair: Val Randall, Archivist: Chris Collins, Social Media Officer: Danae Dodge

4. Election of new committee members

After having no Secretary for a year, Ben Stevenson (PhD student at the University of Sheffield) has recently applied, was approved and subsequently elected for the role at the AGM.

ACTION: Lynda to contact Ben (as he was unable to attend the AGM due to travel disruption) and RSB by email.

5. Chairs Report

Lynda Partridge reported that four Committee Meetings have been held since the last AGM and that the minutes for these and the previous AGM have been posted on the Yorkshire Branch website. There were no queries arising from these. Lynda Partridge and Danae Dodge attended the All Branches Meeting in May. A suggestion arising from this to get in touch with regional University Biology Societies has been relatively successful in generating interest in RSB and joining the Committee. Initiating contacts with schools is more problematic.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Yorkshire Branch account had a surplus of £424.66 at the end of the Royal Society of Biology financial year 2018-19. It was subsequently confirmed by Harriet McAra that the surplus would not be carried forward into the 2019-20 financial year.

A budget for 2019-20 has been submitted, based on the budget developed for 2018-19 by Lynda Partridge. A formal notification that the budget has been approved has not yet been received. The proposed budget indicated a deficit of £420, however, this will be offset by the £160 that was withdrawn from the Branch bank account and recently forwarded to HQ by the former Branch Treasurer Clive Tiney. The Branch bank account has now been closed.

Although it is not possible to access the information about the branch account balance directly, information can be obtained through Harriet McAra. It was agreed that she would be contacted regularly to obtain information on the branch finances including income from events to improve future management and budgeting. However, it will be necessary to apply for Additional Branch Funding from HQ to support some of the branch events throughout 2019-20 and remain within budget.

A question was asked about refunds to members unable to attend events. It was not known whether there was a cut off point after which refunds would not be provided in the event of a member cancelling. It was also not known whether a refund would include registration as well as any meals or refreshments as part of an event. It was agreed that the Treasurer would seek clarification from RSB HQ and report back. Some members also reported that they'd only been charged for lunch and not attending the Symposium, when they'd attended

both. Lynda agreed that it wasn't quite clear on the booking form that both Symposium attendance and lunch should be booked and paid for.

ACTION: Graham Bonwick to contact HQ to obtain clarification regarding the RSB refund policy.

7. Events Report

The Frontiers of Science Meeting (joint RSB, RSC, Society of Astrobiology) held on 16th March at KPMG in Leeds was very successful with >100 attendees and feedback was positive.

The joint RSC/RSB seminar, 1st May York was organised by Brian Grieves (RSC) for the last time. Dr Alison Parkin gave an excellent, very accessible talk "Harnessing Chemistry to re-wire biology", which received very good feedback, although numbers attending were relatively small.

A planned summer outing to Harlowe Carr did not take place due to problems with availability.

8. Future Events

The next Frontiers of Science meeting will again be at KPMG on the 14th March. There was some discussion about promotional material for the RSB (e.g. mugs) for this event. Chris Collins is thought to have the RSB banner.

The Joint RSC/RSB Seminar will be held at the University of York in the Dept Biology, on the 29th of April, when Dr Sarah Staniland (Dept Chemistry, Sheffield) will talk about her research on magnetic bacteria. RSB is organising this with the help of Prof James Moir at York (known to Emma and Lynda), since the Committee was unable to identify an appropriate local RSB contact.

The celebration of the Ten Year Anniversary of the RSB sees the Yorkshire Branch honouring Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who pioneered the use of smallpox vaccination in England and is associated with Wentworth Castle in South Yorkshire. The RSB plans for the event envisage unveiling of a blue plaque, an inspiring talk about Lady Mary (Chris Collins?) and an engaging lecture about present and future research in the area, with a networking reception to follow. The National Trust, who now run Wentworth Castle Gardens in partnership with the Northern College (Barnsley), seem agreeable to a plaque on the Long Barn at the Gardens (although as this is a listed building, permission must be sought) The National Trust suggested that the Northern College may have a suitable venue for a meeting/lecture. There is also the issue of advertising and it was suggested that contacting the local press was a good idea.

ACTION: Lynda to follow up with the Northern College + RSB to check their plans/role in organising this.

Potential summer outings were discussed: Harlow Carr, Harrogate; The Falcon Bird Sanctuary and Flamingo Park were mentioned.

ACTION: Committee to implement plans for the Summer Outing at the next Committee meeting.

Suggestions for next year's theme for the Autumn Symposium were invited. These included Animal Behaviour and Reproductive Biology/Fertilisation. Lynda and Emma have some contacts for potential speakers for the latter. For Animal Behaviour, possible venues included the University of York and Askham Bryan Wildlife and Conservation Park/ College. Danae Dodge mentioned Kirsty E Graham at the University of York who works on primate behaviour, as a speaker and local contact at York. It was suggested that other members be contacted to suggest topics.

ACTION: Danae can advertise and call out on social media for people to suggest topics.

9. Social Media Update

The social media channels that we are on are Facebook and Twitter. Every month Danae has been collecting social media analytics to measure the impact of posts. Danae reported that previously the analytics looked at were quite general (audience/ followers; how many posts were put up, and how many of the posts had an interaction of some sort). Recently, along with a refresh of content, Danae has now changed which analytics to review monthly. Now she reviews reach (the number of times a post enters someone's screen) and engagement (anytime someone interacts with a post). She does however continue to monitor the top three posts (that have the most engagements) of both platforms. Overall, audience/followers tend to interact mostly with RSB London material, specific information about our branches' events, and anything environmentally related (e.g. Askham Bog in York, Sheffield trees and climate change). Danae reported that these topics could be capitalised upon by potentially using one of these as a symposium theme.

Follower numbers have increased for both platforms. On Facebook, there are about 112 followers and on Twitter, there 504 followers (recorded in notes prior to symposium). Please note, there may be more than that now post symposium. Danae reiterated the success of contacting biology university societies on social media. The posts got a lot of engagement, and consequently one member is interested in joining the committee.

Danae is currently refreshing the content on both channels. Contacting the biology societies was part of this. She has also collected biography committee members to showcase the people of our committee illustrating the diversity of the committee. All biographies have now been collected, and she will shortly be creating a schedule for these posts, which she will inform the committee members of before the material goes out.

Following that, additional content is in the works known as "Spotlight on Biologists" to showcase the diversity of people (and research) who are Yorkshire biologists. The idea is that people will submit short bios about themselves and their accomplishments that they wish to share with the community. Hopefully, early career researchers, women, BAME and LGBTQ members will be particularly encouraged to share their stories, but only if they wish to. Danae will start to advertise this soon.

10. AOB

The next Committee Meeting will be held at the end of January, probably in Sheffield, TBC.