

**The 180th Committee Meeting of the British Biophysical Society, held from
12.00 pm – 4.00 pm on Wednesday 10th June 2020 online via Zoom**

Edited Minutes

Date: 10th June 2020

Present: Olwyn Byron (Chair), Tharin Blumenschein (Secretary), Ann Dixon (Treasurer), Guy Grant (Meetings Secretary), Mark Leake, Dave Scott, Ehmke Pohl, Peter Crowley, Syma Khalid (for part of the meeting).

1 Apologies: John Seddon, John Sanderson, Tony Watts.

2 Approval of Minutes of the 179th meeting

The Minutes were circulated too late for approval at this meeting. They will be approved at the next meeting.

3 Actions and Matters Arising

Actions table was updated with other actions that were completed. Move actions table to a Google document that can be shared and edited by all.

Action: Tharin

4 Chair's Report (Olwyn Byron)

BPS Ambassador

Since lockdown, Olwyn's participation in the BPS Ambassador Programme has been zero because, as for many others, her local workload has increased a lot. In her capacity as a BPS Ambassador, she was due to participate in the BPS meeting in San Diego (15-19 February 2020), but she was too unwell (from 13-24 February) and was unable to travel. Once local workload is more under control, she will re-engage with the BPS. In February, she had to provide BPS with Outreach Plans and Strategies. At that time, her outreach plan was to create a "which biophysicist are you" Instagram filter. She still plans to do this by getting an Honours project student to do the work! She would also like to suggest the BBS considers inaugurating a new biennial prize for outreach.

Action: Tharin to include the possible prize in a future agenda

Biophysics Week 2020

This will have been very much impacted upon by Covid-19. For instance, the Scottish Structural Biology Community Meeting in April 2020 was postponed. Mark Leake ran an early careers event for Biophysics Week.

Voice of Young Science

When Olwyn represented the BBS at the RSB Christmas Parliamentary Reception on 16 Dec 2019 she had the pleasure of a long conversation with Dr Hamid Khan, the Senior partnerships coordinator of an organisation called [Sense about Science](#). Hamid has since been in touch to enquire whether the BBS would be interested in forming a partnership with their Voice of Young Science programme. She has a flyer about this, which everyone can take a look at. The headline to note is that partnership costs either £3.6k/year or £1.9k for a single workshop. The committee agreed that we are not a large enough Society to engage with this programme.

Astbury Conversation 2020

The Astbury Conversation 2020 was postponed to 25 and 26 April 2022. We agreed to contribute 2 bursaries ≤ £200 to cover registration, accommodation and travel for a UK participant and to provide material to go into the welcome pack and for a stand at the event. The organisers are asking if we are happy to roll our sponsorship over to 2022 – the committee agreed we are happy to contribute to 2022.

Biennial meeting 2020

In February Olwyn invited all our Honorary Members to the Honorary Members' dinner on the first evening of the Biennial Meeting (1 July 2020). Once she has the new email banner and details of the Zoom for the September meeting, she will contact HMs again advising them that the meeting has been rescheduled and there will sadly be no HMs dinner. She will stress that we would love for them to join via Zoom. Olwyn feels that we should consider inviting some of our HMs to deliver short talks.

Action: Olwyn

5 Treasurer's Report (Ann Dixon)

1. **Balances** and reserves are healthy.
2. **HMRC:** Trustees have been updated on the HMRC website. Accounts are still in preparation and are late due to workplace shutdown and delays due to Covid-19. Awaiting missing statement from NS&I to arrive through post for 2018 Savings account. No progress on belated recovery of Gift Aid for Sosei-Heptares donations.
3. **Payments:** All claims and payments up to date. Planned spend includes £750 for virtual conference for admin support during the meeting, and ~£480 for Karen Hanlan to audit accounts and prepare report for HMRC.

The committee approved a vote of thanks to Ann, for the significant amount of work that she has put into the role.

Given how virtual meetings come at a much lower cost than physical meetings, we should consider more virtual meetings even after lockdown.

6 EBSA/IUPAB Activities (John Seddon and Tony were absent)

IUPAB – the next Congress has been postponed to October 2021, in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, organized by the Brazilian Biophysical Society and the Brazilian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

7 IOP Activities (Mark Leake)

Last subgroup meeting was the week before lockdown, the next is planned for 3 July. Likely that most planned meetings for 2020 will be virtual, some cancelled. Mark will confirm after next committee meeting once clarified.

Action: Mark

8 Physics of Life Network (Olwyn Byron/Mark Leake)

PoLNET3

PoLNET3 (£353k) and the partner program, Physics of Medicine, (funded by the Rosetrees Trust) started on 1 May. Mark Leake and Olwyn continue their membership of the PoLNET3 Steering Group; Olwyn is a member of the Physics of Medicine Steering Group. We had the first joint PoLNET3/Physics of Medicine SG meeting on 13 May. Both grants run until 28 April, 2023. A virtual launch event is planned - date tbc.

Workshops

The first tranche of workshops will be held online.

Examples of PoLNet3 workshops that would be scheduled in the first 24 month of the network are:

Self-assembly within cells	Stem-cell physics
Molecular Robotics	The Physics of Death
Ecosystem physics	Biomaterials for strength and sustainability
Physics of viruses and viral infection	Phase-separation/transition in biological systems
Bio-geoengineering oceans	Physics of astrobiology
Biophysics of ageing	Physics-based strategies in drug discovery ⁴
Physics of the Brain	Environment physics

Areas identified in the Physics of Medicine include:

- Quantitative approaches to anti-microbial resistance
- Merging approaches from physics, mathematics and biology to overcoming metastasis and emerging resistance in cancer therapies
- Using soft matter physics to understand joint disease
- Applying physical and biological sciences to the understanding of gut disorders
- Insights into heart disease; a physical sciences perspective
- The physics of neurodegenerative disease

Workshops can act as catalysts for Building Collaboration at the Physics of Life Interface applications (see below).

Virus workshop

The PoLNET3 response to Covid will take the form of a Virus workshop in 2021, possibly co-organised by Reidun Twarock (mathematical biologist, U. York). This might attract clinicians, epidemiologists, modellers (who may have the benefit of hindsight from current COVID-19 data), ecologists (tackling the general transmission of zoonotic disease linked to human induced habitat destruction and wildlife trade), soft matter physicists and molecular biologists (viral structure).

Building Collaboration at the Physics of Life Interface

The first £15m now supports 7 x 3-year research projects. It is anticipated that a second funding call of similar scale will be announced in 2021, for 2022 grant start dates.

Other events

There will, once again, be a PoLNET summer school in 2021. The theme has yet to be agreed. There is also a proposal for PoLNET3 to lead on a large-scale Physics of Life meeting in 2022/23 - envisaged partners include IoP BPG, BBS, Physics Meets Biology.

9 **RSC Biophysical Chemistry Group Activities** (Mark Wallace/John Sanderson)

Not present.

10 **Royal Society of Biology Activities** (Tharin Blumenschein)

- 1) *Newsletters continue to be circulated to the committee.* Tharin has now started circulating the Policy and Covid-19 newsletters as well. If anyone would rather not be included in these emails, please let her know.
- 2) *Royal Society of Biology Diversity and Inclusion group* – there was a meeting on Zoom this morning. Main agenda topic was moving beyond gender. A number of societies issued statements about Black Lives Matter, some also have resources webpages on the topic. The statement from the RSB was much commended. We legally cannot do anything political as a charity. I mentioned that we haven't had "bandwidth" to do much this year, as we have no staff and all academics are busy with Covid-related adaptations. The lack of resources was a common theme for the small societies. There were discussions on diversity surveys, and the difficulty of gathering enough data; using case studies to highlight diversity while focusing on the science of each person, and making sure that these efforts do not overload underrepresented groups. Wiki editathon was also discussed as an idea. There was a discussion on listing preferred pronouns on committee webpages and email signatures. The committee decided that rather than issuing a BLM statement, we should focus on practical actions. For instance, a committee member

should have the brief of diversity, and we could highlight in our bios any other diversity work that we do.

11 **Secretary's Report** (Tharin Blumenschein)

- 1) *New committee members* – we advertised for a postdoc committee member, and 3 people volunteered.
Action: Tharin to circulate applications to the committee
- 2) *Awards* – We currently have one nomination for the Kendrew Prize, and one potential for the Young Investigator. Hopefully with the new deadline we'll get more nominations... The committee also decided to change the name of the Young Investigator Award, as it suggests age discrimination which is not in the criteria. The award will be renamed The BBS Louise Johnson Early Career Award.
- 3) *Why join BBS leaflet* – to be discussed in future meetings
- 4) *MDPI* – At the BPS meeting, Tharin approached the publisher MDPI (International Journal of Molecular Sciences, Entropy, Biomolecules, life) about sponsorship for the meeting. They also proposed a collaboration agreement that would provide members with discounts to publish on IJMS and potentially Biophysica (which hasn't been launched yet). It'd also be a potential place to publish conference proceedings. They also have a "conference" platform (it's not quite a conference as we'd recognise it, no synchronous components) that's free to use during the pandemic or for collaborators, but it wouldn't be suitable for our meeting because it's completely open access. They still want to hear about sponsoring the meeting.

The committee decided against an association with MDPI. We already have a preferential relationship with the European Biophysics Journal.

12 **Meetings Secretary's Report** (Guy Grant)

2020

The *Biennial Meeting* moved online to 14-17 September, 1-5 pm on each of those days.

Title: "*Biophysics in time and space*".

STFC will allow us to use their licence for the Zoom webinar, with the only cost being £750 for the STFC full time administrator.

The schedule needs to be organised and uploaded to the website. We need to organise registration, and provide a refund for people who had registered for the meeting in Nottingham.

Action: Dave Scott and Claire Friel

All speakers from the original meeting have agreed to take part, although some have time restrictions so some rescheduling will be needed. A preliminary schedule is available on Google Docs.

Mark Wallace was very unwell and is only now getting back to work. He can update the website, although he has shared instructions with Olwyn who can forward them to Dave in case he wants to edit the website himself.

Action: Olwyn and Dave to liaise with Mark

We will need to organise committee mini-meetings to organise the meeting, between now and September

Action: Tharin and Olwyn to organise

Carl Harrison (Sheffield) is organising a series of online panel meetings for early career scientists. The committee has agreed to support, providing speakers and input.

Action: Tharin

Should we have another virtual meeting before December 2021? Or a small, focused meeting around Easter 2021?

2021

24th-28th July, EBSA Congress, Vienna

Joint one-day meeting on NMR for Structure and Function with Biochemical Society – awaiting to see how the pandemic situation will affect future meetings

Action: Tharin and Ann

13 Newsgroup/Publicity Officer (Syma Khalid/John Sanderson)

Syma says Twitter is going well and has a good reach, although she apologises for not always being on top of it. If you'd like things retweeted, tag the BBS Twitter account, @BritBiophysSoc.

14 Website (Mark Wallace)

Not present.

15 Membership (Ehmke Pohl)

Had to leave the meeting before this agenda item.

16 Irish Sub-section (Peter Crowley)

Had to leave the meeting before this agenda item.

18 Honorary members

Committee members are encouraged to start thinking of nominations for 2021 and are particularly encouraged to identify potential female HMs.

Action: all to think of nominees

19 AOB

None.

20 Date of Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be in October 2020, online. The date will be decided after a Doodle poll.
