

**The 183rd Committee Meeting of the British Biophysical Society, held from
10.00 am – 1.00 pm on Thursday 3rd June 2021 online via Zoom**

Edited Minutes

Date: 3rd June 2021

Present: Olwyn Byron (Chair), Tharin Blumenschein (Secretary), Ann Dixon (Treasurer), Guy Grant (Meetings Secretary), John Sanderson, Svetlana Antonyuk, Dave Scott, Robin Leatherbarrow, Alice Pyne, John Seddon, Ehmke Pohl.

1 Apologies: Jayne Wallace, Mark Leake, Mark Wallace, Tony Watts, Peter Crowley.

2 Approval of Minutes of the 181st and 182nd meetings

Both approved with minor corrections.

3 Actions and Matters Arising

Actions are now kept in a live document.

Elspeth Garman is delighted with the public engagement prize being named after her, and discussions about possible sources for endowments are ongoing.

4 Chair's Report (Olwyn Byron)

Welcome Mathew

A formal welcome to Mathew Horrocks attending his first BBS Committee as a full member. Recall that at the last committee meeting Mathew was co-opted onto the BBS committee to provide a stronger link with the Biophysical Chemistry Group.

EPSRC - Welcome Luke

Pleased to report that Luke Boldock (Portfolio Manager for Biophysics and Polymers at EPSRC) will join us for this meeting between 11 and 11:30am. We will cover agenda item 8 (Physics of Life Network Activities) when Luke joins us.

New role for Alice

Congratulations (once again) to Syma on her new position at U. Oxford. Syma has a lot on her plate at the moment and so Alice has kindly taken over generating and distributing the BBS Newsletter - many thanks to Alice.

New role for Tony

Congratulations (once again) to Tony on becoming President-Elect of IUPAB. Tony will become IUPAB President 3 years hence and then IUPAB Past President 6 years hence. The BBS Committee is rightly proud that one of their own should hold this office and wishes Tony all the best with his new role.

Website refresh

Olwyn asked Mark Wallace if he could update committee member roles on the BBS webpage:

Tharin – possibly add RSB Representative.
Tony should be IUPAB Representative.
John Seddon should be EBSA Representative.
Guy Grant should be something like Education Convener.
Mark Leake - RSC and PoLNET Representative.
Rob Cook is no longer on the committee.
Tuomas Knowles is no longer on the committee.
John Sanderson is now Meetings Secretary.
Syma - remain Publicity Officer or become BPS Representative (since she is now on the BPS Thematic Group committee)?

Add Alice Pyne (who is Newsletter Convener).
And Jayne Wallace - Industrial Liaison / Representative; RSB DIWG Representative.
Peter Crowley - Irish Sub-section Representative
Other roles to added should be suggested to Olwyn.

We should consider listing folks in alphabetical order (of surnames)?

Also, Mark and Tharin should liaise to get minutes up to date on BBS website.

Biophysics Week 2021

No other activities were reported. The closest Olwyn got was to participate in the RSB Engaging with Parliament event on the evening of 25th March (along with Syma). The speaker was Carol Monaghan MP (a Scottish National Party (SNP) politician who was elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Glasgow North West in the general election in May 2015. She is the SNP Education, Armed Forces and Veterans spokesperson in the House of Commons and a member of the Commons Science & Technology Committee. Unlike a previous RSB Engaging with Parliament event speaker, Carol was really excellent and very non-partisan. Olwyn asked the following question on behalf of the BBS: "Blue skies research is already

supported to an extent by UKRI through responsive-mode funding streams and strategic priority funding programmes such as Physics of Life. What are your views on the potential for confusion, fragmentation and underfunding of well-established streams by the new Aria agency?”. Carol’s response was “the body that has no goal, no target, no checks & balances”. Not convinced this is additional spend. Similar to amount cut from @UKRI_News ODA. Also possibly funded from @EU_H2020 Horizon savings.” Olwyn tweeted about Carol’s talk:

Strong messages from impressively non-partisan @CMonaghanSNP during this evening’s #RSBEngageParliament event:

(1) ECRs encouraged to interact with Science & Technology Committee @CommonsSTC by responding to enquiries & calls for evidence by e-mailing members of committee.

(2) New @TuringScheme_UK doesn’t come close to @EUErasmusPlus which enabled young people to come to UK. Turing doesn’t facilitate inward exchange. Cannot envisage young people from disadvantaged backgrounds taking advantage of Turing. Genuinely sad to see end of Erasmus.

(3) Response to my question on behalf of @BritBiophysSoc re Aria - @CMonaghanSNP “the body that has no goal, not target, no checks & balances”. Not convinced this is additional spend. Similar to amount cut from @UKRI_News ODA. Also possibly funded from @EU_H2020 Horizon savings.

New Biennial Prize for Outreach / Public Engagement

Olwyn contacted Elspeth Garman to ask if she would be happy for the BBS to name a new biennial prize for outreach and public engagement after her. The formal title would be the BBS Elspeth Garman Prize for Outreach and Public Engagement. Elspeth replied that she was very surprised, humbled and honoured and offered to help in any way she could.

Post BBS Biennial Survey

Olwyn drafted some questions for the survey and shared them with Tony and Dave for suggestions. Olwyn proposes to share them with the committee next and then will liaise with Alice to get the survey sent out.

Women Plus in Biophysics

There are only 9 women from the UK listed on this website (a Resource for Scientists, Educators, Journalists and Policy Makers), all of whom were in my suggested list of 24 UK women. The US has 84. We should suggest female colleagues for inclusion.

MS Teams

Olwyn asked if we should start using MS Teams for sharing documents etc. The committee's feeling was that it wouldn't be helpful at this stage.

5 Treasurer's Report (Ann Dixon)

1. **Balances** and reserves are healthy.
2. **Payments:** We are up-to-date on all submitted claims and payments, including IUPAB, EBSA and RSB subscriptions, Trustee Insurance, and fees for accountant.
3. **Yearly Audit for HMRC:** Completed and submitted on time.
4. **Membership:** New bank account for membership fees has been opened and mandate variation request has been filled in, signed and approved to get Mark Wallace access. We also have applied for online banking access for Mark, but the approval for that is yet to be confirmed. The next step is linking the online membership payment form to the account, which can be done anytime as all account information has been communicated.

6 EBSA/IUPAB Activities (John Seddon/Tony Watts)

EBSA –EBSA Congress, 24th-28th July 2021, in Vienna. 800-900 attendees expected in total. There are currently ~360 registrations for in-person attendance, ~130 online registrations, and about 130 submitted abstracts that do not correspond to registrations yet. The General Assembly and the National Societies Presidents' Meeting will take place during the Congress, with attendance possible online and in-person.

Action: Syma to represent the BBS as she'll be attending as a speaker

IUPAB – The IUPAB 2020 congress will be virtual from Brazil, 4th – 8th October 2021, with a much reduced programme (still being finalized). There will be another IUPAB supported meeting in 2022 in Brazil to accommodate as many speakers as possible from the 2021 virtual programme.

IUPAB elections take place this year online before June 23rd, and the new posts will be taken up in October at the 20th IUPAB congress hosted online out of Sao Paulo. There will be 12 new council members to be voted from 16 candidates standing. BBS has 2 votes.

Action: Dave and Guy to represent the BBS for the elections

The new Treasurer is Christina Sizun (Paris). The current President-elect, Manuel Prieto (PT) will become President. Tony Watts is the new President-elect.

Korea has applied to join IUPAB.

Action: All to remember to share information for the IUPAB newsletter

7 IOP Activities (Mark Leake)

Mark L. circulated the latest confirmed minutes of IoP BPG.

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

This item was covered once Luke Baldock, from EPSRC, joined the meeting (after item 11).

Luke described the Biophysics portfolio within EPSRC. 20% of the proposals have been funded, some with co-funding with other themes (20% Physics, 5% BBSRC, 2% MRC). Biophysics receives harsher reviews than other areas.

The number of applications for the Strategic Priority Fund for the physics of life interface was underestimated. Comparing the 1st and the 2nd calls, it was clear how much difference a bit more notice of the deadline makes.

Luke Baldock confirmed that he is the contact for EPSRC programme grants, and that it is a good thing to engage early with the EPSRC for those grants.

Luke reassured the committee that funding in discipline interfaces can happen independently of strategic calls, as there are behind the scenes talks between colleagues in different Research Councils. This is a similar process to what happens across Themes within EPSRC. There are some issues with reviews for these proposals, but it is improving.

Luke has confirmed that computational research projects can be sent to the Biophysics theme.

He also said that there is more overlap than gaps between EPSRC and BBSRC funding, and that applicants shouldn't worry about proposals being sent to the other council. Both councils support Biophysics.

Luke left at this stage.

Action: Alice to ask key contacts in the Research Councils if they mind being added to the newgroup

Upcoming events

An ECR workshop “[Physics of Life from the perspective of early career researchers: How do collaborative, interdisciplinary projects work to address key challenges at the interface of physics and the life sciences?](#)” is scheduled for 12-13 July 2021 (afternoons) on Zoom.

Olwyn is catalysing a Physics of Water event to be organised by Lorna Dougan and strongly encourages BBS committee members to consider organising a workshop or sandpit.

Other events

There was a PoLNET steering group meeting on 19 Apr; there has not been a Physics of Medicine steering group meeting since 15 Dec.

Building Collaboration at the Physics of Life Interface: Strategic Priority Fund Programme

The UKRI Physics of Life Strategic Priority Fund Programme Mid-Term Evaluation Board submitted its report (including 26 recommendations) on 30 April. There was no time for our report to have any influence on the second call (6 May, closing date 2 June). It may affect how the applications are reviewed and how the grants are operated, however. Did anyone else tune in to the second call webinar (supposed to be at 15:15 on 22 Apr) only to find it had already finished?!

Biological Physics “go to” meeting

A further meeting to develop this event was held on 20 Apr. BBS is now very well represented by Olwyn and Mark Leake and Mark Wallace. We conveyed the views of the BBS and the support of the Society is much appreciated by the meeting organisers. One suggestion that originated from the BBS committee was to delay the meeting to 2024 and combine it with the BBS Biennial meeting. A series of pros and cons for this were identified:

Pros

- The big meeting would avoid the same year EBSA/IUPAB is being held.
- It would be good to link directly with BBS.

Cons

- The meeting should be standalone; it's important the meeting is perceived as a joint effort in which all stakeholders in UK Biological Physics are part owners with equal input (Physics of Life, PLM, BBS and IoP BPG). Having buy-in from all these groups is crucial and will further build a community from which all individual groups will benefit.
- Running in 2024 would delay everything by a year which would partly miss the pressing issue to demonstrate to UKRI that the community is thriving and ready for more funding. It also misses the end of PoLNET3, and their potential source of funding.
- It may be that running in 2024 would mean we would circle onto a once every 4-year large go-to meeting. On this point, it was agreed that if the large go-to meeting is to be successful enough to continue beyond 2023, the ideal frequency would be once

every 2 years to bring the community together at a frequency enough to be effective.

It was decided that cons outweighed the pros, and therefore the group would continue to aim for a 2023 delivery of this 'large go-to meeting'. The meeting (called "Physics of Life") will take place in Harrogate, 27-30 March 2023. The next meeting on this meeting is 15 Jun 10-11 am. Olwyn can't attend, but hopefully Mark and Mark can. Any observations for them to convey?

Physics of Life Student Summer Bursaries 2021

61 applications were received for PoLNET summer bursaries for undergraduates interested in pursuing interdisciplinary research projects that combine physics and life sciences (biology and/or medicine). 14 projects are going to be funded. Not sure if these have been announced yet.

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

Nothing reported.

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 newsletters as well.
- 2) *Renewal of membership* – Tharin passed the invoice on to Ann
- 3) *Consultations* – there are often consultations happening, Tharin has been circulating them to the committee
- 4) *Parliamentary Links Day* – will take place on 22nd June, online
- 5) *AGM* – was 25th May, but the BBS was not represented

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

Routine activity continues, with membership requests and other emails.

The committee decided to arrange another meeting to discuss any changes to the BBS rules.

We receive 6-7 bursary applications per year, and Guy is happy to continue managing them for the time being, despite changing roles. They will remain on a first-come, first-served basis, and applicants need to be members of the BBS, and based in the UK.

Action: Mark Wallace to change the website accordingly

Meetings Secretary's Report (Guy Grant)

2021

24th-28th July, EBSA Congress, Vienna

Online meeting on condensates

Action: Dave

Teaching in Biophysics, online, around Christmas

Action: Guy to organise

2022

17th March, Structural basis of muscular contraction: A memorial meeting to celebrate the life and work of Professor

John Squire 1945-2021, Imperial College London – we are supporting this meeting by sponsoring a talk.

29th June-1st July, BBS Biennial Meeting, Galway, Ireland –

The theme of the meeting could be “assemblies”: protein assembly, protein interactions, liquid-liquid phase separation as main topics. Protein assemblies could be a general topic, with a wide scope for other sessions. There could be problem-focused sessions, with techniques well balanced across sessions. Could include membrane, nucleus, catalysis, transient complexes.

Galway has a nice campus. The engineering building has been suggested, but the poster place is small. Otherwise, it's a very nice, new building.

Accommodation will need to be booked as soon as possible.

The meeting can also be run as a hybrid meeting, the local conference organiser has confirmed that the facilities allow this.

There are 3 lecture theatres, with capacities of 250, 140 and 110.

They are booked as full day or part day. The committee decided we shouldn't have parallel sessions.

In addition to BBS members, it is expected that 50-60 Irish delegates will also attend. Tourism Ireland can fund €30 per international delegate. An excursion could be included in the meeting programme. The committee will need to see a budget as well. EBSA can sponsor a speaker, and student bursaries. John Seddon is happy to advise on how to apply.

Actions: Peter to continue progressing with meeting organisation.
Dave to liaise for condensate content to avoid repetition of this year's online meeting

2023

22nd-27th March, Physics of Life UK meeting, Harrogate
early July, EBSA Congress

2024

BBS Biennial Meeting – we should start thinking of potential venues
Allostery meeting – to celebrate the 40th anniversary of seminal paper.

Action: Guy to organise.

13 Newsgroup/Publicity Officer (Syma Khalid/Alice Pyne)

We decided we should include a job board on the website, as well as notices of seminars, conferences and events. If the number of job opportunities becomes too much to manage on the website, we could have a Tumblr job posting site. We should also add a link to the JISC mail archive to the website.

The committee thought that these were great ideas.

Action: Olwyn to ask Mark Wallace to update the website accordingly

14 Website (Mark Wallace)

There are updates that need to be done to the website.

Action: Committee members aware of items to be updated should emails Mark Wallace, who will implement the updates

15 Membership (Ehmke Pohl)

We have a constant trickle of new members. At the moment, we're missing the drive of conferences, which lead to a pre-conference rush in members.

16 Irish Sub-section (Peter Crowley)

Covered under Meeting Secretary's report.

17 Honorary members

Elspeth Garman, Oxford, and Julia Goodfellow, DBE have accepted nominations as honorary members.

Action: Olwyn to contact other suggested nominees

18 AOB

We need a date for the AGM, fitting within EBSA Congress.

Action: Tharin and Olwyn to arrange with John Seddon and Tony

Molecular Simulations is running an event on under-representation. This is an interesting topic that we should consider as a session in the 2022 biennial meeting, or as a future event.

Action: all to consider

19 Date of Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be in September 2021, online. The date will be decided after a Doodle poll.

An extraordinary committee meeting will be organised in early July to discuss changes to the BBS rules. The date will be decided after a Doodle poll.
