

British Biophysical Society

Minutes of the 110th Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 21st January 1997 at 1.00 pm. at the Biochemical Society, 59, Portland Place, London.

Present: R. Cooke, M.A. Ferenczi, K.R. Fox, S. Harding, E. Hounsell, G.G. Kneale, A. Lane (invited), J. Molloy, A.C.T. North, J. Murray-Rust (observer), G.C.K. Roberts, M.P. Sansom, W.A. Thomas, J. Thornton (Chair), A. Wilkinson.

1. Apologies for absence: J. Helliwell, D. Hulmes and R. Leatherbarrow. Tony Wilkinson was welcomed as a new member of the Committee.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted with minor corrections.

2. Matters Arising.

(i) The question was raised concerning the legal status of allowing the membership list to be presented on the Society WEB page, bearing in mind the data protection act. Since the list is a source of funds for the society through advertising and circulars, it was decided to keep it as such, and not put it on the WEB.

(ii) Since the society is still 2 or 3 Committee members short due to retirements, Sheena Radford and Andrew Thomson should be contacted. **(Action - JT)**. Andrew Lane agreed to be co-opted as a member of the Committee.

(iii) The tax relief status of BBS membership was raised. Since members had varying experiences with different tax offices, it was agreed to clarify the situation. **(Action - WAT)**.

(iv) Tony Wilkinson agreed to be the BBS representative on the Molecular Enzymology Group **(Action - AW)**.

3. Honorary Secretary's Report: presented by WAT.

(i) The AGM on 16th Dec. 1996 was chaired by GCKR and attended by about a dozen members. WAT and EH were elected as the new officers, the others being reaffirmed.

(ii) The Institute of Biology asked the BBS to cite their top three priorities for the next government's science policy (via Jonathan Cowie, 8th Jan. 1997). After considerable discussion, the following priorities were agreed:-

(a) Encouragement of science directly linked to wealth creation should not be at the expense of basic research.

(b) To address the anticipated shortfall in scientists, a positive contribution has to be made to persuade students that science is a challenging and

rewarding career.

- (c) Serious consideration must be given to the complexity and complementarity between industry and academia. The interface has to be carefully defined. It is generally agreed that the best interactions occur during collaboration towards a common scientific goal, rather than the current practice of trying to extort money from industry to underpin research (a reference to the current policy of requiring a 50% contribution from industry applied by the research councils).
- (iii) A letter from Professor North concerning IUPAB priorities was discussed. The Committee felt that IUPAB meetings should neither be too large or too expensive and should in style reflect UK - organised meetings. Use of commercial sources to organise meetings should be discouraged, and meetings should concentrate on the science and scientific discussion, not on social events. It would be useful if IUPAB funds could be used to support BBS meetings, in particular to enable young people from abroad to attend such meetings. The WEB pages should reflect such information. **(Action - WAT)**.
- (iv) It was decided to refuse the invitation to join the Expert Witness Institute as a professional body, as no significant advantage could be seen for BBS.

4. Honorary Treasurer's Report - presented by JT in the absence of RL

- (i) 200 replies had been received so far confirming increased subscription to BBS, and 25 cancellations. This still left some 600 members from the database who had not so far replied.
- (ii) It was decided that a reduced subscription of £10 was appropriate for retired members. **(Action - RL)**
- (iii) Corrections to members addresses had been incorporated into the database. In addition the membership database had been upgraded to allow for members' scientific interests to be incorporated. A breakdown of these interests by category will be prepared for the next meeting. **(Action - RL)**

Honorary Meetings Secretary's Report

This was the last report from the retiring secretary (SH) who was thanked by JT for his unstinting efforts over the last few years.

- (i) "Current Methods to Characterise Biomolecular Interactions", the Dec. 1996 BBS Discussion Meeting held at UCL, was well attended with 125 delegates and 8 sponsors. The good attendance and high level of sponsorship allowed a low registration fee (£10 for BBS members, £5 for students), and probably a small overall profit. By charging non-members an additional £10 to cover a year's membership an extra ~90 members have been acquired and an additional ~£900 for BBS funds.

- (ii) "From Proteome to Function :- The Application of Modern Mass Spectrometry to Molecular Cell Biology", to be held 8-9th April, 1997 at Glaxo Wellcome, Stevenage, and organised by Walter Blackstock and RC. RC reported that arrangements were well advanced for this meeting, with a registration fee of £80 (£30 for students) and an expected 100 -150 participants (200 max.).
- (iii) "Biophysics Driven by Microscopy", a BBS Discussion Meeting to be held on July 11th, 1997 at NIMR, Mill Hill, organised by MF. This meeting was well on course, with several sponsors already on board. A proposed budget was presented. Registration would be £25 for BBS members and £40 for non-members.
- (iv) "2nd European Biophysics Congress" (EBSA97) to be held in Orleans, Jul 13 - 17th, 1997. Although second circulars had so far been few and far between, the organisation was well underway, with 42 invited speakers and ~800 participants expected.
- (v) "Theoretical Basis of Biological Assembly and Organisation" 14-17th Sept. 1997, to be held at Hulme Hall, Manchester, organised by DH and A. Brass. £3000 had been donated by the Wellcome Trust. It was suggested that the registration fee should be less than the proposed £100. A full budget would be presented for the next meeting. **(Action - DH)**.
- (vi) "Nucleic Acid Biophysics" a BBS Main Meeting, Jan. 12-13th, 1998, to be held at the University of Surrey and organised by Andrew Lane and KF. The tabled report was discussed. Surrey was chosen because it offered cheap ensuite accommodation plus meals for £65. Sponsors were currently being approached. ~100 attendees were expected. *It was agreed that the BBS AGM would be held at this meeting.
- (vii) Joint Meeting with the Biochemical Society (Nucleic Acids Group) "Enzymes which interact with DNA", a proposed 2-day meeting in Cardiff in Spring, 1999, organised by KF, M. Blackburn and GK. Following a brief update, it was suggested that it should be a group meeting with registration fees to comply with BBS format.
- (viii) A joint meeting with the Biophysical Chemistry sub-group of the Faraday RSC Division on "Thermostable Proteins" may not go ahead. **(Action - LF to check)**.
- (ix) Joint meeting with the Faraday Society "Molecular Interactions at the Cell Surface", proposed for Dec. 1998, organised by MS. The level of contributions will be investigated. **(Action - MS)**.
- (x) "Molecular Machines" a 1-day Discussion meeting at York University organised by JM. The proposed date was July 1998. It was suggested that a lunch to lunch meeting with time for evening discussions might be appropriate. **(Action - JM)**
- (xi) "Laser Light Scattering Spectroscopy", a 2-day meeting in Sept. 1999 at Nottingham, reported by SH. It may coincide with the IUPAB meeting in Delhi on 19-24th Sept., 1999.

(xii) "Model Pores" suggested by Charles Pasternak for Dec. 1998 should be investigated further as the date is inappropriate. **(Action - MS)**

(xiii) It was agreed that £250 should be contributed to Tony Watts towards the cost of the Harden NMR Discussion meeting. **(Action - RL)**.

AOB

(i) MF raised the question of the relationship between EBSA and the National Biophysical Societies, with the objective of a contribution to be made by each Society to fund fellowships and Congress participation from poorer countries (Proposal tabled by MF). It was agreed that a flat contribution from BBS of £400, representing ~1ECU per member was appropriate, to be reviewed annually. **(Action - WAT via RL and MF)**.

(ii) A disappointing response to the LOGO competition was noted with just one (!) entry so far.

(iii) ACTN raised the potential problems of future adherence of the Royal Society to other Unions. BBS may come under scrutiny in the future, requiring a contribution of ~\$1000.

(iv) GCKR reported from the latest meeting of the UK National Committee for the Molecular, Cellular and Physiological Life Sciences. The name of the Committee had thankfully been changed to the UK Life Sciences Committee. The Committee had plans to develop a comprehensive database on meetings in biology. Subscription costs for BBS were estimated to be ~£200 (out of the total of £12000). It was agreed that by the end of the month we should formally say that we want to join, to pay the required subscription and have a representative on the Committee (GCKR). **(Action - JT to write formally)**

(v) The date of the next BBS Committee meeting is Tuesday 13th May 1997, at 1.00 pm. at the Biochemical Society, 59, Portland Pl., London.