



The Russell Society

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RUSSELL SOCIETY**

**HELD AT 16.30 ON 23 APRIL 2016**

**AT BOWBURN HALL HOTEL, BOWBURN, CO DURHAM**

The meeting was attended by 41 members and was quorate in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution of the Society.

### **Meeting agenda:**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting (summary published in Newsletter 67 and full minutes available via The Russell Society website)
3. Matters arising
4. Honorary Officers' reports:
  - 4.1 President
  - 4.2 Vice-President including Health & Safety
  - 4.3 General Secretary
  - 4.4 Treasurer
  - 4.5 Membership Secretary
  - 4.6 Journal Editor
  - 4.7 Newsletter Editor
5. Appointment of Independent Verifier of the Society's accounts
6. Appointment of Honorary Officers and Trustees for 2016 - 17
7. Any other business

The Russell Society is a society of amateur and professional mineralogists which encourages the study, recording and conservation of mineralogical sites and material.

Registered Charity No. 803308

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from: John Fisher; Gary Morse; Malcolm Southwood.

## **2. MINUTES OF THE 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The minutes of the 2015 AGM (available via the Russell Society website and the summary of them published in Newsletter 67) were agreed by all present as a true record of the 2015 AGM. This was proposed by Nigel Moreton and seconded by Chris Finch. Tom Cotterell (President) signed and dated a printed copy of the 2015 AGM Minutes.

## **3. MATTERS ARISING**

None, other than items covered on the agenda in section 4.3 concerning Public Indemnity Insurance.

## **4. HONORARY OFFICERS' REPORTS**

### **4.1. President (Tom Cotterell)**

Tom gave an overview of the Society's position and change during the last year, and continued to emphasise the importance of member involvement in the Society's activities.

Tom thanked Michael Dunmore and Margaret Ince for their valued work as General Secretary and Treasurer respectively over the past few years. Tom also thanked Frank Ince for kindly agreeing to stay on as Journal Manager, to ensure that we all continue to receive the Journal. He noted that the post of Conservation Officer remains vacant and, whilst aspirational rather than essential, encouraged members to get involved and fill this post. Anyone interested should get in touch with Tom direct. Tom's final point was that we should all advertise the Society whenever, and wherever possible, and that new promotional material is being prepared to help with this.

*Firstly I would like to thank the Northern Branch for putting together a wonderful weekend of events for our ASM. I would also like to thank everyone here for attending – without your involvement the society would not be what it is.*

*As members you might not be aware of what the Council's role is so it is probably worth me reminding you. We on Council hold two meetings a year and communicate regularly in order to keep the society running as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Whether it be producing our publications (the Journal and Newsletter) or making decisions relating to insurance policies the Council have the task of deciding what is best for our organisation. Therefore we represent you, our members, and are very open to discussing anything relating to our society at any point in the year.*

*I would therefore like to thank the Council members for continuing to give their time freely in maintaining the operation of our society and hopefully you, our members, can see the results. The society continues to maintain a relatively strong and healthy membership number, but we are all too aware that it has been in a gradual decline for many years and so we need to plan for the future.*

*I would like to thank Michael Dunmore for his excellent work as Secretary over the past two years. Michael has kept the organisational side of the society in check extremely well. Michael has also done much work above and beyond his secretarial role in establishing our new website and for this we should all be extremely grateful. Taking over the position as Secretary I would like to welcome Steve Warren to the Council. Those of you who know Steve well will be certain that he is well equipped to fulfil this role.*

*Another change is arrival of Rob Bowell as Treasurer. As you will be aware Margaret Ince kindly 'stayed on' as Treasurer during the past year while we sought a successor. Margaret has very ably kept the accounts in check and has also raised some very useful suggestions as to how we can better use the money we hold in a manner that will benefit our members or attract new members. Some of these ideas will be mentioned shortly and I would welcome feedback on your thoughts. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Margaret and to welcome Rob into this position.*

*You may also be aware that Frank Ince was due to retire from the Journal Manager's post, but has recently decided to continue this role in order that we all still receive the journal. I think that we should all express our thanks to him for this.*

*The eagle-eyed amongst you might also have spotted that the position of Conservation Officer remains vacant. This position is non-essential to the day-to-day running of the society, but is aspirational. Therefore if any of you feel that you would like to take on this role then I would very much welcome talking to you about what is involved.*

Looking forward it is very refreshing to see a number of new faces and I would urge all of us as members to try and advertise the society whenever we attend mineralogical, or geological, events. We are in the process of printing new sets of advertising materials and so if any of you are interested in obtaining some promotional leaflets, posters, or business cards to hand out please let me know.

Thank you once again for another successful year.

#### 4.2. Vice President (Christine Critchley)

Christine summarised field trip attendance in 2015: a total of 39 trips with a total of 279 person/visits. As in the previous year, Christine was very pleased to report there had been no incidents on the field trips. Christine also noted that a review of the Society's H & S information had been completed during the year and that the updated information has now been issued to field trip leaders and placed on the website.

She also noted that the Society will be holding two Scavenger Hunts this year, firstly at the new Leyburn Show in August then the usual Bakewell Show in October. Please let Christine know if you have any suitable donations that can be used as prizes for these events.

#### Health and Safety

Many thanks to those who submitted the documentation for review and to all attendees who enabled the field trips to be incident free, showing the responsible attitude which Russell Society members have to health and safety issues. Using the returns from the Field Leader Indemnity Forms (FLIF) a summary of visits has been produced.

Branch	Number of Field Trips Reported	Field Trip Attendance
Central	4	52
Northern	5	26
South West	12	85
Wales & West	8	52
Southern	5	39
North West	5	25
Total	<b>39</b>	<b>279</b>

There have been 279 person/visits. 92 different people attended a field trip, including 2 visitors. 11 members have attended field trips organised by three different branches and 1 member by all six branches. 3 members have attended 8 or more field trips with one member doing 12 trips, 11 trips have been cancelled by quarry management or did not run. I am very pleased to be able to include a nil return for incidents occurring during the field trips.

Summary AGM Report	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Person/Visits	407	381	464	464	439	386	279
Different people	122	129	135	135	125	108	92
Four Branches	2	6	11	9	5	7	2
Nine Trips	8	6	9	9	13	13	1
Total number trips	60	55	53	53	63	52	39
Cancelled	7	8	4	4	4	7	10
Not reported	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

#### Health and Safety Documentation Review

The H&S review has been completed and all the new documentation has been forwarded to Council Members, Field Trip Officers, and our 'web master'. All members, and particularly those attending field trips, are encouraged become 'acquainted' with the documentation. Anyone without access to the web can request an email copy. A review of our insurance has been carried out and Michael Dunmore will be commenting about this later.

#### Scavenger Hunt

We will be organising TWO Scavenger Hunts this year, one in October at the Bakewell Show again and another at the new Leyburn Show in August. Any donations of 'prizes' (we gave over 100 specimens away last year at Bakewell) and offers of help on the stand on the day will be more than welcome.

### **4.3 General Secretary (Michael Dunmore)**

Michael explained the continuing efforts to administer the Society as efficiently as possible and in line with the Council budget. Expenses (other than general postage costs) are primarily mileage expenditure for two Council meetings held at Bromsgrove and events for promoting the Society and encouraging new members.

He reported that specific questions had been put to insurers as part of the wider health and safety review and that insurer's responses had endorsed the Society's health and safety procedures and documentation.

During the year Council had also looked at the implications of the Society changing from an unincorporated charitable association to an incorporated one. After considering the pros and cons, however, mainly related to additional costs and the lengthy timescale of the process, Council had decided not to go down this route.

Michael finally reported that the new Society website is now live and is much easier to update than the old one. All present thanked Michael for his and Gary Morse's efforts on the website.

### **Public Indemnity Insurance (PPI)**

*Following earlier members comments and at the request of Council several questions have been put to insurers and responses received as follows:*

*Q. Are there any expectations or requirements concerning the experience or competencies of field trip organisers?*

*A. "There are no specific requirements or exclusions on the policy as such, although we would ask that any field trip organisers would demonstrate a level of due diligence when planning and running the event."*

*Q. Does the insurance cover all members participating in field trips regardless of age?*

*A. "I can confirm that your insurance cover is not limited by age and covers all members acting on behalf of the organisation."*

*Following the above responses from insurers a further question was put to them:*

*Q. The Russell Society has processes in place for each field trip, including a risk assessment. Do you have a review process for health and safety procedures so that we can be sure we meet your expectations regarding due diligence?*

*A. "After having a brief look at your safety guidelines I would say this is absolutely sufficient and certainly enough to keep us happy at our end!"*

*On the basis of the above discussion Council considers that the current insurance arrangements are the most appropriate for the Society and the activities of its members. Furthermore, Council considers that insurers comments are an endorsement of the Society's approach to health and safety and its health and safety documentation.*

### **Risk and Incorporation**

*Council asked the General Secretary to explore the implications of converting the Society to an incorporated charitable structure and a paper on the matter was considered by Council during 2015. Incorporated charitable status would leave trustees with similar responsibilities as a company director, would incur extra costs and would involve a lengthy registration process. Although incorporated status would limit liability on trustees Council decided that it would not be in the interests of the Society to change its structure and that trustee protection would be better achieved through taking out additional indemnity insurance (at a modest cost of less than £100.00/year).*

### **4.4 Treasurer (Margaret Ince)**

Margaret gave a presentation to explain the financial position for 2015; covering the financial year from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2015. Her report was underpinned by the Independent Examiner's assessment of the Society's Accounts for this period.

She confirmed that the Society accounts are in a healthy condition and suggested that the Society might wish to use some of the reserves for beneficial activities, perhaps related to increasing membership, through improving PR material, or providing services that would be of benefit to members. Discussion followed on possible benefits, which could include funding access for members to analytical facilities at museums or university departments or setting up workshops to help improve member's photography skills? Both of these

aspects could, in turn, help member's contributions to the Newsletter and Journal.

Margaret and Neil reiterated the need for members to pay their subscriptions through Gift Aid wherever possible and to please make sure payments are made promptly, preferably before the end of January and certainly before the end of March, otherwise administration of Gift Aid becomes more complicated.

Following Margaret's presentation a vote of thanks was given for all her hard work for the Society.

### Main Society Current and Deposit Accounts

See end of Treasurers Report for copy of 2015 accounts verified by Independent Examiner.

I have retained format of summarised accounts. All figures are to the nearest £1.

NB: allocations entered as expenditure in Society accounts are also as income in Branch accounts.

The Society accounts are generally healthy.

**Deposit account:** The reserves remain at £19,000

**Current account:** End of year (Dec 2015): £16571

Main Society receipts exceeded payments (£3467).

**Branch accounts:** End of year (Dec 2015): £4263

**Main receipts** are from subscriptions (£8224), tax rebate (~£2402) for both 2013 and 2014 (but not for 2015), AGM auction (£1601) and one-off donations from members (£1635)

**Main expenditure** is on publications (£9016) and administration (£915), notably covering costs for trustees and branch reps to attend Council meetings (travel costs only, refunded at a low 25p per mile).

### Branch Accounts and Allocations

Note there are now 2 branches (Northern and South East) that no longer have branch accounts. I wish to thank all remaining 5 branch treasurers for sending their accounts this year.

The amount of money held by branches is £4263, a reduction of £1642. Branch allocations reduced to reflect money held by branches and the reduction in the number of branches.

	C	NW #	S *	SW	WW ^	N & SE	Total
OB:	151	268	993	693	3861	Closed	5905
Allocation	90	100	0	0	0		190
Income	0	0	0	283	1980		2263
Expenditure	28	20	160	282	3665		4155
CB	213	348	833	694	2175		4263
*Adjustments:- #(268 not 126); *(918.13+75.49); ^ ASM							

### Associate Subscriptions

GA is essential as is linked to insurance.

NAHMO

### Membership subscriptions

There was small reduction in subscription receipts – we need to continue seeking to retain and recruit more members and encourage those not already signed up to Gift Aid to do so. It would help both the Treasurer and Membership Secretary if subscriptions were paid in January and certainly before the end of March.

### Independent Examiner

Finally I would like to thank Mr John Todd for acting as Independent Examiner. As I am standing down as Treasurer, I wish to recommend that the incoming Treasurer identifies a new Independent Examiner for 2016 to be formally appointed by the Council.

### Recommendations for the future

*For a small charity we have accumulated reserves, notably from donations (and good financial management). I recommended at the last Council meeting that we should consider spending some of the reserves with the aim of benefitting members in all branches, whilst retaining at least sufficient contingency funds for 2 years activity. Ideas discussed included:*

- improving public awareness of the Society, with the aim of increasing membership e.g. business card-sized information material (for use at mineral shows etc.); table top banners and a greater presence at mineral shows.*
- supporting branch-specific projects (project allocations to take in to account money held by the branch. Project reports would need to be submitted to the Council for inclusion in Society publications/at AGMs)*
- aiding members with mineral identification by paying for the use at analytical facilities (museums, university depts. etc.); there would be conditions for this to ensure as wide a spread of possible for both branches and individuals.*

**Budget for 2016 recommended by the Council** (see forecast below).

*This retains:*

- the cap of £7000 on publications (Journal and Newsletters), but should be reviewed if postal charges increase; and*
- the same level of administration expenditure as it is one of the best ways that feedback, suggestions etc. from members are received, discussed and acted on;*

*It includes an allocation of £3500 for projects (as covered under 'Recommendations for the future').*

<b>Treasurer's Budget for 2016 (agreed by the Council 21 February 2016)</b>			
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>PAYMENTS</b>	<b>Agreed</b>
Subscriptions (all sources)	8000	<i>Admin</i>	250
Tax refund (2015&2016)	2400	<i>Council</i>	750
COIF interest	60	<i>Web</i>	200
Journals	100	<i>Journal</i>	3500
AGM auction	500	<i>AGM Venue + expenses</i>	500
Royalties	250	<i>Insurance</i>	300
Donations	0	<i>Trustee Ins</i>	100
Branches	0	<i>Newsletters</i>	3500
		<i>Branch Grant</i>	300
		<i>Ass'n Subs</i>	20
		<i>Projects</i>	3500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11310</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12920</b>



# THE RUSSELL SOCIETY

www.russellsoc.org

## Independent Examiner's Report of the Receipts and Payments Account

Accounts for the year 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2015

Opening balance	13055.72
Income	14420.31
Expenditure	10953.39
Outstanding cheques	49.26
Closing balance	16571.90

### Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Date Act have not been met;

or

- (2) To which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

  
John R. Todd

Date: 30/3/16

The Russell Society is a society of amateur and professional mineralogists which encourages the study, recording and conservation of mineralogical sites and material.

Registered Charity No. 802202

**THE RUSSELL SOCIETY**

Registered Charity No 803308

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

For the year 1 January 2015 to 31st December 2015

	<u>Dec 31 2015</u>	<u>Dec 31 2014</u>		<u>Dec 31 2015</u>	<u>Dec 31 2014</u>
	Receipts	Receipts		Payments	Payments
From COIF Acc	0.00		To COIF		
Subscriptions (receipts-refunds)	8224.09	8,399.00	Administration	292.48	237.94
Journal & Newsletter sales	141.61	152.55	Council expenses	622.68	406.00
Insertions	50.00		Website	189.99	90.00
Interest received	64.18	76.99	Journal costs	5763.72	195.20
Tax refund	2402.42	1,281.65	News letters	3297.29	3060.20
AGM 2015 Auction +	1601.22	970.00	Ass. Subscriptions	100.00	40.00
AGM2015 income less costs			Insurance	297.23	195.78
Donations	1635.00		Branch allocations	190.00	400.00
Branch closure		298.47	AGM2016(15) payments	200.00	600.00
PLS	301.79	1,217.25	Conferences	0.00	0.00
Receipts	14420.31	12395.91	Publicity	0.00	0.00
Opening bank balances			Medals	0.00	0.00
Current account	13055.72	5,884.93	Expenditure	10953.39	5225.12
Deposit account	19000.00	19,000.00	Closing bank balances :-		
Outstanding cheques	0.00		Current account	16571.90	13055.72
Total Income	<u>46476.03</u>	<u>37280.84</u>	Deposit account	19000.00	19000.00
			Outstanding cheques	49.26	0.00
			Cross check	<u>46476.03</u>	<u>37280.84</u>

Independent Examiners's Report of the Receipts and Payments Account

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Date

30/3/16

John R. Todd

**Acceptance of Accounts**

A proposal was made that the accounts should be accepted. Proposer: Tony Parker; Seconded: Mike Sweeney. Vote: the Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted by those attending.

**4.5 Membership Secretary (Neil Hubbard)**

Neil provided an overview of membership numbers and trends, and expressed some concern about the continuing decrease in the membership. At 17 April 2016 there were 351 members, with only ten new members joining in 2015 and three so far in 2016. He stressed that it is up to all of us, not just Council, to try and recruit new members.

A discussion of ways to promote the Society and increase the number of members (particularly students and young people) followed and included:

- Organising social events during mineral shows;

- Creating a Facebook page and/ or Twitter feed for the Society (with the need to find members who could create and post content regularly – are you the younger person we need to help with this?);
- Providing unique content through the website, such as lectures;
- Linking to/ advertising on relevant pages of the Open University website.

*We can see from the table below that our membership fell last year, but this would not have happened if we had recruited the same number of new members as we had in the previous year. Recruitment of new members is too important to be left just to the Council, all members of the society should be thinking of ways of attracting new members. Any suggestions will be gratefully appreciated !!*

*I would like to thank all of those members who pay their subscription on time, this keeps myself and the treasurer happy.*

Year End	Members	New Members
2008	493	
2009	447	43
2010	452	43
2011	413	13
2012	402	12
2013	389	28
2014	392	23
2015	379	10
17 April 2016	351	3

#### 4.6 Journal Editor (Malcolm Southwood) and Frank Ince (Journal Manager)

Malcolm could not present at the meeting. Frank explained the work undertaken in 2015 to produce JRS 18, summarised the production process, contents, distribution and related financial structure – as well as the plan for JRS 19 that will be published in December 2016. 392 copies of JRS 18 were produced and 311 copies circulated to members, with production costs being reduced from the previous year. As with the Newsletter, Frank encouraged members to contribute papers, advising that help and encouragement can be provided where needed.

Frank announced that he would stay on as Journal Manager, to ensure that members continue to receive the publication in the absence of a new manager coming forward. Frank was thanked by all present for his many years of outstanding service in managing the Journal, and for agreeing to stay on, but perhaps you could become the next manager of JRS?

He also reported on the disposal of the Society's Library, which has now been dispersed, raising almost £1000.00 for the Society. He thanked Jo Brown and Bracken Gibson for their work as Society Librarians and for their help in the disposal.

#### JRS Volume 18, 2015

##### Schedule

- 4 papers, 1 note, an obituary and a book review
- Manuscripts submitted by early-September
- Manuscripts sent to referees and reviews returned to authors by mid-September; final manuscripts ready by late-September
- Layout completed using InDesign by late-September
- Proofs sent to authors for checking in early-October
- InDesign final version (56 text pages + 4 cover pages) ready for printing by early-November
- Printing late-November and circulation early-December

Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Manuscripts received and sent for review						Layout	Proof check	Print			

### Finances

- **Income: £3,070.61** (Budget £3,000.00 + Sales £70.61)  
Sales (2 x £13.00 + 3 x £15.00): Total £70.61 (£71.00 - 39p bank charges)
- **Expenditure: £2,868.98** (Printing £1,862.26 + P&P £1,006.72)
- **Balance: +£201.63** (Bob and Sally King Donation: ≈ £2,300 remains)

### Publication and Circulation Details

- |                                  | per Copy                  | per Page     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| • 392 copies (380 + 12 reprints) | £4.75                     | 7.92p (60pp) |
| • JRS 17 (2014)                  | £5.11                     | 7.51p (68pp) |
| • 311 copies to members          | £7.67pm (JRS 17 £8.31 pm) |              |
| • 3 exchange and 9 donations     | Free                      |              |

### Exchanges

- 3 exchanges cancelled (disposal of the RS Library)

### Website

- JRS 14 and 15 PDFs added to the RS website and indices updated

### JRS Volume 19, 2016

#### Planned schedule

- Various articles, notes and a book review received or expected
- Cut-off date for manuscripts end-June
- Reviews complete by mid-June, final versions received in July-August, relay to Journal Manager as they come in
- Layout in August-September, proofs relayed to authors
- Authors return proofs with corrections by early-October
- Final version to printer in mid-October
- Printing and distribution in late-October – mid-November
- **All offers of new contributions gratefully received**

Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Manuscripts received and sent for reviews					Layout	Proof check	Print				

### Russell Society Library

#### Disposal of the RS Library

- RS Council decided to dispose of the Library (October 2015)
- Small group set up to organise the disposal (Jo Brown, Bracken Gibson, Roy Starkey and Frank Ince)
- 'For Sale' and 'Give Away' spreadsheets created
- Notification of disposal circulated with JRS 18 (early-December 2015)
- Spreadsheets of the residue circulated by e-mail (late-January 2016)
- The vast majority of the lots have been purchased or given away
- Most of the lots have been posted, collected or delivered

#### Amount raised from the disposal

- £894 from various lots + some generous donations
- ≈ £1,000 (total not yet known)

#### Jo and Bracken

- Thank you gift: 'Minerals of Britain and Ireland' by Andy Tindle

### 4.7 Newsletter Editor (Michael Doel)

Michael presented highlights of the production and costs of Newsletter 66 (March 2015) and Newsletter 67 (September 2015), noting that he had kept within 3% of his annual budget. He noted that increasing postal costs remain a concern, totalling almost 25% of Newsletter costs. He also noted that the flow of contributions to the Newsletter has just been adequate to fill it and that it seems to be the same small pool of contributors that provide material.

Once again, Michael encouraged all members to make a contribution (it is your Newsletter!) and stressed that help could be provided to write articles if people felt they needed it. Michael noted the perennial problem of lack of field trip reports and asked that they should be completed and submitted for the

Newsletter after every trip, for all Branches. He pointed out that this is a key purpose of the Society – to record the mineralogy we find! He stressed the need for members who have email addresses, but don't receive the electronic version of the Newsletter, to give their email addresses to our Membership Secretary (and for those of us who do subscribe electronically to keep Neil Hubbard up to date with any changes).

Finally, Michael said that he was keen to receive member's feedback and suggestions for the future content and presentation of the Newsletter.

*Since my report to the last AGM in 2015 two more issues of the Newsletter have been produced and circulated. These were issues 67 (September 2015, 48 pages) and 68 (March 2016, 40 pages) both of which were printed in full colour. I hope all members received them safely and enjoyed the content.*

*The total cost of production for the two issues in the calendar year 2015 was £3296 i.e. 3% over the agreed budget of £3200 for the year. For 2016 a budget of £3500 has been agreed for producing the Newsletter. I am hopeful that, once again, two issues can be produced in full colour while remaining (more or less) within budget. Postal costs remain a source of concern as the rates continue to rise inexorably. The cost of postage totalled £774 in 2015, a slight increase over 2014 despite sending out fewer copies in 2015 than in the previous year.*

*The flow of material for publication in the Newsletter has once again been just about adequate over the year, although I have regularly needed to produce additional "filler" material to achieve an optimum number of pages. What I have received has been quite wide-ranging as usual and I would like to thank everyone for their contributions. However, it remains true that we still rely heavily on a rather small number of people who provide the great majority of the material. I would – once again - like to encourage more members to contribute. I'm sure many people have interesting thoughts and information that could be the basis of a short Newsletter item. Please get in touch with me with any ideas you may have.*

*Another thing that I seem to say every year is that a number of field trips never seem to get written up. I know that members derive considerable pleasure and interest from reading trip reports in the Newsletter and it is a central principle of the Society that our geological activities and observations should be written up. I would like to ask all of those concerned with the planning and leading of society field trips – in all the RS branches - to try to ensure that a report is prepared in a reasonable time after the trip and submitted for publication.*

*Both of the Newsletters in 2015 were, as usual, sent out in two forms - the paper version to all paid up members within the UK (plus a small, residual number of overseas members) and an electronic (.pdf) version to all those (UK and overseas) members for whom we have a valid e-mail address – currently some 250 members. Feedback on the e-version is uniformly positive and I would encourage any members who have an e-mail address but are not receiving the electronic Newsletter to make sure that Neil Hubbard, our Membership Secretary, has your correct, up to date details.*

*I am always keen to receive feedback from members on any aspects of the Newsletter, including comments or suggestions for its future content and presentation. I also hope that, in the coming year, you the members will continue to enjoy your Newsletter and that more of you will feel able to support it in the most concrete way – by providing copy or ideas for future articles.*

## **5. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT VERIFIER OF THE SOCIETY'S ACCOUNTS**

Agreed that Rob Bowell should select and appoint the independent verifier as part of his role as Treasurer.

## **6. APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES FOR 2016 – 17**

Michael Dunmore (General Secretary) stated that at the requested date of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016, completed nominations had been received for each Council position for 2016 / 2017, with the exception of the role of Treasurer. As there was only one nomination received for each position except for Treasurer (Rob Bowell agreed to be nominated for the post of Treasurer after the closing date for nominations and his late nomination was accepted by the AGM), a ballot of the membership is not required. The nominations received were:

<b>Office</b>	<b>Candidate</b>
President	Tom Cotterell
Vice-President	Christine Critchley
Treasurer	Rob Bowell

General Secretary	Steve Warren
Journal Manager	Frank Ince
Membership Secretary	Neil Hubbard

A proposal was made that all nominations should be accepted by Roy Starkey and this was seconded by Marashean Parker. The nominations were unanimously supported by all present at the AGM.

#### **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Michael Dunmore thanked the Northern Branch for organising such a successful weekend.

Christine Critchley announced details of the 2017 AGM, to be hosted by the North West Branch from Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April at the Lodge Hotel, Tal-y-Bont, Conwy, Wales, LL32 8YX. Further details about the event will be published when they are available.

Roy Starkey spoke about a proposal in Germany concerning draft cultural heritage laws that would place restrictions on the export and sale of collectables (including minerals). Roy has written to the president of the German Bundestag at [norbert.lammert@bundestag.de](mailto:norbert.lammert@bundestag.de) to give his views on this topic, and suggested other members should do likewise.

The meeting closed at 18.10  
Steven Warren (23 April 2016)