

UKEMS: Minutes of the AGM Business Meeting

Held at the University of Lancaster, 8th July 2014

1. Minutes of the UKEMS AGM Business meeting held 15th July 2013, University of the West of England, Bristol.

Ruth Morse (UKEMS secretary) took the minutes. Anthony Lynch led the meeting through the minutes of the previous AGM business meeting up to the end of the president's report, then presidential handover to Frank Martin who continued the minutes from the treasurer's report onwards. The minutes were reviewed; no corrections or changes were required and they were taken to be accepted by the present membership.

2. President's report

Anthony Lynch (UKEMS president) gave a report to the meeting based on the following: "UKEMS has had a busy 12 months since the AGM in Bristol and we continue to pursue our charitable objectives with the award of grants to support research, travel and training for our members and the dissemination of research to the scientific community, plus committee meetings in Leicester and Lancaster. Of note were the following awards:

- 2 small grants and several summer placements
- Support for 6 early career researchers/industry equivalent (ECRs) and 5 established scientists to attend the ICEM in Brazil in Nov 2013
- The UKEMS also helped sponsor the IWGT in Brazil (Nov 2013)
- As hosts to the EEMS conference, UKEMS provided 31 ECRs and 2 established scientists with grants to attend the Lancaster conference
- In addition UKEMS provided 1 travel award for a member to attend the NanoTox Congress in Turkey and 3 travel awards for members to attend EuroTox.

The UKEMS hosted the 43rd EEMS conference in Lancaster in 2014. The theme of the meeting was "Genome Integrity: from mechanisms to applied and regulatory research" and the meeting was attended by ~300 delegates, >80 speakers presenting 11 symposia and 4 workshops organised along 3 tracks of basic, applied and regulatory research covering a broad range of topics of interest to our members. In addition, there were 2 continuing professional development sessions (on the Comet assay and DNA repair), a Young scientist session and two poster sessions along with plenary lectures from Hansruedi Glatt (Fritz Sobels Award) and Prof. Ketal Patel (Oxford). I'd like to congratulate the 2014 UKEMS young scientist, Dr Sabine Langie and EEMS Young scientist, Dr George Johnson on their awards and excellent presentations. The conference will be followed by a workshop organised by HESI ILSI on "Genetic toxicology at the Crossroads : from qualitative hazard evaluation to quantitative risk assessment", with ~80 delegates expected.

Following on from the UKEMS debate in Bristol I am pleased to note that the minutes of the debate were posted to the website. In response to the debate, the text describing the aims and mission of UKEMS was updated and shared with the committee at the Lancaster meeting. Once committee members have had time to review, an updated version will be posted to the website for comment by members with the aim of replacing the existing text. In addition, the organising committee for Lancaster included symposia on NGS, therapeutic

cancer prevention, systems biology, ecogenetox, de novo germline (epi)mutation and mitochondrial mutagenesis to cement existing links and foster new ones, and arranged early bird meetings to encourage development of special interest groups aligned to IGG, MEG, GSN and other key topics at both the European and UK levels. As president of UKEMS, I attended the GSN meeting in Cambridge in January to promote UKEMS and the Lancaster conference and with the help of Jess Bateson, compiled a database of all UK Genetics depts. to promote our society and any future meetings more broadly in the UK. The use of social media was also discussed at our committee meeting in Leicester (and may provide an opportunity for a younger member to become more engaged with the organisation of the society).

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the UKEMS committee members over the past 12 months, especially Karen Brown (secretary), Mike Routledge (treasurer) and Frank Martin (VP) and I'd like to welcome Ruth Morse, Mike Fellows (as incoming VP) and Jonathan Howe. Karen has now stood down as secretary and I want to personally acknowledge her dedication to the UKEMS. Karen has been the beating heart at the centre of the society, helping to organise our committee meetings, AGM, Grant reviews, travel awards and up-dating the website and we all owe her a great debt of gratitude. Ruth Morse will be succeeding Karen and on behalf of the society we wish her well in the years to come. In addition, Mike Routledge has agreed to take on another term as treasurer and we thank him for his continued support. I also want to thank the chairs of IGG (Ann Doherty), MEG (Volker Arlt) and GSN (Simon Reed) and David Phillips as editor in chief of Mutagenesis (and his editorial staff).

The Lancaster meeting is a terrific success and a great start for Frank's Presidency of UKEMS and we both wish to thank the organising committee, speakers and event organisers, especially Jen & Keith (Affinity Events) for helping to make it so. Lastly, I wish Awadhesh Jha every success with the UKEMS 2015 conference in Plymouth and hope to see you there next year."

Frank Martin took over as the new UKEMS president, and thanked Anthony Lynch for his role as President of UKEMS and for all the work he had done.

3. Treasurer's report (Michael Routledge)

The membership currently stands at 40 fellows, 100 members and 14 students. Oxford University Press (OUP) is now managing membership online with subscription at £25 per member (free for students), however there are a few issues outstanding with monitoring membership as there are still a few old non-active members on standing orders who are still paying into the society. Whilst every effort has been made to reimburse and contact these individuals, not all can be traced and so the extra income is currently being treated as "charitable income".

We have seven sustaining members (AstraZeneca, Covance, Gentronix, GlaxoSmithKline, Harlan, Perceptive Instruments, Unilever).

Our total reserves at Friday 4th July 2014 were £176,172.95, which is down from last year. At this stage in the year it is usually higher from the income from OUP, however the bursaries

for the meeting have not yet been paid out, so a lot of the reserves have been spent, according to the plans of the committee to reduce the reserve. The income from Mutagenesis has increased by 3.72% to £62,482 for the year up to December 31st 2013. The accounts have been prepared with the accountants Alexander Sloan, who were slow to send the data this year and when this arrived on Fri 4th July, there were noted errors in the information, but the overall view is that more has been spent than has come in, meeting the aim of reducing the reserves by supporting the society members to achieve the aims of the society.

Questions raised:

Steve Dean: what is the target total that UKEMS is aiming for?

Michael Routledge: there is no target stated at the moment, but this is the first time we have managed to make an impact on the reserves and now it is for the committee to decide an appropriate total.

Simon Reed: is it possible to get the accountants to advise on a suitable target?

Michael Routledge: the accountants did advise on this previously and suggested a figure of about £50k. In considering this figure, we also need to be confident of being able to cover conference costs.

Gill Claire: Would it be possible to publish the names of the people who receive bursaries?

Karen Brown: recipients of travel bursaries are expected to write reports on the meeting that they attend which is published to the webpage, but the list of recipients is not published.

Gill Claire and Karen Brown then discussed how publishing a list would make the process more transparent but it was unclear on the best place on the webpage to add such a list. There were no more questions raised. The finances were proposed by Mick Fellows and seconded by Frank Martin.

4. Mutagenesis Editor's report (David Phillips)

Submissions are down from previous years with 100 manuscripts submitted in 2014 so far. There have also been changes to the editorial board; there is a 3 year rotation (without exception), with Gunther Speit and Toshihiro Ohta stepping down after many years of exemplary service. In their places, have been appointed Alok Dhawan (Gujarat), Peter Møller (Copenhagen) and Masamitsu Honma (Tokyo).

Due to the fluctuations in manuscript submission, David has been considering future special issues: at the moment we have one on the Comet Assay nearly complete, guest edited by Andrew Collins. Another one, based around the ILSI-HESI workshop at this EEMS meeting, is planned, guest edited by George Johnson and Paul White.

In addition, several session chairs at this EEMS have been approached to guest edit a Special Topic for the journal (which will comprise part of an issue), commissioning their speakers to provide a manuscript based on their talks. A number of these Special Topics, which will comprise 4-6 linked articles and form part of a regular issue, are now in preparation, or at the planning stage:

In preparation:

Targeted therapies in oncology (guest edited by David Cox)

Pig-A (guest edited by Robert Heflich, Stephen Dertinger, Vasily Dobrovolsky)

Planned:

Exposomics (Arlt, Kyrtopoulos)
Therapeutic cancer prevention (Brown, Gerhauser)
Ecogenotoxicology (Jha, Chipman)
Cellular stress/DNA damage response (Reed)
Genetic and epigenetic mechanisms of germline (epi)mutations (Brinkworth, Pacchierotti)

There is no data on the impact factor for Mutagenesis at this stage – this will be released at the end of July from Reuters, however we are not expecting a change and OUP predict 3.5. A number of members of the Editorial Board were “retired”, having served three 3-year terms of appointment. New members of the Editorial Board are Janet Baulch (Irvine), Claudia Bolognesi (Genoa), Gunnar Brunborg (Oslo), Shareen Doak (Swansea), Stephen Hecht (Minneapolis), Marcin Kruszewski (Warsaw), David Lovell (London), Frank Martin (Lancaster), Takeshi Morita (Tokyo), Leona Samson (Boston), Helga Stopper (Würzburg), João Paulo Teixeira (Porto) and Veronique Thybaud (Vitry-sur-Seine). They were selected and invited after consultation with the Senior Editors. Günter Speit and Toshihiro Ohta also join the Editorial Board as former Senior Editors.

Questions raised:

Andrew Collins: what is the gender balance of the senior editors?

David Phillips: it’s currently 100% male, but females were encouraged to be part of the board and we hope the current status reflects this.

Phil Clay: What are the criteria for certain papers to be rejected? Are they in certain trends, fields or countries?

David Phillips: there are several reasons and can be complex; they may not be in the remit of Mutagenesis, also there are minimum requirements but there is a strong emphasis on mechanistics.

There were no further questions raised.

5. IGG Chairperson’s report (Ann Doherty)

The committee as at October 2013 comprises Ann Doherty (Chair), Paul Fowler (secretary), Darren Kidd (treasurer), and Trish Ellis, Will Barfield, Julia Kenny and Richard Williams as ordinary members.

The account balance for IGG on 29th April 2014 is £3414.96; IGG have yet to claim for bursaries for the conference for 2013 but it is acknowledged that it is now too later for claiming these.

Over the last few years, IGG have held their annual meeting in London, but the expense is now prohibiting this, so after a poll, the membership agreed a North-South schedule and so the 2014 meeting will be held at GSK Stevenage site on 18th November 2014.

6. MEG Chairperson’s report (Volker Arlt)

The committee has not changed since last year and comprises Volker Arlt (Chair), Susan Duthie (secretary), Andy Povey (treasurer), and Montse Garcia-Closas, Jill McKay and Andrew Collins as ordinary members.

The MEG committee extended thanks to UKEMS for the annual support of £2000.

MEG held their annual meeting on 6th December 2013 at Newcastle university, and had 65 attendees, with an exciting programme entitled “The Future of Epidemiology: Biomarkers meet Populations’. MEG had a record breaking 18 posters this year, with the abstracts scheduled to be published in Mutagenesis.

The next annual MEG meeting will be held on 28th November 2014 in London, a flyer will shortly follow and all are welcome to attend.

7. Genome Stability Network Chairperson's report (Simon Reed)

GSN held their 10th annual meeting in Cambridge (Robinson's College) on 10th January 2014 and had an attendance of ~260 members. The programme was well received with a focus on presentations by young scientists. The venue was a success and this has been booked again for 2015.

The GSN bank account is stable at about £20k, which is about where GSN like to keep it to cover conference costs, and GSN thanks UKEMS for sustaining with £2000.

Simon thanked Ruth Morse for her role as secretary for GSN, who has now moved to secretary of UKEMS, and also to Sarah Allinson (Lancaster) who has stepped down as treasurer and handed over to Kath Green (Cambridge). GSN are now looking for two new committee members to replace Ruth and Sarah.

GSN also can confirm funding from Cancer Research UK for support for the next two years of annual meetings. It is expected that this situation will change when the Crick Institute opens in 2015, but GSN are fins so far.

8. Elections Results for Vice President (Karen Brown)

Mick Fellows was nominated to take over from Frank Martin and was unopposed, so the membership agreed Mick's nomination.

Michael Routledge is in the last year of his first 3 year position; no one has stood to take over from Mike so he will continue as treasurer for a further three years.

No further comment was received from the meeting, hence Mick and Mike were welcomed to continue in new roles on the UKEMS committee.

9. EEMS matters (Anthony Lynch)

All issues for EEMS had already been covered by Anthony in the president's report.

10. Report on the UKEMS debate held 16th July at the University of the West of England, Bristol (Anthony Lynch)

All issues for the debate had already been covered by Anthony in the president's report.

11. UKEMS website (Karen Brown)

It is noted that a lot of people use the website as both members and non-members, so the membership are encouraged to send photos and items to the secretary (Ruth Morse). There is a possibility that in the future, electronic voting may be available which we hope to try next time.

There has also been a proposal to form a UKEMS wordle and the construction of this was explained to the membership. Members are encouraged to complete the forms distributed by Karen and complete them with whatever words relate most closely to the member's idea of what UKEMS represents. The completed wordle will hopefully be uploaded to the UKEMS webpage.

12. Any Other Business

A request was made for any other business, but none was forthcoming and the meeting was closed.