

Member Networks Conference 2018
30 October to 1 November 2018
Liverpool

On the first day of the conference, two parallel meetings took place, one for geographical networks and one for our Interest Groups.

Both meetings were chaired by members of our Member Networks Committee:

- Interest Group meeting Chair - Helen Ryder (Formulation Science and Technology Group)
- Geographical networks meeting Chair - Chris Williamson (Downland Local Section and Member Communities Board)

In addition to the programmed discussions and presentations, delegates were asked to consider and input into the following two projects:

Recognition of our volunteers

Delegates were asked to submit ideas on postcards about how we can better recognise the work and dedication of our volunteers.

Surplus to purpose

The second project was about how we, the Royal Society of Chemistry, can spend more money. Our Trustees have identified that we have surplus funds and that these need to be used to fulfil our charitable purpose while maintaining suitable reserves for the future. We need to plan for the future and ensure that our projects are sustainable and we would like to hear your ideas on how we can take our funds and turn them from surplus to purpose.

Consultation and discussion sessions

There were also opportunities later in the day for delegates to share their own experiences in organising different types of event as well as taking part in discussions to input into projects on engaging early career members and the identification of our scientific priorities.

The second day of the conference was devoted to four workshops:

- Inclusion and diversity (resources available [here](#))
- Communications
- Engaging members
- Engaging new volunteers

The outputs from those sessions will be used to produce toolkits that will be available to support our member networks in early 2019.

The following is a summary of the first and last day of the conference.

Interest Group Forum

Questions for the Interest Group Forum were submitted in advance for discussion at the Member Networks Conference. Following those discussions, delegates in attendance were given the opportunity to raise further points for discussion.

The discussions have been categorised as:

- **Engagement**
- **Communication**
- **Events**
- **Inclusion and diversity**

Staff responses appear in italics – some of these are post event responses.

Engagement

Member Recruitment

How do we ensure that members of the RSC know which Interest Groups are of most relevance to their interests, particularly for those with interests that overlap a number of groups?

The list of Interest Groups on our [website](#) is now split into different fields of interest, some groups which are more general interest appear in multiple fields. All new members are invited, 4 weeks after admission, to view the list of groups and to join as many as they wish. All existing members are asked to consider their Interest Group membership at renewal each year.

How can we ensure that members in a specific sector know that there are Interest Groups that relate to their professional role?

Recent updates to our web pages outline benefits of specific relevance to Managers, Consultants and Teachers and all direct members to the appropriate groups.

Member Engagement

How can we engage with our members, some groups are finding it difficult to achieve their expected number of registrations for events?

We have a number of communication channels open to our networks and the output of the workshop by our Head of Communications, Julian Roberts, will be made available in 2019.

How can we ensure that members understand the benefits of volunteering to help run events or to join committees?

The outputs of the workshops about engaging members and new volunteers will be made available as a toolkit for our networks in early 2019.

Communication

Members

How can we focus our communications with our members to ensure that they engage with the message so that we don't need to keep resending e-alerts?

There are a number of communication channels open to our networks and the output of the workshop by our Head of Communications, Julian Roberts, will be made available in 2019.

Emails / E-Alerts / Newsletters

Concerns were raised regarding E-Alerts. It was felt that members are not seeing E-Alerts or do not notice them and requests were made to be able to send out more.

Limiting the number of E-Alerts sent is based on feedback from our members. Sending out too many emails, or repeating the same email content leads to members unsubscribing from the mailing list. By limiting the number of emails sent out by each committee, the content is more likely to be seen by members. The Networks Team are planning to review all of our communication processes including working with colleagues in Publishing and Research and Innovation to identify new communication channels for targeted promotion of events.

As member networks are not able to have an official RSC email address, a suggestion was made to utilise artificial intelligence to make it appear as though an email is coming from an interest group. From this, information on analytics can be generated, i.e. who clicked, how long/when, what was the impact.

Monitoring and tracking open- and click-rates is possible using our current e-alert platform, however creating and sharing regular reports for all member networks is a significant administrative burden. We will consider how best to share this information with member networks as part of our communications review.

GDPR

Members raised concerns over the difficulty of promoting to groups whilst remaining in compliance with GDPR laws. The question was raised 'can we explore how we work within reasonable guidelines to promote with other groups?'

It was noted that the General Data Protection Regulation was a matter of law and that the RSC must be compliant. Non-compliance could result in large fines for both the organisation and the individual members involved in a breach.

For our networks that collaborate with other organisations it has been agreed that the most straightforward and compliant solution is for each organisation to share information with their own members.

Social Media

How can we utilise social media most effectively to communicate our activities to our members and the wider community?

Can the staff managed RSC social media accounts promote our activities on our behalf?

There are a number of communication channels open to our networks and the output of the workshop by our Head of Communications, Julian Roberts, will be made available in 2019.

In terms of the staff managed RSC social media accounts – you might have noticed that we no longer have individual accounts and that all of our social media presence is now run by our Media Team through one account per platform. As a result, it would not be realistic for all networks activity to be promoted in this way. If you do use social media then please do tag our corporate accounts and they can like or share as appropriate.

A concern was raised that RSC do not actively retweet.

Our corporate social media accounts have a very large audience and the communications staff need to balance the content of relevance to their whole audience with the requests to promote localised or niche member-led activities.

Staff do retweet and like networks tweets from personal accounts.

Webinars

Do groups run webinars and if so, what solutions are available?

Yes they do, the Management Group has run a number of webinars for the past year or two through our GoToWebinar system.

The Chemical Education Research Group has run a very popular series of webinars (or cerginars as they call them) through a different system.

We have recently acquired a GoToWebinar account that will be managed by the Networks Team and will be available to our member networks to run their own webinars. We're just putting in place guidelines and a booking process then we'll be in touch with all of the information. The Networks Team will be able to support you for your first webinar and there is also training available from the provider's customer service team.

Website

Our main issue is the website – the RSC should be able to provide a responsive website service to help its members keep in touch & be informed about activities. Can there be provision of group management tools (file sharing, chats/forums)? MyRSC is not really fit for purpose and has severe limitations.

We appreciate that this has been a long running issue and we assure you that Fiona McMillan is working with colleagues in our Technology directorate to identify a solution.

It was noted that in recent months there has only been one member of staff available to support updating the web pages for our member networks – this situation has now improved.

Any requests for changes should be sent to networks@rsc.org.

Publishing

When there are specific issues around an Interest Group subject, for example, themed issues and published articles, why is there no consultation with experts in the Group, which could be mutually beneficial?

Many of our active committee members are also involved in our publishing activities and as they will know, there are specialist editorial boards who are consulted on these matters. When we have investigated this issue in the past, it has become apparent that members of the relevant editorial board are involved with the related interest group but had not informed the rest of the committee.

If there are any specific issues please do let us know so that we can help you make the appropriate connections.

How can we increase engagement with RSC Publishing at our events?

All of our member networks are welcome to contact relevant publishing teams to discuss potential areas of overlapping interest or to invite them to attend events.

How can officers of a LS and IG be told when you have changes in staff?

Currently, we inform our volunteers of staff changes in the Networks Team through the Networks Newsletter which is sent by email each month and is also available on [MyRSC](#).

If members would find other channels of communication more appropriate then we can make changes to accommodate.

As a large organisation with over 500 staff in our Cambridge office alone, it is not realistic for us to notify our networks of every staff change.

Chemistry World

Chemistry World appeared in a number of discussions as a tool members can use to promote their events.

Hilary White explained that staff are now working more closely with the Chemistry World Team to identify potential opportunities for collaboration.

Contacting Staff

Members would like a central point of contact for issues which require urgent attention, with a requested response time of 24-48 hours.

With the exception of the time between Christmas and New Year, the RSC office is open Monday to Friday.

Queries should be sent to shared mailboxes for the relevant team rather than directly to personal email addresses to ensure that the message is seen if a member of staff is not available.

On any occasion when a whole team are not available to answer a query, an automated response is sent to ensure that the sender of the email is aware that there will be a delay in responding. If planned absence for the whole team is unavoidable another member of staff will be asked to regularly check the shared mailbox to respond to any urgent queries.

To contact the Networks Team please email Networks@rsc.org.

Legal Responsibilities

Concerns were raised regarding the timeframe of contracts from going to the RSC legal team to returning to members. The timeframe is too long and there is a risk that venues, along with other aspect of running events, could be lost. Members would like documents to be returned to them within 3-4 weeks as they cannot afford to wait any longer.

Please be aware that the Legal Team have a very quick turnaround on contracts and that the rate determining step is normally slow response from the service providers.

Interest Group Collaborations

Could there be a forum for Interest Groups to facilitate committees in identifying potential collaborations?

Last year, at the Interest Group Forum, we held a discussion session specifically to identify potential collaborations. This is something we hope to repeat in 2019.

We can facilitate groups getting in touch with each other to discuss ideas.

We could, using MyRSC, set up an online forum for committee members to use to seek collaborations.

Events

International conferences

The number of international conferences run by the RSC, both staff and member-led, seems to have decreased – how can we reverse this trend?

Our member networks run well over 400 events per year and quite a number of these are international conferences and collaborations with other international organisations. Our events team run a significant number of international conferences each year and will continue to do so.

It may be that centrally we are more strategic about how we use our resources so perhaps we are running fewer, more impactful conferences.

We want to provide more opportunities for our volunteers to share their expertise with each other.

Staff-led Conferences

We would like to see a commitment from RSC Central that no conferences are organised without first consulting with relevant Interest Groups.

This has now been fed back to the Events and Exhibitions Manager. She agrees that there needs to be better communication to ensure that there is a two way dialogue regarding the conference pipelines.

Conference support services

What support we can expect from the RSC for conference organisation?

Our Events Team can offer support in collecting credit card payments – this is a chargeable service but that is no different to the internal recharging which operates between teams.

There will be new information about the registration service in early 2019.

Why does the RSC event registration system not use the same log in details as MyRSC?

MyRSC is an independent platform provided by a third party.

Does the RSC collect data on typical numbers in terms of attendance for events for monitoring trends?

Not currently but this is certainly something we will consider.

Following the discussions in this meeting, we are planning to investigate better ways to support our volunteers in having a better overview of their audience. As a starting point, we will be asking for further information in the 2019 annual report.

Can we use a third party event organiser for our events?

Absolutely, but please be aware that it is necessary to have a contract with the organiser, or any other service provider, and that this must be approved by our Legal Team and signed by a member of staff.

Can information on events be categorised into 1 day, 2 day, regional, and international and differing support be applied to each category?

We have over 120 committees running numerous activities that vary from school competitions to conferences. Volunteers are passionate about their event and we cannot categorise as what is deemed as important.

Event Promotion

It was felt that events run jointly with a collaborator are promoted well by partners but not by RSC who failed to provide a response on some occasions. Others noted that there was lots of communication with RSC but no publicity of the event. When events are publicised by RSC, there are concerns that they are not publicised early enough with some members finding out about events after they have happened.

We are currently reviewing ways we can communicate member-led activities to members and the wider community.

Inclusion and diversity

Best practice

We recognise that all of our activities should be inclusive and should showcase the diversity of our community – can the RSC provide best practice guidelines in the following areas:

- Events
- Communications
- Committee membership

Further information for our member networks is available [online](#).

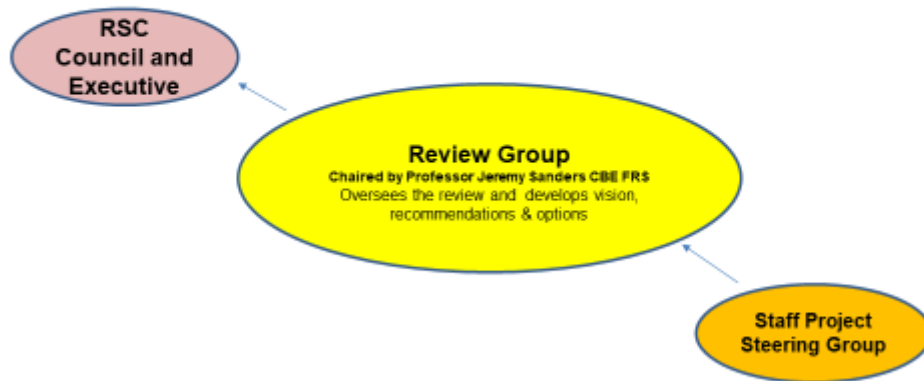
Review of Recognition Programmes 2019

Deirdre Black gave an overview of the 2019 review of recognition programmes noting that the motivations for the review can be summarised as:

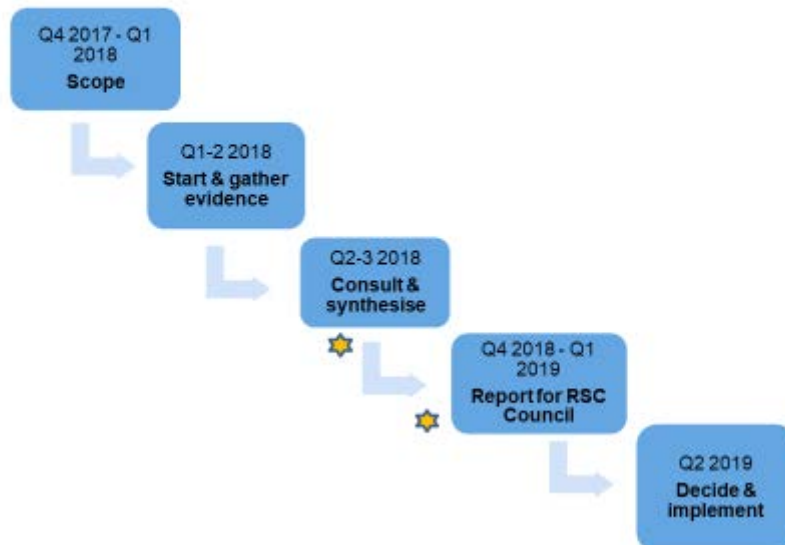
- Good practice – 10 years since last review
 - Noting aspects of RSC Prizes & Awards have continually improved in those 10 years
- Issues and opportunities highlighted by community and staff since review
 - Diversity, UK/International, member/non-member, reflection of RSC membership, publicity and profile. Also nominations, judging, finance and governance.
- Changes in the scientific environment and in recognition
 - Focus on impact, innovation and skills, interdisciplinarity, team science, academic research culture/ethics and careers, new types of recognition
- RSC strategy has changed and opportunity to show leadership



Review Structure



Timeline & Review Group



Key Activities

- Literature review
- Workshops with
 - RSC Science Education & Industry Board
 - Awards Working Group
 - Inclusion & Diversity Committee
 - Division Councils
- Interviews
- Survey and open mailbox recognition2019@rsc.org
- Message to Interest Group Chairs

- Interest Groups & Member Networks Conference
- Review of volunteer support including recognition of volunteers
- Coverage in *Voice* and *Chemistry World*

Questions

- Are there any areas or aspects of the chemical sciences that should be reflected more in the RSC awards portfolio?
- What are the benefits to Interest Groups of having awards?
- Do Interest Groups need additional guidance or support in connection with awards?
- Is there an issue that “the RSC has too many awards”?

Sharing Experiences

We know that our member networks and other volunteers have a wealth of experience in planning and running a diverse range of events and other activities.

You have told us on a number of occasions that you really value the opportunity to share your experiences with each other, to be inspired by each other and to seek advice from each other and so we would like to offer you the opportunity to talk to those around you about your activities and particularly where your committee excels.

The purpose of this session is for you to share your experiences in organising events and to be inspired by each other.

We have delegates here from groups that have experiences to share in different areas:

- Tom from the Separation Science Group who have great experience of organising international conferences
- Kevin here from the Water Science Forum who have created a comprehensive process for approving and running events of all sizes including member engagement events
- Byron from the Management Group who have a regular webinar programme
- Yvonne from the Electrochemistry Group who regularly collaborate with other RSC Interest Groups as well as other organisations

Those present were encouraged to share their experiences and to consider the following starter questions:

- What type of events do you organise?
- Have you had any feedback from your community on the types of activities they want?
- Are there any new types of activities you would like to consider?

These discussions continued on the topics discussed and summarised in the Interest Group Forum.

Geographical Networks Meeting **IYPT – Julian Roberts and Sheena Elliott**

2019 has been designated the International Year of the Periodic Table, marking the 150th anniversary of the Mendeleev periodic table, which is an iconic image and a vital tool to all who learn and work in science, at all stages of their learning and careers. The IYPT allows the RSC to celebrate an important international anniversary, an iconic tool within our profession and the achievements of our profession and our communities. In doing so, we also have the opportunity to raise awareness of and engagement with the RSC, our products and services whilst advancing some of our strategic priorities, particularly against the Profession and Voice strands of our strategy.

This is an organisational and community wide project and all staff, members and communities will have an opportunity to get involved. We look forward to talking to and learning from our community and aim to tap into chemistry at every stage from school to industry, to build collaborations, within the UK and internationally to make our mark.

IYPT will be launched on 29 Jan 2019 in Paris, we will work with IUPAC and EuChemS over the next few months to prepare.



Overall Aim

IYPT celebrates the periodic table, our profession and our communities through a programme of staff and community led activity.

Periodic Table

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18																										
1	H	Li	Na	K	Rb	Cs	Ba							Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr														
2	Be	Mg	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr	Xe	Rn																							
3			Al	Ga	In	Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Fl	Cn	Og																															
4			Si	Ge	Sn	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Fl	Cn	Og																																
5			P	As	Sb	Bi	Po	At	Fl	Cn	Og																																	
6			S	Se	Te	Po	At	Fl	Cn	Og																																		
7			Cl	Br	I	At	Fl	Cn	Og																																			
8			Ar	Kr	Xe	Rn																																						
9													Fr	Ra	Ac	Th	Pa	U	Np	Pu	Am	Cm	Bk	Cf	Es	Fm	Md	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru	Rh	Pd	Ag	Cd	In	Sn	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Fl	Cn	Og



Opportunities

There is a diverse programme of activity planned throughout 2019 for IYPT using the periodic table as a template to showcase the diverse work of the RSC and our communities and celebrate our achievements. This is a mix of member and staff led initiatives, high profile flagship events, directorate activities and localised events designed to reach a diverse audience and inspire individuals from across our audiences to engage with our profession and the RSC. These include:

- A public lecture series that can be rolled out at locations across the UK

- Participation in IUPACs global women's breakfast event
- Themed journals and books
- Dedicated Chemistry World content
- Activities to engage policy makers – to influence policy and encourage investment in education
- Activities to engage with the public (and policy makers as a result)

IYPT provides an opportunity for us to develop and trial new resources that can be adapted beyond 2019 to support using the periodic table as a template to showcase the diverse work of the RSC and our communities and celebrate our achievements, the inspiration of people towards our profession. These will include:

- Provision of grants to our member networks and communities to fund IYPT specific activities for their respective communities.
- Education hub for teachers and resources provided through the Learn Chemistry Partnership
- Public outreach resources
- Social media and digital guides and toolkits for members and member networks

We will take the opportunity to monitor the impact of these events and their legacy.



Project Highlights

- Mix of diverse and engaging activities to be delivered throughout 2019
- Steering Group and Advisory Board
- Dedicated budget and resource approved
- Official launch: January 29, Paris
- Strong emphasis on communications – plan will be in place
- Measuring impact/ensuring legacy is key



Funding and Grants

IYPT member network activities will be supported through two strands of funding: the Outreach Fund (<http://www.rsc.org/awards-funding/funding/outreach-fund/>) and IYPT grants (<http://www.rsc.org/iypt/iypt-member-grants/>).

There are two types of IYPT Grants:

- IYPT Member Networks grants:
 - Up to £1000 for Member Networks (Local Sections, Interest Groups, International Sections, Education Division Regions and Analytical Division Regions)
- IYPT Member grants
 - Up to £500 for members, ChemSocs and Learn Chemistry Partnership schools

These are offered in addition to the annual Member Network and ChemSoc grants.

The IYPT Grants are now open and will be open throughout year with a rolling application process; applications will be considered in January, April, July and October. The first deadline is Monday 14 January. Member networks are encouraged to apply early – we are not sure of the uptake and number of applications to expect, it is possible that we will increase the budget if there is high demand.

The Outreach Fund will be open as normal for grants up to £2,000 and £10,000 for IYPT activities.

Contact Magda, Geri and Anna at outreach@rsc.org for more information.

A number of questions were asked and discussed after the presentation – these are noted in the following table.

Question	Response
Why 2019?	2019 is the 150 th anniversary of Mendeleev's discovery of the periodic system and the 100 th anniversary of the founding of IUPAC.
Will the RSC be involved in the Jan 29 launch activities?	We're sponsoring IUPAC's launch, and working with them on the content for the launch.
Is this part of a UN initiative? How is RSC feeding into this?	We supported the IUPAC and UNESCO application for IYPT.
Will info be sent to schools from RSC?	We will promote IYPT and resources to schools. The £500 IYPT Member grants are available through LearnChemistry for schools or teachers.

<p>Will there be resources and support rather than just money?</p>	<p>We are preparing a digital communication pack for social media, etc., consistent with the global celebrations and that reflects RSC and members.</p> <p>These will be ready for the IYPT launch (Jan 2019).</p>
<p>The RSC appears to be tacking on to this event, but we should be a major player. Can Local Sections put on displays or interact with science museums?</p>	<p>We are in discussion with science museums all over the country and help the Science Museum in London with events. We are being approached by organisations for IYPT resources and support; we want to take national lead and raise awareness.</p> <p>Some of these partners are science centres and we are linked with these through our volunteer engagement team. We will be involved in the launch and mirroring international events (like global women’s breakfast).</p> <p>The communication pack will be easy to use and share and will help members and member networks to create specific Twitter or LinkedIn content.</p>
<p>In 2011 (the International Year of Chemistry), every Local Section was given £1000 to do something additional outside of their ordinary remit; will there be something similar?</p>	<p>The Outreach fund based on the legacy of the IYC. What we want is to start projects that will have a similar long-term legacy and impact.</p> <p>We will link individual members who apply for IYPT Member grants with local sections or members in their area and encourage building on projects.</p>
<p>Will you share “good ideas” from the IYPT grant applications? How?</p>	<p>We will upload stories to our news pages and share successful ideas via social media.</p>
<p>Are the IYPT Member grants available for international members?</p>	<p>The £1000 Member Networks grants are available for all geographical networks.</p> <p>The grants for individual members are only available to members in the UK and Ireland. If a member who is not based in the UK or Ireland applies, we will connect them with their international section or representative.</p>
<p>Are the IYPT Member Network grants open for AD regions?</p>	<p>Yes and ED regions too.</p>

Is this separate from the normal ChemSoc grants (for £100, £200 or £500)?	Yes. It will be possible to scale up activities for IYPT.
Is there funding available from the UN?	Not that we're aware of, but if we become aware of additional funding opportunities we will share this information.
Will there be similar funding through PACN?	We are not aware of any plans to offer IYPT funding through the PACN.

Sharing Experiences – Sheena Elliott

We know that our member networks and other volunteers have a wealth of experience in planning and running a diverse range of activities to showcase the wonder of chemistry. This session is for you to share your experiences in past public engagement initiatives like the International Year of Chemistry or Chemistry Week and to be inspired by each other.

Please use the papers and post-its on your table to put all of your discussions down on paper and at the end we will ask each table to feed back the main learning points from your discussion.

- Most successful outreach or public engagement?
- Most unusual activity?
- Any examples of reaching underserved audiences?
- Any challenges or learning points?
- Examples of where partnering with others has worked?
- Any practical considerations, or areas of support that need developing?

Discussion topic	Main learning points
Most successful outreach or public engagement?	<p>Schools Analyst Competition. Barrier: Lack of funding, only public schools compete</p> <p>Chemistry Busking at the EuChemS Congress in Liverpool. Barrier: Confidence and a lack of expertise for difficult questions for volunteers.</p> <p>Kitchen Chemistry events: visual, relatable and entertaining</p> <p>Christmas lectures or supporting science festivals (like in Norwich)</p> <p>Working with children – must be an activity that is engaging for the children and people with them</p>

	Outreach lectures or events that equip children with problem solving skills and drive scientific temperament
Most unusual activity?	Working in Eisteddfod in Wales, ploughing championships in Ireland, Royal Highland show in Scotland, always have a table very popular with great discussions and serious questions about chemistry in daily life (fertilisers, etc.).
Any examples of reaching underserved audiences?	Pop ups at farmers markets, libraries, train stations Taking over shopping centres and doing demonstrations of chemistry of smell, art or gin in pop-ups
Any challenges or learning points?	We need volunteers who are confident to approach the public: there was love/hate feedback from volunteers at the Chemistry Busking in Liverpool as some found the questions difficult to respond to. Old events (like public lectures) don't work well anymore
Examples of where partnering with others has worked?	Think Science in UEA – a collaboration with industry and engineering. Provides hands on, real world examples for children. Barrier: Health and safety.
Any practical considerations, or areas of support that need developing?	Health and safety Teacher training Volunteer training
Suggestions for IYPT activities?	“Common man” approach to saturate the market: Produce periodic table beer mats, podcasts, apps and giant PTs for schools Roll out previous Chemistry Week ideas

Communicating with your Members – Sheena Elliott

In 2017, we surveyed all the members of member networks' committees and they told us that they would like the opportunity to share different ways to communicate with members both about activities and getting involved.

We know that there are many different communication channels used by our member networks and that your members include a number of different audiences.

The purpose of today's discussion is to give you the opportunity to learn from each other, to share your experiences in communicating with your members and to identify what you can learn from each other.

Discussion topic	Learning points
What channels do you use to promote your activities?	Email.
What channels are most successful (or unsuccessful)?	Email works. E-mail, face to face and phone are best, then skype and virtual meetings.
Has anything worked to reach new audiences?	Nigeria has 200 million people. We would like to take activities to regions for face to face interaction. We try to line up International Section activity with a regional event or conference to meet RSC members within the group, this has worked recently.
Do you find different channels work better for different types of activity?	Teaching: non-verbal communication is important so face to face is best. Communicating with schools: a formal letter on headed paper is most likely to get a response In Nigeria, organising school activities through the Ministry of Education works
Anything unusual you've tried?	Chemistry Busking at the EuChemS Congress in Liverpool Student led activities work (good for professional development)
Any practical considerations, or areas of support that need developing?	Important to show that we don't work as individuals. Chemistry is interdisciplinary, we work in groups. Need to make the subject matter entertaining and bring it to life

	<p>Chemistry History: We should draw on it as history is good for context, however a balance is needed, as we cannot make the content too dry</p> <p>How can we have a broader uptake of chemistry? Only 5% of people are chemists, but 95% could have the temperament to be a scientist.</p> <p>Only 5-10% of our membership turn up and get involved in our activities, the bulk are not engaged. How do we tap into them?!</p> <p>Support from RSC Member networks need more funding. Would like to start a newsletter but need funding (Nigeria)</p> <p>Help from RSC and guidance about when/what to email</p>
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Open Questions – Geographical Networks

Questions were submitted in advance for discussion at the Member Networks Conference. Following those discussions, delegates in attendance were given the opportunity to raise further points for discussion.

Communication	
Question	Response
We have had a number of comments regarding the issues some members have had in ensuring that their events are promoted in the monthly Update which accompanies Chemistry World.	This is an issue which we have already started to investigate, our Communications colleagues are working with us and we hope to have an update for you all soon.
Can you comment on the use of MyRSC to share information about community activities and to share and store documents?	<p>We would encourage all of our networks to make use of MyRSC to share their activities if their community is active on that platform. In terms of sharing and storing documents that is absolutely fine, although, please ensure that any files are GDPR compliant.</p> <p>We want to support member networks' online presence and community. If MyRSC is convenient for your committee and network then that's great, but we are happy for networks to use alternative social media platforms.</p>
If we ask for a mailing list of our members, and send out a mail we might get a	When e-alerts sent from Networks@rsc.org are bounced from email addresses that are no longer

<p>very high proportion of bounced emails. What steps does the RSC take to reduce this bounce-back rate? How does the RSC ensure that the member information is correct?</p>	<p>valid we forward the responses to the Membership team so that our records can be updated.</p> <p>Some spam filters can block emails that are sent to a large number of people, this is not observed when we send an email. It might be prudent to send member emails through the Networks team, or at the very least forward information about bounced emails to us.</p>
<p>What about students registered at home address instead of university address who are not getting the relevant Local Section mailings?</p>	<p>We can store home, work and term-time addresses for our members but it is up to members to give us accurate information and to indicate which address they would like to use.</p> <p>We can work with our colleagues to investigate ways to contact student members to remind them about this issue.</p>
<p>Engagement</p>	
<p>Question</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>How should we engage with student members? Should we ask them to volunteer to help out running activities?</p>	<p>We encourage all of our networks to seek out volunteers from their whole membership to help run activities. Our members' survey tells us that there are a lot of enthusiastic members out there who would like to volunteer on an ad hoc basis rather than for a committee role. We can help you by targeting e-alerts to members in the right location or, if you particularly want student members for a specific activity, we can send the message only to them.</p> <p>We would encourage targeting your communications in general (as will be discussed in the workshop on Wednesday) as a more effective way to communicate with your members – there's no point in sending your student members invitations to a retired members' lunch, for example.</p>
<p>Chemists' Community Fund</p>	
<p>Question</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>What are the plans for updating the activities and expenditure of the Chemists' Community Fund?</p>	<p>Currently the Chemists' Community Fund is offering workshops, webinars, and services with the aim of preventing poverty. The ability to offer alternative services depends on the origin of and conditions on the funds in question but we are working on broadening the services and support offered by the CCF. Current activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing workshops • Bereavement support • Development of the CCF volunteer network

Policy and Evidence	
Question	Response
<p>There has been a specific query regarding any planned opportunities for members to work more closely with MPs and other politicians.</p>	<p>While we engage with policy makers as an organisation, we know that politicians are more likely to listen to an opinion from their own constituents. We do have campaigns from time to time that we ask members to get involved with and to contact their local MP to amplify our voice using letter templates or other resources.</p> <p>We encourage all of our members to engage with their local MP, or equivalent, to raise the profile of chemistry and the importance of chemical science to society.</p>

Project Consultation Discussions

The following presentations and discussions took place in both meetings with the purpose of gathering member feedback on current projects.

The output from the discussions has been captured and will be used to inform these projects.

Information on the specific projects is noted here.

Scientific Horizons – Deirdre Black

The chemical sciences are a constantly changing environment. We want to develop a mid-term outlook for chemistry in the next 5–10 years, this will feed into RSC scientific strategy and identify areas for us to focus on (for example, flagship themes, outreach campaigns, conferences, funding agencies or emerging areas for new journals, meetings or interest groups).

We are working with an external research agency to gather information in three stages:

- Gathering data science from publishing and funding to identify trends or correlations
- Identifying trends in research funding globally and policy
- Gathering opinions from researchers – we began these interviews at ECC7 in Liverpool, we've also conducted about 70 interviews over the phone

In general, we have found that among publishing and funding bodies there was a trend for a focus on impact, on translation of results from university to commercial applications, and on international collaboration. There has been a global move towards challenges or missions (e.g. the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or the UKRI or EU missions).

From our feedback from researchers, the early emerging themes include

- The importance of fundamental research (e.g. Yaghi's porous materials research became water harvesting technology)
- Major challenges like batteries, antibiotics, or energy
- The importance of research enablers: funding, behaviours, and the necessary technology, tools, and techniques for measurement

We are seeking your input in three areas:

- Advances: What do you think will be the most important and exciting advances in your area of chemistry over the next 5-10 years? Why?
- Impacts: What might be the impact of these advances over the mid to long term?
- Enablers: Are there any enablers or dependencies that will be critical in order to achieve these advances?

We will collect all the information and find themes and overlaps. Please send further comments to blackd@rsc.org.

The overall outputs of this project will be published next year.

Ethics in Chemistry - Strategic Purpose

Deirdre also gave a short introduction to the Ethics in Chemistry project which is being led by Harp Minhas (minhash@rsc.org).

What

- To determine what matters to our communities with respect to ethics, how are they affected by such issues and how ethical guidelines are implemented

Why

- To work with our communities to build and adopt a clear ethical framework to improve and enhance the work environments of chemists and the conditions under which they are employed

How

- By gathering internal and external opinions, documents and institutional approaches to ethics. Ascertaining whether ethical requirements are subject-specific (within chemistry) or common across chemistry and other related sciences

Your input

- Via the questionnaire – tell us what ethical issues matter to you and give you the greatest concern. What issues would you like better addressed?

Engaging with Early Career Members – Sarah Harrison

The RSC is currently undertaking a review to examine what we do for early career members and to consider what more can we do.

Firstly, we identified the Early Career community as apprentices, teachers, PDRAs, PhD students, industrialists, and academics. We included members who had had a career break.

Note: we do not consider undergraduate level students as early career members as we provide many services for undergraduates and promote the EC community and its advantages as a benefit of RSC membership.

Secondly, we examined the range of activities that we provide for EC members. We examined activities across the portfolio instead of focusing on different sectors so that we could get ideas of how to create networks and links.

For the review we need the EC community to have a voice so that our plans reflect what the early career community are telling us they need.

What do we do?

- Early Career Symposium
- Grants and funding workshops
- Industry training vouchers
- Webinars
- Prizes & Awards
- Careers fairs

- Mentoring
- Careers management service
- Journal lectureships
- Joliot-Curie conference

What do our member networks do for Early Career members?

Our research has identified EC needs in four areas:

- Networking
- Training
- Recognition
- Careers

We want to hear suggestions of opportunities or barriers for EC events in these four areas; we will collect all of your comments and these will be used to inform the output of this project.

What do members expect?

We already know the amazing range of activities you provide for your communities. Now we'd like you to think in a more general way about what do our members expect from their membership of the RSC.

What we want is to understand the benefit of joining a member network.

- What do our member networks offer?
- What do you want or expect as a member?
- What support or recognition do you expect (or need) from us?

Topic	Main discussion points
What does your committee provide for your network?	Engaging family events Inclusion and diversity in events Social and scientific events Teacher support
What do you expect from the networks of which you are not a member?	Opportunity to give back Mentoring and support for teachers Duplication of events Accessible database Lists of speakers
What do you expect from us?	Share successful events Volunteer opportunities for retired members

	Recognition Funding Lists of “approved” venues or facilitators for events
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International Local Sections Meeting 1 November 2018

This meeting was run specifically for those delegates representing our Local Sections based outwith the UK and Ireland. These Local Sections operate under a different funding and governance structure to our UK and Ireland Local Sections and benefit from the opportunity to share their experiences in supporting members outside of the UK and Ireland.

The meeting was chaired by Tim Reynolds, Chair of the International Steering Group and a member of the Member Networks Committee.

Finances

Fiona McMillan explained the new process for approving funding for Local Sections outwith the UK and Ireland which had been approved by the Member Networks Committee.

In May 2018 the Member Networks Committee agreed that a more succinct and efficient process for approval of these grants should be put in place by the Networks Team. To ensure all of the budget requests are considered fairly and relative to each other, while ensuring that economic and cultural factors are still taken into account, the following process will be implemented in 2019.

Funding Process

This process will operate on a strict timeline to ensure that we can respond to the budget requests quickly, as long as they have been submitted with all of the correct information.

As with all of our member networks, the deadline for submission of financial reports is in early February (**9 Feb 2019**). The main change is that this will also be the deadline for budget requests – for the first year there will be some flexibility, but submission of budget requests beyond Q1 will be strongly discouraged.

All complete requests submitted by the deadline with accurate information will be processed, and approved grants will be paid within four weeks.

To ensure consistency, all of the budget requests will be initially reviewed by the Networks Team. The budget requests will then be passed, with the Networks Team's comments, to a member of RSC staff with experience working with the relevant country to ensure that we take into account any different cultural or economic realities for members in that country, as well as any local RSC activities that might be relevant. Any requests which include any public engagement or outreach activities will also be reviewed by colleagues who manage the Outreach Fund.

The final decisions will be made via panel from within the Member Communities team, with approval from the Member Communities manager as budget holder. This will be communicated as soon as possible.

What do we need?

To help us to meet our ambitious timeline we are asking that:

Financial report

Submit your 2018 financial report by **9 February 2019**.

- Ensure that your accounts balance and are submitted on the correct forms.

Budget request

Submit your 2019 budget request by **9 February 2019**.

Your budget should, for this year, be a 15 month budget from January 2019 to March 2020.

- Tell us what you need – give us as much information as possible.
- Tell us about any country specific issues for us to record for future years.
- Tell us how many members you envisage taking part in each activity and how you will measure the impact.
- If you have past experience of running a similar event tell us how it went and how you will build on it.

Grant payments

We will inform your Treasurer when your budget has been approved including:

- The value of the approved grant including an explanation of how we reached the final decision.
- A summary of which parts of the budget were approved and which were not approved.

If you have not received the grant payment 28 days after the Treasurer has been notified please email networks@rsc.org.

Question/comment	Response
If there are surplus funds then our budget the following year will decrease. We are forced to use up our budget for the sake of it, rather than use it efficiently.	You do not need to use your budget to 0. If we have given you money in September, show us how you plan to use the money in the coming months.
We are required to keep money back as we do not receive our budget payments until June/July.	This is why we are making the changes
The money transfer process takes too long. In a previous year we did not receive our	We commit to getting money to you. There have been cases when money has not been received and RSC has not been informed. If you have not

<p>money until the end of the year and we couldn't do our activities. As a result, we didn't ask for any money in 2017.</p>	<p>received your payment within 28 days of your treasurer being notified of the payment, please inform the networks team (Networks@RSC.org) ASAP.</p>
<p>It would be helpful to know the time period for which we are budgeting. This would make it simple for us in the reporting and allow us to justify why there are surplus funds.</p>	<p>We use the calendar year for all our member networks (Jan-Dec). We appreciate the time lag and take into account that there will need to be flexibility. For 2019, please budget for 15 months (Jan 2019-March 2020)</p>
<p>Can you remove the password protection so we can add notes?</p>	<p>We can ask our colleagues in our Finance Team.</p>
<p>Can the secretary help the treasurer?</p>	<p>Yes, not a problem</p>
<p>At the AGM the officers might change</p>	<p>This is not a problem. You do not need to pre-approve spending at the AGM. It just needs to be agreed by the chair and treasurer.</p>
<p>We would like more grants to be able to run programs annually</p>	<p>There will also be IYPT and Inclusion and Diversity funds.</p> <p>Members can include requests for new activities in their budget request.</p>
<p>Inclusion and Diversity – What do you expect?</p> <p>What is the reason?</p>	<p>This means Inclusion and Diversity in every sense. Inclusion: accessible to different backgrounds – consider backgrounds, impairments when planning events. Diversity – every type of diversity. There should be no reason someone shouldn't attend an event.</p> <p>Members are to identify within their own countries where there are gaps. A lot of countries already do this very well.</p>
<p>Having retired members in committees makes it difficult to make any arrangements. The budget is too small to cover travel.</p> <p>We use the RSC's name which encourages membership and would like to keep the section going but we need funding to allow the handover.</p>	<p>We encourage all of our networks to use the funds they have to support engagement by any members who wish to get involved. If there is a need for additional funds this should be included in the budget request.</p>

Are there any restrictions on international events?	<p>We are happy for all of our networks to collaborate. Chemistry should be global.</p> <p>Other members were able to provide success stories where collaborations have worked well for them.</p> <p>Members are encouraged to form collaborations with other IGs and LSs.</p>
Can other sections apply for travel?	Yes, it doesn't have to come out of your budget.
Can our budgets be used to support academic-industry interactions?	Yes, Interest Groups are global. Contact the relevant IG if you are organising an event with overlap
We would like RSC staff members to attend events, does this come out of our budget?	No. The budget for this is internal within RSC and member groups should not cover the cost of RSC staff to attend their meetings.

What is outreach?

Magda van Leeuwen encouraged delegates to share ideas on possible uses for the £1000 grants available to celebrate the IYPT.

Question	Response
What is the role of chemistry in terms of science?	<p>Scientist's responses can come across as hostile which promotes fake news stories.</p> <p>Encourage open dialogue</p> <p>Relax about sensitivity on how people are coming to decisions.</p>
Not all children will become chemists. How can we interpret evidence in a way that will encourage young children to consider chemistry as a career?	<p>It is important to inspire confidence within people, which is something we can move towards as a community.</p> <p>RSC are trying to bridge the gap and bring exciting chemistry back in to the classroom.</p>

RSC Global Activities

Sarah Thomas, Senior Programme Manager for International Engagement, gave an update on RSC activities around the world.

Question / comment	Response
<p>There has not yet been any Chemical Society Memoranda of Understandings with Nigeria.</p> <p>What are the requirements?</p>	<p>There are no strict requirements. If there is interest on both sides then we can discuss formalising a relationship.</p>
<p>Commonwealth chemistry – interest in federation of grouping chemical societies within commonwealth countries.</p>	<p>May be possible to organise a congress.</p>
<p>How long have you had an office in Germany?</p>	<p>The staff in our offices have different roles. USA and Germany are more focused on sales. India, China and Japan on membership and broader engagement.</p>
<p>Could you provide more information on accreditation?</p>	<p>There are 2 types. In the UK all chemistry degrees are given the stamp of approval. We have started to role this out internationally. The university submit the paperwork on course content and output.</p>

International Regional Steering Groups

Tim Reynolds led a discussion on the current usefulness of the International Regional Steering Groups.

Question	Discussion
<p>It was noted that not all of the Local Sections were present and that it would not be fair to make any decisions without including all of the relevant networks.</p>	<p>We want you to discuss this with all networks but as not every network could be represented at the conference we want to start the discussion with those present.</p>
<p>Is there a need for sub regions?</p>	<p>Is there scope for an international forum where all countries and committee reps can have access?</p> <p>Create something virtually, webpage forum to discuss proposals etc.</p> <p>India hold a physical meeting once a year for a day or half day and this works well. A virtual meeting would make it challenging. There has always been a call for more face-to-face</p>

	Some members feel that a biennial meeting would be enough to meet new people and meet RSC staff.
Nothing happened in Africa with sub regions. Africa would like a regional Africa Network which meets once per year.	This would be ideal to link with PACN.

General discussion

Question	Discussion
People want to get involved, or have been involved, but feel unappreciated.	Other members agree and feel there is a need for more recognition. It was noted that the Networks Team can already provide a letter of appreciation and long service award certificates. It is hoped that the review of recognition will instigate some new opportunities for recognition.
Can we receive information on the demographic of our member networks?	Yes, we can provide you with anonymised data. We will aim to do this annually with the information given to you in time for when you are putting together your budget requests.
Sometimes students are interested in activities but are concerned about what they get from RSC if they become a member. Is it possible to offer a trial period? Is it possible to give students reduced fees if they are from an RSC accredited university?	We don't offer a trial membership. Some members already get a 50% reduction so we cannot reduce that any more. This also applies to staff at universities.
Members outside the UK don't always understand the benefit of membership or the prestige of FRSC.	Fellow is our most senior category of membership. Applicants must be in a senior position for 5 years involved in chemical sciences. We have 8000 fellows and the application is a peer review process. We occasionally invite to apply but this does not guarantee fellowship. It is possible to go straight to fellow.

<p>Some promotions are based on publications, what about teachers?</p>	<p>When applications are assessed, publications are looked at but this is not the only area that is considered. We also look at senior responsibilities, impact, budget, and input of strategic directions.</p>
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