

## ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY

### DRAFT Report of the AGM held in Burlington House, London, on 12 July 2007

Jim Feast, RSC President, chaired the AGM, the notice having been circulated to members with *Chemistry World* in June.

The AGM conveyed loyal greetings to the RSC's Patron, Her Majesty the Queen.

Jim Feast referred to the international nature of RSC, a charity, reminding members that the income from the global Publishing business provides the resources with which we can undertake much of the work to support our activities for our members worldwide.

He drew attention to a few of the RSC's achievements for the year which were highlighted in the *Annual Review*:

- the new RSC office in Beijing with the local RSC representative, Dr Chunxiao Zheng, who had attended the RSC General Assembly in Glasgow, and the arrangements for the launch of *Chemistry World China*
- the 10% increase in Impact Factors for RSC Journals compared with around 6% for all chemistry titles globally.
- the launch of ReSouCe, the RSC's referee and author portal, together with a number of other technical innovations, including Project Prospect to enable links to additional detailed information
- the launch of two successful new journals, *Soft Matter* and *Molecular BioSystems*, *Soft Matter* having an impact factor competitive with the equivalent ACS journal in that area
- the award to *Chemistry World* of the Periodical Publishers' Association monthly business and professional magazine of the year.
- the collaborative agreements with sister societies in China, India, Singapore, South Africa, Brazil, in support of the development of our publishing business and promotion of high level science conferences.
- the significant impact of RSC energy policies on government; page 15 of the *Annual Review* illustrates the event at No 10 Downing Street to meet the then energy minister Malcolm Wicks; the leading role in the energy activities of EuCheMS (European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences)
- the RSC work in leading the Chemistry Innovation Knowledge Transfer Network, page 17 of the *Annual Review*, with a contract with the DTI for ~£5 million to get this initiative off the ground and a portfolio after one year of £48 million, allocated through DTI, the EPSRC and the European FP6 and FP7 programmes
- other external sources of funding: the £3.6m government funding for our *Chemistry for Our Future* project to develop of university curricula and ensure a sustainable future for chemistry in UK universities; £1.3m from GSK and the Department of Education and Skills to fund a programme to provide Chemistry for non-specialist science teachers.
- the role of RSC, through its Campaign for Chemistry, in pressing for the £75m in funding from HEFCE towards physical science teaching in universities

- the redesigned *Education in Chemistry*, our magazine for schools and university chemistry teachers which is sent to over 5000 schools in the UK, to all UK chemistry departments and to a subscribers list in 50 countries worldwide.

Jim Feast invited the Chief Executive, Richard Pike, to comment on the 2006 Accounts, in the absence of the Honorary Treasurer, Elliot Finer. The full accounts were published in the *Annual Record and Trustees' Report*, copies of which were available at the AGM, and the summary of the Accounts had been published the *Annual Review*.

Richard Pike reported that the key message from the Honorary Treasurer was that 2006 had been an excellent year. The RSC had devoted £26m to charitable activities and ended the year with a surplus before gains on investments of £5,335K (£4,591K in 2005). Unrealised gains on investments were £4,963K and the net movement in funds for the year included a decrease of £956K resulting from actuarial losses on the Defined Benefits Pension Scheme. The balance sheet reserves and funds including General Funds rose from £49.7m on 1 January 2006 to £59.1m at 31 December 2006.

He explained that the Financial Statements had been prepared for the first time in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) issued by the Charity Commission. Prior year figures had been restated as required to comply with the revised SORP and to be on the same basis as those for 2006. There was no net impact of these changes on the reported net surplus for the year.

Richard Pike drew attention to the publishing surplus of £8.8m compared to £8.3m in 2005. Two new journals, *Soft Matter* and *Molecular BioSystems*, had been launched and the Business Development team had built up its knowledge and expertise in the area of energy. Additionally, the RSC's referee and author portal, *ReSource*, had been relaunched with additional functionality and author tools.

He reported that income from membership subscriptions remained unchanged at £2.8m. Membership had increased to 43,440 – this was a small increase after a recent decline (membership was 42,772 in 2005), with a retention rate of 93.9% (93.5% in 2005). The other main income was from the investment portfolio, which yielded gross income of £1.9m in 2006 compared to £2.1m in 2005. The total investment return on the Investments was 12.3% compared to the benchmark of 12.1%. The relative out performance was due to positive equity market returns, strong corporate earnings growth and solid economic activity.

Richard Pike confirmed that RSC continues to aim to run high quality international conferences whilst reducing the overall deficit for our conference activities.

He added that the pension fund deficit reported under FRS 17 decreased to £12.1m at 31 December 2006 (£15.4m in 2005). Based on actuarial advice, and in agreement with the Pension Scheme Trustees, the RSC had agreed a timetable for the funding of this deficit. In line with this plan, an additional payment of £4m had been made in 2006 (£4m in 2005). Additional annual payments of £4m had been forecast in RSC's medium term financial plan for 2007 and 2008.

Jim Feast then invited questions from the members on the accounts and the Reports.

In answer to a question about the RSC's role in promoting employment issues, including minimum notice periods, Jim Feast reminded members that the RSC had members in a wide range of professional activities and overseas but that it did not have the role of a trade union and was not able to negotiate on such matters. In answer to a question about promoting understanding among the general public of the difference between a pharmacist and chemist, Jim Feast responded that although efforts had been made in the past there appeared to be no effective way of tackling this issue.

In response to a query about Local Section activity in the London area, the President informed members that he had attended a lively Chilterns and Middlesex Section meeting in Burlington House and reminded members that the Section could determine the extent of its own activities and seek funding where appropriate.

In response to a question about the best way of finding RSC environment, health and safety briefings on the web site, members were assured that the web site was continually updated and that the RSC had purchased Google software to provide the optimum search facility. In answer to an enquiry about use of funds to improve water quality and reduce pollution, the President announced that the RSC would soon be launching a major initiative, through a new Pan-Africa Chemistry Network project.

Jim Feast responded to a question about transfer between categories of membership by informing the member that anyone having difficulty in finding referees would receive help and advice from RSC staff; a line manager who is a member of another professional body could be a suitable referee.

The adoption of the 2006 Accounts was proposed by John Green, seconded by David Whan and approved by a show of hands.

The meeting noted that the notice of vacancies on Council and for Elected Members of Boards had been published in *RSCNews* in January 2007. Jim Feast reported that Simon Campbell would relinquish the office of Immediate Past President at the close of this meeting and added that during Simon Campbell's tenure of office the RSC had undergone major change, developing a much higher profile with government and a better defined strategy. Simon Campbell's initiative in launching the Campaign for Chemistry had had a significant effect on the climate of opinion about chemistry. He would continue his involvement in the high-profile fundraising campaign.

Jim Feast announced that Council's nominee for the position of President Elect, Dave Garner, was declared elected, his term of office as President to start immediately after the 2008 AGM.

Jim Feast reported that seven nominations had been received for the five vacancies for Ordinary Members of Council, a ballot had been held and the following were declared elected: Dr John David Green, Professor Ray C F Jones, Dr Peter J Machin, Professor Carole C Perry and Dr David W Prest. The Scrutineers' report was available.

With respect to Boards, Jim Feast reported that nominations had not exceeded the number of vacancies. The following were declared Elected Members of Boards:

Education Policy Board: Michael Page, John Parkinson, Neville V Richardson  
Membership Affairs Board: Mike Green, Adrian Arnold-Smith, Graham V Hutson  
Qualifications and Professional Practice Board: Janette Waterhouse, Claire Gallery-Strong, Richard J Whewell  
Science Policy Board: Graeme Armstrong, John W Nicholson, Diana Simpson

The appointment of PricewaterhouseCoopers as RSC auditors for 2007 was proposed by Jim Feast, seconded by Simon Campbell and approved by a show of hands.

The Meeting noted the Annual Subscriptions payable by members of the RSC with effect from 1 January 2008, as shown on the AGM agenda paper:

Fellows	£103
Members	£103
Associate Members	£62
Affiliates	£62

Before introducing item 7.0 the President appointed Stanley Langer and Neville Reed to act as tellers for counting the votes. He then reported that in 2006 the RSC had established a group, ChemNet, for secondary school students to foster their interests in the chemical sciences and to enable them to receive information about further study in and careers related to the chemical sciences. The students in ChemNet are not members of the RSC. However, many students in ChemNet will progress to higher education to take courses in the chemical sciences and such persons would be eligible to become members of the RSC in the category of Affiliate.

Jim Feast proposed that the AGM approve the Resolution to permit RSC to admit members of ChemNet as Affiliates, as shown on the agenda paper and this was seconded by Simon Campbell. The Meeting voted 32 for, 2 against, with 1 abstention to approve the Resolution that: *In accordance with By-laws 6 and 7, students in the ChemNet group may, upon admission to an institution of higher education, be automatically admitted to the category of Affiliate without formal application. Following admission to the RSC such persons will be required to affirm their agreement to promote the interests of the RSC and to be bound by all of its relevant constitutional and regulatory provisions.*

Peter Atkins said what a pleasure it was to be part of the RSC, which received support from so many volunteers. He thanked all the volunteers who had given their time to serve on Council, boards, committees, interest groups, sections in the UK and overseas, RSC representatives and the Benevolent Fund volunteers. He also thanked the Chief Executive and staff.

Jim Feast formally welcomed Dave Garner as the new President Elect and declared the AGM closed.

E K McEwan  
July 2007