

# Science is Vital

## Second Annual General Meeting

The second Science is Vital Annual General Meeting commenced at 17.40 on 12th December 2013 at Charles Darwin House, London, with Dr Jennifer Rohn in the chair. The meeting was declared quorate.

No apologies for absence were received.

1. Jennifer Rohn (Chair, Science is Vital) opened the meeting and welcomed those present both physically and by the wonder of the Internet
2. The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as an accurate record of relevant business (Proposed: Stephen Curry; seconded: Andrew Steele)
3. Matters arising
  1. There has been a lack of progress on some of the action points from the first meeting, e.g. setting up of local chapters, getting Members of Parliament to visit labs, etc.
  2. The lack of a Membership Secretary was considered a major obstacle in achieving our aims
4. Guest speaker  
There was no guest speaker. This minute intentionally left blank
5. Reports
  1. Chair's report  
Jenny reported that Science is Vital has become an established name in the science funding sphere.  
Among our achievements we have devised the 0.8% campaign, a long-term ask for Government (no specified timeframe). We published a letter in the Daily Telegraph, signed by 53 notable scientists, including 7 Nobel Laureates.  
Science is Vital's strength is in finding and publicizing stories about science funding. Many organizations collect statistics, but Science is Vital is personal.  
We met with David Willetts and BIS Head of Science Funding Dr Graeme Reid about our legacy of the 2010 cash freeze report.  
We had a conversation with BIS about the impending breach of the ring-fence. This looked like a cut of 2–3% on top of the 10% real-terms cut due to inflation. The actual cuts hadn't been announced, but Jenny said we need to decide what we can do if the ring-fence were to be breached.  
We want to convince the parties to include science funding in their manifestos.
  2. Treasurer's report  
Shane McCracken reported on the finances of the Institution (a full report was supplied). In summary, we have ongoing costs, mainly the ~£500 it costs to e-mail 35,000 people three times a year. Otherwise finances are healthy, and would pay for insurance at another rally if we had one, but it would be prudent to increase what we have available.
  3. Membership  
Richard P Grant gave a membership report. Sadly, our membership secretary Julie Ghosh died in March. A statement was read from Richard Wintle.  
One nomination for membership secretary: Mathew P Martin, in Newcastle.
6. Executive Committee elections
  1. Membership secretary: Mathew Martin elected (Proposed: Richard Grant; seconded Shame McCracken)
  2. Executive member: Alasdair Taylor elected (Proposed: Richard Grant; seconded Shame McCracken)

## 7. Planning for the 2015 General Election

1. There was a discussion about what we might do ahead of the election. Some key points are summarized:

- Going along to CaSE meetings could be a good way to engage with other organizations
- Many people might not know how you can get in touch with their MP. How can we encourage people to visit their MPs? How does science affect individual constituencies? People could get high-profile individuals to agree to turn up at MP's surgery—you probably only need just one famous local scientist to come forward to have an effect
- Many universities in the UK have been through the REF, and in so doing had to produce case studies for the positive effects of science investment
- Conversely, we can go to our members and try to find out what's gone wrong due to lack of funding
- The timeline to the next general election is the most important. We need to affect the manifestos. We need to do this ASAP, because they will start to take shape in spring conference
- We need resources with facts and figures to take to MPs—such as Scienceogram
- Meetings elsewhere in the country should be organized. Local 'chapters' are essential to this
- University-centred science hustings?
- We need, as a community, to get politicians to commit to stuff. Push for having a transparent strategy. The Autumn Statement was terribly unclear: committed to 'Quantum Centres', but no explanation of where BIS will make the £300m stated cuts which are stated. It's very easy for the vagueness to create a glittery picture of wholesomeness
- We need rules for nodes, e.g. remaining scrupulously non party-political
- Shane: please give us your e-mail address!!

8. The meeting closed with a motion to the pub