



Fellowship

9th Fellowship Council Meeting Summary

Thursday 8th December 2011, 13.00-16.30
RSA, 8 John Adam Street, London, WC2N 6EZ

FCMtg8Dec11SummaryDRAFTV2

Convenors:

Robert Porrer (Chair)
Irene Campbell (Deputy Chair)

Present:

Ann Packard
Bill Gibbon
Charles Millar
Clive Harries
David Archer (FC Trustee)
David Dickinson
Gerard Darby
Irene Campbell
Jackie Elliman
Jemima Gibbons
John Elliott
John McMullan
Julia Goodfellow-Smith
Keith Horsfall
Kevin Cahill
Marion Simon
Max Comfort
Pat Samuel
Paul Buchanan
Robert Porrer
Ruth Jindal
Suzy Walton (Trustee)
Tony Colton
Tony Hoskins
Wiard Sterk
Zena Martin (FC Trustee)

Apologies:

Andy Gibson
Charmian Love
David Clarke
Frances Gallagher
Gerry Acher
Rosie Ferguson
Tessy Britton

RSA Staff present for all or part of the meeting:

Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive
Adam Lent, Director of Programme
Michael Ambjorn, Head of Fellowship Networks
Josef Lentsch, Head of Fellowship Services
Lou Matter, Fellowship Networks Coordinator (Notetaker)
Brinda Sittapah, Governance Officer

In attendance (*pre meeting only*):

Malcolm Noble, RSA Chelmsford, Changing Chelmsford

Welcome and introduction from FC Chair

Chair Bob Porrer welcomed everyone to the meeting, including a particular welcome to a new member of the Council, Pat Samuel (London); he also welcomed Dr Suzy Walton, Deputy Chair of the Trustee Board. He finally welcomed Brinda Sittapah who was attending to assist with any governance queries and Lou Matter who was taking notes on the meeting.

1. Apologies

Noted as above.

Live-Blogging

Council member Jemima Gibbons would be live blogging the meeting at:

<http://www.monkeyswithtypewriters.co.uk>

2. Summary of 8th Meeting held on 21 September 2011

No comments had been received regarding the summary of the last meeting. No further amendments raised; the summary of the last meeting was **APPROVED**.

3. Matters Arising

RSA Wales/Cymru

Bob Porrer noted that the new structure for RSA Wales Cymru had been discussed and agreed at a meeting open to all Fellows in Wales which had been held on 22 October 2011. A call will go out to all Fellows in Wales who are interested in helping move things forward. Michael Ambjorn also provided the update that Vivienne Long-Ferguson (Senior Networks Manager) has taken over management of the Wales/Cymru region and thanked Wiard Sterk for helping organise the forthcoming Cardiff Network meeting.

Question: Is the group being set up democratically?

Answer: A temporary Committee will be established to develop the agreed plans pending the elections for all Regional/National Chairs next Summer. All Fellows in Wales will be invited to register an interest in joining the Committee.

Governance Advisory Group

Bob Porrer noted that GAG's proposals were approved at the October 2011 AGM with a substantial majority and that steps are now being undertaken to implement the new governance arrangements. It is hoped that a draft of the guidance for the new Regional and National Teams will be available for circulation in the next few weeks, so that comments can be sought from Regional and National Chairs.

In addition, the timing of elections for the Fellowship Council and Regional/National Chairs is being finalised with the process likely to be completed by the end of June 2012, with people taking up office in mid-September 2012. This will allow time for the 5 appointed Fellowship Council members to be nominated and also allow a period of transition where there is a change of Chairs. The election process will begin with a request for nominations in April/May 2012. The first Fellowship Council with the new membership is scheduled for 20 September 2012.

It is hoped that GAG will reconvene in January 2012 to discuss some detailed issues relating to the Fellowship Council and Regional and National Committees that arose from the AGM decisions. It would be helpful to get the view of Fellowship Council on the following issues:

Fellowship Council - The composition of the Council is changing and will comprise of 14 elected Regional and National Chairs, 14 Councillors elected by their region/nation and 7 other Fellowship Councillors "elected from the regions". The question asked of the Council was how the 7 'other' Councillors should be elected. Bob outlined an approach using a formula based on numbers in each Region/Nation, but asked whether the allocation should reflect the numbers in each Region/Nation or otherwise.

Comments: There is a concern that using the numbers formula method would exclude regions that have smaller Fellow numbers and there is a case that these should be the regions that are given more incentives to activate and gain more members, and therefore might get more involvement if they have members on the Council.

Comments: It could be an idea just to omit these 7 extra posts on the Committee.

Question: Should the places go to the 7 top elected Fellows, after those who have already been appointed?

Answer: If this option was chosen it would be likely that all places would go to the London region.

Comments: Maybe it would be better to go for a non-geographical formula and appoint Fellows based on the RSA's Charter goals and interests, such as manufacturing/commerce/enterprise, or community or education, although there was concern this could define their roles within the Council.

ACTION: There was a strong feeling that the 7 places should not be allocated on a geographical basis to Regions/Nations, and that the Council would better represent the range of Fellows interests and activities if the 7 places were "at large" and able to reflect different interests and activities. Bob Porrer will meet with Brinda Sittapah (RSA Governance Officer) to work out what is possible legally under the Bye-law and will circulate wording to the Fellowship Council for comment before forwarding the FC's views to the GAG.

Fellowship Council Terms of Office - Bob Porrer advised that the terms of office for the Council would remain unchanged, with the 2 + 2 years option. He asked the Council's views on how far previous service of members of the Council should be taken into account when the new Council (with a very different composition and 35 elected) was elected later in 2012. He outlined three options:

- Apply the 2 + 2 rule to current FC members who wish to stand for election in 2012 (some will only be able to stand for 1 year)
- Treat the current 1 year "extension" for some elected in 2009 as a "grace year" and count previous service as a maximum of 2 years
- Ignore previous service on the FC (as Regional/National Chairs have suggested for their elections)

The first option did not have any supporters and the discussion focussed on the other two. There was a leaning towards the last (ignore previous service), but the advantage of not having all FC members' period of service ending at the same time and thus staggering the turnover found favour (an approach already proposed by the Council to aid continuity) and following discussion the second option (the

current year as a “grace year”) was **APPROVED**. This would mean that those who have been on the FC since its inception could serve two more years, while those who joined this year could serve four.

ACTION: Bob Porrer will forward the views of Council to the GAG.

- There was some discussion around the involvement of Regional/National Chairs on the Fellowship Council once elected.

Question: Is it possible that this could also bring about a disconnect between what is going on in the regions and the representation on the Fellowship Council?

Answer: Bob advised that the decision on the elected system had been taken and agreed at the AGM. The purpose of the new governance arrangements was to bring together and integrate all those involved in supporting Fellow engagement and activity.

Question: What would happen if a Regional/National Chair was indisposed?

Answer: A Fellowship Councillor would take up the responsibility for the link with the Council in the interim.

Question: Would the elected Regional/National Chairs who are ex-officio members of the Council be able to vote?

Answer: Bob advised that the Chairs would be full voting members of the Council.

Regional/National Teams and Terms of Office - At their meeting on 7 November 2011 Regional/National Chairs had discussed the transition to the formation of the new Teams under the revised governance arrangements. Bob reminded Council that

- For the first time, ALL Chairs will be elected in same way as Fellowship Councillors
- Elected and co-opted members of the new teams would have a 2 + 2 year period of office
- Chairs will serve for an initial two years with the possibility of a second two year term, subject also to a maximum period of six years without break as a member of the team.

He reported that Regional/National Chairs have recommended that problems with the transition to the new team structure would be reduced by starting new terms for Chairs and elected/co-opted team members as from zero. This was **AGREED** by Council as a sensible approach.

ACTION: Bob Porrer will inform the GAG of the Council’s support for this approach.

Bob noted that in the current guidance for Regions a certain degree of flexibility was possible over extension of terms of office on Regional Committees. He suggested that it would be sensible to allow similar flexibility for the new Regional/National Teams and suggested a draft text to define this flexibility: *“In exceptional cases the Trustee Board may approve the extension of service as member of a team beyond the normal maximum of four years, for example where this would clearly be to the benefit of the Region/Nation and it is supported by the Regional/National Team. In this case the member would be able to stand for re-election/co-option for a further one or two year term, as agreed by the Trustee Board”*.

This met with general approval subject to any detailed comments on the wording.

ACTION: Councillors are asked to email Bob Porrer (robert.porrer@virginmedia.com) with any comments on the above wording, before the statement is forwarded to the GAG for inclusion in the new guidance

Guidance Notes for freestanding Thematic Networks: it was **NOTED** that the guidelines for these would be reviewed after the new guidance for Regional/National Teams had been finalised.

Fellowship Council Terms of Reference: the revised Terms of Reference incorporating the changes approved at the October 2011 AGM had been approved by the Trustee Board and were **NOTED**. Bob drew attention to the addition of the requirement not to miss two consecutive meetings without good cause.

Resourcing of activity within the Regions/Nations: Bob advised the Council that following the recommendation from Council the Trustee Board have set up a small working group to review resourcing activities within the Regions/Nations. The group will start work after the Trustee Board's January 2012 meeting at which its Terms of Reference will be approved. The group will include the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Fellowship Council, and two or three members of the Trustee Board. Recommendations from the group are unlikely to be made in time for 2012/13 budgets, so Bob has suggested contingency funding be set aside so that at least some funding can be made available to support regional/national/international developments.

RSA House - David Archer (who with Andy Gibson represents the Council on the House Development Committee) informed the Council that work had started on the refurbishment of the Great Room and was so far on schedule, with completion due in July 2012. The main entrance will be out of action for a while, with the Durham Street entrance becoming temporarily the main entrance to the building in January 2012.

He advised that it had been decided that the Great Room should be made available one day a month for fellowship activities and asked the Council for ideas on how this could be arranged and organised. This arrangement would probably begin in Autumn 2012. There would be no charge for room hire, though other costs (e.g., catering) would have to be covered by the user.

Question: Does the 'day' arrangement include evening and daytime usage, or just daytime?

Answer: This is open for discussion. Feedback welcome.

Question: Has an Access audit been completed?

Answer: Yes, and changes will be made to improve wheelchair access to the building and an audio system would be installed to improve hearing ability within the Great Room.

Comments: Concern that regions/nations geographically distant from London may be excluded from this arrangement and this needs to be taken into account.

ACTION: Councillors asked to email David Archer (david.archer@socia.co.uk) by mid January 2012 with suggestions for uses of the Great Room and criteria to be used to decide the allocation of the monthly "free" day.

4. Supporting the Engagement of Fellows

Irene Campbell reported back on discussions that had taken place within the brainstorming group looking at supporting the engagement of Fellows in the regions/nations. The aims of the group have focused on engaging non active Fellows and concentrated on the role of Fellowship Councillors and Regional/National Chairs and how they were reaching out to Fellows within their local areas. It was thought that Fellowship Councillors needed to be more active and act as facilitators and ambassadors of the RSA in order to engage Fellows further.

Comments: It needs to be remembered that Fellows within Regions/Nations need to be treated sensitively when supporting and feeding down information from the Fellowship Council.

Comments: Fellows themselves need to be talked to and asked what they want from their membership. Fellowship Councillors and Chairs need to meet up with Fellows in the Regions/Nations in a wider variety of ways and arrange networking events.

Comments: The Catalyst scheme is another way in which Fellows can become more engaged within Regions/Nations.

Irene posed the question - how can the Fellowship Council work as a body to engage Regions/Nations more fully and to support the spider's web of activities that exist within each area? The group considered some kind of mapping of activities and projects which could connect Councillors with these activities so that they could give advice and share expertise.

Comments: This should become an important part of the Councillors' role, supporting the information flow in the regions and making the discussions less centralised and coordinating with the regions more effectively.

Irene concluded the discussion with the agreement that the brainstorming group was on the right train of thought and advised that she will take the discussion forward with Adam Lent.

5. RSA Projects

Adam Lent (Director of Programme) thanked the Council for giving him the opportunity to speak about what is happening within Projects at the RSA.

He informed the Council that during the last two Trustee Board meetings discussions had taken place about how to focus and raise the profile, influence and impact of RSA Projects. The Trustees had agreed the Strategy paper he had written, and he hoped that the Fellowship Council would help fill in the detail of the future strategy.

The RSA already has a portfolio of excellent projects; Design; the Academies; Citizen Power; and Whole Person Recovery, these have facilitated in growing the RSA's influence and profile. An example of the fantastic work coming out of RSA Projects was a recent report entitled; 'Satisfactory' schools: Unsatisfactory?, written by Becky Francis (<http://www.rsablogs.org.uk/2011/education/satisfactory-schools-unsatisfactory/>), this had received press coverage across the UK and interest had been shown from Ofsted and the Department of Education. Another report on Transitions about prisons (<http://www.thersa.org/about-us/rsa-pamphlets/rsa-transitions>) included direct involvement with Fellows, gaining from their experience and expertise. Such progress indicates that now is the time to break through and establish a regular media profile and influence more widely the way people go about

things. An aim is to assist the RSA in providing the answers to questions that are not sufficiently being answered by traditional ways of thinking.

The aim is to grow in scale and ambition the RSA's practical work and move it to the next level. Take lessons learnt from the examples of Citizen Power and Whole Person Recovery projects and identify other areas in which to develop these in mobilising citizens. In order to do this the RSA needs to get better at translating practical ways to take ideas forward.

There is also a need for a clearer focus on areas that are high on the policy agenda, particularly in the three following areas; education; enterprise and community and public services and to use the RSA's unique methods in approaching these areas, through example design/the arts/behaviour change and networks. The aim is to focus the reputation the RSA has in these areas and work with Fellows to help grow this reputation and influence.

An Advisory Group (name subject to change) will be established, comprising of Trustee Board members, representatives of the Fellowship Council, Fellows and RSA staff to discuss ways to take this forward. Also to further engage Fellows to act as champions to grow and disseminate findings from RSA Projects and to build closer links between projects, regions and networks. Also to have senior staff involved in dialogue with the regions and realise the potential for connections, talking to regional chairs and understanding the development plans for regions.

There will be an RSA Projects re-launch in mid 2012, linked to two or three major reports being released. The key message will be the RSA provides a genuinely independent analysis rooted in evidence and the practical experience of Fellows.

Bob Porrer thanked Adam and commented that it was positive that the Fellowship Council and RSA Projects were working in synergy; he then invited questions.

Comments: Involving the Fellows is a big challenge, questions need to be clearly identified and the networks can work around these. It would be useful to compile a clear agenda including the big challenges that are persistent in the system and gather Fellows around these and encourage them to use these as a focus.

Comments: It would be a good idea to give Fellows the opportunity to undertake discreet tasks or periods of time on a project, so there is not necessarily a long term commitment involved.

Comments: The Skills Bank needs to be fully incorporated onto the website so that this can be used as a tool to attach Fellows to networks.

Comments: With Catalyst projects it would be useful to think about ways to take ideas to scale and replicate them elsewhere. The RSA could be instrumental in helping with this.

Comments: For external branding it should just be RSA, rather than RSA Projects.

Question: Could you have specific RSA areas highlighted for new Catalyst projects?

Answer: Adam Lent - This idea has been discussed previously and the concern about running Catalyst this way is that the fund needs to be led by Fellows, it is important to keep the fund open and clearly encourage new projects and ideas.

Adam concluded the session by thanking the Council for their contributions and commenting the RSA was keen to explore how Fellows' ambitions could be scaled in efficient and affordable ways, with opportunities for dialogue and advice being welcome. Bob thanked Adam for his presentation.

6. **Report from Chief Executive** (moved forward on the agenda as Matthew Taylor had to leave early)

The Chief Executive's report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Matthew Taylor outlined that the RSA was making remarkable progress on a number of fronts; this week alone had seen three fantastic events, the published report on schools receiving blanket press coverage, and positive steps forward from projects that will take them to scale.

Matthew highlighted how hard working the staff of the RSA were, and wanted to take this opportunity to thank and praise them to the Fellowship Council.

Matthew outlined that he considered there was something remarkable happening within the RSA specifically in terms of the integration between fellowships and projects, with projects engaging with Fellows and Catalyst, providing a model for change. He thanked the Fellowship Council for all their hard work and continued support.

Question: How do the academies sit within the RSA, is it possible for Fellows to visit an Academy?

Answer: There is a paper going to the next Trustee Board that will be circulated in the future and there will be opportunity for Fellows to visit Academies.

Question: Interested in the RSA's discussions with the ICA (Institute of Cultural Affairs) can you outline these?

Answer: Michael Ambjorn – We are working in partnership with the ICA on the development of an RSA small groups methodology. In practical terms, Network Managers are undertaking facilitation training in order to understand better how small groups can work together effectively.

Comments: The RSA Academies appreciate the work that is undertaken between them and the RSA Fellows.

Comments: The Council would like to express its thanks to all the staff of the RSA and to wish them a Happy Christmas.

Action: Bob Porrer asked Matthew to forward to RSA staff the Council's appreciation for their hard work and commitment together with best wishes for a happy and restorative break over the Christmas period and for a happy and successful New Year.

7. Report from FC Trustee Board Members

Zena Martin highlighted the main issues from the Trustee Board specifically that the Fellowship platform is progressing but has been temporarily put on hold whilst a new interim head of IT is arriving.

There had also been a resignation from the Board and in accordance with regulations the vacancy would be filled in the current election, the deadline for voting for this and another vacancy is Friday 13 January 2012.

A member raised the issue of the reported resignation of a member of the Trustee Board and there were some exchanges on this issue before the Council moved on to further business. Given that this related to an issue which was confidential to the Trustee board, with possible legal ramifications, no further detail will be included in the minutes.

8. Review of the nature of FC Working Groups

Council noted the preliminary paper Bob Porrer and Irene Campbell had written regarding a review of the Working Groups.

Comments: The working groups are best kept loose and reviewed when necessary.

Comments: For the Digital Engagement group it may be helpful to revisit the Terms of Reference.

Bob commented that there was no intention to restrict the flexibility of Working Groups to operate in ways appropriate to their area of activity; nevertheless there was currently a lack of clarity and the question of whether some of the groups would be better supported as freestanding Thematic Networks. There was also the need to consider establishing new working groups in response to the new relationship between the Council and Regional/National Teams.

ACTION: Bob Porrer suggested it would be best to come up with a few simple principles for Working Groups. Bob and Irene will progress this further, based on input from the day and report back to the next meeting. Please email Bob if you have comments.

9. Regions/Nations

Bob Porrer noted the paper detailing the summary of discussions from the meeting of Regional/National Chairs held on 7 November 2011. Action points from this meeting have in part been discussed earlier in the meeting but he asked Council to note is that some Regional/National Committees have asked for closer contact with their Fellowship Councillors and encouraged all Councillors who do not already have a working relationship with their regional/national Committee to contact the Chair of the Committee.

Question: With Regional/National Chairs on the Fellowship Council from 2012 will there also be separate meetings of Chairs?

Answer: There will still be the need for Chairs to meet separately especially to discuss operational matters and the practicalities of working with JAS, while more strategic issues would normally be on the Council's agenda.

Question: Does there need to be a working group regarding this within the Fellowship Council?

Answer: It is likely that the Council will need to establish a small group to look at reports and development plans from the Regions/Nations.

10. Reports from FC Working Groups

Bob Porrer asked if there were any questions regarding these reports.

Jemima Gibbons updated that the RSAs interim Head of IT had been appointed and that she would be meeting with him on 21 December 2011 as part of the Digital Engagement Group's work.

Comments: Would like to have a list of membership of all the groups.

ACTION: List of membership to be circulated for the next Fellowship Council meeting.

Council **RECEIVED** the International Group's first report to the Council. A member of the group, Gerard Darby, spoke to the report. He commented that the international aspect of the Fellowship membership had great potential and the international Fellowship was currently an untapped resource. In moving forward one way to provide inspiration to Fellows would be to assist with case studies and ideas from other countries that could be used more widely. The group is particularly looking at potential within three countries; USA, Germany and Poland. It was important to develop a model which can be applicable to the development across a variety of regions and countries, so that international Fellows feel less of a disconnect between themselves and the RSA.

Comments: Would like to make a plea to look carefully at a supply side model, the two-way flow of information is critical; in the past flow has tended to be one way, from JAS.

Comments: Clive Harries highlighted a music education project within his region that has an international element and potential for dialogue regionally and internationally, he will keep the Council informed of progress with this.

ACTION: Gerard would welcome comments on the paper and expressions of interest in joining the group; please send in by email to gerard.darby@gmail.com

11. Use of "closed" NING to facilitate communication and business of the Fellowship Council

Bob has been looking at how to improve the way we communicate, both for FC meetings and between meetings. There have been a number of problems in using email (e.g., attachments do not always work, people swamped by "reply all" emails), so we are looking at how to make a closed Ning site work with automatic notification of new postings with links to take members directly to the discussion or new material. He was not yet satisfied that we have yet succeeded in getting what we want out of a test Ning site but hopes to report more positive progress at the February meeting.

12. A.O.B.

Bob commented on the Progress Report that he had recently written for the Council's webpage. He highlighted the progress that the Council had made over the past couple of years, including:

- Improving relations between regional/national Committees and Panels and RSA headquarters at John Adam Street, with regular meetings of Regional/National Chairs.
- Input on the Trustee Board through two elected Fellowship Council members.
- The development of the Fellows' Charter.
- The Fellowship Council's review of regional/national structures which provided significant input into the recent governance review for a new approach to enhancing Fellows' activities and engagement outside John Adam Street.
- Active involvement in the Governance Advisory Group which was established by the December 2010 AGM, with its recommendations (including changes in the composition of the Council) being approved by a substantial majority of Fellows at the October 2011 AGM.
- Input and continuing support for the very successful Catalyst Fund and the associated Skills Bank, which has provided financial (so far over £108,000) and other support for a wide range of Fellows' projects.
- An active working group on Digital Engagement, which has already produced some useful guidelines and is supporting the development of a new Fellowship Platform which includes a new database of the Fellowship as a basis for improving opportunities for Fellows to contact those with similar interests.
- An active working group looking at ways to enhance engagement of Fellows across the RSA.
- FC members have been instrumental in creating some thematic groups - for example, on Education and on Youth.
- A number of practical improvements in communications and support from John Adam Street, with a close working relationship between the Council and its Officers and the Fellowship Department.

Overall we have facilitated a more constructive dialogue between the Fellowship and John Adam Street, and Council is starting to have a genuine influence on RSA strategy and operations and is also improving the two-way flow of information between the Fellowship and JAS.

Comments: Adam Lent's presentation shows the improvement in the communication between the Fellowship Council and staff and would like to thank the Council and Bob in particular for making this possible.

13. Future Meetings for 2012

Dates for FC meetings in 2012 are as follows:

- Wednesday 29th February 2012
- Tuesday 22nd May 2012
- Thursday 20th September 2012
- Wednesday 12th December 2012

Bob Porrer thanked the Fellowship Council and closed the meeting at 4.15pm.