



7th Fellowship Council Meeting Summary

Tuesday 19 April 2011, 13.30-16.30

RSA, 8 John Adam Street, London, WC2N 6EZ

Convenors:

Robert Porrer (Chair)

Irene Campbell (Deputy Chair)

Present:

David Archer

Mark Ball

Paul Buchanan

Kevin Cahill

David Clarke

Nicholas Clifford

David Dickinson

John Elliott

Frances Gallagher

Jemima Gibbons

Andy Gibson

Anthony Hoskin

Zena Martin

John McMullan

Katie Moore

Ann Packard

Lopa Patel

Wiard Sterk

Apologies:

Gerry Acher

John Bale

David Biggs

Tessy Britton

Andrew Chidgey

Sybil Crouch

Gerard Darby

Jackie Elliman

Rosie Ferguson

Emma Harrison

Susan Jones

Charmian Love

Charles Millar

Graham Sprigg

Helen Westropp

David Young

RSA Staff present:

Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive

Adam Lent, Director of Programme

Michael Ambjorn, Head of Fellowship
Networks

Josef Lentsch, Head of Fellowship Services

Katy Evans, PA to Director of Programme

Live blog of meeting is available via:

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

1. Welcome

Chair Bob Porrer welcomed everyone to the meeting. Particular welcome extended to Adam Lent, new Director of Programme who will be overseeing Projects, Fellowship and Networks. Welcome also extended to Katy Evans taking the notes of the meeting.

He drew attention to a leaflet from the William Shipley Group for RSA History which was available for all attending the meeting.

2. Apologies

Noted as above.

Live-Blogging

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

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

3. Summary of 6th Meeting held on 2 February 2011

One amendment had been received and updated. No further amendments raised; the minutes of the last meeting were approved.

4. Matters Arising:

Improving the operation of the Fellowship Council

Bob Porrer invited Irene Campbell to lead on this item.

Role of the Fellowship Council

Irene Campbell reported she had been taxed by the lack of progress / interest in defining the role of the Fellowship Council. Notes of the discussion at the last FC were analysed by Irene and had been circulated and Irene had narrowed feedback down to several areas with reference to what the role of the Fellowship Council should / could be:

- **House focused:**
Work to specific subject groups.
Have a voice on the Trustee Board where Fellows issues can be raised by the FC elected trustees
Contribute to strategy and policy at the RSA.
- Regionally focused:
championing Catalyst and encouraging take up by Fellows
Communicating the work of staff at John Adam Street to regions
Working with Regional Committees to contribute to Regional activity
- Liaison role:
sharing best practice to learn from each other.
Representing Fellows at Fellowship Council.

Question: Should we have surgeries and work with Regional Chairs?

Answer: This to be explored.

- Creating a way of logging the successes of the Fellowship Council to be explored.

- It was agreed that this was the essence of the last discussion.

Irene Campbell proposed facilitating a one off group of those interested in supporting the engagement of Fellows on their Fellowship journey and this met with general approval.

Role of Fellowship Council Members

Clarity and support regarding what a Fellowship Council member can offer in the regions was to be welcomed.

Comments: Structure not quite clear yet, pending the outcomes of the governance review.

Question: Are email addresses of Council members available on the RSA website and is it clear what questions people can ask of Council members?

Answer: The website and visibility of Council members on the site needs clarification. Michael Ambjorn checked on the availability of email addresses; these were not currently there and would require permission of each FC member for their email address to be displayed. (see below)

Comments:

- Council members' details are available on the Regional Committee newsletter and email list for the Eastern region. All Fellows in the East of England have access to this.
- It was suggested Fellows could be asked what they want from the Council / Council members as part of the Fellowship Survey.

It was queried whether Fellowship Council members, working with regional teams could help with an induction with new Fellows when they join and whether induction would be the responsibility of the Council.

Comment:

- It was suggested induction should be completed within six months of a FRSA joining and could become a useful retention device.
- Some Council members have been asked by new Fellows '*what do I do now?*' and '*who's a Fellow locally?*' after joining and receiving the initial welcome.
- Matthew Taylor advised the Trustees are thinking about the broad Fellowship strategy. There has been a major shift in the way Fellows are recruited; cold calling has stopped. Most Fellows are now recruited through current Fellows or people that have approached the RSA. One of the ideas to pilot would be an induction interview about their / our expectations initially through staff then through trained Fellows. This would add to the variety of roles Council members could undertake.
- It is important to have an induction pack for new and existing Fellows.
- An induction pack is being developed for FRSA's in Scotland.
- The induction pack should come from the central body and include a focus on issues where the Fellow is based.

ACTION: Irene Campbell to work with Bob Porrer to take this forward; next steps to be emailed to all.

RSA Cymru / Wales

Bob Porrer advised there had been progress since the last FC meeting. It was expected that a draft paper would be circulated to all Fellows in Wales soon with proposals for the establishment of a regional structure. A meeting, open to all Fellows, is planned at the end of May / early June to discuss and vote on the proposals.

5. Governance Advisory Group (GAG):

Bob Porrer reminded Council that there were four Fellowship Council members on the GAG: himself, Jackie Elliman, David Archer and Ann Packard and gave a brief overview of the remit of the group:

- To review the RSA's governance structures, specifically: the composition of the Trustee Board, including sub committees of the Board and, where applicable, processes for the election of Trustees.
- Governance of the Regions and the role of Region Committees.
- The role and composition of the Fellowship Council.
- The processes for the calling of general meetings of Fellows and for the expulsion of Fellows.
- To consider where necessary best practice of other leading charities and membership organisations in order to deliver a final report, with recommendations, to the Board of Trustees by July 2011 in order that resolutions may be voted on at the 2011 Annual General Meeting in October.

In its deliberations the GAG will aim to consider, and find the right balance between:

- Proper representation of the Fellowship.
- Efficiency and effectiveness in managing the RSA and its resources.
- Meeting the requirements of the Charity Regulators.
- Minimising bureaucracy.
- Developing a governance structure that best reflects the purpose and aims of the RSA.

Progress to date:

Meetings had been held in February, March and April, initially to plan work and then to start reviewing the key areas, viz., the context of the RSA as a charity (and comparing with governance structures of other organisations - though there are no exact equivalents). So far much of discussion had been taken up with regional structures and the Trustee Board, but underpinning all this were three key themes: communication, roles and relationships. The GAG was not just looking at what is needed to have the accountability required by the charity regulators but how we can make the RSA work better, with two-way communication involving the Trustee Board, staff, the Fellowship Council, regional teams and other groups, and the Fellowship, wherever they are.

The GAG was seeking comments on a number of specific points. There was a consultation with Regional Chairs and there were some points for Council to discuss here today. Wider consultation was intended once the GAG's draft proposals have been formed and David Archer and Ann Packard were involved in planning the timetable for this.

David Archer stated they were keen to ensure the Fellowship Council and Fellows were consulted regarding the proposals. He advised of the intention to send the proposal out to Council and Regional Chairs by 25th May 2011, with it being sent to the wider Fellowship by 7th June 2011. All comments are to be submitted by 4th July 2011. Anne Packard advised it was an important opportunity for individuals to respond.

After a lengthy and wide-ranging discussion the following points emerged:

- There were differing views on whether the FC should meet to discuss the recommendations of the GAG but the conclusion was that a organising a face to face meeting of the council was not viable and that some form of electronic consultation probably using a Wiki or Ning was preferred
- A summary of the comments received via this means could then be sent to the GAG by the FC Chair & Deputy Chair so that the collective views of the FC could be clearly fed into the process alongside views from individual Fellows and Regions
- It was noted that the GAG was a group of Fellows established directly by a vote at the AGM and the FC had no formal role other than to elect three representatives to the GAG. The Fellowship Council's role was to advise and not to vote on whether to pass the proposal. However the importance of getting Fellowship Council input to the process was stressed and that an endorsement by the FC of the proposals would be a strong recommendation to the rest of the Fellowship
- The FC was advised by David Archer and Ann Packard (who are working on a communication plan for the GAG) that time for consultation would be tight and so the request will be for brief objective comments on the proposals.

Bob Porrer advised the Fellowship Council of specific issues on which the GAG had requested comments:

Fellowship Council and Regions/Nations

The proposals for governance; that the Fellowship Council should move from 20 elected and 20 appointed members to 5 co-opted members (to ensure diversity of representation) and 35 elected members including 14 elected Regional/National Chairs. All these elections would take place at the same time through a ballot of all Fellows in each region/nation. This was a change for Regional/National Chairs and there was a variety of processes at present: most commonly the Chair was proposed by the Committee, and then endorsed at the regional AGM. Holding the elections at one time would mean more publicity and hopefully more Fellows voting.

Bob Porrer advised some regions have different approaches and there was a question of continuity: sometimes a deputy served for a period before becoming the next chair, and he could see no reason why a team could not indicate its support for their favoured candidate. At present it was difficult for anyone to challenge the system; the proposal was for a more open democratic process.

The GAG was proposing that all elected regional/national chairs would become ex-officio members of the Fellowship Council, but accepted that not every Chair would wish to perform both roles, in which case the regional/national team would invite one of the elected Fellowship Council Members to perform the role of liaison between the regional/national team and the FC. The aim was to cement links between the regional/national teams and the FC.

It was noted that the core regional/national team would include the Chair, Fellowship Council members and the Network Manager, but the Chair would have the responsibility of ensuring that the team was composed and operated in a way appropriate for the region/nation, with further elected or co-opted members.

Matthew Taylor advised that a draft of new guidelines for regions/nations was to be presented to the next GAG meeting. In line with the flexibility proposed for regional/national teams, the aim was to give regions/nations a choice of models (panel or more traditional committee) to adopt for their governance and also move from AGM to a regional/national conference making it an event for broader discussion.

There was wide ranging debate on the merits of moving to a 35/5 split of elected/co-opted members and on how the elections would take place.

Comments included:

- It seems fair that anyone who wants to become a regional chair can if enough people vote for them
- Fellows should have spent time in a region to qualify for election.
- The above was queried as Fellows should have the right to vote for whoever they wish.
- Election can be destabilising for some regions and there is a risk that experience on a committee might not be recognised
- Being a regional chair is a different role to being a Fellowship Council member. The broader representation we have the better.
- The only qualifying criterion for regional chair should be membership of the RSA.
- Need to keep it simple for Fellows to understand and recognise skills in the room.
- To lead and inspire a region and run a committee is a big job. How many people would be able to do this? Are we excluding people that could do part of the role but not both?
- There should be some qualifying process in the vote.
- There is an issue with the idea of elected chairs automatically becoming Council members. The idea of the Fellowship Council is to have new blood, a fresh sense of purpose which is not restricted to a small number of people.
- Maybe the election process doesn't need to be addressed. Keep the election system as before and assign a number of seats on the Fellowship Council.
- Election can be destabilising for some regions and there is a risk that experience on a committee might not be recognised.
- Regional chairs have a particular skillset which some people didn't sign up to originally. The current situation on the Fellowship Council is more representative with a mix of working groups, regional representatives etc.
- One member stated that he wasn't asked to represent his region, but rather to bring skills to the forum; who did we want in the room?
- Fellowship Council numbers: if only 5 are co-opted and 35 elected there isn't much opportunity to attract expertise.

There was no consensus in the FC in support of a move to a 35/5 under the terms proposed and the comments made in the debate will be fed into the next GAG meeting by the FC members of the Advisory Group

Bob Porrer commented that experience and what each candidate could bring to the role were important and it was vital that information on all candidates included details of relevant experience, e.g., on a regional/national committee. The GAG was considering how to improve the information on candidates for election and it could be that a specific question could be added to the "statement" for those wishing to stand as regional/national Chair.

Matthew Taylor: the original basis to get people onto Fellowship Council was to gain a range of skills, to have strong regional links, but the main focus on skills distribution. All Fellowship Council members are part of a region.

There was also a short debate on the money being spent in the regions, the cost of Network Managers and the budgets that were under the control of the Regional Committees. Matthew Taylor advised that £700K was the total cost of Fellowship services and not just Networks Managers. It is important that Networks Managers and regions work together.

Matthew Taylor reminded the meeting that since the GAG was set up by the Fellowship in an AGM vote it had delegated powers to report back to the AGM. It was therefore important to make representations to the GAG, and that the range of views was represented, including any minority views. Bob Porrer commented that while the FC had given broad support at its last meeting to the draft recommendations of the FC's Review of Regions Group it was unlikely that the FC would reach total agreement on every point and the GAG would have to take the range of views into account before making its recommendations.

David Archer had been taking detailed notes on this discussion and would report on it to the GAG.

Composition of the Trustee Board

Bob Porrer advised there are currently two Fellowship Council representatives on the Trustee Board. The GAG proposed that these should be counted as "elected", in terms of the proposed balance between elected and co-opted Trustees.

Comment:

- Why can't they be deemed as being co-opted?

It was agreed that this item had been covered sufficiently and that the proposal should be accepted. Time constraints meant that we should press on with other items on the agenda.

6. Interim arrangements for Fellowship Council pending changes in governance to be approved at October AGM

Bob Porrer had circulated the paper to Fellowship Council members.

MOTION: Pending the implementation of recommendations of the GAG the term of office of Fellowship Council members should be extended by one year. Existing FC members should be invited to serve an additional year and, if more than the two existing vacancies were notified by 30 April 2011, there should be bye-elections for all vacancies held in the appropriate regions/nations.

MOTION AGREED

7. Pilot survey of Fellowship - presentation of preliminary results (Matthew Taylor)

Matthew Taylor presented a preview of the Fellowship Survey. It was noted results are preliminary and subject to slight adjustment as there was still some feedback to add.

- The online survey ran from 9th – 28th March and 1,950 (10% of UK Fellowship) were sampled (random and representative).
- 519 surveys were completed; a 27% response rate which was good for an on-line survey - despite queries to the contrary.
- The demographics found the survey very representative, e.g., the length of Fellowship membership and age.

Matthew Taylor ran through the findings of the survey to date:

Initial findings reflected:

- People chose to get involved in their own way.

- There was less awareness of regional committees, though this is not necessarily a reflection on these since some regions have fewer opportunities for meetings.
- The time people have had to become aware of the particular projects; some projects have had more exposure in the Journal.
- On the whole Fellows want to work with each other rather than on central projects.
- Local city, town based groups provide more connections for Fellows.
- 4 to 1 / 5 to 1 support for 21st century enlightenment.

Key insights:

- The RSA has become better over the last years, but there is potential to get better at understanding Fellows' expectations.
- Need to develop structured engagement paths for Fellows who want to get involved.
- Fellows would like to prioritise investment in infrastructure and networks.
- Huge untapped potential for online platforms.

The report to be completed 4th May 2011 and presented to the Trustee Board on 11th May 2011; the report will be shared with the Fellowship Council.

ACTION: Josef Lentsch to circulate details to the Fellowship Council of the survey's preliminary analysis and key points and to circulate the full survey results once available.

Matthew Taylor encouraged Fellowship Council members to vote for Animate in the Webby Awards.

Break

In follow up to an action point in the first half of the meeting, Irene Campbell reported that Fellowship Council members' details are not on the RSA website and therefore available to all Fellows; permission is required from members to add their details to the website.

Michael Ambjorn advised the simplest way of contacting members would be via LinkedIn and back to the Fellowship ning.

ACTION: Michael Ambjorn to email Fellowship Council members with advice on the above issue.

8. Strategy: discussion of Strategy Paper received from Trustee Board

A strategy paper outlining aims for 2011-13 had been circulated with the agenda. Bob Porrer explained it was a very ambitious statement, but based on successful development of many aspects of the RSA over the past few years. Clearly the outcomes of the GAG might have an impact once they are known and in general he thought that the paper did not give sufficient recognition of the potential contribution that Fellows can make, especially in the regions/nations. Bob asked whether Fellowship Council members had any comments on the strategy.

Comment:

- In the Chief Executive's report there are comments on overstretch of current resources, but in the strategy there are lots of recommendations; how will they be resourced?

Matthew Taylor advised it was an iterative process. Thus if the House wanted to invest more, it could make a business case for this. Fellowship had to recruit and retain Fellows. Projects had to externally fundraise. Success and capacity went together. A tighter budget had been set this year, but the ambition was to bring in more external resources in order to meet the aims set.

Comment:

- The [Fellowship] survey is really helpful; a good piece of work. The results / characteristics of Fellowship link the strategy (aspirational) to the survey results.

Matthew Taylor advised that full analysis of the survey would provide some cross tabulation. Engagement was broadly age related; younger Fellows were more engaged than older Fellows – it would be more worrying if this finding was reversed in terms of our future. We needed to look for multiple routes of engagement alignment between the different things we did. What is exciting is that more and more Fellows were coming together to discuss austerity and localism; we needed as a Society to rise to this challenge. We were developing place-shaping expertise in our Research and Development teams which was in demand. The overlap between staff and Fellows on the ground combined had strong potential for the future.

Comment:

- It was good that the Strategy foresaw moves to support student and youth options within the Fellowship.
- The numbers registering on the Fellowship Directory had been disappointing.

It was stated that we cannot force Fellows to add their details to the Fellowship Directory.

Matthew Taylor reported that there were more conversations about Fellowship matters at the Trustee Board than ever before; David Archer and Zena Martin were commended. Levels of engagement were also higher than they have ever been; there was a lot of activity going on out there. Matthew stated that he was being asked by other similar organisations how we achieved these levels of engagement.

Comment:

- Influence has grown online, but the growth in the number of Fellows was slow.

Matthew Taylor explained that the strategy was for quality rather than quantity. The target was to maintain Fellowship levels and minimise those leaving. We wanted people to know what they are getting involved in; growth following engagement.

Question: Are there any plans to contact those that leave the Fellowship?

Answer: Josef Lentsch replied that regarding retention they were developing a new recruitment process, a more formal induction to clarify expectations and personal contact. When Fellows left an exit interview would be conducted to establish the reasons for leaving.

Matthew Taylor stated the main reasons for leaving the Fellowship were not having time to get involved or the money.

Bob Porrer thanked Matthew Taylor for presenting the findings and looked forward to the FC's future involvement as the strategy developed.

9. Digital Engagement: Presentation and discussion led by Jemima Gibbons:

- Jemima noted that everything discussed today had touched on engagement.
- 80 Fellows had signed up to the Digital Engagement working group on the ning.
- The group will finally be getting their strategy together at a meeting in Manchester on 12th May 2011. The Digital Engagement group would value input on what they should be looking at.
- 'Digital' can be off putting. It is more about a philosophy, openness, clarity of communication. Content is required from the Fellowship Council which then can be put out to the wider Fellowship; Jemima and Digital Engagement group members can give advice about how we can get people engaged online.
- Web services are the number one priority for engagement, so we need to get this right.

Ways to get engaged:

- RSA Comment.
- Ning – plans to streamline groups and make it more accessible.
- LinkedIn.
- Fellowship Network area.

Michael Ambjorn advised the work of the Digital Engagement group was appreciated from the staff's perspective e.g. Fellowship newsletter; they have asked the group to get involved with this.

Comment:

- Encourage staff to look at digital engagement with Projects to let Fellows get involved via datasets; digitalisation of research data is an important area for development.
- Presentation for data visualisation for RSA Animate.

Matthew Taylor advised that they are about to launch a RSA Animate competition to find ways of representing data.

Comment:

- There is no personality to the RSA brand, that's what's hindering people engaging with it. We need to develop a brand personality.
- Organisations don't tweet, people do. Need to trust staff to engage and people in regions to be champions of the organisation to bring the personality through.

ACTION: Send ideas for digital engagement to Jemima Gibbons and the Digital Engagement group to: www.monkeyswithtypewriters.co.uk

10. Website Update and future plans (Josef Lentsch):

Bob Porrer informed the meeting that over the past weeks and months he and Irene Campbell had been meeting regularly with Josef Lentsch and Michael Ambjorn to work with them to move a number of practical issues forward. Central to this was the RSA's website and its use for the Fellowship Council, regional/national and other groups.

Bob handed over to Josef to update the meeting on the website changes and future plans.

Josef Lentsch reported the visual refresh of the RSA brand was now taking place, with work on the website to be carried out over the next few weeks. Input on changes has been sought from:

- Survey of Regional Chairs / Committees.
- Continual liaison with:
 - the Fellowship Council Chair / Deputy-Chair
 - the Fellowship Council Digital Engagement working group
- ‘What users do’ – Usability testing.
- Google Analytics.

Criticism had been received regarding navigation and specifically that it was not being easy to find relevant pages and also Fellows. The consistency of the layout needed to be improved. The revised website should offer:

- Simpler navigation:
 - Fewer clicks to what you need:
 - Events where you are
 - How-to guides
 - Map
- Consistency of layout:
 - Making it easier for people to find what they are seeking.
- Regular update schedule:
 - Making sure things do not get out of date.

Josef advised the new website was due to go online in the second week of May and he looked forward to receiving feedback from Fellowship Council members.

The problems with the Fellowship Directory needed to be addressed. There were two options: to tweak the existing Directory (which is not integrated with the Fellowship database) or scrap it. It had been decided to scrap it (it was stressed no data would be lost) and redesign it for easier navigation and administration, linking with the main Fellowship database. If this option got the go-ahead work would start in August 2011, with a view to the revamped Directory being available next year.

Bob Porrer commented that he and Irene Campbell had spent time with Fellowship staff and they were impressed with the approach to the detailed redesign as well as the overall strategy.

Comment:

- The website is fine. Strategy for other media?

Michael Ambjorn reminded the Fellowship Council of the forthcoming meeting of the Digital Engagement group on 12th May in Manchester to discuss a comprehensive view of what is available in order to compile a digital strategy for the future. There was a reminder to feed in comments and views to the Digital Engagement group.

The Fellowship Council were advised there is a RSA Vision app available.

Irene Campbell commented that the group she would be leading would look, *inter alia*, at engagement of Fellows and consider the wide range of ways that could be used.

11. Trustee Board Fellowship Strategy Group:

Bob Porrer noted that a draft will be available for discussion at the Fellowship Council’s September meeting.

12. Report from Chief Executive (Matthew Taylor)

Bob Porrer advised the report had been circulated. The report was a remarkable summary of activity across the RSA; a huge amount had been achieved.

Matthew Taylor advised the rebranding exercise was instigated by the Trustees last year.

- A working group of Trustees and others was put together. Options were given, a broad approach chosen and it has now been rolled out across the RSA.
- The idea was that the new logo is like a platform; a foundation for the RSA. It allows for different messages within the platform.
- We have been as frugal as possible; using up existing branded material before ordering new branded materials.
- There was flexibility for Fellows within the style guidelines.
- Gill Sans was the typeface.

Comment:

- The report highlighted what's going on; it's a great piece of documentation that could be used for induction. I would like to tell my local network about the contents.

Matthew Taylor advised the report is drawn together from information from the Executive Team.

David Archer recommended the Chief Executive's report is brought to network groups.

It was agreed that it could be circulated to network groups.

Comment:

- Are you (Matthew Taylor) and the Trustees responsive?

Matthew Taylor: there is a clear distinction from my perspective; we try to experiment e.g., drinks after lectures request. There is a small group of Fellows that are hostile to the direction of the RSA. We are responding to clear, concrete ideas.

Comment:

- What about the State of the Arts conference?

Matthew Taylor advised we would not be doing this conference again.

Comment:

- The work with government the RSA does is with the English government. This is not a criticism, but a lot of good work is being done in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland that we could pull on e.g. Design in the Curriculum in Wales. More work throughout the UK could be drawn upon.

Networks Managers have been tasked with linking in, but not going over the heads of Fellows.

There was appreciation for the work of all the RSA staff and what they were achieving and Matthew Taylor was asked to communicate thanks and appreciation to all concerned.

Bob Porrer recorded his gratitude for the hard work and responsiveness of staff in the Fellowship Department and this was supported by Council.

13. Report from FC Trustee Board Members – presented by David Archer and Zena Martin.

Zena Martin advised she would report back on a couple of items from the circulated report.

RSA Family of Schools

The RSA is currently consulting with three schools interested in becoming part of the RSA Family of Schools. Whitley Abbey in Coventry has officially signed up as the first of these to join when it achieves Academy status later in the year.

The Board has approved the creation of the Opening Minds Charitable Trust which will oversee the governance of the Family of Schools.

There was debate about why only schools who opted to become Academies under the government scheme could be part of the new RSA family, and it was noted that there are two things in parallel: the Opening Minds schools and the new RSA Family of Schools which are designed as Academies.

However FC Education working group and other FC members who were interested in pursuing this conversation should continue to work with Becky Francis (RSA Director of Education) on this topic.

Attention was drawn to the article on academies on page 43 of the current RSA Journal.

At the last meeting concern was expressed at the lack of time for consultation with the FC on important topics such as the Family of Schools, the RSA strategy paper etc. This concern has been taken to the Board and they accepted that the issue was not one of transparency but timing. As an example it was noted that at this meeting the Council had seen more of the Fellowship Survey than the Board has yet. The key issue for the future is to plan any consultation process as far as possible in advance so that the Fellowship Council can be consulted at an appropriate time on issues where its advice is sought by the Board.

Great Room project

David Archer reported that the Great Room project plans to provide better video technology and open up the room to give access to simultaneous events nationwide as well as creating a much more flexible space for Fellowship activities. An idea is being explored whereby every month there should be some time reserved in the Great Room for Fellowship activity free of charge.

There were two questions:

- How quickly do we go ahead with this? One plan is to complete it by 2012 to make the most of the commercial potential (noting that there were links in the Great Room's frieze to the Olympics!) but another was to take longer and integrate the Great Room work with other plans to make changes to the entrance and ground floor of the House.
- Questions under consideration are - What are the dependencies on disruption to the House? What do people who use the House really want / need?

ACTION: Any Fellowship Council members who wish to get involved in Great Room focus groups contact Andy Gibson for more information / how to get involved.

Matthew Taylor advised we expect to raise £2–3M to cover this work. The worst case scenario was that there was money in the bank to cover it. Matthew reported that the new House Director, Matthew Bates, has seen that with the new Great Room, we can have two big events going on at any one time, thus enhancing the commercial potential of the House.

14. Reports from other Fellowship Council working groups (update circulated prior to the meeting)

Bob Porrer asked whether there were any questions on the reports from the working groups. There were not.

It was noted that the Charter working group had completed its work and “how to” links are being developed.

15. Reports from other Regions/Nations

Bob Porrer advised there will be a meeting of regional / national chairs on 13th May 2011 to which he has been invited as a guest; Matthew Taylor was also invited to part of the meeting.

16. Future Meetings for 2011

Bob Porrer stated that it had been intended to hold this meeting in Birmingham and then visit the Academy, but unfortunately this had not turned out to be feasible. He asked whether the visit to the Academy should be organised as a separate event. This was agreed, with any spare places to be offered to other Fellows.

It was asked whether Fellowship Council members would like to incorporate feedback from regions / project groups, for example by having a short separate meeting in advance of the main business meeting to look at a particular project or activity with the idea of replicating good practice. Agreed.

ACTION: Bob Porrer and Irene Campbell to look into this for the next meeting.

Comment:

- It was suggested If we had a Fellowship Council wiki we could contribute ideas there for selection for the next meeting.
- Would there be the opportunity for informal networking at the December meeting?

Matthew Taylor advised the budget might stretch to that.

It was noted that the governance issue might figure on the agenda for the September meeting, but the hope was expressed that after the AGM the Fellowship Council would be able to concentrate on engagement and activity rather than governance structures.

17. A.O.B.

Comment:

- It was suggested by one Council member that agenda items have time allocations against them to aid the Chair.
- John Elliott was seeking feedback/information from FC members for the Norwich-based Education Group. Since there had not been time earlier it was suggested that he should email all FC members direct to seek comments and ideas.

Bob Porrer thanked the Fellowship Council and closed the meeting at 4.38pm.