Fellowship Council
21 May 2014 12:00 – 17:00
RSA, 8 John Adam Street

Notes on Meeting

Agenda

1. Welcome from Chair, and agreement of notes from last meeting with any matters arising (12:00 – 12:15)
   With Irene Campbell

2. CEO and Strategic Review Update (12:15 – 12:45)
   With Matthew Taylor

3. Technology Update (12:45 – 13:00)
   With Carol Jackson
   Lunch (13:00 – 14:00)

4. Our Legacy; what’s worked, what didn’t, where next? (14:00 – 15:45)
   Group discussion
   i) Looking back what has worked well, not so well
   ii) Looking Forward
   iii) Regions & Nations
   Coffee Break (15:45 – 16:00)

5. Update (16:00 – 16:15)
   With Oli Reichardt
   i) New Fellows Journey Yrs 1–3
   ii) Centenary Young People’s Fund

   With Viva Long-Ferguson

   With Wiard Sterk

8. AOB (16:35 – 16:50)
**Present:**
Steve Coles  
John Elliott  
Bill Gibson  
Andy Gibson  
Clive Harries  
Tanya Hine  
Keith Horsfall  
Tony Hoskins  
Ruth Jindal  
Suzanne Lyle  
Bethan Michael  
John Naylor  
Malcolm Noble  
Erinma Ochu  
Nicholas Parker  
Jan Portillo  
Peter Robinson  
Kathy Seddon  
Richard Tyrie  
Ed Whitelaw

**Convenors:**
Irene Campbell, Chair  
Wiard Sterk, Deputy Chair

**RSA Staff present for all or part of the meeting:**
Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive  
Carol Jackson, Chief Operating Officer  
Oliver Reichardt, Director of Fellowship  
Clive Holdsworth, Head of Technology  
Vivs Long-Ferguson, Deputy Head of Fellowship – Regional  
Jade Prentice, Fellowship Programmes Coordinator (Notetaker)

**Apologies:**
Lilian Barton  
Susan Bennett  
Jenny Bland  
Allan Bosley  
Andrew Board  
Charlotte Britton  
Jackie Goodman  
Mark Hadley  
Seren Page-Bailey  
Suzanna Pickering  
Lorna Prescott  
David Punter  
Philippa Rose  
Denis Stewart  
Pam Warhurst  
Pooran Wynarczyk
1. Chair's welcome and matters arising

Chair Irene Campbell welcomed the Council to the last meeting before the 2014 Elections.

The substantive item is reflection and discussion of this Council’s term in office; what has worked, what hasn’t worked and what is our legacy to handover to the next Council?

The Trustees Board met on 19th May and it was a good meeting, with positive feeling towards the work of the Fellowship Council and the achievements and strategic aims of the RSA. Since the last Board meeting the Regions and Nations have organised over 200 events and activities, nominated over 200 Fellows and 8 Regions and Nations have received venture funds.

Apologies confirmed and notes from the last meeting passed without comment except to clarify notes on the role of the Fellowship Councillor, [see revised handbook]:

FC notes Feb-14: 2.ii.Fellowship Governance Handbook/Fellowship Councillor:

_The Fellowship Councillor is to be independent from the Regional/National Chair, and support events to bring in and attract new Fellows – Councillors can do what they like to make that work._

Some Fellowship Councillors found it useful to know their role was not line managed by the Chair and overall consensus understood the role of the Fellowship Councillor as working alongside the Chair in common purpose. No revision of the notes necessary.

2. Chief Executive’s update and discussion of the Strategic Review

Matthew Taylor opened with 2 RSA Animate shorts.

The Fellowship Council has come a long way from its beginning, when there were governance complications in the early stages. Progress and achievements to be proud of include the development and integration of the Regional Core teams in the Fellowship Council, and the spirit of collaboration the Council shares with the RSA, in its commitment to work with and inspire Fellows.

With the Strategic Review and Power to Create the Fellowship Council will begin to see more clarity, focus, ambition and cohesion in the areas of work we select as our change aims. The RSA is a unique organisation of many parts and will work across its resources to create impact, and powerful theories of change.

The Strategic Review is ongoing and in the design stage - the RSA is going to change and will make use of the changes that the Fellowship Council wants to see happen.

Comments:

- Erinma Ochu – We are missing a conversation of opening up diversity in the RSA. What comms are there about our policies towards diversity – there don’t seem to be any. For example - what can we say to our disabled Fellows who want to know what the RSA is doing about diversity? [MT; Fellowship Diversity - at the moment, we are looking at many areas of this point, such as Education disparity in different areas, work with the African diaspora, recruiting more women into the Fellowship, recruiting more young people .. but the importance of this issue deserves a considered response, rather than a list and we will come back to you].
- Clive Harries – Can we concentrate a little bit more on the ARTS, which has so many applications to help us make the changes we want to go ahead. [MT; We are looking to see what fits into our change aims, and then looking at funding. We need to match with Arts projects that have a capacity for breakthrough in our change aims].
• Andy Gibson – What should the next FC do to help with the next phase of the RSA? [MT; If we want the Fellowship to be a really important and integral part of the change we want to see happen, then we need the support structures in place at high level and on the ground, so that there is a professional level of support for the programmes we have identified as our change aims. That could mean there is less available RSA resource to support non-change aims projects even if they are a great idea. The Fellowship Council will be an important part of communicating that to the Fellowship so it’s accepted].

3. Technology Update with Carol Jackson

Carol Jackson presented an update of the current MVP model of the Fellowship’s technology platform to be launched in October 31st [see appendix Technology Update(FC) for example profile pages].

Some of the exciting new benefits to be delivered in October -

• **Networking**: Interests, Projects, Skills are all individual categories where Fellows can edit their preferences and engage up to the level they want to.
• **Connecting with the RSA**: ‘Interests’ will have sub-categories that tie in with Strategic Review change programmes i.e. Communities, Design etc, so that Fellows can be up to date with what the RSA is doing and how to get involved.
• **Connecting with like-minded Fellows**: you can find Fellows who have co-registered the same interests as you.

**Comments:**

• Irene Campbell – Can we search more specifically than region i.e. by postcode?
  [Clive Holdsworth/Carel Jackson; Not yet, it’s happening in the later stage, because in the development testing stage we have heard feedback that it’s not the first priority. It’s going through further testing, with members of the Fellowship Council who have volunteered to go through this].

• Richard Tyrie – I understand the fundamentals we need to get there, but the development is too slow. Sitting in the Catalyst Panel I can see that there is so much resource in the Fellowship that we can capture as a resource, but the inertia here is compounded is that there is a vastly under-resourced SkillsBank, which is still using excel. We lack the ability to use our greatest resource and the Fellowship is getting further and further behind.
  [Matthew Taylor; if you ask Fellows ‘do you want collaborative spaces’ everyone says yes but in reality no one uses them (Linked-In), so we need to ensure early take-up to make the collaborative space work and remain in use. We are working to get the Technology in place so that works together with the collaborative spaces that Fellows want to use. There are quite a higher proportion of our Fellows that want to work at a lower intensity and it’s important that we get it right for all.

• Richard Tyrie – we need more capacity to improve SkillsBank
  Oliver Reichardt; the Regional Programme Team do a number of things and among them is SkillsBank, which they are working on developing.
  Matthew Taylor; we’ve given a substantial increase in that resource, it used to be just Vivs Long-Ferguson who looked after SkillsBank and now it’s supported by a 6-strong Regional Programme Team.
• Jan Portillo; Does the new platform feed directly to salesforce so that the data is self-cleansing? [Clive Holdsworth; yes and it’s also connected to RSA events that will also be integrated so that if you turn up, you are tracked].

4. Our Legacy; what’s worked, what didn’t, where next?

Group discussion including -

i) Working Groups update
ii) Handover; looking back and recommendations for the new Fellowship Council looking at the overall experience of this Fellowship Council and our contribution to the RSA
iii) Working Groups
iv) Fellowship Engagement do we have the tools we need for the staff and the Fellowship Council to engage the Fellowship?
v) Regions & Nations; does the Regions & Nations structure fit into how we want to engage with the Fellowship or should we move to cities and networks?
vi) Strategic Review; how will the Strategic Review impact on the next Council?
vii) Positives/Negatives

i) Working Groups Update:

(Please note: full sets of working group minutes go to the Councillors that are on them if Councillors want a full set of any working group minutes please ask Jade Prentice. At Fellowship Council meetings only a working group summary will be available).

This Council has had a 60% take-up of working groups and not all have been fully attended so we need to evaluate good practice and provide recommendations for the next Council.

International; there was an ad-hoc meeting of the international group, following the last Fellowship Council that wasn’t sure if they wanted to continue International as a working group specifically, as it’s not ‘task & finish’. This is International’s update:

• Connectors network is expanding, with new Connectors potentially joining from Bulgaria and Israel in May
• The last Connectors virtual round table event updated Connectors on Catalyst, and the next meeting will focus on the Technology Strategy
• 20th March Brussels event convened by local Connector Alain Roche was a success, promoting RSA awareness and recruitment
• The new Director of International will start mid-September

Chair’s update for International, Wiard Sterk

We want the Fellowship Council to recover working with International as a key network. With no clear handover plan after Joseph Lentsch’s departure as Director of International we thought remaining tasks were for the Fellowship Council to support the Connectors network. The relationship between Connectors and the Fellowship Council has changed, now Skype meetings work fairly independently of the Fellowship Council and are not always communicated clearly by the RSA.

Comments:

• Jan Portillo – There is an increasing importance for the RSA to keep an international focus, particularly regarding the Strategic Review change aims and the Fellowship Council can contribute towards that goal.
• Kathy Seddon - We have an inter-agency linkage with the Winston Churchill Fellowship and RSA Connectors are a really strong and important of that.

ARC; ARC will focus on Fellowship engagement with the RSA’s change aims. ARC’s Fellowship comms will be circulated after this Council, and updates relating to works from RSA staff can be clarified as needed.

• Tony Hoskins – RSA ARC Project directors are active where they have funds and so the interaction between ARC and Fellowship can be quite limited. I also don’t recognise the actions from the working group summary circulate before this meeting.

• John Elliott – I have not got any closer to the RSA’s research projects as a result of joining my first meeting of the ARC working group. Overall my engagement with Fellowship Council working groups has been a frustrating experience, with Thematic also shutting down. [Andy Gibson; to engage with ARC has been quite frustrating because we need to work at an earlier stage with the RSA Funding process, so we are aware that hasn’t work but the conversation is happening at all levels to integrate more of the Fellowship into the work we are doing].

• Irene Campbell – Matthew Taylor’s update and everything that is being worked on at the moment is working towards integrating the Fellowship into the work of the RSA.

• Wiard Sterk; It is more difficult for the Fellowship to integrate into ARC due to its nature but overall we’d like to know where that advice goes. There needs to be feedback from the RSA of outcomes from our advice and recommendations.

• Kathy Seddon – the interaction has been interesting as it is constantly changing but ARC has had some problems, there seems to be unwillingness to share with people who are going to be critical, there is a real need for peer review in ARC by the Fellowship Council. [Andy Gibson; How would it work, in terms of capacity, is it practical? The Fellowship Council is too busy to do that. A peer review is a significant ask for ARC and there isn’t a structure for it to work for everything. ARC did put out a call for feedback and got very little].

ii) Handover; looking at overall recommendations for the next Council:  

It is likely that 50% of the Fellowship Council is not standing for re-election in October. As an outgoing Council it’s important to reflect on what we are handing over and what recommendations we would make. For succession planning we will look at what works well, what doesn’t, and what we would like to see go further.

Councillors who want further guidance on the governance and process of Council Election should refer to the Terms of Reference on the RSA website.

iii) Working Groups

- Should working groups be permanent or task & finish?
- What expectations do we have of our role in working groups - are we advisory?
- What could work better?

• Councillors need more feedback from the RSA on what happens to working group recommendations – more feedback, more measurable outcomes, helpful evaluation
• We could benefit from drafting an understanding on what is the most constructive way to work with RSA staff to build trust and add value
• As well as task & finish projects we can work to a process model where the direction is incremental and will change; ‘See a way Scotland’ is a good example of an iterative process
• Working groups create a useful facility for Fellowship Council – RSA staff collaboration and a good community of experts
• Working groups would benefit by operating to recommendations of good practice; for example good practice of Comms would include more online conferencing (rather than in person).

**Action:** Irene Campbell will develop good practice recommendations for the new Fellowship Council working groups and include better use of technology to facilitate meetings.

iv) **RSA-FRSA Engagement; do we have the tools we need to engage the Fellowship?**

• We think our purpose is to inspire, engage and mobilise the Fellowship into social action and we need more tools to do this
• Is this a representation of the Fellowship, or just the active fellows? Important to get the positioning right to build our influence
• How much are we here to provide services to our Fellows as customers, and how much are we here to mobilise the Fellows as volunteers in support of the RSA’s mission?

v) **Regions & Nations; does the Regions & Nations structure fit into how we want to engage with the Fellowship or should we move to cities and networks?**

• Should we consider whether national and regional representation is really fit for purpose for where the RSA and the UK are heading? These are artificial boundaries that don't reflect the reality of cities and networks.
• Regions have had some good examples of cross-working with each other but this could be improved; sharing of innovation and cross-regional activity should be compulsory
• The role of the core team is very effective for engagement in the regions
• The working culture between RSA and the Regions has improved

vi) **Strategic Review; how will the Strategic Review impact on the next Council?**

• Pre-launch; this Council would like more inclusion the development work of the Strategic Review going forward, it does not feel there has been enough consultation and feedback from the RSA and Trustees
• After the launch of the Strategic Review change aims will require more integration of Fellowship expertise into the work the RSA is doing
• The next Council needs a clear remit i.e. practical application and engagement with the RSA strategic review change aims with the FRSA.
• We think the next Fellowship Council has a big job to do communicating and engaging the Fellowship with the Strategic Review change aims and needs to be given the resources and RSA staff support to do that.
• There may be a need for a new working group to work with the change aims of the Strategic Review.

vii) **Positives**

• We receive greater knowledge of the RSA and its activities and make great connections
• The Fellowship Council offers a great platform to engage the rest of the Fellowship
• We are a useful resource that have helped staff do more than they could alone (e.g. Catalyst)
• We have some influence on strategy e.g. increasing focus on Fellowship networks and volunteering, progress on data issues etc.
• Overall we have high quality local-level FRSA engagement and activities, the Regional Core teams are working well
• RSA Leadership updates at Councils are very useful

viii) Negatives; looking at the overall experience of this Fellowship Council

• We think that our feedback on what Fellows want out of the new Technology Strategy has not actually been incorporated into the final product which is a great disappointment
• The RSA must deliver the technology for all Fellows to find and contact each other independently through FRSA technology, across Regions
• Data issues have impeded FRSA engagement and prevented us from devolving power or doing much more than advising and influencing JAS to take action on our behalf
• Technology and digital inductions for Councillors could work better
• We could be a greater resource for the RSA and more than an advisory body, our expertise and assets could have been used more
• The RSA must do more to show the Council it has input and opportunity in areas of work
• Could the Fellowship Council have more influence on the agenda of the RSA (e.g. shaping their vision, input on the programme of lectures)
• Without more feedback and evaluation from JAS RSA on how our feedback is being used it is not clear how much impact we achieve through Fellowship Council meetings
• Would like more pro-active sharing of good practice between Councillors
• Shame not to have anyone from ARC presenting projects and asking FCs if they'd like to be involved in them. (Even ARC working group members haven't met the ARC directors!)
• Our feedback from younger Fellows is that they need more outgoing engagement from the RSA no-one ever gets in touch
• The lack of diversity in the Fellowship and Fellowship Council needs further work
• Is the Council too big or could we network with each other differently? It's difficult for Councillors to know everybody even after 2 years

5. Update from RSA Fellowship with Oli Reichardt

i) New Fellows Journey Yrs 1-3
ii) Centenary Young People’s Fund

Before the Fellowship update the Council received a quick update of the impending 24th June Fellowship Centenary event and were asked to confirm attendance as soon as possible.

New Fellows Journey Yrs 1-3

Both the content and strategy of our communications is being re-examined, particularly over years 1-2. The RSA is looking to spread out and vary our comms so that regular and opportunistic features are not overlooked. Based on the Fellowship Survey feedback and other analyses, some content ideas include:

- What you can do to engage
- (Survey #1reason new Fellows join is that they support the work of the RSA)
- The importance of renewal
- Consistent Regional updates

Inactive Fellows are still an important base of our support and we want to get the strategy right so that FRSA engagement is an opportunity but does not seem compulsory. It is also important that
we offer routes for new Fellows to engage that exist outside of the governance structure i.e. crowdfunding, RSA Engage, SkillsBank etc.

**Recruiting Young Fellows; Centenary Young Fellowship Fund (CYF)**

Since its launch the CYF has received 65 applicants for new Young Fellows. We have enough funding so far. We are looking at how we will support new CYF Fellows to engage with the RSA.

6. **Regions & Nations Annual Conferences Update**

The Regional Programme Team is using Eventbrite for events which record a lot of valuable data to allow us to evaluate support and activity.

Some outcomes that have come out of the Regions & Nations adopting annual conferences is more projects and increasingly non-Fellows also engaging with the Regions. Attendance from the Executive and updates of the RSA strategic vision has also brought real cohesion across the whole of the RSA.

7. **AOB**

Irene thanked the Council for their participation and for voting her as Chair. For her Council is about visibility and raising profile of Fellows. Irene believes we have achieved:

- Consultation on strategic direction as an advisory body
- Understood that we are the first port of call for views on Fellowship, this is not the only method
- Are embedded in the governance

Challenges are we want it now or tomorrow. Only upon reflection do we realise what we have achieved. We have moved forward and genuinely believe Council has a voice.

Finally this is about you and I would like to thank you for your time, commitment and for being constructively challenging.

Council thanked Irene and Wiard for all their role and support.

[Followed by close and reception]

**END**