

**ecsite-uk: the Science and Discovery Centre Network**  
**MINUTES OF THE 2005 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Place: National Museum of Ireland, Dublin

Date: 8 September 2005

**1 Opening of the meeting**

Colin Johnson, founding Chair of ebsite-uk, welcomed all ebsite members. He chaired the meeting till the election of the new Chair. It was minuted by Melanie Quin (executive director).

**2 Apologies for absence**

Committee members sending apologies were those reaching the end of their term of office (Tristram Besterman; Gail Bromley; Paul Jennings), and:

Roland Jackson, the BA

Heather Mayfield, Science Museum, London

All other Committee members were present, together with some 20 members.

**3 Minutes AGM 2004**

The Minutes of the Plymouth AGM, 8 September 2004 at the National Marine Aquarium, were approved.

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**4 Chair's report**

John Durant, formally coming to the end of his term as Chair, departed the UK for a new position at MIT end June. In his absence, Colin Johnson referred members to [www.ecsite-uk.net](http://www.ecsite-uk.net) as a dynamic archive of the year's activity, and spoke to the four points that were ebsite-uk's aims at its establishment in 2001:

a major **capital fund** for the refurbishment of science centres and their exhibitions was established, jointly by the Millennium Commission, Wellcome Trust and Wolfson Foundation. The £33 million 'ReDiscover' fund has now made all its grants, and the achievements of the scheme will be celebrated at a one-day conference on 28 October,

**national programmes** have been funded (grant applications made by ebsite-uk) and are being delivered by collaboration partners locally/regionally UK-wide. These are detailed on the ebsite-uk website, and invitations for partners for new projects are invited in the monthly eNews. Thanks and congratulations were expressed to Drs Rosalind Mist and Louise Webb, project managers, and Savita Custead project officer,

**advocacy** has been conducted with reference to the agendas of the three key spending departments: DfES, DTI (OST) and DCMS. Lobbying at Westminster has produced modest support for some English

millennium centres. Used as leverage, this has led to a more realistic level of support for the Scottish science centres. In Wales, Techniquest continues to receive approx 30% of annual operating expenditure from the Welsh Assembly. In Northern Ireland, W5's position is being assessed and is not yet resolved,

□ members' **communication and information** needs are addressed through [www.ecsite-uk.net](http://www.ecsite-uk.net) and the monthly e-Newsletter, as well as the quarterly ecsite (Europe) newsletter. Occasional Specialist Seminars provide opportunity for discussion by senior staff of specialist topics. Thanks and appreciation were expressed to Rachel Simmons, Admin Manager, Martin Glancy, Webmaster, our colleagues in the Brussels office (Walter Staveloz and Michaël Renvillard), and to Melanie Quin in London.

Colin then gave a public vote of thanks to John Durant, thanking him for chairing with distinction, energy and commitment in 22/24 months of his term of office. He also voiced members' sincere thanks and appreciation for the contributions of Committee Members coming to the end of their term of office: Tristram Besterman, Gail Bromley, Paul Jennings and Sally Montgomery.

Colin thanked the BA for hosting the ecsite-uk office in the Wellcome Wolfson Building – the BA/ecsite-uk connection offers valuable synergy; and for John Gagg's financial administration.

## **5 Treasurer's report**

Peter Trevitt reported that finances have remained generally positive: there is a considerable portfolio of grant-based projects which – by their nature – need vigilant financial control, but the relationship with OST and the core funding Government provides has been crucial.

Nevertheless, the situation with respect to OST is unstable as the current core funding terminates in March 2006. This necessitates reliance on a contribution from project grants, which have to be continuously sought.

The Meeting approved the 2004 accounts.

## **6 Amendments to the constitution**

Both proposed amendments were accepted nem con. The constitution now states that:

*Small centres have a mission to provide interactive learning experiences. Their visitor numbers normally do not exceed 50k pa.*

and:

*The AGM is valid if a minimum of fifteen (15) percent of all Members are present.*

## **7 Elections to the committee**

ECSITE-UK's statutes specify a Committee composed of the Chair, between 8 and 10 members (8 elected; up to 2 more co-opted), and the chief executive of the BA. The AGM was presented with nine candidates for election or re-election to five open positions, and with the Committee's candidate for Chair.

Colin Johnson presented Linda Conlon, Life science centre, as the candidate for Chair. The AGM unanimously approved her election.

Ballot papers were then distributed and votes cast. There was a tie for fifth place so the Meeting was asked to agree the appointment of six members to the Committee, leaving one further place for co-option in due course. No objection was raised, so this was agreed.

The Committee members are:

Linda Conlon (Chair), Life science centre, Newcastle  
Kelvin Boot, National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth  
Goéry Delacôte, At-Bristol  
Sally Hall , Intech, Winchester  
Judith Harvey, W5, Belfast  
Roland Jackson, the BA  
Heather Mayfield, Science Museum, London  
Stuart Monro , Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh  
Gillian Pearson , The Oxford Trust  
Leigh-Anne Stradeski, Eureka! The Children's Museum, Halifax  
Peter Trevitt (Treasurer), Techniquest, Cardiff

## **8 Action Plan 2005/06**

Linda Conlon thanked Colin Johnson, John Durant and Melanie Quin for their various contributions through the past 12 months. She commented on the excellence of the Committee, its geographic spread across the four nations, and its international expertise. She commended the website for its representation of the broad spectrum of ecsite-uk's activity. The funding challenge remains considerable, with a different scenario unfolding in each of the English regions as RDAs, SLCs and SETpoints establish new relationships. While ecsite-uk needs to continue lobbying nationally, it will also be our job to support member institutions in becoming part of the regional agenda.

Linda invited the AGM to inform the action plan, and introduced the discussion by reminding members that the membership Values Survey conducted in 2003/04 indicates that 84% of members want more networking events; 49% want more opportunities to join collaborative projects; and 46% want information and advice about funding opportunities.

Discussion was animated, and members were invited to continue contributing to shaping the agenda through the year, by email and phone to the ecsite-uk office.

## **9 ECSITE-UK AGM 2006**

The next AGM will take place during the BA annual festival, 3-8 September 2006, in Norwich.

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