

Advisory Council

WEB Minutes of meeting 04 July 2024

Advisory Council Members Present:

Chair Carolin Göhler (CG) Chair / President	Allison Walters (AIW) Elected Chartered Member	John Ingham (JI) BrRep – Yorks & Humber
Mark Smeeden (MS) Hon Secretary	Jennifer Smith (JS) BrRep - EMids	Mark Ross (MR) BrRep - Scotland
Ben Gurney (BG) Elected Chartered Member	Daisy Parsons (DP) BrRep - EofE	Steve Mann (SM) BrRep - Wales
Ruth Holmes (RH) Elected Chartered Member	Annabelle Silver-Setchfield (AS) BrRep - London	Vanessa Ross (VR) EMC Rep
Nicola Phillips (NP) Elected Chartered Member	John Clay (JC) BrRep - Mids	Anastasia Nikologianni (AN) PCC Rep
Will Sandy (WS) Elected Chartered Member	John Turner (JT) BrRep - NE	John-Paul Friend (JPF) BrRep - SW
Akash Wadhawan (AkW) Elected Chartered Member		

Apologies:

Noel Farrer (NF) Vice President	Debbie Bartlett (DB) BrRep - SE	Marko Yau (MY) Student Rep
Mat Haslam (MH) Hon Treasurer		

Staff In Attendance:

Rob Hughes (RH) CEO	Yvonne Matthews (YM) Executive Assistant	Naomi Taylor (NT) Head of Membership Services
Rowena Lovell (RL) Board Secretary	John O'Keefe (JO) Head of Education & Careers	Neelam Sheemar (NS) Head of MarComms & Events
Emma Wood (EW) Governance & Regulation Manager		

1. Opening business

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The meeting being quorate, Carolin Göhler, Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those detailed above, with a particular welcome to new members Jennifer Smith, Annabelle Silver-Setchfield and Steve Mann attending their first Advisory Council meeting.

The Council noted congratulations to Marko Yau, Student Rep as the garden he worked on for RHS Hampton Court was awarded a [Gold Medal and the BEST garden award](#) in category.

1.2 Declarations of interest

The meeting noted no potential conflicts of interest declared in relation to the items on the agenda for discussion.

1.3 Minutes of meeting held 15 February 2024

The Advisory Council unanimously agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2024 as an accurate record of discussions.

1.3.1 Matters arising from the last meeting

In relation to item 2.2 Business Plan 2024-25: the meeting noted that the action arising from that discussion is still outstanding and the expected outputs from LI accredited courses and alternative routes alongside the accredited courses and the membership assessment processing will be explored.

1.3.2 Update from Board

The meeting noted an update from CG from recent Board and Board Committee meetings

2. Items for discussion and decision

2.1 Introduction to the role of the Advisory Council

As there are new members recently joining the Advisory Council, the meeting took the opportunity to discuss the role and function of the Advisory Council:

- The LI is governed by the Royal Charter, granted by the Privy Council with how these are implemented in practice set out in the By-Laws and Regulations.
- The role of the Advisory Council is to monitor and ensure the organisation, including the Board, complies with the Charter and its main responsibilities are to:
 1. Ensure accountability and oversight of the Board
 2. Advise the Board and senior team
 3. Influence strategy and policy
 4. Inspire support amongst and for the membership.
- The terms of reference of the Advisory Council set out in full its role and responsibilities. However, these have not been reviewed since 2019 and discussions agreed that they should be updated to improve effectiveness and the flow of information and communication as well as flexibility and agility.

Council discussions noted that:

- Papers shared with Advisory Council that outline early thinking around an issue or internal structure should remain confidential until the Advisory Council has input into evolving thinking and proposals agreed. However, every effort will be made to be as open and transparent as possible and ensuring such papers are kept to a minimum.
- A diagram showing the structure of the LI and how the members, staff and other stakeholders are interlinked and engage is being developed and will be shared once finalised for further discussion.

2.2 Confidential item

2.3 Appointments & Selection Committee

The Council noted an update on the current position of the Appointments and Selection Committee (A&SC) and that:

- The A&SC plays a key role in the governance and functioning of the LI and therefore needs to have a stronger alignment to governance process and cycles and to ensure closer working with the Advisory Council, Board and the Governance Committee.
- Recently four members of the Advisory Council have joined the Governance Committee which is helping to bring about that closer working and alignment.
- The terms of reference for the A&SC have not been reviewed since 2016 and do not reflect the recommendations from the governance reviews or the current approach that is required.
- The Committee has not been quorate for a while and there have not been any volunteers to fill the vacancies.

Council discussions noted that:

- It is important for the Board to identify skills gaps and advise the A&SC for any Trustee recruitment.
- The A&SC are a sub-committee of the Advisory Council and are separate and independent of the Governance Committee even though there is now a shared membership between the two.
- Membership of the A&SC can require a significant time commitment especially during recruitment.
- At the current time the requirement for one member of the A&SC to be an FLI is set out in the By-Laws and as a result is not easy to change.
- There is a real need to increase promotion and raise awareness of Fellows and how to become one.
- The LI has TMLI members now and it is important that they are also encouraged to become involved.
- How the A&SC will work with the Board in relation to Trustee recruitment needs to be clarified in the terms of reference.

Decision: The Council approved the revisions to the terms of reference for the A&SC subject to any additional edits to be agreed by Ben Gurney, chair of A&SC and Rowena Lovell, Board Secretary in relation to how the A&SC will work with the Board.

2.4 CEO and SLT update

The Council noted an update on LI activity over the last year and plans for 2024 -25 including the twelve critical areas of focus over the coming year and aligned business objectives

2.5 Review of joint meeting

The meeting noted a summary of all group discussions from the recent joint meeting of the Council, Board and senior leadership team including that:

- The summary report of discussions will be shared with Board.

- The following headlines and key themes have been identified where similar comments were made in more than one group on the day around the current and future role of the Advisory Council:
 - Member representation and communication: a conduit for communication with members; to be the voice of members and to facilitate two-way communication between Board and Advisory Council but also Advisory Council, Branches and Standing Committees
 - Oversight and accountability: monitor and hold the Board to account and ensure transparency in activity.
 - Innovation and problem-solving: a conduit for new ideas and thinking and to formulate ideas not just listen.
 - Policy development: a crucial role in developing effective policy and guidance; advising and making recommendations to the Board on policy matters and recognising key issues that need to be addressed.
 - Members voice: Providing a mechanism for feedback to ensure members have a voice and concerns represented effectively.

3. Meeting Close

With no items of AOB raised the meeting was closed.