

EGS Strategy 2014-15 to 2018-19

1. Introduction and Strategic Objectives and Policies

The EGS Council, aided by its Finance and Planning Committee, carried out a review of its activities and finances in the autumn and winter of 2014-15, with a view to identifying the scope for new initiatives and improving the planning and implementation of its activities. This Strategy for the next five years is the outcome of that. It is envisaged that the Strategy will be reviewed and rolled forward annually.

The two main objectives of the Society laid down in the Society's Laws are “the **stimulation and encouragement of public interest in geology** and the **advancement of geological knowledge**”. In Council's view these two primary objectives remain appropriate. However, having reviewed all the Society's current activities, Council concludes that, while it does participate in other organisations' “open days” the Society is doing relatively little at its own hand in pursuit of the first of these Objectives. Yet this is part of the basis of the Society's charitable status which Council wishes to protect.

Over the coming period, therefore, the Society plans to make a step change in its public interest activities.

Many of the Society's activities are carried out on an annual basis and will continue to be so, but in addition the Society will aim to mount new initiatives, usually time-limited and some with a major profile, often in partnership with other bodies.

Finally the Society has a wide audience, in three main categories – professional geologists, amateur geologists and the general public. It needs to ensure that all three client groups are catered for in planning its individual events, making clear which group or groups the events are targeted at, and striking an appropriate balance between them. In pursuing its activities The Society regards its main geographical target area as Edinburgh, east central Scotland and the Borders, though where appropriate it could extend to the rest of Scotland.

2. EGS Plan for the Next Five Years

With these objectives and policies in mind the Council will take forward the following activities. The funding of these activities, and the additional human resources required to deliver them, are set out in subsequent sections of the Strategy.

2.1 Lectures

Lectures are a key member benefit and are well-attended. To reach more of the general public, however, the programme will include an annual public lecture, possibly as part of the Edinburgh Science Festival and possibly in conjunction with the Geological Society of Glasgow or other partners.

2.2 Excursions

The Society's excursions are aimed primarily at its members and are seen by many as a key benefit of membership. The annual weekend and long excursions are very popular, but the Wednesday and Saturday ones are less so, some having a low attendance, yet considerable effort is required to organise them. The Council will review the excursions programme to assess and improve its effectiveness.

2.3 Publications

The Excursion Guides are a cornerstone of EGS's output and this activity will be continued and indeed

expanded, subject to the availability of authors prepared to invest the time required.

The Edinburgh Geologist is very well-regarded by the Society's membership but will be promoted more vigorously, expanding its readership to include the general public, supported by the occasional inclusion of topical articles on geology. It will be assisted in this by the Council's Publications Committee.

The Geoconservation leaflets are very successful in reaching the public audience and the Society's funding of these will be increased where needed. In addition steps will be taken to increase their promotion including by electronic means.

The Council's Publications Committee will review the production of the membership Billets with a view to improving their effectiveness and establishing whether cost savings are possible.

The Society will aim, in conjunction with its partners the Geological Society of Glasgow and the Geological Society Publishing House, to secure the future of the Scottish Journal of Geology as the "journal of choice" for those publishing research on Scottish geology, and as the Society's main means of meeting its Objective of advancing geological knowledge.

2.4 Grants

Grants are available each year from the Society's Clough and Mykura Funds, but in 2014 the Council launched a new general grant scheme to assist individuals and organisations with other geology-related activities such as exhibitions and geoconservation/geodiversity work. The Society will promote this new scheme more vigorously to encourage both professional geologists and public-interest groups to take advantage of it and to further the aims of the Society.

2.5 Sponsored Projects

Sponsored projects, such as the Rocks for Schools project, are self-funding and will be continued as sponsors come forward.

2.6 Workshops

As part of its outreach activities the Society will mount workshops both for its members and for the general public, possibly including a rock-and-fossil show or a microscopy session.

2.7 Special Initiatives

Council will take forward selected one-off initiatives, often in collaboration with other partners, such as the initial planning of a Hutton tercentenary project (for 2026), an initiative for Siccar Point, the promotion of specific information boards/plaques, and perhaps a multi-partite conference.

3. Financing the Plan

3.1 Income and Expenditure

Table 1 in the Appendix shows that in recent years the Society has been generating surpluses. In 2013-14 the surplus was £7,045. For 2014-15 a further surplus of around £5,000 is predicted, before expenditure on grants or geoconservation leaflets, and assuming no unexpected items. One of the Council's financial objectives is to break even on average over a period of years (there are fluctuations from year to year) so it is clear that annual expenditure can be increased if required.

Council will therefore examine the case for further expenditure in pursuance of this Strategy during 2014-15

and draw up a budget for 2014-15 accordingly, revising the projection in Table 1. Beyond that the final column of Table 1 projects what a budget for 2015-16 might look like if more of the changes set out in this Strategy are implemented. This will be reviewed, and every autumn Council will discuss and approve a budget for the forthcoming financial year.

In addition there are a number of other steps Council will consider taking which could increase further the availability of funding if required:

- ⌚ a recruitment drive to increase the number of members and boost subscription income
- ⌚ a review of the level of subscriptions which have been unchanged since 2005-06
- ⌚ a review of pricing of publications, especially excursion guides
- ⌚ a review of the cost of the Billets

3.2 Capital Reserves

The Society's unrestricted reserves have grown over the last four years from £57,973 to £84,570: of the increase £7,472 was due to capital appreciation of the investment portfolio, and £7000 from the 2013-14 surplus still awaiting allocation. Council has reviewed the level of reserves and concluded that the Society needs to maintain minimum unrestricted reserves of £35,000.

Reserves also produce income for the Society without which the annual surplus would be less. Nonetheless Council has concluded that reserves as high as £84,000 are not required and that there is room within the reserves for the funding of one-off events, some possibly quite prestigious, such as the Special Initiatives mentioned in section 2.7 of this Strategy. Council will consider using this facility as cases arise. Council will also keep the level of the Society's reserves under review in the light of changing circumstances.

4 Delivering the Plan

A key constraint in implementing this Strategy is the availability of human resources. The time which Council members can devote to the EGS is limited and Council will therefore take to following steps:

- ⌚ create an EGS Promotion Secretary post within Council to drive forward many of the initiatives set out in the Strategy
- ⌚ delegate the lead on certain initiatives to individual members or subgroups of Council
- ⌚ contract out support services on an ad hoc basis where additional help is required with particular initiatives or activities
- ⌚ seek to find out, and draw on, the interest, expertise and enthusiasm of members of the Society for assistance with specific events.
- ⌚ where appropriate, seek partner organisations with whom to take forward specific initiatives.

Table 1: EGS Income & Expenditure (Unrestricted) (£)

	<u>2011-12</u>	<u>2012-13</u>	<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2015-16</u>
<u>Income</u>					
Subscriptions & Gift Aid	10,726	10,895	10,625	10,600	10,800
Donations	0	2,497	1,791	200	200
Investment Income	2,011	2,245	2,214	2,200	2,200
Publications (net)	1,755	-214	2,347	500	500
Total	14,492	15,423	16,977	13,500	13,700
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Lectures	2,306	2,430	2,007	2,200	2,200
Billets	1,763	1,888	1,692	1,700	1,500
Edinburgh Geologist	2,352	2,460	2,467	2,400	2,400
Grants & Awards	233	183	950	0	2,000
Geological Leaflets	1,000	1,865	270	0	1,500
Administration	892	788	979	900	2,600
Fund Management	480	480	480	480	500
Governance	1,405	1,659	876	1,000	1,000
Excursions (net)	63	-24	211	0	0
Total	10,494	11,729	9,932	8,700	13,700
Surplus	3,998	3,694	7,045	4,800*	0

* Note: mid-point of a range of possible outcomes