**THE ASSOCIATION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**Quality and Audit Committee report to the Annual General Meeting January 9th 2021** (Item 7)

This has been an unusual year for all concerned owing to Covid-19. The Quality and Audit Committee has met on three occasions, in July, September and November – remotely of course. This has been my first experience of chairing meetings sitting at my dining room table. A significant amount of business has been transacted, some of it via email between meetings.

My first and pleasant duty is to inform you that Martin Hollins and Jonathan Ling were elected to the committee in the elections in June 2020. We shall ask you to confirm these appointments at the end of my report. As a result of your decision at the last AGM Maggie Hannon was able to re-join the committee as the Trustee Body Representative.

**Follow up on the review of the Trustee Body**

At last year’s meeting we reported that, following a review of the Trustee Body to explore whether the structure set up in 2012 was still working satisfactorily, Q & A had made the following 5 recommendations for trustees to consider.

1. Review the rules for identifying trustees.

*The Trustee Body considered this recommendation which resulted in the rule change approved at the AGM in January 2020.*

2. Review the relationship between Trustee Body and Education Group, particularly in the areas of common membership of the two groups, of responsibilities and reporting back. *This review is ongoing.*

Q & A has agreed to work with the Education Group in reviewing the committee structure and the remits of those committees. This review is ongoing.

3. Continue to attempt to appoint trustees with business, organisational development and human relations skills.

*The Trustee Body has made attempts to identify suitable persons. Contacts have been made but, to date, no-one has been appointed.*

4. Consider how ordinary members can be re-engaged in seeking election as trustees and voting in elections.

*A ~~h~~* ***H****ead of Communications, Marketing and Member Engagement has been appointed who is addressing this issue.*

5. Review the Association’s approach to conflicts of interest.

*The Trustee Body asked the Quality and Audit Committee to advise on this issue. Q & A researched relevant advice from the Charity Commissioners, forwarded this to the Trustee Body suggesting areas that needed updating.*

*At its November 2020 meeting the Trustee Body approved an updated version of the Conflicts of Interest Policy which included the recommendation from Q & A.*

**Proposal for a three-year term for Chair of Trustee Body.**

The Trustee Body consulted the Quality and Audit Committee on a proposal to establish a 3-year term of office for the Chair of Trustees. Q & A identified the potential implications for the rules on length of service of a trustee. A trustee appointed as Chair in years 5 or 6 of their term as trustee would not conform to the current **rules**. The proposal for the rule change will be considered in item 8 of the agenda.

**Other items of the committee’s business**

The committee supported, in the light of the pandemic, the proposal by the Trustee Body to extend the Richard Needham’s term to the beginning of 2021 in order to provide more continuity and create a longer handover period between the current and incoming chairs.

The committee monitored the elections, scrutinised the nominations for Honorary Membership and was represented at meetings of the Remuneration Committee.

Those of you who visit the “About us” page of the website will have noted that the**O**perating **P**rocedures are still “under review”. As you can imagine, there have been higher priorities during 2020.

The committee has produced an information document on the work of the committee for those considering nomination for membership of the Quality and Audit Committee. It should also be helpful to new members of the committee. The document will be placed on the ASE website.

The Chief Executive Officer has attended each of our meetings and reported on activities at headquarters. The committee has been impressed by the response to the situation we have been placed in by the pandemic. You will have heard the details in the report earlier in the meeting. The committee wishes to place on record its grateful thanks to the headquarters staff for the way they have continued to offer a relevant and valuable service to members (and many non-members) over the past ten months. They deserve our congratulations for their awareness of member needs, their imagination and hard work.

You will have noted the announcement of a further vacancy on Quality and Audit Committee in the November EiS. This results from my completion of the maximum number of nine years of membership of the committee allowed under the rules.

At the outset nine years seemed to be a very long time but the pleasure of working with colleagues and the sense of purpose in working in the best interests of members leaves me surprised that nine years will have passed at the end of August.

Sincere thanks to all the colleagues I have worked with over those nine years.

I take this opportunity to wish the Quality and Audit Committee and the whole Association continuing success in the future.

Dennis Sutton (Chair of Quality and Audit Committee). 13:12:2010

*(Q & A members Maggie Hannon, Martin Hollins, Jonathan Ling, Alan Rhodes, Dennis Sutton).*