



Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2023

Monday, 2nd October 2023, 4:00pm, online via Zoom

ITEM		ACTIONS
1	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>BMS President Janet Quinn welcomed all attendees to the meeting. There were 57 BMS members in attendance, 7 of whom were non-voting. Apologies were received from Lynne Boddy and Jane Heydecker.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes and actions from Annual General Meeting 2022</p> <p>It was noted that in the 2022 FEO report, the term ‘sub-committee’ was used instead of ‘working group’. This will be amended, as the BMS does not operate sub-committees. (Action: NP)</p> <p>With this correction, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the AGM 2022 proceedings.</p> <p>Proposer: Elaine Bignell Seconded: Emma Williams</p>	NP
3	<p>Report on the year’s activities (President, Janet Quinn)</p> <p>Council and Committee meetings</p> <p>Janet Quinn reported that the following Council and Committee meetings had taken place: Council: March (online) and September (in person & online). Fungal Biology Research Committee - March and September (online); Field Mycology & Conservation Committee - February and September (online); Fungal Education & Outreach Committee - February and July (online) plus another online meeting scheduled for November.</p> <p>BMS meetings and events</p> <p>2023 was another very active year with a range of BMS meetings and events, including monthly online talks and events co-ordinated by BMS committees (highlighted later in the AGM).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMS Talks – online (every month) • Spring Field Meeting – Caernarfon (April) • Microscopy Workshop - Barnsley (June) • Ascomycete Workshop - University of Cumbria (August) • Autumn Field Meeting - Scarborough (October) • Student Research Conference - Newcastle (September) • Annual Scientific Meeting - Newcastle (September) • UK Fungus Day - across the UK & online (October) • Autumn Open Meeting - Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, (planned for November) <p>The Annual Scientific Meeting was held in Newcastle, with a programme devised by the Scientific Advisory Board: Jan Quinn, Elaine Bignell, Carol Munro, Alessandra da Silva Dantas, Mike Bromley and Neil Brown. Following the success of the inaugural Student Research Conference at the previous Annual Scientific Meeting (Cranfield 2022) this one-day event ran again in Newcastle, preceding the main meeting. This allowed students to network with their peers before the main meeting, present their research, and gain valuable career advice. It was very well received and</p>	

attended (29 attendees). The main meeting was also a great success with almost 100 delegates and a programme of invited and offered talks around the theme of Fungal Interactions, to showcase the latest journal to join the BMS portfolio.

BMS grants

Jan reported a good level of engagement during the year with the many grant schemes offered by the BMS:

- Four recipients were awarded research grants to facilitate new research directions or ideas, and cover a range of topics from the production of neurotoxins, to the potential role of *Cryptococcus* in Alzheimer's disease.
- Four Undergraduate Student Vacation Bursaries were awarded to enable students to study in host labs, again covering diverse areas of mycological research from the study of wood decay fungi to the genetic basis of antifungal resistance in a human pathogen.
- An impressive number of Small Grants (17) were awarded, illustrating the range of activities these grants can support from conference attendance and running or attending workshops, to resources for schools and local recording groups.
- There were four recipients of the Eunice Jones Bequest Fund, the purpose of which is to help fund postgraduate students visiting laboratories to undertake collaborative work, or to attend conferences or workshops.
- The first two recipients of the new Massee Arts Grant, which was introduced this year were announced (see the FEO Committee update).

BMS awards

In addition to grants, the BMS also actively champions those who have made outstanding contributions to promoting fungal science and to the society.

This year the President's Medal – which is selected by the BMS President for their outstanding contribution to mycological research - was awarded to Jan Dijksterhuis for his contributions to a vast range of mycological research areas and his great work as senior editor of the BMS journal *Fungal Biology Reviews*.

The Benefactors' Medal, awarded to those persons who have given outstanding service to the Society, was awarded to Norman Porrett for his consistent and reliable service to the BMS.

The John Webster Award, which is made on behalf of the FBR committee, was awarded to Lynne Boddy in recognition of her outstanding and extended career in fungal biology research.

The Field Mycology Award, which is made on behalf of the FMC Committee, was awarded to Brian Spooner in recognition of his significant contribution to the advancement of British field mycology.

The Toni Trinci Award - in its 2nd year - is made jointly by the British Mycological Society and the Microbiology Society to a selected speaker presenting ground-breaking research at either society's annual scientific meeting. This year, the winner was Ester Gaya (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew) who leads a team studying the fungal component of Kew's Plant and Fungal Tree of Life programme.

At the Annual Scientific Meeting, six early career mycologists received Howard Eiggins Awards for best talks and posters. Three prizes were awarded in each category with Amelia Clark winning the overall best talk prize, and Sarah Vielreicher the overall best poster prize.

Many congratulations to all awardees.

Membership

Jan announced that BMS Council unanimously approved the proposal that Prof Geoff M. Gadd be elected as an Honorary Member in recognition of his significant contributions to the BMS, including senior editor positions of BMS journals and his significant tenure as BMS Treasurer.

This was accepted by AGM attendees.

Proposer: Lee Davies

Seconded: Mark Ramsdale

Jan reported the following numbers of members, noting the increase overall compared to 2022, particularly the increase in Postgraduate Members, with further new members expected to join before the end of the year.

	2023 (at 26 September)	2022 (at 21 November)
Member	383	394
Associate	222	222
Honorary Member	8	9
Centenary Member	10	10
Life Member	46	42
Postgraduate Member	68	95
Undergraduate Member	63	55
TOTAL	800	827

BMS office staff

Following on from the announcement at last year's AGM regarding a new position within the BMS staff base for an events and member services officer, Jan was pleased to report that Sally Hawkes joined the BMS in January. Sally has extensive experience in conference and events management and most of the Council have benefited immeasurably from Sally's input this year. Thus, the BMS staff base currently comprises Sally, Emma Thompson and Norman Porrett. Jan thanked the staff for all their hard work improving the smooth and professional running of the society.

Naresh Magan

Before handing over to the committee chairs, Jan acknowledged the sad and untimely passing of a dear friend and colleague Naresh Magan, who passed away earlier this year after a short illness. Jan noted that many will remember Naresh for his unfailing enthusiasm for mycology and his wise and calm presence on BMS Council, most recently as general secretary.

3a Fungal Biology Research (FBR Committee Chair, Dan Bebber)

This year, two new members are joining the committee: Alessandra da Silva Dantas (Newcastle) and Esther Garcia-Cela (Hertfordshire), making 7 in total. The Committee is seeking a further 2 new members.

A key activity is work in collaboration with the British Society for Plant Pathology on creation of a 1.5 day meeting "One Health and the Challenge of Antifungal Resistance". This will take place in Bath on 4th and 5th April 2024. The aim is to bring together antimicrobial resistance researchers in industry and academia to consider how we can together tackle the growing issue of anti-fungal resistance. The organising committee is Dan Bebber, Alessandra da Silva Dantas (BMS), Neil Brown (Bath University) and Richard Oliver (BSPP). Thanks to Sally Hawkes for help with meeting organisation.

	<p>BMS will participate in the International Mycological Congress - IMC12 - in August 2024, Maastricht – this will be the big scientific meeting for next year, in place of the BMS Annual Scientific Meeting.</p> <p>The Committee has initiated discussions with Elsevier regarding the mycology research landscape – historically, currently and into the future: who is working on what, where are they based, and where are they publishing their research. Considering a bibliometric analysis of UK mycological research.</p>	
<p>3b</p>	<p>Field Mycology and Conservation (FMC Committee Chair, Marcus Yeo)</p> <p>Core activities of the committee have progressed well; developmental activities that were planned have taken a back seat although it is hoped that the Committee can reinvigorate those in the coming 12 months.</p> <p>Field meetings have been very successful thanks to the efforts of Carol Hobart, with good attendance and positive feedback from those meetings already held (Spring field meeting: Nantlle, Gwynedd, April; Microscopy workshop: Barnsley, June; Ascomycete workshop: Ambleside, Lake District, August). The Autumn field meeting takes place in Scarborough later in October.</p> <p>A highlight is the continuing engagement of amateur field mycologists in DNA barcoding, which is now yielding great results, with identification of species new to science, species new to the UK, and over 300 sequences submitted to GenBank by the middle of the year. An excellent example of how amateur field mycologists can make a really good contribution to scientific mycology.</p> <p>The Fungal Records Database of Britain and Ireland (FRDBI) continues to be widely used with several tens of thousands of new records being added each year; it now holds 2.7 million records. The main development this year has been the addition of a new facility that enables users to analyse the plant associates of different fungal species.</p> <p>Membership of the Committee is in a state of flux, with some members stepping down and 2 new members joining. The Committee is planning ahead to fill forthcoming vacancies: Carol will be stepping down at some point over the next year or two, as Field Events Manager; Stuart Skeates, over a similar timeframe, will be stepping down as Database Manager. The Committee is actively looking ahead to how they can replace their considerable expertise on the Committee. Interest in any type of contribution to the Committee is most welcome: please get in touch.</p>	
<p>3c</p>	<p>Fungal Education and Outreach (FEO Committee Chair, Mark Ramsdale)</p> <p>The FEO Committee meet regularly: 3 meetings per year; Mark took over as Chair of the Committee in January. The Committee has been working towards some of the core aims outlined in the plan; a number of working groups are focused on different activities. The eight members of the committee have very different interests and backgrounds: some are academics; some are field mycologists; some are teachers and educators – so there is a breadth of expertise.</p> <p>As already highlighted, the Massee Arts Grant was awarded for the first time. There were over 316 applications, which was quite a challenge for the panel to whittle down to just two winners. One – Jenny Ashby - is delivering a project in which fungi ceramics produced by a large number of amateur and professional potters will be exhibited as part of the UK Fungus Day celebrations in Bristol. The other - Anna Dimitriu - is experimenting with various media to understand and highlight mycotoxin-producing fungi. Well done to Jenny and Anna.</p> <p>UK Fungus Day remains the Committee’s dominant outreach activity, taking place on Saturday 7th October this year, with a theme of ‘the many faces of fungi’, encompassing everything fungi do,</p>	

	<p>from their ecology to agriculture, impact on humans, food and drink, art and so on. Thank you to Sally for putting together the new website. Huge range of events and attractions taking place, including forays and tours, open doors events, international seminar (organised by Lynne Boddy), online quiz, online cider tasting.</p> <p>In addition to the UK Fungus Day Working Group, there is a Newcomers to Mycology Working Group and an Education in Schools Working Group. There has been a stall in progress with the Newcomers group but a previous questionnaire, developed by Corina Marcos, and the large number of responses highlighted where the interests of newcomers lie. The Committee is putting together new resources, both for newcomers and for education.</p> <p>The Committee has a post on the Royal Society of Biology’s Education Policy Advisory Group, and we are gaining some traction with promoting fungal biology; they are keen for the BMS to produce a policy statement on the importance of fungi.</p> <p>A review of online resources is underway; it is slow but we are creating new resources including ‘Fungus Facts’ cards on human fungal pathogens and plant pathogens.</p> <p>BMS will be sponsoring the MiSAC (Microbiology in Schools Advisory Committee) competition for 2025; the theme will be “Fungal Disease and Antifungal Drug Resistance”, fitting in with the scientific meeting in Bath.</p> <p>The Committee is actively involved in the production of a new GCSE in Natural History, and has managed to get fungi onto the curriculum; Lynne Boddy is leading on this. The GCSE will launch in 2025.</p>	
3d	<p>Publications (Publications Officer, Matthias Brock)</p> <p>Matthias has been Publications Office for five years; his role is mainly promoting the BMS journals and communication between members, the publisher and Council. He was also involved in the tender process, whereby Elsevier were appointed.</p> <p><i>Field Mycology</i> is no longer published with Elsevier; the BMS produces this in-house and it is available free to members in digital format.</p> <p>For all three of the journals published with Elsevier (<i>Fungal Biology</i>, <i>Fungal Ecology</i> and <i>Fungal Biology Reviews</i>) the impact factor for 2023 has slightly declined compared to 2022. There are several reasons for this: submission rates to BMS journals are slightly declining; additionally, there is a change in the calculation of the impact factor that may have affected the journals. (It is no longer the printed articles that are included in citation counts, but citations are counted from when they appear online.)</p> <p>However, the BMS journals are still relatively healthy; the number of articles published that receive citations is increasing over the years, compared to the number that remain uncited. Thank you to the editors and reviewers for their great job selecting high-quality manuscripts.</p> <p>The Editor in Chief of <i>Fungal Ecology</i> is now Benjamin Wolfe, replacing Lynne Boddy who held the role for many years. For <i>Fungal Biology Reviews</i>, Irina Druzhinina has joined to support Jan Dijksterhuis as Co-Senior Editor.</p> <p>The new BMS open access journal, <i>Fungal Interactions</i>, has been launched and has a diverse editorial board. The first submissions have now been received, following the ASM in Newcastle.</p>	

	<p>All members and colleagues are asked to consider BMS journals for their publications. A 50% reduction in the Article Processing Charge is available until November, and the BMS also has a limited number of vouchers available to help reduce costs.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Treasurer’s report for the financial year ending 2022. (Treasurer, Geoff M. Gadd)</p> <p>Geoff delivered a report on the accounts for the year ending December 2022, firstly highlighting some key facts about the Society as given in the accountants’ report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Society is considered a Going Concern – there is a reasonable expectation that the Society has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The financial statements are prepared on this basis. • The principal funding sources of the Society are publications, investment income, subscriptions and meetings and registration charges. (Roughly in that order of magnitude, with the main income coming from the publications contract with Elsevier.) A minor amount of income is generated through grants received, donations and the sale of merchandise. • Reserves are at a sufficient level to ensure that the Society would not be insolvent if winding up occurred for any reason. Reserves are balanced between fixed interest securities, equities and cash deposits. • Risks and uncertainties - the charity is considered to be well positioned to manage risks and uncertainties and secure future operations. • Investment policy and objectives – a mix of fixed interest securities, equities and cash deposits best meet requirements for both income and capital growth. The Society does not invest in companies with inappropriate environmental activities. The Society’s assets are invested in funds offering a return profile which demonstrates low volatility and incremental gains. <p>The accounts are produced by the accountants and are required to be reviewed at by an independent examiner. The examination has not raised any concerns.</p> <p>Geoff explained the funds at year end 2022 compared to year end 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total income from investments and charitable activities was £288,984, and increase from 2021 • Expenditure was £216,290. An increase from 2021, which was £148,888. There are a number of reasons including: the increase in activities after Covid; expansion of the administration team; additional grants. • Income exceeds expenditure for 2022, and the net income (before losses/gains on investment) is £72,694. A little less than year-end 2021. • There has been a net loss on investments of £148,227. In 2021, when the portfolio was doing very well, there was a gain of £105,772. The loss is due to the changes in the global economic environment. • The net movement in funds is thus a decrease of £75,533, which is fairly different to 2021 when it was an increase of £192,186. • Total funds at year end 2022 were £1,681,669. Which is less than year end 2021 of £1,757,202 <p>Geoff then explained some of the details of the balance sheet that underpin these figures, and summarised the increases and decreases in funds as above. Despite the adverse results for investments in 2022, the Society’s finances are in a healthy position and the future is financially secure.</p>	

	<p>The report and accounts had been previously approved by Council, and were accepted by AGM attendees.</p> <p>Proposer: Anthony Whalley Seconder: Alessandra Da Silva Dantas</p> <p>Before moving on, Janet Quinn thanked Geoff on behalf of the whole Society for his massive contribution to the Society, and for the rigour he has undertaken in his role as Treasurer. It is testament that the Society is in such a healthy financial position due to his hard work over very many years.</p>	
5	<p>Proposal for updates to the Society’s Constitution and voting on Resolutions. (President, Janet Quinn)</p> <p>The Council together with the help of Executive Officer, Emma Thompson, undertook a review of the Society’s constitution to bring it up to date and to ensure it helps (rather than hinders) the effective operation and progression of the Society.</p> <p>The key changes and draft of the updated constitution were circulated to members for feedback at the beginning of September, with any queries about the papers or the resolutions to be forwarded to the BMS office before the AGM. Jan outlined three such points that were raised, and Council’s responses, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regarding change to entitlements of membership : Current constitution Part 2 (7)(5)(a)(i) Members shall be entitled to: (i) <u>attend and participate in any activity of the Society.</u> Proposed Constitution Part 2 (4) all members may <u>attend and participate in the activities of the Society for each category of membership.</u> <p>Council thinks the change is correct as not ALL activities of the Society are available to ALL types of member. For example, not all members could attend the student research conference, or apply for grants for post-graduate students. The current constitution implies that everyone can access everything, which is not quite true. We will add a chart to the membership pages on the website illustrating the benefits/services/activities each member type can access (Action: ET)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Regarding election of trustees “Prior to the nominations by Council 3mth before the AGM should there not be a reminder or request for nominations?” <p>The complete process is explained in Part 2 point (5) of the proposed constitution. Importantly, this process is the same as the current constitution. Thus, members are reminded/invited to make nominations to Council and members can also make further nominations after the Council’s initial suggestions are circulated. So, there are two opportunities for members to nominate Trustee posts, and furthermore we propose to make this easier in that the requirement is for a proposer and seconder (rather than 10 members) to support a nomination.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Regarding ensuring a good balance on council that represents the full membership: Current council: P, VP, GS, T, FBR x2, FMC x2, FEO x2, Pub, Int (non-voting). Proposed council: P, VP, GS, T, FBR, FMC, FEO, Pub, Int, plus 2 member posts. <p>The posts on the current council are as noted above. A key change with the proposed council is that the three ‘secondary representatives’ from Committees are replaced by two ‘Council Member’ posts. The rationale is that the Committee chairs can adequately represent their respective Committee, whereas these two new roles will be used proactively to enable inclusion, diversity and best representation of the BMS membership on Council. For example, individuals filling these posts could bring a particular mycological or demographic background, or have experience or skills</p>	ET

not otherwise represented. If our proposed updates to the Constitution are accepted, the transition to this new structure for Council (Resolution 2) will require nomination and election of the 2 new Council member posts.

Voting on Resolutions

Jan Quinn asked members to vote on the three Resolutions. The process for voting by adding names to the online Chat was overseen by Emma Thompson and Sally Hawkes,

Resolution 1: An updated Constitution for the British Mycological Society

Proposed by President, Janet Quinn and Vice President, David Harries on behalf of the BMS Council. BMS members are asked to accept the updated Constitution as presented herein, to be effective from today's date.

Resolution 1 was accepted.

Votes For: 36

Votes Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Resolution 2: Transition of Council and Committee members

Proposed by President, Janet Quinn and Vice President, David Harries on behalf of the BMS Council. BMS members are asked to approve the appointments on Council and Committees as presented herein, which includes election of the named members of Council.

Posts on Council

Role	Post-holder	Term
President	Prof Elaine Bignell	2 years from Jan 2024
Vice President	David Harries	Extend for 1 year to Dec 2024
President Elect	Vacant - term begins January 2025	1 year
General Secretary	Prof Janet Quinn	5 years
Treasurer	Dr Paul Dyer	5 years
International Advisor	Prof Anthony Whalley	Extend for 1 year to Dec 2024
FBR Committee Chair	Dr Dan Bebber	Continue to Dec 2025
FMC Committee Chair	Marcus Yeo	Continue to Dec 2024
FEO Committee Chair	Dr Mark Ramsdale	Continue to Dec 2025
Publications Committee Chair	Dr Matthias Brock	Extend for 1 year to Dec 2024
Council Member	Vacant – see Resolution 3	3 years
Council Member	Vacant – see Resolution 3	3 years

Posts on the Fungal Biology Research Committee

Role	Post-holder	Term
Chair	Dr Dan Bebber	Continue to Dec 2025
Members	Dr Alessandra Da Silva Dantas	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2026
	Dr Esther Garcia-Cela	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2026
	Dr Filipa Cox	Extend for 1 year to Dec 2024
	Dr Matthias Brock	Continue to Dec 2024
	Dr Rhys Farrer	Extend for 1 year to Dec 2024

Posts on the Field Mycology and Conservation Committee

Role	Post-holder	Term
Chair	Marcus Yeo	Continue to Dec 2024
Members	Carol Hobart	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2025
	Chris Knowles	Continue to Dec 2024
	Clare Blencowe	Extend for 1 year to Dec 2024
	David Satori	Continue to end 2025
	Helen Baker	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2026
	Lee Davies	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2026
	Stuart Skeates	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2025

Posts on the Fungal Education and Outreach Committee

Role	Post-holder	Term
Chair	Dr Mark Ramsdale	Continue to Dec 2025
Members	Alex Dombrowski	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2026
	Cameron Diekonigin	Extend for 1 year to Dec 2024
	Christian Taylor	Continue to Dec 2025
	Ethan Henderson	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2026
	Evelina Basenko	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2026
	Gary Easton	Continue to Dec 2024
	Lynne Boddy	Starts as soon as approved at AGM; ends Sep 2026

Posts on the Publications Committee

Role	Post-holder	Term
Chair	Dr Matthias Brock	Extend for 1 year to Dec 2024
Members	Dr Benjamin Wolfe, Editor in Chief, Fungal Ecology	Until they cease to be the Senior Editor
	Dr Irina Druzhinina, Co-Senior Editor, Fungal Biology Reviews	
	Dr Jan Dijksterhuis, Co-Senior Editor, Fungal Biology Reviews	
	Prof Geoffrey Kibby - Senior Editor, Field Mycology	
	Prof Geoffrey Gadd, Senior Editor, Fungal Biology; Senior Editor, Fungal Interactions	

Resolution 2 was accepted.

Votes For: 33

Votes Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Resolution 3: A call for nominations to fill two vacancies on Council

Proposed by President, Janet Quinn and Vice President, David Harries on behalf of the BMS Council. BMS members are asked to approve the recommendation for a call for nominations to the two vacant Council posts and election of members at a Special General Meeting.

Resolution 3 was accepted.

Votes For: 33

Votes Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

Membership fees and journal subscriptions 2024

The three resolutions having been passed, Jan announced the membership fees and journal subscriptions for 2024.

Member	£38 (New members, first year = £21)
Postgraduate Member	£21
Undergraduate Member	£10
Life Membership	£266

Fungal Biology, Fungal Biology Reviews, Fungal Ecology

Electronic subscription to all three £38

Print-only subscription:

<i>Fungal Biology</i>	£60	(£50 if taken with electronic access)
<i>Fungal Biology Reviews</i>	£40	(£35 if taken with electronic access)
<i>Fungal Ecology</i>	£54	(£47 if taken with electronic access)

Field Mycology

BMS Member		Non-member	
Electronic access	Free	Electronic access	£55
Print subscription	£12	Print subscription	£55

A key point relating to the new constitution is the merging of Member and Associate Member categories. This will be active from October 1st for new joining members. Current Associate Members will be able to pay the Associate rate for membership in 2024, but will be transferred to Full membership.

Additionally, there will be an introductory membership offer of £21 for the first year for new Members, in the hope of encouraging newcomers to mycology in addition to those more experienced to join the BMS.

Journal subscription fees will be held at 2023 prices. The only exception is the *Fungal Biology Reviews* print price, which has increased by £4 to £40. However, this is still significantly below the non-member price (currently £77 per year). Electronic access is still the best option: for members, this is £38 for all three Elsevier journals, and free access to Field Mycology.

6 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting was closed.