

Minutes of BIG Executive meeting

Glazebrook Room – IOP London

02/12/2008

Present: Noel Jackson, Sarah Vining, Rachel Mason James Piercy, Natasha Verniquet, Savita Custead

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes are considered a true and correct reflection of the previous meeting. Some changes will be made to ensure initials have been changed to full names.

NV to update minutes with full names, not initials.

2. BIG Event:

- Format and timeline for session proposals

There will be four formats and five strands to help guide delegates when deciding on session proposals. These guidelines will also give structure to the event making it easier for visitors to choose which sessions they want to partake in.

The four formats are:

Presentation
Hands on
Show case
Forum

The five strands are:

Teenagers
Community involvement
Partnership links
Personal development
Formal education

Other suggestions for strands were: Theory of science communication, programming, learning from other fields, skills, career progression, young professional strand, early years, primary, adults, family.

The submission form will have a sentence or two explaining what each of the strands means, and will ask delegates to decide which their topic fits best.

Delegates will be informed that the sessions will be an hour long, and then at the executives' discretion individual delegates may be asked to expand their sessions to last for longer.

Timeline: 1st Jan – Savita to put out the call for submissions
20th Feb – Deadline for submissions
26th Feb – Submissions viewed by Exec
- Registration fees

Savita to give text to Sarah about the submission process to go into the Newsletter and website.

Savita to put submission process on big chat

Savita and Rachel to discuss finances – in particular whether it is worth having the early bird discount.

It is suggested that due to the popularity of the event this year we might need to cap the number of delegates. We should portray this sense of urgency in the advertising/building excitement which might encourage people to pay early, which is important, as we are unsure whether there will be an early bird discount this year. We are expecting more one-day visitors at this event, which may affect the atmosphere of the event.

- Historic demos event

This event is planned on the Wednesday night as an opener to the event. With more one-day delegates it provides a social/networking alternative to the dinner on the Thursday night.

The event will be 1,1/2 hours in total with a break - four different people doing twenty-minute sessions (including change over), with a ten-minute interval.

- Key note speakers

Suggestions: Science minister Lord Drayton, Chief of Science Museum or Natural History Museum, Head of the Royal Society, IOP or Biological Society, Marcus de Sautoy, Simon Singh.

With the event being held at the RI in London we should set our sights high, looking for a keynote speaker who is in a serious role in science and society and values the role we play in science engagement.

3. BIG Skills

James presented to the Exec a summary of the proposals for the BIG skills days including suggested dates, venues, and costs (see BIG skills file for further information).

Feedback from Lorraine Kenny's storytelling day was positive. The event made £60 and pulled in new members to BIG.

Rachel expressed concern about the informal way the skills reps worked in regards to finance. It is suggested that this process becomes more formalised with skills reps working with Rachel to outline effective budget plans.

Ben Brown's session on theatre skills training looks to be organised for the 28th of February with Kevin Hollis(?) running the workshop. Savita suggested applying for funding through BASSAC for the Science Festival meeting to reimburse travel costs.

Noel to convene and organise the flow of the show.

Savita to be in charge of the event and be the point of contact with the RI.

Savita to look into keynote speaker based on Exec suggestions.

Sarah to add the Skills days to the newsletter and add updates to the web.

Savita to look into applying for funding through BASSAC

Changes have been made so that Big Skills reps are now the first point of contact instead of all emails going to Sarah.

4. Administrator's Report

Sarah presented to the Exec an administrators report showing our increase in membership, and updates on the e-newsletter, website and events (see Administrators file for further information).

Sarah expressed concern over the increasing workload of the administrator. Key areas include time required to edit the newsletter and the increase in admin and marketing support due to the recent Skills days.

Suggested that a style guide be produced so people writing stories can adjust them to the 'BIG' style of writing.

Sarah presented to the Exec a copy of the website tendering proposal which was accepted. Savita suggested going through an open system that will not tie us in to one company/personal CMS. That way it will allow us to change who we use when we want to change/update in the future.

5. Treasurer's Update

Rachel presented to the Exec a paper detailing the duties of the treasurer (see Treasurer file for further information). This paper outlined the increase in workload of the treasurer over the last seven years, suggesting that it is becoming beyond the scope of a volunteer. At the moment it takes up about 1/3 to 1/2 day per week, working out at around £2-3,000 per year.

Noel said that it takes about £7,000 to support the paid staff to run the organisation therefore we need to maintain membership of 238 to be sustainable.

Rachel suggested we could take out event insurance for the BIG events so we would no longer require such a large surplus. This would free up the surplus each year to be spent as the executive saw fit.

Sarah to do minor editing but will pass on any large editing jobs (for the newsletter) to other exec members.

Sarah to monitor her time/workload in particular how much this will increase with the new CMS.

Sarah to send out Website tender to BIG chat. Deadline 15th December Rachel to monitor her time to give information on how long she spends as treasurer.

Rachel to identify what is costs us to run BIG, and our income.

Savita to get a quote for event insurance.

Sarah to look at a marketing budget.