

The British Interactive Group Executive
IOP Glazebrook Room
Minutes: 23/04/2009

Attending: Savita Custead, Noel Jackson, James Piercy, Sarah Vining, Natasha Verniquet

Apologies: Rachel Mason

1. Minutes of last meeting

Sarah suggested that our meetings and reports be put online, for members to access. This was agreed with by the executive.

The action for Sarah to get information about our members has been cancelled as the membership forms don't ask for job titles and therefore any information she could get wouldn't tell us much about the person and their relationship with BIG.

2. Admin Report

See Administrator's report – April 2009 (in the Big Executive folder)

It was suggested that the next E-Newsletter be pushed forward by a week to give the appropriate six weeks for BIG executive nominations. It could become a Mid Summer Issue. Other suggested entries were, a plug for the BIG event, the future of BIG report, nominations for BIG executive, and the recommendation of the Executive for next years committee members. (For example it will be put to the members that Rachel is allowed to run again for treasurer).

Actions:

3. Marketing material

Sarah presented the executive with marketing suggestions (see Big Executive folder for specific details).

Increased Income

- It was suggested that **sponsorship** of the BIG event could be an income. Savita said this is something that we haven't really looked into in the past. She suggested bursaries to the event, with a sponsors name attached as the easiest form to manage.
- Sarah suggested that we put together a menu of things people could sponsor for example coffee, lunch, programme, bursaries.
- In regards to sponsorship it was decided that we would go for bursaries this year and look for other forms of sponsorship next year.

Action: Savita to write up a letter to send to identified bodies who might be interested in sponsoring Bursaries for this years BIG Event. Sarah and Savita to discuss possible forms of sponsorship for next years BIG Event.

- The idea discussed was to make **BIG chat** a members-only incentive of £5 to join. General consensus was that we would loose out on this as

someone could easily set up a new chat list for free. Also we then cut off our direct marketing to 750 people who have registered their interest in our field. Would be interesting to see in our evaluation forms how people hear about our BIG skills days. That way we can see if the BIG Chat list is the way people find out about what Big offers them.

- It is suggested that we use our **resources** as a source of income, either by using it to encourage new members by making it a members only thing, or by making up fact sheets (Make your own bubbles) and sell them for cheap. Sarah suggested hiring someone for two days of work to plough through the website and sort through the resources. Noel suggested making it a Masters Student placement project. James suggested adding links to official reports and research papers so that we can be the one stop shop for information on informal science communication.

Action: Savita to look out for a Masters student who might be interested in sorting out the web resources.

- There was a suggestion to offer advertising on the Big website, which the exec agreed probably wouldn't bring in too much revenue and would may annoy members.

Increased Membership

- Direct Mail. Famelab – Invite Sharon to be a judge at the BIG demo as a first step to formalising a relationship with famelab. Savita emphasised the importance of making it clear to famelab why they should partner with us, as we are able to provide ongoing support and connections for their participants.
- Member-get-member incentive. Exec thought this was a great idea, but feels unsure as to what exactly the incentive would be? Money, extended membership?

Increased Profile

- More twittering and updating of the Facebook page
- Suggested that we write for more publications, Noel expressed his interest in continuing to write these for BIG post July.
- Conferences – Should BIG go along? Suggested that a budget (£300) be put aside for conferences. Could be a good way of disseminating information, about skills days or general members practise.

Action: Executive to identify events/conferences we should speak at/go to.

- Noel commented that we can get a better profile once we know what we represent.
- James to look into getting on the Learning Outside the Classroom committee.

Role of the Administrator

It was again noted that the role of the administrator is increasing due to added responsibilities relating to the Big Skills Days. The executive is keen to make sure that Sarah is being paid appropriately for her work.

Action: Sarah and Rachel to prepare a recommendation for what the administrator should be doing, and how much this would cost. Include longer term ideas (such as some of the marketing initiatives mentioned above).

4. Treasurer's Update

Sarah spoke on behalf of Rachel. Our account is looking healthy with £7000 made this year.

5. BIG Skills Events

Science Festival Workshop

Noel was wondering if we should open it up for more people as it is a forum for Science Festivals and so the more people who get to input the better. Sarah said the cap is due to the room size. Savita queried whether opening the session up for more people would actually get any more people. All science festivals were targeted and especially invited to come.

Savita questioned whether we want to make the science festival meetings an invitation only event instead of opening it up to all and any BIG members as a skills day. She said currently there are two types of groups attending the event, those who work for festivals and those who want to advertise/market/sponsor festivals, because they can choose to go.

Noel posed the question, do the festivals feel like their links should be formalised or still fit in with BIG?

Teenager's event

Action: Sarah to chose a bit more for this one as interest is currently low.

Noel suggested that the skills event days need to be more spaced out. James said there are roughly four a year and are general set apart but has been trouble with the organisation of the Theatre day.

Noel asked if as it is taking time for the events to get rolling, should the current event officers be asked to come back next year? James asked if we needed more people?

Noel suggested at the BIG event we hold a session to discuss possible ideas for skills days.

6. BIG Event

Action: Executive to register for BIG Event

There are currently 58 people registered for the Big Event, with another 25 verbal clarifications. Savita said their was a nice show of new people registered.

Thursday evening event

Savita asked the executive about the set up for the Thursday evening event. She said she was looking into the Science Comedian, but what else could we do/have.

Noel confirmed the style should be cabaret and Natasha suggested that a chance to change seats at some point through the meal would be nice. It was suggested an open mic for budding science comedians, and/or a 'create what you can with these office supplies' to be on the tables.

AGM

Needs to be quite formal. Savita suggested it would work better on the Thursday than the Friday. It should be a one hour session and not at lunch. All members should be invited to come and not have to pay (so those who work in London but aren't coming to the event, can still make the AGM for free).

Programme

Exec said they were happy with the programme. Savita said she had room for nine more sessions and was wondering about the process of getting more. Was keen for the executive to have a look at the programme and come up with suggestions of people/groups we aren't hearing from. Hopefully the new sessions can be workshop based as there are few of these sessions currently.

Advertising

James suggested that we advertise to Institutes that we will be just around the corner.

Action: Savita and Sarah to work out how best to approach this.

Accommodation

Savita has talked to conference London people and will put up a listing for accommodation.

Keynote Speaker

Savita has been waiting for a reply from Susan Greenfield from the RI.

7. Direction of BIG

(See report in Executive folder)

BIG is for *all informal science communication*.

We are the organisation for practitioners of informal STEM communication.

Proposal to the membership is to add a new strap line to our title that we are about STEM. BIG will always be open to learning from other sectors and sharing our skills and experiences. We will need to ask the membership to make changes to the constitution to better express who we are.

BIG membership is for those who see themselves as informal science communicators, in particular exhibit designers, science centre staff etc. Don't recommend putting constraints on who should join.

We should target, museum staff, Science and Engineering Ambassadors and teachers.

Noel – Big is expanding because the sector is expanding and maturing. Noel to explain BIGs role in the chairman's speech at the AGM, and in the Mid Summer Newsletter.

Proposal to put to members that Big should promote excellence and come up with a set of guidelines. They should recognise and reward best practise. This will require a sub-committee to come up with the guidelines.

Action: Noel to do w write up on our position and email round, eventually to go into the newsletter and chairman's AGM speech.

Sarah to put James report on the website (be sure to take out any individuals names)

8. AOB

Concern about a volunteer job becoming a paid position (in this instance the position of Treasurer). If it was to become a paid position then it would need to go out to tender.

Exec decision that the treasurer's position will be an honorary position and should have a strategic overview of the organisations accounts and at this stage we do not look to make this paid. However the burden of book keeping/administration will be moved to the administrator who is in a paid position. (remember to consider this when working out a plan of work for Sarah).