

Commonwealth Chemistry Annual General Meeting

21 May 2024

CCAGM/0524:99

MINUTES of a meeting of the Commonwealth Chemistry Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 21 May 2024 from 10:00 – 12:30 GMT by MS Teams.

Participants

Executive Board:	
Professor Neil Coville	President and Executive Board Chair (South Africa)
Dr Genevieve Adukpo	Executive Board Member (Ghana)
Professor Steve Bottle	Executive Board Member (Australia)
Dr Michael Forde	Executive Board Member (Trinidad and Tobago)
Dr Vicki Gardiner	Past-President and Executive Board Member (Australia)
Professor Peter Mallon	Executive Board Member (South Africa)
Professor Sarah Masters	Executive Board Member (New Zealand)
Dr Ale Palermo	Executive Board Member (UK)
Professor Alison Thompson	Executive Board Member (Canada)
Professor Datuk Dr Soon Ting-Kueh	Executive Board Member (Malaysia)
Professor Sandeep Verma	Executive Board Member (India)
In attendance Secretariat	
Dr Andrew Shore	Secretary
Ms Gill McGrath	Secretariat
Dr Bianca Provost	Secretariat
Membership	
Mr Erick Awas	Kenya
Dr Timothy Biswick	Malawi
Professor Sir Richard Catlow	UK
Mr Sainey Cham	Gambia
Professor James Darkwa	South Africa
Dr Ireshika De Silva	Sri Lanka
Professor Bikele Mama Dèsiré	Cameroon
Professor Amanda Ellis	Australia
Dr Andrea Goldson-Barnaby	Jamaica
Professor Joanne Harvey	New Zealand
Dr Jamal Hassan	UK
Professor Cynthia Ibeto	Nigeria

Dr Justin Kabera	Rwanda
Dr LOH Xian Jun	Singapore
Dr Md. Iqbal Rouf Mamun	Bangladesh
Professor Basil Marasinghe	Sri Lanka
Professor Bice Martincigh	South Africa
Dr Terry Mohammed	Trinidad and Tobago
Ms Nita Mosley	UK
Jeffrey Gitu Mwangi	Kenya
Dr Thabile Ndlovu	Eswatini
Dr Deborah Nicoll-Griffith	Canada
Professor Vincent Nyamori	South Africa
Dr Eunice Nyawade	Kenya
Professor Dr Gloria Ukalina Obuzor	Nigeria
Professor Sourav Pal	India
Prof. Priyani Paranagama	Sri Lanka
Professor Namal Priyantha	Sri Lanka
Professor Vishal Rai	India
Professor Ponnadurai Ramasami	Mauritius
Dr Lydia Rhyman	Mauritius
Professor Rufus Sha'Ato	Nigeria
Professor Vinod K Singh	India
Dr Marvadeen Singh-Wilmot	Jamaica
Dr Emma Smith	Barbados
Dr Josephine Tsang	Canada
Dr Mohammad Helal Uddin	Bangladesh
Dr Amália Uamusse	Mozambique
Professor Clinton Veale	South Africa
Ms Timaima Waqainabete	Fiji
Dr Sisira Weliwegamage	Sri Lanka
Professor Avril Williams	Barbados

1.	WELCOME BY THE PRESIDENT	
	Professor Coville welcomed all to the 4 th Commonwealth Chemistry Annual General Meeting. He took attendees through the Participant Agreement and Housekeeping and spoke through the agenda, highlighting the last item(open discussion) - and said he hoped to hear from as many members as possible during the meeting.	
2.	MINUTES FROM THE 2023 AGM (CCAGM/0523:99)	
	Professor Coville asked for amendments to the 2023 AGM minutes. Some changes had been sent to the Secretariat ahead of the meeting, which would be made. No changes were put forward and the minutes were approved .	
3.	PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS	
	3.1	<p>Commonwealth Chemistry President's Report (Verbal)</p> <p>Professor Coville gave an update on his first year as President. He briefly paid tribute to Dr Gardiner, the first President of Commonwealth Chemistry, highlighting the work she had carried out to set up the governance of Commonwealth Chemistry and celebrating the strong direction she had given to establish the Federation.</p> <p>He talked about the set-up of the Early Career Network in 2023, a personal priority for him as President, and outlined the success so far of the group. The focus of his second year as President would be on the financial future of Commonwealth Chemistry as well as enhancing the profile and engagement with Commonwealth Chemistry. He touched upon the recently acquired accreditation of Commonwealth Chemistry by The Commonwealth which would help raise the Federation's profile.</p> <p>To increase interaction with the Commonwealth Chemistry membership, Professor Coville highlighted that a new Committee was being formed which would liaise directly with Societies to build a stronger network and engagement.</p>
	3.2	<p>Announcement of 2024 Commonwealth Chemistry Executive Board Elections and Appointments (CCAGM/0524:02)</p> <p>Professor Coville thanked the membership for voting. He set out the results of the recent elections and appointments of Commonwealth Chemistry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Michael Forde from Trinidad and Tobago, President-Elect • Professor Sarah Masters from New Zealand, Elected Member • Professor Ireshika De Silva from Sri Lanka, Appointed Member • Dr Ale Palermo from the United Kingdom, Appointed Member <p>As incoming President-Elect, Dr Forde expressed thanks to all that had voted. Professor Coville reminded all that Dr Gardiner would stand down at the close of the AGM as she had reached the end of her term as Past-President.</p>
	3.3	<p>Commonwealth Chemistry Membership (CCAGM/0524:03)</p> <p>Professor Coville referred attendees to the paper which shows the membership of Commonwealth Chemistry. Currently, there are 26 Society Members.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Royal Australian Chemical Institute 2. Bangladesh Chemical Society

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Chemical Society of Botswana 4. Cameroon Society of Chemistry 5. Canadian Society for Chemistry 6. Pancyprian Union of Chemists 7. Ghana Chemical Society 8. Indian Chemical Society 9. Chemical Research Society of India 10. Caribbean Academy of Sciences Jamaica Chemistry Division 11. Kenya Chemical Society 12. Chemical Society of Lesotho 13. Institut Kimia Malaysia 14. New Zealand Institute of Chemistry 15. Chemical Society of Nigeria 16. The Chemical Society of Pakistan 17. The Institute of Chemists, Papua New Guinea 18. Rwanda Chemical Society 19. Singapore National Institute of Chemistry 20. South African Chemical Institute South Africa 21. Chemical Society of the South Pacific 22. Institute of Chemistry Ceylon 23. Tanzania Chemical Society 24. Trinidad and Tobago Chemical Society 25. Royal Society of Chemistry, UK 26. Chemical Society of The Gambia <p>Professor Coville was delighted to announce the first Associate Member for Commonwealth Chemistry: the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, University of Malawi. Professor Coville invited representative Dr Timothy Biswick to share a message in celebration of this news.</p>
	3.4	<p>Commonwealth Chemistry Boards and Committees (CCAGM/0524:04)</p> <p>Professor Coville referred attendees to the corresponding paper which showed the current Boards and committees of Commonwealth Chemistry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Chemistry Executive Board • Commonwealth Chemistry Finance Committee • Early Career Network Committee • Commonwealth Chemistry Nominations Committee <p>Professor Coville highlighted the new Early Career Network Committee, and mentioned that Professor Priyani Paranagama, Chair of the Committee, would address attendees later in the AGM.</p> <p>Professor Coville also highlighted a second new Committee, the Commonwealth Chemistry Nominations Committee. This Committee would be tasked with ensuring candidates put forward for election will provide an appropriate balance of skills and representation on the Executive Board.</p>
4.		<p>COMMONWEALTH CHEMISTRY FINANCIAL UPDATE (CCAGM/0524:05)</p> <p>Professor Mallon, as Chair of the Commonwealth Chemistry Finance Committee, provided an update on expenditure from 2021 to 2023 and forecasted expenditure for 2024.</p>

	2021 Actual £	2022 Actual £	2023 Actual £	Notes 2023	2024 Forecast £	Notes 2024
Income						
Travel bursary for Early Career Chemists Sponsorship	-	-	150,000	1		
	-	-	-			
Expenditure						
External contractors (Consultants, Commissions, etc)	8,000	5,120	5,230	2		
Production Costs	-	320	649	3		
Grants, Prizes, Awards	12,500	12,500	6,428	4	6,250	8
Conference & Event Costs	5,624	5,840	76,645	5	15,000	9
Technology costs	2,398	2,500	3,120	6	2,680	6
Publicity, Marketing & Advertising	-	9,311	-			
Travel and accommodation expenses	-	19,744	155,175	7	34,000	10
Total Costs*	-28,522	-55,335	-247,247		-57,930	

* All costs prior to 2021 were charged to RSC Operating Budget (ca. £102k in 2019 and ca. £49k in 2020).

Notes:

1. Contribution from the RSC Chemists' Community Fund to support Early Career Chemists from low- and middle-income countries to attend 2nd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress.
2. Social media campaign and legal fees.
3. 2nd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress delegate bags.
4. Prizes for 4th Commonwealth Chemistry Posters event and 2nd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress.
5. Venue, catering, LOC staff costs and bus transfers for 2nd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress.
6. Federation website hosting fees.
7. Delegate travel and accommodation for 2nd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress (excluding early career chemist travel).
8. Prizes for 5th Commonwealth Chemistry Posters event.
9. Virtual event costs for 5th Commonwealth Chemistry Posters event held in October 2024 and Early Career Network activities.
10. Executive Board and Finance Committee 2024 board meeting held in India.

Professor Mallon asked members to pay special attention to AGM paper 10.2, which would be presented later in the AGM. This paper was designed to open a discussion on securing the financial future of Commonwealth Chemistry and Professor Mallon asked the membership for their input. He asserted the issue of financial sustainability of Commonwealth Chemistry was of utmost importance as, without additional funding, Commonwealth Chemistry would cease to exist by 2029.

A question was posed in the chat regarding the funding from the Royal Society of Chemistry Chemists' Community Fund which was shown in the paper. Professor Mallon confirmed this contribution was made for the Congress in Trinidad and Tobago in 2023. On this note, Professor Mallon mentioned that it was anticipated that the 2025 Congress spend would be less than for the 2023 Congress.

5. REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2023 COMMONWEALTH CHEMISTRY CONGRESS (CCAGM/0524:06)

Dr Gardiner shared her experience of the 2nd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress in Trinidad and Tobago. She reminded all that the first in-person Congress had been delayed due to the pandemic. Dr Gardiner spoke of the amazing experience she and others had in coming

	<p>together in Trinidad and Tobago, highlighting the value in the participation of delegates from developing nations in the Commonwealth, enabling discourse and sharing of ideas between 200 delegates from 33 countries, including 92 Early Career Chemists. She mentioned that 24 out of 26 Society members were represented and the event included 25 invited speakers from 18 countries. Dr Gardiner mentioned that the focus on Early Career Chemists was one of the ways that the Congress was different to other scientific conferences, and the feedback survey following the event revealed success in allowing participants to identify new contacts, build relationships and develop professionally. Overall, the feedback had been overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>Dr Gardiner finished by saying there was great warmth at the Congress, with good community building across a diverse group of people.</p>
6.	<p>COMMONWEALTH CHEMISTRY ACTIVITY REPORT (CCAGM/0524:07)</p> <p>Professor Masters summarised the 4th Commonwealth Chemistry Poster event 2023. The event attracted the highest ever number of posters, with 240 posters presented by participants from 34 countries with a focus on 13 of the UN SDG themes. The Scientific Organising Committee for the poster event included many Early Career Chemists who contributed to the success of the event. As in past years, the event took place across 3 time zone sessions to enable inclusivity. The standard of presentations was high and the judges were impressed by the quality of poster presented. 25 prizes were offered across all scientific themes to participants based in 16 nations.</p> <p>Dr Adukpo highlighted the Commonwealth Chemistry Early Career Network's first event, the Pathways to Success Webinar, which took place November 2023. This webinar was organised as a result of outcomes from the first output of Commonwealth Chemistry, the Sustainable Workforce report. The event was successful and featured inspirational talks from three Early Career Chemists. 115 participants registered with slightly fewer attending live. A recording of the event is available for all to view on the Commonwealth Chemistry website.</p> <p>Dr Ibeto shared an update on the second event of the Commonwealth Chemistry Early Career Network, a webinar run on Commonwealth Day entitled <i>Empowerment of Women Chemists in Commonwealth Countries</i>. Speakers were from across the Commonwealth and explored topics ranging from support with publishing and writing, entrepreneur skills and accessing funding schemes. 171 delegates registered to attend the event with slightly fewer attending live. A recording of the event is available for all to view on the Commonwealth Chemistry website.</p> <p>Professor Coville directed members to papers to read a full report of all Commonwealth Chemistry activities.</p>
7.	<p>COMMONWEALTH CHEMISTRY EARLY CAREER NETWORK UPDATE (VERBAL)</p> <p>Professor Paranagama provided an update on plans and upcoming activities of the Commonwealth Chemistry Early Career Network.</p> <p>A webinar would be held in June 2024 entitled "Fostering Collaboration through Research Networking" featuring three expert speakers: Dr Michael Forde (President-Elect, Commonwealth Chemistry and The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago), Professor Anthony Gachanja (Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenya) and Professor Ayanthi Navaratne (University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka), also including Dr Adukpo as moderator. The registration link was for the event was provided in the meeting chat and also on the Commonwealth Chemistry website. Professor Paranagama encouraged all to share this with their communities and also to join the event.</p>

	<p>Professor Paranagama mentioned a plan to offer an online workshop on laboratory techniques. Work was underway by the Committee to identify labs that were under-utilised and could be made available to researchers to access at no cost. The workshop was to be co-ordinated by Dr Forde and will take place over 2 hours. Further information and dates for the event would be circulated once finalised.</p> <p>Finally, Professor Paranagama highlighted a planned webinar on the topic of Science Leadership for Early Career Chemists across the Commonwealth. This activity would be aimed at those attending the 3rd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress in 2025, so they may benefit from advice and training prior to the event. The focus of the event would be on building collaboration, research skills, networking skills and how more broadly to advance in scientific research fields.</p> <p>Professor Coville paid tribute to Professor Paranagama and all those working on the Early Career Network Committee programming, which he felt was remarkable.</p>
8.	<p>3RD COMMONWEALTH CHEMISTRY CONGRESS 2025 (VERBAL)</p> <p>Professor Coville announced that the 3rd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress would take place in Stellenbosch, South Africa on 11 – 14 May 2025.</p> <p>Professor Clinton Veale, Chair of the Local Organising Committee (LOC), provided an update on local organising efforts. Members of the LOC include Peter Mallon (University of Stellenbosch), Susan Bourne (University of Cape Town), Rueben Pfukwa (University of Stellenbosch), Siobhan Brigg (University of the Western Cape) and Marwaan Rylands (University of Cape Town). Congress events and activities would take place at various locations, including an opening ceremony at the Endler Lecture Theatre in Stellenbosch University, The gala dinner at the Webersburg Wine Estate, and the main conference and accommodation would be hosted at the Protea Marriot Hotel, around 10 minutes away from Stellenbosch University. The hotel includes function space capable of hosting 300 delegates, as well as a separate space to host posters throughout the Congress. Professor Veale mentioned that childcare facilities would be available for delegates in need, that Cape Town International Airport was easily accessible for the venue, and also that visas may be required for some delegates.</p> <p>Professor Sir Richard Catlow, Chair of the Scientific Organising Committee (SOC) talked through the scientific programme which intended to build on the previous Congress theme – Partnership for Goals. There would be plenary and keynote talks, flash presentations by poster presenters, panel discussions, an Early Career Network session and the 2025 Annual General Meeting. The Congress features the same UN SDG-focussed scientific themes as for 2023 given their importance to chemical science. The three themes are Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3); Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and finally Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), Climate Action (SDG 13). The programme would be built around bringing together scientists from across the chemical sciences community.</p> <p>The 2025 Congress would feature some new panel discussion topics (Machine Learning and AI in the Chemical Sciences, Transformation of the Commonwealth Chemical Industry (SDG 9)) alongside a critical panel discussion topic featured at the 2023 event, Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10). Professor Catlow mentioned these were not yet set in stone and subject to change.</p> <p>Professor Catlow highlighted the 13 members of the SOC and finished by asking Society</p>

	<p>Members to be involved by inputting into the programme, suggesting speakers, or taking other actions to support delivery of the event.</p> <p>Dr Palermo provided an insight into Early Career Chemist presence at the Congress. For 2023, early career researchers were central to the success of the event. She reminded attendees that it was the responsibility of Society Members to evaluate and select Early Career Chemists to put forward for the 2025 Congress. Dr Palermo followed on by providing an overview of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)'s process to select Early Career Chemists in the UK for 2023 to guide other Society Members and country contacts for 2025. The RSC promoted the call for nominations for the 2023 Congress on social media and through member newsletters. As part of this call, all applicants were asked to provide and a short video alongside their application documents. Two members of RSC staff independently ranked their top 5 nominees, and the shortlist of 10 was put forward for review by three further members of RSC staff. Their final decision took into account gender, regional and institutional diversity across the UK, the scientific topics, UN SDGs and also their ability to speak about their research.</p> <p>Dr Adukpo provided an overview of the Ghana Chemical Society (GCS)'s Early Career Chemist delegate selection process for 2023. Early Career Chemists were selected based on geographical location of their institution, including a Northern Sector, Central Sector and Southern Sector, including one from each. There was not a formal procedure in place - but an advertisement was circulated to members and the recommendations received were considered by the GCS. Eligible candidates needed to hold a PhD in the chemical sciences in addition to having teaching or researching responsibilities. Gender balance was of special importance.</p> <p>Professor Dr Soon provided the final insight into a Society Member's 2023 Early Career Chemist selection process, specifically for the Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM). In Malaysia, a call for nominations was made for those eligible, under the age of 45. They received 166 expressions of interest, which were assessed taking into consideration gender, diversity and inclusivity. 3 judges from IKM composed of senior chemists evaluated applications based on scientific content, and how their field of research related to UN SDGs. A total of 22 nominations were shortlisted, and the final 3 Early Career Chemists were approved by IKM Council.</p> <p>Professor Coville thanked all for their input. He reminded Society Members and contacts to initiative Early Career Chemist selection processes in good time to ensure strong global representation at the 2025 Congress.</p>
9.	<p>4TH COMMONWEALTH CHEMISTRY CONGRESS 2027 BID PROCESS (VERBAL)</p> <p>Dr Forde said that Members would have received an invitation to put forward a bid to host the 4th Commonwealth Chemistry Congress in 2027. As part of this call for bids, supporting documentation and guidance was provided to assist them in developing their bid. The documentation covered sponsorship, surplus and deficit, guiding principles of the Congress, the benefits of hosting, responsibilities of the host, supplier requirements and a risk assessment. Dr Forde mentioned that bids were welcome from single or multiple societies running a joint event.</p> <p>The first deadline was 31 May for an expression of interest, including one to two pages setting out the basics for hosting such as city, date, venue, accommodation, visa and transport, sponsorship opportunities, endorsement, experience.</p>

	Dr Forde reminded that full bids needed to be submitted by 31 August 2024, and the Executive Board would discuss and relay their decision in October 2024.
10.	<p>OPEN DISCUSSION</p> <p>Professor Bottle chaired this part of the meeting. He welcomed all to the Open Discussion.</p>
10.1	<p>Review of Election Process</p> <p>Professor Verma asked members for their views on the recent changes to the election process which had changed from multiple rounds to a single transferable vote – shortening the process considerably. He asked for comments.</p> <p>Dr Sourav Pal mentioned that he felt the election process was significantly improved compared to the previous process.</p>
10.2	<p>Responsibilities and benefits of Commonwealth Chemistry membership (CCAGM/0524:08)</p> <p>Dr Palermo highlighted paper 0524:08, which sets out the proposed responsibilities and benefits of membership of Commonwealth Chemistry, with a focus on the financial sustainability of the Federation. Following the upcoming 2025 Congress in South Africa, Commonwealth Chemistry's funds would continue to reduce, with a projected depletion in 2029. Dr Palermo stated that to ensure the continued existence of the Federation, new ways of funding Commonwealth Chemistry would be required.</p> <p>Paper 0524:08 includes key recommendations to ensure financial sustainability for Commonwealth Chemistry, with a special focus on candidates put forward by Members to serve on the Executive Board and also for attendance at Congresses. The proposed criteria for candidates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to meet all costs, including travel and accommodation, to attend one Executive Board in person meeting per year. • Ability to meet all costs, to include travel and accommodation, for a nominated representative to attend the physical Congress and AGM. • To consider travel costs and accommodation for Early Career Chemists to attend Congress. • To consider travel costs and accommodation (in full or in part) for the SOC. <p>Dr Palermo stressed that these recommendations were not intended to exclude members from the process, that exceptions would be considered where appropriate and that the information received would assist the Executive Board in their planning.</p>
10.3	<p>Future ideas for Commonwealth Chemistry</p> <p>Dr Forde asked for feedback on what the future priorities of Commonwealth Chemistry should be.</p> <p>Several ideas were highlighted including resource mobilisation, potential engagement with Heads of Government and other organisations to provide funding, and capitalising on the Federation's accreditation by The Commonwealth.</p> <p>Professor Dr Soon mentioned that inclusivity remained key, and to keep in mind that that Commonwealth countries are all in different stages of development. He suggested</p>

		<p>a Commonwealth Chemistry Foundation Fund to support developing countries, for example to support research or to enable networking, education or training. Dr Forde acknowledged the proposal and mentioned that such support may be provided through government or other community initiatives. He reiterated the Federation's commitment to Early Career Chemists and expanding this network, as well as the important role early career scientists will play in the future.</p> <p>Dr Gardiner asked about Commonwealth Chemistry's role in enabling research in developing countries. Dr Forde acknowledged this was a challenge, but that, for example, the planned Early Career Network activities on providing information on access to advanced national laboratory facilities was a good place to start with this. He mentioned further consideration would be given to facilitating sharing of resources, for example a Members' database with Commonwealth research facilities.</p> <p>Dr Singh-Wilmot expressed pride in the organisation and its progress and thanked all involved for their efforts. She put forward the idea of research and education hubs across the Commonwealth, to facilitate scientific cooperation and mobility among Commonwealth Chemists. She felt this would elevate the chemical sciences, drive research & development, and importantly support Early Career Chemists. She said this would also help to address the issue of inequity in resources and infrastructure across the Commonwealth. She also raised the possibility of a "Commonwealth Chemistry Collaborative Grant", for chemical societies, to enable collaboration. Dr Singh-Wilmot wondered whether such an initiative could be funded by Commonwealth Heads of Government. Dr Forde responded that at this time Commonwealth Chemistry did not have a remit to provide research grants based on its rules and funding models. He added that this could be considered as the Executive Board work on the Federation's financial sustainability challenge.</p> <p>Professor Thompson suggested a calendar of events on the website, not restricted by career-stage, which might assist individuals in identifying opportunities for future engagement/involvement.</p> <p>Dr Kabera suggested a student workshop to run alongside the Commonwealth Chemistry Congress, where some experiments can be conducted to attract young people by inciting their scientific curiosity.</p> <p>Dr Forde thanked all for their comments and encouraged members to keep in touch, sharing their ideas by email.</p>
10.4	General Discussion	<p>Professor Bottle Chaired the General Discussion. Several questions had been received in advance of the meeting which would be addressed, and attendees were encouraged to submit further questions via the chat function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can Commonwealth Chemistry help to promote an event or resources available to Commonwealth Chemists? Professor Bottle said the website was the best route for this - members could highlight events, news, webinars, 'how to' guides, and funding routes. All registered users could submit content on the home page. The Secretariat was also available to assist.

How can my Society get more involved in the Early Career Network?

Professor Thompson suggested publicising Early Career Network events among members would be a good route, and also the Early Career Network Committee was open to receiving ideas. A dedicated Early Career Network page for the website was also in progress.

Professor Verma added that Commonwealth Chemistry was a great platform for Early Career Chemists and members could become mentors – the Federation had a lot of collective knowledge.

What are the benefits and risks to a Society hosting a Congress?

Professor Verma said that benefits included raising the profile of chemistry within the host country, region and also more broadly. An awareness of the risks of being host was also highlighted as being important, specifically financially, but he also mentioned it was possible for Societies to come together to spread the costs and minimise risk.

What is the target number of participants and anticipated financial burden for a Society hosting a Congress? Is financial support from Commonwealth Chemistry offered to the host Society? (Professor Dr Soon)

Professor Bottle suggested that 200 – 250 participants should be targeted to attend a Congress and also referred to the guiding principles and other documents available to help those wishing to progress to bid stage. He acknowledged there would be financial risk and suggested the Executive Board advise individual Societies wishing to progress to a bid stage. Professor Mallon added that Commonwealth Chemistry, if it was in a position to do so, would provide some funding to support Congresses – he added that the risk was also shared. He asked members to consider different financial models.

What were the criteria for nomination of members of the Congress to join the SOC? (Professor Gitu)

Dr Shore mentioned the SOC was composed of a combination of nominations, suggestions from Societies and from the Secretariat – which were shortlisted in discussion with the SOC Chair. It was not a requirement for SOC members to be members of their national chemical society.

Is Commonwealth Chemistry a member of the International Science Council, International Council of Chemical Associations or i-STEM? (Dr Singh-Wilmot, Professor Gitu, Dr Helal Uddin)

Dr Palermo mentioned Commonwealth Chemistry did not currently hold membership of these organisations, but that it would be good for the Executive Board to consider this. She encouraged Members to share their views about this.

How can a Society express an interest in hosting a future Commonwealth Chemistry Congress? (Dr Waqainabete)

Dr Forde said that interested Society members should submit an Expression of Interest document to the Commonwealth Chemistry Secretariat. If 2027 is not the right timing, Dr Forde mentioned that there would be future opportunities, and Society Members were encouraged to be part of the bidding process when it best suits them.

How was the Chemists Community Fund contribution used for the 2023 Congress in Trinidad and Tobago? (Dr Singh-Wilmot)

Dr Forde responded that the £150000 bursary was used to support travel costs for Early Career Chemists to attend the Congress. He added that some Early Career

	<p>Chemists' international travel costs were sponsored by their respective chemical societies.</p> <p>Does The Commonwealth and/or Governments provide any financial support to Commonwealth Chemistry? (Professor Sha'Ato)</p> <p>What support, guidance or assistance is available to countries to set up a new national chemical society? (Dr Ndlovu)</p> <p>Dr Shore directed interested parties to consult a Commonwealth Chemistry published article about the Kenya Chemical Society's experiences with this. He mentioned the Secretariat could follow up with further information for any interested participants or contacts.</p>
11.	<p>CLOSE</p> <p>Professor Coville took this opportunity to pay tribute to Dr Vicki Gardiner, the first President of Commonwealth Chemistry, who would be retiring from the Executive Board following the AGM. Dr Gardiner was involved in the set-up of the Federation, guiding it through the governance – the Rules and Articles and through the global pandemic. He highlighted her enthusiasm, light-touch approach, her sense of humour which strongly aided in bringing people together. Professor Coville thanked Dr Gardiner for her guidance as he came on board as President and wished her success for the future.</p> <p>Dr Palermo added that it had been a great pleasure to work with Dr Gardiner who had a wealth of knowledge. She mentioned that Dr Gardiner had been there from the very beginning, and took the initial concept through to what the Federation is today, including its vision, mission, governance and the first Commonwealth Chemistry Congress. Dr Palermo thanked Dr Gardiner for all that she had done.</p> <p>Many participants joined Professor Coville and Dr Palermo in thanking Dr Gardiner for her service and important role in establishing Commonwealth Chemistry.</p> <p>Dr Gardiner thanked all for the kind words. She paid tribute to the entire Commonwealth Chemistry team for all of the support she had received throughout her Presidency, including the original task group, the Secretariat and especially the Membership. She wished everyone well for the future.</p> <p>Professor Coville thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.</p>

*Dr Andrew Shore, Secretary
November 2024*