

## South East Regional Meeting

Victoria Park Plaza Hotel, London

Thursday 19 January 2006

Dr Peter Stockwell welcomed members to the meeting. He reminded members that, under the new governance structure, Regional Meetings were an increasingly important way for the RSC Council to communicate with members. He hoped that those present would find the meeting useful. He introduced the Honorary Treasurer, Dr Elliott Finer, who gave the main presentation of the evening.

### RSC 2006-2010 Strategy

(the series of slides used for this presentation can be downloaded from the Regional Meetings main page)

Dr Finer reminded members of the RSC's vision which was ***to be the most effective international organisation for advancing the chemical sciences***. Members noted that 10 key areas had been agreed by Council and these were:

- **Increase our influence in key decision making bodies**  
The RSC will participate in, and influence, science and education policy discussions across the UK and with the EU, and ensure it is recognised as a key source of expertise and advice on the chemical sciences
- **Broaden our science base**  
The RSC aims to nurture the core chemical sciences, expand its scientific footprint and enhance the support for the applied sciences
- **Foster the study and teaching of chemical sciences**  
The RSC will encourage the study, and enhance the teaching, of the chemical sciences at all levels
- **Enhance the benefits of membership**  
The RSC will become increasingly relevant, receptive and responsive to a broader range of chemical scientists across the UK, EU and more internationally
- **Promote professional qualifications and ethical conduct**

The RSC will promote its professional qualifications, best practice in the chemical sciences and uphold the highest ethical standards

- **Enhance our publishing activities**  
The RSC will build upon its international reputation for excellence in publishing through strengthening its core products and by encompassing a broader footprint
- **Improve our channels of communication**  
The RSC will enhance the perception and image of the chemical sciences and its practitioners amongst our members, the international scientific community and the general public
- **Pursue activities in partnerships with other organisations**  
The RSC will build national and international alliances to further the impact of the chemical sciences and its practitioners
- **Improve our governance, structure and financial planning**  
The RSC will complete the review of its governance and structure and ensure the provision of resources for the effective delivery of the strategic plan
- **Investing in our staff and supporting our volunteers**  
The RSC will develop its staff and support our volunteer network to deliver our strategy

Following the presentation, the following questions/points were raised:

- To the question of how the RSC could influence employers to recognise the designation CChem, it was noted that RSC staff were already visiting companies and making presentations to HR Departments and groups of scientists, with varying degrees of success
- It was suggested that the RSC could highlight the fact that insurance rates are lower for staff who are chartered
- The question of whether there is a possible conflict with CChem and CSci was raised. It was agreed that this was something that should be monitored
- Dr Finer had mentioned that it was proposed to give CLS control over its own budget. How would this be achieved? Dr Finer said that the thinking was to encourage Sections to look at the RSC's objectives and to consider what meetings/activities they could arrange to help achieve those goals. They would then bid for funding from the CLS

- It was noted that, though the RSC journals were very profitable, if profits were to suffer, the RSC would need to start prioritising its objectives
- It was noted that ChemSoc Reviews and ChemComm were available for on-line access. If successful, other journals would also be made available. The RSC was also discussing the possibility of non RSC journals being made available on-line and that costs were currently being worked out

### **South East Regional Representatives Meeting**

Dr Bryan Pierce and Dr Derek Lohmann informed the committee that there had been a recent meeting of Representatives of the South East Region. It was noted that this group had been formed following the demise of District Members of Council (DMC). It had been agreed at the Professional Affairs and Membership Board to run a two year pilot scheme to determine the effectiveness or necessity of maintaining a position to replace the DMC.

The group comprised representatives of each of the four Sections, along with representatives from the South East Region of both the Analytical and Education Divisions. Bryan Pierce was Chair of the group and Derek Lohmann the Secretary. The meeting noted that the first meeting had discussed a variety of issues, both local and national. This had included greater collaboration between sections and interest groups, the possibility of RSC Field Officers being appointed and the requirement for enhanced feedback.

The full Minutes of this meeting are appended

### **Chemistry; The Next Generation**

(the series of slides used for this presentation can be downloaded from the Regional Meetings main page)

Dr Kate Burrell, RSC AimHigher National Coordinator provided an overview of this two year project.

It was noted that The Higher Education Funding Council for England had earmarked almost a million pounds for a project by which teenagers will be able to participate in projects that stress the importance of chemical sciences in their everyday lives. The money was offered as a result of a successful funding bid orchestrated by the RSC. Initially, 12 universities and 3 pharmaceutical companies, two Sector Skills Councils and the RSC were involved, working with the

joint aim of raising the interest and expectations of young people, particularly those with non traditional backgrounds.

The meeting noted that this is the RSC's flagship outreach exercise and will have the twin benefits of demonstrating the excitement and importance of chemical sciences in everyday life while the collaboration between universities and industry will show that a higher education qualification in chemical sciences can lead to some very exciting career opportunities.

During the discussion which followed, it was noted that, where possible, there was liaison with Chemistry at Work events and that funding is provided for schools' travel to events. The requirements of the Criminal Records Bureau, whereby anyone working with schoolchildren need to be vetted, also created some problems and meant that all pupils need to be escorted by a teacher.

The initiative received strong support from members.

### **Open Forum**

During the Open Forum, the following was raised:

#### *Work placements*

Many requests for work placement/work experience were received each year and that the response from industry was, in the main, very poor. It was noted that a large part of the problem was in risk assessments. It could be an horrendous task arranging risk assessments for young people to enter working laboratories. The alternative was to just allow them to visit "safer" areas. However, this was not seen to be exciting or to promote chemistry as a career.

#### *eAlerts*

It was noted that it was hoped that the problems associated with RSC eAlerts had now been overcome and that eAlerts would, once more, be available for use.

#### *Field Officers*

It was noted that it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit new people onto Section Committees. Modern day working does not allow the flexibility or time for members to be able to take part and that this was causing a higher workload on existing volunteers. It was proposed that the RSC investigate the feasibility of appointing part time paid *Field Officers* within each of the 9 Regions. The main role of these people would be to provide assistance to Local Sections with their day-

to-day work. Typically, they could be of great help when organising Chemistry at Work events and enhancing liaison with academia.

#### *Licensing Laws*

The question of the legality of serving drinks at meetings was raised. It was noted that, after having consulted appropriate staff, this was not seen as a problem. The problem would only arise if a Section set up a bar at which they sold drinks directly. If drinks were provided as part of a meeting, there is no contravention of the licensing laws.

#### *Industry and technology Forum (ITF)*

Dr David Alker drew the meeting's attention to work of the ITF. It was noted that the forum was continuing to develop activities, events and initiatives relevant to industry. These included:

- Training for Industry;
- Engagement with Industry;
- Innovation;
- Support for Small Companies.

The ITF also addresses policy and communication, and forges links and collaboration on joint projects with other organisations. Dr Alker urged members to get involved and directed them to the RSC web site for further information.

Dr Stockwell thanked members for attending and hoped that they had found the meeting stimulating and useful.