

**Minutes for 94th Annual General Meeting of Applied Microbiology International
17 July 2025, 16:00 BST
Online via Zoom**

Present:

107 members attended the meeting, including the following trustees.
Emmanuel Adukwu, Honorary Officer – International / Industry Officer (Chair)
Otto Balsiger, Honorary Officer – Treasurer
Marc Dumont, Elected Trustee
Nwadiuto Esiobu, Honorary Officer – General Secretary
Kate Lagerstrom, Elected Trustee
Samantha Law, Elected Trustee
Helen Onyeaka, Elected Trustee
Catherine Rees, Elected Trustee
James Williamson, Elected Trustee

In attendance:

Lucy Harper, Chief Executive
Emma Prissick, Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Paul Sainsbury, Chief Operating Officer
Kathryn Spiller, Director of Publishing
Katherine Roberts, Governance Manager

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Prof Adukwu welcomed members to the meeting. A quorum of members was present at the meeting. He noted apologies for absence had been received from Professor Jack Gilbert (Trustee / President) and Chris McCall (Member).

He explained that 182 members had registered to attend the AGM. As evidence of AMI's global membership, there were delegates from Australia, India, Nigeria, the UK, Italy, the USA, South Africa, Ireland, Indonesia, Rwanda, Pakistan, Germany, Canada, Iraq and Senegal amongst others.

2. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the 93rd Annual General Meeting held online on 18 July 2024 were considered and approved by audience poll.

Prof Adukwu confirmed there were no matters arising from the minutes

3. Presentation of the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts 2024

AMI's Chief Executive, Dr Lucy Harper, presented the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts from 2024. Dr Harper outlined some of AMI's objectives and achievements during 2024.

Dr Harper explained that AMI activities were centred around six goals, each of which aligned with at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- Food Security – aligned with UN SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- One Health – aligned with UN SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing
- Climate Action – UN SDG 13
- Healthy Land – aligned with UN SDG 15: Life on Land
- Clean Water – aligned with UN SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- Ocean Sustainability – aligned with UN SDG 14: Life Below Water

AMI had established six scientific advisory groups. Lucy thanked all members of the advisory groups, who provided their expertise, time and networks to contribute to ideas for AMI's scientific meetings, conferences, policy output, content for 'The Microbiologist', and articles for themed collections in the journals.

During 2024 AMI continued to implement the strategy it launched in 2022, which was to focus on international reach and alignment with the UN SDGs. In this work, AMI continued to be guided by four values:

- Promoting inclusivity
- Pushing forward
- Scientific rigour
- Meaningful collaboration

AMI's work during 2024 was structured around four strands; collaborate, modernise, grow and sustain.

Collaborate

Dr Harper said AMI had made significant progress in developing and strengthening partnerships with international microbiology societies (including the American Society of Microbiology (ASM), the Federation of European Microbiology Societies (FEMS), the International Society for Microbial Ecology (ISME) and the International Union of Microbiology Societies, demonstrating the effective repositioning of the organisation since the rebrand and name change in 2022.

In addition, AMI had broadened the range of partnerships held with topic-specific groups of microbiologists such as the Soil Stars and the Microbes and Social Equity Working Group.

During 2024 AMI had continued to develop the network of Global Ambassadors. At the end of 2024 AMI had a total of 43 Global Ambassadors, representing 31 countries. Dr Harper said they work hard to promote AMI in their region.

Modernise

Dr Harper said AMI had continued to support numerous approaches to diversity and inclusion in microbiology. AMI hosted two webinars with the aim of enabling microbiologists to share their experiences, challenges, and successes while exploring ways to promote diversity and inclusion within the scientific community. In addition, AMI created a Diversity and Inclusion Committee, involving members of the staff team, with trustee representation to take forward AMI's diversity and inclusion strategy.

Dr Harper reported that the number of countries contributing to *The Microbiologist* grew during the year, as well as the diversity of countries where members were reading articles from *The Microbiologist*.

Grow

2024 saw significant growth in the number of AMI's members, with members located in 105 countries. On the 31 December 2024 total membership stood at 5,693 a growth of 2,543 members during the year. 2,401 (42%) of these members were provided with free membership which was issued based on specific criteria as listed in the trustees report.

Sustain

Dr Harper said that AMI was aiming to achieve Net Zero in its operations and events. To that end, several members of the team achieved Carbon Literacy Accreditation through the Carbon Literacy Trust. During 2024 AMI also launched a new grant, the *Sustainable Microbiology* Novel Research Grant, which would provide financial support to sustainable microbiology projects.

Dr Harper reminded members that AMI published three academic journals – the *Journal of Applied Microbiology*, *Letters in Applied Microbiology* and *Sustainable Microbiology*. 2024 had been the second full year of operation with Oxford University Press (OUP) as AMI's publishing partner and the organisation was delighted with the relationship. OUP's processes had delivered significant reductions in production times, thus improving authors' experience.

In early 2024 the sale was completed of AMI's minority shares in three joint-owned journals to Wiley. These journals are *Environmental Microbiology*, *Environmental Microbiology Reports* and *Microbial Biotechnology*.

In November 2024 AMI announced the winners of the Horizon Awards.

- WH Pierce Global Impact in Microbiology Prize – the One Health Microbiome Center at Penn State.
- Basil Jarvis Food Security and Innovation Award – Dr Helen Onyeaka, an industrial microbiologist at the University of Birmingham.
- Dorothy Jones Diversity and Inclusion Achievement Award – the Afro-Caribbean Commercial Science Network (ACCSN), founded by Daniel Similaki.
- John Snow Public Health Innovation Prize – Dr Kim Barrett, vice dean for research and distinguished professor of physiology and membrane biology at the UC Davis School of Medicine.
- Christiana Figueres Policy to Practice Award – Professor Sabiha Essack, the South African Research Chair (SARChI) in Antibiotic Resistance and One Health, Professor in Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and Honorary Professor of Pharmacy at the University of Jordan.
- Rachel Carson Environmental Conservation Excellence Award – Dr François Thomas, an independent researcher with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, France).

During the May 2024 AMI held the Early Career Scientist Research Symposium in Bristol, UK. This annual event provided Early Career Researchers with a valuable safe space and opportunity to share their research findings in a supportive and professional setting.

AMI had been the managing partner for the 30th Molecular Microbial Ecology Group Conference in Southampton, UK in December 2024.

During the year AMI held a range of webinars. AMI also supported or attended a number of third-party conferences and events to share information about the benefits of AMI membership and promote our journals. Full details were included in the trustee's annual report.

Dr Harper reported that AMI published three policy-in-practice papers in AMI's *Sustainable Microbiology* journal. The team had also developed a fourth paper in collaboration with Jo Handelsman on soil erosion, this was currently under her review and was due to be submitted to *Sustainable Microbiology* for publication in 2025.

AMI provided responses to UK House of Commons / House of Lords Committee inquiries, facilitated contributions to two further consultations and flagged a further six opportunities to members to encourage engagement.

A new programme of grants was launched to AMI members in early 2024. These grants helped members with a variety of needs including training, meeting support, career

development and assistance in attending conferences. Full details of the grants offered were available on the AMI website.

The AMI team continued to grow during 2024. During the year the team was restructured to ensure AMI was resourced effectively to make progress, create impact, strengthen AMI's financial position and ensure AMI remained sustainable. In May 2024, AMI was named on the Sunday Times Best Places to Work list, within the best small organisations category.

Moving onto consider AMI's financial performance, Dr Harper explained that detailed financial information was reviewed by the Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee in support of the AMI trustees.

Income in 2024 had been £4.0m, an increase of £2.0m compared with the previous year. That was because the year included proceeds from the sale of the three part-owned journals to Wiley, which totalled £1.95m.

During 2024 £219k of restricted income was received. Of this £218k was received from the Medical Research Council to fund the Minoritised Life Scientists Future Forum. Dr Harper confirmed that all these funds had been spent prior to the event taking place in March 2025.

AMI's expenditure on charitable activities was £2.3m, including £1.1m on support costs. Expenditure on charitable activities increased by £436k compared to 2023, with the biggest increase being a £287k increase in the cost of running meetings and conferences.

Dr Harper reported that AMI had made a surplus of £2.2m in 2024, which included investment gains of £518k. This was driven by favourable equity market conditions and the Fund's focus on high-quality, sustainably managed companies.

Net assets remained strong at £14.4m on 31 December 2024. Dr Harper reflected that this strength of financial position ensured AMI was able to continue providing relevant benefits to all AMI members in the future, whilst further building the reputation of AMI worldwide.

Dr Harper concluded by expressing her thanks to the trustees and AMI staff team for all their hard work during 2024.

The Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 were accepted by those present with a majority voting in favour.

4. Auditors

The proposal that Haysmacintyre should be reappointed as Applied Microbiology International's Auditors was accepted by those present with a majority voting in favour.

5. Auditors Remuneration

Prof Adukwu invited members to authorise the Trustees to set the level of the Auditors' fees. This proposal was accepted by those present with a majority voting in favour.

6. Alteration of Articles of Association: Special Resolution

Prof Adukwu explained that AMI's trustees had recently completed a review of AMI's Articles of Association and were recommending some amendments. He outlined the main changes proposed. First two new 'Lay Trustee' roles would be created which would enable AMI to recruit trustees with the skills and experience needed to help AMI grow and thrive into the future. Second the number of elected 'microbiologist' trustees would be reduced from nine to seven. And third, the number of Honorary Officers would be reduced from six to five (due to the removal of the Vice President role).

Changes to the Articles of Association required approval through a Special Resolution which received over 75% approval from the members in attendance.

The full text of the special resolution was: *"THAT the draft Articles of Association produced to the meeting and, for the purposes of identification, annexed to this resolution be and are hereby adopted as the Articles of Association of the Company in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, the existing Articles of Association."*

Prof Adukwu confirmed that the special resolution was approved by a poll of the members, with 93% approval.

7. Retirement of Trustees

Four trustees would retire from the AMI Board of Trustees following the AGM. Prof Adukwu expressed AMI's thanks to Dr Tajudeen Bamidele, Dr Arpita Bose, Oern Grief and Dr James Timmis for serving as trustees of AMI.

8. Appointment of Treasurer

Prof Adukwu explained that following the retirement of Oern Greif after 6 years as a trustee, a new Treasurer would be appointed. Otto Balsiger had been recruited following an open recruitment campaign in early 2025. Otto was an FCCA qualified accountant and was currently Director of Finance, Membership and Publishing, at the British Society for Immunology (BSI). In his role as Treasurer Otto would lead the trustees in the oversight of AMI's strategic financial management.

The proposal that Mr Otto Balsiger be appointed as Treasurer (an Honorary Officer) as approved by the Executive Committee, was accepted by those present with a majority voting in favour.

9. Election and appointment of Trustees

Prof Adukwu confirmed that following an election of members between 14 May 2025 4 June 2025, the members selected Dr Helen Onyeaka and Prof Catherine Rees to serve as trustees of AMI.

Prof Adukwu thanked everyone who applied to serve as a trustee, he noted that 15 candidates had stood in the election.

Dr Helen Onyeaka was an Associate Professor in Chemical Engineering at the University of Birmingham and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA). She specialised in food microbiology, food safety, and sustainable food systems, with a particular focus on food security , microbial innovations and food waste valorisation.

Prof Catherine Rees had been re-elected for a second term as a trustee. She had already been a Trustee of AMI for three years. Catherine was a Professor at the University of Nottingham, where her work focused on understanding bacterial physiology to improve food preservation and more recently the development of rapid detection methods for mycobacterial pathogens in the agricultural and dairy sectors.

The members noted the appointment of Dr Helen Onyeaka and Prof Catherine Rees as trustees of AMI, following their selection in the online ballot of members held between 14 May 2025 and 4 June 2025.

10. Any Other Business

No further business items were received.

Prof Adukwu thanked everyone for attending The Annual General Meeting for Applied Microbiology International.

The meeting closed at 16:45.