

Minutes for 93<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting of Applied Microbiology International  
18 July 2024, 16:00 BST  
Online via Zoom

**Present:**

53 members attended the meeting, including the following trustees and members of AMI staff.

Jack Gilbert, President (JG)  
Emmanuel Adukwu, Honorary Officer – International / Industry Officer  
Sally Cutler, Elected Trustee  
Marc Dumont, Elected Trustee  
Kate Lagerstrom, Elected Trustee  
Samantha Law, Elected Trustee  
Diane Purchase, Elected Trustee  
Catherine Rees, Elected Trustee  
James Williamson, Elected Trustee

**In attendance:**

Lucy Harper, Chief Executive  
Paul Sainsbury, Chief Operating Officer  
Katherine Roberts, Governance Manager

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Prof Gilbert welcomed members to the meeting. A quorum of members was present at the meeting. He noted apologies for absence had been received from Arpita Bose (Trustee) and Tajudeen Bamidele (Trustee), Ian Feavers (Member), Oern Greif (Trustee), Richard Rotherham (Member) and James Timmis (Trustee).

**2. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting held online on 11 July 2023 were considered and approved by audience poll.

Prof Gilbert confirmed there were no matters arising from the minutes

**3. Presentation of the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts 2023**

AMI's Chief Executive, Dr Lucy Harper, presented the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts from 2023. Dr Harper outlined some of AMI's objectives and achievements during 2023.

She reminded members that following a thorough strategic review in 2021, AMI adopted a new name in July 2022. Moving from the Society for Applied Microbiology to Applied Microbiology International.

Dr Harper explained that AMI's activities were centred around seven goals, each of which aligned with at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These goals were supported by Advisory Groups, which included subject matter expert microbiologists. In recent months new chairs had been appointed to lead the AMI Advisory Groups:

- Food Security: Dr Jake Bell, Research Scientist, Multus Biotechnology Limited.
- One Health: Prof Sally Cutler, University of East London.
- Climate Action: Dr Komang Ralebitso Senior, Liverpool John Moores University.
- Clean Water: Gary Hogben, Feedwater Ltd.
- Ocean Sustainability: Prof Andre Antunes, Macau University.
- Healthy Land: Dr Nasmille Larke Mayer, The Quadram Institute

Dr Harper said that publishing activity was AMI's major revenue stream. 2023 had been the first full year of operation with Oxford University Press (OUP) for *Journal of Applied Microbiology* (JAM) and *Letters in Applied Microbiology* (LAM). The transition has been a great success. During 2023 a full restructure of the editorial boards had also been completed. In early 2023 AMI launched a new journal, *Sustainable Microbiology*, and the first papers were published in January 2024.

Dr Harper reported that during the year AMI had negotiated the sale of minority shares in three joint-owned journals to Wiley. These journals were *Environmental Microbiology*, *Environmental Microbiology Reports* and *Microbial Biotechnology*. The agreement was finalised and sale completed in January 2024.

Moving on to AMI's membership. Dr Harper confirmed that at 31 December 2023, total membership stood at 3,420, a growth of 1,772 members during the year.

During 2023 AMI had continued to develop the network of Global Ambassadors. These were microbiologists with a range of expertise and knowledge across regions and sectors who supported and promoted applied microbiology and AMI.

In November 2023 AMI had announced the winner of the Applied Microbiology International Horizon Awards. That month also saw the Environmental Microbiology Lecture which was given by Professor Betul Kachar and included the presentation of the AMI 2023 Fellow, Professor James Prosser.

The Microbiologist was AMI's industry-leading magazine and digital platform that provided a mix of features, news, opinions and career articles. In 2023 The Microbiologist was shortlisted in the Memcom Excellence Awards in the Best Magazine Launch or Relaunch category

In May 2023 AMI held the Early Career Scientist Research Symposium in Belfast, 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.

On 18 October 2023 AMI held an online event hosted by Dr Komang Ralebitso- Senior of Liverpool John Moores University. The event engendered networking among academics, researchers and practitioners with a passion for SDG-based work. It focused on climate change, diversity and inclusion, and included a special keynote lecture on forensic science.

The Power of Microbes in Sustainable Crop Production event took place at the John Innes Centre, Norfolk, UK in October 2023. The conference focused on the impact microbes have in crop production and future food security.

During 2023 AMI developed a new Policy Strategy which outlined the organisation's ambition to establish a better foothold in the global policymaking arena, increase recognition of the importance of microbiology within STEM and ultimately have an actual, direct impact on saving human lives and the planet by informing high level decision-making.

Dr Harper said that AMI encouraged numerous approaches to diversity and inclusion in microbiology and undertook inclusive practices in support of this. During 2023 AMI developed a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which was finalised in early 2024.

Dr Harper reminded members that AMI administered grants to help members with a variety of needs including training, meeting support, career development and assistance in attending conferences. During 2023 AMI provided grants to the value of £219k.

Dr Harper moved on to AMI's financial performance. Income in 2023 was close to £2.0m, an increase of 24% compared with the previous year. The largest increase over the year was an increase in investment income of 41% compared to 2022.

A review of the performance of AMI's Investment Managers was undertaken in 2022, and as a result in 2023, all of AMI's investments had been transferred to Cazenove's Charity Sustainable Multi-Asset Fund – an ESG fund which was more aligned with AMI's values.

Income from AMI's journals increased by £181k as subscriptions to the online journal package with OUP continue to grow.

AMI's expenditure on charitable activities was £1.9m in 2023, an increase of £196k compared to 2022. AMI made a surplus of £631k in 2023, which included investment gains of £513k. This was driven by market gains at the end of 2023, as US inflation continued to fall.

Net assets remained strong at £12.2m on 31 December 2023. The Trustees' main objective for AMI's investments had been to seek a combination of income and capital growth over the long term.

AMI's Reserves Policy aimed to balance investing in the strategy and members of AMI, with the need to maintain an adequate level of reserves. AMI has adopted a target reserves range of £6.1m and £7.3m based on the risks of long-term high inflation, financial loss due to anticipated income streams not coming to fruition, as well as AMI's reliance on publishing income. The unrestricted general reserves of £12.0m, as at 31 December 2023, remained above the top end of the target reserve range.

Dr Harper said that 2024 would see the continued delivery of AMI's strategic objectives for the period 2022 – 2027. In early 2024 the team had completed an exercise to refresh and renew the organisational objectives and the strategic projects which supported these, under the themes of collaborate, modernise, grow and sustain.

Dr Harper concluded by expressing her thanks to the trustees and AMI staff team for all their hard work during 2023.

The Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 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 Gilbert 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. Appointment of General Secretary**

Prof Gilbert explained that following the resignation of Dr Suzy Moody as General Secretary in July 2023, Prof Nwadiuto Esiobu had been selected and appointed by the trustees following an open recruitment process. He said that Prof Esiobu was a Professor of Microbiology and Biotechnology Florida Atlantic University in the USA. She is a leading expert in multidisciplinary research for bioeconomy, sustainability and climate-change resilience.

The proposal that Prof Nwadiuto Esiobu be appointed as General Secretary (an Honorary Officer) as approved by the Executive Committee, was accepted by those present with a majority voting in favour.

#### **7. Election and appointment of Trustee**

Prof Gilbert expressed his thanks to Prof Sally Cutler & Dr John Threlfall, two trustees who would retire from the Executive Committee because their terms of office had ended.

The members were invited to agree the following resolution: the Dr Marc Dumont, Dr Katherine Marie Lagerstrom, Dr Samantha Law and Dr James Williamson be appointed as trustees, following their selection in the online ballot of members held between 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024. This proposal was accepted by those present with a majority voting in favour.

#### **8. Fellowship of AMI**

Prof Gilbert explained that every year AMI awarded fellowship of AMI, it was granted to those who had made a significant contribution to advancing microbiology and science as a whole. He said he was delighted to announce that in 2024 fellowship would be awarded to Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu.

#### **9. Any Other Business**

No further business items were received.

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

The meeting closed at 16:30.