

**The 164th Annual Report of the Royal Meteorological Society
for the period 1st January – 31st December 2017**

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THE SOCIETY'S MISSION

*The Royal Meteorological Society is the UK's Professional and Learned Society for weather and climate and its mission is **to promote the understanding and application of meteorology for the benefit of all**. At the heart of this is the responsibility for the stewardship of both the profession and science of meteorology. The Society has an important role to play internationally as one of the world's largest meteorological societies. The Society is owned by its membership, but exists for the benefit of all.*

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Royal Meteorological Society is dedicated to providing benefit to the wider public, or sections of it, in achieving its aims. The Charity Act 2016 lists 13 main charitable purposes that would be regarded as 'for public benefit'. In the Society's case, the public benefit of our activities falls into four of these categories.

The advancement of health or the saving of lives

Through partnerships with the General Aviation Safety Committee (GASCo), the UK Flight Safety Committee (UKFSC), and the Royal Institute of Navigation (RIN), the Society provides support and advice to weather-related safety-critical issues. The Society holds weather education seminars and events for private pilots and sailors, with the specific purpose of improving safety and reducing the number of accidents relating to flying and sailing in deteriorating weather conditions, which can sometimes be fatal. In 2017, the Society attended five aviation Safety Information Exchange meetings.

The Society is the academic partner with EUROCONTROL to support SKYbrary (www.skybrary.aero/index.php/Main_Page) to oversee weather content on their website, in order to encourage meteorological exchange of information to enhance flight safety.

While responsibility for implementing and maintaining the Aeronautical Meteorological Personnel (AMP) standards rests with the weather service providers in the aviation sector, the Society continues to provide support and impartial advice where required to enable them to comply with the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) criteria for competence and qualifications.

The advancement of education

The Society's mission has a wide remit that looks to support people's understanding, interest and enthusiasm in meteorology, whether they are research scientists, amateur meteorologists, practitioners, or members of the general public. It goes further, supporting the development of high-quality science, the next generation of scientists, professional development of individuals, accrediting further and higher education courses, informing policy and supporting learning in weather and climate through education and outreach activities. The Society has two dedicated members of staff and an Education and Outreach Committee to oversee this important work. The Committee has representatives from the Institute of Physics, the Royal Geographical Society and the Geographical Association to ensure collaboration.

The Society works with teachers and students at both primary and secondary levels to promote understanding of weather and climate and runs interactive projects to both stimulate the interest of students in meteorology and to improve the quality of teaching materials and resources in schools. The resources provided by the Society, including the loan of instruments to schools, are made freely available to all schools, teachers, parents and school students. In addition, the Society is also freely providing an increasing number of Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for teachers who have come to teaching meteorology from a non-meteorological background. The educational focus during 2017 was in support of the GCSE and A-Level specifications, particularly recent changes to the curriculum. The Society developed and launched a new Climate Negotiations resource in 2017 working with climate scientists, teachers and a German theatre company. The resource simulates a 'World Climate Change Conference' for 14-18 year olds, allowing the students to learn about the impacts of climate change and the politics involved. It is designed to be used by non-expert teachers in standard

lessons. More extensive materials have been made available on the Society's education website, MetLink www.metlink.org, including the past climate teaching resources to support secondary geography teaching, which was Highly Commended by the Geographical Association in April 2017. The Society has redeveloped its teacher training material into an online course delivered in partnership with the University of Reading on the FutureLearn platform. The 3-week course, '*Come Rain or Shine*', ran 3 times during 2017 attracting thousands of participants. Primarily designed to meet the needs of secondary geography teachers, it is free and open to all.

At higher-education levels, the Society awards financial support to enable students to broaden their studies of meteorological sciences. It also provides careers information and helps with the development of careers in meteorology through its work on National Occupational Standards in meteorology as part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), which provides the structure for creating and accrediting qualifications. The Society is recognised in European and UK law as both the Competent Authority and the Regulatory Body for Meteorology in the UK, and offers independent recognition and regulation around training and professional development for meteorology and meteorologists. The Society's accreditation framework offers individuals a range of recognised vocational qualifications, professional registration and chartered status as well as related CPD opportunities.

The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science

One of the Society's charitable objectives is to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge and education in science for public benefit. The Society aims to advance professionalism in meteorology through the professional accreditation schemes, Chartered Meteorologist and Registered Meteorologist, that meet a high professional standard and competence, and follow an established code of conduct. The Society sets standards for CPD, and professional conduct and performance, so that meteorologists are empowered to conduct high-quality, ethical work consistently throughout their careers. The Society works with professional bodies, government, employers and national academies, and aims to ensure the workforce across the meteorological community reflects the diversity of society.

The Society publishes seven world-leading scientific journals, which are made available free to developing countries through publishing aid programmes and to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Training Centres. The Society also has a curation programme for a historical and culturally valuable archive of documentation on behalf of the UK. The Society runs a comprehensive meetings programme which is open to all with an interest in weather and climate. This includes free public national and local meetings to encourage a focus on global, national and local issues, and also conferences to bring about the advancement in the understanding of meteorology as a science, through its applications and as an interest to all. The Society offers remote participation at its national meetings making them more accessible to wider audiences. Grants and bursaries are awarded annually to encourage interaction between scientific groups both in the UK and internationally, and to allow attendance at meetings and conferences.

The Society's special interest groups offer meetings and other activities to facilitate the exchange of information and views within specific areas of meteorology. The groups are primarily a way of communicating at a specialist level and include areas such as the history of meteorology and physical oceanography; atmospheric electricity; data assimilation; climate science; weather, art and music (WAM); and meteorological observing systems.

The Society hosts an annual Student Conference that brings together those involved in graduate and post-graduate studies, as well as early career scientists from the UK and internationally, to create a community of young scientists and to give them experience in active participation in scientific conferences. In 2017 the conference was held at the University of Exeter attracting 75 students and young scientists.

The advancement of environmental protection or improvement

The Society is at the heart of the debate on climate change. It plays a particularly important role in communicating some of the more complicated scientific and technical issues to the public at large, enabling them to understand and engage with what is one of the most important global issues that we face today. This role is overseen by the Society's Climate Science Communication Group and the

Climate Science Special Interest Group; the latter aims to sustain, encourage and progress activity in climate science and its relevance to society. The Society published two climate science briefing papers in 2017, entitled '*What is Climate Change?*' and '*Climate Sensitivity*', as well as hosting two meetings on *The Challenges of Climate Science Communication* and *Air Pollution*.

The Society has several popular publications that promote a public interest in the environment. Our Weather Watcher's 3-year log book is used by many people who wish to record and make notes on the weather and this book was redesigned and relaunched in 2017. theWeather Club www.theWeatherClub.org.uk is the public outreach arm of the Society, engaging the general public on weather and climate, and provides a key framework for delivering greater public information, engagement and dialogue. The Society continues to work closely with BBC Weather Watchers as their official academic partner, and supplies educational content and articles on a monthly basis. The Society was involved with a number of public outreach activities in 2017 including 'Weather Craft Workshops' and a 'Gardening in a Changing Climate' panel, both of which were run in conjunction with the the Royal Horticultural Society. The Society's Weather Photographer of the Year competition runs annually, and in 2017 it was run in partnership with the Royal Photographic Society.

The Society's website www.rmets.org has a wide range of information and content that is freely available to all with an interest in the Society and meteorology. The Society continues to invest significantly in making its website more accessible and informative, providing a wide range of freely available educational, scientific and professional material.

THE YEAR JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2017

A brief review of the highlights

The Society is pleased to report an increase in membership of 15% over the last three years despite this levelling off in 2017 (3,337 members). There is still the potential to grow membership which remains one of the strategic aims of the Society, and is being overseen by the Membership Development Group. During 2017 the Society completed a review of its Fellowship scheme and continued to grow its cross-discipline mentoring scheme, and promote the carers' fund. The Society is extremely grateful for the continued support from an active and engaged community of volunteers, with over 250 involved on the Society's committees or contributing in other ways. This important contribution from volunteers allows the Society to successfully achieve many of the activities highlighted in this annual report.

The Society continues to promote two accreditation schemes, Registered Meteorologist (RMet) and Chartered Meteorologist (CMet), as well as ACCSYS, the Society's online CPD and Application tool. Since its introduction in 2014, the use of ACCSYS has steadily increased with the number of records rising from 642 (2014), 1,644 (2015), 4,782 (2016) to 7,820 in 2017. Users include those applying for and maintaining both RMet and CMet accreditation; it is also used by the wider membership as a means to support and encourage them to keep a detailed record of CPD activity for their own professional use. At the end of 2017 there were 321 users of the system. The work of the Course Evaluation and Continuing Professional Development Panel has expanded as the growing number of RMets submit their CPD Reports for review. Another significant development is that the knowledge requirements for the Society's Accreditation schemes are now linked to the WMO 1083 specification for Training and Education.

Both members and non-members alike engage actively with the Society's full programme of National and Local Meetings. In total, the Society delivered 65 events during 2017 across the country, which is testimony to the support and enthusiasm of Society volunteers. The Society averaged 75 attendees at its National Wednesday Meetings during 2017, and maintained good levels of activity in its Local Centres and Special Interest Groups. In 2017, a new Local Centre in South West England was formed in partnership with the Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institute, with the first joint meeting in February 2017. The Society continues to offer remote participation at all its National Meetings (where possible).

In 2017 the Society delivered three conferences:

- The Society's annual conference was held at the University of Exeter in July and attracted 152 delegates. The theme of the conference was '*Weather and Climate Impacts: From research and services to application and policy*' and featured a combination of plenary invited keynotes and parallel workshops.
- This was preceded by the annual Student Conference at the Met Office in Exeter, which was attended by 75 delegates.
- The amateur conference was replaced this year by a one-day meeting, known as *WeatherLive*, which was held on Saturday 4th November at Central Hall Westminster, London.

The Society's website continues to have good visitor numbers and new content is continually added in the form of news, events and factual resources. In 2017, the Society worked on the implementation of its Digital Strategy, which includes strengthening the Society's logo and brand. It also launched a Jobs Board after consulting with strategic partners and corporate members, which has continued to grow throughout the year.

This was another busy year for the Education and Outreach Committee, aided by the virtual committee of teachers and educational specialists, who support the work of the main committee. The focus in 2017 was supporting the revised GCSE and A level specifications. The Society developed and launched a new Climate Negotiations resource that simulates a world climate change conference for 14-18 year olds; introduced past climate teaching resources to support secondary geography teaching (Highly Commended by the Geographical Association in April 2017); and continued to run a free, 3-week online course, entitled '*Come Rain or Shine*' which is delivered in partnership with the University of Reading on the FutureLearn platform. This ran 3 times in 2017, attracting thousands of participants.

The Society partnered with the Royal Photographic Society again in 2017 to run the 'Weather Photographer of the Year' competition. The competition received over 2,000 entries, narrowed down to a shortlist of the 48 best images from which seven winners were chosen. The exhibition tour started in 2017 in London and Liverpool and will continue into 2018.

theWeather Club, the public outreach arm of the Society, offers free online registration providing the general public with access to an interactive website www.theWeatherClub.org.uk with weather and climate features and news updates, information about events and meetings and a quarterly e-newsletter full of informative content, all produced in-house. Social media has continued to broaden the Society's outreach. The Facebook page has over 1,500 followers and our Twitter followers now exceed 7,000. The Society published one climate science briefing paper in 2017. The Society continues to work closely with BBC Weather Watchers as their official academic partner, and supplies educational content and articles on a monthly basis. The Society continues to be a popular resource for the press to interview at times of extreme weather events and in 2017 the Society was involved with over 140 press engagements, including BBC, Channel 5, and Sky News.

The Society's scientific publishing is its single largest activity and is a vital contributor to the mission and well-being of the organisation. This has continued to operate successfully with publishers Wiley. The new [journals hub](#) was launched, which ensures a coherent structure across the Society journals increasing their visibility and supporting the branding. A new journals layout has been approved and this will guarantee efficiency gains in the production process, thus reducing publication times.

The work to support journal editors commenced in 2016 has progressed in 2017 focusing on the clean-up of Manuscript Central (submission platform) to ensure that contact details of reviewers and their areas of expertise are up to date. The Society and Wiley ran a webinar entitled '*Peer Review and Publishing Ethics*' which was broadcast live in November to support scientists, particularly early career researchers, from Indian institutions. The webinar received 290 pre-registrations, 92 live viewings and 220 viewings of the recorded session which is available [here](#). This is particularly important for the RMetS portfolio of journals as a considerable number of manuscripts are from authors from this part of the world.

The Business Development role is one of the Society's strategic priority areas and does not operate in isolation, rather it seeks to support other areas in the Society through identifying areas for improvement

and enhancement and moreover maximising sustainable income to deliver the Society's charitable activities. During 2017 the Society completed a review of the Business Development Function that will be delivered in early 2018.

The Society worked throughout 2017 developing the Strategic Plan for 2018-2020 in consultation with the Society's Committees, stakeholders and the Strategic Planning Group. The plan was approved by Council in October and will be launched in January 2018.

The Society continues to be in a good financial position. Income from scientific publishing has increased. However, the next few years remain challenging with pressures on income from scientific publishing due to the move to an Open Access model. The Society will enter this period on a firm financial footing and the activity plan and budget for 2018 form part of the 3 year strategic programme which includes Business Development activities, and continued, planned sustainable growth in the range of charitable activities.

FINANCE

The Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2017 are published separately from this Annual Report in line with the requirements of the Charity Commissioners. The Auditors' report appears as the Page 1 to the Accounts and certifies that in their opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Society's affairs and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

The Society continues to be in a good financial position and total reserves at 31 December 2017 stand at £1,751,277 (2016: £1,517,898).

The operating surplus of the Society in 2017 was £190,328 (2016: £41,670), this is mainly due to increased publishing income and delays to two strategic projects with deferral of related costs to 2018. Investment gains of £43,051 (2016: £81,973) were recognised, this increase in the value of investments reflects the movement in the FTSE All Share Index over the year.

The Society's scientific publications continue to make up the largest part of its income, providing £712,344 (2016: £589,652). Non-subscription publishing income from institutions has made an important contribution to this rise in revenue. Other publishing activities such as the calendar and the Weather Watchers Log Book contributed £6,608 (2016: £6,702). The associated expenditure on publications was £139,767 (2016: £131,132).

The total Membership Subscription income including Gift Aid decreased from £227,069 in 2016 to £221,298 in 2017, primarily due to the fall in corporate membership renewals. A review has been conducted and membership feedback taken into account so that there is renewed confidence that corporate income going forward will be sustained. Interest income remained low as a result of the continuing poor bank interest rates during the year.

Staff costs were £423,111 (2016: £459,885), a decrease of £36,774 over the previous year which reflected staff maternity, and a full year cost of the business development role.

The notes in the separate Annual Accounts provide more insight into the detailed figures and the way these have been compiled.