RHS Current Issues: 3 FEB 2015

ISSUES ARE LISTED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

Issue	Brief description	Timescale	Responsibility	Comments
Membership/Fellowship application software AND Research Support application software	Elements of each application must be automatically collated into a single PDF and stored somewhere visible and accessible. The process from receiving completed forms from applicants to collating and distributing them needs to be streamlined and automated. At present it is not functioning smoothly and there are too many manual processes.	ASAP	ADAM (with support from Jane and Holger)	Last month I wrote "*Holger to decide ASAP whether the existing software can deliver the basic functionality we need. Need for clarity about what we can and can't expect from the system.*" **This is now more urgent than ever.** **Mel and Holger have written a new spec, which Mel says is the same as the one she produced 2 years ago. As noted last month, however, the spec should not really be the issue, since the functionality we need is really pretty basic. We revisited the spec with a view to supplying SE with clear instructions to construct a bespoke back-office system and enhance functionality. SE were given the spec in mid-Jan but we are still waiting for their quote. Meanwhile Holger has improved the back office systems using an integrated single PDF. But due to technical problems with the server (WPEngine) we were unable to use this in the last round.** **We're in danger of suffering real reputational damage as a result of the difficulties with these systems and this now has to be top priority.**
Fix glitches with current software – in addition to the above.	Events images not always correctly formatted – Trevor is investigating this. Email alerts to RoyalHistSoc not working.	ASAP	ADAM (with support from Jane and Holger)	These are specific and fixable problems which are not fundamental to the plug-ins we are using. Renewed effort to be made to supply SE with a snagging list so that they can be systematically addressed. The situation does, of course, need to be monitored.

Mailchimp	Mailchimp (a widely used bulk mail service) has been successfully set up and initial circulars sent out. There is at present a high incidence of bounced emails which Holger is investigating.	Mid-Feb	Jane and Holger	It is worth noting that Mailchimp is NOT a plug-in and is not part of the new website, but an independent service which we pay for monthly. We use the Membermouse database to source addresses for the Mailchimp membership distribution list and need to make sure that these two lists are synchronized properly i.e. when Membermouse is updated the Mailchimp list is also automatically updated.
Job Descriptions, Staff Handbook		Mid-Feb	Adam	Discontent expressed by Jane, Sue and Mel about the handbook, its tone and content. Agreed that it needs to be revised to make it more friendly, more appropriate to the scale of the RHS, and, perhaps in certain respects, more realistic e.g. in terms of expected notice periods. --JANE, SUE and MEL will revise the Staff Handbook and pass to ADAM who will go over it once more.
Issue contracts		Feb 6	Adam	*Need for authorization from Sarah*
Square Eye costings	Need for an *estimate* of the number of hours likely to be required to complete remaining tasks	ASAP	Jane	Jane suggests that the £400 per month package with 10% discount on hours plus maintenance is reasonable. **Estimate of remaining hours in Phase 2 to be finalized once back office spec is agreed and remaining work assessed. We estimate that we will need to purchase the £400 month package for the next three months, thereafter reducing to £50 a month once the immediate outstanding work has been implemented.**
Holger's Hours	Need for an *estimate* of the number of hours of Holger's time we are likely to need to pay for between	ASAP	Jane (and Holger)	Holger is currently working on a new estimate in the light of the current situation.

	now and the end of May.			
Public History Prize	Publicity	Mid-Feb	**Jo**	Jo met Ludmilla and Alix on Monday 2 Feb and is due to report back to Jane, Sue and Mel shortly.
Publicity for upcoming RHS events	As detailed in Comms Rolling Plan	Ongoing	**Jo, Jane, and Sue (see right)**	*Responsibilities as detailed in Comms Rolling Plan. Last minute publicity for Feb lecture, planning for future events.* IN ADDITION, we agreed that **SUE** would take responsibility for: 1. Creating lists of academics in the Southeast organized by expertise who can be circulated depending on the topic of the lecture AND THAT **JANE** would take responsibility for: 2. Circulating fellowship/ membership with questions about what kinds of events they'd like to be reminded about. Overall division of responsibility is that Sue will do e-bulletins and Jane will do publicity for RHS specific events The forthcoming visit to De Montfort was discussed. SUE: has responsibility for the practical arrangments working with Robert Coles. JANE will deal with publicity for the lecture, and afterwards.
Newsletter	Move to electronic publishing as detailed in Comms Rolling plan. Jo and Jane are currently researching a range of packages.	End of Feb	**Jo (with support from Jane)**	Jane expressed doubt that it would be possible to move to e-publishing in May. An alternative plan was discussed whereby the May newsletter would be the last paper copy and that it would include a form which fellows would have to return to indicate that they wished to CONTINUE receiving paper copies in the future.
Survey of Fellows/Members		End Feb/March	**Jane to provide stats analysis. ADAM to write commentary.**	Adam has asked JANE to UPGRADE our surveymonkey subscription in order to produce more complex stats.

Membership welcome pack	Make it more friendly, informative	By Feb 6 to come into effect with next round?	**Mel to work with Sean. Final text to be signed off by Peter and Jo.**	Jane suggested we issue certificates of membership signed by the President – something Fellows & Members request on occasion. Mel and Sue suggested these should be issued after initial subs were paid.
Equalities Working Group			**Peter.**	The expectation is that Jane will provide support for this committee. Clarification of its remit and membership needed. Jane is meeting Mary on Friday to discuss this. Adam suggests that we appoint a member of Council as convenor of this committee working with Mary.

Finance functionality	Ability to process online payments. Linking SagePay with other databases, either manually or through an automated process.	By the end of May	**SUE (with support of Sarah)**	--Sue to talk to accountants and auditors about simplifying existing accounting procedures. --we need to decide whether to do payment through the site or link to another site… ? --SUE to research and, in consultation, decide on which system to buy to process online payments. --NOTE Direct debits are still running off the old system… Agreed that we will get online payments in place first before trying to bring direct debits online.
REF project			Mary	In hand
Implementation of first Appraisals under the new system			**Adam**, **Peter**	This will be implemented as soon as we have contracts, JDs and handbook agreed.
Comms Strategy Monitoring	As detailed in Comms Rolling Plan need to identify role of Google Analytics,	By end of Feb?	**Jo**	Roles as outlined in Comms Rolling Plan NEED TO CLARIFY WHAT NEEDS TO BE ANALYSED.