

Nuclear Institute Annual General Meeting

Monday 30 September 2024

Crewe Hall Hotel

Minutes

1. The President, Fiona Rayment, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for joining. A total of 45 members attended plus 8 who attended remotely.
2. The President welcomed Robert Gofton as the new CEO of the Nuclear Institute.
3. The President provided a summary of the agenda, including a review of the past year, presentation of accounts, and an introduction to the new CEO, Robert Gofton. She reflected on her tenure as NI President, highlighting the honour of the role and the challenges faced with leadership changes over the past six months.
4. The President gave an overview of some of the key activities and achievements of 2023:
 - **Membership Growth:** The Nuclear Institute saw a net gain of 579 members, primarily driven by the company membership scheme, which now includes 33 companies.
 - **Event Resurgence:** Key events such as the Security Conference and the annual Modelling Seminar resumed after being paused due to COVID-19.
 - **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):** A board for EDI has been re-established, working to meet the Science Council and Royal Academy of Engineering standards.
 - **Branch Development:** The London and Southeast branch have a new committee and are actively progressing.
 - **Volunteer Forum:** Hosted after the 2023 Annual General Meeting, supporting member engagement.

Committee Work:

- The Policy Committee has been particularly active, responding to government consultations on small modular reactors, new nuclear builds, and site planning.
- The Outreach Committee has been overseeing the development of updated educational materials for schools.

Staff and Other Changes:

- Recruitment of a new membership manager and digital marketing apprentice.

- July 2023 saw the rebranding of the Nuclear Institute, bringing consistency across branches and the Young Generation Network.
- The organisation upgraded its CRM system to improve member engagement and website functionality.

Key Events and Collaborations:

- Successes include a sold-out Young Generation Annual Seminar and Dinner, multiple branch dinners, technical events, and collaborations with New Scientist Live and the Climate Schools Project on nuclear energy awareness initiatives.
- The NI/NIA Annual Dinner was another major success, with a record turnout and sold-out capacity.

Board Updates:

- Two new trustees were appointed: Kirsty Armour and Hannah Patterson.
 - A change in presidential structure was announced where the president-elect will now serve for a two-year term before becoming president. Adrian Bull was named president-elect for the 2026–2027 period.
5. Honorary Treasurer, Nicola O’Keeffe, highlighted past financial challenges due to COVID, but noted that 2023 accounts marked the third consecutive year of surplus.

She noted the following key points:

2023 Financial Performance and focus of investment

A surplus of £179,700 was achieved in 2023, surpassing the budget. This brings total reserves to £670,800, setting a strong financial position for future investment. The Board is now considering how to invest the rebuilt reserves to enhance membership benefits.

Income Sources

- **Membership Growth and Income:** With significant growth in companies under CMS and Corporate Affiliates income has increased to £361,000, aiming to cover administrative and staff costs.
- **Event Income:** Surpassed budget by £62,000, totalling £751,000, driven by successful events like the NI/NIA Annual Dinner, YGN Annual Seminar and Dinner, and Branch dinners as well as increased technical events attendance.

Ongoing Challenges

- Journal Subscriptions

The journal saw a small downturn in subscribers but remains a valued membership benefit. The Board is committed to continued investment in the journal despite lower returns.

Investments and Auditing

£324,000 was invested with Coutts by year-end and the accounts were audited by Sayer Vincent LLP.

Branch Funding and Outreach

- Increased funding for branches, but under budget due to branches not spending allocated funds.
- Efforts are being made to encourage branches and YGN to utilise their budgets moving forward.

The 2023 financial statements and reappoint Sayer Vincent LLP as auditors for the following year were both adopted.

6. The CEO, Robert Gofton, provided a review of progress in 2024 including those reported in plans at last year's AGM, other achievements and future plans for the Nuclear Institute.

Key events and highlights from 2024:

- 15th anniversary celebration.
- Digital Conference.
- Dinners, a significant part of the Nuclear Institute's tradition.
- Launch of mentoring initiatives, aiming for further development.
- Refreshing the Nuclear Delta as a professional standard, set to launch next year.

Financial Position and Leadership Transition:

Robert acknowledged the work done by the previous CEO, Sarah Beacock, in steering NI through COVID-19 and financial challenges and thanked her for all her work during the past 7 years. NI is now in a strong financial position, allowing for future investments in membership and organisational growth.

Plans for 2025

Robert spoke about the plans for 2025 where he explained that a key focus will be on membership growth. This depends on understanding membership needs and increasing the value proposition for current and potential members. He aims to gather member feedback on what's working well and where improvements are needed. Plans to modernise NI's operations to ensure the organisation is fit for 2025 and beyond, focusing on technology, governance, and inclusivity in volunteer participation.

Some key challenges have been identified:

- Clarifying membership benefits.
- Enhancing communication about the value of joining NI.
- Creating a stronger sense of belonging within the NI community.

Robert then reflected on NI's Value Proposition in terms of some current member benefits including:

- **Nuclear Future publication and events.**

- **Mentoring scheme** and professional development opportunities (membership and fellowship).

Engagement and Strategy Development:

Robert called for collaboration from members and volunteers to help shape NI's new strategy, which will guide the future direction of the organisation. A strategy is under development, with feedback from members being crucial to defining its details.

Nuclear Sector Expansion:

The nuclear sector in the UK is set to triple in capacity, requiring a doubling of the workforce. NI aims to play a key role in supporting this growth by promoting professionalism, public trust, and sector development.

The work of existing volunteers was acknowledged, and it was necessary for ongoing and increased involvement by the volunteers to support NI's efforts to modernise and grow. In terms of looking forward, NI's future success depends on continuous improvement and the collective efforts of members and volunteers.

In summary the attendees were presented with a forward-looking vision for NI, focusing on modernising the organisation, enhancing member value, and fostering growth in line with the nuclear sector's expansion. He encouraged active collaboration from members and volunteers in shaping NI's future by acting as advocates for NI within their networks, provide feedback and suggestions for improvements and engaging with NI's vision of supporting the nuclear sector's workforce, particularly as the sector expands.

7. The President opened the floor for questions and comments from members and online participants with a summary as below highlighting the current strengths and challenges moving forward.

1. Events

These are currently a major strength for the Nuclear Institute (NI), accounting for 80% of income and providing valuable networking and industry knowledge-sharing opportunities. However, there is currently an over-reliance on events, which might not appeal to all members, especially non-technical professionals like project managers, finance directors, and marketers.

Challenge: Diversify offerings beyond events to attract a broader membership.

2. Value Proposition for Membership

The NI must enhance its value proposition, both for individuals and companies. Many members only engage with the NI for events and publications, and the broader membership does not feel connected or see clear benefits beyond those.

Challenge: Develop a more comprehensive value proposition to increase member engagement and grow the organisation sustainably.

3. Engaging Non-Technical Professionals

The NI is seen primarily as serving the technical/scientific side of the nuclear sector, though there is a wide range of professionals (HR, marketing, finance) working within the industry.

Challenge: Broaden the scope of offerings to include professional services and other non-technical professionals to reflect the full ecosystem of the nuclear sector.

4. Company Membership and Workforce Engagement

Company memberships are increasing, but only a small percentage of employees from these companies are active NI members.

Challenge: Increase individual memberships from within company members and communicate the benefits of NI membership more effectively.

5. Professional Development and Mentorship

There is significant demand for workforce development, particularly for upskilling new graduates and non-nuclear professionals entering the sector. NI offers a mentoring scheme to support this, but it was felt that this is currently underutilised due to a lack of awareness.

Challenge: Raise awareness of mentoring programs and other professional development tools within the industry.

6. Infrastructure and Volunteer Support

As membership grows, there is a concern that the infrastructure, including the availability of assessors for professional development, will be insufficient to handle increased demand.

Challenge: Scale up the infrastructure and volunteer support (e.g., assessors) to handle larger memberships efficiently.

7. Communication and Marketing Gaps

It was felt that the NI struggles to communicate its full range of services effectively to both individuals and companies.

Challenge: Improve communication strategies to ensure members understand the value of the NI and the range of support it offers.

8. Long-Term Professional Development Backlog

If the current rate of professional recognition continues, it would take decades to professionally certify all members.

Challenge: Streamline and modernise the professional development and assessment process to make it more efficient and appealing.

9. Advocacy and Member Support

Existing members and volunteers play a critical role in promoting the NI and advocating for its benefits.

Challenge: Leverage advocates and volunteers to help raise awareness and expand the reach of the NI within the nuclear sector.

Overall, the NI has a positive future. There was an acknowledgment of past financial challenges being overcome, and the current focus on enhancing the member value proposition to foster sustainable growth.

8. There was no other business. The President thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting at 17:00.

Members present in person:

Fiona Rayment FNucl (President)	Nicola O’Keeffe (Hon Treasurer)	Camila Arce-Depic
Linda Aylmore	Kirsty Armer FNucl	Anthony Banford
Stephen Byrne	Stefan Bozhkov	Adam Cheetham
John Clarke	Jessica Cliff	Harry Conway
Alan Davies MNucl	Antonio Di Buono	Sarah D’Lima
Harry Edwards	Jeremy Edwards	Katie Farrell
Michael Greenshields	Mark Gardiner MNucl	Gorby Jandu
David Jury MNucl	John McCandless	Joseph Neilson
Jennifer Nugent	Thomas Norton	Hannah Paterson
Sharon Platt FNucl	Atul Ranjan MNucl	Tom Robinson
Jasbir Sidhu	Robert Skelton FNucl	Kevin Smith
Becky Sparkes	Saralyn Thomas MNucl	Jen Weineck
Frederic Wheeler MNucl	Laurence Williams FNucl	
Cynthia Hearing (Membership and Business Development Director)	James Barker (Marketing and Communications Manager)	Jenni Killick (Membership Manager)
Om Maharjan (Finance Officer)	Ian Jones (Events Officer)	Keeley Hazelhurst (CFO)
Robert Gofton (CEO)		

Members present online:

Nejdet Erkan MNucl	Robin Cowley	Jacob Seddon
Matthew Mousley FNucl	Steven Hickey	David Mulholland
Mehdi Askarieh	Joanne Bailey	

Apologies were received from:



Adrienne Kelbie, Michael Latham, Angela Lidiard, Edmund Morgan-Warren, Andrew Newell, Barbara Smith, Jonathan Stait, Rebecca Weston.