**Minutes of the BSN Annual General Meeting**
**Date:** 30 September 2026
**Time:** 2:00pm - 3:00pm (BST)
**Location:** Online via Zoom

**Attendees:** Kate Ellacott (President), Michelle Bellingham (Treasurer), Mino Belle, Dan Brierley, Paula Brunton, Jeff Davies (Grants Secretary), Rebecca Dumbell (Communications Secretary), Isadora Clivatti Furigo, Dave Grattan (Journal Secretary), Gisela Helfer, Allan Herbison, Miguel Ruiz Cruz (ECR Representative), Limei Zhang, Francesca Cockshull (CEO), Roni Robbins (Minutes) and 27 members of the BSN. The meeting was quorate.

## 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Neil Evans and Karen Spencer.

## 2. Approval of the minutes of the 2025 AGM

The minutes of the 2025 AGM had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

No amendments or comments were raised, and the minutes were approved.

## 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

## 4. President's report

Kate Ellacott welcomed members to the AGM and reflected on another successful year for the Society. She highlighted the continued growth of the BSN, both in membership and international reach, and emphasised the importance of maintaining the Society's friendly, welcoming and collaborative ethos.

Kate acknowledged the continued success of the Journal of Neuroendocrinology (JNE), which remains fundamental to the Society's financial position and its ability to support members through grants, meetings and other activities. She encouraged members to continue supporting the Journal through submissions, peer reviewing and participation in initiatives such as the Early Career Researcher (ECR) Editorial Board.

Reflecting on recent meetings, Kate praised the International Congress of Neuroendocrinology (ICN) held in Japan and the BSN ECR Meeting held in Manchester in September 2026. Both meetings had provided valuable opportunities for scientific exchange, networking and engagement with the international neuroendocrinology community. She also looked forward to the next ICN meeting, which will take place in Mexico, with Mike Lehman and Denise Belsham leading the organisation.

Kate reported on the retirement of Sue Thorn, who had served the Society for many years as CEO. She expressed sincere thanks for Sue's considerable contribution to the BSN and wished her well in her retirement.

A warm welcome was extended to Francesca Cockshull, who had joined the Society as its first permanent salaried, part-time CEO. Kate noted that Fran was already making a positive contribution and shared the Society's commitment to maintaining its welcoming and supportive culture.

Finally, Kate acknowledged the contribution of the Board of Trustees and its subcommittees, encouraging members to consider becoming involved in the future.

## 5. Treasurer's report (including to receive the 2025 Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts)

Michelle Bellingham presented an overview of the Society's financial performance for the year ending 31 December 2025. She reported that the Society remained in a strong financial position, despite wider economic uncertainties.

Total income for 2025 was £554,069, compared with £587,278 in 2024. Expenditure remained relatively stable at £469,961, compared with £465,988 in the previous year, resulting in a net surplus of £84,108. Total funds at the end of 2025 stood at £1,248,322.

The JNE continued to provide the Society's principal source of income, generating £485,763 in royalties during 2025, broadly consistent with the previous year. Membership subscriptions contributed £20,938, while the annual meeting generated £9,772. Bank interest and investment income contributed a further £27,448, a notable increase from 2024.

Michelle highlighted the significant proportion of expenditure directed towards supporting the Society's charitable objectives. A total of £196,697 was awarded in grants to individuals, with a further £54,566 provided in grants to organisations. This represented over £251,000 in direct grant support during the year.

Other expenditure included £99,052 towards the Journal, including symposium grants, £21,826 on the annual meeting, £12,673 on communications and £1,225 on prizes and awards. Administrative expenditure included staff and office costs, website and membership management, accounting and professional fees.

Michelle noted that some differences between the 2024 and 2025 expenditure figures reflected adjustments to the previous year's accounts relating to recoverable costs and VAT refunds.

The Society's reserves requirement remained at £900,000, providing sufficient protection to cover at least two years in the event of a sudden loss of journal income. With total funds of approximately £1.25 million, the Society remained comfortably above this level, allowing continued investment in member support and charitable activities.

Investment holdings increased from £288,407 in 2024 to £485,666 at the end of 2025, including £170,000 of additional funds invested during the year. Investment gains amounted to £21,951, compared with £9,370 in 2024.

Michelle also reported that a Charities Aid Foundation/Flagstone account had been established in May 2025 to optimise returns on cash deposits, with approximately £704,000 invested during the year. The Investment Subcommittee had also begun reviewing investment and financial advice providers.

Looking ahead, budgets for 2026–2028 had been increased to reflect the additional funds available for member support. However, Michelle emphasised the importance of planning for the expiry of the Society's publishing agreement with Wiley at the end of 2028. Given the Society's reliance on journal income, careful consideration of future publishing arrangements would be essential.

Michelle concluded that the Society remained financially secure, with healthy reserves and the capacity to continue supporting its members. She thanked Fran Cockshull for preparing the financial presentation.

No questions were raised.

## 6. Membership Secretary's report

In the absence of Neil Evans, Kate Ellacott presented the Membership Secretary's report on his behalf. It was noted that the General Secretary and Membership Secretary roles had been combined, with Neil currently holding both responsibilities.

Kate reported that membership had reached a record high of 729 members in 2025, compared with 578 in 2021 and 243 in 2013. This continued growth reflected the Society's increasing international profile and the range of benefits available to members.

Members were reminded of the benefits of BSN membership, including free access to the JNE, eligibility for grants and awards, reduced registration fees for conferences and events, access to lecture recordings and opportunities for networking and professional development.

Membership continued to represent a broad range of career stages, with academics forming the largest group at 252 members (34.6%), followed by postgraduate students at 224 (30.7%) and postdoctoral researchers at 184 (25.2%). Research technicians accounted for 17 members (2.3%) and undergraduates for 52 (7.1%). ECRs, comprising postdoctoral researchers, postgraduate students and undergraduates, represented 63.1% of the membership.

Kate highlighted differences in gender representation across career stages. Women were more strongly represented at undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral levels, while male members remained more prevalent in senior academic positions, accounting for 62% of academic members. She acknowledged that these patterns reflected wider trends within the scientific community and emphasised the Society's commitment to supporting career progression, particularly for women moving into senior academic roles.

The Society's international membership continued to grow, with UK-based members accounting for approximately 55% of the total and international members representing 45%. The UK remained the largest membership group with 393 members, followed by France (42), New Zealand (41), the United States (38), Australia (24) and Nigeria (22). Membership was also growing in other countries, reflecting the Society's increasingly international reach.

Kate welcomed this international engagement and encouraged members from all regions to become involved in the Society's committees and leadership opportunities.

The Society had also welcomed additional honorary members during the year. Members were reminded that nominations could be submitted for individuals who had made significant contributions to neuroendocrinology or to the Society.

## 7. Meetings Secretary's report

In the absence of a full report from Monica Imbernon, Kate Ellacott provided a brief update on the Society's meetings.

The 2025 Annual Meeting had been held in Bradford, while 2026 had seen members participate in the International Congress of Neuroendocrinology in Japan and the BSN ECR Meeting in Manchester.

Looking ahead, Kate confirmed that the 2027 BSN Annual Meeting will take place at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, from 9–12 August 2027.

Planning for the scientific programme was underway, and members were encouraged to submit suggestions for symposia, speakers and topics of interest. Kate emphasised the importance of ensuring that the programme reflected the scientific interests and needs of the Society's membership.

A further update on meeting arrangements would be circulated when available.

## 8. Grants Secretary's report

Jeff Davies presented an overview of the Society's grant activity during 2025, together with an update on applications received during 2026.

Jeff outlined the seven grant schemes currently available to members, covering travel, research support, public engagement, undergraduate laboratory experience and symposium support.

He reported that demand for grant funding had continued to increase, with 238 applications received in 2025, compared with 191 in 2024. Of these, 90 awards were made, with a total of £186,111 awarded.

The overall success rate had fallen from 36.5% in 2024 to 29.5% in 2025, reflecting the increasing number of applications received.

The Project Support Grant and Research Visit Grant schemes remained particularly popular. Applications for Project Support Grants increased from 58 in 2024 to 85 in 2025, while Research Visit Grant applications increased from 12 to 23 over the same period.

Success rates varied between schemes, with the ECR Travel Grant achieving an 84% success rate and the Research Visit Grant achieving 59%. The Project Support Grant scheme was particularly competitive, with a success rate of 16%, while the International Conference Travel Fund had a success rate of 22%.

The Society continued to support members across all career stages through funding for research, travel, collaboration, public engagement and undergraduate laboratory experience.

Jeff noted that the number of applications received during 2026 had already reached 335, including 157 applications for travel support to attend ICN in Japan. A total of 151 ICN travel

awards had been made, amounting to £149,118. Several other grant rounds were still ongoing, and final figures would be reported at the following AGM.

Kate thanked Jeff, Isadora Clivatti Furigo and Monica Imbernon for their work in administering the grant schemes. She emphasised the importance of providing constructive feedback to unsuccessful applicants and encouraged members, particularly ECRs, to reapply where appropriate.

## 9. EDI Secretary's report

Kate Ellacott reported that the position of EDI Secretary was currently vacant and therefore no formal report was presented.

She confirmed that the Society remained committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and intended to re-establish the EDI Committee's activities during 2027.

The temporary pause in activities reflected limited capacity during the current year rather than any change in the Society's commitment to EDI.

## 10. ECR Representative's report

Miguel Ruiz Cruz presented an overview of the activities and initiatives undertaken by the ECR Subcommittee.

Miguel began by reporting on the ECR event held during the 2025 Annual Meeting in Bradford, which focused on career transitions and leadership. The event included a panel discussion with Monica Imbernon, David Garcia Galiano, Su Young Han and Dan Brierley, followed by practical workshops covering academic branding, networking, collaboration, scientific communication and leadership.

Feedback from the event had been positive, with an overall rating of 4.37 out of 5. Of the 19 respondents, 84% rated the event as excellent or very good, with the remaining 16% rating it as good. Suggestions for improvement included ensuring that workshops adhered more closely to their scheduled times.

Miguel also reported on the successful ECR Meeting held in Manchester on 2–3 September 2026. The programme included plenary lectures by Gareth Leng and Carlos Diéguez, ECR oral and poster presentation sessions, a JNE workshop on scientific publishing led by Mike Lehman, and the Julia Buckingham and Michael Harbuz Awards.

Feedback from the Manchester meeting was extremely positive, achieving an overall rating of 4.7 out of 5, with all 24 respondents rating the event as excellent or very good. Suggestions for future improvements included allowing more time for informal networking and addressing audiovisual difficulties.

The ECR Mentorship Scheme continued to provide valuable support to members. During 2025, 14 mentor–mentee pairs were established in March and a further 13 in September. An additional 10 pairs were established during the March 2026 round, with applications for the September round closing on the day of the AGM.

Miguel highlighted the continued development of resources for ECRs, including the Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant Writing Toolbox and methodological video tutorials. Further resources were

being developed covering scientific presentations, career development grant applications and specialist research techniques, with additional material scheduled for release during late 2026 and early 2027.

Looking ahead, Miguel welcomed João Paulo Cavalcanti de Albuquerque as the incoming ECR Trustee and Representative, together with Matt Higgins as Deputy ECR Representative.

Kate thanked Miguel for his enthusiasm, leadership and considerable contribution to the Society's ECR activities, particularly the development of resources that would continue to benefit members in future years.

## 11. Communications Secretary's report

Rebecca Dumbell presented an overview of the Society's communications activities, acknowledging the support of Deputy Communications Secretary Isadora Clivatti Furigo and freelance Communications Officer Agnes Becker.

Rebecca emphasised the importance of effective communications in maintaining engagement with members, promoting Society activities and increasing the BSN's visibility within the wider neuroendocrinology community.

The Society continued to communicate with members through its website, newsletters, social media platforms and online resources. Newsletters were circulated periodically, with subscriptions also available to non-members, helping to extend the Society's reach.

The annual infographic continued to provide a summary of the Society's achievements, grants, activities and Journal developments. Rebecca also highlighted the introduction of a dedicated JNE newsletter in February 2026, providing a new opportunity to promote the Journal and its activities.

The communications team continued to publish articles, blogs and interviews highlighting member achievements, high-performing JNE articles, ECR resources, the mentorship scheme and initiatives such as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

Rebecca also reported on the Society's developing use of Instagram, including collaboration with Jodi Pawluski to promote the Mommy Brain podcast. She noted that there remained opportunities to make greater use of the platform and welcomed suggestions from members.

Member achievements and successes continued to generate particularly strong engagement across social media. Rebecca encouraged members to share news, interact with the Society's posts and contribute content to help promote the BSN community.

Kate thanked Rebecca and the wider communications team for their considerable efforts, acknowledging their contribution to the Society's growing membership and international profile.

## 12. Journal Secretary's report

Dave Grattan presented an update on the performance of the Journal of Neuroendocrinology, highlighting another exceptionally successful year.

The Journal's impact factor had increased from 4.1 in 2024 to 5.0 in 2025, its highest level to date. This placed the Journal in the first quartile for both Neuroscience and Endocrinology and Metabolism, reflecting its strong performance and growing international reputation.

Dave attributed much of this success to strategic developments over recent years, particularly the introduction of the Translational and Clinical strand alongside the established Fundamental and Mechanistic strand. He noted that several highly cited papers had contributed to the increased impact factor, although some fluctuation could be expected in future years as these papers moved outside the citation calculation period.

Submissions to the Journal increased by approximately 60% between 2024 and 2025, rising from 303 to 483. The number of articles published also increased, from 112 to 141, representing growth of approximately 25%. The acceptance rate decreased from 36.9% to 29.2%, reflecting the Journal's increasingly selective approach.

While the increase in submissions was encouraging, Dave noted that it had also created additional demands on editors and reviewers, particularly as a proportion of submissions did not meet the Journal's requirements. Maintaining high editorial standards while managing the increasing workload would remain an important consideration.

The Journal continued to support the development of early career researchers through its ECR Editorial Board, providing valuable opportunities to gain experience in scientific publishing and editorial processes. Recruitment for a second cohort was underway, and members were encouraged to consider applying.

Dave highlighted the importance of the Journal's programme of special issues, many of which arose from conferences and symposia supported by JNE. Three special issues had been published during 2025, including those associated with Peptide Receptor Radionuclide Therapy and Avian Endocrinology. This approach helped to generate high-quality content while supporting scientific collaboration and international meetings.

Readership continued to increase, with 551,220 downloads recorded in 2025, an increase of 12% compared with 2024. This performance compared favourably with wider trends among comparable Wiley neuroscience journals. Approximately half of published articles were now available through open-access arrangements, largely as a result of institutional publishing agreements.

Dave also reported on the changing international profile of the Journal. Approximately 90% of submissions and readership originated outside the UK, with growing engagement from countries including India and China. He emphasised the importance of maintaining the Journal's international outlook and continuing to support neuroendocrinology activities worldwide.

Looking ahead, Dave highlighted the expiry of the Society's publishing contract with Wiley at the end of December 2028. The Trustees would need to consider the options for future publishing arrangements, including renewing the existing agreement or exploring opportunities with alternative publishers through a tender process.

Given the Journal's significant contribution to the Society's income, careful planning and timely consideration of these options would be essential.

Dave concluded by thanking the Journal's Editors-in-Chief, Mike Lehman and Wouter de Herder, together with the editorial teams, reviewers and contributors, for their continued efforts.

He encouraged members to consider JNE when submitting their research, highlighting the direct benefit to the Society and its members through the reinvestment of journal income into grants and other activities.

## 13. Notification of election results for Trustees

Kate Ellacott announced the results of the 2026 Trustee elections.

Kate Ellacott, Rebecca Dumbell and Gisela Helfer had been re-elected to the Board of Trustees.

Karen Spencer was also welcomed back to the Board, having previously served as a Trustee.

Kate acknowledged the retirement of Allan Herbison and Miguel Ruiz Cruz from the Board and expressed sincere thanks for their service.

Particular recognition was given to Allan for his contribution to strengthening the Society's investment strategy and financial oversight, and to Miguel for his leadership of the ECR Subcommittee and development of resources for early career researchers.

Members were encouraged to consider standing for election to the Board of Trustees or becoming involved in one of the Society's subcommittees.

## 14. A.O.C.B.

No additional business was raised.

Kate confirmed that no comments had been received on the minutes of the 2025 AGM and that these would therefore be taken as approved.

She thanked all members for attending the AGM and for their continued support of the Society. She encouraged members to remain engaged with the BSN and to contact the Society with any questions, suggestions or ideas.

There being no further business, the meeting was formally closed.