

Activity Plan 2022

The Royal Statistical Society's vision is a world with data at the heart of understanding and decision making.



Introduction

The Society seeks to put data at the heart of understanding and decision-making through the six strategic goals set out in our five-year strategic plan, which runs from 2018 to 2022. This document details the work which is scheduled to take place during 2022.

Overview of 2022

2022 will be a busy year, as we seek to put in place significant new offerings, and undertake some important pieces of strategic work to ensure the Society's long-term success.

It will also be a year of significant change for the Society. The Society has significant opportunities to increase our impact and further our mission: the public profile of statistics is higher than ever, the importance of data science as a field continues to grow, membership growth is robust, and demand for training and accreditation looks likely to increase.

At the same time, the Society faces three significant financial headwinds: (i) from 2023, it is likely that the income we receive from our journals will fall, perhaps by 40% (a ~15% reduction in Society income); (ii) increased building maintenance costs necessitate a review of our building plans, and possibly expensive repairs (costing up to 40% of annual income); (iii) the cost of our long-closed staff pension scheme has doubled (increasing costs by ~5% of Society income).

The continued success of the Society relies on our ability to take advantage of the significant opportunities open to us, while carefully managing the financial risks we face.

To do this, we will seek to invest in our activities, to make the Society relevant to broader and more diverse groups, in particular through our work on Data Science and on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Data Science: As well as launching our Data Science Certificate and advancing the work of the Alliance for Data Science Professionals, we are working on launching (i) a platform of data science case studies and educational resources for data scientists, (ii) a new journal of statistics and data science and (iii) a mentorship scheme for underrepresented groups in data science, subject to external partnership and funding. We will be guided in this work by the Society's sections (including the Data Science & AI Section, Data Ethics and Governance Section, and Women in Data Science and Statistics Special Interest Group) and by our Data Science Task Force.

EDI: Working with our newly appointed Honorary Officer for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, we will develop **new initiatives to promote EDI**, and to mainstream EDI in the Society's general business.

We will address the challenges presented by increasing building costs and changes to our journal publishing contract through a pair of reviews.

- **Building strategy.** The experience of remote working has caused most organisations to think hard about how they use office and event space; at the same time, the Society's building maintenance costs have increased sharply. 2022 is an opportune time to review the RSS's building needs, and the future of 12 Errol Street.

- **Journals strategy.** The RSS's current journals contract with Wiley expires at the end of 2022, and the field of academic publishing is changing rapidly. We will conduct a review of the RSS's learned journals to identify useful changes.

Finally, as we are approaching the end of the Society's last five-year strategic plan, we will review the Society's delivery against this plan, and begin the process of creating the next plan, to cover the period from 2023-2028. We will work with Council and the Executive Committee to do this from summer 2022 to summer 2023.

The rest of this document sets out the Society's planned activities in more detail, under the six headings of the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan.

Strategic Goal One

For statistics to be used effectively in the public interest, so that policy formulation and decision-making are informed by evidence, for the good of society.

1.1 Policy, research and campaigns

In 2022, we will continue to promote the effective use of statistics and data. We will seek to demonstrate, to policymakers and others, the importance of statistics and data in society and articulate how they can help.

We will seek to engage on new topics that have statistical elements as they emerge, especially where there is interest from groups within the Society. It is likely that questions around the economy and the (hoped-for) recovery from Covid-19 become increasingly important and we will engage with these topics as appropriate.

This work will be taken forward by various advisory groups: the Campaigns Advisory Group (CAG), the Academic Affairs Advisory Group (AAAG), the National Statistics Advisory Group (NSAG), and the Covid-19 Task Force, as well as by the Society's Sections and Local Groups.

Covid-19 will continue to be a focus for our work, driven by the Covid-19 Task Force and by complementary work by our Sections and Local Groups. We plan to engage with the public inquiry into the government's handling of the pandemic and promote the lessons and recommendations that we highlighted in our work in 2020 and 2021.

Economic Statistics: NSAG will continue to liaise regularly with the UK Statistics Authority, the Office for National Statistics and the Office for Statistics Regulation, to strengthen official statistics and the roles of statisticians within government departments. We will continue to play a leading role in the Economic Statistics Working Group (ESWG), which brings RSS together with the ONS, the Royal Economic Society, the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence and the Society of Professional Economists. ESWG's events programme will depend largely on ONS's organisational and financial input, but we expect that it will be more active than in 2020/2021 when numerous events were lost to Covid-19 restrictions. We will seek external funding to expand our work on economic statistics, for example to convene a commission on statistics for a better society.

Academic Affairs: (our campaigning on Academic Affairs is covered in section 4.1 below.)

Selection, prioritisation and engagement. We will strive to understand new and emerging issues and to develop a prominent and timely voice regarding developments of strategic interest to the Society, its members and statistics, leveraging the expertise of our members and in particular our sections and special interest groups.

We are working to involve members more in our policy work – and last year we established a policy mailing list to improve communication with members who are interested in this aspect of our work – and advisory groups will liaise with sections and special interest groups in delivering when preparing relevant pieces of work.

Identifying new areas of interest and pursuing them will be the responsibility of the newly formed CAG. This group is composed of a number of the Society's vice-presidents and honorary officers, representatives of Council as well as a small number of external subject-matter experts. This group will help to coordinate and prioritise work across the Society's remit and help to ensure that our campaigns and policy work has the maximum impact.

We will communicate clearly to ensure that RSS members are aware of the wide range of policy activity that the Society undertakes on their behalf. Policy achievements will be communicated to fellows to increase their awareness of the changes that the RSS, through their support, brings about, in the interests of both member engagement and member retention. We will continue to monitor [policy consultations](#) which may be of interest to members on a weekly basis and linking to them on the website.

1.2 Public affairs, press, external-facing events

We will aim to hold a number of events that are of interest to the membership as well as the wider public and media as an effective way to reach new audiences and promote the relevance of statistics in society.

We will look to capitalise further on the increasing relevance statistics has had during the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath and look to promote our views on the statistical aspects to the media and other relevant stakeholders. We expect, however, this will be less of a focus for 2022, so will concentrate more of our efforts on communicating our other campaign priorities which will be developed by our newly formed Campaigns Advisory Group. We will also continue to promote the Society's core policy messages, as set out in our Data Manifesto, on the importance of data in decision-making, when opportune moments arise in the news agenda.

We will work with our Statistical Ambassadors, providing them with the relevant support and training, so they can continue to assist the media with statistical enquiries, both for background and on-the-record interviews, and seek to expand the programme with outside funding.

1.3 Awards for statistical excellence

We will continue to work closely with all our award partners and aim to secure long-term sponsorship agreements where appropriate. We will look to increase the impact of the awards through additional online content, press, sponsorship and social media engagement.

Our awards will continue across existing categories for official statistics with the UK Statistics Authority and Civil Service World, journalism with ESRC and early-career writing with Significance magazine. Our Trustworthiness, Quality & Value award (formerly the Voluntary Application award), in partnership with the Office for Statistics Regulation and Civil Service World and the

Florence Nightingale Award for Healthcare Data Analytics, supported by the Health Foundation, will also be presented. We will introduce a new award for popular writing by researchers.

1.4 African Institute for Mathematical Sciences

We will continue to encourage RSS members to volunteer as lecturers and tutors at the various AIMS centres in Africa. We will provide financial support to enable three RSS fellows to travel. The AIMS committee will continue to oversee the programme, develop our partnership with AIMS Cameroon and look for ways to introduce and deliver the statistics syllabus at other AIMS centres. Additional support of the AIMS committee will be provided through the recruitment of suitable supervisors for dissertation projects. We will also work proactively to identify any new areas within the scope of our partnership where we can make a positive contribution. Our partnership with Springer ended in 2021, so we will continue to seek new supporters for this work.

1.5 Statisticians for Society

We will continue to connect small charitable organisations with volunteer statisticians who can help collect, analyse and present data. The Scoping Committee will continue to oversee the initiative and selection of projects for member volunteers. The Review Panel will continue to review the work of our volunteers to ensure it meets the needs of participating organisations.

The knowledge repository working group will continue to lead the development of statistical resources for the charity sector. We will also increase our outreach work in order to boost our exposure and participation by charitable organisations and member volunteers across all UK regions. We will also look at ways to involve RSS sections and local groups in promoting our volunteers' work and encouraging members to take part.

We will encourage RSS fellows to join charity boards through our partnership with Reach Volunteering and running introductory trustee workshops with industry experts.

We will continue to work closely with DataKind UK, the Operational Research Society and Pro Bono Economics to match our volunteers to opportunities that arise through them and share good practice with the sector. We will signpost to other volunteering opportunities, including with delivery partners such as Statistics without Borders.

Strategic Goal Two

For society to be more statistically literate, so that people's understanding of data, risk, and probability can inform their daily decision-making, leading to better outcomes.

2.1 Our approach

In 2022, we will have a new Vice-President for Education and Statistical Literacy. Along with the Education Policy Advisory Group, they will work to develop a new strategy for our work in this area.

Some of work in this area will be delivered with and through our partners, such as the Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education and the Council for Mathematical Science, both of which we co-fund.

We will seek to make the most of synergies between our education policy work and the Society's practical work on training and on accreditation – for example, by making policy recommendations on how people can build statistical skills throughout their careers.

We will also seek to make the most of teachers, including our e-Teacher members, as the most effective advocates for good statistical pedagogy and for curriculum and policy change.

2.2 In society

Covid-19 has shone a light on the importance of statistical literacy: there has been a confusing mass of information about the pandemic – including misinformation on various topics – and statistical skills have been essential both for navigating this and managing personal risk.

While there is an increased awareness about the importance of statistical literacy, it remains challenging to identify ways in which the Society can – outside our education work in schools – contribute to improving statistical literacy among the wider population. Part of the long-term answer is for school students to learn statistical skills in a wider range of subjects, especially humanities subjects, and ensure that statistical skills are not taught solely in mathematics. We will continue to campaign for this, but this alone will not improve statistical literacy among those who have already left school.

There is a role for the Society in using our platform and profile to explain statistical issues as they arise in the news. In 2021 we sought to do this with our Covid FAQs, and we will aim to produce more regular explainers of a wider range of statistics and data issues that are relevant to the news agenda.

2.3 In key professions

Our education work supports other parts of the RSS in their work on increasing statistical literacy in key professions for wider public benefit: from parliamentarians and policymakers, to journalists and teachers, together with partnering with relevant professional bodies.

We plan, by the end of 2021, to have conducted a survey of statistical knowledge among parliamentarians and GPs. A portion of our efforts in 2022 will be devoted to promoting this research and encouraging parliamentarians to improve their statistical knowledge, where our research has indicated that would be beneficial.

2.4 In education: policy and practice

We are working with EPAG to focus our policy priorities on education. Ideally, we would find areas where there is a synergy between our practical expertise in accreditation and training, and our campaigns, and ensure that we are not duplicating the efforts of other organisations.

One possible area is non-university routes to data science training: it is widely acknowledged that the existing data science apprenticeship and degree apprenticeship standards are currently inadequate and there are opportunities for us to help improve this situation.

It is also important for us to work with partnership organisations – such as the Royal Society and Joint Mathematics Council – who are seeking to improve the teaching of mathematics. We will continue to work with partners in this area to ensure that statistics is represented in this work – especially arguing for improvements in the way that statistics is taught as part of the mathematics A-Level.

2.5 Public engagement and outreach

We will aim to recruit a fourth cohort of statistical ambassadors from the fellowship. These early-career statisticians will be provided with the relevant training, so they are able to speak on behalf of the Society and promote the importance of statistical literacy to the wider public via the media and other communication channels. The criteria will be similar to previous years but with a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, given our prioritisation of this area.

Our ambassadors and other Society spokespeople will continue to engage, not only with the media but with the wider public by representing the Society at external events

2.6 Significance magazine

We will produce six print issues of Significance, in partnership with the American Statistical Association, the Statistical Society of Australia, and our publisher, Wiley.

Building on the 2020 review of our online offering, and the 2021 redesign of the website, we will implement a new content strategy for significancemagazine.com with the goal of increasing readership and identifying new regular contributors.

In response to feedback received from our April 2021 survey of RSS members, we will undertake a project to establish a “style guide” for data visualisations appearing in Significance articles, to improve the quality and readability of published graphics.

We will pursue opportunities to further promote the Significance brand through partnerships with other media outlets, whether specialist or general.

We will seek to increase the circulation of Significance to non-RSS members through targeted marketing strategies and will continue to promote a partnership package to allow other societies to offer Significance subscriptions to their members at a reduced cost.

We will look to develop the Significance commercial proposition by creating opportunities for organisations to support the print magazine and website through advertising and sponsorship.

The Significance editorial board will continue its efforts to better reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the RSS membership through the appointment of new board members.

Should circumstances allow, Significance will host/co-host social events and programmed sessions at the Joint Statistical Meetings and the RSS Annual Conference.

Strategic Goal Three

For a strong body of professional statisticians to maintain and develop the skills they need so that they can critically apply methodology, interpret results and communicate findings.

3.1 Strategic connection between Training, Accreditation and Education work

We will deepen the links between the Society's Accreditation and Training offerings, and our Education Policy work, to strengthen our ability to support statisticians and data scientists in their careers.

This will allow us to not only target new members and new corporate members, but through these collaborations we will work more closely with our existing members and corporate partners to identify their daily needs and any opportunities where we can help develop their training, professional development, and membership needs. This collaboration, along with the work of the Data Science Taskforce, will also play a key role in identifying new offerings within data science and how we can best serve our members in this area.

3.2 Diversity

We plan to build on the Society's work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) which will be supported from January 2022 by the appointment of an honorary officer for EDI. This appointment formalises this important element of RSS work: it recognises the importance of the work being undertaken and brings equivalence with other areas of the Society's remit.

During 2022 an EDI committee will be formed to support the honorary officer role. The honorary officer and committee will draw up an EDI remit and strategy, and with staff support will be responsible for its delivery.

A flagship EDI project will be to put in place a mentorship scheme aimed at supporting Data Scientists from underrepresented backgrounds, building on the success of the Women Breaking Barriers in Data Science at the 2021 Conference.

3.3 Professional Membership

In 2022 we will be building on the launch of new standards and a new category of membership by building closer relations with current and potential corporate partners in the hope of seeing more members going through the new professional pathway. We aim to increase membership at each level of professional membership and through additional engagement with student membership we hope for a higher rate of conversion from student membership to professional membership.

3.4 Accreditation

With the launch of the Quality Mark in 2021 and the extension of current accredited scheme until 2023 for those already accredited we hope to concentrate on searching for new courses and modules to be accredited. We are hopeful that we will be able to accredit commercial courses, an area previously the RSS has been unable to access due to restrictions within our own standards.

3.5 Training and professional development

In 2022 we will be working to get our sales of public and commissioned training courses back to pre-Covid 19 levels. We will be building on our experiences gained over 2020/21 to offer a public course programme of both face to face and virtual courses, to enable us to continue to supply training courses to delegates unable to travel to Errol Street.

Our strategy continues to deliver professional-level courses for our members and academics while offering courses for non-statisticians. We plan to leverage the new course accreditation process to promote our suitable training courses as a route to Data Analyst recognition.

With virtual courses on our public course programme, we will look to market our courses to a more international audience.

3.6 Data Science

We are currently recruiting a Programme Manager to help us achieve various goals within this strategy area. In 2022 we hope to build on those ideas that come out of the Data Science Task Force.

One of the targets is to formally launch a data science certificate in 2022. We will be working with other awarding bodies and learned societies to accredit both universities and individuals. We will be advertising this across the membership and mainly towards our corporate members.

We will also work on launching (i) a platform of data science case studies, (ii) a new journal of statistics and data science and (iii) a mentorship scheme for women in data science, subject to external partnership and funding. We will be guided in this work by the Society's sections (including the Data Science & AI Section, Data Ethics and Governance Section, and Women in Data Science and Statistics Special Interest Group) and by our Data Science Task Force.

Strategic Goal Four

For statistics as a discipline to thrive, so that methodology is advanced, applied and made accessible, leading to greater understanding of an increasingly complex world.

4.1 Academic affairs

Through the Academic Affairs Advisory Group (AAAG), we will continue to advocate for increased funding for research into statistics and the wider cross-discipline subjects. This includes looking at future frameworks. We have taken on core activities of the disbanded Committee of Professors of Statistics (COPS) by developing a network of leaders of statistical groups at universities and working with this group to identify areas where coordination or support for the community is necessary. We plan an annual survey of this group that will help us to build a clearer picture about the health of the discipline.

Universities have been hugely affected . We are working to build an understanding of how universities have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, both in terms of issues around teaching methods and student numbers as well as understanding how the pandemic has affected teaching and research staff, especially with in relation to equalities . Brexit also continues to be a

factor affecting universities – potentially impacting student numbers, funding and research collaborations. We will continue to monitor this situation and respond where needed.

We will continue to work with the Council for the Mathematical Sciences and the Campaign for Science and Engineering to liaise with research funding bodies about research funding for mathematical sciences including statistics.

The RSS will also work with UKRI to help them consider how to improve the assessment of data driven research, to ensure the right statistical skills in the research system, and to promote research integrity from a statistical point of view.

4.2 Journals

We will edit and produce four issues of Series A, five issues of Series B and five issues of Series C, aiming to include more than 4000 published pages across the series.

We expect to see a continued increase in the number of open access journal articles (free for anyone to read, generally with open access fees paid by authors/funders) published this year in line with demands by research funding bodies for greater open access to scholarly publications. This expansion will be achieved in part by a continued programme of producing special issues within series and themed virtual issues across the series. The initiative aims to attract high quality papers and serves to increase the journal's impact.

We will continue to support the editors, associate editors and referees in their efforts to minimise times between manuscript submission and the decision to authors. On acceptance of papers, we will work to improve times to early online publication in Wiley Online Library. There was a dip in performance during the latter part of 2020 and during 2021, partly due to the effects of the pandemic on the publisher's editorial and production teams as well as the major transition to delivering a full service.

The Discussion Meetings Committee will continue to develop the programme of flagship single-paper, multi-paper and extended Discussion meetings, drawing on the expertise and knowledge of its section representatives for timely and interesting topics. As in recent years, we plan to hold a multi-paper Discussion meeting at the RSS Annual Conference in Aberdeen. The papers read at Discussion Meetings will be published with the discussion in the relevant journal series. Where appropriate we will use the new Special Topic meeting format to organize meetings in response to rapidly unfolding events.

We will continue with our popular virtual Journal Webinar programme of events. The journals provide the Society with around a third of its income and is used to cross-subsidise its activities. Although the Society will benefit from an annual guaranteed payment from Wiley until the end of the current contract (2017-2022), total revenue will reduce again this year due mainly to a switch away from traditional journal subscriptions to open access 'transitional agreements'. During 2020/21 revenues were affected by the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic and constraints on institutional library budgets globally, which could continue to affect subscription renewals. Much of the subscription income is collected in dollars and fluctuations in exchange rates increase the uncertainties.

We will conclude contract renewal negotiations with Wiley at the beginning of 2022 and look ahead to a new publishing contract for the period 2023 to 2028 – whether this is with Wiley or not, and the precise type of publisher relationship we end up with, remains to be determined (we will also assess whether there is a case for the Society to self-publish). We will continue to review the

evolving subscription licenses and deals and how to add further value to existing content to sustain income. We will keep under review the decline in printed journals for institutions.

To meet the financial challenges whilst maintaining the series as attractive, high quality journals the editorial panels will continue to increase the number and diversity of their membership to handle submissions more easily and attract and encourage authors from diverse backgrounds to submit their papers. Their terms of reference will again be reviewed with the aim of increasing submission rates and further raising the journals' profile in data science and machine learning whilst maintaining standards in their more established fields of coverage.

An important review of the journal is planned for 2022. It will be informed by recommendations, some available at the start of 2022, from various working parties exploring the merits of an online open access journal for data science, and policy formulation covering the collection, access to and sharing of data and highlighting privacy and ethical issues. The results of the survey of members in mid-2021 on their views of the journal will also feed into the review and improvements implemented wherever possible.

We will agree and support the publisher's promotional and marketing campaigns and strategies with particular reference to open research, open access and the emerging economies.

4.3 Conference and events

Our annual international conference will take place in Aberdeen in September 2022. We will continue the streamed-by-topic format which has proved highly successful in recent years but will aim to keep the programme content fresh and innovate where appropriate. It will be the first year of a session exchange with the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and the keynote programme will include the first winner of the David G Kendall Award. We will review the experience of running a 'blended' conference in 2021 with both in-person and online attendees, and if appropriate create a similar online experience for those unable to travel to Aberdeen while ensuring it complements rather than replaces in-person attendance.

We will undertake planning for our 2023 conference and continue work on sourcing venues for 2024 and beyond.

It is now 10 years since the Conference Programme Board was first established to plan and deliver the annual conference programme - the Honorary Officer for Conferences & Events will undertake a review of the remit and composition of the board to ensure it is suited to the ever-evolving format of the conference.

We will continue to work with our committees of volunteers to deliver an events programme throughout the year, delivered through a combination of in-person, hybrid and online events. We will aim to generate income from all formats of events, while ensuring membership benefits through defined discounts (or free entry) for Fellows.

We will also continue to explore event partnerships to promote the Society to wider audiences and extending our geographical presence beyond London.

Again, building on our experience of moving events to an online format during 2020 and 2021, we will look to further develop content-sharing from events, including video and live streaming, with the aim of providing premium content for fellows, generating income from non-fellows and providing a better service to our non UK-based members.

4.4 Honours

In September, we presented our 2021 medals and prizes at the RSS international conference in Manchester.

We are seeking fresh nominations for the 2022 Honours, which will be presented at the Society's conference in September 2022. The honours up for award are the: Guy Medals in Gold, Silver and Bronze, Barnett Award, Honorary Fellowship and Research Prize. We will aim to increase the number of nominations, particularly in the junior categories and actively encourage diversity in those being nominated.

With the Bernoulli Society, we announced the inaugural winner of the David G. Kendall Award for Young Researchers in 2021. We will find ways to encourage nominations for the 2023 award which is open to researchers working in mathematical statistics.

4.5 Sections and Special Interest Groups

Sections and special interest groups will continue to hold events to support learning and development, sharing of research and methodologies, and networking. We will ensure that wherever possible we address the requirements of our sections and groups for online and hybrid delivery of events, including a clear policy on the running of hybrid events at Errol Street.

Staff will work with section and group officers to grow income from events and to deliver further membership benefits through defined discounts for fellows.

We will encourage sections to consider how they might respond to matters of public interest relating to their area of expertise issues. In 2022, sections will update their remit documents and we will encourage them to include activities that will contribute to the Society's strategic goals in addition to their programme of meetings.

With the introduction of the new contact database, integrated website and mailing system, we will continue our work towards the smoother running of sections and special interest groups. We will provide training and support that enable committees to familiarise themselves with the new system and engage with members, supporters and other sections.

We will encourage sharing of good practice through the biannual meetings of section and local group officers, induction webinars for officers, developing resources and supporting Council representatives in their role.

We will continue to encourage the creation of special interest groups in key areas not currently covered by existing sections.

Strategic Goal Five

For an engaged and energised membership and staff to work collaboratively with partner organisations and other stakeholders in meeting these goals, so that the Society can maximise its impact.

5.1 Membership strategy: promoting member engagement opportunities, member retention, communications and recruitment

In 2022 we will continue implementing the revised membership and professional affairs strategy and work plan. The primary focus of the revised plan is on engaging members to help achieve the Society's strategic goals. The key areas of work for the team will focus on engagement, recruitment, retention, communications and promoting professional affairs and accreditation.

We will continue to use the RSS journal series and Significance magazine to promote the discipline and engage with members and non-members. The newly implemented enhanced CRM and website is bedding down and providing improvements to membership administrative processes. We are using the CRM and a series of member surveys to better understand membership demographics, requirements/wants/needs. Data from these sources will help improve benefit design and delivery and enable us to utilise the collective intelligence of RSS members.

Member engagement

As a member-led organisation, the RSS draws heavily on its member volunteers to increase the scope and scale of our activities.

We will continue to grow engagement with our members as volunteers in our work through a range of opportunities, including serving on Council (our Trustee body), in Local Groups, Sections and other advisory and working groups. We will maintain Statisticians for Society and AIMS initiatives.

We will continue to profile our engaged members to demonstrate and recognise the impact and value they bring to the RSS.

Member retention

We will work to retain our membership in a variety of ways:

- Continuing to review member benefits
- Interrogating the exit survey to understand why ex-members have left
- Continuing our active programme of email engagement with new members
- Continuing our effective partnership with the telemarketing company Chord
- Renewal communications with members
- We aim to implement a hardship fund for members in financial difficulties
- Making use of the new CRM system to monitor member engagement
- Beginning a form of recognition for long service – for example in the form of a letter or certificate after 5, 10, 20 or more years of Fellowship

Communications

The RSS website saw a significant revamp in 2020 with a cleaner design and better navigation. We will work to keep the new website up-to-date and engaging, by continuing to publish statistics-related content of interest to members.

We also ensure we publish member news and regular updates on Society activities, events, volunteering opportunities and other notices that might be of interest to them. We also publish a long-running annual Christmas Quiz which has a small but very enthusiastic following.

This content will continue to be sent out to members via our fortnightly member newsletter, which also carries exclusive content such as messages from the CEO/president and highlighting the publisher/event/training discounts and free-to-read articles from our journals that come with membership. Member newsletters link back to news and events content on the main website, which is continually updated to reflect the Society's ongoing activities.

In addition, there are six conference-focused emails sent throughout the year to encourage members to take part, and four events-focused emails that are sent to members and non-members who have signed up for updates. The supplementary print newsletter, *Member Update*, will continue to be sent to fellows three times a year, with every other issue of *Significance*.

Recruitment

We will continue to seek out and recruit new Fellows. An important part of this will be by reconnecting with our corporate partners: understanding their learning and development needs, their staff structure and how many more people would qualify to join a level/type of membership who aren't already members.

RSS promotional talks and scheduled webinars are currently being scoped and implemented from September 2021 for our current corporates as an incentive to attract members of staff to join as a professional pathway member, focusing in promoting Data Analyst.

Analysing the data we hold in our new CRM database will also help us identify new potential corporate members, and organisations where we can recruit more Fellows. We aim to create a target list of organisations by identifying where there are members and non-members already engaged with RSS.

We will pilot webinars aimed at non-members who are already interacting with us at some level. The webinar will showcase the membership offering and how to join the RSS.

5.2 Local groups

We will continue to support our local groups to organise topical meetings that are attractive to a range of individuals and support their engagement with potential new members.

We will work with local groups to encourage their engagement in local and national outreach activities and initiatives such as Maths Week.

In 2022, we will support for local groups and assist them in engaging with the RSS and the wider membership. The RSS contact database, integrated website and mailing system will enable local groups to engage with local RSS members and the wider community, and we will make sure they have adequate support as they continue to familiarise themselves with the new system.

We will continue to encourage the formation of local groups in geographical areas not covered by existing local groups.

Strategic Goal Six

For the RSS to be a financially sustainable and well-run organisation, with effective governance and use of technology, so that it will grow in relevance, exert influence and have wider impact.

6.1 Budget

The 2022 budget is an operational surplus of £80,794. Income is budgeted to be £2.689m (2021: £2,303m) the increase is a return to pre-pandemic performance for our trading subsidiary, significant membership growth and a small deterioration in journals income as we are in the final year of our current contract. Expenditure is budgeted to be £2.609m (2021: £2.060m) as we return to more in-person events and increase resources to meet specific new strategic objectives in data science, training and accreditation. There are also significant overhead costs to repair and maintain our freehold building at Errol Street, London.

This operational budget excludes any changes in the value of our tangible assets, restricted funds, investments and the closed defined benefit pension scheme. It also excludes any activities that are funded directly from reserves which in 2022 includes £90k to undertake the external refurbishment of the building that occurs on a 7 year cycle.

6.2 Investments

The Society's investments are managed by Cazenove. In 2021 the Audit and Risk Committee undertook a review of our investment policy and in November 2021 Council resolved that we adopt a target growth assumption of CPI + 4% (an increase of 1%) and that the entire portfolio be moved within 12 months to Cazenove's Responsible Multi-Asset Fund (RMAF). The sustainable screening policy in the RMAF excludes areas of significant social or environmental harm to integrate environmental, social and governance factors within the investment selection process, across all asset classes. It supports the Paris Agreement on Climate Change by reducing total portfolio emissions and by purchasing high quality carbon offsets.

6.3 Funding, business development, marketing

For marketing our training courses our main routes will continue to be: our website; Google AdWords; NCRM; RSS Twitter account and Allstat emails. We will also seek to extend our marketing reach for training through paid advertising on LinkedIn and Reed and by using our policy and campaigning efforts, where possible, to enforce our accreditation and training offerings.

Our jobs board is advertised through our website and newsletter. We are investigating improving its visibility in search results and looking at the cost of paid Google ads to promote it. This may however prove to be prohibitively expensive due to the competition.

For venue hire which we hope to reopen in early 2022, depending on building works, our marketing strategy is based around increasing its visibility on the RSS website by putting a link on the landing page, and by promoting the venue through venue listing sites. We plan to place

the venue on three websites where we pay sales commission (usually 10%) and one where we pay a monthly fee.

Our pricing continues to be designed to be competitive compared to our competitors with discounts for charities and our corporate members.

We will identify and approach external sources of funding – especially charitable trusts and foundations – for any policy or campaigns work that is likely to be of interest to them. There are especially likely to be opportunities to support our education and statistical literacy work.

6.4 Building

2022 will see a significant increase in repair and maintenance costs at 12 Errol Street, as we conduct the regular external maintenance that takes place every seven years, deal with repairs delayed during lockdown and deal with a significant damp problem in the basement.

Given the changing use of our building, rising repair costs and falling building income, we will undertake a review of our Building strategy. This will take into consideration the Society's future building needs (for both events and staff working space), the current finances of the building (including income and maintenance costs), and the state of the commercial property market, working with a subgroup of Council, to come up with a recommendation for the Society's future building needs and how to proceed.

The Errol Street premises have been closed to members and for public use (training, room hire) since March 2020. It was reopened for staff use on a one-day-a-week basis whilst Government guidance allowed. The situation has been under constant review and plans drawn up for both the return of staff (blended home/RSS premises work models for most) and the reopening of the building for members and public use from late September 2021. The senior management team will continue to review the situation and adhere to guidelines and best practice.

Broader changes in working patterns and events (which have been accelerated by Covid-19 but are likely to persist) raise important questions about the future use of the building. We plan to undertake a review of the RSS property during 2022 to consider what our long-term position should be.

The building closure for much of 2020 and 2021 resulted in repairs/decoration proceeding at a slower pace than we would have liked. The 2021/22 budgets will include an increased amount for building maintenance, since the smaller amounts budgeted in previous years were consistently exceeded due to unexpected works. We will concentrate on essential refurbishments, aiming to gradually address the recommendations of reasonable adjustments to create a more user-friendly accessible building.

The main construction work to both the YMCA with whom we share a party wall, and the development of Finsbury Tower opposite the RSS has been completed, which will improve access and noise levels which have impacted our building and staff/visitor well-being during the last four years.

6.5 Venue hire

Following the closure of venue hire between March 2020 and September 2021 we are now looking to rebuild our venue hire business. With the improvements made to the facilities inside the building over the last few years and an increased staffing resources we believe we are in a good position to grow this business. As the Society moves to holding more meetings and events online, we are expecting increased spare capacity in the building that venue hire can utilise. To maximise this opportunity, we plan to focus our marketing in the areas where we had seen previous high levels of interest.

6.6 Information technology

The growing wealth of data in our CRM will allow us to improve our reporting and analysis. By segmenting our membership, we will be able to deliver relevant content based on interests, career stages and areas of specialisation. We will increase engagement via surveys, social media and online events. Analysing these and other touch points will reveal the most effective paths for recruiting new members and interacting with existing ones. We will continue developing CRM functionality to meet evolving business needs and increase the number of automated member communications.

We will use analytics to measure user journeys on our website and refine the structure and content to provide a streamlined experience. Our SEO and Google Adwords will be constantly tweaked to ensure our content is easy to find. We will improve accessibility for users with impairments.

The quality of the data we hold will be improved by focussing on classification, governance and retention policies. We will seek formal IT security certification by taking part in the government backed *Cyber Essentials* scheme. Key staff will be trained in GDPR and best practice embedded throughout the organisation. We will adapt to any new logistical and security issues that arise from hybrid working.

The design of our newsletters will be updated to align more closely with our website. The branding of the Significance website will also be refreshed.

We will create a series of short videos and animations explaining our various member types, how to join, apply for professional status and get involved in the wider community.

We will continue supporting RSS groups with their newsletters and online events; investment in lighting and video mixing equipment will improve the quality of our filming and live streams.

6.7 Staffing, human resources, benefits, pensions

We plan to hire a Data Science programme manager at the start of the year, to help develop our emerging work in this area. During Q1 2022 we will undertake a salary benchmarking exercise in order to monitor the compensation we offer to staff to ensure that it is competitive in the wider market.

6.8 Pension scheme

The Society's closed defined benefit pension scheme needs to be fully funded. The value of the assets and liabilities are valued every three years (the triennial valuation), most recently at 31 December 2020. This latest valuation identified a deficit, therefore during 2022 the Society will need to agree a payment plan for funding the deficit. These payments are likely to be greater than currently and be required for longer.

6.8 Governance

The Society's main governance committees will meet as scheduled in 2022. We expect three Council meetings, three Executive Committee meetings, and three Audit & Risk Committee meetings. The Directors of our trading subsidiary RSS (Services) Ltd. will meet twice.

We will produce a short note of our annual achievements to highlight the successes of the Society in a stimulating and accessible way.

Elections to Council will take place through electronic ballot.

6.9 Management information

The RSS Council now reviews a management information dashboard at each of its meetings. The Senior Management Team meets weekly, and regularly reviews management information as appropriate – e.g. monthly budget projections; monthly membership numbers etc.

6.10 RSS Green Group

During lockdown the staff Green Group has been dormant, since most of the issues it was looking at were related to office-based working. As we move back to this way of working, the Green Group will seek to ensure that some of the more sustainable practices developed over lockdown (eg paperless systems) are maintained while continuing to identify other ways in which the Society can lessen its environmental impact.