

# Activity Plan 2023

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 strategic plan. This document details the work which is scheduled to take place during 2023.

## Overview of 2023

2023 will be a year of change and of growth for the Society, as we seek to capitalise on the growing awareness of the importance of statistics to society. In spite of challenging economic conditions, we will be continuing with our regular activities with and for members, launching and developing a range of new offerings, and developing the Society's strategy to ensure its future success.

We will continue to invest in our activities, to deepen our impact and 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.

We launched the new Data Science: Real World Data Science, an online platform of resources for data scientists at the end of 2022 and plan to launch RSS Data Science, a new peer-reviewed journal. We will continue to grow the new Alliance for Data Science Professionals, welcoming new members to the group. 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.

Working with our newly appointed Honorary Officer for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), we will develop new initiatives to promote EDI, and to mainstream EDI in the Society's general business. These include research on new pathways into data and statistical careers, and a new mentorship platform.

We will also undertake three important exercises related to the long-term strategy of the Society:

- A new five-year strategic plan, covering the period 2023-2028. This will be carried out in consultation with our Sections, Advisory Groups, Local Groups, Special Interest Groups, and the membership at large, and will identify key areas for development in the years to come.
- A review of the Society's journals, to ensure that they meet the needs of the statistical and data science communities, in light of widespread changes to the world of academic publishing.
- Continuing the work of the Society's Building Task Force to identify a sustainable plan for the Society's headquarters, that delivers the Society's mission at an affordable cost.

In addition, we will seek to develop the Society's fundraising efforts, building on our success at generating grant income in 2022, and to expand our conferences and events activities.

The rest of this document sets out the Society's planned activities in more detail, under the six headings of the 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 2023, 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 cost-of-living crisis will continue to be 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, which will be hearing evidence in 2023. We will promote the lessons drawn from the four Covid Evidence Sessions that we held in 2022 as well as engaging broadly with our membership to ensure that our submission represents the range of opinion.

**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. Given the continuing focus on economic questions in government and the media, we will look to strengthen our engagement on this topic, working with members with an interest in the subject.

**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 used 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 is the responsibility of the recently 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 Society, 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 look to capitalise further on the increasing relevance statistics has had during the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath. While Covid-19 has become less of a focus for our externally facing work, the public inquiries bring us a good opportunity to again promote our key policy messages around the statistical issues of the pandemic. We will also concentrate more of our efforts on communicating our other campaign priorities as set out by the CAG. While also continuing to promote the Society's core policy messages on the importance of data in decision-making, when opportune moments arise in the news agenda.

With our spokespeople and statistical ambassadors, we continue to work closely with journalists, to promote the work of the Society and ensure statistics and data are used responsibly in the media.

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 actively look for event partners where we can, to ensure such events have maximum reach and resource.

### **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.

### **1.4 African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS)**

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 2023, we will take forward the new strategy on education and statistical literacy that has been developed by our Vice-President for Education and Statistical Literacy with the Education Policy Advisory Group.

We are developing work in the short-term on projects to support statistical literacy. Our focus is on identifying groups where there is a specific need and desire to improve statistical literacy and making targeted interventions that will help meet that need.

Our other objectives are: i) in the medium-term, to improve the teaching of statistics as part of mathematics courses in schools through engaging with and supporting maths teachers and ii) in the longer-term, to influence the curriculum to improve the teaching of statistics.

We will continue to deliver work in this area with and through our partners, such as the Royal Society's 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 and we will explore ways to do this.

## **2.3 In key professions**

It is important that our statistical literacy work looks at key professions as well as schools and the general public. Statistics arises in a wide range of professions and a key part of our work lies in supporting professionals in other fields who are using statistics to do so in the most effective way that they can: from parliamentarians and policymakers, to journalists, doctors, and members of the legal profession.

In 2022 we conducted a survey of MPs intended to help us gauge the level of statistical literacy among parliamentarians, and we also released a report intended to support members of the legal profession handle statistical issues related to suspected medical malpractice. We will continue in 2023 to seek opportunities to engage with partners and improve statistical literacy in other fields.

## **2.4 In education: policy and practice**

We continue to focus on identifying synergies between our practical expertise in accreditation and training, and our campaigns, and ensure that we are not duplicating the efforts of other organisations.

We are planning to produce a report on non-university routes to data science training – focusing on data technician apprenticeships. 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**

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. We are looking to recruit a new cohort of ambassadors if funding can be obtained.

Our social media presence continues to grow and we look for opportunities to capitalise on this by producing educational materials, such as explainers either in blog or video form, to promote on our various accounts.

## **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 new publisher Oxford University Press (OUP). We will work with OUP to ensure a smooth transition from former publisher Wiley, after which we will explore publication development opportunities with OUP.

We will continue and complete development of the redesign of the [www.significancemagazine.com](http://www.significancemagazine.com) website, which will include a new content strategy with the goal of increasing readership and identifying new regular contributors.

We will conclude our project to establish a “style guide” for data visualisations appearing in Significance articles, to improve the quality and readability of published graphics.

We will review and revive the existing Significance podcast project, either with the support of a third party or independently.

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 Society membership through the appointment of new board members.

Significance will host/co-host social events and programmed sessions at the Joint Statistical Meetings and the Society 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**

During 2022 Eugenie Hunsicker was appointed as the inaugural RSS Honorary Officer for EDI. Her remit is to work with a committee which will coordinate EDI activities to ensure that we understand the diversity of our membership and enable to promote the impactful work achieved by members in this area.

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 2023 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.

### **3.3 Professional Membership**

In 2023 we will continue to build 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 Society has been unable to access due to restrictions within our own standards.



### **3.5 Training and professional development**

In 2023 we will be working to continue to grow our sales of public and commissioned training courses. We will be expanding our catalogue of courses and increasing the number of deliveries of other courses to increase sales. We will also be increasing the number of courses we deliver virtually as we have found these courses to be both popular with customers and more profitable. 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.

### **3.6 Data Science**

We are currently recruiting a Programme Manager to help us achieve various goals within this strategy area. In 2023 we hope to build on those ideas that come out of the Data Science Task Force.

Following the successful launch of the Advanced Data Science Professional certificate in 2022 as planned, we will develop and implement a marketing plan to gain more applicants and in turn, members. We will continue working with the Alliance to gain new partners, jointly market the standards and introduce both a graduate-level certificate, as well as university accreditation standards. 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.

Building on the planning and development of the Data Science Platform in 2022, in 2023 we will roll out the Platform's content offering with a focus on case studies, exercises, explainers, and advice-driven material.

Guided by our editorial board, and with input from relevant RSS sections and other stakeholders, content will be commissioned according to key themes and topics that have been identified as timely and of vital interest to the data science community.

To widen the Platform's audience and its pool of potential contributors, we will look to partner with other creators in the data science space and pursue opportunities for cross-promotion of content. Similarly, we look to develop the brand profile of the Data Science Platform by media-partnering various events and activities, both online and in-person.

We will continue to pursue funding from a range of external partners to ensure we have the resources necessary to sustain and grow the Data Science Platform.

## 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 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 conduct an annual survey of this group that is helping us to build a clearer picture about the health of the discipline. In particular, we will continue to monitor and support the ability of Universities to train the next generation of academic and professional statisticians.

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

We will continue to work with the CMS more broadly in its initiatives to maintain the health of the Mathematical Sciences generally in UK Universities. We will also engage with CMS as it develops a prototype National Academy for Mathematical Sciences, to ensure that the development of the academy serves the best interests of the Statistics community.

The Society 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

January 2023 marks the launch of the new publishing contract with OUP more than 30 years with Wiley. The conclusion and bedding in of the substantial transfer of all journal operations will take place during the first quarter when we will produce the first issues of Series A, B and C.

We will take the opportunity provided by the change in publisher and ongoing changes in academic publishing to reassess journal strategy and development. Engaging with our OUP partners, journal editors and other stakeholders we will seek to improve our offering and identify ways to ensure the journal's future sustainability in an increasingly open science publishing landscape.

A review of the journal during 2023 will be key to informing journal development plans. As well as identifying improvements to the series, the plan will include important preparations for the introduction of a new open access data science journal with prospective launch at the 2023 annual conference.

We will support marketing and promotional plans designed with our new publisher to underpin journal development and the potential of the journals to increase revenues in a difficult economic climate whilst maintaining its high-quality standing.

By the end of the year, we aim to have included at least 4000 pages across the series and anticipate an increase in the proportion of journal articles published open access. The initiative to attract high quality papers by producing special issues within series and themed virtual issues across the series will again have a prominent place in editorial decisions.

We will again support the editors to increase the number and diversity of their membership. This is an important means of attracting and encouraging authors from diverse backgrounds and at different stages of their research careers to submit their papers.

The new journal pages on OUP's Oxford Academic website will undergo a content refresh during the year to ensure that they better meet the needs of authors, editors, our members and other stakeholders in the journal community.

The Discussion Meetings Committee (DMC) will continue to offer a programme of meetings presenting flagship single-paper and multi-paper discussion meetings, drawing on the expertise and knowledge of section and editorial representatives for timely and engaging topics. As in recent years, we will hold a multi-paper Discussion meeting at the Society Annual Conference in Harrogate; the topic, this year, is Machine Learning.

A clear and comprehensive communications drive using available channels will continue throughout the year to support and inform authors, members and other stakeholders of changes and new initiatives.

#### **4.3 Conference and events**

Our annual international conference will take place in Harrogate in September 2023. We will continue with the successful mix of keynote talks, invited topic sessions, professional development workshops, contributed and rapid-fire talks, and poster presentations. In particular, we will ensure that there continues to be a strong professional development stream, and that the exhibition continues to grow back to the levels seen in 2018 and 2019. A review in the autumn of 2022 will determine whether we continue with the 'blended' approach to delivering conference with both in-person and online attendees.

We will undertake planning for our 2024 conference in Brighton and continue work on sourcing venues for 2025 and beyond. We will review the overall branding and messaging for the conference ahead of planning the 2024 conference and also investigate what legacy activities arising from the conference may involve.

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 over the past couple of years, 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 Society international conference in Manchester.

We are seeking fresh nominations for the 2023 Honours, which will be presented at the Society's conference in September 2023. 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.

Staff will work with section and group officers to grow income from both in-person and online events and to deliver 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 2023, 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 2023 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 Society journal series and Significance magazine to promote the discipline and engage with members and non-members. The newly implemented enhanced Customer Relationship Management platform (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 Society 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 Society.

#### **Member retention**

We will continue to work to retain our membership through communications and engagement with members, effective use of the CRM system and associated reporting, and the introduction of campaigns to recognise long service and win back lapsed members.

We will continue to send – and regularly review – a series of email communications to new members, and to engage telemarketing company Chord to make telephone calls to new fellows in months four and nine of their first year of membership. Chord will also continue their 'unpaid member' campaign on our behalf, calling existing members who have not renewed within two to three months of the due date; whereas previously this campaign has focused solely on the bulk of members due to renew in January, in 2023, this will be extended to all members renewing throughout the year (including those who renew on the anniversary of joining), providing better

engagement with our newer members. All paying members will also continue to receive a series of automated renewal communications via the CRM.

We will make use of the CRM system to monitor member engagement and continue to track membership trends. We will continue to survey those whose membership has been cancelled or lapsed, and to interrogate the survey results to understand the reasons why. We will also continue reviewing member benefits to assess their relevance and value to members.

In 2023 we will continue our campaign to invite lapsed members to re-join the Society, and introduce a new email campaign to acknowledge and appreciate members' long-service, offering digital badges for those who have been members for five, ten, twenty or more years of fellowship.

## **Communications**

The Society 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* - which focuses on member news, profiles and benefits – will continue to be sent to fellows three times a year, with every other issue of Significance.

## **Recruitment**

### **Corporates**

We will continue to seek out and recruit new Fellows across our recruitment and retention of corporate partners. Re-establishing relationships with our current partners has been successful in terms of understanding their learning and development needs, their staff structure and how many more people would qualify to join a level/type of membership who are not currently members. This will continue to be a priority as their needs develop and we will continue to ensure the professional pathways are supported by the employer, to help drive more growth in this area.

RSS promotional talks and scheduled webinars are currently being scoped and implemented from October 2022 into 2023 for our current corporates as an incentive to attract members of staff to join as a professional pathway member, and also promote the Data Science work the Society is developing, as well as our training courses and getting involved in other areas of the Society.

We will continue to analyse the CRM data and continually create a target list of organisations by identifying where there are members and non-members already engaged with RSS. Reporting

and spotting trends on the joiners and leavers through our corporate partners; engagement with RSS and how they use our services is also a focus for 2023 to help steer our activities with each partner moving forward.

We are also scoping a focus group to help steer how we develop the corporate scheme into an attractive package for the private sector. This should help make our corporate package more personal and relevant to organisations with data/stats professionals at the heart of their decision making and data strategies.

### Individuals

Webinars aimed at non-members who are already interacting with us at some level in 2022 have been successful, both in attendance and demand, so these will continue quarterly in 2023. These webinars showcase the membership offering and how to join the Society, and we will trial including guest speakers/live case studies in these webinars to help promote the Society and its offering.

We also aim to be more present on social media channels – we are currently trailing a paid LinkedIn campaign and to promote corporate membership to get our name and message to a wider audience and promote the scheme. We hope to do a paid membership ‘join us’ specific campaign on Facebook and Twitter to promote our membership awards in 2023.

With face-to-face events on the rise, we will focus our efforts to sponsor and be present at data and stats specific conferences and events. We will also look to be present at universities and higher education institutions’ fairs and conferences to increase our e-Student member base to help build a healthy pipeline of paid members.

### **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 2023, we will support for local groups and assist them in engaging with the Society and the wider membership. The Society 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 Society 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

Add 2023 budget when agreed. Planning for a £200k operational deficit budget.

### 6.2 Investments

The Society's investments are managed by Cazenove. 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 to Cazenove's Responsible Multi-Asset Fund (RMAF). This was achieved in March 2022. 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 we reopen in early 2022, depending on building works, our marketing strategy is based around increasing its visibility on the Society 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

Following a building strategy review Council will decide this year on the future of Errol Street. That decision on whether to sell the building or refurbish it will have a major effect on any changes to the building. While waiting this decision only essential projects have been undertaken resulting in a number of larger maintenance projects, such as the external maintenance of the building being



put on hold and if we are to continue to occupy the building going forward will need to be undertaken in 2023.

Currently the building is only open to staff and the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays plus additional days for specific events. The senior management team will continue to review the situation and adhere to guidelines and best practice to create a safe and accessible space.

### **6.5 Venue hire**

In 2023 we will continue to promote our venue hire business in an attempt to grow our income from this activity. Our main marketing activity will be focused on external venue hire websites. Our level of room availability will be dependent on the Society's use of the building and the decisions taken on the future of Errol Street.

### **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**

A salary benchmarking exercise took place during 2022 which helped us monitor the compensation we offer to staff to ensure that RSS salaries remain competitive in the wider market. 2023 will be a challenging year as cost-of-living increases are currently high at a point when we wish to retain experiences and talented staff members. The senior management team will work to ensure that efficiencies are made where necessary but that staff are supported in their work and that we make investments by recruiting in key work areas.

### **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 agreed 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 will welcome a new President on January 1 2023; the new President will conclude their term in office on December 31 2024.

In 2023 the Council will seek to form a new President Nominating Committee that will begin the search for the 2025-26 President.

The Society's main governance committees will meet as scheduled in 2023. We expect three Council meetings, four Executive Committee meetings (including one closed Committee), 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 Society 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 (e.g. paperless systems) are maintained while continuing to identify other ways in which the Society can lessen its environmental impact. The Green Group will also advise on environment issues relating to the future of 12 Errol Street.