

**MINUTES OF THE SEGH BOARD MEETING HELD ON 22nd APRIL 2026 AT 12:00
(LONDON, UK) ON ZOOM**

Agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Matters arising from the last Minutes
4. Report from Chair
5. Report on ECR matters
6. Report on Fellows' Matters
7. Report on Membership
8. Report on Finance
9. Updates on Ljubljana 2026
10. Reports from the Regions
11. Updates on the website/social media
12. Report on EGAH
13. AOB

Attendance:

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. J Entwistle | 7. O Humphrey | 13. A Argyraki |
| 2. F Ajayi | 8. A Hursthouse | 14. C Monteiro |
| 3. A Olatunji | 9. F Onyangore | 15. O Morton-Bermea |
| 4. M Gabersek | 10. M Abdou | 16. K Torrance |
| 5. M Barbieri | 11. M Watts | 17. M Hashmi |
| 6. G Gibson | 12. D Purchase | 18. J Olajide-Kayode |

The meeting commenced at 12:05 (London), as JE welcomed all. The meeting Agenda was uploaded for members to preview.

1. Apologies were received from:

- (i) Xia Huo

2. The Minutes of the last meeting had been sent to members earlier, and was adopted as a correct representation of what transpired in the last meeting.

3. (a) AA had sent the list of beneficiaries of the one-year free membership from the ISCMGEH – South Asia to KT; who had added them to the membership list. JE also reported that she had sent them all an email welcoming them to the Society. AA and OH had also organised the upload of the Keynote Talks to the SEGH website.

(b) MA and CM presented the draft version of the Newsletter. They reported that though only a few responses were received to the request for content, some content was taken from the SEGH

website to beef up the Newsletter. The sections in the Newsletter were to include: *Editorial, news on SEGH Presidency change, ECR Spotlight, SEGH “Ljubljana” 2026, News from the Regions, Research Highlights, a link to join the Society*. CM suggested that constant messages should be sent to the membership requesting for information/content for the Newsletter. JE agreed that this was a good idea, and encouraged Board members to ensure that news on activities from the Regions are promoted in the Newsletter.

Action: JO to periodically send a request to the membership for information/content for the Newsletter (Status: Ongoing).

(c) On the report from the Belfast 2025 Conference, JE stated that AA had reached out to Dan Middleton again to send it in, as well as a (post) Conference blog. As neither the Report nor the Blog had been received, the Board agreed give the matter a rest.

(d) On finalising the keynote Speakers for Ljubljana 2026, and liaising with XH on having a session during the conference, MG responded that the list of Keynote Speakers had been put on the website. He also added that he had received feedback from XH on the Session; and that there would be a number of delegates from China.

(e) Suggestions for improvement of the SNAPP system had been sent by GG to MW, and had been forwarded to Springer. MW had also sent the SI template to MG.

(f) JE did a run-through of the *SEGH 2027-2031 Strategic Plan* template; around which the World Café would be framed. The goals in the Plan are to be deliberated upon at the World Café. She enjoined members to go through the template and make more suggestions before the end of May.

Action: Board members to go through the Strategic Plan and make suggestions on how the goals can be achieved/improved (Status: Ongoing).

4. (a) JE had circulated a Request for Association with SEGH from Association of Applied Geochemists (AAG). She stated that the term “Affiliation” was better than “Association” as used in the request – with an affiliation, both bodies would maintain autonomy, while leveraging on each other’s network for mutual benefit. GG agreed with the change in terminology. Amongst the terms in the proposal were *contribution to each other’s Newsletters, posting one webinar annually on each other’s websites, co-organising local seminars/workshops and providing one full delegate pass for each Society to promote its activities at conferences*. AH added that there had been a negotiation with AAG many years ago, and believes an affiliation now could help raise the profile of SEGH. While it was agreed that the Terms of the Affiliation needed modification, the general consensus was that affiliation with the AAG was a good idea.

Action: JE to make adjustments to the Terms of the Agreement with AAG; send to GG and AH, and revert to AAG that the Board is supportive of an Affiliation (Status: Ongoing).

(b) The IUGS reached out to the Society to be involved in the IGC 2028, under the theme of *Medical Geology*. JE indicated the Society’s interest in doing this, but suggested that the theme be modified to *Geosciences and Public Health* or *GeoHealth*.

5. In addition to the ECR-related updates given for the Newsletter, MA stated that efforts are continuing to rally the ECRs on the ECR LinkedIn group, adding that Seminars and other Society activities are also publicised there. CM noted that the feedback from the LinkedIn group is often poor, and that the Society needs to come up with a better strategy to reach out to and engage the ECR group. MA suggested that the World Café could be promoted in the Newsletter; that a Survey could be done about it to pique the interest of potential delegates (particularly ECRs) and even those who wouldn't be attending the conference physically. JE opined that this was a good idea and asked MA and CM to design the Survey, adding she would highlight the World Café element of the *Strategic Plan* in her Editorial. She also agreed that the Survey might help resolve the long-standing disconnect between what the ECRs *really* need the Fellows to help them with, and how they can key in better into the SEGH Strategic Plan. In CM's opinion, besides posting the Survey on the ECR LinkedIn page, it could be sent directly to their emails.

Action: MA and CM to design a Survey about the World Café (Status: Ongoing).

6. GG's efforts/insistence had finally paid off, as Fellows' Talks had been scheduled through to the end of 2026. She also added that the attendance at the live Talks is improving; with the videos posted on the website for those who are not able to attend the Talks live to access. She added that the Society is looking to increase the number of Associate Fellows, and asked for suggestions on suitable candidates from members of the Board. JE appreciated the efforts put in by GG to keep the Board and Fellows up to date on Fellows' matters.

Action: Members of the Board to suggest names of suitable candidates for Associate Fellow to GG (Status: Ongoing).

7. JO reported that although the Society could do better, there was a slight improvement in the number of active members compared to the last quarter of 2025. KT added that subscription renewals through Stripe was now active, improving the *maintenance* of members through the year. For those who register for the Conference (and who will receive one year membership), KT opined that their membership would be better managed if it starts from the day they registered (and not when the Conference starts/ends). KT asked MG to help compile the names of Conference delegates who pay registration fees directly through bank transfers. For individuals with active memberships who register for the Conference, KT said that a manual adjustment would be done for their membership validity.

8. On Finances, KT uploaded the end-of-year statement which summarised the transactions in the financial year (1 April – 31 March). It also compared the bank balances from the last three years. The opening balance as at 1 April 2025 was GBP 7,905.92, as against GBP 7,262.13 and GBP 6,305.42 respectively, at the same time in 2024 and 2023. The account balances as at 31 March in 2026, 2025 and 2024 were GBP 20,063.27, GBP 7,905.92 and GBP 7,264.13, respectively. He however, noted that the account balance for 2026 included the IUGS Grant (ca. GBP 13,714.47) to be paid out for SEGH "Ljubljana 2026". This meant that the effective balance as at 31 March 2026 was GBP 6,348.80. KT noted that the reduced bank balance, compared to

the previous years, was due to a down-dip in membership as the Belfast Conference fell short of the expectation, especially of membership addition to the Society.

9. MG reported that Abstract submission for the Conference had closed, with 106 Abstracts received, even though some late entries were still expected. On the ECRs that were granted bursaries to travel to Ljubljana, MG stated that quite a number of them had challenges getting visas to Slovenia. While some were close to completing the process, none had confirmed getting the visa yet as at the day of the meeting; which was the deadline set for feedback from the beneficiaries. MG suggested that more time should be given to those who already had interview dates in May, and the Board agreed that the deadline for feedback from the ECRs should be extended till the end of May.

JE reminded all that there had been some suggestions on re-allocating the IUGS Grant should the ECRs be unable to utilise them. One of the ideas was the *BGS Research Development in Africa* (Writing Workshop) programme focused on Kenya, but which could be broadened to include other African countries (i.e. Zambia and Nigeria). MW agreed that this was doable; with in-person sessions run in Kenya while virtual sessions could be done at another hub. He added that recruitment for the Workshop should start in May. JE added that ECRs and Senior Researchers (as resource persons) could be funded to attend the Programme in any of the hubs. MG also asked if part of the IUGS fund could be used for the Field Trip, and JE and JO responded that it could be used to sponsor ECRs to attend the Field Trip. The total amount that would be available to fund both ideas would be known at the expiration of the extended deadline given to the ECRs to obtain their visas. Another idea was to use part of the funding to sponsor Poster presentations for ECRs at the 2026 conference; which would give more of them the ability to present at the conference. MG replied that work was ongoing on the modalities for this, and he would revert.

Additionally, MG reported that Registration for the Conference is open, and work had begun on preparation of the Conference Special Issue. He also stated that there is now a registration category for Retired members, which is the same fee as students/LMIC delegates.

Actions: (i) MG to update ECRs that the deadline for feedback on visa application had been extended till end of May (Status: Ongoing), (ii) The Board agreed that the rest of the IUGS Grant should be used in support of setting up another hub for the *BGS Research Development in Africa* Workshop, (iii) MG to revert on modalities for having online Poster presentations at the Conference (Status: Ongoing), (iv) JO to update the membership that Registration for “Ljubljana 2026” is open (Status: Done).

10. FO reported that there are plans underway to form a network of Middle- and Early Career Researchers/Faculty members. She added that a Conference is also being planned for December in the University of Kabanga, during which it is hoped that the visibility of SEGH in Kenya and East Africa in general, can be improved. JE advised that SEGH and the BGS should be involved in the planning/execution of the Conference, offering support and collaboration.

JO stated that two members of the SEGH (i.e. AO and *Maryam Akinsanya* – the SEGH-IUGS Liaison) facilitated sessions on Sampling Protocol and Sample Preparation/Analysis, respectively, in the February webinar of the Nigerian Chapter of International Medical Geology

Association. A session of the webinar was dedicated to promoting SEGH – its objectives, membership cadres, activities and how to join, etc. JO stated that the future series of the webinar could be co-batched with SEGH; where one/more of the Board members could give the talks and at the same time, promote the visibility of SEGH. JE advised that a short article on this should be prepared for the Newsletter.

For the Americas, OM said that she would get students/ECRs to write some articles for the Newsletter on the work her delegate group to Belfast were doing with the students/ECRs.

AA also reported that Rob Finkleman had stated that preparations had begun for the Latin America online Student Conference, and advised OM to reach out to him. A report on the annual sampling training herself and Alecos Demetriades had with students in Athens had already been captured in the Newsletter.

Actions: (i) FO to liaise with JE and MW on how SEGH and BGS can be involved in the Conference being planned for December in Kenya (Status: Ongoing), (ii) JO to prepare a short article on the talks delivered by SEGH members at the webinar of the Nigerian Chapter of IMGA (Status: Done), (iii) OM to get students to write some articles for the Newsletter (Status: Ongoing).

11. OH noted that there was a spike of 500+ views from the Americas on 1 February 2026, stating that he would keep an eye on it to find out why. The gender spread of visitors to the website remained balanced, and the most active countries were UK, India, Nigeria, China and Greece. Most visitors were still within the 18-34 age group. The most visited pages were the *Home Page, SEGH2026, Join SEGH, SEGHLive Videos and EGAH*. As average engagement time had reduced to about 1 minute, OH enjoined all Board members to write articles/blogs for the website.

12. DP stated that in the first quarter of 2026, 1,069 manuscripts had been received, and 237 of them accepted with a 102-day TAT. She added that the journal had experienced exponential growth as in 2022, the *submission : acceptance : TAT* ratio was 1200 : 240 : 125 while in 2025, it was 3200 : 607 : 115. 4 *super* Editors had now been engaged, which had greatly improved the journal's performance. DP also stated that the *Author Satisfaction Survey* for the journal had been received from Springer, with EGAH scoring 93% (above the Springer cut off of 84%); showing that most authors were happy with their experience. On *Editorial Advice/Comments* throughout the review process to improve manuscripts, EGAH scored 97%. 95% of authors also either strongly agreed or agreed that the peer review process was well handled.

JE expressed satisfaction on behalf of the Board at the excellent statistics/results that EGAH had achieved. She noted the work done by OH in sending regular emails/notifications about the journal to Editors and Reviewers.

GG narrated an experience she had reviewing a paper for another journal where, though the Abstract was good, the rest of the entire manuscript had been generated with AI. She asked DP if EGAH had any mechanism in place to prevent this. DP responded that she would bring this to the attention of Springer's *Integrity Group*.

Action: DP to ask Springer's *Integrity Group* about mechanism for detecting/sanctioning AI-generated manuscripts (Status: Ongoing).

13. (i) The annual International Students' Conference on Medical Geology and Environmental Health (ISCMGEH) – Latin America edition, had already been discussed by AA and OM.

(ii) GG pointed out the need to disallow the use of AI to record the Fellows' Talks, so that SEGH resource materials are not being recycled and re-used. She suggested that a policy on this should be worked out, which OH can put on the website.

Action: JE to work on developing a policy on AI recordings (for webinars, meetings, etc), which is to be put on the website (Status: Ongoing).

All members were thanked for their time and contributions by JE. The meeting was unanimously adjourned and ended at 13:50pm (London).