Chairman: Norman Chipakupaku  President
Mike Ross  Vice President
Heather Kay  Secretary

There were 44 people in attendance and 4 via online access, therefore the AGM was declared quorate.

Norman Chipakupaku, Watt Club President, welcomed everyone to the meeting and to Panmure House, the Edinburgh home of Adam Smith.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting, held on 22 February 2018, were approved as a fair record. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

*The 2017 AGM minutes were approved by the meeting.*

2. UPDATE FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Norman Chipakupaku advised the meeting that it had been a busy year for the Watt Club. Active clubs were coming on board in China and Texas and a new branch established in Zambia. Other branches were undergoing regeneration, such as Dubai and London. Three new Co-Opted Council members had been appointed. Council members had attended graduation ceremonies to represent the Watt Club. The President also welcomed Professor Heather McGregor who was going to give a talk immediately following the AGM.

3. FINANCE

Mike Ross, Vice President presented the accounts for 2017/18 and the budget for 2018/19. The Watt Club receive a subvention of £15k per annum. Mike highlighted two areas from the 2017/18 accounts;

1) There was no allocation of election costs in the 2017/18 budget. This was because the election had moved in the calendar and would therefore be paid from the 2018/19 budget. Election costs represent a significant percentage of expenditure and Council are currently looking at ways in which this could be reduced.

2) In previous years there has been a larger expenditure on Watt Club Medals in order to maintain stock. Due to a mis-communication this has not occurred in the 2017/18 cycle and therefore this money has not been spent.

The budget surplus from 2017/18 has been donated to the Annual Fund. Mike advised the meeting that it is not the intention of Council to have a surplus of funds. Council would prefer to see funds allocated to support branches.

*The financial accounts were approved by the meeting.*

The Vice President confirmed that the subvention had been set by the University at £15k and this was the third year of operation. Previously the sum had fluctuated proportional to the number of
students. A question was asked regarding taxes and Mike confirmed that all tax affairs are handled by the finance department of the University and paid for on our behalf by the University.

There had been discussion during the 2017 AGM regarding whether an approach should be made to the University for an increase of funds. If Council were to request more money, what should it be spent on? There must be a clear programme of expenditure before approaching the University. Branches are entitled to apply to Council for funding but branches should not be dependant upon central funding and should ultimately be self funding. There is currently an annual cycle of Branch funding, but this is possibly not the most efficient use of resources. Going forward this should be regarded as Watt Club Development Funding which would enable a longer term and more strategic approach.

A question was raised regarding the recent decision by Glasgow University to introduce a Repatriation Fund whereby proceeds from sugar plantation families would be returned to families rather than used by the University. Nuala Boyle, Vice Principal advised that the recent Freedom of Information Act had raised questions regarding sources of funding however, Heriot-Watt University has still to work through this process.

4. UPDATE FROM ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Nuala Boyle gave a report on behalf of the Development and Alumni Office (DAO). This year has seen success for many global Watt Clubs and the development of new clubs. Local Watt Clubs can be viewed as opportunities for alumni to get involved in Non-Executive type roles and gain leadership experience. DAO are continually looking at ways to bring alumni back into the University, this can lead to mentoring and coaching, internships, career placements and other opportunities. DAO are also keen to develop a sense of “giving back” by encouraging alumni to take on volunteer positions on Council, serve on Court, etc. Through the Annual Fund “giving back” can include access bursaries and financial awards. The Edinburgh Business School (EBS) has a very successful model which uses alumni to promote student recruitment.

DAO work closely with both the Watt Club Council and the Student Union to develop a partnership approach. DAO is keen to build communities and is working on bespoke communications as well as Wattclubconnect.org.

Throughout the year there have been a number of global events to develop professional and social networking. The University has administrated seventeen events across eight countries. Unfortunately, despite a strong alumni presence in Edinburgh there is not an active Edinburgh Branch.

DAO has also been involved in proactive fundraising and Riccarton Campus is in a stage of transformation. The Discovery and Innovation Centre is due to open in 2020, at a cost of £19million and both the Student Union and Sports Union are in need of additional funding. In addition, Panmure House is looking to find corporate sponsorship. The fundamental goal is to provide students at Heriot Watt with the best overall experience.

DAO would like to engage in a comprehensive survey to establish what alumni want. How can we encourage alumni to connect back with the University? Strategy 2025 is currently in progress which is a significant piece of work, engaging all stakeholders.
5. BRANCH UPDATES
Mike Ross, Vice President presented an overview of the activities of Branches. During the course of the year some Branches had been re-energised. In some cases Chairs had been in place for many years and those Branches needed to be re-engaged and re-launched. The Dubai Branch had re-launched earlier in 2018 and a similar plan is currently in progress for London Branch. The Council allocated funding to help reform Branches and were now moving to a “development funding” model which would allow more strategic allocation of monies. Mike had taken on the reformation of the Edinburgh Branch in recent years but new leadership was now required. Council also encouraged the creation of new Branches, these might not always follow a geographical pattern and could develop around subjects/disciplines, etc.
In some geographical areas the process is more difficult, for example the China Branch has to be administrated in a particular way in order to be registered with the Chinese Government. This has required the identification of good leadership in order to satisfy both government regulations and Heriot-Watt University goals. The rules of each country must be followed, Nuala Boyle assured the meeting that where different approaches are needed in different parts of the world, due diligence is undertaken. All Watt Club Branches must be open clubs where all members are respected and treated as equal.

It is disappointing that a number of Branches have not submitted reports.

6. AOB
No items arising

The President, Norman Chipakupaku thanked all present for attending. Panmure House was an excellent venue and attendance was good.