
ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH

PURPOSE

1. The paper seeks the Board's approval for a further three Financial Years' investment in the Royal Society of Edinburgh, FY2023-24 to 2025-26 inclusive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Council is invited to:
 - agree in principle that support of £2,764,900 should be offered to the Royal Society of Edinburgh for FY 2023-24 with a continuance of our current policy that we match any general university uplift for future years, dependent on the availability of funding;
 - delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the Funding Agreement and, subject to Ministerial approval, make the appropriate funding award from HE Strategic Funds.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3. Commitment of programme funds of £2,764,900 over FY 2023-24.

RISK ASSESSMENT

4. Risk associated with support: Low
 - Refreshed structures, a new senior executive team and a new strategic plan give confidence in a strengthened ability to make focused contributions to Scotland's priorities and to SFC's agendas.
5. Risk associated with flat cash or one year funding settlement: Medium
 - Limitation of the activities as a result of loss of ability to plan in the long term, including independent examination of national and global issues, provision of advice, running of research grants, awards and international exchange schemes
 - Limited ability to implement planned improvements to governance and operations, leading to inefficiencies, and a risk that without visible SFC support other funders would not be forthcoming such that the RSE would not be able to achieve the planned diversification of income sources to sustain either its programme or its physical presence on George Street.
6. Risk associated with failure to support: High

- Risk to the continued existence of a long-established element of Scotland's social structure and associated impact on the international perception of Scotland as a nation which values knowledge.
- Loss/limitation of the activities, including independent examination of national and global issues, provision of advice, running of research grants, awards and international exchange schemes, loss of international relationships/influence/soft power, loss of country-wide enrichment opportunities in education and public engagement. Reduced national ability to co-ordinate and draw upon a high-level, interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral resource to inform social and policy developments.
- Loss of standing/balance in UK engagements: Learned Society of Wales and Royal Irish Academy, and London-based UK academies would not be balanced by a strong RSE voice. Loss of standing in international engagements with equivalent bodies elsewhere.
- Inability to implement planned improvements to governance and operations, leading to inefficiencies, no increase in inclusiveness and reduced standing of the RSE, and a risk that without visible SFC support other funders would not be forthcoming such that the RSE would not be able to sustain either its programme or its physical presence on George Street.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

7. The RSE is committed to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in its culture and working. EDI initiatives are integrated into an RSE-wide programme to enable learning and improvement that can be monitored and evaluated. The RSE's review of governance and structures has been carried out through an EDI lens and adjustments implemented to ensure diversity and inclusion.
8. Finalisation of a funding agreement between SFC and RSE will be subject to completion of an EHRIA.

ISLAND COMMUNITIES

9. Geographic inclusion is promoted through the RSE's Strategic Regional Approach, ensuring the RSE creates and maintains a presence across Scotland. Working with University of the Highlands and Islands and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, RSE are developing a regional programme.

CARBON REDUCTION

10. The RSE Strategic Plan describes a number of ways in which RSE activities over the period will contribute to the Scottish Government's priorities for carbon reduction and

the achievement of 'net-zero' by 2045, including follow up events to COP26, bringing together stakeholders to discuss the future of education and skills of Scotland with reference to Net Zero and an identified priority of the Economy and Enterprise Committee to investigate a more *environmentally sustainable* economy – by reducing carbon emissions, more sustainable energy production and consumption and other key issues as they arise.

PUBLICATION

11. This paper will be published on the Council website.

FURTHER INFORMATION

12. Contact: Morag Campbell, Assistant Director, Research and Innovation tel: 0131 313 6530, email: mcampbell@sfc.ac.uk or Hazel McGraw, Senior Policy Officer, 0131-313 6657, hmcgraw@sfc.ac.uk.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH

PURPOSE

13. The paper seeks the Board's approval for a further three Financial Years' investment in the Royal Society of Edinburgh, FY2023-24 to 2025-26 inclusive.
14. The [Royal Society of Edinburgh](#) has been Scotland's national academy for almost 240 years. The combined knowledge of its 1,800 increasingly diverse fellows – experts from all areas of business, academia and public service – is a national resource brought to bear on crucial national and international issues. As a unique and independent part of Scotland's knowledge environment, the RSE can explore and challenge the problems of the day, and engage across Scotland, in a way that no other Scottish institution can. The RSE's core commitments overlap with SFC's and they are keen to continue work in concert with us to deliver additional value to our joint interests. Refreshed structures, a new senior executive team and a new strategic plan give confidence in a strengthened ability to make focussed contributions to Scotland's priorities and to SFC's agendas.

BACKGROUND

15. Prior to FY2012-13, RSE was funded directly by the Scottish Government. Responsibility for RSE's support was then passed to SFC, initially with ring-fenced grant-in-aid. Since 2015-16, SFC's support for the RSE has been associated with Outcome Agreements and taken the form of three-year funding agreements. The last of these three-year settlements ended in FY2020-21; the onset of Covid disruptions and development of SFC's Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability resulted in support over the last two years being via one-year extensions to that agreement.
16. Throughout this period the RSE has undertaken an extensive review of its structures, governance and approach and has developed a strategic plan for the period 2023-28, with an associated business plan currently being drafted. This period of review has provided an opportunity for strategic consideration of the alignment of RSE and SFC priorities and objectives, and for identification of areas where coordinated and complementary activities can be developed.
17. The RSE is funded from a variety of sources, the largest of which is currently SFC on behalf of the Scottish Government. Other significant sources of income are other public bodies, investment income and rentals. At the start of the funding period (FY2018-19), SFC funding represented approximately 40% of RSE income. By FY2020-21 the same level of SFC funding represented 55% of RSE total income, largely due to a reduction in other income sources reflecting Covid-related impacts on commercial income and investments. The FY2021-22 RSE accounts (yet to be finalised) are expected to show a return to strong investment income, although rental incomes are recovering more slowly. Early indications show that SFC funding is likely to represent around 40% of total

RSE income again in FY2021-22. RSE's new Strategic Plan commits to increased efficiencies, and diversification of their income by seeking partnership funding for all new initiatives and through direct programme-related fundraising. The RSE is also seeking advice on how best to use both its investments and its buildings to generate more working capital.

18. This paper sets out RSE's role as a national academy, its development and strategic plans for the period 2023-28 and details how RSE and SFC priorities overlap and how the RSE is supporting delivery of SFC's priorities. The annexes provide further detail on RSE's Strategic plan for 2023-28, Equality Diversity and Inclusion and some key achievements of the RSE over 2021. The paper proposes a suggested funding envelope for Board agreement; and asks the Board to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the Funding Agreement and, subject to Ministerial approval, make the appropriate funding award from HE Strategic Funds.

MINISTERIAL SUPPORT FOR RSE

19. Mr Hepburn, Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, has confirmed that he is:
 - Content for SG to continue to support public funding of the Royal Society of Edinburgh through the allocation of SFC funding;
 - Content for SFC to continue to act as the 'delivery agent' of funding for RSE, with authority to take decisions about funding distribution and evaluation;
 - Content for SFC to consider the continuation of grant funding for RSE as part of its future planning; and that
 - SFC should ensure when providing further funding that RSE delivers public value for the research and tertiary education system, and that options for best outcomes are considered along with ensuring value for money, including consideration of availability of other income sources to reduce the dependency of the projects on SG/SFC funding over time.

SFC SUPPORT FOR RSE

20. SFC support for RSE has dual purpose:
 - supporting RSE as Scotland's national academy; and
 - supporting RSE's direct contribution to delivery of SFC's priorities through shared objectives.
21. Certainty of future income from SFC at this point will allow the RSE to finalise and implement its business plan for the next three years in line with its recently agreed strategic plan FY2023-28, and to take forward plans to rediversify their funding. In particular, the confidence that SFC support will indicate is crucial to attracting funding

from other bodies and through philanthropy to reduce the RSE's reliance on SFC funds over time.

22. Annex A presents some highlights of RSE delivery during 2021, and over the FY2018-21 period.

RSE – SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL ACADEMY

23. The Royal Society of Edinburgh has been Scotland's only national academy for almost 240 years. As Scotland's national academy, the RSE's purpose is the encouragement and application of learning in all its forms for the benefit of Scottish society and beyond. The RSE motto '*knowledge made useful*' reflects the place the RSE occupies at the interface between research and practical implementation of knowledge.
24. The RSE consists of a 1,800 strong fellowship nominated from the breadth of academic disciplines, business, civil society and government service, and a team of professional staff. The structure of the RSE, centred around an elected Council and dedicated standing Committees, supported by the professional staff team, is set out in Annex B.

UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES OF A NATIONAL ACADEMY

NATIONALLY

25. As a unique and independent part of Scotland's knowledge environment the RSE can draw on its substantial convening power to bring together Scottish expertise from wide ranging disciplines, practitioners and policy makers within a neutral space for the discussion of issues that might be controversial and politicised, e.g. Post-Covid Futures Commission.
26. The fellowship alone represents an asset and a resource for the nation, which is drawn upon for independent and impartial knowledge and expertise across a wide range of multidisciplinary challenges and issues. This is an asset which is growing and diversifying as the RSE introduces changes to the nomination and selection process to better reflect the talents and expertise across Scottish society within the fellowship (see further detail in Annex C).
27. SFC has drawn directly on this asset in the past, utilising the RSE as a neutral meeting space and source of expertise (for example hosting roundtable events as part of both the Reid Review of Innovation Centres and the Heathwaite Review of the Research Pooling Initiative) and envisages using the RSE in this way again in the future especially, but not limited to, the thematic areas highlighted below.

BEYOND SCOTLAND AND INTERNATIONALLY

28. As our national academy, RSE plays an important role in representing Scotland both within the UK and globally. The RSE works closely with the London-based UK academies (notably the Royal Society and the British Academy) and the national academies of

Ireland (Royal Irish Academy) and Wales (Learned Society of Wales). The RSE has a strong international reach including partnerships with 26 other national academies and through the international connections of its Fellows. RSE also works with the *Commonwealth Science Academic Network* and the *All European Academies* (ALLEA, the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities).

29. The SFC review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability (hereafter referred to as the Review) recommended ‘the Scottish Government works with the sector to develop a strong marketing strategy for the Scottish tertiary education and research brand, with urgency, particularly across prime digital channels, that showcases beacon institutions and emphasises Scotland as a safe, welcoming, supportive, socially progressive, environmentally aware destination.’ The RSE is clearly well placed to contribute to implementation of this recommendation and the Strategic plan sets out their aim to strengthen Scotland’s international links and collaboration in research through research funding, international colloquia and putting their international connections at the disposal of researchers, institutions and research funders in Scotland.
30. Within the UK the RSE provides balance across the UK landscape and work with national academies across the devolved administrations to ensure strong representation in UK-wide discussion. This will be particularly important should UK not associate with Horizon Europe as proposed ‘plan b’ transition measures¹ include talent funding via the National Academies.

AN ACADEMY FOR THE FUTURE

31. The RSE has undergone a period of substantial change and development. Over 2021 and 2022 the RSE has both developed a comprehensive strategic plan for 2023-2028, undertaken an extensive review of governance and operation, and appointed a new Chief Executive.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-28

32. The RSE Strategic Plan 2023-2028 was developed in consultation with Fellows over 2021 and 2022. The President and other Office Bearers met with key stakeholders, including SFC. The plan was agreed by the RSE Council on 6 June and development of a business plan is underway.
33. The plan sets out the framework for delivering the RSE’s Purpose as Scotland’s national academy. The plan describes RSE’s purpose and aims, their attributes and strengths, identifies key societal challenges and thematic programmes and sets out plans for operational delivery including the development process for the business plan. A summary is available in Annex C and the plan in full is available on request. As is clear in the strategic plan there is extensive crossover between the strategic aims of RSE and SFC

¹ [Government publishes proposals for package of transitional measures to support research and innovation sector affected by Horizon Europe delays - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-publishes-proposals-for-package-of-transitional-measures-to-support-research-and-innovation-sector-affected-by-horizon-europe-delays)

and this is explored in further detail in paras 23-34 below.

RSE GOVERNANCE REVIEW

34. Alongside development of the strategic plan the RSE is completing a period of strategic and operational review. In 2021, it introduced open and competitive elections to Council, becoming the first Academy in the UK to do so and over 2021-22 completed a thorough operational restructure. A governance review will report in September, which seeks to simplify and clarify existing responsibilities and delegations, to make better use of both the Fellows themselves and of the professional staff team that supports them, and to ensure that the RSE is a modern, diverse, fit for purpose organisation.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

35. In June it was announced that Professor Sarah Skerratt, the existing Director of Programmes, will take up post as the RSE's new Chief Executive from October 2022. As well as her existing familiarity with the RSE and her strong track record on Programmes, Professor Skerratt is a particular champion of equality, diversity and inclusion with a commitment to the RSE being Scotland's national academy with a reach across the whole of Scotland.

CONTRIBUTION TO DELIVERY OF SFC STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

36. There is clear alignment between RSE and SFC strategic priorities. Highlighted below are three areas where SFC and RSE colleagues are working together to ensure complementary and co-developed activities that will contribute to the delivery of SFC's strategic aims. Additional areas are currently being explored.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

37. RSE and SFC strategic priorities with regard to Research and Knowledge exchange are closely aligned. The RSE strategic plan includes within its stated aims:
 - The promotion of research; and
 - Improving the impact of knowledge through informed advice across the fields of business, government and civil society
38. These sentiments are echoed in SFC strategic objective 2:

'To invest in excellent research and innovation that adds to current knowledge, delivers economic and societal value, enhances Scotland's international reputation and attractiveness, and makes the world around us prosperous, healthier and more sustainable.'
39. RSE directly complements SFC support for excellent research through its Research Award Programme. Recently reviewed and refreshed, the award programme provides types and amounts of funding not available from SFC, UKRI or other sources. The small-

scale awards are critical for early career researchers prior to attracting larger funding from UK, European and international sources. Equality, diversity and inclusion issues are prioritised, as exemplified by the 2021 Covid-19 Research Reboot Awards Scheme and the 2022 networking and capacity-building event for the awardees.

40. RSE and the executive are in discussion on how RSE can support implementation of SFC review recommendations in particular:

- *'developing mission-orientated research and knowledge exchange themes and funding at a national level'* RSE's cross-disciplinary Fellowship is particularly well equipped to aid development of these discussions; and
- *'work with the sector to develop a blueprint for establishing a positive research culture in Scotland'* RSE's convening power and neutral space enabling open cross-sector discussion. RSE has particular contributions in the research culture discussion as it pertains to public engagement and research into policy which the executive will draw upon.

ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE

41. The RSE Economy and Enterprise Committee has identified three forward-looking priorities: increasing economic efficiency; enhancing equity; and working towards a more environmentally sustainable economy. RSE will deliver to these priorities via a series of activities, including the following:

- Contributing to implementation of the Logan Review recommendations including exploring a fund to boost the profile of diverse and under-represented new enterprises;
- engaging with the development of the Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB) and of the British Business Bank (BBB) in Scotland;
- working in partnership to reposition the RSE's unique offering at the interface between research and entrepreneurship to promote business in Scotland. Building on the past 25 years of the RSE's Enterprise Fellowship Scheme, the RSE offers experience, calibre and influential connections to continue leading business development and training with the higher education sector, supporting Scotland's ongoing development of world-class entrepreneurs.

42. These priorities and activities clearly align with findings of the SFC review that

'truly successful business creation and commercialisation of research and knowledge exchange (through start-ups, spin-outs and licensing from universities and colleges) will be assisted greatly where the sector can actively support companies to scale and develop by providing the knowledge and expertise to support their business growth' and

'One of the important contributors to Scotland's green recovery towards a net-zero carbon future society will be the ability of entrepreneurs to innovate, create change and

build good-quality employment across the country.’

43. RSE is also well positioned and keen to work with SFC to contribute to the delivery of the Entrepreneurial Campus Strategy, primarily through its knowledge and access to commercial champions on the following specific recommendation:
- *‘co-design an Entrepreneurial Campus Strategy with colleges and universities to dramatically increase the flow of entrepreneurs into technology and other innovation ecosystems’*

EDUCATION

44. As Scotland’s National Academy, the RSE is in a unique position to consider education as a whole and relate it to the major social, economic and environmental challenges. RSE’s strategic plan sets out a range of workstreams underway or in development under the Education Committee, of particular relevance to SFC priorities are:
- Tertiary Education Futures, a joint RSE/YAS initiative which will identify future challenges and opportunities for tertiary education in Scotland through exploration of topics which other organisations might avoid and through the lived experience of key stakeholders bringing in non-traditional education providers to explore contrasting future visions of TE in 2040.
 - Net Zero skills provision, the Education Committee will explore the nature of an education and skills system that will be needed as we transition to a Net Zero economy (including Just Transition). RSE will employ its role as an independent convening body to bring together educationalists, policymakers, industry, and business and importantly wider society, to discuss the future of education and skills.
45. These plans:
- Clearly align with SFC’s core objective 3: To ensure colleges, universities and specialist institutions form part of a successful, world-leading, coherent and sustainable system of education that responds effectively to the future needs of learners and the skills needs of the economy and society, enhances our rich cultural life, and strengthens Scotland’s international connections.
 - support SFC Review recommendations around developing a refreshed approach to skills alignment and tertiary provision planning including implementation of the Climate Emergency Skills Plan and to galvanise current and future leaders across tertiary education, skills provision and research to work together to effect system change development.
46. The RSE will support the SFC’s Review recommendation to explore a single tertiary quality framework, working closely with SFC’s Learning and Quality colleagues. This could include support from the RSE via its national convening power and advice paper series in facilitating debate around (as examples): defining tertiary in the Scottish

context, learner outcomes in a tertiary context, learning/teaching design for example around blended delivery modes; generation and use of evidence that is fair and consistent for students and staff; diversity of access to learning pathway end-points irrespective of starting-points; and building on and enhancing Scotland's international brand, reputation and marketing

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND OPTIONS

47. The RSE is a unique and valuable resource for the nation with priorities closely aligned to SFC and well positioned to contribute to delivery of SFC's strategic objectives and review recommendations. Refreshed structures, a new senior executive team and a new strategic plan give confidence in a strengthened ability to make focussed contributions to Scotland's priorities and to SFC's agendas. The executive and RSE staff will continue to work closely to develop the areas highlighted above for complementary and co-developed activities and these will be further developed within the funding agreement.

FUNDING AGREEMENT

48. SFC funding supports RSE activity as a national academy, including specific activity to be set out within the funding agreement in line with SFC priorities and detailed in paras 23-34 above, and including delivery of RSE's Research Awards programme.
49. As set out in the table below, SFC funding for RSE has remained relatively static in recent years. The three year funding agreement covering FYs 2018-21 included uplifts in line with general funds to institutions (although this was zero in two years), and the following two single year agreements were flat cash. This has resulted in a decrease in real terms in funding from SFC, at a time when the UK Government is significantly increasing support for its four national academies.

| Financial Year | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 21/22 | 22/23 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|-----------|
| SFC core grant | 2,703,000 | 2,703,000 | 2,764,900 | 2,764,900 | 2,764,900 |
| RSE total income | 7,100,000 | 5,700,000 | 5,000,000 | 7,224,000² | tbc |
| % of income | 38% | 47% | 55% | 38%² | tbc |

OPTION 1

50. RSE are seeking a three-year funding agreement incorporating a 5% increase (approx. £138k in each year) to accommodate annual staff pay increases over the funding period.

² Indicative, accounts not yet finalised

This would result in a total funding envelope of £8,709,435 over FY2023-24 to FY2025-26.

OPTION 2

51. Given the RSE's intention to diversify their income streams, they propose, instead of this being paid in three instalments equally over the three year period, that payments from an £8,709,435 envelope be tapered as they build up their capacity for fundraising, with 40% payable in the first year, 35% in the second and 25% in the third, as set out in the table below.

OPTION 3

52. No change, a flat cash funding agreement for one year £2,764,900 in FY 2023/24 with a continuance of our current policy that we match any general university uplift for future years, knowing that an uplift is unlikely and that this is an agreement in principle, subject to the availability of funding overall.

| Financial year | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | Total |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Option 1 | 2,903,145 | 2,903,145 | 2,903,145 | 8,709,435 |
| Option 2 | 3,483,774 | 3,048,302 | 2,177,359 | 8,709,435 |
| Option 3 | 2,764,900 | N/A | N/A | 2,764,900 |

53. We recommend that a decision on the level and period of funding offered to the RSE recognises the scale of RSE's operations, and that the principle is maintained that RSE's support should continue to include uplifts in line with general funds to institutions.
54. On this basis, given the flat cash settlement that has flowed from the Scottish Government's Resource Spending Review, an uplift to the grant is not viable and we recommend that Option 3 is the most appropriate Option.
55. We ask the Board to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the Funding Agreement and, subject to Ministerial approval, make the appropriate funding award from HE Strategic Funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

56. The Board is invited to:
- agree in principle that support of £2,764,900 should be offered to the Royal Society of Edinburgh for FY 2023-24 with a continuance of our current policy that we match

any general university uplift for future years, dependent on the availability of funding;

- delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the Funding Agreement and, subject to Ministerial approval, make the appropriate funding award from HE Strategic Funds.

ANNEX A

2021 in words and numbers

A busy year: notwithstanding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the RSE continued to deliver on its mission of 'Knowledge Made Useful'.



Public engagement

A mainly online programme though there was a move to more in-person events towards the end of the year. Highlights include:

- Curious 2021, the RSE's summer festival** comprised 40 individual events with 130 speakers, 45 of whom were Fellows. There was an 86% increase in bookings and 92% increase in attendees compared to 2020.
- Over 30 videos** from public engagement activity were made available on the RSE YouTube channel.
- 15 separate events** were held for the Post Covid-19 Futures Commission.
- 17 individual events including successful joint event with Royal Academy of Engineering** on the climate emergency and events on conspiracies, fake news and false scientific information during the Edinburgh Science Festival and a human rights and climate change symposium in the run up to COP26.
- Over 4000 attendees** at RSE events in 2021.

Awards

Recognised excellence and supporting leading research through funding:

- Launched two new Awards Programmes, the RSE Research Awards and Saltire Awards** in addition to the Ireland/Scotland Bilateral Network Grants, the RSE COP26 International Climate Change Network Grants 2021, SAPHIRE (Scotland Asia Partnerships Higher Education Research Fund) and the RSE research re-boot (Covid-19 impact) research grants for those whose work was impacted adversely by Covid. All received a significant number of applications.
- 676 applications** reviewed and **a total of 199 awards** made amounting to a total of £3,370,355.64.
- Lead awardees represented 12 of the 15 Scottish universities.** Through the awards, collaborations were made with 26 countries.
- In addition to existing RSE awards, there was also **funding for international joint projects** with National Natural Science Foundation of China and National Research Council in Italy.

Expert advice

Provided independent evidence and advice to inform public policy decisions and legislative direction including:

- Facing up to Climate Change: 10 Years On:** in-person event on climate change in Scotland.
- In partnership with SCOL, BT Scotland and ScotLANDIS, published **Innovation Critical** outlining Scotland's potential to be a leading innovator and exporter of technological solutions to climate change.
- 22 advice papers** and responses.
- Online fringe events** at party political conferences on the key learnings from the RSE Covid Commission.

- In partnership with the **Scottish Science Advisory Committee**, **22 Face the Facts** videos produced showcasing climate change researchers.
- Held a joint online conference with the Scottish Centre of the Royal Meteorological Society on Climate Science in Scotland** with more than 170 attendees.

Enterprise Fellowships

Supported graduates and researchers to turn their ideas into business successes.

- Eight new Enterprise Fellows:** £100,000 per award, £800,000 in total.
- Two virtual Enterprise Fellowships** presentation held with a total of 146 attendees.
- Awardees** came from the universities of Aberdeen, Leeds, Cambridge, Strathclyde, Portsmouth, Warwick, Heriot-Watt and Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC).
- 11 paid jobs created,** four company officer/directorships and six board members appointed.

Young Academy of Scotland

- YAS launched its Charter for Responsible Debate** which proposes nine general principles for responsible public debate, based on the belief that joint decision-making should be informed, respectful and inclusive.
- Several projects undertaken** including a coastal knowledge exhibition, videos and blog posts and the Sustainable Business Travel Pledge in the run up to COP26 to show the world what members are doing on climate change.
- Children's Voice** competition run, for 8-14 year olds to share their vision for the future.

Communications

- New RSE website** successfully delivered offering greater accessibility and better navigation.
- 11 Tea and Talk podcasts recorded** and issued on the themes of equality and also climate change.
- Three editions of RSE's magazine Resource** themed around equality and diversity, climate change and health.
- 110 pieces of media coverage** secured across print, radio and TV.

Post-Covid-19 Futures Commission

- 46 Fellows, 6 YAS members** involved in Commission activities/outputs.
- 175 contributors** including 31 young people.
- 12 project partners** including the National Theatre of Scotland, Support in Mind Scotland and Democratic Society.
- 41 blogs, 15 podcasts with a focus on Covid-19,** 31 video outputs: a mix of talking heads, event recordings, community films, illustrated Prezi presentations, creative explorations of Commission themes.
- 21.76 million social media impressions** across whole Commission.

International

- Promoted Scotland's reputation in research, innovation and culture through collaborations through:
- Four high-profile international roundtables** such as:
 - Creating Connections:** a collaboration with the Royal Society on the challenges of a post-Brexit collaboration landscape.
 - PCFC International Evidence:** two international roundtables with 12 countries held to gather evidence on Covid-19 communication and public engagement.

- 2 policy responses:** Advice papers to inform the UK Gov International Development Strategy and Scot Gov International Work inquiries.
- A major international human rights and climate change symposium** in partnership with the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina involving the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and former UK Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment with participants from 31 countries.
- In partnership with the African Academy of Sciences,** developed mutually beneficial partnership activity focused on building pan-African collaborations.

Fellowship

- Welcomed 87 new Fellows** (1 Honorary, 7 Corresponding and 79 Ordinary) to join our 1600+ leading thinkers and experts from Scotland and around the world. Two thirds of new Fellows came from groups underrepresented in the Fellowship (young (under 50), BAME, from an underrepresented university, outside of academia, women). 10 new Fellows are, or were, members of the Young Academy of Scotland.

- New style of Ordinary Meetings** were launched to provide more opportunities for Fellows to meet and discuss topics of interest including climate change, inclusive and healthy design of the built environment, welcoming refugees and data, evidence and science.
- A new President, Sir John Ball** and new Office Bearers were elected.

RSE ACHIEVEMENTS FY2018-19 – 2022-23

The RSE has delivered a package of activity which directly contribute towards SFC's objectives. Engagement remains high, and a snapshot overview of 2021 is attached above. Some highlights from the previous funding periods are set out below.

Post-Covid Futures Commission (<https://www.rsecovidcommission.org.uk>). Established in Spring 2020 as the pandemic took hold, to contribute to Scotland's recovery and renewal, the Commission has provided important insights on building national resilience; the development and deployment of data evidence and science; inclusive public service and public dialogue and participation with a series of recommendations to policymakers and others.

Covid 19 reboot. Developed to a tight timeframe to support academics adversely affected by Covid to 'reboot' their research. The Call generated 124 applications from across Scotland's research institutions. The RSE made 29 awards totalling £470K, with 79% of awardees being women, 58% identifying as early career, and 67% stating that they had taken on additional caring responsibilities due to Covid-19.

Enterprise Fellowships. Supporting entrepreneurialism and the commercialisation of research, an independent evaluation pointed to the success of the scheme. Since its inception the programme has supported the creation of over 220 companies, four-fifths of which were still operational after five years (compared with an average of c45% for new technology starts-ups and spin-outs) and a return on investment of 10:1 to the UK economy.

Young People's Programme: in 2021/22 RSE School Talk speakers delivered 14 school talks to 362 pupils across Scotland covering topics from Spelling and Sounds to The Origins of Life on Earth. Additionally, the RSE piloted a new approach to school talks by delivering a series of ten online school talks to primary and secondary schools located in Shetland on the theme of space science.

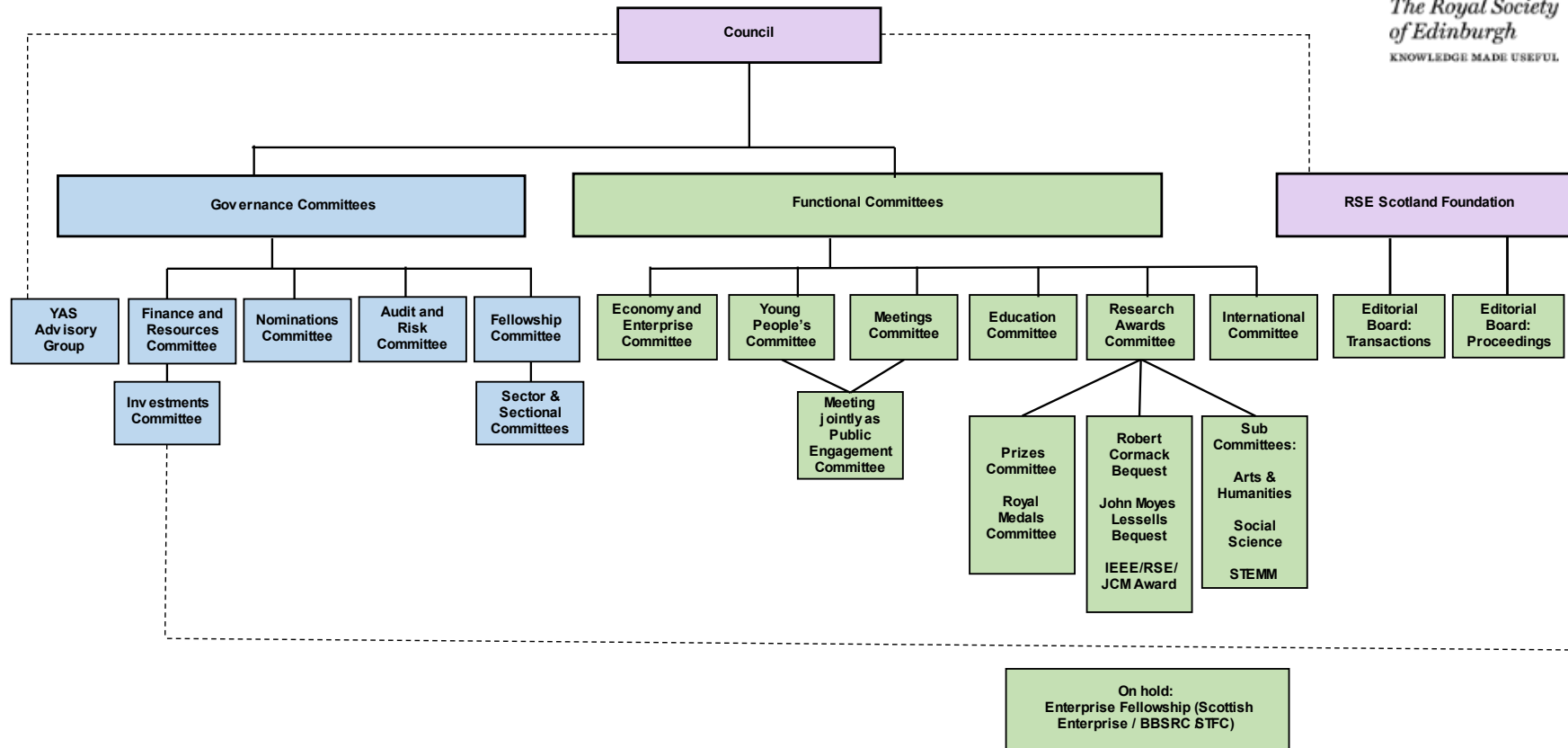
Curious: Summer Programme (<https://www.rse-curious.com>). Launched in 2019 as part of wider work to better connect with a wider range of people, this three week programme of events to coincide with the Edinburgh Fringe has gone from strength to strength, last year attracting over 2200 attendees across 40 online events. This year's Curious will run over 30 in-person, online and hybrid events across the four key themes of health and wellbeing, innovation and invention, our planet, and Year of Stories.

Women in Science exhibition. Prompted by the need for positive role models, identified in RSE's 2018 report Tapping all our Talents 2, the exhibition aimed to raise the profile of female scientists and show that science is an exciting career choice open to anyone. Alongside the physical exhibition, a digital version was created and shared online and with schools, a touring version has been everywhere from Belladrum to Borders College and a version on display at Edinburgh Airport is estimated to have been seen by in excess of 3 million people helping celebrate Scotland and its scientific expertise.

International Collaboration on AI. In May of 2021, the RSE, Connected Scotland and the French, German, Hungarian and Netherlands embassies convened a meeting under the theme “Scotland’s ecosystems and infrastructure in Data and AI: fostering collaboration with Europe”. 52 attendees from Scotland, France, Germany, Hungary, and the Netherlands attended the event, which increased awareness of the Scottish landscape regarding Data and AI and revealed strong willingness from EU participants to increase collaboration with Scotland.

ANNEX B: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Royal Society of Edinburgh
Governance Structure (at June 2022)



ANNEX C: SUMMARY OF THE RSE'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

The five-year Strategic Plan sets out the framework for delivering to the RSE's Purpose as *Scotland's national academy with the broad remit of the encouragement and application of learning in all its forms for the benefit of Scottish society and beyond*. Consultations took place with Fellows about the Plan in 2021 and 2022. The President and other Office Bearers held meetings with key stakeholders. Staff teams and Fellows' committees contributed and a special Council meeting discussed the key principles in March 2022. A Strategy Working Group of Fellows guided the elaboration of the Plan. Subject to reaching a multi-year funding agreement, an Outcome Agreement between the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and RSE governs those aspects of the RSE's Plan covered by SFC funding. The last RSE Strategic Plan covered the period 2016-2021 with the SFC Outcome Agreement 2018-2021 running alongside, supported by annual Business Plans. This Annex summarises the full Plan, which is available from the RSE on request.

1. RSE PURPOSE, MISSION, ATTRIBUTES AND CONTRIBUTION

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) is Scotland's national academy, comprising Fellows from all academic disciplines, business, civil society, government service and the arts and humanities, allowing it to occupy a central place in the civic and academic life of the nation and beyond. The RSE cooperates with the London-based UK academies (notably the Royal Society and the British Academy) and the national academies of Ireland (Royal Irish Academy) and Wales (Learned Society of Wales).

RSE PURPOSE

As the national academy of Scotland, the RSE's broad remit is the encouragement and application of learning in all its forms for the benefit of Scottish society and beyond. The motto '*knowledge made useful*' (in the spirit of the Scottish Enlightenment), indicates the place the RSE occupies at the interface between research and 'practical' forms of knowledge. This involves utilising the collective knowledge and experience of its Fellowship with the aims of:

1. Enhancing the wellbeing of Scotland through the application of knowledge. This includes economic prosperity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and a vibrant and inclusive cultural life;
2. The promotion of research;
3. The promotion of education and learning, and raising public understanding of, and engagement with natural and social sciences, the arts and humanities;
4. Improving the impact of knowledge through informed advice across the fields of business, government and civil society;

5. Providing a forum for discussion and debate on national and global scientific, economic, social and cultural issues;
6. Sustaining Scotland's international connections in research, education and applied knowledge, and cooperating with other academies and learned societies.

The RSE is committed to the achievement of diversity and equality in all its activities and among its Fellowship.

RSE ATTRIBUTES AND STRENGTHS

The RSE's natural advantages include:

1. *The broad Fellowship*: giving us an advantage in key challenges that do not fall within clear disciplinary boundaries.
2. *Convening power*: well-connected across Scottish academia, government and civil society, the RSE brings together key actors to address pressing issues.
3. *A neutral space*: the RSE provides a neutral forum for the discussion of issues that might be controversial and politicised.
4. *Research and Practice*: the RSE provides a crucial link between the world of research and that of practice, whether in government, business or civil society. It is not a think tank or an advocacy group. Rather, it is a body in which academic research and practice can meet in order to gain a deeper understanding of complex issues.
5. *Diversity*: the RSE is broadening its Fellowship to include more women, minorities, non-academics and people from all parts of Scotland. Its Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) also reaches out to a new generation.

SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

We identify three broad challenges facing Scotland and the world: **climate change and environmental sustainability; economic prosperity; social cohesion and inclusion**. These challenges are closely interlinked and must be addressed through an interdisciplinary approach encompassing the natural sciences; the economic and social sciences; the humanities; the creative arts; and the world of practice. RSE addresses them by:

1. promoting scientific research in Scotland through its own programmes and by securing Scotland's share of other research funding;
2. providing advice to Governments and Parliaments based on the skills and knowledge of Fellows;
3. exploring future challenges and publishing papers on key issues, including short consultation notes and longer research reports;
4. organising meetings and round tables to disseminate key findings and provide a forum for discussion among academics and practitioners;
5. informing and engaging the public across Scotland in scientific research and the creative arts through public lectures, traditional and social media, exhibitions and meetings.

2. PRIORITIES, THEMES AND PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMME PLANS

We present the main programmes under a series of headings, while recognising the interconnections among them.

ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE

The Economy and Enterprise Committee has identified three forward-looking priorities:

- increasing *economic efficiency* via faster, more sustainable growth and overall incomes in Scotland;
- enhancing *equity* – reducing inequitable distribution of incomes and employment, by geographical area, age group, ethnicity, gender and other relevant categories;
- working towards a more *environmentally sustainable* economy – by reducing carbon emissions, more sustainable energy production and consumption and other key issues as they arise.

RSE will deliver to these priorities via a series of activities, including the following:

- *Engaging with the Scottish Government in relation to the implementation of the [Logan Report's recommendations](#)*
- *Investment, skills, business generation and enterprise*
- *RSE's Strategic Regional Approach*

We plan further work on taxation and public expenditure, considering equity among income groups, with a roundtable collaboration with the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) on the Deaton Review into inequality, and work on Scottish statistics, and the distributional impacts of net zero policies.

EDUCATION

As Scotland's National Academy, the RSE is in a unique position to consider education as a whole and relate it to the major social, economic and environmental challenges, asking *What does society need from its education, skills and assessment system?* Key questions that sit beneath this overarching challenge include:

- What does society value in education and skills?
- How do we ensure we have the skills to achieve net zero?
- What 'knowledge' do learners need?
- What is the balance between knowledge and skills?
- What is it we are seeking to assess in education?

The RSE has already created a number of workstreams, including: Reform and performance of Scotland's education system; Early Learning and Childcare (ELC); Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL); and Tertiary Education Futures. The Education Committee's plans focus on the nature of an education and skills system that will be needed as we transition to a Net Zero economy (including Just Transition) and sustainable development and practices, while stressing inclusion; and interdependence and coherence across the education system.

INTERNATIONAL

The RSE has a strong international reach and presence across all its activities. It is well networked, including partnerships with 26 other national academies and the international connections of its Fellows. We also work with the Commonwealth Science Academic Network and the All European Academies (ALLEA). We will strengthen Scotland's international links and collaboration in research through our own research funding, international colloquia and putting our international connections at the disposal of researchers, institutions and research funders in Scotland. The RSE is an active participant in Connected Scotland (which seeks to promote Scotland's higher education sector in target markets and growth of the sector's exports).

RSE, drawing on its status as neutral space and its convening power, will provide a venue for discussions on Scotland's place in global affairs, covering trade and investment; science and technology; education and research; the arts and culture; and channels to project Scotland overseas whatever the outcome of current constitutional debates. This is not confined to government but will include wide engagement with international questions on the part of business, the educational community and the wider civil society. RSE is committed to global human rights and takes a particular interest in protecting scholars whose freedom is threatened, often in collaboration with other academies and bodies such as Scholars at Risk. We are conscious that this poses dilemmas in collaborating with official institutions in certain countries and this is under continuous review. Internationalisation permeates most of the RSE's activities, but the international strategy was reviewed in 2018 to give greater thematic and regional focus. To current priorities in China, Europe, Asia and Africa, we will add a focus on Arab countries, especially the Gulf states.

The following projects will feature prominently in the next period:

Europe: a new Europe initiative, to include Chatham House seminars with policy makers, researchers, business and civil society to explore how links with Europe can be maintained and strengthened, and opportunities explored, in economic, social, educational, cultural and environmental matters.

Africa: RSE and African Academies of Science (AAS) will finalise their MoU in 2022. The RSE Africa Working Group and AAS Fellows Working Group are prioritising innovation partnerships, collaboration on global challenges such as Covid-19 and climate change, dialogue and collaboration with scholars in Africa on the slave trade, and Early Career

Researcher mobility and inclusion in RSE International Awards Programmes such as Bilateral Visits or Joint Projects.

Asia: We will expand on our existing work in Asia through the RSE Scotland Asia Partnerships Higher Education Research (SAPHIRE) Fund, a grant scheme funded by the Scottish Government. SAPHIRE aims to enhance the existing international research partnerships between Scottish universities, research institutes and partners in Australia, India, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Singapore and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The RSE and the National Natural Science Foundation are jointly supporting 9 successful applicants (two-year duration) during 2021 undertaking projects related to Covid-19. A further Joint Projects call with the NNSF of China will open for applications in September 2022; a new Scotland-China Joint Workshop Scheme will launch in Autumn 2023.

The Gulf: there are currently no national academies in the Gulf regions despite the UAE and other Arab countries investing heavily in higher education and international research. An initial approach has been made to Qatar's Ministry for Foreign Affairs who have expressed an interest in how the RSE may assist in setting up a national academy in Qatar.

RESEARCH

An internal review of the Research Awards Programmes (2019/20) concluded that research: is central to the RSE; needs to serve all disciplines and career stages; should benefit multiple audiences; should promote equality, diversity, and inclusivity; should maintain and enhance Scotland's and Scottish HEIs' recognised high profile in research, scholarship and impact; and should generate better opportunities for national and international collaboration. The new Programme has seen an almost tenfold increase in applications and with standards of awards (as measured by referee scores) comparable to other major research funders. This quality has been recognised by the Scottish Government and as indicated by the successful £2M SG/SFC/RSE Saltire Research Awards programme (2021/22). RSE is scoping whether and how it could expand its Research Awards Programme to the vocational and Further Education sector. Subject to availability of resources, the RSE is committed to sustaining and growing its Programmes, filling a critically important niche by supporting crucial small and medium-sized grants, an interdisciplinary perspective and emphasis on emerging scholars.

The RSE also awards *prizes and medals* designed to recognise achievements in our fields of interest. We are concerned that these may not be attracting enough strong nominations. It is also anomalous that all prizes are named after men. A review of RSE medals and prizes is under way, presenting proposals to Council in June 2022 which (subject to approval by Council) will be developed further within the lifetime of this Strategy.

POLICY ADVICE

RSE is singular in its ability to provide independent, evidence-driven policy expertise across a wide range of areas, drawing on the unpaid work of its Fellows and Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) members. This includes responsive work, such as government and

parliamentary consultations (Scottish and UK), as well as own-initiative projects on future societal challenges. The RSE's policy advice work is a common thread of Fellows' expertise and engagement across most areas of its activity. It is closely linked to the Public Engagement and Communications work, engaging stakeholders and citizens in Scotland and the UK with key policy issues.

We will host a COP26 follow-up event in 2022 examining the power dynamics of COP, inviting grassroots organisations and climate activists to share their experiences and explore how future conferences could be made more inclusive and participatory. We will increase engagement with the Scottish Parliament through public and informal Committee sessions, a reception with MSPs, and hosting fringe events across all party political conferences. We will continue to act as secretariat to the Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Science and Technology, which brings together MSPs, members of the scientific community, and interested citizens to discuss science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). We are organising a series of workshops with the Scottish Government, examining issues arising from the RSE's Post-COVID-19 Futures Commission. We have a strong relationship with the Westminster Scottish Affairs Committee (SAC), including hosting roundtables on their behalf and providing witnesses for evidence sessions.

The RSE also hosts the Learned Societies Group on Scottish STEM Education (LSG) and the Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance (SAHA), producing policy outputs, coordinating campaigning activity, and brokering meetings with policy leaders and parliamentarians. Our work with the Celtic Academies Alliance allows the academies to achieve more together than would be possible on their own. As a trusted, impartial source of expertise and a neutral space for discussion, the RSE is developing a new constitutional programme, some of which will be in partnership with the Royal Irish Academy and the Learned Society of Wales, on constitutional futures for Scotland and 'these islands'. This follows the *Enlightening the Constitutional Debate*, conducted around the Scottish independence referendum in partnership with the British Academy produce papers analysing the key issues from a non-partisan perspective. Using its convening power, RSE hosted a series of round tables and meetings across Scotland, addressed both by academics and by members of civil society. The RSE developed a similar exercise around the Brexit referendum of 2016.

3. DELIVERY

FINANCIAL PLANNING

The RSE Strategic Plan will run together with financial planning to ensure that resources are available for the Strategic Plan's delivery. Proposals for new activities will need to be accompanied by a statement outlining internal and/or external funding plans. Staff time spent on projects will now be fully costed allowing us to assess the comparative expense and assess priorities.

The RSE is committed to diversifying funding. Promising routes are through project funding, through partnerships (as with the proposals for the new Enterprise Fellowships) and working with foundations in Scotland, the UK and internationally. Partnership proposals need to be scrutinised to ensure that they are consistent with RSE core Purpose and themes and that they provide added value.

The RSE Treasurer is prioritising the following items in order to underpin successful delivery of the RSE Strategic Plan:

1. A new, up-to-date automated accounting system which will substantially ease the workload of the staff and allow for the speedy production of monthly and annual accounts and other analyses;
2. A new procurement policy and expenditure sign-off protocol with a clear and transparent process, whether or not the expenditure was provided in a budget;
3. A revamp of the accounting processes to allow the production of profit and loss accounts, cash flows and balance sheets as at each month end with comparators to the previous year, budget and forecasts as the year progresses;
4. A system to record how the professional staff team spend their time so that we can match income directly with expenditure and cost future projects;
5. A review of central overheads to see if savings can be made;
6. A review of the building in George Street, its uses, maintenance costs and opportunities for better financial returns.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The RSE will increase investment in Information Technology, enabling it to embrace online collaborative spaces further, building on the learning and experience gained during the Covid19 pandemic to increase our reach and inclusion. IT investment will: (a) encourage and support Fellow-to-Fellow engagement, particularly for Fellows who are more remote; and (b) expand RSE's reach as Scotland's national academy to the regions and the global stage.

SFC/RSE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

The RSE is engaging with discussions with SFC to secure a three-year SFC/RSE Outcome Agreement 2023/2026. Funding associated in the Agreement would cover those elements of our plans and programmes funded with SFC resources, including those where SFC moneys will be combined with external funding.

COMMUNICATIONS

RSE *Communications* is essential in ensuring that clear messages reach our stakeholders in Scotland. In the past two years, *Communications* has increased the RSE's reach, diversifying the means of engagement, through podcasts, written and social media. In 2020, the *Tea and Talk podcast series* was launched, providing more informal engagement with Fellows around key scientific themes (over 33 episodes with more than 5,000 downloads). The RSE's magazine, *ReSource*, was revamped 2021, with three editions themed around Equality and

Diversity, Climate Change, and Health, profiling Fellows' and YAS members' achievements, supported by hundreds of pieces of media coverage secured across print, radio and TV. 2021 also saw the launch of the RSE's new website, monthly visitor numbers climbing to 7000-11,000 (28,000 in June 2021). Social media presence has also been enhanced, with RSE's Facebook followers growing by over 16% to 3493 followers; Twitter followers growing 20% to over 12,000; Youtube subscribers growing by 70% to 1,769; and Instagram and LinkedIn sitting at 606 and 3135 respectively.

RSE is currently reviewing its communication strategy to focus on: what sort of knowledge are we communicating; and with whom are we communicating? The aim is to translate what can be specialised knowledge, with its own vocabulary, into language that policymakers, stakeholders and citizens can understand and with which they can engage. This requires different pitches for different audiences, while relating scientific knowledge to the lived experience of citizens. We will also look at barriers to engagement and how these can be broken down. We have a particular interest in communities that do not customarily engage in these debates but whose experiences are vital for understanding our key challenges in the economy, social cohesion and sustainability. This involves experimentation in modes of communication and engagement, building on what we have learned in recent years. Work will be undertaken to support increased engagement of Fellows and gather more information on Fellows' expertise and interests in order to utilise their experience, knowledge and skills.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public Engagement is an intrinsic part of all the RSE's thematic programmes. As an independent organisation with a reputation for intellectual rigour and a Fellowship of diverse experience and expertise, the RSE is well placed to engage the public and provide an impartial platform for debate. Recent years have seen a steep increase in the RSE's Public Engagement activity. In 2021/22 4679 people participated in RSE events, including:

- RSE "own-branded" events, including: the RSE's summer festival Curious; "RSE Investigates" Series; RSE Young People's Programme which includes a school talks series; Post Covid Futures Commission events; RSE Public Engagement Medal events;
- RSE events in partnership, including with: Scottish Parliament; Festival of Politics; COP26 with Royal Meteorological Society; Midlothian Science Festival; Human Rights and Climate Change Symposium; Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; Royal Institute of Philosophy; Royal Academy of Engineering; Abbotsford Walter Scott 250 Project; Edinburgh Science Festival; Greyfriars Kirk; Scottish Consortium for Rural Research;
- launch of the RSE's Strategic Regional Approach, strengthening the RSE's footprint as Scotland's *national* academy through: supporting Fellows' initiatives across Scotland; partnering with stakeholders to deliver locally sensitive engagement in rural regions; and developing legacy partnerships with diverse sectors and communities.

RSE's new Public Engagement Strategy (Feb 2022) builds on the experience and learning from prior years and aims to: engage the people of Scotland on key contemporary issues; stimulate and provide an impartial forum for public debate and informed discussion. The four guiding principles are: inclusive, inter-generational and for the whole of Scotland; multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary; high quality and high impact; and listening to communities. During the Strategic Plan period, RSE will encourage more Fellows to engage in public-facing activities. The Society is investing in new communications technology, allowing for on-line and hybrid events alongside in-person ones, drawing on lessons learned during the pandemic. We will partner with other academies and organisations where appropriate, increasing our reach and reducing duplication.

4. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The RSE is committed to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in its culture and working. We will integrate all EDI initiatives into an RSE-wide programme to enable learning and improvement that can be monitored and evaluated.

A DIVERSE FELLOWSHIP

The RSE is diversifying the Fellowship in order to reflect more fully the talents across Scottish society and to ensure that it is best placed to respond to the needs of society in Scotland and further afield. It has established pro-active nominations groups to identify people in underrepresented groups who should be considered for Fellowship (currently identifying women, people from ethnic minorities, creative arts, business, the professions, younger candidates). Changes have been made to the criteria for election and nomination forms to support diversity and provide opportunities for candidates to detail any individual circumstances that make the achievements particularly notable and/or impressive, or which may have affected the candidate's career profile and volume of output (for example, career breaks, caring responsibilities, part-time working). We have increased the number of Fellows elected each year, with the additional places targeted on candidates meeting diversity criteria. Although only 20% of the overall Fellowship are women, this figure doubles (39%) among those elected in the last 5 years. In 2021 two-thirds of new Fellows came from groups which are underrepresented in the Fellowship (those aged under 50, BAME, from an underrepresented university, outside of academia, women). In 2022, this increased to three-quarters.

In 2022, RSE became the first UK national academy to provide for open and competitive elections for all Office Bearers and Members of Council, while putting in place procedures to secure diversity.

ENSURING DIVERSE PANELS

The RSE is committed to representing fully the diversity of Scotland's knowledge base as well as delivering outcomes that impact positively on the full range of Scotland's diverse population. We therefore make a commitment to eliminate panels exclusively made up of men for all RSE activities, whether internally facing (e.g. committees, interview panels) or externally facing (e.g. workshops, conferences). Ideally all panels would contain members that can represent varying aspects of diversity (e.g. ethnicity, class, geographical location), but this can be difficult when seeking panel members that draw from smaller diverse groups. We understand that this requirement may place an extra representation burden on certain Fellows, and that it may not be possible to find women with the right expertise for all events and panels. However, with 39% of the most recently elected Fellows being women, the barriers to forming gender-balanced panels are increasingly straightforward to overcome. The RSE therefore commits to making every effort to ensuring diverse panels and committees wherever possible.

YOUNG ACADEMY OF SCOTLAND (YAS)

YAS is a body of professionals demonstrating knowledge and leadership in their work, along with a wider interest in contemporary social issues. YAS is interdisciplinary with activities developed and led by members, responding to some of the most pressing challenges facing Scotland today. YAS values equality and diversity, and is proud of the equal gender split of their membership. They encourage applications, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or any other protected characteristics. Recognising that Scotland's refugee and asylum-seeking communities include many people who can make meaningful contributions to Scotland, since 2016 YAS has committed to recruiting At-Risk Academics and Refugee (ARAR) professionals as members, with reserved slots, no membership fees and financial support to cover costs of participating in YAS activities.

RESEARCH AWARDS PROGRAMME

The RSE's redesigned Research Awards Programme ensures that awards are open to all academics, at all stages of their career, from all disciplines and at all research institutions. Financial support for those with caring responsibilities was piloted in calls such as the Covid19 Research Reboot Awards (2021), guidance was sought on how to support those "intersectionalities" of BAME, LGBTQI+ and those experiencing disadvantage/caring responsibilities, since evidence showed disproportional impacts from Covid19. Learning from this is being built into the 2022/2023 Research Awards Programme. We remain vigilant to any proposals that might support or promote inequalities and are scoping Unconscious Bias Training for proposal assessors (Fellows).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with public, policy and wider stakeholders has seen a shift to a more inclusive approach, in order both to reach, and secure input from, the breadth of Scottish society. RSE has partnered with organisations across the public, private and third sectors to enhance awareness of the RSE's "offer". *Geographic* inclusion is promoted through the Strategic Regional Approach, ensuring the RSE creates and maintains a presence across Scotland. *Inclusion of individuals* is also addressed through (for example): British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation at major events; easy-read versions of recent publications; and a remuneration policy to support participation of those who could not otherwise take part in events due to financial and other constraints. These initiatives are being pulled together into an EDI Approach to Engagement that can be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis.

RSE COMMUNICATIONS

The RSE's Communications Team work closely with the Research and Public Engagement Teams: ensuring that Research Awards calls reach the greatest breadth of potential applicants (using SFC and other networks) and that the Terms and Conditions are expressed clearly; that the public engagement events have the maximum reach through multiple communication channels and media (including videos, blogs, vlogs etc.), and making sure RSE publications and the recently-refreshed website are fully accessible.

INTERNATIONAL

As a member of the UK Human Rights Commission (UKHRC), the RSE participated in a meeting in 2021 aiming to formulate efficient responses to key humanitarian concerns, including the plight of Afghan Academics and the continued targeting of Mexican scientists. The UKHRC now includes all seven of the UK Academies in its membership, along with expert input from the Council of at Risk Academics (Cara). The RSE also successfully responded to five high profile academic-at-risk cases in 2021. Other critically important initiatives developed over 2020-2021 include creating the RSE Africa Working Group and commissioning the historical research scoping project into the RSE's historical links with slavery, as well as international policy responses. Most recently, the RSE has actively engaged with other Academies in response to the war in Ukraine.