The 107th Biochemical Society Annual General Meeting will take place this year on 26 July, at our headquarters, Charles Darwin House. The AGM is always a great opportunity to update members on another busy year of activities, and this year we will also announce the Biochemical Society’s next Chair, who will take over from Professor Anne Dell who is stepping down in July next year.

Last April, the Society announced the winner of the inaugural International Award, which recognises research conducted outside the UK that illustrates the importance of the molecular biosciences in the advancement of life sciences research. This month, the award will be presented to Job Dekker (from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the University of Massachusetts Medical School) by the Society’s President, Professor Sir Pete Downes, at the 24th IUBMB and 15th FAOBMB Congress (4-8 June) in Seoul, South Korea where Job will deliver his award lecture.

The eleven winners of our 2019 awards are also now public. The awards honour talented scientists at every stage of their careers, recognizing the outstanding work of both distinguished researchers and early career scientists. You can read more about the winners and their contributions to the molecular biosciences here: https://bit.ly/2v6AGkG.

At the time of writing, a year since the triggering of Article 50 has just passed, a significant milestone marking precisely one year until the UK is expected to leave the European Union. Leading up to this, the Society continues to work closely with the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) (which published a report on Brexit to mark this important anniversary: https://bit.ly/2y8SH1L) and also the Royal Society of Biology. Partnering with organizations such as CaSE and the RSB lends the Society a strong voice with which to ensure the views of our community are heard by the UK government during this critical period of negotiations.

As part of our work with the Royal Society of Biology, later this month the Society will attend Parliamentary Links Day (26 June). Organized annually by RSB on behalf of the STEM community, Links Day is the largest science event on the annual Parliamentary events calendar, and aims to strengthen dialogue between the scientific community and parliament, by bringing together scientists, learned societies, MPs, and Peers. Each year, the event assumes a different theme; at the time of writing, the proposed theme for this year is “Science and the Industrial Strategy”.

Finally, by the time you are reading this we will have wished farewell to two valued colleagues, Niamh O’Connor (Director of Publishing) and Helen Albert (Community and Press Editor) whom I would like to thank here in recognition of their hard work and dedication to the organization.

Niamh, who left us in May to take up an exciting new role as Journals Publishing Director at PLOS, first joined the organization in late 2013. During the past four and a half years she played a leading role in transforming our publishing and commercial activities. She led the modernization of our business, with the introduction of new editorial and production systems, which have helped to give Portland Press a competitive edge within the industry, and she was also instrumental in brokering the new sales partnership with the Royal Society of Chemistry which will help to broaden the reach of our publications while strengthening our revenue streams. Additionally during her tenure Niamh has overseen considerable changes to our communications function – including the re-branding exercise in 2015, an innovative approach to social media, and the launch of The Biochemist Blog. Through her expert knowledge of publishing policy, Niamh has helped to raise the profile of the Society and Portland Press, which will also continue to be an asset to the sector more generally through her work with ALPSP.

Helen, who also left in May, has taken on the position of Editor-in-Chief of Labiotech.eu, based in Berlin. Helen played a vital role as Editor of this magazine since joining the organization in 2015. She helped to reinvigorate the publication, having worked closely with the Editorial Board to develop a new and ambitious strategy for the magazine. Through her work with the Editorial Board, Helen updated the content of the magazine, with input from our Designer and Brand Guardian, to make it more accessible while not compromising its scientific value, as well as introducing new regular features such as interviews, Local Ambassador focus articles, and careers articles in collaboration with our Training Manager. She also developed and launched The Biochemist Blog, an online forum for news, views and opinions.

It has been a pleasure to work with both Niamh and Helen and, on behalf of everyone here at the Society and Portland Press, I would like to wish them all the best in their new endeavours.