

# **Trustees Report – for year ending 30 September 2023**

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Appointment and training of new Trustees**

The President, President Elect, Vice President(s), Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer are elected by the Fellows and Members of the Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST). The role of Immediate Past President is automatically filled. The chairs of Committees (which includes the External Affairs Committee) are nominated by the members of their respective Committees and their appointment as Trustees is ratified by the Board of Trustees.

Formal training is offered to new Trustees and governance training is included at the Board meeting following the AGM. Opportunities for external Trustee training are highlighted to the Trustees. Literature relating to good governance is available for Trustees to download from IFST's website. For the first time, broad EDI training was provided in September for all Trustees. Directors' and officers' liability insurance is maintained.

## **PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT**

The Trustees have taken due regard of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The charity's objectives, its main activities and who it aims to benefit are described below. All IFST's charitable activities focus on the advancement of the science of food science and technology, its education and its application for the benefit, safety and health of the public.

### **Organisational Structure**

The Board is advised by a Scientific, Finance, Education, Professional Development, Publications, and External Affairs Committees; each is chaired by a Trustee who is a member of the Institute. The Board is also advised by Advisory Groups Panels and ad hoc working groups.

An Independent Assessor, responsible for assessing the effectiveness in which the Board discharges its duties, attends Board and other meetings as an observer but may not vote.

The Trustees have delegated to the Chief Executive the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the charity. Pay and remuneration of key management personnel including the Chief Executive is set by the Remuneration & Benefits Committee. An informal benchmarking exercise is carried out on a regular basis with similar organisations to ensure IFST pay and remuneration remains marketable and fair. A new, more structured discretionary bonus scheme was introduced for all personnel.

## **Risk review**

The Board of Trustees taking advice from the Finance Committee maintains and monitors a register of all major strategic, business and operational risks that the charity faces and confirms that systems have been established to mitigate these risks.

The key risks highlighted through this process included:

- The Institute's financial security, especially relating to the income generated through its publications as the market moves to open access and other streams
- Database or website problems due to failures/bugs/upgrades
- The potential impact on the Institute's reputation should there be any real or perceived lack of robustness in its accreditation or professional recognition schemes
- Potential for loss of key personnel through retirement/resignation
- Decline in availability of members to volunteer or with the required expertise

## **REVIEW OF IFST OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The objective for which the Institute is established is the general advancement and application of food science and technology, for the benefit, safety and health of the public. Each year the Board undertakes a strategic review; in April 2023 IFST re-confirmed its six strategic priorities to enable it to achieve this objective.

Significant activities and achievements during 2022-2023 included the following

### **1) Providing and sharing evidence-based FS&T knowledge**

Those needing access to relevant, reliable evidence-based FS&T knowledge actively seek out knowledge, outputs and positions provided by IFST. Information is known for being easily searchable and, generally, made available at no or low-cost.

Key indicators and activities included:

- Focused on the curation of others' trusted resources as well as generating our own content
- Further developed resources using interns and other paid resources
- Further developed the delivery of hybrid events/conferences and returning to in person only events
- Increased the attendance at key events (Spring Conference/Lecture)
- Improved promotional availability of our resources
- Improved non-members event registrations

During the year the Institute hosted a series of in-person events and online webinars attracting registrations from members and non-members.

Spring Conference 2023, 'Tackling the Perfect Storm' the Power of Food Science and Technology was well-received and attracted 212 delegates (2022: 203) plus students from the host, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Readership of the Institute's quarterly Food Science & Technology magazine remains strong: members receive the magazine as part of their membership package; other individuals, libraries and organisations may receive the magazine as a paid-for subscription. Each issue of the magazine is themed by the Editor around an area of interest agreed with the IFST's Publications Committee and the Editorial Board. In 2022-2023 the themes included: food education and citizen science, food reformulation, advances in food manufacturing, innovation. The online readership continues to indicate new visitors rather than existing users indicating the online version of the magazine is read by more non-members than members.

International Journal of Food Science & Technology, the Institute's peer-reviewed academic journal published by Wiley, has performed very strongly with 622 articles and 810,128 page views, achieving an impact factor of 3.3 (2022: 3.612; 2021: 3.713). In contrast to the previous impact factor calculation period (2019 & 2020), IJFST published a greater number of citable articles. The increased number of articles reduces the ratio of citations per article and hence reduces the impact factor. It could be said that the journal is a "victim of its own success".

IFST has published 46 Information Statements, including new statements on Dietary Fibre, Food Contact Material Compliance, Genetics in Food Processing Parts 1 and 2. (2022: 42, 2021: 42).

There are now 17 'Food Science Fact Sheets' (2022: 13; 2021:11) in IFST's consumer/public facing information series, with recent additions on Safe Handling of Meat and Seafood, Fats and Oils, Food Processing.

This year we introduced the new resource of Technical Briefs. These are concise summaries of key food science and technology subjects and targeted at Technical Managers. We have published 5 during the year including AI and Food Safety, Intellectual Property, Starting a Food Manufacturing Business.

We also launched the major new scientific resource – the Innovation Toolkit. A Toolkit is designed to give reliable guidance on key topics. The Innovation Toolkit has been particularly popular when it was launched in September 2023 with over 2,000 clicks within the first fortnight of being published online.

Through its member-led Special Interest Groups (SIGs), Branches and Working Groups, IFST hosted a number of webinars during the year in addition to in-person and watch-along events.

## **2) Influencing key stakeholders**

Our invaluable resource of independent evidence-based scientific positions and our access to experienced professionals is actively sought to inform and support the work of key stakeholders including Governmental departments. IFST will demonstrate

leadership over chosen key topics and projects where it is in the best place to deliver positive outcomes in pursuit of our mission.

Key initiatives and activities included:

- Developed and deepened relationships with government departments and funding bodies
- Defined and embedded the branches representing the four nations
- Developed key policy positions and statements
- Identified and developed relevant themes where IFST can lead and influence
- Further promoted a governance guide for directors on food safety and food risk management
- Continued the petitioning for Royal Charter

Relations with Government departments continue to strengthen through the work of the External Affairs Committee and the Scientific Policy Director. External Affairs Committee is continuing to prioritise policy positions. Regular contact with FSA/FSS/Defra remains commonplace.

We were pleased to achieve more than 65,000 followers on our LinkedIn company page in September 2023 which represents significant growth from 50,000 in September 2022.

The Institute is going to be appointing a Social Media and Scientific Communications Coordinator to specifically manage online activity. The Institute's social media activity is becoming much more sensitive to profile of users on the different platforms. The number of users or followers is increasing year-on-year, and the average 'engagement rate' across all platforms is 4.4% (2022: 4%, 2021: 3.6%).

### **3) Promoting professional standards and development**

Regulators, retailers and the general public are reassured that technical personnel at all levels within the food sector are recognised as being professionally competent and striving to remain current in their knowledge and skills through effective CPD.

Key initiatives and activities included:

- Promoted membership and professional recognition
- Promoted adoption of the Food Safety Register
- Identified and pursued corporate 'group schemes'

The Institute continues to run sessions for employees of new and existing membership groups schemes, improving their understanding of potential memberships and registration options open to them.

For existing members, small group and workshop sessions have been offered to help people find the right membership or register, and help them through the application process.

Membership numbers continue to be boosted through new membership group schemes, through which employers promote professional recognition with IFST and cover the fees for their employees.

However, in summer 2023 the Institute experienced severe technical difficulties with the transfer to a new member database that may have affected the experience of members in renewing their membership and registrations. The new database is due to be integrated in January 2024. All lapsed members will be contacted to find out why they did not renew to help us improve our offering going forward and also prompt members to rejoin who experienced technical difficulties.

Long-held plans to redevelop the MyCPD system have been included within the update of the membership database.

Under license from Science Council, the Institute has 148 Chartered Scientists (2022: 170), 45 Registered Scientists (2022: 45) and one Registered Science Technicians (2022: 2) The Institute is committed to supporting the Science Council to ensure these registers remain relevant and that licensed bodies like IFST have the information and relevant collateral they need to help them promote professional registration and attract registrants.

The multi-level Register of Food Safety Professionals has continued to attract a steady flow of new registrants. The number of registrants was: 238 (2022: 246).

There were 109 registrants on the Register of Professional Food Auditors and Mentors (2022: 117).

The Code of Professional Conduct, which all members agree to observe, and the Disciplinary Procedures were reviewed and amendments published to members in April 2022. No complaints about the professional conduct of members under the Code of Professional Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures were received during 2022-2023 (2022: 0; 2021: 0).

#### **4) Utilising and growing the strength of our membership**

The profile of our membership is respected for its breadth and depth of experience. Individuals are proud to join and be a part of the Institute for the opportunity to actively contribute to the achievement of the Institute's mission.

Key initiatives and activities included:

- Worked with an external developer to implement a new membership database, although due to technical difficulties this experienced a number of delays. This will be implemented during 2023-2024.
- Increased the number of new members involved in our SIGs and Committees
- Supported branches, SIG and working group activity to align with the new network model.
- Supported relevant industry awards.

The number of members has increased slightly at 3,310 on 30 September 2023: (2022: 3,299; 2021: 2,983). Membership retention varies across the different levels of membership. The membership comprises:

Fellows: 692 (2022: 697)

Members: 834 (2022: 857)

Associates: 922 (2022: 997)

Undergraduate Students: 736 (2022: 748)

Postgraduate Students: 126 (not recorded for 2022)

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Fellows</b>	697	692
<b>Members</b>	857	834
<b>Associates</b>	997	922
<b>Undergraduate Students</b>	748	736
<b>Postgraduate Students</b>		126
<b>TOTAL</b>	3,299	3,310

The reduction in some numbers of members may be due to the aborted implementation of the new membership system attempted in August 2023. This resulted in membership renewals being suspended for a period of 4 weeks. This was addressed in September 2023 and individual contact has been made with each lapsed member.

‘IFST Community’, the member engagement platform which enables members to interact with each other as individuals or as members of branch or SIG networks, has continued to grow but achieved less traction than anticipated and a review of the platform is overdue. This has been delayed due to the technical issues with the new membership database. This will be undertaken within 2024 with a review of the website.

IFST remains hugely indebted to the 250 plus members who regularly contribute in some capacity, including serving on a committee, helping with policy development, responding to consultations, presenting at events and writing for publications.

## **5) Encouraging and supporting our future talent**

We are in a position to inform the sector on the current and future talent/skills needs relevant to FS&T and, where appropriate, we provide leadership in the delivery of those needs. The talent pipeline through all channels is currently insufficient to meet the needs of the sector.

Key initiative and activities included:

- Scoped and started to build an apprenticeships portal as a one stop shop for food science and food technology apprenticeships across the UK
- Developed and promoted National Food Science and Technology Week as the lead organisation in a consortium with IGD, NFU and the National Skills Council.
- Continued to operate the degree accreditation scheme
- Delivered Student Launchpads across the nations

- We note that we have not progressed the planned development of training provider accreditation and are reviewing the capacity and value of doing this.

Student LaunchPads were held in a number of locations across the UK including being held at Campden BRI in Gloucestershire and Macphie in Scotland attracting over 140 registrations increasing the number of students attending for another year. The number of Launchpads was less than in 2022, but the number of attendees was greater.

The degree accreditation scheme for undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses in food science and technology has attracted new applications, with a current total of 54 degree courses accredited (2022: 56; 2021: 50), representing the majority of UK food science and technology degree provision. There are two courses that have ceased and therefore not renewed. There are three in the process of applying for accreditation.

Love Food Love Science, the website resource for young people and secondary school teachers continues to attract interest and use although with less webpage visits than in previous years. It is planned that the content of this site will be integrated and revitalised in 2024 after the Apprenticeships portal has been launched.

In collaboration with Campden BRI, IFST continues to support 'Ecotrophelia', an EU-wide 'dragons den'-type competition for teams of university students. The 2023 UK competition attracted 10 teams from 5 universities (2022: 13 and 7; 2021: 11 and 6)., The UK heat was held at Sainsbury's head office in London online with teams presenting high quality products to a high-profile panel of 'dragons'. The winners (a team from the University of Nottingham, with their product, 'PlanEat') and represented the UK in the European final in October 2023 at Anuga, Cologne.

The 2023-24 POST Fellow Elliot Stanton commences his IFST sponsored fellowship in January 2024. His POSTnote will be published by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), supported by a grant from IFST.

This area of IFST's work did not progress as much as desired due to a staff vacancy in the Education and Careers Coordinator role. This appointment has now been made.

## **6) Financial stability, effective governance and sustainability**

IFST's income from membership and publishing continues to be stable. Some infrastructure projects including the new database project will require the planned investment from reserves.

The budgeting process has been reviewed and a new budget built up split into core and project expenditure. This is enabling more effective reporting per project, cost control, sound financial and risk management and robust governance followed by the Board and the Executive.

The Board, supported by the IFST Executive, the Finance, Scientific, Education, Professional Development, Publications and External Affairs Committees, as well as advisory groups and panels, continues to plan activity, monitor and review performance, and manage risks in line with the strategic priorities.

Key initiatives and activities included:

- Defined a tender for the next Publishing contract time period with an external consultant and go out to tender
- Agreed to combine the Education and Professional Development Committees to provide a spectrum of support and engagement from 'cradle to grave' for members.
- Explored alternative income streams from corporate supporters
- Pursued EDI objectives
- Scoped the necessary upgrade or replacement of the website platform
- The Institute's governance structure and main committee terms of reference are fit for purpose following the review in 2021.

There have been a number of staff changes during the year and some periods of multiple vacancies. The executive team has managed this, ensuring business continuity. This has been overseen by the Remuneration & Benefits Committee. These appointments have now been made and a settled staff team is in place for 2024.

### **Diversity, Equality and Inclusion**

The Institute is a signatory to the Science Council Declaration on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion. The Board has appointed a 'diversity champion' for these matters. IFST continues to work with the Science Council to improve representation, equality and inclusivity. Employee recruitment processes have been reviewed to mitigate the potential for unconscious bias and attract a diverse range of applicants.

### **Environmental Impact**

Although the Institute is an organisation of just 12 employees working out of a modest office space – and does not trigger the threshold for SECR reporting - it does recognise the need to manage and, where relevant, report on its environmental impact. Indeed, as the professional body for those engaged in food science and technology, with the food sector contributing so significantly to carbon emissions and other environmental impacts, IFST recognises the leadership it must show.

- Carbon: limited to employee travel, heating premises (11kWh) and electricity for light office equipment.
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions: limited to typical household emissions.
- Water: very low; limited to WC, drinks making facilities and dish washing.
- Waste: low; typical small office. Separate recyclable waste stream handled by local authority.
- Resource efficacy and materials: low; typical small office.
- Emissions to Air, Land and Water: low; typical small office.
- Biodiversity and Ecosystems: limited to typical small office.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The Finance Committee receive monthly reports on key financial documents. These are reviewed by Trustees at Board meetings also together with a regular report from the Honorary Treasurer.

Reporting is now split into core budgeted activities and specifically defined projects. In 2024 reporting will also be per strategic workstream.

During 2024 the Finance Committee and Trustees will consider the forthcoming new SORP requirements for 2025 and the Chrity Commission guidance CC8 on internal controls.

It is noted that a deficit budget was agreed for this financial year with agreed draw downs from reserves to fund specific development projects including a new membership database system. This was to utilise the reserves rather than to allow them to climb above a desired level and to invest in identified priority areas within the Institute.

### **Principal funding sources**

The major income streams were publications £447,987 (2022: 372,710) followed by membership subscription £278,149 (2022: £235,191). Significant income was also generated from accreditation activities.

### **Reserves Policy**

At the year end, the charity's reserves stood at £1,152,310 (2022: £1,411,180). The Trustees reviewed the reserves in 2021 and agreed it would be prudent to aim for a minimum reserve of £510,000 in any one year (which includes funds to be used for unbudgeted activity or innovations) and that, in addition, a further £1,200,000 should be held for longer term exceptional risks as identified in the risk register. The reserves policy takes account of risks and opportunities faced by the charity, the number and sources of income, security of income, level of expenditure commitment and other liabilities to ensure reserves continue to represent sufficient mitigation to foreseeable risks and are not excessive.

### **Investment Policy**

The Trustees wish to invest those monies not immediately required for the benefit of the charity's activities in such a manner that annual interest on the investment, after such taxes as may be levied on charities, the target is CPI plus 3.5% over a 3 to 5 year period. The Board of Trustees believes that a medium risk investment policy is appropriate. Medium risk is described as being prepared to accept risk of some short-term volatility in pursuit of returns over the medium- to long term in line with this investment target.

The Trustees recognise that they are not in a position to trade on a frequent basis and have delegated management of the portfolio to investment managers Cazenove Capital.

The Trustees have also determined the investment will be held in a Responsible Multi-Asset Fund, which seeks to avoid harm (integrating ESG factors), benefit people and the planet, and supports Sustainable Development Goals, and therefore excludes investments in assets like fossil fuels. In line with good practice the choice of investment management will be reviewed in 2024 and in relation to the wider market.

Drawdowns from reserves were made during the year for agreed, planned expenditure including the new membership database.

The reserves are being closely monitored and a plan is in place to replace them. The Finance Committee now receives a monthly update on cashflow and the plan to replace the reserves.

The Board of Trustees have kept themselves apprised of the new guidance from the Charity Commission on investments and ESG factors. They are satisfied that there is no change needed to our policies.

### **Investment Performance**

During the year the value of investments decreased by £62,284, including losses of £12,334.

### **Fundraising**

On occasion, IFST receives voluntary funds from trusts, foundations and individuals as income that helps us to fulfil our charitable objectives. The executive team administers any voluntary income received in this way but does not actively fundraise. IFST does not engage external professional fundraisers or commercial participators to carry out fundraising activity nor engage in face-to-face or telephone fundraising. In developing the approach to fundraising IFST has taken account of the Code of Fundraising Practice issued by the Fundraising Regulator. The charity has received no complaints about its fundraising activities either during the financial year or subsequently.

The charity periodically reviews its policies and procedures in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation. This Privacy Policy, published on our website, clearly states what personal data we will hold in relation to members, stakeholders and related contacts and how this data will be used. It sets out how individuals can raise concerns or complaints.

### **PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS**

The Board of Trustees has agreed a detailed plan for the period October 2023-September 2024 focused on utilising and leveraging the 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the Institute to increase membership, awareness and impact of IFST in each of six strategic workstreams with the following priorities:-

#### **Workstream 1 - Providing and sharing evidence-based FS&T knowledge**

- Deliver more credible and current scientific content - optimise and celebrate insight and input from Special Interest Groups and Committees

- Be seen online through increasing search engine optimisation across web content and promote through search engine marketing
- Increase online presence - content optimised and functionality of a new website
- Be seen at events where IFST can share knowledge and insight on food science and technology
- Hold better and more attractive events, increasing marketing

#### **Workstream 2 - Influencing and supporting key stakeholders**

- Deepen and expand relationships with press and target stakeholders
- Increase the speed with which we respond credibly to consultations and news
- Increase external representation – to increase credible voice, presence and member recruitment

#### **Workstream 3 - Promoting professional standards and development**

- Increase CPD opportunities for members = member benefit
- Increase credibility of membership
- Establish poor conduct management to maintain standards
- Clarify and increase association with IFST in social media profiles (Linked-In)

#### **Workstream 4 - Utilising the strength of our membership**

- Increase support for Branch events including in-person events to increase networking opportunities as a membership benefit
- Define and promote a series of awards for the Jubilee year
- Celebrate and recognise member involvement - especially diversity

#### **Workstream 5 - Encouraging and supporting our future food sector talent**

- Agree and implement an updated education and professional development strategy with the new Committee
- Increase engagement with UK students including a greater number of Launchpads
- Develop a strategy to retain and engage international students

#### **Workstream 6 - Financial stability, effective governance and sustainability**

- Ensure Board and Committee administration is accurate and timely
- Enhance monthly finance reporting and embed budget management across the staff team
- Define Office and Team Infrastructure – IT, office, working at home

### **RELATED PARTIES**

The only related party transactions in the year are shown in note 18. There are no related parties outside the normal course of business.

### **GOING CONCERN**

A significant proportion of IFST's income comes from publishing and membership activity, which have risen in the year. Income generating event activity has not increased as much as intended but the running costs of the Institute have been carefully controlled.

Noting the apparent security of the Institute's income streams and stability of expenditure in light of recent (and potential future) shocks and the levels of reserves, the trustees plan an ambitious programme of work and continue to operate IFST as a going concern.

## **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Trustees (who are also Directors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report (incorporating a Directors' Report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the result of the charitable company for that year. In preparing these statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and

- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In approving the Trustees' Report, the Trustees are also approving the Directors' Report in their capacity as company directors.

**Auditor**

Moore Kingston Smith LLP is deemed to be re-appointed under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

**Small company provisions**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.