

Statement from Trustees – protecting IChemE’s reputation

The following statement, published on 7 December 2017, represents the views of IChemE’s Council following the announcement of an Extraordinary General Meeting, made on 27 November 2017. The meeting will convene on 11 January 2017.

1. The Trustees of the Institution have to take a holistic view of the actions of the signatories to the EGM request, and cannot consider the request in isolation as has been suggested. This includes a review of their actions both before and after submission of the request.
2. The ongoing exchanges and comments on social media, which have been running for over a year, and, which have been supported (directly or indirectly) or posted by some of the signatories, have ranged across the spectrum from the sensible to the outrageous. The outrageous commentary has included:
 - a. Personal attacks on the integrity and standing of the Council and the staff.
 - b. Unsubstantiated allegations of misconduct, some of which have required independent investigation and all of which have been found to be wholly without substance.
 - c. Outright dismissal of the positive work by the current Trustees, all of whom are volunteers, and none of whom receive remuneration for their efforts.
 - d. Outright dismissal of the member consultations on governance and strategy. This includes the work that was initiated over two years ago to address issues with the current governance structure, and work that has been undertaken to develop a far-sighted strategy that articulates a vision for a successful Institution for 2022 and beyond.
3. Before the submission of the request, the signatories did not attempt to conduct any meaningful dialogue with the Trustees and staff, to better understand the work that is in hand to address the concerns that they have raised.
4. It is reasonable for the Trustees to conclude from the above that the signatories as a collective, have chosen not to engage with the legitimately constituted Council, preferring instead to mount and conduct a campaign that, knowingly or otherwise, fundamentally attacks the reputation of the charity.
5. As set out by the Charity Commission (Document CC3), the Trustees have a duty to ensure that:

“You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. This is sometimes called the duty of prudence. Prudence is about exercising sound judgement. You and your co-trustees must:

 - *make sure the charity’s assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes*
 - *avoid exposing the charity’s assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk”*
6. It is Council’s belief that when the behaviour of the signatories, as outlined above, is considered in the round, it exposes the charity’s reputation to undue risk. Therefore, the Trustees and staff cannot support any activity that has the potential to do harm to the Institution’s reputation and must take the appropriate steps to defend it.