



Press Release: 3rd October 2011

New RSE President and General Secretary take Office

Sir John Arbutnott has succeeded Lord Wilson of Tillyorn as the next President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE). He formally took over the role at the Annual Statutory Meeting of the Society.

Professor Alice Brown has also followed Professor Geoffrey Boulton as the General Secretary of the Society. Alice is the first woman to be elected to this post.

Sir John Arbutnott is a distinguished microbiologist and former Principal of the University of Strathclyde. He also chaired the Greater Glasgow Health Board and led the Clyde Valley review on the potential for providing shared local authority services.

The retiring President, Lord Wilson of Tillyorn commented, "Sir John is a person of high reputation, who in addition to his academic achievements has an outstanding record of public service."

"I have very much enjoyed my period as President of the RSE and in particular I am pleased that during my term the Society has recently established the RSE Young Academy of Scotland, which I hope and expect will nourish some of the outstanding younger generation of scholars and professionals that we have in Scotland."

"The Society will be fortunate to have Sir John as its next President. Under his Presidency I am sure that the RSE will go from strength to strength in all of its roles as the National Academy of Scotland."

"I also welcome the election of Professor Alice Brown as the next General Secretary of the Society. Professor Brown is a well known and respected figure in public life and I am confident that she will build upon the work in policy advice to government that Geoffrey Boulton has made a key priority during his term of office."

Sir John responded saying, "I am highly honoured to be elected as the President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The RSE with its links across Scottish society plays an important role in the future of Scotland nationally and internationally."

Sir John was educated at Hyndland Secondary School, Glasgow University and Trinity College, Dublin. He was made a Knight Bachelor for services to education in 1998. Amongst his academic posts he was a Professor of Microbiology at Trinity College, Dublin and the University of Nottingham before returning to Scotland to take up the position of Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Strathclyde, a role he performed from 1991 to 2000.

He has also served on a number of committees advising on aspects of policy including: the Richmond Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food; the report on Boundaries, Voting and Representation in Scotland; and on the Allocation of Health Resources in Scotland.

Professor Alice Brown is a former Vice-Principal of the University of Edinburgh, having taught economics and politics in her academic career, and also served as the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Alice was an active figure in the development of devolution in Scotland, including, being a member of the Consultative Steering Group that developed the procedures for the Scottish Parliament, and promoting the equal representation of women in the Parliament. She was awarded a CBE in 2009.

Notes to editors:

In addition to Sir John Arbuthnott and Professor Alice Brown the following are also members of the RSE Council for 2011-12:

Vice-Presidents: Professor Jean Beggs; Professor Graham Caie; Mr John McClelland; Professor Wilson Sibbett.

Treasurer: Mr Ewan Brown.

Fellowship Secretary: Professor Alan Miller.

Ordinary Members: Professor Cairns Craig; Professor Anna Dominiczak; Professor Susan Manning; Professor Sheila Rowan; Sir David Edward.

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