



British Society for
Research into
Learning Mathematics

BSRLM Chair's Annual AGM Report 2025

BSRLM Chair

Alf Coles, University of Bristol

BSRLM Honorary Award

It is the privilege of the out-going Chair to nominate a BSRLM member for an Honorary Award (conferring life membership). It is my great pleasure to announce that this award has gone to Professor Hilary Povey, in recognition of her services to RME, BSRLM, local, national and international communities of teachers and of mathematics educators. Hilary has been an inspirational figure to many of us in this room. Sadly, Hilary cannot be here today to give a plenary address.

Priorities

As an executive committee, we have been working towards the following priorities for the last 3 years. This is a moment perhaps to recognise our achievements and I am sure the new Chair and executive will want to set new priorities for the years to come.

- (1) developing our inclusivity in the four regions and beyond UK; (with the conference in Scotland, we raised our profile significantly; membership it as its highest level since records began – likely meaning the highest ever level; see further notes on Day Conferences)
- (2) reaching out to other communities in maths education research; (this joint conference with the Netherlands feels hugely significant and we hope will lead to further collaboration; we have an aspiration to hold joint events every 3 years)
- (3) contributing to national narratives about research in mathematics education (the book contract with Springer (see below) aims to be an important publication; we also hope the book might become a series, e.g., updated every 4 or 5 years – something done for mathematics education research in Australasia, see below)
- (4) stabilising finances and processes; (we continue to be relatively stable financially; we continue to work on collating our collective wisdom around processes, see notes on executive committee and JD award below; we have begun exploring options for limiting executive member liability – for now we would like to formalise that we are an “unincorporated association”, see legal advice below)

(5) promoting RME (the journal is being cited and accessed more than ever – see further notes on RME below).

Day Conferences

Conferences all ran smoothly again in the last year (continuing the pattern of a Saturday f2f, Saturday online, Friday f2f meeting). Many thanks to Cristina Mio and Bohan Liu for organising these events with such care and skill.

The June 2025 New Researchers' Day and Day conference were both held in Glasgow, many thanks again to Cristina Mio and all the other local organisers. It was great to have a BSRLM event in Scotland and we hope this will prompt prolonged engagement with Scottish mathematics educators.

Participants' evaluations of day conferences continue to be highly positive. We have the venues already for summer 2026 (London) and autumn 2026 will not run due to BCME. Spring 2026 and Spring 2027 will be online. We welcome offers for hosting BSRLM in the summer of 2027. We are delighted *this* conference is a joint event with the Freudenthal Institute, in the Netherlands and we look forward to further collaborations.

A successful practitioner research day took place in February 2025 – many thanks to Jennie Golding and the BERA SiG convenors for organising and running this important event.

BSRLM@40

BSRLM turned 40 in 1985. To mark this occasion we put together a proposal for Springer's Advances in Mathematics Education series. This proposal has been accepted and we hope to have the book published in 2026.

Research in Mathematics Education (Journal)

RME has produced three issues since the last AGM. The editorial team is now: Christian Bokhove, Jodie Hunter and Eirini Geraniou as Editors; Vesife Hatisaru as Book Reviews Editor, supported by Gabriel Lee as Editorial Assistant. Congratulations to Eirini and Vesife on their appointments. I am sure I can speak for all of BSRLM in thanking Jenni Ingram for her work as editor, who stepped down in the summer, and to Eirini for her work as book reviews editor.

The Editorial Board conducted an online meeting at the end of October. Article access has increased by 37% in the year. The journal is in Q1 of education journals.

We are grateful to the work of the Editing team, reviewers and submitting authors, in ensuring the continued relevance of RME.

We are re-looking at the contract between BSRLM and T&F (which was signed in 2013). Now so many members receive RME online only, a better arrangement may be possible (currently we pay the same fee per member per issue, for online or print access).

BSRLM Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has met three times during the year, as well as doing a great deal of work by e-mail to ensure the smooth running of the society. I am grateful to every member of the Executive Committee for their hard work and commitment.

For several years now we have been trying to capture the accumulated wisdom of the Society in the form of policies and procedures. This is an on-going process.

The following summarises positions and periods of office (red indicates the AGM at which new officers will need to be elected):

	Nov 2025	Nov 2026	Nov 2027
Chair	Alf Coles	<i>New Chair</i>	<i>New Chair</i>
Secretary	Laurie Jacques	Laurie Jacques	<i>New Secretary</i>
Membership Co-ordinator	Rosa Archer	Rosa Archer	<i>New Membership Co-ordinator</i>
Treasurer	Dave Hewitt	Dave Hewitt	Dave Hewitt
Online Comms Co-ordinator	Karen Skilling	<i>New Online Comms Co-ordinator</i>	<i>New Online Comms Co-ordinator</i>
Publications Officer	Taro Fujita	<i>New Publications Officer</i>	<i>New Publications Officer</i>
Outreach Co-ordinator	Jennie Golding	Jennie Golding	Jennie Golding
Day conference co-ordinators	Cristina Mio Bohan Liu	Cristina Mio Bohan Liu	<i>New Day conference co-ordinators</i>

The executive also appoint 2 auditors of BSRLM accounts (for 2-year terms). Current auditors are: Gwen Ineson (until 2026) and Tracy Helliwell (thank you for agreeing to take on this role until 2027). Thank you to Vinay Kathotia for serving his 2-year term as auditor. We are grateful to you all for the service you offer to the community.

Janet Duffin Award

The award for 2024 was received by James Calleja, who gave an inspiring plenary talk in the June conference, for this paper:

Calleja, J., Foster, C., & Hodgen, J. (2024). Teachers' structuring of mathematical inquiry lessons: shifting from "task-first" to "scaffolded inquiry." *Research in Mathematics Education*, 26(3), 460–493. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794802.2023.2176915>

We were delighted a member of the Duffin family could join the conference in Glasgow to present the award.

New Researcher's Award

All proceedings papers of the summer conference (and new researcher's day), authored by those self-identifying as a "new researcher", are considered for BSRLM's new researcher award. The award for 2025 went to:

Rita Pescetelli, for the significance for mathematics education of her study and the rigour and appropriateness of her report 'Unpacking the challenges: initial data analysis on cognitive and attentional demands faced by students with ADHD Symptoms in GCSE Mathematics word problems'

We would also like to highly commend two other papers, those of:

Helen Gormley: 'Play, talk, think: Fostering mathematical reasoning in reception classrooms' and

Holly Drummond and Kirsten Fenton, ESMS Junior School, Edinburgh: 'Mathematical journalling: reframing pedagogy in Scotland through oracy, reflection and learner voice'.

You can find all these papers in the Proceedings of the June 2025 conference.

Open Forum Feedback (from June 2025)

There was support to maintain the pattern of 2 x f2f and 1 online meeting.

We discussed ways to increase the proportion of conference submissions written up for Proceedings. The executive considered alternatives to 6-page proceedings articles. For now we do not propose any change – and would again like to highlight and promote the writing up of your research presentations, workshops and working groups.

We continue to explore whether plenary talks might be able to be recorded and made available on our website.

One proposal for the AGM for a change in constitution

Proposal

The constitution of BSRLM is not explicit about what kind of an organisation it is. Having discussed at the AGM in 2024, we would like to bring to the AGM in 2025 the following constitutional change.

Proposal - Change the start of the constitution from the current wording:

Name 1. The Society has the name “The British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics” (BSRLM)

To the following:

Name and status 1. The Society has the name “The British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics” (BSRLM). BSRLM is an unincorporated association.

We sought legal advice about this move, which is copied below.

Summary of legal advice re: move to being an unincorporated association. Our questions are in normal type, legal advice in bold. Advice was sought from: Peter Korn, Interface Legal Advisory Service, and received Oct 2025.

1) At present BSRLM does not state what kind of organization we are. (We are a “Learned Society” but we believe that this does not confer, in itself, any legal status). So, in this current state, do we have a de facto legal status and, if so, what is this?

In my view your legal status is as an “unincorporated association”. This is really just a posh way of saying “not a company”, and it basically denotes a situation in which two or more people get together for a common purpose (and start to act on that common purpose) but without incorporating.

2) In this current state, what is the liability of the executive and the membership (e.g., if there is unlimited liability, is this shared by all members)?

The executive can be held liable for the organisation’s debts. It is also theoretically possible for ordinary members to be jointly liable for criminal acts or breaches of statutory duty committed by the organisation, but I think that this is a very unlikely scenario, particularly where (as here) the constitution gives members no responsibilities other than to pay the annual subscription.

3) Would you advise that we move to making clear in our constitution that we are an “unincorporated association”? (given the executive changes quite regularly, it would seem to me helpful to make explicit our status, in case this question arises again in the future, so would this be the correct status to adopt?)

Yes, as this would be more accurate about - and descriptive of - the status, but most people will not understand the implications and so I think that it is more important to ensure that people know about the degree of liability (or to improve the position by incorporating).

4) And, if we were to do this, does it make any change to the society’s position re: liability of the executive committee and members?

No, I do not think so.

[end of legal advice]

Our current understanding about options going forward are as below. This will be a matter for the next Chair and executive to discuss and propose to members if changes are sought.

Status	Benefits	Risks/drawbacks
Unincorporated (i.e., maintain current status)	Current practices can continue uninterrupted. We know the accounting and data protection arrangements are manageable by volunteers (just).	There is personal liability for the exec. (NB BSRLM now has public liability insurance)
Charitable Incorporated Association	There is limited liability for exec members. There may be opportunities for tax savings or gift aid (e.g., on Leone Burton fund donations).	There are increased accounting requirements – accounts need to be submitted to the Charity Commission. All of BSRLM’s activities need to be charitable (meaning, not just for the benefit of members).
Company Limited by Guarantee	There is limited liability for exec members.	There are increased accounting requirements – accounts need to be submitted to Companies House.

Thank you!

To Taro Fujita, for his exceptional work as Publications Officer, and for helping promote writing up of research reports.

To Karen Skilling for all her work as Online Communications Co-Ordinator, including instigating blog posts and interviews on the BSRLM website, and improving navigation in the Members’ area.

It has been a pleasure to work with both of you over the last three years on the executive committee.

To Vinay Kathotia, for his support of BSRLM as auditor of our accounts and the care he took over this important task.

And to all of you for supporting BSRLM and the entire executive!