

## **DRAFT**

### **2020 AGM Minutes - Held by Video Conference commencing at 4 pm 19<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

Lilian Greenwood, President, in the chair.

The President set out the ground rules for conduct during the meeting and the procedure for asking questions. Liz Goodman, as convener, explained the voting mechanism and confirmed that there was a quorum of members present with a total of 30 participants being recorded immediately before the meeting commenced.

1. Apologies were received from: Nicola Chakraverty, David Grieve, Dr Tony Lyons, David Peace and Jean Thomas.

John Wells – Reported that immediate past secretary David Peace's motor neurone disease has progressed as prognosed but that he remains in good spirits despite having difficulty in speaking, eating and drinking. An operation to improve his quality of life has been unexpectedly postponed. He has written a blog "deardavid.co.uk." which includes experiences from his early life. John Wells undertook to convey the good wishes of the meeting to David.

A modification of the running order of the Agenda as circulated was proposed so as to receive John Wells' (the Chair) report before that of the Treasurer.

2. The President drew the meetings attention to the Minutes of the 2019 AGM and asked if there were any matters arising. Since there were none, she then asked if there was a proposer (Keith Cocker) and seconder (Stephen Mennell) to the resolution to approve.

The Minutes of the 2019 AGM were approved without changes nem con.

3. The President then moved onto appointments. In view of the pandemic and its ramifications the Committee had proposed that the past President, President and President Elect continue in office for a further year.

3.1 The resolution in favour of Lilian Greenwood (1984) to continue as President for 2020-21 was approved nem con

Those nominated by the Committee:

3.2 The resolution in favour of John Little (1972) remaining as Vice-President and President elect for 2020-21 was approved nem con

3.3 The resolution in favour of John Moverley (1968) remaining as Immediate Past President for 2020-21 was approved nem con

3.4 The resolution in favour of John Wells (1976) remaining as Chair for 2020-21 was approved nem con

3.6 The resolution in favour of Michael Roberts (1967) being elected Secretary was approved nem con

3.6 The resolution in favour of John Little (1972) to continue as Treasurer was approved nem con

3.7 The resolution in favour of Tuhin Imam (1984) being elected to the Committee was approved nem con

3.8 The joint resolution in favour of Karen Cass (1981) and David Hughes (1978) as Committee members was approved nem con

Deborah Loveluck (2007) was acknowledged with pleasure as the College Representative. The Senior Tutor's nomination of up to two student members was expected shortly and, in accordance with the Society Rules, would be considered at the next meeting of the committee. The Editor of the Society Magazine, the Webmaster and the Branch Chairs are noted as agreeing to continue to serve as Committee Members.

## 4 The Officers' Reports

4.1 **The President Report** – the President referred to her report that had been previously circulated, noting the unusual times had resulted in far fewer events being held or attended than she would have wished. In reference to her report, it was acknowledged that Keith Cocker's name should contain only one "r".

4.2 **The Chair's Report** – flowing from the 2019 AGM debate John Wells reported that the intended discussions on the nature of the relationship between the Society and the College had not progressed. It is intended that the discussion be resumed as soon as conditions permit.

A joint opinion survey on behalf of the College and the Society has been conducted among alumni in respect of the style, content, format and presentation of the College publications to establish preferences and appreciation of members views thereon. The results will be available shortly. A review of the Society's investments and its management has arisen as the College is also changing its Investment Manager. The process of finding a new investment manager is largely complete and a recommendation to the Committee will be made shortly. David Way had suggested two possible candidates.

The College has advised that it is no longer able to collect subscriptions to the Society from graduating students. There are legal issues in respect of mandatory charges and of data protection. As a result, from the end December 2019 the subscription of £45 will no longer be collected and all alumni graduating after this date will automatically become full members of the Society. Alternatives have been considered but the conclusion of the Committee is that the only way to continue with the principal of universal membership of Society is to discontinue the charge. Because of this suggestion the Society must now resolve to approve the recommendation not to collect subscriptions from new graduates.

Herb Bate – enquired why the collection of contact information by the College for the Society offends data protection legislation. The Chair replied that was for the College to explain. The fact remains that they are not prepared to collect the subscription on behalf of the Society. The Society could try to collect subscriptions directly but that gives rise to the probability of two classes of alumni which is regarded as highly undesirable. Furthermore, attempts at collection would raise several logistic issues which the Society is not currently able to handle. The Chair said that the Society had written to every new graduate to welcome them as full members and to outline the benefits of their membership.

Keith Cocker said this decision by the College is disappointing. He knew of no one who had objected to

the subscription and regrets the distancing of the Society and College. Cocker urged that the Society tries to close the gap.

Deborah Loveluck emphasised that College was merely following legal advice and had not sought to distance itself at all. She also stressed that the College attempts to obtain contact details of all recent graduates. This includes writing to them up to three times but as they discontinue their Dot. Cam email address the process becomes increasingly difficult. Another opportunity to re-establish contact arises at the time of the award of MA degrees. She said that the MOU between the College and the Society contained a provision to the effect that there is to be a review by the College's new communications manager who is seeking to obtain feedback from the 8-9,000 alumni and had so far about 560 responses with more expected. She noted that the College pays all the expenses of the production, printing and distribution of the Magazine at a cost of about £20,000 currently. There is potentially an issue of viability if the number of copies that were being mailed were substantially reduced.

The mood of the meeting indicated a strong desire to retain a print version of the Society magazine.

Tony Engel agreed that the legal advice made sense but enquired whether the Society could become registered as a charity especially as one of its principal functions is to make grants. One of the longer-term concerns must be the Society's continued financial capacity to make such grants and pay its other obligations. He enquired whether donors to the College could be more actively encouraged to consider the Society at the same time.

The Chair said that the new investment managers had indicated that the projected income will be sufficient to enable grants to be continued at the current level.

The President then called for a vote on the Committee's recommendation to cease to collect further subscriptions for Full Membership with effect from January 2020.

The motion was carried with 21 in favour, 2 against with 6 abstaining

#### **4.3 Treasurer's report**

In respect of the Income of the Society in the year to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 the Treasurer noted that while dividend and interest income was slightly down on the previous twelve months at £7,252 against £7,684. The loss of £8,180 of subscription income compared to the previous year meant a decline in total income from £16,676 in 2019 to £9,200 in this financial year. Expenditure was down notably in the categories of catering, entertaining, communications management and secretarial costs while grants and bursaries were held at a similar level to 2019. Thus, total expenditure was reduced to £8,239 from £12,398 resulting in a small operating surplus of £964 for the year compared to £4,270 in 2019. However, the value of cash and investments fell by £5,177 resulting in a deficit for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 of £4,207, and the Society's total net assets falling from £341,207 to £337,000.

The Treasurer referred to the impending appointment of a new investment manager. After fees and adjusting for inflation a net cash return of about 3% of the capital value of the investment portfolio is to be anticipated. This would represent an increase from the 2% that has been achieved with the current investment managers and so, despite the loss of the subscription income it is believed that the Society can continue to make grants at approximately the recent

historical level. The disappointment being that no increase in this element of the Society's activities appears to be able to be made without a greater level of donations or new income from other sources. It was noted that applications for new grants and bursaries were down in 2020 largely owing to the current global situation where travel is restricted.

A further issue facing the Society is whether it is liable to pay corporation tax on some or all of its income. The Chair advised that professional advice is being obtained on the matter but until there is a final outcome of that discussion, and it may be that the Society's income will be deemed not to be subject to tax, then the costs and complexities involved in seeking to avoid this tax through applying for charitable status is to be deferred.

John Moverley enquired who had incurred the £750 travel cost. This was a grant in respect of a tour for College musicians.

Tony Engel observed that more income is required to support larger grants. He also suggested that the Society should consider setting up a charitable account to receive donations that would not then be subject to corporation tax.

Bill Schardt enquired if the general donations of £1,789 were a non-recurring item which the Treasurer confirmed was so.

The President then called for a vote to approve the 2019-2020 Society Accounts as presented. John Little proposed the resolution and Bill Schardt seconded the motion. The resolution was passed with 92% in favour, none against and 8% abstaining.

The President then enquired if there was any other business but since no matters were raised the meeting was formally closed at 5:15 pm

The date of the 93<sup>rd</sup> AGM is set for 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

Michael Roberts

Secretary