

British Humanist Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on Saturday 19 July 2014, 14.30 – 16.00 at Bishopsgate Institute, 230 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4QH

Present: Asad Abbas, Catherine Abrey, John Adams, Mike Adams, Deborah Ainger, Ray Alcock, Robert Ashby, Charles Baily, Tom Beaton, Samuel Becker, Michelle Beckett, John Blakey, Rhian Blakey, Dermot Bolton, David Bothwell, Alan Brownjohn, Nicholas Burns, Neil Camp, Barbara Chandler, Donald Clarke, Les Collins, Bronwen Davies, Clare Delderfield, Stells Dessoy, Steve Dolan, Blaise Egan, Zoe Fairbairns, Charles Franklyn, Cathryn Fraser, Alice Fuller, Edward Gascoigne, Lyn Glass, Brian Goredema-Braid, Neville Grant, Anna Gray, Mary Grove, Bernard Halter, John Hanger, Roy Heaps, Alan Henness, Nicholas Hollinghurst, Russell Holt, Willemien Hoogendoorn, Tony Howard, Nicola Jackson, Diana Jones, Toby Keynes, Audrey King, Roger Knight, Adam Knowles, Josh Kutchinsky, Maureen Kvebekk, Terry Lilley, Maria MacLachlan, Derek Marcus, Marilyn Mason, Robert Mill, Leslie Milne, John Moore, Peter Morgan, Daniel Nabarro, Len Newton, Marie Oatham, Ronald Oatham, Steve O'Kane, Rory O'Kelly, Alan Palmer, Helen Palmer, Paula Palmer, Iain Paterson, Rafael Pepiol, Naomi Phillips, Mike Pictor, David Pollock, Mary Porter, Alison Redcastle, David Redcastle, Michael Rickwood, Jeremy Rodell, Patricia Rogers, Seoirse Ropaigealach, Alom Shaha, David Simmonds, Barbara Smoker, Joe Stacey, Alison Stein, Richard Stein, Ian Symons, Darrell Thomas, Anthony Thorne, Frances Thorpe, Brian Tolman, Bryan Tully, Richard Unwin, Jessica Vautier, Philip Veasey, Carmen-Lydia Vernet, Philip Vince, Lucy Wainwright, Phil Walder, Ray Ward, David Warden, Mark Wardrop, Deborah Waters, Jerry Weber, Karen Weber, John White, Ray White, Tony Wild.

Staff in attendance: Andrew Copson, Pavan Dhaliwal, Jessica Layfield, Catriona McLellan, Blakeley Nixon, Iyabo Ojo, Sara Passmore, Isabel Russo, Richy Thompson, Andrew West, Liam Whitton.

Apologies for Absence: Abe Alpren, Peter Bagshaw, Barbara Burfoot, Chris Butterworth, John Catt, Sophie Catt, Amal Chaudhuri, Chris Chessum, Julia Copson, Tom Copley, Maureen Duffy, Leslie Geach, John Gregory, Marion Gregory, Rosemary Hanbury Brown, Lyndon Harrison, Dianne Hayter, Ramon Henson, Wendy Hill, Irene Jackson, Jack Jeffery, Billy Jenkins, William Knight, Warren Lakin, Barry Latchford, Elaine Lever, Fanny Lines, Ken Loach, Tag McEntegart, Raymond Mellor, Richard Norman, Guy Otten, Richard Paterson, Elio Pennisi, Joe Platts, Maggie Platts, Sue Polydorou, Edward Presswood, Susan Rankin, John Ricketts, Martin Rowson, Nick Senior, Rosemary Somers, Tony Somers, Chris Smith, Ariadne Tampion, Mary Walker, Michael Watson, Janet Williams, David Wright, Jane Wynne Willson.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked members for attending.

Adoption of Standing Orders: On the proposal of Robert Ashby (Chair of the Board of Trustees and the AGM), the Standing Orders were adopted by the meeting.

Declarations of Interest: The Chair reminded those present that members speaking should declare any potential conflict of interest in relation to any item.

Appointment of tellers: Alice Fuller and Alan Palmer were appointed as tellers.

Appointment of timekeeper: The Chair informed the meeting that this was not required.

Minutes of the AGM of Saturday 13 July 2013: Iain Paterson requested that his attendance be recorded. On the proposal of the Board, the minutes were approved *nem con* with this change.

Matters arising from the previous minutes: There were no matters arising.

Chair's address: The Chair reported on the past year's activities, thanking the Chief Executive and the BHA for the many successes. In particular, the Chair reported on the work the Board of Trustees has been doing to oversee the strong governance of the organisation. The Chair thanked the staff, trustees, and volunteers for their dedication and hard work, in particular the Vice Chair and Treasurer, and the volunteers on the BHA Development Board, who have been working hard to fundraise for the World Humanist Congress. The Chair reported on the ongoing organisation of the World Humanist Congress, which has taken a huge amount of staff and volunteer time. The Chair noted the campaigns successes of the year, which have been significant and have helped to raise the BHA's public profile.

Election to the Board of Trustees: An election of trustees was reported. In a postal ballot in which 2007 valid votes were cast, the following candidates were elected (in order of election): PHILLIPS, Naomi; BECKETT, Michelle; ROGERS, Patricia; RODELL, Jeremy. Thanks were expressed by all present to all candidates who stood. Thanks were expressed by the Chair to Blaise Egan and David Savage, both of whom were leaving the Board this year, and to John Woolhouse, who stepped down as Treasurer in November 2013.

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2013: John Adams (Treasurer) presented key figures from the annual accounts. He drew attention to the much improved financial situation in 2013, in which the BHA reported a surplus. The Treasurer thanked the previous Treasurer, John Woolhouse, and the Board for overseeing these improvements, and thanked the management for proposing and implementing such difficult budgetary restrictions while continuing to operate to a very high standard. The Report and Accounts for 2013 were accepted *nem con*.

Re-appointment of Auditor: The firm of Knox Cropper was reappointed as auditor *nem con*.

Remuneration of Auditor: The trustees were authorised to determine the remuneration of the auditor *nem con*.

Motions received: The following motion was proposed by Tony Wild, representing the North East Humanists, and seconded by Leslie Milne:

The British Humanist Association believes that society has a moral responsibility to look after the welfare of those who, through no fault of their own, find themselves disadvantaged and in need of the assistance of the state. It further believes that the current programme of financial austerity, with its cuts to welfare spending, is having a disproportionate effect on the nation's poor, who are now bearing the main burden of the attempt to reduce the economic deficit. It, therefore, encourages all humanists to support campaigns that oppose policies and practices which make the poorest, and least physically and psychologically able, pay to solve an economic problem which is not of their making.

The Board of Trustees proposed the following amendment to the motion on the grounds that the procedure for making BHA policy includes consultation with partner groups and full discussion at the Trustees' annual policy meeting:

In the first line of the motion above, replace 'The British Humanist Association' with 'This meeting'.

Tony Wild accepted the amendment and the meeting voted in favour of it: 92 voted in favour and 2 voted against, with 13 abstentions.

Following a debate, the motion was put to the vote and was not carried: 31 voted in favour and 50 voted against, with 26 abstentions.

Emergency Motions: No motions had been received.

Any other Business: There was none.