

Minutes of BHA Board of Trustees Meeting
1 August 2015 11.00-15.40 at 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB

Present: Robert Ashby (RA, Chair), John Adams (JA), Michelle Beckett (MB), Blaise Egan (BE), Guy Otten (GO), Naomi Phillips (NP), David Pollock (DP), Jeremy Rodell (JR), Patricia Rogers (PR), and Amy Walden (AW).

In attendance: Andrew Copson (AC, Chief Executive and Company Secretary), Jessica Layfield (JL, minutes).

Item		Action
15/15/1	Apologies for absence were received from Tom Copley (TC), Natalie Haynes (NH), and Alom Shaha (AS). Pavan Dhaliwal (PD) also sent her apologies for 19/15 due to illness. The Board noted their best wishes for PD.	
15/15/2	There were no declarations of interest .	
15/15/3	The Board welcomed new trustee Amy Walden, and welcomed back returning trustee Blaise Egan.	
15/15/4	The Board elected Robert Ashby as Chair.	JL
15/15/5	The Board elected Patricia Rogers as Vice Chair.	JL
15/15/6	The Board elected John Adams as Honorary Treasurer.	JL
15/15/7	The Board co-opted Adam Rutherford to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Mary Porter and recorded their gratitude for Mary's invaluable service.	JL
15/15/8	The Board agreed to leave one vacancy for an appointed trustee in accordance with its decision to use the vacancy to recruit a future Chair, should this be necessary.	
15/15/9	The Board re-appointed Blaise Egan to the management committee of CFI UK for a three-year term. The Board noted that the responsibilities of the management committee may need to be reviewed in the near future.	JL
15/15/10	The Board appointed Rory Fenton and re-appointed Mike Paynter to the AHS Board for three-year terms.	JL
15/15/11	The Board re-appointed Patricia Rogers to the Defence Humanists Committee for a one-year term. The Board noted that the governance of the Defence Humanists is under review at the moment, as they are in the process of developing an internal Defence Humanists network within the MoD. However, some existing members of Defence Humanists (such as veterans and family members) would not be eligible to join that network and the existing section will certainly continue in some form.	JL
15/15/12	The Board did not make an appointment to the LGBT Humanists Committee. AC agreed to speak to the LGBT Humanists Committee about finding someone suitable.	AC
15/15/13	The Board re-appointed Pavan Dhaliwal, David Pollock, and Patricia Rogers as BHA representatives to the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU). The Board	JL

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	manage in the wake of this. AC along with staff and volunteers are managing the work of the Head of Education in the meantime, and one of the Administrative Officers is temporarily filling in as Assistant to the Chief Executive until a new one is appointed.	
16/15/3	AC reported that the Events work is going very well. The Annual Conference was a success and the feedback is being analysed at the moment. The Board expressed concern that the feedback given to the Manchester Humanist Choir had been too blunt, but AC advised that this was handled sensitively.	
16/15/4	The Board noted the success of the new Young Humanists section. The Board congratulated those involved with the section, in particular their coordinator, Alice Fuller.	
16/15/5	The Board were pleased to note the increase in the number of Partner groups, and the increase in the number of new celebrants joining the network.	
16/15/6	The Board congratulated staff on the increase in the number of unique page views for the Ceremonies website, and agreed that the redesign has been a huge success.	
16/15/7	AC reported on the preliminary meetings the BHA has had with NHS England. These have been successful, but we had to make clear to them that we are still in the early stages of developing our service provision. The Board agreed that having members or supporters participate in patient boards would also be very useful.	
16/15/8	AC reported that we are still facing opposition from some existing chaplains who are promoting a generic model of pastoral support, where the provider or chaplain doesn't have to have the same religion or belief as the patient. The NHS would need to remove the GOR from these roles if they wanted to go in this direction. However, this is not the model that we are in favour of.	
16/15/9	The Board enquired about the Young Humanists membership figure. AC clarified that any BHA member between the ages of 18-35 is automatically considered a member of Young Humanists.	
16/15/10	AC reported on the BHA's meeting with the Law Commission with regard to their investigating marriage law. They will make recommendations to the government but this may not have any impact for humanist marriages.	
16/15/11	The Board were pleased to note the recent announcement by Huw Lewis AM that Religious Education in the Welsh Curriculum will be replaced with Religion, Philosophy, and Ethics. We will be making an announcement about this next week.	
16/15/12	The Board congratulated the Public Affairs team on reconstituting the APPHG following the general election. AC advised that we will be relying more on parliamentarians than we have done in the last parliament, and so will be working closely with these APPHG members. There will be a relaunch of the Conservative Humanists later this year, and the political humanist groups are likely to be important over the next few years in helping us develop relationships with MPs.	

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16/15/13	The Board noted that AC will be meeting with the Chief Executive of Dignity in Dying later in August to discuss the different policy positions and campaigns of the two organisations. We believe strongly that there will only be a change to the law if the Supreme Court issues a declaration of incompatibility, and that they will do so when the next case is taken. AC will report further on this on behalf of PD under item 19/15.	
16/15/14	The Board congratulated the ICT Manager on the development of the Celebrant Dashboard. RA felt strongly that this is a good strategic move in centralising funeral data and potentially clarifying the process for clients.	
16/15/15	The Board received an update from AC with regard to the complaints received about Ceremonies and Pastoral Support training. The complaints were partially upheld and changes were made to the wording in the training literature to clarify that not all trainees will be accredited. A new complaints procedure has since been developed to ensure that complaints about service provision do not get filed against a staff member.	
16/15/16	The Board enquired about the appointment of the next President. AC has a call with the next person on the current shortlist on Monday about this and will inform the Board of the outcome.	
16/15/17	The Board received the accounts for 2015Q2 and 2015YTD.	
16/15/18	The Board requested clarification on Development income that is not donations or subscriptions. AC will look into this and report back.	AC
16/15/19	The Board received an update from JA on workplace pensions, which are becoming universal from 2016. The BHA's staging date is May 2016, which means we must have these in place by then. JA does not yet know what the total financial commitment for us will be, but AC will bring an update on this to the November Board meeting. NP requested that further information be given to staff on the importance of having a pension set up.	AC
16/15/20	JA reported that he and AC will be meeting to discuss the expenses policy so as to have it fully documented.	AC, JA
17/15	<u>Governance</u>	
17/15/1	The Board discussed the AGM, which took place on 11 July, and congratulated the staff on a successful event.	
17/15/2	The Board approved the minutes of the AGM.	JL
17/15/3	The Board reviewed the Trustee Skills Audit. The Board agreed that there were no specific gaps in skills and experience to be filled, other than potentially in Marketing and Public Relations.	
17/15/4	The Board agreed the following dates for meetings in 2016: - 13 February BoT Meeting	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 14 May BoT Meeting - 9 July AGM - 30 July BoT Meeting - 10 September Policy Away Day - 12 November BoT Meeting - 3 December Strategy Away Day 	
17/15/5	The Board received an update from AC on the Chair recruitment process. AC advised that the panel will be speaking to up to four potential candidates at the end of September.	
17/15/6	The Board approved amendments to the Byelaws.	JL
18/15	<u>Strategy</u>	
18/15/1	The Board received a strategy review paper from AC.	
18/15/2	The Board received some background information from AC on the paper and to the original development of the Aims and Strategies, as most Board members were not in post at that time. As part of the present review process the SMT had identified some key goals and key bottlenecks, which AC had detailed in the paper. These should help in strategy deployment, the development of which is what is currently needed.	
18/15/3	The Board reconfirmed the 'Strategies' as an excellent basis on which to develop the BHA's strategy deployment, as they remain an accurate top-level description of the ways in which we seek to achieve our Aims. JR suggested that the Aims and Strategies could better articulate the positive role Humanism can play in creating a pluralistic, peaceful, and secular society. It was agreed that AC will review these and the BHA's Values with JR and some members of the SMT and bring a paper on suggested changes to the Strategy Away Day in December.	AC
18/15/4	<p>AC provided some background information on the development of the list of potential Goals. These were difficult to identify as the BHA is a unique organisation. The Board was asked to provide feedback on the goals for further discussion by the SMT (including the creation of lead indicators) before final discussion and agreement at the Board Strategy Day in December. The Board provided the following feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Board were very supportive of the work done so far and the suggestion of setting Goals that link the Strategies to departmental Workplans. The Board also agreed that working towards agreed goals is likely to have secondary benefits in other areas of the BHA's work. - AC clarified that not all of the Goals will be agreed – the list provided is a long list. - The Board requested further information about our current position against these suggested Goals so they can better understand the targets suggested. - Some Board members felt the Goals may be overly ambitious and perhaps could be more realistic. However, other Board members felt that it is important to set ambitious targets. 	AC

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18/15/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some goals are not easily measurable, but we should not focus only on those that are. We should ensure indicators measure progress towards the goal, rather than just the end result. - It was suggested that dashboards of key indicators will be useful once the goals are agreed, as they will allow more easy identification of useful indicators. - The Board wanted to ensure the goals are approximately balanced between departments. AC confirmed that this would be the case – around three per department. - The goals listed are all output goals rather than input goals. AC clarified that the lead indicators (to be identified) would include input goals. - Some of the goals need to be more specific – for example, we would need to clarify who we mean by ‘under 18s’ and ‘contacts’. - There are some goals which the BHA only has a limited ability to influence – these should not be the responsibility of an individual staff member or department to achieve. - Some Goals could perhaps be better aligned to each other. - It was suggested that one Goal should be to create a more equal spread of Humanism and humanist culture around the country. Another could be to reflect the BHA’s positive contribution to a peaceful society. <p>AC provided the following information in response to some of the points raised by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The references to public opinion are from the data we currently collect in our annual public surveys. - The SMT have discussed in depth what the goals will be, and it was understood that these are not a replacement for staff action plans, as they are organisational goals. In addition, these will not form the main part of each SMT member’s work – potentially they would spend about a quarter of their time on work directly relating to these. - AC clarified that the SMT had tried to choose goals that they felt would have the greatest impact in other areas of the BHA’s work. Those that made this list had to have positive impacts on lots of areas. 	
18/15/6	<p>AC requested the Board send him feedback on the individual goals suggested. AC will arrange for a central feedback document to be sent round to all Board members.</p>	AC, ALL
18/15/7	<p>The Board noted the bottlenecks outlined in the paper and AC gave some background information on how these were identified in the strategy review days. These are closely linked to the amended budget.</p>	
18/15/8	<p>The Board requested clarification on what is meant by developing consistency across our brands. AC explained that our various brands and messages are not unified, and that we have different branding for different departments, services, sections, etc. It was suggested that a mapping exercise will be a good thing to do at this stage before the organisation grows further.</p>	
18/15/9	<p>The Board received the amended budget paper from AC, who gave some additional detail on the items listed. AC advised the Board that the majority of this additional</p>	

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18/15/10	expenditure will hit in 2016 accounts rather than this year. AC advised that an external management consultant will be brought in to advise how best to manage the restructure of our community services provision.	AC
18/15/11	The Board were supportive of the 'Humanist Think Tank' idea, and having humanist thought leaders. However, some felt it might need to be made clearer how this would help achieve our Aims.	
18/15/12	The Board requested further information about which of the costs would be recurring and which are one-off investments. AC advised that, incorporating the recurring costs, the projections into 2018 do not take us out of surplus in that year. JA advised that he feels this is certainly an affordable budget amendment given the current financial situation.	
18/15/13	The Board enquired about whether any of these items might warrant additional physical presence around the country, which would not be a huge additional expense and may then bring in a surplus themselves. AC agreed we need to regionalise our activities, and the suggested budget includes a number of ways to do this. There may be benefits of local offices but we would need expert advice on these and what each would be responsible for, to avoid duplicating work. The majority of the Board were sceptical about the benefits of regional offices at this stage. AC will continue to bear this in mind but won't seek external advice on this.	
18/15/14	The Board supported the idea of live streaming our London events to other major cities beyond reasonable travelling distance from London, and AC agreed to look into this further.	
18/15/15	The Board enquired about the Press and PR Officer role, and whether this should be a more senior post. AC clarified that these plans are not yet finalised and that they may decide to hire someone at a more senior level.	
18/15/16	The Board approved an increase in expenditure in 2015/16 by £280k and by £200k in 2017. The Board noted that at the end of 2017, this would leave £202k still available in excess of reserves.	
18/15/17	The Board received the paper on the BHA's contribution to International Humanism from AC. This work could be better joined up within the organisation and we would like to do more to encourage staff and volunteers to participate in this type of activity.	
18/15/18	The Board agreed that the BHA benefits from being active in international Humanism and that the organisation should be more so. The Board were supportive of being able to use this work to campaign for freedom of religion or belief and develop a good relationship with the government in this issue.	
18/15/18	The Board enquired about funding to support an expansion of these activities, such as more non-operational staff attending IHEYO events and SMT members attending international General Assemblies, as it could be expensive. AC confirmed that we will not be able to cover costs to send everyone to everything, and will be limited to what is approved in the budget.	

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18/15/19	The Board enquired about whether there exists any online forum on international humanist activities. It was confirmed that IHEU operate such a forum.	
18/15/20	The Board enquired about how much of AC's time this additional work might require. AC advised that this would not be a large commitment for him, although it may be more for other staff, and this would be carefully managed.	
19/15	<u>Presentation from Director of Public Affairs and Campaigns</u> The Board received an update on the Assisted Dying campaign from AC, on behalf of PD. AC confirmed that we are speaking to our lawyers regarding the costs of this, and once agreed we will look to raise funds to be able to take our case forward.	
20/15	<u>Any Other Business</u> There was none.	
	<u>Date of the next Meeting</u> BHA Board of Trustees Policy Away Day on 12 September 2015 at The Education Space, Cockpit Arts, Cockpit Yard, Northington Street, London WC1N 2NP. BHA Board of Trustees Meeting on 14 November 2015 11.00-15.40 at 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB.	