

Humanists UK

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on Sunday 23 June 2019, 14:00 – 16:00 at Athena Theatre, Leicester

Present: Asad Abbas, John Adams, Alan Betteridge, John Ashton, Parveen Babar, Zahir Babar, Cameron Bairstow, Peter Barnett, Antony Barrett, Jennifer Bartle, Melanie Bartlett, Phil Bass, Tom Beaton, Andrew Benson-Wilson, Mary Betteridge, John Blakey, Rainer Bohlin, Dermot Bolton, Steve Bowen, Gerald Bowman, Anthony Brierley, Ginny Broad, Carol Broom, Noreen Brosnan, Irene Brown, Austin Caffrey, Neil Camp, Eleri Carrog, John Catt, Isobel Catt, Tony Challis, Alasdair Chalmers, Helen Cherry, Rajin Chowdhury, Sophie Colligan, John Collins, Andrew Cooper, Andrew Copson, Julia Copson, Russell Crew-Gee, James Dart, David Davidson, Adrian Davis, Erwin de Silva, Gaynor Doherty, Luke Donnellan, Carrie Dunne, Blaise Egan, Peter Ellis, Philip Emery, John Fitton, Shelagh Fitzpatrick, Jane Flint, Mike Flood, Dimitrios Fragkos, Cathryn Fraser, Richard Frost, Linnea Glynne-Rule, Susan Guiver, Miry Gurevich Mayer, Dawn Gyles, Christine Hackett, Clive Hammond, Gill Harris, Allan Hayes, Michael Heap, Roy Heaps, Brian Hodgson, Michelle Hordern, Paul Hughes, Adam Hughes-Buchanan, Julyan Hunter, Elaine Hutton, Richard Jacques, Julie Jagger, Maria James, Paul Jenkins, Rhian Jones, Briony Kapoor, Connaire Kensit, Toby Keynes, Hamed Khoshi, Thomas Knight, Max Levin, Brynda Lewis, Al Lindsell, Daniel Lower, Ewan Main, Clare Marsh, Stuart McCullouch, Emily McCullouch, Tag (Mary) McEntegart, Patrick McKeown, Mary McKeown, Stephen McLean, Catriona McLellan, Alan Montgomery, Linda Montgomery, Kenneth Morton, Margaret Mulholland, Simon Nightingale, Barbara Noble, Ann O'Connell, Stephen O'Kane, Terri O'Sullivan, Guy Otten, Ann Pickering, Maggie Platts, Joe Platts, David Pollock, Simon Qadri, Brian Quinn, Alexander Rees, Mike Reynolds, Kat Reynolds, Glenda Reynolds, Michael Rickwood, Jeremy Rodell, George Rodger, Patricia Rogers, Isabel Russo, Aliyah Saleem, Stephen Samways, David Savage, Jim Scott, Gail Senior, Michael Sewry, Christine Seymour, David Sharp, Christine Simons, Harry Small, G Steff, Bill Stephenson, Karen Stephenson, Sylvia Summer, Cath Sutherland, Ruth Swetnam, Michael Sykes, Elizabeth Thompson, Brian Tolman, David Tooley, Cynthia Turner, Moira Turner, Paul Turner, Mike Turner, Lucy Wainwright, Hamza Bin Walayat, Phil Walder, Stuart Walker, Martin Ward, Mark Wardrop, Neil Weddell, Alan White, Anthony Keith Wilson, James Wood, Dave Wood, Tom Woolley, Karen Wright.

Staff in attendance: Andrew Copson (Company Secretary), Andrew West, Casey Ann Seaniger, Catriona McLellan, Ruth Wareham, Edward Prout, Edward Robinson, Ian Scott, Isabel Russo, Karen Wright, Michael Moore, Miry Mayer (Minute taker), Guy Hirst, Keiron McCabe, Liam Whitton, Luke Donnellan, Tony Pinkney, Rachel Taggart-Ryan, Richy Thompson, Samantha Streibl, Simon O'Donoghue, William Gordon.

Apologies for Absence: Prof Sir Tom Blundell, David Browning, Barbara Burfoot, Yasmin Chopin, Graham Cooper, Lord Dubs, Baroness Hayter, Kate Housden, Sean Jordan, Ruth Kaufman, Dr Reginald Le Sueur, Diana Naumann, Tony Overton, Alan Palmer, Paula Palmer, Helen Reed, Mark Revell, Christopher Richardson, David Savage, Paul Sinha, David Staines, Ariadne Tampion, Dick Taverne, Mary Walker, Baroness Whitaker.

Adoption of Standing Orders: On the proposal of Tamar Ghosh (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.

Tellers: Toby Keynes and Harry Small were appointed as tellers and the Company Secretary as timekeeper.

Minutes of the AGM of Sunday 24 June 2018: On the proposal of the Board, the minutes were approved *nem con*.

Matters arising from the minutes: Tony Brewer asked about Humanists UK's response to the question of AI, raised in the last AGM. The Board advised that they had considered a special interest group but decided not to work on this issue and not to set up a group. Separately, a group for humanists working in tech had been created, being led by Imtiaz Shams and Andrew West.

Chair's and Chief Executive's address: The chair and chief executive reported on the past year's activities, highlighting Humanists UK's many successes and the hard work ahead, and answered questions from the floor.

Elections to the Board of Trustees: The Company Secretary reported the results of the election for trustees in which there were 2000 valid votes cast and the following candidates (in alphabetical order) were elected: Tom Copley, Ruth Kaufman, David Pollock, Imtiaz Shams, Hamza Bin Walayat.

Annual Report and Accounts: By resolution, the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2018, presented by John Adams (Treasurer) were accepted *nem con*.

Appointment of Auditor: By resolution, Knox Cropper were re-appointed as auditors, *nem con*.

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

Other Motions: The following motion, proposed by Cath Sutherland and seconded by Laurie Cohen was debated and defeated by 120 votes to 24 with 10 abstentions:

According to 97% of climate change scientists, our climate and environment are facing catastrophe. Humanists UK needs to respond to this impending disaster. I propose that this conference ask our trustees to hold a ballot of all members on the proposition the Humanists UK should change its definition of humanism to explicitly state that the preservation and maintenance of the natural world are integral to the core definition of what we are. The ballot proposal should state that we challenge the dominant western perspective, prevailing over several centuries, that human beings are our primary concern, and that it is acceptable for the rest of the Earth's flora and fauna to be plundered for our benefit. The ballot should ask members to vote on changing the basic definition of what Humanists UK stands for: to explicitly state that the natural world and humans are inseparable, and that actively respecting and caring for the Earth's fauna, flora and environment are as important as any other ethical responsibility. This change would mean that this statement of humanist principles is not just tucked away in our 'Articles of Association'. Rather, our responsibilities to the environment would be explicit in all Humanists UK websites, magazines and publicity. Accordingly, we should consider changing the Humanists UK strapline to something like "For the one life we have and the one world we live in" and "Think for yourself, act for everyone and for our Earth"

Any Other Business

Briony Kapoor encouraged Humanists UK to be more attentive to the role of the arts in humanism, and issued an open invitation to personnel to visit her sculpture park in Kent where a number of

humanist pieces of artwork had been installed. It was noted that the Director of Community Service would be visiting in the summer.