

Humanists UK Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on Sunday 11 June 2023, 15.30

at Liverpool Guild of Students, 160 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5TR

Present: John Adams, Mark Agathangelou, Parveen Babar, Zahir Babar, Nick Baldwin, Peter Bamber, Judith Barnes, Peter Barnett, Antony Barrett, Janet Beck, Sarah Bennett, John Blakey, Rhian Blakey, Steve Bowen, Tony Brewer, Hester Brown, Chris Bryant, Andrea Cameron-Collier, Katharine Cawsey, Anthony Challis, David Cleal, Lynn Cleall, David Cockayne, Patricia Cockayne, Clive Coen, Julie Collins, Margaret Cooper, Phoenix Cooper, Julia Copson, Adrian Davis, Ian Dunbar, Pauline Element, Ian Ephgrave, Cathryn Fraser, Richard Frost, Tamar Ghosh, Neil Hawkins, Roy Heaps, James Hodgson, Richard Jacques, Paul Jenkins, Russell Johnson, Fran Johnstone, Briony Kapoor, Ruth Kaufman, Angela Kilenyi, Roger Knight, Andy Lawrence, Marilyn Mackley, Ewan Main, Amit Malde, Jude Marr, Lori Marriott, Clare Marsh, David McAvoy, Stephen McBride, Peter McGinty, Neil McKain, Tom McMillen, Michael McNally, Archie Mitchell, Alan Montgomery, Linda Montgomery, Bernard Mooney, Colin Moran, Kenneth Morton, Margaret Mulholland, Simon Nightingale, Richard Norman, Ann O'Connell, Guy Otten, Alan Palmer, Paula Palmer, Keith Pennington, Andy Pepperdine, Maggie Platts, Joe Platts, Dean Powell, Liliana Risi, Jano Rochefort, Malcolm Rochefort, Jeremy Rodell, Alison Roder, George Rodger, Amy Rogers, Nigel Ross, Emma Russell, Stephen Samways, Nick Senior, Nicole Shasha, Harry Small, Peter Smith, Cath Sutherland, Ruth Swetnam, Anthony Thorne, Hamza Walayat, Stuart Walker, Martin Ward, Kate West, Rosy White, Andrew Whiteley, Mike Wilkins, Peter Wood, James Wood, Martin Wood, Usman Yousaf.

Staff in attendance: Andrew Copson, Luke Donnellan, Catriona McLellan, Terri O'Sullivan, Boyd Sleator, Andrew West, Liam Whitton, Aaron Wilkins

Apologies for Absence: Asad Abbas, Ruth Abbott, Robert Adams, John Aston, Tom Blundell, Martha Cock, Trudi Dargan, John Dowdle, Colin Francis, Maggie Fraser, John Gray, Baroness Hayter, Saiful Islam, Charley Jarrett, Adrienne LeMan, David Lewis, Pat McKeown, Mary McKeown, Leeka Meetal, Betty Mileham, Paul Sinha, Ariadne Tampion, Peter Tatchell, Mark Wardrop, Baroness Whitaker.

Remembering David Pollock: The AGM noted the death of David Pollock, a humanist activist for over six decades, and honoured his six decades of activism with a round of applause.

Adoption of Standing Orders: On the proposal of Neil Hawkins (Chair of the Board of Trustees and 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: Harry Small and Nick Senior were appointed as tellers and Catriona McLellan as timekeeper.

Minutes of the AGM of Sunday 26 June 2022: On the proposal of the Chair, the minutes were approved *nem con*.

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

Chair and Chief Executive 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 following candidates were elected to the Board without objection (in alphabetical order): John Adenitire, David Cockayne, Roland Davis, Kate West

Annual Report and Accounts: By resolution, the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2022, presented by Ann O'Connell (Treasurer) were accepted without objection.

Appointment of Auditor: By resolution, Knox Cropper were re-appointed as auditors, without objection.

Remuneration of Auditor: By resolution, the trustees were authorised to determine the remuneration of the auditor, without objection.

Motion: The following motion, proposed by Cath Sutherland and seconded by Phil Walder, was debated:

Humanists UK is to be congratulated for setting up Humanist Climate Action as one of its sections, and for the progress HCA has made so far. HCA should continue to follow the policy of Humanists International, of which Humanists UK is a member, to "foster a social and political commitment to urgent action and long-term policymaking to mitigate and prevent climate change".

In addition, Humanists UK should adopt the following:

1. Humanists UK recognises that the climate crisis along with other damage that humans are inflicting on the natural world, as described by scientists, are an existential threat to the future of humanity. Humanists UK should provide guidance to humanists about how to react to this threat. This guidance should be prominent and frequent in Humanist UK communications.

2. Humanists UK should add a fourth tenet to the three tenets of humanism as displayed on its website. The fourth tenet should read that Humanism recognises that humans are part of the natural world and totally dependent upon it, and

therefore should protect and nurture it.

3. Humanists UK should encourage humanists to make their voices heard about the climate crisis and other threats to wildlife, individually or as part of international or local campaigns, organisations or movements, or by actively supporting Humanist Climate Action.

4. Humanists UK should encourage humanists to adapt their lifestyles to reflect the need to lower carbon emissions and protect the natural world.

5. Humanists UK should commit to an environmental audit of its work and activities, and take into account environmental impacts in all of its future policies and campaigns, just as Equal Opportunities or Human Rights impacts are already taken into account.

The following procedural motion was proposed by Richard Norman and approved, without objection:

To take the motion in parts: proposed by Cath Sutherland and seconded by Phil Walder into two separate motions to be voted upon separately. The AGM will be asked to vote on the Preamble and points 2, 3 and 4 of the original motion as one motion and will then vote a second time to remit points 1 and 5 to the Board.

The following was approved by 71 votes to 9 with 12 abstentions:

Humanists UK is to be congratulated for setting up Humanist Climate Action as one of its sections, and for the progress HCA has made so far. HCA should continue to follow the policy of Humanists International, of which Humanists UK is a member, to “foster a social and political commitment to urgent action and long-term policymaking to mitigate and prevent climate change”.

In addition, Humanists UK should adopt the following:

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4. Humanists UK should encourage humanists to adapt their lifestyles to reflect the need to lower carbon emissions and protect the natural world.

The following was remitted to the Board for its consideration by 57 votes to 9 with 17 abstentions:

1. Humanists UK recognises that the climate crisis along with other damage that humans are inflicting on the natural world, as described by scientists, are an

existential threat to the future of humanity. Humanists UK should provide guidance to humanists about how to react to this threat. This guidance should be prominent and frequent in Humanist UK communications.

5. Humanists UK should commit to an environmental audit of its work and activities, and take into account environmental impacts in all of its future policies and campaigns, just as Equal Opportunities or Human Rights impacts are already taken into account.

Emergency Motions: On a proposal by Wendy Savage, in light of news that a woman in England had just been found guilty of abortion under the criminal law, the following motion was unanimously agreed by the meeting:

In light of growing threats to the right to abortion, this meeting reaffirms the support of Humanists UK for the decriminalisation of abortion in England and Wales.

Any other Business: None was notified in advance.