

**Minutes of BHA Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**13 February 2016 11.00-16.00 at 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB**

**Present:** Robert Ashby (RA, Chair), Michelle Beckett (MB), Tom Copley (TC), Blaise Egan (BE), Tamar Ghosh (TG), Guy Otten (GO), Naomi Phillips (NP), David Pollock (DP), Jeremy Rodell (JR), Patricia Rogers (PR, Vice-Chair), Adam Rutherford (AR), Alom Shaha (AS), and Amy Walden (AW).

**In attendance:** Andrew Copson (AC, Chief Executive and Company Secretary), Stephen Miceli (SM, minutes).

Item		Action
01/16	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> were received from John Adams (JA, Treasurer).</p> <p><b>The Board welcomed</b> new trustee and Chair Elect Tamar Ghosh to her first meeting.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p><b>The Board approved</b> the minutes of the November 2015 meeting and the confidential minute.</p> <p>There was the following <b>matter arising</b> from the minutes of the November 2015 meeting: in relation to item 33/15/11, the Board enquired as to whether AC had looked into reviewing the different demographics for trustee nominations. AC confirmed this would be discussed on today's agenda.</p>	
02/16	<p><u>Management (AC)</u></p> <p><b>The Board received</b> the 2015 Q4 management report and congratulated the management on a successful quarter and year.</p> <p>1.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> with pleasure that the number of events has increased, including the first event of the newly launched Blackham Society in December which was successful.</p> <p><b>The Board requested</b> that SM circulate the date of next Blackham Society event and ensure that all trustees are receiving invites to upcoming events.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> LD's handling of the disruption to the management of the school speakers training and networking event and acknowledged the success of the event.</p> <p><b>The Board</b> welcomed the news that there is an increased number of school speakers.</p> <p><b>The Board</b> were informed that the launch of the 'What is Humanism?' book will occur in September to allow more preparation time to prepare</p>	SM

	<p>the website and develop the educational materials</p> <p>2.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> that ticket sales for the Celebrant Conference were down last year, but this year IR will have assistance from events and communication staff who will help with the marketing and promotion of the conference to celebrants for 2016.</p> <p><b>The Board discussed</b> the possibility of laying of a wreath at this year's City Hall Remembrance event. TC will explore this further.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> that we experienced increased exposure around the time of the death of Simon Binner, however not all media contact was pleasant and PD experienced some harassment from The Mirror.</p> <p>3.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> that the Report of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, for which AC was a commissioner, had been released; the reaction to the report was not entirely positive. Despite this the Woolf Institute are meeting with government to follow up on the report's recommendations.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> that the BHA would be generally in favour of the recommendations made in the report, in that they represent a move in the right direction.</p> <p><b>The Board welcomed</b> the news that following the publication of BHA reports exposing schools' unlawful admissions policies, offending schools such as the London Oratory school were made to change their practices.</p> <p><b>The Board discussed</b> the government's plan to implement a statutory instrument which would ban organisations like the BHA making complaints against school admission policies.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> the government's attempts to sidestep the BHA's High Court victory to ensure Humanism is included in the GCSE RE Curriculum and discussed the influence of the Conservative Christian Fellowship on Nicky Morgan's disastrous approach.</p> <p><b>The Board discussed</b> the need to reach out to more secular-minded Jewish organisations to create more of a bridge between the BHA and Jewish organisations.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed</b> that it is important to build up our presence and support within the Conservative Party and to revive the conservative humanist group.</p> <p><b>The Board welcomed</b> the news that an advertisement for a paid religious chaplain at Guys and St Thomas' hospital was deemed unlawful and withdrawn thanks to BHA intervention.</p>	<p>TC</p>
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	<p><b>The Board</b> were informed that the BHA does not plan to take on any assisted dying cases at present.</p> <p>4.</p> <p><b>The Board</b> welcomed the news that the BHA was selected as a partner with the House of Lords to host a debate on how to increase diversity in parliament.</p> <p>5.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> that the post of Head of Pastoral Support has now been taken up by Simon O'Donoghue who has taken over from David Savage, and noted the strength of the field of applicants for the Head of Pastoral Support role. <b>They congratulated and recorded their thanks</b> to David Savage for his voluntary service in this vital role.</p> <p><b>The Board were</b> informed that recruitment for the role of Director of Communications was unsuccessful but it will be re-advertised at the end of February and it is hoped someone will be in post by spring.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> that a vacancy for an IT officer has been advertised and interviews for the role of Director of Community Services have been arranged.</p> <p><b>The Board welcomed</b> the news that we are developing and solidifying our internal processes and database management.</p> <p><b>The Board suggested</b> that it would be useful for full unedited reports be made available on the intranet for Trustees to access. AC and SM will look into possibility of this.</p> <p><b>The Board received</b> the 2015 Q4 and full year accounts, together with a written report from the Treasurer, and <b>congratulated</b> the management on another successful quarter and year.</p> <p><b>The Board concluded</b> that the situation is positive and that we should look at how to best use the resources at BHA's disposal.</p> <p><b>The Board requested</b> that a quarterly balance sheet summary be included in the accounts.</p> <p><b>The Board clarified</b> that that surplus money donated towards Jay's salary is restricted but can be used for overall campaigns work.</p> <p><b>The Board received</b> a verbal update from AC on the BHA's progress in the nations of the UK.</p> <p><b>The Board recalled its past decision</b> to revise the byelaws in order to create new membership sections in Northern Ireland and Wales and <b>welcomed</b> the news that development officer roles had been created in each country. Boyd Sleater is in place in Northern Ireland and is making good progress with pastoral support, celebrant and school speaker</p>	AC
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	<p>training, and supporting the effort to register legal humanist weddings and is working well with pro-choice organisations on abortion laws.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> that interviews for the position in Wales will occur on 23 February and that we will be selecting from a strong field of applicants for including former CEOs.</p> <p><b>The Board suggested</b> engaging Charlotte Church to promote activity in Wales.</p> <p><b>The Board welcomed</b> the news that the Wales government are not seeking to set up new faith schools (though one school has been imposed by the local authority) and that the humanist group in the Welsh assembly is in the process of being set up.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> that HSS are not abiding by the Heads of Agreement we made with them and are unlikely to do so. As an alternative, HSS had suggested we develop a strategic partnership agreement. AC will be taking this forward.</p>	
03/16	<p><u>Strategy</u></p> <p><b>The Board received</b> a paper on the development of the BHA's strategic goals from AC, <b>approved</b> the framework of goals, and <b>agreed</b> that AC should proceed as planned to present a final paper with real life data and a number of modifications including: review of the usage of the phrase 'in the UK' throughout the document; consistency in the time period of measurement for the goals i.e. that they are all measured until 2020.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the view of the Treasurer that</b> 'We now have, at the time of writing, more than £1 million in liquid assets and I have been discussing with Robert and Andrew potential new ventures which we might be able to afford. It is, in my view, a large enough sum to be able to consider a significant project; different from but supportive of, the work that we do now.' and <b>received</b> a note on bigger strategic initiatives from AC and RA and had an open discussion on the general principle of identifying such projects.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed with the principles suggested in the note</b>, namely that suitable projects would be 'those that significantly enhanced our credibility, infrastructure, reputation, or status and presence in British public life. They would be the sort of projects that would also be suitable for attracting major gifts, which is a priority for development in the coming years.' <b>The Board also considered</b> that suitable projects would be those which promoted a constructive and positive image of the BHA.</p> <p><b>The Board discussed</b> potential projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Major profile raising exercises involving patrons to raise general public awareness, potentially targeted at engaging a younger</li> </ul>	

	<p>demographic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of a professional institution to give greater and more concrete professional development in our community services provision</li> <li>- Increased funding for a humanist think tank or academic institution which would produce high quality contributions to public debate</li> <li>- Purchase of a humanist retreat which could also be used for training and events and student camps</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board</b> also noted the possibility of using the surplus money to expand our existing projects and scaling up existing activities. Growth in these should not be neglected.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed</b> that the feasibility of the projects suggested should be further investigated by the SMT with the support of individual trustees who can apply expertise in relevant areas and reported back to the Board.</p>	AC
04/16	<p><u>Governance</u></p> <p><b>The Board received</b> a report from AC on current trustee vacancies and <b>noted</b> there will be five trustee vacancies to be filled by election this year.</p> <p><b>The Board appointed</b> the following as potential scrutineers for the election count – AW, GO, PR, MB and RA.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed</b> the inclusion of age, region, and ethnicity on the candidate nomination form in addition to gender, but candidates will have the option to leave these blank and forms without this information will still be considered for election.</p> <p><b>The Board decided</b> to consider the inclusion of LGBT on the form in the future.</p> <p><b>The Board received</b> a verbal update from PR on the trustee and officer reviews, who thanked members for completing the reviews which were considered helpful and constructive.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed</b> that the review process worked well but requested that the question prompts be displayed on every relevant screen of the form.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed</b> to defer the review of the report on risk management from PR until the next meeting but PR encouraged the board to consider if they believed anything had been left out to contact her in advance of the next meeting.</p>	<p>AC</p> <p>AC</p> <p>AC</p>

	<p><b>The Board reviewed and agreed</b> the redrafted BHA expenses policy.</p> <p><b>The Board</b> agreed to set up a sub-group to examine the fundraising activities of the BHA and report back to the Board as to their compatibility with the high standards expected as a result of the Etherington Review, making any recommendations for changes if necessary.</p> <p><b>The Board appointed</b> NP, TG, PR and JT as the four members who will make up the committee.</p>	NP
05/16	<p><u>Presentations from Head of Ceremonies and from Head of Pastoral Support</u></p> <p><b>The Board received</b> a presentation from new Head of Pastoral Support SO who presented an overview of his development plan.</p> <p><b>The Board congratulated</b> SO on his work so far and on his proposed action plan.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> the importance of building strategic relationships with NOMS and NHS England.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> the importance of raising awareness and pro-actively making people aware that non-religious pastoral support is available.</p> <p><b>The Board received</b> a presentation from Head of Ceremonies IR focusing on the restructure of the celebrant network.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed</b> that the network restructure is a good proposal.</p> <p><b>The Board noted</b> the difficulties in getting celebrants to engage with their local groups and being more actively involved in the network which is often because people have to travel long distances to attend meetings.</p>	
	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p><i>Agenda</i></p> <p>RA reminded <b>The Board</b> to email anything that they would like to be included on the agenda to email RA or AC and not to open debates amongst Board members by email.</p>	
	<p><u>Date of the next Meeting</u></p> <p><b>BHA Board of Trustees Meeting</b> on 14 May 2016 11:00-15:40 at 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB</p>	