

# ROYAL SOCIETY PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

## Annual General Meeting 2003

### MINUTES

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At the seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the RSPA held at the Royal Society on Monday 12 May 2003:

Present: George Hemmen (Chairman)

Chris Argent ( <i>Editor, BTT</i> )	Jenny Hutchinson
Frank Attack	Erica Lazarus ( <i>Joint Events Secretary</i> )
Diana Chapman	Jennifer Malcolm
Alan Clark	Len Mole
Vera Cockle ( <i>Hon. Treasurer</i> )	Maurice Oak
Brenda de Vere-Lewis ( <i>Hon. Secretary</i> )	Jenny Shanahan
Sheila Edwards	Nadia Slow
Terry Garrett	Nancy Tupholme
David Griffin ( <i>Pensions Trustee</i> )	Peter Warren
Don Harlow	Jackie Witchalls
Marjorie Harris ( <i>Committee Member</i> )	

Karen O'Connell (Head of Human Resources) and Matthew Llewellyn, Chairman of the Royal Society Staff Association (RSSA) attended by invitation for item 11.

Unable to attend: 54 members

#### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2002 were confirmed and signed.

#### 2. Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported that during the year John Torpey, Claire Burden and Jane Lewis had joined the Association, the two latter as deferred pensioners. The year had been one of celebration with three 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays, starting with Nancy Tupholme on 23 May, Bon Parsons on 15 August and Carrie Foreman on 25 October and followed by Norman Robinson's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 24 April. Flowers had been sent to the ladies and a book token to Norman. Unfortunately Norman was unable to attend the AGM but had written to say that he was 'still going strong'. During the year flowers had been sent to Mary Fortnam following a knee replacement operation and to Gladys Dance who had been knocked down by a car. The Royal Society Staff Association (RSSA) had notified the RSPA of its

Christmas Fayre last December, and whilst it had not been possible for the RSPA to organize a stall a collection had been held at the RSPA Christmas Lunch when £35 had been donated for the RSSA nominated charities which were Big Issue and Cancer Research (UK). The Secretary concluded her report by passing on specific greetings from Ratti Bulsara, Frances Chetham, Alan Houghton and Jeannie Lamb all of whom were unable to be present.

### 3. **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer presented the income and expenditure account for 2002/3 and reported the balance as at 31 March 2003 was £736.66 and balance in the Welfare Fund £120.06.

The Chairman said that for various understandable reasons, four members were no longer in a position to pay their subscriptions and that the Committee, at its informal meeting earlier in day, had considered it appropriate for these to be waived. There were, however, other financial implications as the Royal Society currently matched the RSPA subscription income Pound for Pound and he had already spoken to the Executive Secretary about this. It was agreed that the Committee should consider the matter further at its meeting on 1 December and authorise whatever action was considered desirable.

### 4. **Pensions Trustee's Report**

David Griffin, Pensions Trustee, reported that despite the current troubling time for pension funds, the Royal Society Pension Fund seemed to be keeping its head above water without the necessity of changing its basis. Both staff and employer contributions had been increased, however, to offset greater life expectancy and lower returns on investments. The Trustees last met in June 2002 when the annual report of the pension plan prepared by the RS Head of Finance had been approved. The assets held by the fund stood at the end of 2001 at an estimated £6½ M as compared to £7M at the end of 2000. The Trustees next meeting will be 16 June 2003 with the Society's new Treasurer, Professor David Wallace, in the chair.

With reference to response times in respect of queries relating to pensions, the Pensions Trustee said that at the last Trustees Meeting the Head of Finance had reported that it had taken five months for Clerical and Medical to respond to one enquiry referred to them as against the Society's aim of obtaining a response within five weeks.

David Griffin's three-year term as Pensions Trustee would end in November 2003. In due course the Royal Society would consult pensioners regarding his replacement. Len Mole indicated that he would be willing to undertake this role and, on a proposal by the Chairman seconded by Chris Argent, all present agreed that it would be beneficial for Len to be nominated as Pensions Trustee. (David Griffin having pointed out that the Society insisted that the nomination be from RS pensioners and not from the Association).

## 5. *Beyond the Terrace*

The Editor of BTT reported that BTT 28 had been published in April and that considerable progress had been made on the 29<sup>th</sup> edition. So far contributions had been received from David Griffin and John Deverill and that contributions from others would be most welcome. Len Mole congratulated the Editor for his work and the Editor thanked David for his editorial comment.

## 6 **Joint Events Secretaries Report**

In Christine Johnson's absence, Erica Lazarus, Joint Events Secretary with Christine delivered the report. Three outings had been held during the year: the Chelsea Physic Garden on 3 July attended by 21 members and guests, the Mansion House on 23 October when attended by 36 members and guests and most recently the Globe Theatre on 28 April when the party was 19. On this occasion some members had lunched at the Royal Society and a report on this latest visit would appear in the next issue of BTT. 27 had enjoyed the Christmas lunch at the Royal Society on 10 December.

Erica said that ideas would be welcomed for the next outing scheduled for the autumn. It was suggested that a visit to a livery company might be considered and Len Mole said he might have a possible contact. Peter Warren said that he too might have some suitable contacts. It was also suggested that the String of Pearls website might be consulted for possible ideas.

## 7. **Elections**

It was noted that the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer had both completed their three-year term of office. Under the RSPA Constitution both were eligible for election on annual basis for two further years, and in the absence of any other nominations, both were re-elected. Unfortunately Marjorie Harris had now completed her two-year term as a Committee member and was not eligible for re-election. Those present approved the Committee's proposal that Jenny Shanahan replace her.

## 8 **Royal Society Publications**

With reference to the circular letter sent to RSPA members on 25 March 2003 regarding the receipt of RS publications, the Chairman said that a copy of this had also been sent to the Executive Secretary, Stephen Cox, for information. A number of responses had been received and these supported the action proposed in the circular. The Chairman said that he and the Secretary had met with the Executive Secretary earlier in the day to discuss the matter, and it had been made quite clear that the Royal Society is anxious to cut back on the production of publications and leaflets and the postage incurred by their circulation. Stephen had explained that key documents such as *Excellence in Science*, *Annual Review* and all press releases were available on the Web both in the form of a PDF file or as text only.

Stephen understood that some RSPA members did not have access to the Internet and he agreed that those could receive a paper copy of *Excellence in Science*. He said that the same policy was being adopted towards Fellows of the Royal Society and that approximately 80% of Fellows now had internet access and no longer received paper copies. The Executive Secretary said that the Royal Society could offer members a short training course on using the Royal Society's website as well as telephone assistance. David Griffin observed that the Society's policy of encouraging internet access of its publications was in line with that being adopted by many other organizations.

Some members said they wished to receive information about the Society's Summer Science Exhibition, but the Chairman said it was not possible for the RSPA to make representation in respect of individual members wishes and that they would need to contact the Society direct in about May each year.

#### 9 **Invitations to the Anniversary Reception**

The Chairman reported that during the discussions which he and the Secretary had had with the Executive Secretary earlier in the day, they had advised the Stephen of problems which had arisen concerning invitations to the Anniversary Reception and Stephen had re-affirmed his earlier ruling that all RSPA members of pensionable age should receive an invitation. Problems seemed to have arisen because lists of eligible members provided by the Secretary had not been available to the appropriate office. It was hoped that this matter would now be resolved, (see minute 11a).

#### 10 **News of Members**

The Secretary said that items of news which been received from members would appear in the next issue of BTT.

#### 11 **Reports from the RS Human Resources Office and the RS Staff Association**

- (a) The Chairman welcomed Karen O'Connell, Head of Human Resources Office to the meeting. Karen gave a brief outline of the building programme that was currently being undertaken and which had necessitated the transfer of most staff who normally worked on the second and third floors to temporary accommodation in the basement. Her own office was still located in Room 227 on the second floor although there was no longer full lift access to this. Every effort had been made to keep disruption to a minimum.

In connection with the problems relating to invitations for social events (see also minute 9 above), Karen said that departments other than hers needed

access to information about RSPA membership and status of members, and that it would be helpful if the information provided by the Secretary could be placed on the Intranet, i.e. the private part of the Society's website. Before doing this, however, she would need RSPA members consent. It was noted that members when completing the form sent out annually by the Secretary seeking confirmation of current address and other details, were already asked to confirm that certain items of information could be passed 'in confidence' to personnel. To this might be added 'and other departments'. Karen assured all present that only Society personnel would have access to this information and under no circumstances would it be divulged to an outside enquirer.

- (b) The Chairman then welcomed Matthew Llewellyn the newly appointed Chairman of the Royal Society Staff Association (RSSA). Matthew reported that preparations were taking place for the May Ball later in the week and that other events such as a visit to the Globe and to the Proms had been arranged during the past year. Thought was now being given to future activities. Charities for the coming year were Cancer Research UK and Water Aid.

Chris Argent enquired about the current status of *On the Terrace* pointing out that copies of the RSPA publication *Beyond the Terrace* were sent to the RSSA, the Executive Secretary and the Society's library. Possibly reciprocal copies of *OTT* could be emailed to the RSPA.

Diana Chapman said it would be helpful to have advance information of the RSSA Summer Barbecue and Christmas Fayre, as these events were of interest to some members.

## 11 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next AGM would be held on Monday, 17 May 2004 at 2 pm at the Royal Society, to be preceded by lunch.

pp George Hemmings  
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