

# ROYAL SOCIETY PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

## Annual General Meeting 2006

### MINUTES

---

At the 20th Annual General Meeting of the RSPA held at the Royal Society on Monday 15 May 2006:

Present: George Hemmen - Chairman

Chris Argent ( <i>Editor, Beyond the Terrace</i> )	Joan Hurrell
Ratti Bulsara	Christine Johnson ( <i>Joint Events Secretary</i> )
Diana Chapman	Jeannie Lamb ( <i>Committee Member</i> )
Francis Chetham	Erica Lazarus ( <i>Joint Events Secretary</i> )
Alan Clark	Jennifer Malcolm
Vera Cockle	Len Mole ( <i>Pensions Trustee</i> )
Brenda de Vere-Lewis ( <i>Hon. Secretary</i> )	Maurice Oak
John Deverill	Nigel Parfitt ( <i>Hon. Treasurer</i> )
Iris Drake	Jenny Shanahan
Sandra Goodall	Nadia Slow
David Griffin	Nancy Tupholme
Don Harlow	

Unable to attend: 48 members.

#### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2005 were confirmed.

#### 2. Hon. Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported that there had been two new members during the year, viz. Beata Seymour who had re-joined the Association, and Corinne Wakefield who had worked at the Society from 1945-1957 and 1961-1963. She understood that Dick Stillwell of Administrative Services was due to retire shortly, and she had written inviting him to join. Thelma Atack had resigned and Pat Elliot and Shirley Lattey's membership had now lapsed following a failure to pay the subscription for two consecutive years.

Bon Parsons had died on 17 November 2005. Unfortunately it had not been possible for the RSPA to be represented at the funeral, but flowers, organized by Maurice Oak, had been sent, and a letter of condolence sent to her daughter, Valerie Crocombe.

Flowers or wine had been sent to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays of Nadia Slow, 28 September 2005, and in 2006 to Jeannie Lamb 25 February, George Hemmen 1 March and Erica Lazarus, 8 March. All had sent appreciative letters. Flowers had been sent to Christine Johnson and Tania Prigorowsky following hip replacements, to Nancy Tupholme who had broken her wrist, and a book token to Alan Clark who had broken his ankle.

Twenty-five members had sent in items of news and these were being passed the Editor of BTT.

### 3. Hon. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the income and expenditure account for 2005/06. He said that the accounts had been circulated to members prior to the annual audit. There had been small surplus on the recent visit to Chelsea Hospital increasing the balance carried forward to £510.44.

The Treasurer said that 2005-2006 had been an expensive year, in part resulting from four 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays. A similar situation was likely to prevail for the next two years. It was customary for the cost of the AGM lunch to be met from RSPA funds, and previously the Christmas lunch had been subsidized for members. Postal charges had recently increased. If expenditure at current levels continued the balance in RSPA funds would rapidly reduce and if no action were taken then a very serious situation would arise in the near future.

The Treasurer said that the Committee, which had met earlier in the day, had considered the financial position and had discussed possible ways whereby savings might be achieved. These included:

- Reduce the number of issues of *BTT* from three to two a year
- Stop the subsidy of £3.50 a head for the Christmas lunch
- Include a small additional charge for outing costs to offset expenditure on postage, photocopying etc.

The current subscription of £5 had been maintained for thirteen years. Whilst income had been boosted in 2001 by the Royal Society's decision to match £ for £ RSPA subscriptions, this had been at the loss of three free lunches each year for members. It was necessary to get the finances onto a sounder footing and thus there was a need to increase the annual subscription. The Treasurer said that whilst there was a lot to be said for increasing the subscription to £10 he was at this stage proposing an increase to £8. It was not known if the Royal Society would agree to match this figure, but if they did their increase would not take effect until 2008/2009 as the Society's contribution was paid in arrears

The Chairman said that if an increase of £8 were agreed it would still be necessary to keep subscription levels under regular review, and that when increased RS support was being sought the Association needed to show that it was prudent in its spending.

David Griffin asked if there was any one item of expenditure that was a significant drain on expenses. The Treasurer said that whilst the cost of the AGM lunch was a large item, that was not one which he felt appropriate to target.

Jeannie Lamb felt that most members wishing to attend the Christmas lunch should be able to meet the cost in full. She hoped it would not be necessary to reduce the number of issues of *BTT*, and considered an increase to £10 would be good insurance.

During the ensuing discussion a number of members favoured an increase to £8 with a review in a few years time. Many considered that *BTT* represented good value and the hope was expressed that the number of issues each year would not be cut. Maurice Oak said that in respect of outings that he arranged for another organization, it was customary to add £1 to expected costs to cover postage etc. Christine Johnson said that a small additional sum had been added to the cost of some outings, but not all. For future outings she would add a small sum to cover incidental costs.

In the light of the discussion, the Chairman suggested that the subscription be increased to

£8. In seeking a matching sum from the Royal Society, the Society would be informed that the subsidy for the Christmas lunch would be dropped. If the Royal Society required more pruning before increasing its contribution then the matter would need to be considered further. At this stage, however, no action would be taken regarding *BTT*. Those present gave approval for this action. The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his efforts in providing a forward look at the Association's financial position.

The Chairman referred to discussion at the previous AGM (minute 4, last paragraph) about Gerry Evans. He said that although contact had been re-established with Gerry, he was now in long-term care and was not in a position to comprehend the need to pay subscriptions: Margaret Earl seemed to be in a similar situation. It was agreed that the subscriptions for both now be waived.

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

The Pensions Trustee reported that the Royal Society was now in discussion with Clerical and Medical over the possible transfer of the Society's pension scheme to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). The target date for a decision was the end of September. Of the 78 current pensioners, 61 received their pensions via an annuity, and for them there would be no change. The remaining 17 pensioners were currently paid directly from the scheme, and annuities would be purchased for them if the Society transferred to the USS. Currently these pensioners received their annual increments on their retirement dates. This might possibly change but calculations would be made to ensure that no one was out of pocket. The matter was now in the hands of the auditors and lawyers, but progress was slow. A Trustees' meeting might be held during June.

With reference to the Trustees' meeting in March, the Pensions Trustee said that this had been mainly a tidying up operation. Letters had been sent to persons with small sums outstanding, but only one reply had been received. The position of deferred pensioners was raised, and Nadia Slow said that Jackie Middleton-Smith had been unable to ascertain what would happen to deferred pensioners who had paid into the scheme expecting to receive a pension at the age of 60, if the retirement age was raised. David Griffin asked if the Pensioners would still nominate a trustee if the scheme were transferred to the USS. The Pensions Trustee said that all the queries raised would be looked into.

#### 5. ***Beyond the Terrace***

The Editor said he was still enthusiastic about receiving pre-Royal Society histories from members. He had also made an appeal for photographs of certain staff members and said he had received some material from Linda Thomas.

#### 6. **Joint Events Secretaries Report**

Christine Johnson, Joint Events Secretary reported on events as follows:

27 July 2005 – A number of members had visited John and Herta Deverill

14 October – 14 Members and guests had visited <sup>the</sup> Foundling Hospital

13 December – 20 members and guests had attended a special Christmas lunch at the Royal Society

28 March 2006 - members and guests had visited the Royal Hospital, Chelsea preceded by lunch at the Royal Army Museum.

Christine said that possible dates for the Christmas lunch this year were 12 or 14 December.

Regarding future visits, she said she would talk to Peter Warren again about a possible visit to a livery company. Other suggestions from those present were a river trip, the National Army Museum and the RAF Museum, Hendon.

Nadia Slow enquired about the possibility of having a 'country list' for outings as she had a friend who had undertaken occasional work for the International Geophysical Year (IGY) who might be interested. The Chairman regretted that it would be inappropriate to include persons outside of the Association other than as guests of members.

**7. Elections**

Noted that the Chairman had completed his three-year term of office, but was eligible for re-election for two further one-year terms. George was duly elected Chairman for a further year. Brenda, having served as Secretary for a year as a co-opted member, was now eligible for re-election for a three-year term, and in the absence of any other nominations was elected as Secretary.

**8. Reports from the RS Human Resources Office and the RS Staff Association**

**a. Human Resources** – The Secretary reported that Karen O'Connell, Head of Human Resources, was still on maternity leave and expected back at the Society in August. The Acting Head, Paula Lewis, was unable to attend the AGM. The Secretary said that she hoped to see Karen on her return to sort out various problems that had arisen over the year.

**b. Royal Society Staff Association** – Melissa Nagy, Chair of the RSSA was also unavailable.

**9. RSPA Groups**

The Chairman said that the Committee had discussed the effectiveness of the group system that had been set up in 1998 as a means of alerting the Committee of problems and for dissemination of urgent information to members. Currently Group Leaders tried to contact members of their group for news prior to the November committee meeting, but the response to these enquiries was poor, and sometimes it was felt that such enquiries were viewed as intrusive. The Secretary said that for the transmission of urgent information, such as a member's death, trying to use the group system was laborious and with more than 30 members now with email addresses, it was much quicker for her to send out emails, backed up with a circular letter to those without internet access. In the case of problems requiring urgent consideration, again she and the Chairman needed to know and so contact with her was the most effective route. After brief discussion, it was agreed to discontinue to group system.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next AGM would be held on Monday, 14 May 2007 at 2 pm at the Royal Society, to be preceded by lunch.

*Heaven*  
14 May 2007