

# ROYAL SOCIETY PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

## Annual General Meeting 2011

### MINUTES

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At the 25th Annual General Meeting of the RSPA held at the Royal Society on Monday 16 May 2011:

Present: Peter Warren - Chairman

Chris Argent ( <i>Hon. Editor, Beyond the Terrace</i> )	Joan Hurrell
Tom Berry	Christine Johnson ( <i>Joint Events Secretary</i> )
Christine Brock	Jeannie Lamb
Ratti Bulsara	Erica Lazarus ( <i>Joint Events Secretary</i> )
Choong-kar Chan	Jennifer Malcolm
Frances Chetham	Len Mole ( <i>Pensions Trustee</i> )
Vera Cockle	Susan Moss
Peter Cooper	Maurice Oak
Brenda de Vere-Lewis ( <i>Hon. Secretary</i> )	Nigel Parfitt
Sandra Goodall	Tania Prigorowsky
Don Harlow	Keith Root ( <i>Hon. Treasurer</i> )
Marjorie Harris	Beata Seymour
George Hemmen	Nadia Slow
Ann Hicks ( <i>Committee Member</i> )	David Sturt
	Ling Thompson

#### 1. Apologies for absence

The Hon. Sec. reported that 41 members were unable to attend.

#### 2. Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman said he was pleased to see such a large attendance, and that Julie Maxton, the Royal Society's new Executive Director, had accepted his invitation to come to meet members at some point during the meeting.

#### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17 May 2010 were confirmed.

#### 4. Matters Arising

- a. **350th Anniversary of the Royal Society** – The Chairman said that many members had enjoyed some aspects of the celebrations and that he would like to record the Association's appreciation for this involvement. The Hon. Secretary agreed to write to Dominic Reid who had headed the team responsible for putting together the programme of events.
- b. **Wine** – With reference to minute 4, George Hemmen queried the payment from Association funds of wine served at lunches prior to RSPA outings especially in view of a decision made a few years earlier that the cost of outings should be self-financing even to the extent of postage costs. The Chairman said that the decision to do this had been taken at one of the committee's informal meetings held prior to an AGM, and that in future a formal record would be taken of decisions made at such meetings. As members became less mobile, the lunch element before an outing would become a

valuable social activity, and the serving of wine was a way of encouraging the attendance at the lunch of members not necessarily going on to the outing itself.

#### **5. Hon. Secretary's Report**

The Hon. Secretary reported that the current membership of the Association was 71. There had been no new members during the year, although an invitation to join the Association had been sent on 17 February to Stephen Cox, recently retired Executive Director, and Sheila Derrick, a former staff member, who had enquired about membership.

Ursula Tokle had died on 18 July 2010, and the RSPA had been represented at the funeral in Cerne Abbas by Peter Warren, Peter Cooper, Sheila Edwards, Corinne Wakefield accompanied by her husband Dugg, Ann Hicks with her husband Nigel, Jackie Middleton-Smith with her husband Mark, and the Hon. Secretary. The Hon. Secretary said how much she and Peter Warren had appreciated being met at Dorchester South station by Sheila Edwards who had then driven them to the funeral. Chris Alexander had died on 23 November; previously a number of members had visited her at St Raphael's Hospice. Despite appalling weather conditions the RSPA was well represented at the funeral by Peter Warren, Joan Hurrell, Erica Lazarus, Jackie Middleton-Smith, Susan Moss, David Sturt, Ling Thompson, Choong-kar Chan, Len Mole, Ling Thompson, the Hon. Secretary and Nigel Parfitt who had been invited to give an address. Current and former RS staff members were also present. On 16 June the Hon. Secretary had been notified by email of the death of Leslie Townsend who had in fact died during August 2009, but it has not been possible to obtain any further information.

Cards and gifts have been sent to Marjorie Smith and Vera Cockle, to mark their 80th birthdays, and to Don Harlow on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Flowers or flowercards were sent to Joan Hurrell, Christine Johnson, and Diana Chapman, all of whom had undergone surgery, and to Chris Alexander when she was in the hospice.

#### **6. Hon. Treasurer's Report**

The Hon. Treasurer said that David Sturt had audited the accounts for 2010/2011 on 9 May 2011, and copies of these were available if any member required one. Members had received the unaudited accounts with their agenda, and a few minor adjustments had been made under the item relating to the Welfare Fund. In connexion with expenditure relating to events, George Hemmen suggested that it would be helpful if the names of the actual events could appear. The Chairman thanked David Sturt for examining the accounts, and David said he would be willing to undertake the examination in 2012.

With reference to the level of subscription paid by members, the Treasurer said that the Association was highly dependent on the contribution made by the Royal Society, but on the assumption that this will be maintained for the current year, then the subscription could remain at £8.

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

The Pensions Trustee said there were currently 108 members of the Pension Scheme of which 68 were paid by annuity, and 40 directly from the Pension Fund. He said that the Royal Society had put a lump sum into the scheme which was now in a very good financial position.

It was noted that Len will complete his three year term at Pensions Trustee in November 2012 and that he was not proposing to stand for re-election. The Chairman said that a replacement from within the Association would need to be found, and he thanked Len for the work he was doing as Pensions Trustee.

## 8. *Beyond the Terrace*

The Hon. Hon. Editor said that *BTT50* had been issued some time ago, and that he was now working on *BTT51* which he hoped to circulate in July. This will include an obit on Chris Alexander and he said that other copy would be welcome. The Chairman thanked the Hon. Hon. Editor for his work who in turn expressed his thanks for the proof reading assistance provided by David Griffin who was not present today.

## 9. **Dr Julie Maxton**

At 2.30 p.m. Dr Maxton joined the meeting and the Chairman introduced her to the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer, and the Hon. Editor of *BTT*. She commented on the erudition displayed in *BTT* and said that she was impressed by the years of service clocked up by members and their loyalty. [Note: the Chairman wrote subsequently to express our appreciation to her for joining us]

## 10. **Events Secretaries Report**

Christine Johnson reported that 17 had participated in the visit to the Wallace Collection on 23 September, and that 20 had enjoyed a visit to the Royal Academy of Music on 22 March. The Christmas Lunch on 9 December had been very successful with 26 present at that. Plans for a visit to Chicheley Hall on 11 July were progressing with 25 indicating to date that they wished to participate.

## 11. **RSPA Rules**

The Chairman said that the current rules made provision for the co-option of up to two persons to the committee. Currently one of the co-opted places was taken by the second Events Secretary, and the Chairman said that in future it might be necessary to provide additional assistance in relation to other committee posts. It would be useful, therefore, to have the power to co-opt up to three additional persons, and those present gave unanimous approval for this rule change.

## 12. **Elections**

- a. **Chairman** – Noted that the Chairman had completed his three year term of office, but that in accordance with the rules was eligible to be re-elected annually for two further years. The Hon. Secretary proposed that the Chairman be elected for a further year and those present signified their approval
- b. **Hon. Secretary** – Noted that the Hon. Secretary had completed her fifth and final year in office and was not eligible for re-election. The Chairman said that no nominations for this position had been received, and that the Hon. Secretary had agreed to be co-opted back onto the Committee to undertake the work as Secretary. In doing so the Hon. Secretary had stated that she did not propose to stand for election in 2012. The Chairman thanked her for her work and presented her with a bottle of wine.
- c. **Committee Member** – Noted that Ann Hicks had completed her two year term of office and was not eligible for re-election as a Committee Member. The Chairman proposed that Sandra Goodall be elected as a Committee Member and this was seconded by the Hon. Secretary. Those present approved this appointment.
- d. **Joint Events Secretary** – The Chairman said that Christine Johnson and Erica Lazarus now wished to relinquish responsibility for organizing the events programme. The Events Secretary was an *ex officio* position, and he was pleased to report that Ann Hicks had agreed to become Events Secretary assisted by Joan Hurrell who would be

co-opted for this purpose. He thanked Christine and Erica for their work and presented a gift to each.

### 13. News of Members

The Hon. Secretary said that thirteen members had sent in news of their activities which she would pass to the Hon. Editor of *BTT*. She had recently spoken to Nancy Tupholme's cousin, and passed round a birthday card for members to sign in respect of Nancy's 99th birthday on 23 May.

### 14. Report from the RS Human Resources Office

The Chairman welcomed Karina Rook, Royal Society Human Resources Manager. Karina said that the past year had been a very busy one with the main focus being the 350th Anniversary Celebrations. Staff currently numbered 134 with a turnover of about 13% which was a significant improvement on the situation three years ago. The HR team had expanded to three and its current activities included a study of job descriptions, on-line appraisals and a review of exit procedures. A major change during the year had been the appointment of a new Executive Director, and the HR team was supportive of her view that the Royal Society should be a place where anyone would want to work. There was a need, therefore, to ensure that the Society is top of the list of desirable employers.

Karina then responded to queries raised by members:

- Nicola Kane now Chairman of the Royal Society Staff Association
- Possible that the current recession had influenced the reduction in staff turnover
- A final decision had not yet been made regarding a possible replacement for the late Ian Cooper, but Richard Barker currently held a six month interim position

### 15. The Way Ahead

The Chairman said that the RSPA Committee at its meeting on 9 December 2010 had had a detailed discussion about the future of the Association, and its conclusions were summarized in the document *The Way Ahead* which members had received with their agenda. He said that about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the membership were now aged over 70 and that there was a need to be realistic regarding the Association's activities. He would welcome ideas of what members wished to do. During a wide ranging discussion views were expressed as follows:

**Ling Thompson** – Do members wish to have more social contact or are outings more important. She felt that outings did not always provide sufficient opportunity to talk to each other

**David Sturt** – Try to encourage more people to join the Association. The Hon. Secretary said that all retirees from the Society are invited to join

**Nigel Parfitt** – would it be possible to visit some members who live far from London. The Chairman considered in these instances the newsletter was probably the best way of keeping in touch. The Hon. Secretary said that she thought most members had links with certain other members who were not in a position to participate in the Association's social activities.

**Jeannie Lamb** – Personally keeps in touch with a number of members and periodically arranges a lunch at the Royal Society for some of her contemporaries. Anyone who wished to attend these should let her know.

**Chris Argent** - Currently events were usually preceded by a lunch which provided the

social element. He would welcome more visits

**Chairman** – some members already went on other outings with other organizations to which they belonged, and thus these might be in competition with what the Association did

**Nadia Slow** – Pointed out the value of the RSPA events which focused on a smaller attendance

**George Hemmen** – Unable to participate in many events for geographical reasons, but has the impression that the Association's events are much enjoyed by those who are able to attend

**Len Mole** – Possibly a lunch club should be established, with the Events Secretaries being empowered to arrange the occasional outing

**Jeannie Lamb** – knows of at least one member who would like to attend the Association's activities, but is prevented from doing so because of hearing difficulties

**Historical Interests** – The Hon. Editor said that he had been producing *Beyond the Terrace* since 1992, and previous issues contained the obituaries of past members. He would now like to gather these together into a single volume and wondered if current members would have an interest in having a copy. This could be printed on demand, and it was suggested that he put a note about this in the next newsletter.

**Chairman's Summary** - The Chairman then summarized the views expressed as follows:

- A combination of visits and networking occasions is a sensible way forward
- The visit to the Kavli Centre in July a special occasion
- Explore the possibility of a networking event in July 2012
- Try to encourage people who do not wish to come on outings to attend a lunch

**Other Considerations** - The Chairman reminded members that any expansion or change in activities was dependent on finding members to undertake the organizational work. Members needed to consider what contribution they could make

**Finance** - In connexion with suggestions contained in *The Way Ahead* regarding the use of some of the Association's funds, George Hemmen queried the proposal that flowers, or donation (if preferred by the next-of-kin) might be sent at the death of a member, suggesting that it was sometimes more appropriate in the case of deceased male members to send flowers to the widow. The Hon. Secretary pointed out that suggestion was designed to cover those instances when it was not possible for geographical reasons for the RSPA to be represented at a funeral.

## 16. Date of next AGM

It was agreed to hold the next AGM at the Royal Society, on Monday, 21 May 2012 at 2 p.m., to be preceded by lunch.

Len T. Gann

21 May 2012