

THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 112th Annual General Meeting Held on Friday, 17th May 2019 At the Crowne Plaza, Trinity Street, Chester CH1 2BD

Present (Members): Tony Badger (President), Mike Brooks (Hon. Treasurer), Katharine Burn (Deputy President), Tim Lomas (Hon. Secretary), Mike Short (Chair, Branches and Members) Helen Snelson (Chair, Secondary Committee) plus 37 full members of the HA as listed in the archive files.

HA Staff: Rebecca (Becky) Sullivan (CEO), Mona Anjoom-Zaman, Harvey Edser, Emily Randall,

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from a number of members.

2. Welcome from the President

2.1 The President, Professor Tony Badger, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those present for finding the time to attend in what has been an incredibly busy programme.

2.2 He thanked the members for their support of the HA and paid tribute to the staff at 59a, who do a fantastic job. The HA was probably one of the leanest operating Subject Associations in the country, and also one of the few Subject Associations whose membership is increasing, which has active local Branches, and is in good health financially. For all this, the HA owed both Becky and her team, and the Association's supportive and committed members, their very grateful thanks.

2.3 Professor Badger then asked the Chief Executive to take the meeting through the subsequent agenda items.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the previous year's AGM had been circulated, and no queries or comments were raised. Anne Wagstaff proposed, seconded by Katherine Burn, that the Minutes be accepted as a true record. This was **agreed** unanimously, and the President duly signed the Minutes.

4. Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st September 2018

4.1 The Annual Report and Accounts for the year 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018 had been circulated in paper form to those present and made available on the HA's website, and by post on request, to all members. Becky explained that, as some considerable amount of time had passed since then, she would bring the meeting up to date on more recent developments before turning to the formal approval of the Annual Report. She highlighted the following:

4.1.1 **Staffing Changes:** Joseph Wilson had joined the Membership team in September 2018, and Mona Anjoom-Zaman had joined the HA in April 2019 as Senior Administrator, supporting Becky, and also Branch Co-ordinator, supporting the Branches and being their first port of call. Another change in the last few months was that Paula Kitching, who many members would know and who had worked for the HA on a freelance basis for many years, was now working 2

days a week on communications, social media and also on some projects such as Young Quills and on the HA News, which the HA wanted to turn into a better membership magazine.

- 4.1.2 As mentioned last year, Council had set the HA some very challenging membership targets, 8,000 members by 2021. Becky explained that Emily Randall (Membership Manager) would be speaking about this later in the meeting, and it is one reason why the HA has been looking closely at what is needed to support its work and its members and Branches.
- 4.1.3 Over the past few years, the HA has worked quite a lot on funded projects, most recently:
- (a) **The Suffrage Project** for Cabinet Office which went live in November 2018. This provided a fantastic resource with details of over 3,000 individuals involved in the suffrage movement from 1866 through to 1919, and includes 1914 Home Office records.
 - (b) **Teacher Fellowships:** Three have been running, or are about to begin, since the last AGM:
 - *War and Remembrance*, with the Royal Palaces, using the ‘Poppies – Fields of Blood and Seas of Red’ art installation as a starting point. This was led by Michael Riley alongside colleagues from Historic Royal Palaces.
 - *Britain and the Slave Trade*, with the UCL’s Legacy of British Slave Ownership Project and Justice2History, and led by Robin Whitburn and Abdul Mohammad from Justice2History were leading on the Fellowship with Dr Kate Donnington (South Bank University) and Nick Draper (UCL)
 - A new Fellowship on the *Legacy of the Korean War*, funded by the Korean War Foundation would be starting in the summer, led by Ben Walsh. This was for secondary teachers and Becky reported it was still open for applications.
 - (c) **Higher Education Committee:** Following the findings of the working group led by Anne Curry, the HA was moving towards a Higher Education Committee to take work in this area forward. Professor Arthur Burns and Professor Katy Cubitt had been co-opted to Council.
 - (d) **Chartered Teacher Project:** The pilot project has now been successfully completed and this will now be taken forward.
 - (e) **Quality Mark:** Becky was delighted to report this was going from strength to strength, with just over 80 schools having achieved the Quality Mark and another 17 going through the process.
- 4.2 Becky invited members to turn to the formal Annual Report and invited any comments or questions. None being raised, she invited the Honorary Treasurer, Mike Brooks, to take the meeting through the Annual Accounts.
- 4.3 Mike began by saying that, as the President had previously mentioned, the finances of the Association were in very good shape, and while it would be easy for an incoming Treasurer to take credit for that, it was actually due to the hard work of the staff, the members and Branches, and his predecessor. He referred to the detailed accounts on pages 16 – 30 of the Annual Report and drew members attention to the following highlights:
- 4.3.1 Firstly and most importantly, the auditors had given the HA an unqualified opinion on the accounts and were satisfied with their accuracy.

- 4.3.3 The financial year had ended with a surplus of £87,000 compared to the surplus of £55,000 achieved the previous year. Although this seems like a lot of money, in terms of turnover, it was really quite a small margin. He explained that he would touch on this again when talking about reserves and why the HA needs to keep reserves.
- 4.3.4 Income was up by some £260,000, which was largely due to the receipt of the grant from the Cabinet Office for the Suffragist project of £200,000, together with an increase on the HA's share of the profit from the sales of *History*.
- 4.3.5 There was a consequent increase in the expenditure because some of the £200,000 grant has already been spent, the rest being carried forward into the current year. This has now also been spent. He explained that the accounting standards required that when a grant was received, the entire income should be recorded in the financial year during which it was received, even though some of the expenditure would appear in the subsequent year. This meant that the results for the current financial year would not be quite as good as that for 2017/18.
- 4.3.6 The total funds held by the Historical Association at the end of the last financial year on 31st September 2018 were in excess of £1 million, as forecast by his predecessor. Of this, about half represented what are known as 'restricted' or 'designated' funds. Restricted funds are those which can only be used for a specific purpose, while designated funds are those which the HA intends to use for a given purpose, and of these about half has been set aside to enable the HA to continue to improve its e-publishing. The approximate half a million pounds of funds which are neither restricted nor designated represents the 'General' fund, which is what the Charity Commission refers to as the HA's 'free reserves', money which it can spend in the future as Council sees fit. He considered it essential that the HA should retain such funds, firstly to remain independent, and secondly to respond to issues as they occur.
- 4.3.7 Mike explained that the money is not all held in cash. Cash balances had gone up by over £150,000 during the year, partly because of the surplus, and also partly because of some minor realisation of investments in order to reduce their volatility; in view of the unpredictability of the financial market, he thought that the HA's financial adviser had been wise in recommending that the HA should cut back on some of those. The remaining investments are middle-risk and have, during the year, provided the HA with an income of £23,000 and have gone up in value by £11,000.
- 4.3.8 Having these reserves put the HA in a good position to invest in additional resources at 59a to support both operational activities and the Branch network, though it was still very lean.
- 4.4 Mike invited questions or comments, but none were raised.
- 4.5 Mike Short proposed, and Raphael Pepiol seconded, approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, This was **agreed**.
- 4.6 Becky explained that Committee reports would not be given at the meeting, but written updates had been made available and members would be most welcome to talk to Committee Chairs present at the meeting if they had any queries.

5. Election of new Trustees

Becky formally announced the results of elections which had taken place earlier in the year. These were:

Branches and Members Committee representatives: Mary Feerick (Bristol Branch) and Sean Lang (Cambridge Branch)

Primary Committee representatives: Paul Bracey and Helen Crawford

Secondary Committee representatives: Richard Kennett (first term) and Jason Todd (second term)

Higher Education Committee representatives: Arthur Burns and Katy Cubitt

All would serve for three years and attend their first Council meeting in October.

6. Membership update

6.1 Becky then invited Emily Randall, the HA's Membership Manager, to give an update. Emily outlined the following key points:

6.2 Emily began by saying that she understood that this Conference had probably the best attendance of any in recent years, and this was reflected by what was happening in the membership. At the previous conference, she had reported that membership figures stood at 5,847 and she was happy to report now that, less than one year on, stood at 6260, an increase of over 400 members. This number included both individual and school members, with the latter giving access to several members of staff, which meant that the overall number of people reached through membership was much higher. These were the highest figures for about a decade.

6.3 Looking in more detail at the various membership groups, Primary had seen an increase of about 250 members, Secondary had seen around 250 new members – again, individuals and schools but also a lot of trainee teacher members. The HA had also welcomed new multi-academy Trusts into membership, and a number of new IP access subscribers (access via university library online facilities). What this means to the HA is that around 8,000 new people – history students and trainee teachers – can be reached through their library and institutions reaching from the one in Chester to the University of Pretoria in South Africa. There had been a bit of a decline in *Historian* membership, of about 100 or so. Becky and Emily assured members this was being taken seriously and they were looking at developing a wider package.

6.4 Emily explained that HA members represent only a small part of the wider HA network. There are, for example, 24,000 registered website users, 21,000 combined social media followers, 1,400 Branch members who engage with the HA through local Branches. The HA has a bigger connected community, supporting each other, and also that the HA has a wider reach and a stronger voice for history.

6.5 Emily reported that over the last 18 months, she had been doing some new membership research with a view to meeting the challenging target set by Council. Membership offers have been reviewed, with whole school membership being identified as a priority. For Secondary school membership, this has focused on the HA Student Zone of the website, access to which is included with school membership. In line with member feedback, we are developing a new and restructured area designed to develop interpretative skills and subject

knowledge for those aged 16 – 18, and we look forward to that being rolled out in the autumn term. In Primary, a dedicated set of ‘Co-ordinators’ Corner’ resources were in development for primary history subject leaders. The number of additional users on primary and secondary school accounts had been extended allowing information to be shared with more colleagues. As an additional benefit to school members, the HA was planning to roll out a series of webinars. Recognising that school budgets were tight and not likely to improve the decision had been made across the HA to ensure value for money was a priority.

- 6.6 Improvements had been made to the website to help members find content more easily. There was now a new home page, new ways to find a local Branch, changes to the journal directories, and improved information on membership resources, reminding people what they get for their membership. This work is ongoing, and though we have come quite a long way, there is still quite a way to go!
- 6.7 The *Historian* package, was under review and would become a priority area from summer 2020.
- 6.8 In terms of recruitment and retention strategy, the membership team will be looking particularly at the onward journey of trainee teachers and new teachers at critical points in their progress.
- 6.9 Becky thanked Emily for her talk, and also thanked her and the other staff members who are driving all these changes.

7. Membership fees

- 7.1 The AGM were asked to note that Council had, at its meeting on 16th March 2019, agreed a slight increase in membership fees, to take effect from 1st July
- 7.2 The new fees will be:
With printed journals (UK)
- Individual with The Historian: £61.00
 - Individual with Teaching History: £61.00
 - Individual with Primary History: £43.00.
 - Corporate with The Historian: £117.00
 - Corporate with Teaching History: £117.00
 - Corporate with Primary History: £72.00
 - Concessionary with The Historian: £40.50
 - Concessionary with Teaching History: £40.50
 - Concessionary with Primary History: £36.50

Where overseas subscribers require a paper copy journal, additional postage costs will be added of £10.00 for Europe and £21.00 for the rest of the world.

8 Re-appointment of Auditors

Mike Brooks proposed and Jenni Hyde seconded the re-appointment of the Association’s current Auditors, Kingston Smith, until the next Annual General Meeting. **Agreed.**

9. Discussion of issues raised by members

- 9.1 Becky reported that Nick Tyldesley (Manchester Branch) had asked to raise the issue of the HA's connections with Europe. Nick explained that, given the implications of Brexit, he thought the HA should have a positive viewpoint on keeping connections with EuroClio and internationally, addressing issues concerning particularly British interpretations and fostering and developing links. Helen Snelson reported that the HA remained a member and supporter of EuroClio and was in discussions on working with EuroClio on teacher training. She thought that relationships between the two organisations are healthy.
- 9.2 Nick also said that he thought the 30 minutes allocated to the AGM was perhaps too short a time for the discussion of some quite important issues, and the HA might like to consider allocating more time to detailed discussion on, say, the revitalisation of Branches or development of secondary and primary packages.
- 9.3 The CEO formally brought the 112th AGM to a close and thanked everyone for coming.