

## **THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

### **Minutes of the 113<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting Held on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (virtually, by Zoom)**

**Present:** Katharine Burn, Deputy President (Chair), Peter Mandler (President Elect), Mike Brooks, Honorary Treasurer, Tim Lomas, Honorary Secretary, Arthur Burns, Chair of Higher Education, Beverley Forrest, Chair of Primary, Mike Short, Chair of Branches, Helen Snelson, Chair of Secondary – a full list of trustees and members can be found at the end of the minutes.

**Apologies:** Tony Badger (President)

**Staff:** Rebecca Sullivan (Chief Executive), Maheema Chanrai (Education & Events Officer), Melanie Jones (Education Officer), Emily Randall (Membership Manager) and Anne-Marie Stephenson (Marketing Manager).

*In attendance:* Dorothy Oxley (Minute taker)

#### **1. Apologies for Absence and guidance on meeting format**

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from the President, Tony Badger, who was unable to attend because the meeting clashed with another commitment. He had sent a message to everyone which was read out by the Vice-President, Katharine Burn, who chaired the meeting. There had been no other formal apologies for absence
- 1.2 Before the formal meeting began, Becky Sullivan, CEO of the Historical Association, welcomed everyone to this, the first 'virtual' AGM for the HA. She outlined how the Zoom meeting format would work, especially in respect of asking questions (using the 'hands up' icon), proposing or seconding motions, and voting on these through a virtual poll. Everyone was presenting from their homes, so she asked members to be understanding if there were occasional technical problems. Some of the Committee chairs, during their presentation, would share their screen with all participants. The AGM was being recorded for the benefit of the minute taker.

#### **2. Welcome from the President**

- 2.1 Unfortunately the President, Professor Tony Badger was unable to attend as the meeting clashed with a prior commitment, so Katharine Burn, Deputy President, took the Chair. Katharine welcomed members and explained that Tony was sorry not to be present. He had sent some remarks which he had asked her to share. She read these out, and the full version is available on request from the national office. His key points were that it had been an unexpected honour to be invited to be President and what a privilege it had been to serve an organisation which has been run so well due to the efforts of so many people. He thanked his predecessors and said how sad it had been to learn of Justin Champion's death. Professor Champion had been an inspirational visitor to many Branches, and his passion for his subject, plus his unwavering commitment to public history, displayed the values that the HA would continue to celebrate. Professor Badger also thanked Anne Curry and Mike Maddison who had guided him through the early days. One of his greatest pleasures had been to visit over half the Branches; he had learned a lot from those audiences and had been left with a great

sense of gratitude to all the Branch officers who now faced the challenge of mapping out the future of these branches. He also expressed his gratitude to all the staff at the HA for their wide range of activities, including through these very difficult times. Richard Walker, Mike Brooks and John Andrews had shepherded the Association's finances very well, and the Association had been fortunate to have Becky Sullivan as its CEO. The Committee and 59a had been responsible for the spectacular growth of the Association's membership. The target of 8,000 had been aspirational rather than realistic – to have smashed that target so comprehensively was a great achievement and he commended all those involved. He ended by saying that he was delighted to hand over such a thriving organisation.

- 2.2 Referring to Tony's words about Justin Champion, Katharine said that he had been an extraordinary president. The Association owed him a huge debt and she asked everyone to pause for a minute's silence to remember him.

### **3. Minutes of the 112<sup>th</sup> AGM held on 17 May 2019**

- 3.1 **Approval of Minutes:** The Minutes had been made available online. Mike Brooks proposed and Gillian Burnett seconded that the Minutes should be approved and signed as a true record, which was **agreed**.
- 3.2 **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising which would not be covered under separate agenda items.

### **4. Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 30 September 2019**

#### **4.1 Annual Report**

- 4.1.1 Becky Sullivan thanked Tony for his wonderful words and said how sorry she was that there had been no opportunity to thank him in person for being such an excellent President. She hoped very much that the HA could give him formal thanks at the Annual Conference which would hopefully be held in November in Bristol.
- 4.1.2 Becky explained that she would not concentrate on the written report as it focused on the year ending 30 September 2019. The current year had thrown up many challenges and she did not have time to do justice to the sheer number of initiatives and hard work over the past few months. She first thanked her team at 59a who had been highly organized, happy to adapt and take on new approaches quickly and efficiently. She also thanked the committee members and committee chairs. The Secondary and Primary Committees had done wonderful work supporting teachers who had to teach virtually, even though many were having to do home schooling themselves. The Branches Committee had also done wonderful work, as had the Branch Officers, and the HE Committee, who were pulling together resources for young people transitioning to university in the autumn. Richard Kennett and Sally Thorne from the Bristol Branch had put together a Virtual Pub Quiz with over 300 people participating from all over the country and some from other parts of the world. The virtual branch talks put together by Paula Kitching on the staff team would continue to run during the autumn. Naturally many face-to-face CPD events had to be cancelled but Mel Jones and Maheema Chanrai had pulled these around and successfully taken events online. Finally, she thanked the editorial boards and editors of the HA's journals, who put hours of work into producing these quality journals.
- 4.1.3 Covid had rather taken over everyone's lives but also the issue of racism had come to the top of the agenda, which encouraged everyone to look at what kind of society they wanted to live in, to take in

a wide range of opinions and perspectives and encourage diversity. This was an important part of the HA's strategic plan and the HA recognized the very real need to do better. One of the key research projects planned for this year, arising from work done by the Royal Historical Society's report on *Race and Ethnicity*, was to look at what barriers young people, especially those from a Black British and British Asian background, found to taking the study of history further than KS3 or GCSE. Katharine Burn and Jason Todd had started this work and though they had been unable to get the questionnaires out into schools before they were closed, but this was still very much a plan for the future.

## 4.2 Annual Accounts

4.2.1 Mike Brooks, the Hon. Treasurer, took the meeting through key themes from the financial statements to 30 September 2019. He suggested that the accounts for the current year would reflect the Covid situation.

4.2.2 As usual, the auditors, Kingston Smith, produced a clean report, and he thanked them for their efforts. There was an overall deficit of £99,000 compared with a surplus of £71,000 in the previous year. However, £98,000 of this represented the net restricted expenditure during the year, which typically relates to grants which are received in one year and, by accounting standards, must be shown in the income for that year, while a good deal of the money received is actually spent in the following year. When looking at ongoing activities, which are funded by unrestricted reserves, there was only a deficit of £1,000. Looking separately at income and expenditure income was down this year by £206,000 at £897,000 compared to the previous year, but of that £206,000, £139,000 represents lower grant income. In the year ended 30 September 2019, £61,000 was received for the Korean War Project compared with £200,000 received the previous year for the Suffragists project. Total expenditure was just over £1,000,000, £40,000 lower than last year, but the expenditure from restricted funds was up by £46,000. This was however more than offset by a reduction of £86,000 in expenditure on ongoing activities. The details of where the money was spent was available in the notes to the accounts. Essentially it was a year much the same as before, with the exception of spending 2/3rds of the grant previously received for the Suffragists project.

4.2.3 The net position was that at the end of the year, total funds (the net financial worth of the organisation) were £927,000 (£99,000 less than the previous year) but as previously noted all but £1,000 of this reduction related to specific projects funded by restricted reserves. The important thing for the future of the HA is an assessment of the free reserves, which essentially are the money which, in the future, the HA can spend on anything which is in line with its objectives, without the constraint of conditions applied to grants. These free reserves currently stand at just over half a million pounds, shown as the General Fund in the accounts. The reserves policy states that free reserves should stand at about 6 months' expenditure, which would amount to roughly £400,000. This is effectively a cushion to allow the organisation to continue to operate if anything should go horribly wrong. The current sum is around £100,000 in excess and while no charity wants to build up its reserves unnecessarily, in view of the events of the past few months, it is probably better to err on the side of caution. Mike reported that Council was happy with the reserves level.

4.2.3 No written questions had been received on the accounts, Mike Brooks invited questions from participants, and Katharine Burns echoed this. No questions were raised.

4.3 Nora Griffin proposed and Mike Short seconded approval of the Annual Report and accounts, and this was **agreed** unanimously by electronic voting by all present.

4.4 Katharine thanked Becky Sullivan and Mike Short for their reports.

## 5. Election of new President

Katharine Burns was pleased to report Council had proposed the election of Professor Peter Mandler, as President from 2020 – 2023 and he had indicated he was willing to serve. Peter is Professor of Modern Cultural History at Cambridge, working on cultural, social and intellectual history of Britain over the past 200 years. He served for 4 years as President of the Royal Historical Society – the preparation you need for taking on the Historical Association. His latest book *Crisis of the Meritocracy* is due to be published shortly. Jason Todd proposed, Michael Maddison seconded the election of Professor Mandler as President and this was **agreed**.

## 6. Membership update

6.1 Katharine welcomed Emily Randall, Membership Manager, who gave an update on membership, during which she made the following key points:

6.1.1 This had been an unprecedented year, both for the HA and the world. At the last AGM, there had been 6,300 members that figure now stood at 8,749, a growth of almost two and a half thousand members, which meant that the HA has not only met, but exceeded its KPI target. The growth opened new doors, and also brought retention into sharper focus. The HA is committed to meeting both new and existing members' needs. Figures includes both schools and individual members, and the actual number of people accessing the HA's information for members is far higher because of multiple teacher and student users within schools.

6.1.2 Primary membership is the biggest growth area, almost 1,900 members up from last year, and it now takes up the biggest share of total membership. Secondary membership has grown by around 500 members. There are also 20 multi academy trusts and 25 multi access groups. The Historian has seen a small decline of around 40 members, but some initiatives recently encouraged growth.

6.1.3 One of the drivers for growth has been the new Ofsted Framework. This was also a faction in retention which had shown about a 7% improvement rate across the board. The Membership team had created more opportunities for feedback and were continually working to improve communications.

6.1.4 Committees had tailored resources to meet members' needs, such as the new A level topic guides, which also have a strong crossover for general members. There were also corporate guides on subject leadership and whole school development.

6.1.5 The global pandemic had increased the focus on developing resources available remotely, on top of initiatives happening at a local level. Exciting new resources are also in the pipeline, such as a Primary regional resource on significant people, Secondary lesson sequences, and for general members, extending the 'virtual branch' and offering more podcasts.

6.1.6 It is now 3 years since the last membership survey and a new one would be launched a few weeks after the AGM. Emily stressed the importance of members taking part, to ensure all membership sectors are represented and influence the way the HA develops

6.1.7 Emily Randall concluded by saying that there was a lot to look forward to, all responsive to members' needs and led by research, and she echoed Becky Sullivan's thanks to all the committees, speakers and editorial boards.

Katharine Burn invited questions, but none were raised.

## 7. Membership Fees

Council had recommended that fees should not be increased in the next year to allow for possible hardship issues arising from the pandemic.

## 8. Committee Reports

8.1 Katharine invited the Committee Chairs to make brief reports.

8.2 **Primary Committee:** Bev Forrest outlined some of the highlights of the previous 12 months:

- There had been a large number of changes to committee membership, and it was now more truly representative of the diverse nature of HA membership, able to recognise the challenges of a small rural school, and also those facing teachers in a much larger school or as part of an Academy Trust and teachers at all stages of their career path. All faces of primary schools were now represented on the Committee, including Early Years and independent schools.
- Committee membership does not yet quite cover all geographical areas but stretches from Devon to Carlisle.
- As already mentioned, there had been a huge increase in primary membership largely due to the work of the committee, the team at 59a, and also with Ofsted's focus on looking at all curriculum areas.
- Members continue to produce a huge range of website resources, including the new regional resources. The 2019 Summer Resource diversity had been well received, the focus for summer 2020 was historical fiction. The Committee had risen to the challenge of providing resources to support both teachers and parents in home learning.
- They have organised and attended many national, local and CPD events, including the forums. These now include a new one based in Liverpool.
- The primary strand at the Historical Association's National Conference continues to grow.
- Face to face training courses led by Chris Trevor, Stuart Tiffany and Bev herself had attracted large numbers and were well received.
- Discussions at committees centred on the strategic objectives and the latest primary survey findings. The survey findings were now on the website.
- Committee members were active locally, nationally and via social media, and hopefully this makes members feel part of a community.
- Bev thanked Karin Doull and the *Primary History* editorial board.
- Areas of focus for the future included more membership growth, retention, and supporting those facing huge challenges in heritage and teaching.

Bev Forrest closed by thanking all her Committee members, Karin Doull and the Primary History editorial board, and all the 59a team.

8.3 **Secondary Committee:** Helen Snelson began by saying that a lot of the Committee's work in respect of attracting and retaining members had already been said by Emily Randall, and the Secondary Committee's membership strategy to some extent echoes what the Primary Committee has done. She then outlined key developments and activities.

- Geographically, 2 committee members now came from the further North, East and West, and there is also a Committee member with input from school-centred teacher training – the Committee supports trainees from any route.
- They had worked hard on social media engagement, with 'one big history department' blog posts now being accessed from both Facebook and Twitter.
- The Committee supported and were active in the development of online materials for members, and events across the country.
- A whole host of webinars were planned, including supporting lower attainers in the classroom and supporting teachers in the Covid world.

- There is a strong focus on diversity and last year's survey included some questions on curriculum diversity. Resources offered included 'Football makes history', and some 'in conversations' were planned relating to diversity matters.
- The Committee are always seeking to be in alliance with people working in the same field and were working on a joint project with Euroclio. The HA continued to be a member of Euroclio and to maintain a close relationship.

Helen also extended thanks of the whole Committee, the Secondary History editorial team, and the team at 59a, especially Melanie Jones.

Katharine Burn noted that Nick Tyldesley had sent in a question about how the HA is maintaining links with Europe and would be glad to hear about the joint work being carried out with Euroclio.

**8.4 Higher Education Committee:** Arthur Burns explained that as this is a new committee, the first year had been spent largely in assembling the committee and deciding what the committee should be doing. He summarised the Committee's core business as:

- Removing misunderstandings on both sides of the HE/schools divide, encourage imaginative ways to cross that divide, reminding people of the opportunities and impact of working together, trying to reinforce solidarity and demonstrate relevance to a wider public.
- Helping support branches, including through the provision of speakers.
- Trying to explore various ways to achieve these objectives, and also the broader strategic objectives of the Association as a whole.

Arthur explained that the Committee comprised a mixture of university historians, teacher trainers, teachers and Subject Association representatives. The Committee were trying to get wider geographical representation.

Plans for the near future include:

- Writing to all university history departments in the UK
- Developing a newsletter
- Redeveloping the HE part of the HA's website, aiming this partly at people in HE and partly for students/prospective students about HE.
- Working on resources such as 'key terms'.
- Working with colleagues in other learned societies to form a 'one stop hub' to maximise impact and avoid duplication.
- There are also 2 specific initiatives - a series of podcasts talking about different centuries, historians talking about a century to a teacher and how this might translate, and a transition hub (which is about to go live), designed to ease students across the transition from schools to universities. This would apply both to this year's cohort, who face particular difficulties, but also next year's students.
- Although the Committee was not looking specifically to recruit more HA members from higher education, this might be a side effect.

Arthur concluded by saying it was exciting work and thanking everyone for their support.

Katharine Burn noted that Nick Tyldesley had also asked how Branches are supported, and history at grass roots level, and the objective Arthur had mentioned would help to answer this question.

**8.5 Branches and Members' Committee:** Mike Short began by saying that the past year could be divided into two different, unequal parts – pre- and post-Covid. Committee activities in that year included:

- A committee meeting in the North, where representatives from local branches were invited to meet the Committee and ask questions.
- Recognising and developing diversity, both in membership and historical focus. At the second of the two Committee meetings held in London, representatives from the Migration Museum in

London had been invited. At a time when Black Lives Matter (and Brexit) were in the news, the Historical Association may benefit from this link.

- The Branch Officers' Meeting, which takes place every year, is planned to give those attending an opportunity to network and share experiences. Last year's subjects were:
  - History in schools
  - Marketing the Branch
  - Building links with a university and widening participation in the Branch
  - Succession planning

It is not yet clear when the next Branch Officers' Meeting can take place but from the evaluation of suggestions made by those attending the last meeting, members would like subjects to be:

- Branch funding
  - Branch websites
  - Finding speakers
  - Diversity.
- The Branches and Members Committee want to meet as many Branch Officers as possible at possible, and Conference offers an opportunity.
  - When 'lockdown' began the Committee contacted all Branches, who confirmed that all were taking practical and pragmatic steps to help their members. Several praised the 'virtual' HA Branch.
  - The B & M committee's main task is supporting Branches, monitoring their annual reports and accounts, and offering support where needed.
  - The Committee needs to consider what they want to do and produce guides for their successors. Information on running a branch has been produced and the committee is looking at the methodology of support, including how to support a Branch in danger of collapse.
  - Branches are planning to restart their programme of talks and events as soon as circumstances allow.

Katharine Burn commented that it was excellent to hear how quickly the online activity came into being, and also the careful protocols. She then thanked all the Committee Chairs for their presentations, and the Committee members for their hard work.

## **9. Reappointment of Auditors**

Mike Brooks proposed and Ann Wagstaff seconded the re-appointment of the current auditors, Kingston Smith. This was **agreed**.

## **9. Business raised by members**

Nick Tyldesley had submitted two questions which Katharine hoped had been answered during committee reports.

## **10. Any other business**

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No other business was raised.

Katharine thanked everyone who had prepared material and paid such close attention to timing, and to everyone who had demonstrated their membership in one of the few ways all can do, by coming to the AGM. She was pleased to report this was the highest attendance at an AGM in many years.



## LIST OF ATTENDEES

Robyn Adams, Melissa Agnew, Shona Allan, Michael Arnold, James Baiord, Claire Banks, Joshua Bolton, Jessica Boot, Paul Bracey (trustee), Emily Bulman, Helen Burdock, Gillian Burnett, Angela Carr, Chris Corin, Susan Edgington, Kim Edwards, Margaret Elbro, Geraldine Eves, James Fendick, Ailsa Fidler, Simon Finn, Helen Fletcher, Jessica Foulkes, Liam Fox, Zoe Garside, N. Ghazi, James Gisby, Tim Glasby, Key Gobby, Nora Griffin, Ann Hay, Martin Hewlett, Gabriella Higgins, Adriah Holder, Joyce Ireland, Louise Johnston, Christopher Jones, Gareth Jones, Lisa Kelly, Jonida Kempster, Richard Kennett (trustee), Iain Kilpatrick, Alex Kossykh, Paulette Lappin, Chris Leafe, Jennifer Llewellyn, Christine MacDonald, Nicki Maddern, Michael Maddison (Associate Vice President), Ian Mason, Tony McConnell, Lesley Ann McDermott, Becca Meredith, Thomasd Millard, Gary Mills, Naila Missous, Lucy Neary, Claire Needham, Peter O'Sullivan, Carla Phillips, Clive Price-Jones, Andrea Robertson, Jade Sadler, Rebecca Salt, Jenna Shamash, Donna Shoesmith-Evans, James Simister, Shima Sinha, Rowan Stewart, Stephen Taylor, Sue Temple, Jason Todd (trustee), P. D. H. Turner, Ree Ann Vaughan, Yosanne Vella, Juan Carlos Venegas, Ann Wagstaff, John Wagstaff, Ben Walsh, Robin Whitburn, Susie Winkworth, Jamie Wood and Emma Jane Young.