

General Committee 03 minutes

6 April 2022 at 1pm in Harcourt Hill Board Room and Online over Zoom

Present at Harcourt Hill: Mary Lines (acting Chair), David Gibbs, Peter Steadman (Membership & Online), Liz Stock (Reiunion Rep), Miriam Moule (OBU Chaplain), Prof Bill Gibson (OCMCH Director)

Present via Zoom: Sylvia Clift (Past Chair), Will Bissett (Committee Membe), *Tom Dobson (OCMCH/College Archives), *Peter Relf (Chair of Society)

Apologies: John Wallace & Frances Ann Johnson (Area Links Coordinators)

**Members testing positive for, or isolating due to, COVID.*

Miriam opened the meeting with prayer.

MEMBERSHIP Peter S reported on the use of OBU course codes to limit the Society's alumni list to courses relevant to Westminster College. The list of alumni now numbers 7,000. Work is under way to resolve lack of alumni records from 1980s.

The Society has 737 members - up slightly from this time last year. 88 households have joint members who pay £5 or less. At present, on average, members are paying around £6 per person. The aim is to raise that £10. 190 are paying above average.

Peter's work on recency receives helps Chris Crowther and Ann Darley Cook as they telephone Members and contacts from whom we have not heard for a while. Committee agreed that Ann would be the main contact talking to Horseferry Road alumni. Committee approved Chris and Ann as members of the Membership Team.

Peter R showed the new *Join now* A5 leaflets which have been sent to Area Links Coordinators (along with email versions) and A3 poster versions which Tom Dobson has had displayed at Harcourt Hill.

There was discussion about the GDPR implications (for the committee, for team members and for safeguarding the Society's members) of using the alumni list 'in a guarded and careful way'.

Action: Peter S to generate a form for committee and team members in order to achieve this.

FINANCE David G described how both NatWest and HSBC accounts are now fully operational online. So far, in the current financial year, receipts total £4,397.97. 47% of that has been spent on *The Westminsterian 2022*. The total held by the Society on 31 March was £8,862.54.

David underlined Peter S's account of membership income with a significant number still paying £5 and 90 paying only £4. The meeting agreed with David and Peter S on the need to act.

Action: David & Peter S to use WestBase details to ask individuals to change standing orders. David to prepare a concise statement for members on adjusting standing orders to £10 payable to the NatWest account.

David questioned the expenses rate for in-person attendance at General Committee. The meeting agreed to continue one meeting in person per year and for a contribution to travel expenses set at up to 25p per mile.

David also reported on the purchase of a SumUp card-reader for in-person payments e.g. at reunions and the move toward using PayPal for online payments. Initially this would be for fund-raising goods like greetings cards. He is not yet sure about using PayPal for subscriptions, but Peter S pointed out that the easier it is to pay, the more people will pay.

The meeting approved a budget for the next financial year beginning on 1 June 2022. David pointed out that a rise in income from subscriptions and a rise in magazine costs would maintain this year's 47% balance between the two. It was agreed that the magazine's production standards (quality of paper and presentation) should remain unchanged.

REUNION Zoom difficulties led to this item being taken next. Mary reported on arrangements to date.

Action: Peter R to send Mary contact details for Annie Hulbert as possible volunteer helper.

Action: Liz to make catering arrangements and to liaise with Mollie's successor on refreshments.

Peter S reported that 75 are seeking BA awards. At present it is not known how many wish to attend on 3rd September. The cost to put to members was agreed at last year's cost +15%. It is hoped that final costs to members will be less than this.

Action: Mary & Peter S to agree a deadline for award ceremony attendance.

COMMUNICATIONS Peter R reported that *The Westminsterian 2022* issue had been well-received and work was already in hand for the Spring 2023 issue - now with help from Honor Hollis and Jenny Pontiggia, whom the meeting approved as members of the Communications Team.

The new team will also seek to develop the website's structure and content. Peter S has already incorporated an Obituaries section on the website, reducing pressure on space in the magazine.

Peter S reported on complaints of non-delivery of *The Westminsterian* affecting postcodes DA to GU - possibly 100 copies missing. Royal Mail are looking into it for OBU. In the meantime, another 100 will need to be sent. Peter S and Tom are already working on this.

Peter S reported on the March survey which showed that over 60% of respondents were confident online and that over 50% were interested in meeting in-person. The top three city for meetings were Oxford, Manchester and Nottingham/Derby/Leicester. There was interest in keeping in touch by phone (but no more than monthly) As for the Reunion & BA Dat, over 30% said they might come, while around 10% said they'd definitely come.

Peter R reported that the survey on the Discuss idea had received few replies so far. At present there was interest in the idea, and a preference for a recorded online webinar which allowed comments online (rather than a live webinar or a live talk).

AREA LINKS The meeting adopted the paper on the Coordinator role. Peter R reported on the Zoom meeting Frances Ann had arranged via Facebook with two other North-East Ws.

Action: Peter R to update paper on Zoom meetings to include using Google Chat and Teams.

Area Links are still under of development. The March survey shows both interest in meeting in-person (if Covid situation feels ok), and confidence in operating online. Online links are more likely to work across regions, while in-person links inevitably are more locally based. It will be interesting to see if interest groups develop online.

WELFARE Miriam reported on her attendance at a mental health first aid course over 4 evenings.

Action; after her sabbatical, Miriam to pursue details of courses and recruit one or two students; also to talk with Mollie's successor about the Society's possible involvement in OBU mentoring scheme.

Miriam also gave an overview of her role: on campus 2.5to3 days per week, getting to know people and systems, the allure of her baking(!) and her work in counselling and support. During this, Miriam mentioned the parlous state of the chapel roof which very much limits access.

Action: Mary to write to OBU and to The Westminster Trust about chapel access

Meeting closed at: