

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held via Zoom video conferencing software,**

**at 7.30 p.m. on 9 December 2021**

Present: The President (Professor Blair, in the chair) and ca. 15 members.

**1. Introduction and welcome.** The President welcomed members to the meeting, explaining that the Covid-19 pandemic was again causing the AGM to be held via Zoom, as there was no alternative.

**2. Apologies.** The apologies received from Professor & Mrs Andrews, Dr Byde, Mrs Clarke, Ms Douglas, Professor North, Mr Selby, Professor Taylor and Mr Webster were accepted.

**3. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 3 December 2020.** The minutes were accepted unanimously as a true record of the meeting.

**4. Matters arising.**

Any matters arising would be covered under the other agenda headings.

**5. Resolutions.**

No resolutions to be put to the meeting had been notified to the Secretary.

**6. Adoption of the Annual Report of Council, 2020/21.** The President reported that a high level of engagement from Council members had again enabled all Society business to be conducted throughout the year via Zoom; all events had also been held online. He drew attention to the launch of the new Society website in July and put on record his thanks to Nina Best, its designer, and to Dr Hall and Dr Unsworth for their valuable contributions to its creation; the new website had increased the Society’s visibility and it offered many new facilities, notably allowing new members to join online – there had already been a significant increase in numbers, both full and associate members. This trend had been much aided by the appointment of Dr Unsworth to the new post of Events Secretary – she was already in direct communication with members via the website. The 8 talks held during the year had been on diverse topics, in both arts and sciences; although events seemed very likely to continue to be held online for some time, a lecture theatre with live streaming facilities had been identified which could be used in the future when it became possible to host hybrid events. The President also thanked Dr Hatton for his continuing leadership of the Grants Committee – 22 grants had been awarded, totalling ca. £11k. Council had been delighted to welcome Mr David Hopes, the new Director of Leeds Museums and Galleries, to their meetings. The annual report of Council was adopted unanimously by the meeting.

**7. Adoption of the Annual Accounts, 2020/21.** The Treasurer, Mr Warren Smith, explained that the accounts had once again been prepared by the Society’s accountant, Mrs Widdowson, working from data which he and the Assistant Treasurer had supplied. He reported that income from annual subscriptions and investment was down, but at the end of the accounting year the value of the investments had increased by 8.1%. Although the current account held a significant amount in cash, he did not feel able to recommend adding to the investment portfolio in such volatile times; Dr Hatton observed that he would like to see any increased income from members’ subscriptions added to the amount set aside for grants, which had declined over recent years. Mr Bourke, attending his first meeting as the new Assistant Treasurer, thanked the Council and his predecessor, Mrs Clarke, for their welcome; he would soon be taking on the task of pursuing those members who had not so far paid their annual subscriptions; he was also planning to add full membership data to the new website. The annual accounts of the Society were adopted unanimously by the meeting.

**8.** **Resignation of Trustees/Appointment of new Trustees.**

Under the terms of the Society’s constitution, one third of the trustees retire each year by rotation. Those due to retire this December, having been elected in December 2018 were: Professor G.E. Blair, Ms J. Douglas, Mr I.W. Smith and Professor C.M. Taylor. Professor Taylor did not wish to stand for re-election. The Council of the Society had agreed that it wished to nominate for re-election to Council: Professor Blair, Ms Douglas and Mr Smith.

The meeting approved the appointment as trustees and members of Council of: Professor Blair, Ms Douglas and Mr Smith.

The President put on record his thanks to Professor Taylor as he retired after many years on the Society’s Council – he had served as Treasurer for many years and all his contributions to the Society’s work was much appreciated.

The President also drew attention to vacancies on the Council and urged members to consider if they might be willing to join the Council; Mr Meadowcroft suggested that there seemed to be no reason why members should not nominate themselves, as new members might feel a little intimidated by having to ask another member to nominate them; the President felt that this was possible; any self-nominated Council candidate could anyway be co-opted on to Council immediately and then formally elected at the following AGM.

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

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In the time available for comments after the end of the AGM business, Dr Unsworth reported that she and Nina Best were working on some minor changes to the website in the light of members’ comments. She went on to give some details of the 2022 events programme that was being organised; they would be advertised on the website as soon as the dates had been finalised; the numbers registering to attend the online events had started to decline a little towards the end of the year and she wondered if using Eventbrite might reach a wider audience. In a discussion on where to hold in-person events when they became possible again, the President said that while he continued to hold a post at the University of Leeds, he could arrange a venue within the campus for the Society, free of charge, if the meeting was held at a time when the building would normally be open and staffed - the lecture theatre in the Business School might be the most suitable, as it had facilities for live streaming; and parking would be available nearby. Other members pointed out that this might perpetuate the perception that the Society was mainly a University of Leeds organisation and that consideration should continue to be given to various alternative suitable venues around the city.