

British Philosophical Association

Minutes of the AGM held at the University of Aberdeen

1pm, Sunday 13 July 2008

Present* Brad Hooker, Helen Beebee, Dudley Knowles, Michael Morris, Jane Heal, Rowland Stout, Stephen McLeod, Barry Dainton, Daniel Whiting, Constantine Sandis, Catherine Osborne, Constantine Athanopoulos, Tim Mulgan, Elizabeth Telfer, Rachel Carter (representing the Aristotelian Society), Patricia Clarke, Peter Baumann, John Skorupski, Sarah Broadie, Alan Millar, Bill Child, Tim Chappell, Howard Simmons, Peter Milne, John Lippett, Fiona Macpherson, Phyllis McKay, Dorothea Debus, Dorothy Edgington, Rob Hopkins

* Item 3 was taken first, and many members left immediately afterwards.

1. Apologies: M.M. McCabe, Pauline Phemister, Adrian Moore

2. Minutes of the 2007 AGM: Unfortunately there were no minutes for last year's AGM due to problems with the Executive Secretary. The meeting had contained no substantive items of business.

3. Proposed changes to the Constitution

Various changes to the Constitution were proposed:

(a) Removal of all references to charitable status: The NCP had originally intended that the BPA would be a registered charity. However the BPA had decided not to apply for charitable status, partly for financial reasons and partly because it was likely that the Charities Commission would view the Association as a professional body serving the interests of its members, and hence ineligible for charitable status.

(b) Removal of Section 21 ('Arrangements until the first AGM') and the Appendix (concerning suggested activities).

(c) The addition of the information that the Chair and Secretary would be known publicly as the President and Director respectively.

The changes were approved unanimously.

4. Election of Committee Members, and officers for 2008-9

Brad Hooker gave the results of the election on behalf of the returning officer (Hanne De Jaegher). The candidates were: Adrian Moore (Oxford), Garrath Williams (Lancaster), Gordon Finlayson (Sussex), Jeremy Butterfield (Cambridge), Stephen Burwood (Hull), Michael Brady (Glasgow).

Adrian Moore, Gordon Finlayson, Jeremy Butterfield and Michael Brady were elected to served for a term of three years (and so until 2011).

The committee members who had now come to the end of their term were Duncan Pritchard, Dudley Knowles and Adrian Moore. In addition, David Archard had resigned from the committee for personal reasons.

The outgoing members of the Committee were thanked for their work.

BH pointed out that it was important for the success of the Association that the Executive Committee included representatives of several major constituencies within the UK, e.g. Oxford, London and Scotland, as well as a broadly representative spread of philosophical expertise. DK suggested that BH write something to this effect for the next newsletter.

5. President's report

AHRC: BH noted the AHRC's apparently inexorable drive towards funding large-scale collaborative research and specific research themes (with a bias towards performance arts), at the expense of the funding of lone scholar research (through the Research Leave Scheme) and PG funding, and expressed the BPA's opposition to these developments. He reported that members of the Executive Committee had been actively expressing these views at meetings organised by the AHRC across the country, and would continue to do so (e.g. at a forthcoming meeting in London concerning the funding of lone scholar research). The need to continue to press the AHRC on these issues was stressed; however BH also stressed that the AHRC, and particularly the new Director of Research, appeared to be attempting to develop a more reciprocal relationship with the arts and humanities community recently, and that engaging in this process in a constructive way was important.

ERIH: BH reported that little activity had been apparent on this score recently, and this could be a sign that the AHRC was attempting to distance itself from the process. HB had attended a meeting in London in February, with representatives of the AHRC, the ESF, and many A&H subject associations and learned societies. As a result of this an 'Arts and Humanities Rapid Response Group' had been proposed, but progress in the formation of this group appeared to have stalled. HB had written to the AHRC asking some specific questions about its attitude towards the ERIH in May, but had not yet received a response.

6. Financial report

The financial report for the year to July 2008 was distributed to members. The following points were noted:

- (a) The accounts show a deficit for the year of about £1600; however this was offset by about £1800 of as-yet uncashed cheques, which will yield a small overall surplus.
- (b) There were several items of one-off expenditure: designing the new website and logo, and the recruitment drive, which involved a mailshot to over 800 philosophers. These costs were offset by a one-off payment from Routledge for advertising on the website.
- (c) Recurrent costs would increase in future years because Hanne's part-time position at Herts as Dan's assistant would cease, since Dan's term as Treasurer has come to an end; also because the website is now hosted commercially.
- (d) Overall individual membership numbers were similar to last year, but many members had still not renewed, as had many departments and learned societies. This was probably due to the normal renewal round being delayed because of the recruitment drive, and non-renewers were now being chased up.

7. Request to members for suggestions for what the BPA should be doing

The general view was that the BPA was doing just the kinds of things that members thought it ought to be doing. However two specific suggestions were made:

- (a) that the BPA should help philosophers to find employment (as with the APA)
- (b) that the BPA should consult with its members on the issue of what its constituencies should be (see item 4 above).

8. AOB

There was no other business. The meeting closed at 2.00pm. The next AGM will be held at the University of East Anglia in July 2009.