

The Philosophical Society

Minutes of the 2009 AGM

held on Saturday 17th January 2009, in the Lecture Theatre at Rewley House, Oxford

Present: Marianne Talbot President
Frank Brierley Chairman
Eileen Walker Treasurer and Membership Secretary
and 27 other members

Apologies: Phil Rees (Review Editor), Bill Ratcliffe (Tapes Librarian)

1. The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted.
2. **The President:** A good year for the Society. The main focus is the new Marketing Group, because of financial pressures at Rewley House. All help would be welcome (since the department has just lost £2.2m in funding thanks to the government decision to fund only students whose qualifications are lower than those given by the course they're taking; each online course costs £15,000 to develop). Marianne is conducting a research project ('TALL') in Second Life in the hope that it might prove of use to the online courses.
3. **The Chairman:** A survey of our activities - including weekends, Google groups, Members' Day (in June), the Friday evening group, the website forum, the essay competition, and the Review - suggested things were going well. The Chairman is retiring, and he offered especial thanks to Andrew Dalkin, who steps down from the role of Meetings Secretary after nine years, and to Phil Rees and Eileen Walker, for their major efforts on (respectively) the Review and website, and the Society's finances.
4. **Treasurer/ Membership Secretary:** We have now expanded to 228 members, mostly recruited at the weekends and through the website, a few coming from overseas. The finances are in credit by £100 for the year. Declining interest rates will reduce our income from the reserve fund. The Treasurer needs to purchase some accounting software. Useful guidance is given by a member who is an accountant. The accounts were adopted. There was a brief discussion of how debts should be presented.
5. **Review Editor/ Website Manager:** (*written report*) There were plenty of submissions for this year's Review. We are using a new printing company, and the binding is good. The printer did the distribution. The Review now has two Society officers: an Editor, and a Publisher (the new 'Communications Officer'). The website is very stable, and so could be used more for communication with members. We offer advanced listings of weekends, and links, but the links with OUDCE could be better. The year-card is sent by post, but other information is on the site. There was discussion of whether the website Forum should be 'open' to readers and contributors. At the moment non-members can contribute. There is a conflict between privacy of members and promotion of the Society. In a straw poll at the meeting, most were in favour of openness, with three votes against. The general desirability of electronic communication was agreed.
6. **Tapes Librarian:** (*written report*) There now exist recordings (some of them in part) of 109 philosophy weekends at Rewley House. The laborious job of transferring tape recordings to MP3 format is about half complete. A high-quality format has been chosen, despite the bulkier files for emailing. A few members have failed to return tapes.
7. **Constitution:** The Chairman presented a few constitutional modifications. Para 7.2 was passed *nem con*, after a slight rewording. The meeting voted 11 – 8 in favour of abolishing the requirement for the departing Chairman to serve for a further year on the committee. (*The revised Constitution is on the website*).
8. **Election of Officers:** A slight restructuring of the Society was agreed, and then the following appointments were agreed *nem con*:

President: Marianne Talbot
Chairman: Tom Fisher
Meetings and Membership Secretary: Peter Gibson
Treasurer: Eileen Walker
Review Editor: Phil Rees
Website Manager: Phil Rees
Recordings Librarian: Bill Ratcliffe
Communications Officer: Steve Chinn
Committee member (continuing): Hugh Millar
Committee members (new): Peter Townsend, Chris Farmer, Mike Donnan
Chadwick Prize co-ordination: David Hunt (*non-Committee*)
Year card production: Nigel Cowell (*non-Committee*)

9. **Name Change:** There was a short debate on a proposal to change the name of the Society, but this was postponed, given the complex implications, and the small number of members present.

Next Committee Meeting: April 25th 2009, at 1.30 (N.B. *not* 14th March)