

The Oxford Philosophical Society at Rewley House

Minutes of the 2015 AGM (unratified)

Saturday 16th May 2015, at 1.30 p.m. in the Lecture Theatre at Rewley House, Oxford

Present: Marianne Talbot *President*
Bob Stone *Chairman*
Peter Gibson *Secretary*
Eileen Walker *Treasurer*
Committee members, and other members

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted, with a correction to a name.
2. **Constitution:** The Committee suggested that the term of office of the Chairman should be extended from two years to three. Constitutional procedures meant this would have to wait until next year's AGM, so it will be discussed again by the new Committee.
3. **Officers:** Bob Stone was thanked for his term of office as Chairman, and Fauzia Rahman-Greasley was elected (unanimously) as the new Chairman. It was decided that the job title would remain as 'Chairman'. The Secretary, Treasurer, Website Manager, and International Manager were re-elected unopposed. Bob Stone remains on the Committee, as joint Editor of the Review. Tom Fisher and Chris Farmer were thanked for their terms of office. Three new members were elected to the Committee, which is therefore comprised of the following:

President: Marianne Talbot **Chairman:** Fauzia Rahman-Greasley (2015-17) **Secretary:** Peter Gibson

Treasurer: Eileen Walker **Website:** Mike Arnautov **Review:** Bob Stone

International: Christian Michel

Elected (all 2015-17): Ivor Middleton, Frank Brierley, Ken Brownsey, Chris Reason

Co-Opted: Chris Lyons (Hon. Auditor), David Hunt (Chadwick Prize), Peter Townsend (Friday evenings)

4. **President:** As previously, the online courses are very well supported, and the local weekly classes less well so. Two of the proposed new online courses have fallen through, and the current target is for more development in that area.
5. **Chairman:** The outgoing Chairman was pleased with activities during his term of office, including members' days, and the developing student prizes. He enjoyed his term of office, and was thanked for his services.
6. **Secretary:** There are now 353 members (compared with 349 at the 2014 AGM). It seems that the recent period of rapid expansion has now levelled off. There is a steady turnover of members, because the website makes it easy to join, but also easy to lapse. This natural selection, it was suggested, may result in a higher level of enthusiasm among members.
7. **Treasurer:** The accounts for the year ending 31st December 2014 were presented. The finances are in a healthy state, and the increased subscription is more than covering the costs (mainly of the Review). The income from subscriptions shows an increase for this year only, because the inclusion date has been moved by a month (to match the Review cycle). Our Society activities are intended to break even, but usually generate a small surplus. There is now a substantial accumulated fund (largely thanks to a building society windfall a few years ago), and there was discussion of how it might be used. The Committee will look at strategies for either publicising philosophy events, or subsidising more attendance on philosophy courses. We were reminded that bursaries are already available for members who need financial help in attending philosophy weekends [*for which a private application should be made to our President*]. It was agreed that in future these bursaries should also be available for members who attend the weekly Rewley House philosophy classes.
8. **Review:** The target for the Review is always to publish before Christmas, but it was once again late. For several years now there has been a new editor each year, which inevitably slows things up. With this in mind, Bob Stone and Peter Gibson offered their services for a second year, to edit the 2015 Review. It is hoped to publish it earlier this year.
9. **Website:** There has been a 10% increase in 'visits' to the website, and the downloading of recorded talks is up 30%, though only used by a small group of people. [*A member's email address is their password which gives access to our large library of recordings*]. The Forum for discussion has been almost inactive this year. It is for carefully considered contributions to debate, but free-flowing quick discussions seem to be more popular online. The CloudFlare protection system has been added to the site. A highly skilled friend of the Webmaster has agreed to step in if Mike Arnautov were no longer available (and the Secretary and Treasurer have contact details).
10. **Prizes:** The Chadwick Essay Prize has continued, with a good number of entries, and Trevor Hussey and Chris Farmer continue to judge it. The Society's prize competitions for students of philosophy at Rewley House are also flourishing. Christian Michel and Frank Brierley organise them, with help from the Secretary, and Bob Clark helps with the marking. Most entries continue to come from the online courses.
11. **Members' Days 2015:** The AwayDay at Pigotts Farm, Buckinghamshire, is once again being organised by Frank Brierley for Sunday 26th July. The capacity is limited to about 25, and it is now fully booked. Frank has commissioned a sequence of talks on 'Reality'. The annual Members' Weekend will be on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th September. We have booked the Lecture Theatre for both days, so a large attendance is possible. Overnight rooms are available at Rewley House, and details will appear on the website. Peter Gibson is organising the talks, which will be about 'Truth' (broadly interpreted).

Next AGM: The AGM is now in the spring, so it will be on one of three Saturdays – 12th March, 23rd April, 14th May 2016