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| slsa-red80 |  | | **Annual General Meeting  Minutes 6 April 2017** | |
|  | | **Newcastle University   13:00 to 14:00** | | |
| Agenda item | | | | Action |
| **1. Apologies** | | | |  |
| Vanessa Munro | | | |  |
| **2. Minutes of AGM 2016** | | | |  |
| Approved. | | | |  |
| **3.1. Chair’s Report**  **Conferences**   * The Annual Conference at the University of Lancaster attracted a large number of delegates, including many attending their first SLSA conference. The donation from the conference made a welcome addition to the Association’s finances. * The Annual Postgraduate Conference was hosted by the LSE PhD Academy. As in previous years, there was a high level of demand for the conference, and feedback from the students who attended indicated that it continues to be very successful and valuable. The 2018 conference will be held at Queens University Belfast on 4-5 January. * A one-day training conference on Socio-Legal Sources and Methods in International Law, organised in conjunction with IALS and the British Library, was held in November 2016. It included a very interesting group of academic and librarian/archivist speakers and attracted a good audience of PhD students and ECRs. Some of the papers from the day will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Legal Information Management*. We are considering the possibility and potential topics for a further training day in November 2017. * The SLSA Annual Conference 2018 will be held at the University of Bristol on 27-29 March. We undertook a site visit to Bristol, where a large and enthusiastic organising team briefed us on their plans, which include the new Law School building in Berkeley Square, and the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, conveniently located next to the Wills Memorial Building. The 2019 conference will be held at the University of Leeds. * The SLSA is co-sponsoring the LSA Annual Meeting to be held in Mexico City in June 2017, and we have provided bursaries for PhD students to attend and present papers at the conference. Michael Thomson is the SLSA representative on the Mexico City program committee. * We conducted a review of streams and themes following last year’s Lancaster conference. We now have a refreshed list of ongoing streams, while ‘themes’ are intended to be one-off groupings reflecting current hot topics. Each year we will call for new ‘theme’/current issue proposals for the upcoming conference, and a maximum of seven ‘themes’ will be selected by the conference organisers.   **Prizes and Competitions**   * We again received strong fields of applications for the book and article prizes. This year we have initiated an element of surprise, with prize winners not announced until the prize-giving to be held at the conference dinner. We have also secured an arrangement with the *Journal of Law and Society* whereby prizewinning books will be reviewed in the Journal. We will also include features about the prizewinning books and article on the SLSA blog. * This year’s prize for contributions to the socio-legal community has been awarded to Linda Mulcahy. * The postgraduate student poster competition will be judged during the conference. We have provided the opportunity for all those viewing the posters to record their preferences via a voting box. * We awarded one research grant (from 14 applications) and one PhD Fieldwork grant (from 16 applications). The total sum awarded was £3,900. As in the previous year, our focus was on the quality of the applications rather than any need to limit spending. We have also adjusted our Fieldwork grant criteria to specify that students in receipt of Research Council or similar funding for their PhD are not eligible, in order to ensure that the scheme is filling a gap rather than supplementing already generous funding support. * We received 12 applications for the seminar competition. Two applications were fully funded and a further two were part-funded up to the total budget of £10,000. * We made our first two awards under the new mentorship scheme, with a total of £1700.   **Learned Society Activities**  As a Learned Society, we receive frequent invitations to contribute or respond to various initiatives in socio-legal studies, legal education, the higher education sector and law reform. We also liaise with socio-legal associations in other jurisdictions. This year these activities included:   * Legal Education and Training issues – we continued to participate in the Law Learned Associations LETR Working Group. We responded to the SRA’s consultation on the proposed Solicitors’ Qualifying Examination in January 2017. We decided there was no need to respond to the BSB’s proposals concerning future training routes for the Bar, on the basis that none of the proposals were likely to be destructive of the continuing possibility of a socio-legal approach in undergraduate law study. * Postgraduate and doctoral training – I participated in the first ESRC DTCs socio-legal masterclass held in May 2016. The second masterclass will be held in June 2017 and the SLSA has agreed to provide bursaries for up to five places for non-DTC students. * Funding bodies – we attended the ESRC’s annual meeting with learned societies and responded to an invitation to nominate members of the Peer Review College for the Global Challenges Research Fund. We submitted a lengthy and detailed response to the HEFCE consultation on the next REF, having sought input from members generally and from former members of the REF2014 Law sub-panel in particular. Thank you to all those who contributed to the response. * The Law Commission – we attended the annual meeting between the Law Commission and the learned societies in Law. We have once again made a full conference place available to a Law Commission research assistant, which was the subject of keen competition. * The Academy of Social Sciences – we participated in the Academy’s CEO and Chief Officers’ Group and continued to support the Campaign for Social Sciences. We made three successful nominations for Fellowship of the Academy. Congratulations to new Fellows Gillian Douglas, Vanessa Munro and Sally Sheldon. * The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies – we were consulted on IALS’ Legal Records at Risk project. * Other Associations – We contributed to a report prepared by the LSA’s International Activities Committee, and I attended a meeting of the Committee at the LSA Annual Meeting in New Orleans. This provided the opportunity to make several contacts with other national and regional associations. The SLSA reception held at the New Orleans conference was an outstanding success, and it is hoped we will be able to hold a similar event in Mexico City, possibly in conjunction with one or more of the other associations. We were asked to contribute an article for the RCSL newsletter on the implications of Brexit on socio-legal studies. This piece was published in the RCSL’s winter 2017 newsletter and also cross-posted on the SLSA blog.   **SLSA Newsletter, Website and \*new\* Blog**   * We were successful in securing the renewal of all of our newsletter sponsorships, in most cases for a further 3 years. We also gained 4 new sponsors. * The new SLSA website was launched in late 2016 with a new look and streamlined architecture. This was the product of a great deal of hard work with special thanks due to webmaster Jed Meers, web editor Marie Selwood, technical support Lewis Gowers, and web host Rodti Macleary. * The SLSA blog has done well its first year, attracting a steady stream of posts on a wide variety of socio-legal topics.   **SLSA Admin**   * We reviewed the role of SLSA administrator after its first year of operation and unhesitatingly concluded that the position provides a huge benefit to SLSA officers and members. We are very grateful to Nathan Emmerich for his continuing work in this role.   **SLSA Executive Committee**   * On behalf of the SLSA I should like to extend a heartfelt vote of thanks to those members of the Executive Committee who have resigned during the year or are stepping down at the AGM: Natalie Corbett (postgraduate representative), Lois Bibbings (Bristol), Sarah Blandy (Sheffield), Kevin Brown (QUB), Dave Cowan (Bristol), Carla Crifo (Leicester), Petra Mahy (SOAS) and Francis Sheridan (Westminister). * I should particularly like to express my thanks to Kevin Brown for his work as SLSA Secretary and to Francis Sheridan for her work as Publishers’ Liaison Officer. Naomi Creutzfeldt has kindly volunteered to take on the Publishers’ Liaison role. The new Secretary will be elected at the AGM. * We welcomed Jess Mant (Leeds) as the new postgraduate representative. * Devyani Prabhat and Janine Sargoni (Bristol) have been co-opted onto the Executive as representatives of the 2018 annual conference host institution. * I shall also be standing down at the AGM, having served two terms as Chair (and three terms on the Executive). I should like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Executive Committee – and indeed all members – who have supported me during my time as Chair and have helped to make the job so interesting and enjoyable. I am pleased to be leaving the Association in a healthy state and I know it will continue to thrive under its new Chair | | | |  |
| **3.2. Vice Chair**  Rosie Harding reported on her work including co-ordinating the most recent rounds of Expressions of Interest to host the SLSA annual conference; overseeing the judging of the excellent nominations for the Article Prize 2016; and chairing the seminar competition sub-committee.  **3.3. Treasurer**  The SLSA’s finance remain healthy, and we are very grateful for a donation of £34,000 from Lancaster University following last year’s successful conference. As also indicated in my report last year, the account opening balance for auditing purposes was prior to some significant expenditure/ various cheques and awards issued in the preceding financial year being cashed in the current year, and consequently some significant outgoings in this year’s accounts relate to commitments from the previous financial year. Similarly, the auditing period this year excludes our largest single income source each year, the conference donation (which was credited to us last month), so I have added an extra section explaining the impact of this.  I am pleased to report that we have obtained control of the Association’s Lloyds (deposit) account, and both the Lloyds account and the Co-operative (current) account now have online banking facilities in place. Our PayPal account still has limitations on our usage due to PayPal’s anti-money laundering regulations, and despite considerable effort being expended on this matter, we are still awaiting resolution.  The increasing transfer of financial transactions to the online environment poses some challenges to the Association, as some transactions have been wrongly allocated in Agresso and similar financial packages to my employer and not the Association. These have been rectified.  We have also had several attempts to access Association funds by fraudulent means this year, which have been thwarted – mobile phone direct debits, and a recent attempt to forge a standing order, ostensibly for a legitimate charity, but with changed bank account details – this was part of a wider fraud being committed against small organisations. Where this fraud was initially successful, the Co-operative Bank has reinstated the stolen funds. | | | |  |
| **3.4. Membership**  In the absence of Paypal we are still operating on a system of manual approval of members’ payments by Nathan once bank statements arrive. We have had a number of issues with renewal of memberships coming up to the conference and so the information from our database is not as robust as it could be.  The number of paid up members, approved by Nathan on the Joomla system on 31/03/2017 stood at 847.  We are hoping to make some changes to the way we managed the hard copy mailing lists to minimise returns. This has only become possible since the update of the JOOMLA database and Marie, Jed and I are meeting to discuss this issue during the conference.  **3.5 Recruitment**  No report. | | | |  |
| **3.6. Newsletter and Web Editor**  Marie Selwood outlined this year’s activities with the Newsletter, website and e-bulletin.  **3.7 PG Student Representative**  Activities at Newcastle Conference  • PGR-ECR scheme  ECR table at every coffee break, PGRs able to form networks and links with EC researchers in relation to that mysterious ‘grey area’ between being a PGR and becoming an ECR. Proved popular so far with both ECRs and PGRs – will see at the conference how successful it is but have asked for continual feedback so that this scheme can be adapted/improved as needed for Bristol 2018.  • PGR wellbeing session  Newcastle kindly gave me a 2-hour session to play with on the morning of the first day. After consulting with PGRs it appeared that wellbeing/mental health/relationships with other PGRs and ECRs was the biggest concern for PGRs at all stages. Mental health issues, anxiety, stress and imposter syndrome are already disproportionately experienced in academia and only increasing.  (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/blogs/student-experience-survey-2017-investigating-well-being-university?platform=hootsuite)  It is therefore really important that as an organisation we make a symbolic and tangible effort to provide opportunities for the next generation of socio-legal academics to equip themselves with practical skills to cope when things get stressful. The biggest thing we can contribute is to make sure we foster a strong community among our PGRs.  So with this 2-hour slot and the help of 2 other PGRs, I organised a quick fire activity-based workshop on wellbeing. This involved practical info on how to support each other, and make use of support networks beyond your institution. There will also be a short presentation by Richard Collier on his latest wellbeing research. Will report at meeting how successful this was and whether there should be changes to this for Bristol.  2. Bristol  Bristol has a good sized committee of PGRs working on the 2018 conference. I’m in touch with a couple of these PGRs already, but hope to be able to work with them further over the coming year to implement and improve these activities/help them organise any other ones that may be of particular use to socio-legal PGRs.  **3.8 Webmaster**  Since the last AGM, the new website design and the SLSA blog have both been launched. While these have been getting off the ground, things have been quieter on the website development front.  Since the last Executive meeting, there are the following updates:  1. An additional anti-spam plugin has been installed: This creates a Captcha at sign-up, and has helped to reduce the number of spam registrations.  2. The Payment Gateway remains closed: Pending the resolution of issues with PayPal, the payment gateway remains closed on the website (i.e. members cannot pay for their membership, or renewal, using a credit card etc as intended).  3. MailChimp Account/JOOMLA Integration has been explored: In order to:  a. Sync-up people’s emails on the membership system and the e-bulletin;  b. Allow for more flexible/stylish email layouts;  c. To avoid the laborious task of manually updating the JISCMail list;  d. To avoid the accumulation of inactive emails on JISCMail which are never removed;  The possibility of adding a MailChimp extension onto the JOOMLA system has been explored. There is no longer any charge associated with the plugin, so we could use a free MailChimp account. There is further work to be done on the JOOMLA integration ,and it is suggested that I continue to work with Lewis – within the time available under his retainer – to install and test the functionality before we make a final decision on its adoption for the e-bulletin.  4. SLSA Blog continues to receive posts: The SLSA blog continues to receive a number of submissions, currently averaging around one post a fortnight.  **3.9 International Liaison**  Sharon Cowan updated the AGM on her work over the year.  **3.10 Social Media**  No report  **3.11 Bristol Conference SLSA 2018**  There was a brief update regarding the SLSA conference at Bristol University in 2018. | | | |  |
| **4. Elections**  Rosie Harding was elected as Chair of the executive of the SLSA. Proposed by Rosemary Hunter and seconded by Mark O’Brien.  Naomi Creutzfeld and Michael Thomson were elected to a second term on the Executive Committee.  Nominations were called for ordinary vacancies on the Executive Committee. The new members who were elected were John Harrington, Ed Kirton-Darling, Colin Moore, Vanessa Munro and Ilke Turkmendag.  Newly elected members were invited to attend the next Executive meeting. New members would also be added to the Executive mailing list.  Neil Graffin was elected as Honorary Secretary.  **5. Any Other Business**  None.  **6. Next Meeting**  The next AGM will be held at the Newcastle University at the annual conference. | | | |  |