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| slsa-red80 |  | **Annual General Meeting Minutes28 March 2018** |

Present: Rosie Harding, Mark O’Brien, Neil Graffin, Ilke Turkmendag, Colin Moore, Ed Kirton-Darling, Marie Selwood, Emilie Cloatre, Jess Mant, Amanda Keeling, Antonia Layard, Smita Kheria, Jen Hendry, Diamond Ashiagbor, Roxanna Dehaghani, Lydia Hayes, Linda Mulcahy, Naomi Creutzfeld, Flora Renz, Elen Stokes

1. **Apologies**

Thomas Webb, Janine Sargoni

1. **Minutes of AGM 2017**

Minutes approved

* 1. **Chair’s Report**

It was noted that the annual conference at Newcastle was an enjoyable year with a large number of delegates, including many attending their first SLSA conference. The donation from the conference will be a welcome addition to the Association’s finances.

It was noted that the PGR conference was another success in Belfast. A special thanks was extended to Tony Bradley and Fiona Cownie for their work over 25-plus years in delivering the PGR conferences. The 2019 PGR conference will be hosted at the University of Warwick.

The LSA joint meeting was held in Mexico City in June 2017 with good attendance from the SLSA. There will be donation coming to the SLSA from the conference.

Our 2019 conference will take place in Leeds with new exec members Imogen Jones and Amanda Keeling leading this. A site visit has been arranged to take place in the near future.

We will be hosting a socio-legal training day on Social Welfare and Family Law within the British Library in May 2018, which was rescheduled from November 2017.

There will be a One Day Conference being held in Paris from 16 - 17 April. This is being arranged by Emilie Cloatre and will focus on socio-legal perspectives in the UK and France.

**3.1.1. Prizes and Competitions**

It was noted that we received a fantastic field of entries for competitions this year, and a number of worthy winners were identified.

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 five research grants (from 19 applications) and four PhD Fieldwork grant (from 12 applications). As in the previous year, our focus was on the quality of the applications.

We received 21 applications for the seminar competition. Five applications were funded (some partially) up to the total budget of £10,000.

We made one award under the Research Training Grant scheme for £500.

**3.1.2. Learned Society Activities**

We have had representatives on the SRA’s SQE reference group, and wrote a combined submission, with the other law learned societies to the Legal Services Board, regarding the SQE. Members will be likely aware that the decision from the LSB on this issue has been delayed.

The annual Law Commission-Learned Societies meeting took place in June 2017. The Law Commission’s Academic Placements scheme was brought to the attention of SLSA members.

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 have responded to their concerns about the challenges that the social sciences face in the contemporary funding climate, as a greater proportion of available research funding is channelled through challenge-led funds like the Global Challenges Research Fund and the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

**3.1.3. SLSA Newsletter, Website and Blog**

It was noted that our SLSA blog goes from strength to strength. We remain grateful to webmaster Jed Meers, web editor Marie Selwood, technical support Lewis Gowers, and web host Rodti Macleary.

We would also like to thank Nathan Emmerich for his work as SLSA administrator.

**3.1.4. SLSA Admin**

The SLSA executive committee has commenced work on a project to consider our current legal status. We are looking to undertake work to go to the next AGM – a subgroup has formed for this purpose.

It was noted that data protection rules are changing as result of GDPR. We have created a new role of Data Protection officer. This role will initially be filled by Colin Moore.

**3.1.5. SLSA Executive Committee**

We would like to extend thanks to past executive committee members including –Michael Thomson, Jonathan Garton, Nikki Goden-Rasul, Kevin Crosby, Mark O’ Brien, Jill Dickinson, Sharon Cowan and Nwudego Chinwuba.

RH has extended particular thanks to Mark O’Brien for his role as treasurer.

Jess Mant starts a Lecturership soon in Cardiff and we are looking for a new PGR rep. We would like to extend thanks to JMa for all her work as PGR rep.

**3.2. Vice Chair**

JH would like to extend thanks everyone who worked on judging the article prize – it was noted the decision on the winner was a hard one to make.

Our social media presence continues to be health and it was noted that the conference hashtag has been successful.

Dave Cowan has offered a prize of a book for 3000 Twitter followers.

**3.3. Treasurer**

The treasurer gave a verbal report at the conference.

There continues to be an issue accessing the PayPal account which needs to be solved.

It was noted that our expenditure did not deviate too much from last year.

It was noted that as we are an Association which seeks to provide support for socio-legal activities that there is scope for spending in the future.

Thanks was extended to Chris Ashford for reviewing the accounts, but it has been noted that he did not receive the Lloyd’s statement.

This further report was provided after the AGM:

The SLSA’s finances remain in the healthy state that they have been for the past few years, and we thank Newcastle University for their forthcoming donation of £54,641.84 following last year’s successful conference. In common with some previous Treasurer’s reports, the account opening/ closing balances for auditing purposes was prior to some significant income/ expenditure, most notably this year the above sum. This is footnoted below.

Despite obtaining control of the Association’s old Lloyds account, the ongoing and considerable efforts to remove the limitations on the Association PayPal account’s usage due to PayPal’s procedures to comply with anti-money laundering regulations have yet to bear fruit.

Happily, the Association has not experienced the attempts at fraud in the current financial year that were experienced in the last financial year. The account summary, statements and account files have been viewed and approved by Professor Brian Simpson, University of New England at Armidale.

As this is the last time that I will report as Association Treasurer, I am pleased that I am able to step down at a point where there has been a period of consistently-strong finances as a consequence of prudent financial decision-making on behalf of members by us collectively as the Association’s Executive.

Mark O’Brien

Treasurer, SLSA

29 March 2018

**3.4. Membership**

We continue to have issues with the accuracy of the JOOMLA database. We are hoping to commission a JOOMLA developer to make some functionality changes and once this is complete we will take steps to clean up our membership data, removing lapsed members from the database and ensuring that postal addresses are accurate and up to date.

We wish to prioritise Excel pull-off from the database, fixing some teething problems with the MailChimp plug in and turning back on the payment gateway once the exec has taken a decision on how to proceed in lieu of PayPal. Sorting our electronic payments is a priority as some functionality of the database system depends on this being in use.  MS, JM and MH are working on a proposal to put to RH about what exactly needs to be done and how much it is likely to cost.

The number of paid up members, approved by NE on the JOOMLA system on 22/03/2018 stood at 822 (442 full members and 380 PG members). This does not include members who have paid their dues since the last bank statement.

**3.5 Recruitment**

New flyers have been created and distributed at a number of conferences.

**3.6. Newsletter and Web Editor**

*Issues 82 (summer 2017), 83 (autumn/winter 2017), 84 (spring 2018):* all three issues were well supported by members’ contributions and we also covered all the SLSA’s own extensive activities in detail. Members are reminded that they are warmly invited to send in items of interest for publication. Deadline details are included regularly in the weekly ebulletins.

*Sponsorship 2016–2019:*the scheme is now in year two of the current cycle. We are extremely grateful for the continued support of our 23 sponsors: Birkbeck; Cardiff Law School; Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Oxford; Keele University; Kent University; Leeds Beckett University; London School of Economics; Newcastle University; Northumbria University Newcastle; Queen Mary University of London; Queen’s University Belfast; University College London; University of Exeter; University of Leeds; University of Leicester; University of Liverpool; University of Nottingham; University of Sheffield; University of Strathclyde; University of Sussex; University of Westminster; University of York; and Warwick Law School.

*Advertising:*this used to be quite lucrative, but over the last few years academic publishers have drastically reduced budgets for this sort of thing. However, we did receive £700 for the 2017/18 year to date. We have had one or two enquiries in recent times about electronic advertising and this might be something to consider for the future.

*Circulation:*SLSA mailing list (approx 1000 per issue); SLSA delegate packs (500 spring issue); and three times a year with the JLS (electronic insert). Overseas subscribers receive a pdf of the newsletter.

*Ebulletin:*in October we successfully transferred the ebulletin over to Mailchimp. It gives the ebulletin a more professional look and it is now easier to view on mobiles and tablets. We will continue to work on this to improve on the more professional feel and user-friendliness.

MS would like to extend her thanks to everyone for support with regards to the newsletter and web editing.

**Note the account details are provided in the appendix.**

**3.7 PG Student Representative**

JM noted that the PGR sessions before the conference went really well.

It was noted that seven people have asked about becoming PGR reps, which is a role that will need to be filled in the coming year.

**3.8 Webmaster**

*Membership database*

The main member’s database contains a number of inconsistencies including old membership profiles, incomplete registrations, etc.

*Mailing list*

There are problems regarding the integration of the website and the Mailchimp system.

*How did this happen?*

Both of the above issues are a symptom of the main problem, which originated following the Paypal debacle. Following this event the CBSubs payment gateway plugin was switched off. The registration process, payment gateway and the mailing list integration function are interconnected. There appear to be minor issues with the Joomla mailer integration plugin, but it likely that these are also caused by the suspension of the payment gateway.

*Recommendations*

1. Audit: carry out a thorough audit of the members database;
2. CBSubs: reinstate the plugin and consider an alternative payment gateway (e.g. Worldpay – already discussed at exec, or Stripe);
3. Export function: create a web-based members list, for admin use, with a csv export function;
4. Newsletter integration: try alternative Mailchimp integration plugin;
5. Admin procedures: adopt back-office procedures to ensure that the membership database is kept up to date (e.g. following manual membership payments);

*Other recommendations*

In addition to the recommendations outlined above, now might be an opportunity to consider other aspects of the sites functionality and usage. Here are a few suggestions worth considering:

1. A to Z list of members. Does this require an overhaul or rethink?
2. Search engine optimisation. Is the ranking of the website acceptable?
3. Membership profiles. Should members be encouraged to update their website profiles?
4. General site style and design. Does this require any additional work?

**3.9 International Liaison**

No report (vacant)

**Publisher’s liaison**

We continue to have contact with the publishers, and it was noted that a number of the publishers were pleased that their books had made it on to the shortlists.

NC noted that we have some new publishers exhibiting at the conference. There is now 10 altogether, of which one is sponsoring the poster competition.

NC suggested that the Wellcome Trust are keen to discuss funding and inter-disciplinary research. NC suggested inviting funding bodies to the conference for future conferences.

**3.10 Social Media**

See above.

**3.11 Leeds Conference SLSA 2018**

Nothing additional to report.

1. **Elections**

Jess Mant – nominated by JH and Lydia Hayes

Emilie Cloatre elected for second term – nominated by RH and JH

Antonia Layard – nominated by IT and EKD (amongst others)

Elen Stokes elected as treasurer – nominated by MOB and RH

Smita Kheria – nominated by RH and JH

Roxanna Dehaghani – nominated by JM and AK

1. **Any Other Business**

None

1. **Next Meeting**

University of Leeds 4 April 2019

1. **Appendix**

**SLSA Accounts 2017-8**

**1st March 2017 – 28th February 2018**

***Opening balance 1st March 2016 £15,614.60*** *(Co-op Current) (****£51,692.60*** *at 31st March 2017)*

***£16,490.54*** *(PayPal)*

***£14,394.46*** *(Lloyds Deposit)\*\*\**

**Income** *incl.*

*Annual Conference £54,641.84\**

Membership fees (Co-op a/c) £15,590.27 *(N.B. £0.27 due to an international membership - currency exchange rate)*

 (Lloyds a/c) £1,892.00

 (PayPal a/c) £860.00

Newsletters, sponsorship, and associated £9,840.00

LSA Conference donation £2,519.92

Interest *(net) The Co-operative bank discontinued interest payments on this a/c during the last financial year)*

***Total income*** *(Co-op a/c)* ***£59,979.64 (NB: includes 2016 conference donation but not 2017 - due)***

***Total income*** *(PayPal a/c)* ***£0.00***

***Total income*** *(Lloyds a/c)*  ***£2,202.00***

***TOTAL INCOME £62,181.64***

**Expenditure** *incl.*

Newsletter/ website editorship £12,930.00 (Co-op); £1,580 (Lloyds)

Newsletter printing/ postage £8,205.40 (Co-op)

Website £450.00

Admin support £1,400

Executive Committee expenses £2,862.99 (Co-op)

AcSS sponsorship £651.95

SLSA postgraduate conference £450 *(other claims due)*

Grants, awards, and prizes £15,532.61

***Total expenditure (Co-op a/c) £43,487.69\*\**** *(see note)*

 ***(Lloyds a/c) £1,580.00***

 ***(PayPal a/c) £0.00***

***TOTAL EXPENDITURE £43,487.69***

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***Closing balance on accounts 28th Feb 2018 £35,016.82 (Co-op)*** *(£89,658.36 with conference donation when this is paid in)*

***£16,347.88 (PayPal)*** *(NB: wrongly appearing as £16,490.54 on 2017 report)*

 ***£15,016.46 (Lloyds)***

*\*This will appear in* ***next*** *year’s accounts*

*\*\* Some grant expenditure and other year expenses have not yet been processed, and do not appear in this sub-total.*