

ACADEMY of SOCIAL SCIENCES

**23rd Annual General Meeting of the Academy of Social Sciences,
Thursday 16 June 2022, 4pm-5.15pm via Zoom**

Minutes

Attendees:

Stephen Aldridge FAcSS	Lord Robert Kerslake FAcSS
Professor Lisa Anderson	Professor Eleonore Kofman FAcSS
Professor Thankom Arun FAcSS	Professor Richard Laughlin FAcSS
Madeleine Barrows (British Academy of Management)	Professor Stina Lyon FAcSS
Professor Vivienne Marie Baumfield FAcSS	Professor Susanne MacGregor FAcSS
Professor Nic Beech FAcSS	Dame Jil Matheson DCB FAcSS
Professor Richard Black FAcSS	Professor Alisoun Milne FAcSS
Professor Tim Blackman FAcSS	Professor Richard Murphy FAcSS
Professor Jane Broadbent FAcSS	Professor Melanie Nind FAcSS
Professor Woody Caan FAcSS	Dr Deb Outhwaite (British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society)
Chris Caswill FAcSS	Professor Sheila Peace FAcSS
Professor Anthony Crook CBE FAcSS	Professor Jamie Pearce FAcSS
Professor Rob Cuthbert FAcSS	Professor Judith Phillips OBE FAcSS
Professor Mike Danson FAcSS	Professor Jenny Pickerill FAcSS
Professor Pauline Dibben FAcSS	Andrew Pritchard FAcSS
Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS	Professor Michael Reed FAcSS
Dr Peter Geraghty FAcSS	Professor Sasha Roseneil FAcSS
Professor Roger Goodman FAcSS	Professor Andy Ross FAcSS
Professor Eileen Green FAcSS	Professor Phillipp Schofield FAcSS
Professor Helen Gunter FAcSS	Professor Richard Smith FAcSS
Professor Linda Hantrais FAcSS	Reverend Professor Lynda Taylor FAcSS
Professor Geraldine Healy FAcSS	Professor Gill Valentine FAcSS
Professor John Home FAcSS	Professor Kavita Vedhara FAcSS
Will Hutton FAcSS	Professor Antje Wiener FAcSS
Dr Helen Kara FAcSS	Professor Stephen Wood FAcSS
Professor Clare Kelliher FAcSS	

In attendance:

Ms Alison Blow (Membership and Database Officer, AcSS)
Ms Chizom Ekeh (Senior Communications Manager, AcSS)
Mr Steve Grundy (Senior Campaign Manager, AcSS)
Dr Sarah Jones (Head of Administration, AcSS)

Apologies:

Professor Bobby Duffy FAcSS (Chair, Campaign for Social Science)
Sharon Witherspoon FAcSS (Head of Policy, AcSS)

1. Welcome by the President, Will Hutton FAcSS

Will Hutton, President (WH) formally welcomed the Fellows to the 23rd Annual General Meeting.

2. Formal business of the AGM

Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2021

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting, held on 17 June 2021 via a show of hands.

Report from the Honorary Treasurer, Professor Nic Beech FAcSS

Prof Nic Beech (NB) provided his first report as Honorary Treasurer and reported that despite some previous concerns heading into 2021, the Academy ended the year in sound financial shape. For the second year running, the Academy navigated the pandemic challenges well. Fellowship remained strong with a greater than 95% renewal rate and net growth of 71 Fellows (approximately 40 also changed from full to retired or overseas Fellow status.)

NB congratulated Rita Gardner and the team for their prudent management of expenditure. Benefiting from fewer in person meetings and the decision to not return to office space, both the Academy and Campaign cost centres recorded a surplus on their operating activities for 2021 (Academy £63k; Campaign £18k). The surpluses recorded are not structural; and the Academy's Council had agreed in February 2022 that up to 50% of the Academy surplus in 2021 will be made available to new projects in 2022, and the remainder will be added to the Academy reserves.

Overall, the financial statements show a total net deficit on the year of -£12,149, which is solely the artefact of the required accounting procedures for charities. The Academy is required to account purely on income and expenditure in the year; the 'deficit' arose from the spend down of project funds (e.g., PRO-RES) in 2021 that had been paid over to the Academy (and recorded as income) in previous years.

The annual accounts, published on the Academy's website under [About Us](#), show a detailed breakdown of the income and expenditure for all areas of the Academy and Campaign, and Fellows are encouraged to read these.

In the discussion that followed, concerns over whether the Academy's income would be affected by Open Access were alleviated as RG explained that the journal *Contemporary Social Science* is not a major income source for the Academy and the 7-year agreement with Tylor & Francis ensures that the Academy is not in an exposed financial position.

Report from the President, Will Hutton FAcSS

Will Hutton (WH) gave a personal view of his first year as President, noting that there has been a significant push on moving the strategy forward through a clear directed work plan. The Academy team demonstrate a tremendous sense of collegiality and have a clear vision on how to deliver the Academy's purpose.

2021 was the first full year of the new strategy, and the team set about delivering it with focused intent.

Three major externally funded projects ran at pace during the year.

The development of the **new Academy website**, one of the key deliverables in the strategy, has been fundamental in reshaping our visual identity and our ability to communicate our work and importance of the social sciences. The large project, from start to finish, was completed during 2021 thanks in large part to the collective efforts of the 'website development team' and our contracted professional web developers, Praline. The internal web team comprised Chizom Ekeh our Senior Communications Manager who led on the day-to-day implementation, Rita Gardner as CEO, and two volunteer design and digital communications experts from the Campaign Board, Desiree Lopez and Rachel Neamann, both of whom contributed very significant expertise as volunteers. The result is a modern and purposeful website.

The '**Social Sciences in a Time of Change**' project, was in data collection mode throughout 2021 and into the first few months of 2022. A joint project with Lancaster University, and competitively grant-funded by the ESRC, it aims to provide 'in real time' an understanding of how the unprecedented combination of the pandemic, Brexit and HE policy changes are affecting the social sciences in higher education. It's a vital project, complementing the more widely available reporting of generic impacts. WH thanked the many deans and PVCs who have given time and expertise in responding to our survey and in-depth interviews in 2021. The final project report will be published in July 2022 on the Academy's website.

The Academy's contribution as UK partner in the three-year, **EU-funded PRO-RES project** completed successfully in October 2021. Thanks are extended to Fellows, Robert Dingwall, Helen Kara and John Oates for their work on the project and especially to Ron Iphofen, FAcSS, for his leadership of it. The project aims to encourage and support policymakers and their advisors in seeking evidence for their decisions from research that has been conducted ethically, responsibly and with integrity. The output is in the form of a framework consisting of an accord, a toolbox and substantial guidance.

Our **campaign for social science** also saw significant activity and new developments during the year, and Steve Grundy, Senior Campaign Manager, will report on those later in the item. WH shared that he was delighted to have been involved in Campaign activities, spearheading a timely seminar and dinner discussion on 'Levelling Up' in Autumn 2021. It was the campaign's first in person event for two years, and brought together leading experts from academia, the policy community and business.

The **policy work**, under the lead of Sharon Witherspoon, benefited greatly from the new website and was as active as ever throughout the year. RG will comment on this, our work with Learned Society Members and other Academy activities under the next item.

The Academy was delighted to welcome **112 new Fellows in 2021**, bringing the total as of 31 December to 1,500. It is vital that we ensure a continuing lifeblood of expert social scientists in the Academy, from academia and a wide range of other professional sectors. Ensuring we have good representation across our many dimensions of diversity and maintaining a good balance between emeritus and salaried Fellows is also important to avoid us being an ageing community. In 2021, 20% of new Fellows for whom we held ethnicity data were from minority ethnic communities.

WH extended his warm thanks to Gill Valentine for chairing the Nominations Committee and to our member learned societies, Fellows and the two search committees for the excellent nominations. Seven of our Fellows received public honours in the year.

WH also **thanked all the Academy's Fellows** for their support in so many ways. The Academy could not function without the support of its members, partner organisations, those who serve on our Council and committees, those who donate to and sponsor our work, and our hard-working small staff team. For an organisation with a core budget of some £0.5m we are achieving great things for the social sciences.

While we are largely considering 2021 here today, WH also celebrated the launch of two new activities in the past week or so. The first is a new Campaign hub that Bobby will be talking about. The second is the **'We Society' podcasts** launched on 7 June, with the purpose of promoting social science; and engaging the non-academic community in thinking about some of the big issues that social sciences help us all to understand and what sort of society we want for the future. It is a major project for 2022 – and one WH said he was delighted to lead. The Academy is indebted to the first group of speakers, many of whom are Fellows, for sharing their expertise in conversation and he was immensely pleased that Hillary Clinton agreed to feature in the podcast released a couple of days ago. WH encouraged all Fellows to help promote the series to your networks. See the homepage of acss.org.uk and all the main podcast platforms. WH warmly thanked our friends at Whistledown productions for working with the Academy on this exciting project to help promote social science and engage the non-academic community.

Report from the Chief Executive, Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS

RG reported favourably on the second 'pandemic' year of challenge, change and development in the Academy and the first full year of working to deliver the new strategy, which was launched in Autumn 2020.

At the AGM in 2021, RG described 2020 as a year of two dramatic contrasts: of managing uncertainty and risk and making the most of opportunities. By comparison, 2021 was neither as dramatic nor risky. But it was none the less important in progressively developing the Academy and its work. It was also none the less busy for the small, dedicated staff team. It was a year of:

- sustaining the momentum, established in 2020, in our promotion and safeguarding of social sciences;
- extending our range of activities and our profile, supported by the new President who threw himself into the role with enthusiasm and commitment;
- strengthening working relationships with our valued learned society members;
- greatly enhancing our professional platforms in administration, website and identity.

The **development of the new website**, in which every single team member played a role, was a true milestone. There is still some enhanced functionality of the website due to come in 2022, such as the fully completed, searchable Fellows' database. This is underpinned by the Academy getting to grips with using its contact database properly, ensuring it is kept up to date (please do use the <https://acss.org.uk/our-fellows/update-your-details/> form to let us know of any changes), and extending the data we hold with additional variables that will make it one of the best searchable registers of expertise in the social sciences and a great resource for others to use.

The **Policy Monitor**, which is a service we provide to highlight government consultations and requests for expert inputs relevant to social science, has been embedded as a searchable tool in our website – enhancing access and useability. In 2021 it was also

extended to include government and parliamentary consultations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland too.

The Academy values greatly its **learned society members** who are a wonderful complement – with their deep disciplinary expertise – to the Academy’s overarching role for the social sciences as a collective. We welcomed the Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA) as a new member during 2021, and we ended the year with 47 member societies. This is a powerful voice and force for social science. As part of our continuing active collaboration with our member learned societies, we introduced two main developments in 2021, aided by an online communications channel.

- The first was a highly **practical knowledge sharing forum** on running virtual meetings and conferences at a time when organisations were grappling with this issue.
- The second was also one of the ways in which the Academy chose to extend its range of activities. In November we announced the new strategic partnership between the Academy and the **ESRC on equality, diversity and inclusion** in the social sciences. This includes, and draws on the expertise of, the Academy’s learned society members. The first work plan of the three-year project was agreed earlier this year. The purpose is to support and help facilitate EDI across more widely across the learned societies and social science community.

During the year, the **Policy** team responded to 6 substantive consultations and in particular voiced our serious concerns, to the highest level, about the government’s cut to ODA funding for the Global Challenges Research Fund and the way in which this was done. We were joined in those representations by the majority of our member learned societies.

Continuing the now well-established tradition of an annual policy-relevant report, we published **‘The Place to Be’** in Autumn 2021, sponsored by SAGE Publishing. It demonstrated the many ways in which social sciences in universities across the UK are helping to improve places in the UK - supporting local economic growth and the regional rebalancing agenda through research and local partnerships for action. Despite this, and much else evidence besides, Whitehall is still to recognise the importance of universities in the so-called ‘levelling up’ agenda.

RG acknowledged and thanked the hard-working co-editors of the Academy’s scholarly journal – **Contemporary Social Science**. Over their three years as editors and several years before that as Assistant Editors, they have done a wonderful job in advancing the journal. In 2021 the journal received c. 135,000 article downloads – a 44% increase on the previous year. Professors Jacqueline Barnes and John Connolly were warmly thanked. They step down at the end of this month and Professor David Bailey from the University of Birmingham has been appointed to take up the role of Editor.

RG encouraged Fellows to read the [Directors’ report](#), available on the website under About Us, for more information and to see clearly how the Academy’s activities relate to the six strategic aims and current action plan.

RG ended by saying we owe a very great deal to our team of staff and those who core fund us – our Fellows, Learned Society members and Campaign supporters. It is our staff who, on a budget of some £500k per year, deliver the core Academy and Campaign activities and who ensure we punch well above our weight.

In 2021 we completed a process that started in 2020 to reshape our Academy roles and staff team to ensure we had the skills and competencies we needed for the Academy’s development. We welcomed three new team members who joined me, Sharon Witherspoon, Chizom Ekeh, Alison Blow and Ian Williams. At the start of the year Dr Sarah Jones joined in a newly defined role as Head of Administration, followed in June by the appointment of a new Senior Campaign Manager, Steve Grundy and then in October to fill the newly created post of Administrative Assistant, Sophia Cole joined the team. We said farewell to Marta

Kask – Campaign Manager, Aarti Basynet – Communications Manager, and Ashley Lenihan – Senior Policy Advisor – we thank them for their work with the Campaign and Academy.

Report on the Campaign for Social Science, Mr Steve Grundy Senior Campaign Manager, AcSS on behalf of Professor Bobby Duffy FAcSS Chair of the Campaign for Social Science

SG reported that 2021 had been a busy and productive year for the Campaign. It was a year of change with new faces and new energy with the appointment of Steve Grundy the Senior Campaign Manager and boosted by the involvement of the new President in the latter half of the year.

The hubs saw a refresh with **the impact and emergence of Covid 19** being integrated into the Covid Hub and a new hub was launched, on the regional rebalancing ('Levelling Up') agenda.

14 comment pieces on 'levelling up' by leading social scientists – academics and practitioners - were published in 2021, each using evidence to identify up to three areas of prime policy importance for delivering outcomes. Many, but not all, were written by Fellows of the Academy. These hubs were complemented by a busy Autumn programme of events.

The Campaign Annual Lecture was well-attended and given by the President. Entitled 'It's Institutions Stupid: The moralisation of capitalism', it brought together theory, evidence, and practice to explore the possibility of a new and more moral form of capitalism. An excellent response was given by Baroness Minouche Shafik, Director of the LSE. Some 1,700 people registered for this event, with around 550 attending on the day.

The Campaign partnered with SAGE Publications to present **Levelling Up: Principles and Practice, an online TEDx style event focusing on Levelling Up**. Speakers at the event included Neil O'Brien MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and was extremely well attended.

A subsequent **dinner discussion** on this topic offered an opportunity for deeper conversations and networking.

The Campaign's **strategic leadership forum**, a benefit for Gold and Silver level supporters, featured Daniel Zeichner MP, speaking about the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Higher Education and the uncertainties surrounding the direction of HE policy.

The Academy's **new website** has enabled the Campaign to effectively showcase its activities and to reach out more widely.

Support for the Campaign from universities and commercial sponsorship remained very strong with all university sponsors and the lead commercial sponsor renewing. We are hugely grateful to all who renewed in what was a financially uncertain year for many institutions

Looking ahead to 2022, there is a new programme of **quarterly discussion and networking events in partnership with SAGE Publishing and The Conversation**, that launched in late May with Sir Lawrence Freedman speaking on the Ukraine War. And we have refreshed the **Campaign Board** with new members from Scotland and Wales and with expertise on climate change and policy.

SG warmly **thanked:**

- all the supporters for their sponsorship of the Campaign, and not least SAGE Publishing, our lead commercial sponsor, for their support in particular with the policy publication and with all the Campaign events.

- The Campaign Board, for their expertise and advice, and not least Rachel and Desiree for their tremendous support of the website development project.
- The very many people who have contributed time, expertise and energy to create content for the Campaign hubs and to speak at events.
- Prof Bobby Duffy for his leadership and guidance and Academy colleagues, who alongside the Campaign Manager demonstrate hard work and commitment in pulling off these developments in a challenging year.

Report from the Honorary Secretary, Dame Jil Matheson FAcSS

A key part of the first half of 2021 was to chair the selection of shortlisted candidates for the advertised role of **Academy President** and the appointments panel of Trustees. The process, which had commenced in Autumn 2020, was supported by GatenbySanderson as recruitment consultants and JM reported that it worked very well.

In the latter part of the year, time was given over to updating the **Academy's governing documents** to reflect the administrative decisions and changes that had been made at the SGM in 2018, to combine the role of Chair with that of President, and by the Council in 2019. I am pleased to report that the Council has since approved the amended wording and that the process has been reviewed favourably by the Audit & Risk Committee in May 2022. The updated documents are now available on the Academy's website (under About Us). Sarah Jones, Rita Gardner and Tony McEnery were thanked for their work on this.

In 2021 we welcomed **two new trustees** elected by the Fellowship: Prof Tim Blackman - Vice-Chancellor of the Open University and Prof Richard Black - Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Social Sciences, University of Birmingham. And of course, a new President, Will Hutton. Those appointments were warmly received by the Council and Fellows.

JM announced the results of the **2022 elections to Council**. Two elected positions fell vacant under the Learned Societies constitution. 5 declarations of candidacy were received from both Fellows and non-Fellows, each affiliated as required to one of our member learned societies. JM was delighted to announce that the member learned societies voted to elect to Council: Prof Lisa Anderson – Professor of Management Development and Interim Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Liverpool (affiliated with British Academy of Management); and Prof Sally Power FAcSS – Co-Director of WISERD, Cardiff University (affiliated with the British Educational Research Association). We welcome them both and look forward to working with them during their term.

JM thanked Chris Caswill, who after six years on Council as a Learned Society elected member, completes his term. Chris is one of the longest standing Fellows and supporters of the Academy and the Academy is very grateful for the many roles he has played over this time.

Also standing down this year is Prof Gill Valentine, who has been serving as the Chair of the Nominations Committee, and we thank her for the valuable work she has done in overseeing a revision to the guidelines and in helping to maintain the high standards of Fellowship. This is an appointed position, and we will announce Gill's successor in due course.

3. Q&A

Q1 - Should AcSS look again at its work on professional Ethics?

A1 – RG pointed Fellows towards the PRO-RES project that the Academy has been involved with over the last three years <https://prores-project.eu/>

An EU funded project, advised and supported by a number of Academy Fellows, it has been developing a framework and tools to promote the use of ethical evidence in policy. A new section on the Academy's website due to be added later this year will feature the project findings and web links. JM also noted UKRI has recently established a new committee on research integrity and the Academy will in due course be contacted to feed into that.

Q2 – Why are accruals not used instead of cash accounting in the Academy's financial reporting?

A2 – The accounts are prepared under an accruals basis; however the charities financial reporting standard (FRS 102) requires that for projects, income is reported in the statutory accounts in the year in which it comes in and expenditure in the year in which goes out.

Q3 – Where is the Academy in its plans to achieve national academy status?

A3 – This is a long term process. The Academy is a national academy, formed by the social sciences community, and is working towards greater formal recognition by government, consistent with that of the BA, RS, RAE and RSM. It has enhanced its work to promote social science for public benefit in the UK in recent years with a new strategy, fundraising and the introduction of a range of new activities, projects and administrative developments. It has continued to build, and enjoys, a higher profile, greater momentum and strong relationships with stakeholders. There is a renewed confidence in social science, which the Social Sciences in a Time of Change project, will show when published in July 2022. The prospect of formal recognition of our standing is advancing in every five year period our momentum continues to grow.

4. Adoption of Directors' Report and Accounts 2021

The Director's Report and Accounts 2021 were adopted by a show of hands.

5. Welcome new Fellows

RG warmly welcomed all 71 new Fellows and particularly those present at the AGM:

Autumn 2021

Professor Thankom Arun
Professor of Global Development and
Accountability
University of Essex

Professor Clare Kelliher
Professor of Work and Organisation
Cranfield University

Professor Jamie Pearce
Professor of Health Geography
University of Edinburgh

Spring 2022

Professor Geraldine Healy
Professor Emeritus of Employment
Relations
Queen Mary University of London

Professor Richard Murphy
Professor of Accounting
University of Sheffield

Professor Jenny Pickerill
Professor of Environmental Geography
University of Sheffield

Reverend Professor Lynda Taylor
Visiting Professor in Language
Assessment and UKALTA President
University of Bedfordshire

6. **AOB** There was no other business.