

**22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Thursday 17 June 2021

Draft Minutes

Attendees:

Professor Simone Abram
Professor Stephen Aldridge CB FRSA FAcSS
Professor Kavita Vedhara FAcSS
Ms Madeleine Barrows
Professor Yehuda Baruch FAcSS
Professor Vivienne Baumfield FAcSS
Professor Richard Black FAcSS
Professor Tim Blackman FAcSS
Professor Janine Bosak FAcSS
Professor Frances Bowen FAcSS
Professor Jane Broadbent FAcSS
Professor Michael Byram FAcSS
Professor Paul Carmichael FAcSS
Professor Chris Caswill FAcSS
Professor David Clark FAcSS
Professor Lynn Prince Cooke FAcSS
Professor Nelarine Cornelius FAcSS
Professor Tony Crook CBE FAcSS
Professor Mike Danson FAcSS DLitt
Professor Pauline Dibben FAcSS
Professor Sheila Dow FAcSS
Professor Bobby Duffy FAcSS
Professor Claire Dunlop FAcSS
Professor Giana Eckhardt FAcSS
Professor John Flint FAcSS
Professor David Gadd FAcSS
Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS
Professor Peter Geraghty FAcSS
Professor Nigel Gilbert FAcSS
Professor Susan Golombok FAcSS
Professor Roger Goodman FAcSS
Professor Eileen Green FAcSS
Professor Chris Greer FAcSS
Professor Chris Hamnett FAcSS

Professor Linda Hantrais FAcSS
Professor Jackie Harrison FAcSS
Professor Mark Harrison FAcSS
Professor Gerard Hodgkinson FAcSS
Professor John Horne FAcSS
Professor Christine Howe FAcSS
Mr Will Hutton FAcSS
Dr Ron Iphofen FAcSS
Professor Divya Jindal-Snape FAcSS
Professor Andrew Jones FAcSS
Dr Helen Kara FAcSS
Professor Eleonore Kofman FAcSS
Professor Ray Land FAcSS
Professor Denise Lievesley CBE FAcSS
Professor Jeannette Littlemore FAcSS
Professor Yipeng Liu FAcSS
Professor Eva Stina Lyon FAcSS
Professor Susanne MacGregor FAcSS
Professor Brad Mackay FAcSS
Professor Graham Martin FAcSS
Dame Jil Matheson FAcSS
Professor Vanessa May FAcSS
Professor Colette McAuley FAcSS
Professor Anthony McEnery FAcSS
Professor Jane Millar FAcSS
Professor Alisoun Milne FAcSS
Professor Maxine Molyneux FAcSS
Professor Catia Montagna FAcSS
Mr Jeremy Neathey FAcSS
Professor Margaret O'Brien FAcSS
Professor Christine Oughton FAcSS
Professor Judith Phillips OBE FAcSS
Professor Jane Pollard FAcSS
Ms Gillian Prior FAcSS
Professor Diane Richardson FAcSS
Professor Ken Roberts FAcSS
Ms Ceridwen Roberts FAcSS
Professor Sasha Roseneil FAcSS
Professor Andy Ross FAcSS
Professor Sue Scott FAcSS
Professor John Scott FAcSS
Professor Judy Sebba FAcSS

Professor Beng Huat See FAcSS
Professor Tracy Shildrick FAcSS
Professor Chris Shore FAcSS
Professor Sally Shortall FAcSS
Professor Sabina Siebert
Dr Richard Simmons FAcSS
Professor Richard Smith FAcSS
Professor Veronica Strang FAcSS
Professor Shlomo Tarba FAcSS
Professor Einar Thorsen
Professor Gill Valentine FAcSS
Professor Antje Wiener FAcSS
Ms Sharon Witherspoon MBE FAcSS
Professor Stephen Wood FAcSS
Professor Fulong Wu FAcSS
Dr Wei Yang FAcSS

In attendance

Dr Sarah Jones (Head of Administration, AcSS)
Ms Alison Blow (Membership and Database Officer, AcSS)
Ms Chizom Ekeh (Senior Communications Manager, AcSS)
Mr Steve Grundy (Senior Campaign Manager, AcSS)
Mr Damian Todd (IT Manager, St Antony's College)

1. Welcome by the President, Professor Roger Goodman FAcSS

Professor Roger Goodman (RG) welcomed everyone to the 22nd Annual General Meeting of the Academy of Social Sciences, which was taking place by Zoom due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He reminded the attendees of the Zoom etiquette and thanked Damian Todd (IT Manager, St Antony's College) for hosting it on Zoom.

2. Formal business of the AGM

2.1 Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2020

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting, held on 30 June 2020.

2.2 Report from the President, Professor Roger Goodman FAcSS

RG reported on some of the headlines from 2020 and announced that colleagues would consider many of the points in more detail under the next items on the agenda.

- RG reported that he was delighted, as President, to report on the Academy's activities in 2020 to promote the social sciences for the public benefit.

- 2020 saw **major challenges** for the Academy, in common with many other charities and other organisations, in the context of Covid 19. RG was pleased to report that the Academy came through those well, although not without some difficult decisions to be made along the way. RG recognised the tremendous efforts from the staff team led by Dr Rita Gardner, the trustees, our Fellows and supporters that resulted in this outcome.
- In contrast to 2019, there were **no major changes in leadership**, in either staff or trustees in the Academy. None of the members on Council ended their terms of office in 2020. At a time of such external pressure, it was most helpful to have stability on both the Executive Committee and the Council.
- The Academy continued its work during the year on **developing a new strategy**, pausing the process during the first wave of Covid 19 to take stock, and published the strategy in autumn 2020, following a period of substantial consultation in late 2019 and early 2020. The strategy was approved by Council in October 2020.
- The work to promote and help safeguard the social sciences took advantage of both the **new emerging strategy and new opportunities** - sadly in some ways – offered by the pandemic. Prime among these was the development of the Campaign's Covid 19 hub of hubs.
- **Changes to our governance**, that had been approved in 2019, were implemented from mid-2020, as planned. The Academy also commenced the search for a new President in autumn 2020, led by Dame Jil Matheson, as Honorary Secretary.
- The Academy was delighted to welcome **121 new Fellows** in 2020, bringing the total as of 31 December to 1,429. It is vital that we ensure an ongoing lifeblood in the Academy of highly expert social scientists from academia and a wide range of other professional sectors; and a good balance between emeritus and salaried Fellows. RG extended his warm thanks to Gill Valentine for chairing the Nominations Committee and to learned societies, Fellows and the two search committees for the excellent nominations. The retention rate for Fellows is excellent at c. 95% year on year and RGr reported that ten of our Fellows received public honours in the year.
- **Some of our regular membership activities**, such as the Annual Lecture and the President's Lunch, **were curtailed** unfortunately by the sudden and unexpected restrictions of Covid. However, Fellows were more widely involved in our work, as Bobby Duffy will attest to in reporting on the Campaign for Social Science.
- The Academy welcomed **two new learned societies** as members in 2020 – the Royal Anthropological Institute and the Association of Professors of Social Work - and ended the year with 46 member societies, as in 2019. We warmly thank our member learned societies for their continued involvement and support.
- 2020 saw **continuing active engagement with learned societies**, not least in offering a forum to share concerns, to learn from each other, and to help build capacity in mitigating the impacts of covid 19 on the sector. We also continued to work with learned societies on open access to scholarly publishing, responding in particular to the consultation on the draft UKRI Open Access policy.
- 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. RG gave his heartfelt **thanks to everyone. For an organisation with a core budget of some £0.5m we punch far above our weight.**

- RG gave a personal note on stepping down as president and chair after six years that it has been a huge privilege and pleasure. It has provided an opportunity to meet so many members of the social sciences community. Noting that it has provided an insight into the full range of activities undertaken by the Academy and the quality of the Council. Remarking that it had been a privilege to meet so many CEO's and Presidents of the member learned societies, representing 100,000 social scientists between them. RG commented on how the Campaign had gone from strength to strength. Thanking the very small and hard-working and well-led staff team, RG praised Dr Rita Gardner and colleagues. Commenting that moving forward he would like to see greater interaction between the Council and Learned Societies, and the Learned Societies and the Campaign. 2022 marks the 40th anniversary of the Academy and RG noted that capturing its history would be an important piece of work.
- **RG thanked everyone for allowing him to serve as President.**

2.3 Report from the Chief Executive, Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS

- Dr Rita Gardner (RGr) reported that she was delighted to be able to report favourably on a most challenging year in 2020. RGr thanked everyone, and especially the trustees, for the support and encouragement, time and expertise given to me and my colleagues in our small staff team.
- Describing 2019 as eventful at the AGM last year, RGr notes that was nothing as compared with 2020 which is best seen as a year of two dramatic contrasts; of managing risk and making the most of opportunities.
- In terms of managing risk, in less than two months, in April and May 2020, in response to the pandemic, the Academy formulated, approved and started to implement an emergency budget to reduce costs significantly; packed up the office becoming a virtual organisation; completely re-modelled our IT infrastructure, moving all systems into the cloud; and redoubled our efforts on demonstrating our worth and that of the social sciences.
- RGr recognised the work of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, chaired by Tony McEnery in careful scrutiny of the proposals and in wholeheartedly supporting the necessary actions to cut costs in the face of potentially existential levels of uncertainty. The proposals also received unanimous support from the Council.
- RGr recognised the sheer hard work of the small staff team in pulling together, with no complaints but lots of collective action and goodwill, to manage the radical changes in our working practices and above all, to get on and deliver new charitable activities at such a time of change.
- Two colleagues, in particular, who joined the team in the first four months of 2020 – Alison Blow and Chizom Ekeh – went more or less straight into lockdown. Since then, in 2021, we have seen three other team members join us virtually, with no opportunity as yet to meet their colleagues in person. All were congratulated for their commitment, integration and innovation. RGr thanked those who left the Academy over the past 15 months for the three years or so they each spent with us.
- Similar focused effort applied in our policy work, where, among much other work, the team took the opportunity to engage with business community leaders, building on contacts at senior levels held by staff, Fellows and board members. Led brilliantly by

Sharon Witherspoon, our Head of Policy, and with the support of Ashley Lenihan, this work resulted in the publication of *Vital Business* in September 2020.

- The report highlighted the many and varied ways in which the business community use and value social science knowledge, methodology and skills in underpinning their everyday activities, and in their business growth, development, innovation and strategic planning. Including the STEM business community. We gratefully acknowledge the support of SAGE publishing in the production and dissemination of the report.
- It was a timely report, as the ESRC set about scoping the interface between research and business in their realm and, in the face of an inevitably growing focus on STEM, in government as a result of the pandemic. It will also serve us well in likely forthcoming Whitehall challenge on the employability of social scientists.
- The report was used to put in place an enhanced approach to PR and engagement beyond the academy, led by Chizom Ekeh, ensuring the report's reach was both wide and deep. The latter focused on personalized approaches to key decision-makers. As a result, the press release was viewed over 3,700 times; the report was downloaded nearly 1000 times; and there was a strong and positive response on social media.
- The third main area in which we successfully sought out new opportunities – the first two being Covid hub and *Vital Business* - was in monitoring the health of the social sciences in higher education. In a joint project with the University of Lancaster, we received a competitive grant award from the ESRC to enable us to carry out this important work to monitor in real time the impacts of the combined effects of Covid 19, Brexit and emerging HE policy. The project – Social Sciences in a time of change - commenced in October 2020, with the research led by Dr Kevin Burchell. RGr reported that it is progressing well and thanked all the universities who have engaged so far. All universities will be receiving a questionnaire during the summer.
- Referring to the strategy, these two new initiatives in 2020 are very well aligned, and deliberately so, with the new strategy which was published in the autumn.
- RGr reported that the Academy had successfully generated some £200,000 in fundraising in 2020 to support the set-up of the strategy. This funding is now being used in part to fund a new, single integrated website for the Academy and Campaign and a new visual identity. The plan at present is for the website to launch in September 2021, alongside a new visual identity, to provide a more professional and modern look to reflect the level of activities currently being undertaken.
- RGr noted that only a few initiatives have been mentioned and for full details, reference should be made to the Directors' Report and Annual Accounts 2020. Moving the focus away from external-facing activities, RGr reported that improving and professionalising the administrative processes and ensuring sustainability is a major strategic objective. In 2020 and early 2021, led by Alison Blow, we made huge progress in using and populating our central database. This is a vital precursor to enhancing that database with further information and using it to underpin a more sophisticated Fellows' search facility on the new website in due course. And the advent of Dr Sarah Jones, as Head of Administration in January 2021, together with Alison, is revolutionising our administrative efficiency.
- Ending the 2019 report last year on the sombre note of Covid 19, and stating that “overall we are in good heart, decent shape and great spirit as we face the future determined to do the best we can to support social science at a time when it faces some of the greatest challenges ever”. RGr announced that Academy delivered on that in 2020 and survived!

- In 2021, with a strategy and new team and set of skills in place, the aim is to do the same again and, if possible, more. Government policy looks set to challenge the social sciences **and** we must build on the new opportunities we have taken to promote the social sciences for public good, while further enhancing our systems, networks and sustainability. Like the new format of the Annual Report, our work will be shaped by our strategy.

2.4 Report from the Chair of the Campaign for Social Science, Professor Bobby Duffy FAcSS

- Professor Bobby Duffy (BD) reported that the Campaign for Social Science had a busy, innovative and productive year in 2020, not least in re-thinking the Campaign strategy in the context of the Academy-wide strategic planning exercise.
- Taking its cue from the new strategy and from the opportunity to illustrate the vital role of social sciences in understanding, and in helping to mitigate and manage the impact of Covid 19, the Campaign programme was reshaped to showcase the social sciences in four main new ways:
- The Covid ‘hub of hubs’ was launched in mid May 2020, just 7 weeks after lockdown was imposed and it developed a substantial presence through the remainder of 2020 and into 2021. Indeed phase 2 of the Covid hub was launched a couple of weeks ago.
- Its ‘hub of hubs’ role saw it providing a network of links across higher education, and beyond, to organisations that produced a body of evidence-led research and application of social science to the pandemic. It was an impressive showcase of the breadth of response by the social sciences community; and has been widely used. By the end of 2020 there were links to more than 60 Covid 19 research resource centres and provided an impressive showcase.
- Informed comment pieces served to illustrate the scope of social sciences endeavours and to explore some issues in greater depth and reach out to larger audiences. More than 40 commentary pieces, all informed by research and expertise, drew on the knowledge of professional social scientists from academia, public and private sectors. Many, but not all, were Fellows of the Academy. BD thanked those who had contributed.
- Video interviews were introduced in the autumn, providing an opportunity to showcase emerging research from major, funded projects; and produced in partnership with the King’s Policy Institute. These were a successful format and provided a real understanding of what was happening at the front line.
- An autumn events programme was the final element of the refocused Campaign. Highlights included the 2020 annual SAGE Campaign lecture by Prof Trish Greenhalgh, the biggest attended campaign event with over 2,000 people signed up and 1,000 in attendance; a panel discussion on the role of social statistics in informing the Covid pandemic, chaired by National Statistician and Academy Fellow, Sir Ian Diamond; and a discussion around the UK launch of *The Upswing*, Prof Robert Putnam’s new book.
- All these activities, combined with an enhanced database of Campaign contacts reaching government and policy makers, resulted in a significant increase in the Campaign profile, its social media presence (46,000 Twitter impressions per month), in web traffic (users up by 173% to 36,000; and a 400% increase in page views c/w 2019), and in event attendance (between 150 and 750 attending each online event).

- These developments were additional to regular campaign activities, including the Strategic Leadership Forum – addressed by, among others, Jo Johnson - and a wide range of policy work that informs and underpins some campaign activities and which has already been referred to by Rita.
- Support for the Campaign from universities and commercial sponsorship, all of which goes to fund the Campaign, held up well at a difficult time of uncertainty and pressure and BD noted that he was incredibly grateful to those supporters. BD also stated the Campaign was very pleased to see Newcastle University joining for the first time as a major supporter.
- **BD 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 very many people who have contributed time and energy to create content for the Covid hub.
 - the small staff team for their dedication, hard work and commitment in pulling off these developments at such a time.
- BD ended his report by saying he was looking forward to next year with the rebranding of the website.

2.5 Report from the Honorary Treasurer, Professor Andrew Jones FAcSS

- Professor Andrew Jones (AJ) gave his second and final report as Honorary Treasurer and was delighted to be able to report that the Academy ended this most difficult year with a **modest surplus of 8k income over expenditure on its core operations**, stating this was a very significant achievement.
- Highlighting that this was achieved without having to draw on the Academy's limited reserves and after small net losses on investments.
- Noting that this achievement reflects the very careful work of Rita and her colleagues, albeit rapid, planning, management and mitigation measures put in place to reduce expenditure, while at the same time boosting activity and output to help sustain income.
- The main areas of savings made were across the board: in operating costs - premises, in person meetings, and hard copy publications; and in staff cost reductions.
- In summary, the core - unrestricted - income fell by only £45k (to £280k) compared with 2019; but I am pleased to report that only £15k of which was the result of a drop in subscription income paid by Fellows and learned societies.
- The core Academy expenditure was held to £262k, down by £35k compared with 2019.
- The Academy's total income of £725k reflects continuing good levels of incoming restricted, fundraised resources for the Campaign for Social Science and the SPRE project and was importantly boosted by £135k of restricted funds raised to support the new strategy set up in 2020 and subsequent years.
- The Campaign retained £157k of sponsorship support (down £18k compared with 2019) thanks to the continuing commitment of university and SAGE Publishing support and reduced its expenditure accordingly.
- Reporting that the unrestricted general fund reserves - which are those that the Academy can use in the case of general need - ended the year at £143k. For the first

time ever, owing to reduced expenditure, we succeeded in meeting the reserves policy target of 50% of our core operating costs.

- Owing to the extreme uncertainties over income, the very possible risk of needing to draw on limited reserves, and the volatility and risk in the equity markets, the Council took the decision in May 2020 to sell the investments in full and to place the cash in safe keeping until such a time as it was deemed appropriate to re-invest.
In summary, the Academy's finances withstood the challenges of Covid in 2020 and remain in positive balance. This is all to the good given the continuing income challenges the Academy faces in 2021, in common with many sister charities in the sector, arising still from the uncertainties and impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic, and other factors, on income.
- **AJ thanked everyone and remarked that it had been a pleasure and a privilege to work with everyone. AJ welcomed the new president and trustees and wished them the best.**
- **RG thanked AJ for all his hard work as Treasurer.**

2.6 Report from the Honorary Secretary, Dame Jil Matheson FAcSS

- Dame Jil Matheson (JM) noted in 2020 there was one change made to the Academy's Council, which was the decision to appoint Prof Kavita Vedhara as a trustee to fill a vacant appointed position. The appointment was made in autumn 2020 and took effect from 01 January 2021.
- At the AGM, normally the results of the elections to Council by Fellows and learned societies are announced. This year three elected positions fall vacant as Andrew Jones, Cara Aitchison and David Byrne complete their six-year terms. **JM thanked them for their brilliant contributions during their term.**
- Following the open call to Fellows, two nomination forms were received expressing interest in standing for election, one by learned societies and one by Fellows. JM was pleased to announce that Professors Richard Black (Birmingham University PVC Research) and Tim Blackman (Open University VC) are duly elected unopposed. The Council has approved that the third position will be filled for one year by a female co-optee, based outside England, noting the Academy is conscious of the Council membership spread; and will then be open for election in 2022.
- **JM announced that Nic Beech will be stepping up as Treasurer and thanked him for doing so.**
- A key role for JM in 2020/21 was to set up and chair the appointments panel to select Roger's successor as President. Set up in October 2020, the panel consisted of Prof Bobby Duffy, Chair of the Campaign AcSS, Dr Rita Gardner, CEO AcSS, Prof Andrew Jones, Treasurer AcSS, Prof Tony McEnery, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee, Prof Gill Valentine, Chair of the Nominations Committee AcSS and Prof Jennifer Rubin, AcSS as the external member of the Committee. The search was supported by Gatenby Sanderson.
- JM was delighted to welcome Will Hutton as the new president with effect from 17 June 2021 following Council's decision to appoint him in May 2021. Commenting on the level of depth, breadth and interest in the role, JM stated how this reflects on the

activities of the Academy.

3. Q&A

There were no questions received.

4. Adoption of Directors' Report and Accounts 2020

The Directors' Report and Accounts for 2020 were adopted by a show of hands

5. Welcome new president, trustees and Fellows

- Official thanks was given to Roger Goodman by Prof Tony Crook, FAcSS (ADAC), noting his 17 years as a Fellow and that on behalf of the trustees, Fellows and learned societies it was a privilege to be able to thank RG. ADAC commented that on appointing RG to the position, that RG had fitted the role perfectly. RG is an outstanding social scientist and has excellent and extensive experience of chairing committees. RG had not only lived up to but exceeded expectations. Noting how RG had enabled Council members to play their roles, supported Stephen Anderson and Rita Gardner; and been an excellent ambassador for the social sciences.
- **Everyone thanked RG as outgoing president with an online applause.**
- Incoming President, Will Hutton FAcSS (WH), gave an insightful and informative speech about drawing upon his breadth of social sciences which had spanned his career to date. Highlighting his desire to drive forward the Academy, stating his fully endorses the new strategy. WH thanked RG, RGr and the staff team for taking the Academy forward. Noting what a vibrant community he was joining, focusing on some of the challenges for the 2020s and future projects, WH commented on how well-placed social scientists are to address these. WH ended by stating that to date we have been following the science and it is time now to follow the social science.
- New Fellows, Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS
RGr warmly welcomed the 121 new Fellows who had joined in 2020 and particularly those who had joined the meeting. Highlighting that there are many opportunities for involvement in a broad range of activities across the Academy; encouraging them to get in touch to find out more.

6. Any other business

There was no other business.