

Utopian Studies Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Utopian Studies Society Newcastle University, 4 July 2015

Present:

Chair: Fátima Vieira, **Secretary:** Lorna Davidson, **Treasurer:** Adam Stock

Committee Members: Antonis Balasopoulos, Artur Blaim, Greg Claeys, Laurence Davis, Vincent Geoghegan, Pavla Veselá, Nathaniel Coleman, Ruth Levitas, Tom Moylan, and 57 ordinary members

1. Apologies. Lyman Tower Sargent, Annette Magid, Nicole Pohl, Pere Gallardo, Jorge Bastos da Silva, Lucy Sargisson.
2. Minutes of the AGM held in Prague, 5 July 2014 [previously posted on USS website] unanimously approved.
3. Matters arising. None.
4. Finance: Treasurer's Report for 2014/15. [Printed copies were available at meeting]. Adam Stock reported a balance of £3322.46 at 26 June 2015. 8 grant awards, totalling £800, had been disbursed. Surplus funds would be repaid to the account. Report unanimously approved.
5. Office Bearers and Committee.
Office-bearers are available to be re-elected; the Chair will step down in 2016, as previously intimated.
Chair: Fátima Vieira, **Secretary:** Lorna Davidson, **Treasurer:** Adam Stock.
A Blaim requested that the office-bearers be formally re-elected and this was agreed with no dissent.
It was also agreed that nominations for a Chair to succeed F Vieira should be received by the Secretary by 31 May 2016. Committee would agree the details of the process for election of a new Chair at the next AGM, in the event of more than one nomination being received, and this would be advised in due course.
Committee Members:
Committee members (elected in 2012 for 3 years) were now due for re-election. Ruth Levitas and Tom Moylan advised that were stepping down from the committee. David Bell and Michael Kelly were nominated to replace them, and this was agreed unanimously.
A Blaim requested that the other existing committee members *Antonis Balasopoulos, Artur Blaim, Greg Claeys, Laurence Davis, Pere Gallardo, Vincent Geoghegan, Nicole Pohl, Lucy Sargisson, Jorge Bastos da Silva, Pavla Veselá, Nathaniel Coleman* be formally re-elected and this was agreed unanimously.

6. Fatima Vieira: Utopia 500 – Plans for the celebration of the 500th. Anniversary of Thomas More’s Utopia. F Vieira reported on development of UTOPIA 500 website, and recruitment of 40 trainees through the ERASMUS programme. A database of Utopian Studies researchers and scholars is envisaged, and the development of other themes, including Great Utopians, PANUTOPIA 2100, Utopia and Music, etc. was outlined. Members commended the ambitious and creative plans.
7. Conference Plans - updates from representatives of the organisers
 - a) 2016 Lisbon, Portugal – 6-10 July 2016. [This will follow the ICSA conference which is also being held in Portugal, at the Tamera community].
F Vieira outlined plans for the USS conference; the theme will be “500 Years of Utopia”. It is hoped to re-engage participants from Italy, France and Spain, and panels in up to 5 languages will be arranged. In response to a question from L Gruszevska-Blaim, Secretary referred members to the Society’s Conference Guidelines: although the main conference language was generally English, which offered most commonality, organisers had discretion to organise sessions in other languages.
 - b) 2017 Gdansk, Poland. A Blaim reported that the conference venue will be a new building at Gdansk University which is just being completed. The theme will be “Solidarity”. Dates to be confirmed, but it will be early July 2017.
 - c) 2018 proposal for Budapest, Hungary. Zsolt Czigányik from the Central European University gave a presentation in support of the proposal to host the 2018 conference in Budapest. This would be jointly organised by CEU and Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). They hoped to acquire grant-funding of around 5000 euros, and to provide support for delegates from less developed countries such as Azerbaijan. It was tentatively proposed that the theme should be “Utopia and Ideology” . Unanimously agreed to hold the 2018 conference in Budapest.
 - d) A Milner reported that he had submitted an application for funds to enable the 2019 conference to take place at Monash University’s European campus in Prato, Italy. The outcome should be known by end of 2015 and it was agreed to consider this proposal if the grant application was successful.
8. Any other business.
 - a) Secretary drew delegates’ attention to a special subscription offer for USS members for the Utopian Studies journal, and advised that further details could be obtained from Nicole Pohl, the Editor. Other flyers and promotional offers were also included in conference packs and at book desk.
 - b) F Vieira, on behalf of the Society, warmly thanked the organising committee of Lisa Garforth, Adam Stock and Nathaniel Coleman for a stimulating and enjoyable conference and they were presented with gifts as a mark of appreciation.
9. Chair closed the meeting, noting that the date of the next Annual General Meeting would be 9 July 2016, in Lisbon.

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