

The Rewley House Philosophical Society

Minutes of the 2014 AGM

Saturday 11th January 2014, in the Lecture Theatre at Rewley House, Oxford

Present: Marianne Talbot *President*
Bob Stone *Chairman*
Peter Gibson *Secretary*
Eileen Walker *Treasurer*
Committee members, and other members

Apologies: David Jones, Chris Lyons, David Hunt, Christian Michel, Chris Farmer

1. The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted.
2. **Officers:** David Jones has said that he will resign as Review Editor after the 2013 edition is complete, and will step down from the Committee. The Committee has agreed that Patrick Butterly, with help from Mike Arnautov and Peter Townsend, will edit the 2014 Review. The desirability of an Editorial Board was noted, and this was a step towards it. Patrick Butterly thereby has a place on the Committee, and his place as an elected member becomes vacant. There were no volunteers to step into the vacancy. The Committee is therefore comprised of the following:
President: Marianne Talbot **Chairman:** Bob Stone (2013-15) **Secretary:** Peter Gibson
Treasurer: Eileen Walker **Website:** Mike Arnautov **Review:** Patrick Butterly
International: Christian Michel
Elected (2013-15): Tom Fisher, Fauzia Rahman-Greasley, Chris Farmer
Co-Opted: Chris Lyons (Hon. Auditor), David Hunt (Chadwick Prize), Peter Townsend (Friday evenings)
3. **President:** Despite financial pressure, philosophy continues to flourish at the department. The online and weekend courses are very successful, but the weekly classes are in need of greater support.
4. **Chairman:** 2013, the fortieth anniversary of the Society, seems to have been very successful. Most notable was the introduction of a full weekend for members, which went very well, and was organised by Eileen Walker.
5. **Secretary:** The latest estimate of the members total is 349 (compared with 323 last year), so the Society continues to grow. Around 320 members have email addresses, and it is important that we continue to support those who do not. It was agreed that traditional information about forthcoming courses can be sent out by email, but that the Secretary would ensure that it also reached those members who lacked the facility.
6. **Treasurer:** Due to unavoidable but unforeseen circumstances, detailed accounts for 2013 were not yet available. It was reported that, in general, the Society is in good financial health. It was felt that since the Members' Dinner is now in September, there was no particular reason to hold the AGM in January, given that financial information for the previous year may not be complete by that date.
7. **Review:** The 2013 Review has been delayed this year, but should be going to press soon. It was agreed that we should aim to publish it by the end of its named year, but it is a demanding task. The principle of whether the Review should remain a noticeboard for annual information about the Society was raised (given the growing prominence of the website). The current Editor feels the Review should focus entirely on members' writings. It was broadly agreed that much practical information and reporting could be dropped, but that the retention of the list of members was desirable, since it was of considerable interest, and unavailable elsewhere. The question of whether the Review might be published entirely in electronic format was raised, and there was a strong consensus at the meeting for retaining the printed physical Review.
8. **Website:** There has been a substantial increase in the number of visitors, and the number of visits, amounting to around a 30% increase in activity (compared with a 10% increase reported last year). The Forum has been fairly quiet, and the Webmaster urged members to make use of it, since it gives an opportunity for more slow-moving and considered discussion than a Google group can offer. There was no objection to a contributor using an alias. There had been fewer downloads of recording from the website, but this remains active. Several people expressed their appreciation for the many useful features which are being added to the website, especially to facilitate administration of the Society.
9. **Prizes:** The Chadwick Essay Prize has continued, with a good number of entries. Thanks were expressed to Trevor Hussey and Chris Farmer for continuing to do the judging. The termly prize awarded by the Society for essays written on Rewley House philosophy courses is now a flourishing institution, with between 15 and 35 entries each term. Appreciation was expressed to Frank Brierley and Bob Clarke for judging that competition. All entries were, once again, from the online courses.
10. **Members' Day 2014:** A room has been booked at Rewley House for the September weekend, but unfortunately we do not have the Lecture Theatre. The only date when we could use that would be in December. It was agreed to stick to the September date, despite a small restriction on numbers attending. Hence Members' Weekend will be on September 20-21 2014. The organiser of speakers will be Christian Michel (in Madrid), with help in England from Eileen Walker. The provisional topic is 'The Nature of Thought'. There will also be a small one-day meeting at Pigotts (in Buckinghamshire), which will be organised by Frank Brierley.
11. **AOB:** It was suggested that we should have more presence in social media such as Facebook. An offer was made (*after the meeting*) to set up a Facebook page for the Society. We have a Twitter account (@oxphilsoc), and should look for ways to spread Society information across Twitter.

Next AGM: In the light of the discussion about the accounts, it was agreed that the next AGM would be in the spring of 2015, preferably at a weekend when the Lecture Theatre is used, ensuring good attendance.