

**UK Society for Co-operative Studies Minutes of the
Annual General Meeting held on Friday 26 August 2022,
4 – 6 pm**

Meeting held on Zoom

Agenda items

1. Apologies and attendance

Apologies: David Smith, Nick Matthews

Attendance: 18 attendees

2. Minutes of 2021 AGM

The following minor amendments to the minutes were requested:

- Include number to item on election of trustees
- Correct spelling to Martin Meteyard, not Martin Metyard.

10 people voted to approve the minutes. No votes against.

Matters arising from the minutes

Rory Ridley Duff pointed out that the item on sustainability reporting needs to receive further discussion at the Board. The project is still ongoing.

3. Presentation and adoption of accounts

John Maddocks presented the accounts. John first clarified that he was not Treasurer during the reporting period and he stepped in to prepare the accounts only very recently. The accounts show that during the reporting period there has been a net outflow of funds. Several reasons for this. First, the final payment to Wheels of Co-operation was made during this period. The project is now closed for UKSCS and no other funds are to be paid out. Another contributing factor is related to grants and donations. UKSCS usually receives £2 from the Co-op Group but this did not happen during the financial year under consideration, partly because the Society was late in invoicing. The payment should be received this year. Finally, the largest item of expenditure was the journal, specifically the cost of the printer as we were still clearing the backlog.

Overall, UKSCS is still in a good financial position.

To note that there were no expenses for volunteers as all meetings are now online.

It was noted in last year's report/meeting that we were expecting much higher costs for the journal this year.

Paul Jones asked if the grant from Co-op group will be £4k or £2k. John said they will be in touch and will notify him later in the year. They indicated the grant should go forward. If we do receive it, it will be £4k this year, then back to £2k thereafter.

14 attendees voted in favour of approving the accounts. No votes against.

Rory thanked John for having stepped in to help with the accounts at short notice (due to the fact that the person that was brought on to the Board as Treasurer did not work out).

4. Trustee annual report and Q&A

The annual report was considered section by section.

4.1. Jan Myers reported on the journal of Co-operative Studies. During last few months Jan has been busy recruiting people to the editorial board and the editorial team. Those who were on the editorial board have been contacted to see if they wanted to stay on. Most responded positively, with the exception of a couple of people who wanted to take retirement. The current editorial board has a much broader reach, with an enhanced international profile (includes France, Greece and US). Paul Jones has stepped down as Deputy Editor and Francesca Gagliardi replaced him. Paul will join the Editorial Advisory Board and Jan thanked him for his contribution as both past Editor and Deputy Editor of the Journal. Anita Mangan took on the role of Editor in Chief and is now transitioning into the role.

4.1.1 Four journal editions have been published during the reporting period. Journal orders have all gone out, which meant more connections with institutional subscribers. The Interview that Mike Wistow did with Rose Marley was a nice addition to journal content. The commemoration for Johnston Birchall has just been published and is already receiving great feedback. Looking forward, the following special issues are being worked on: new co-operativism, guest edited by Rory Ridley-Duff and Mary O'Shaughnessy (winter 2022); Robert Owen (2023), guest edited by Chris Williams and Nick Matthews. Other special issues are being planned, including one on worker co-ops and one on co-ops in China. For 2025, a special issue to mark the centenary of the Woodcraft Folk is being planned. The new website allows us to do some tracking. Out of more than 50k interactions with the site, over 5k were related to the journal.

Gillian Lonergan said that it has always been a pleasure to work on the journal. She looks forward to continuing but is sorry to see Jan stepping down as Editor in Chief.

Cilla Ross congratulated the team on its work, particularly all the work done on the journal. The Birchall special issue is great and the ongoing projects are really exciting. She is also sorry to see Jan going but has worked with Anita in a number of areas and she is a pleasure to work with.

Ian Hewitt expressed his congratulations for the publication of lots of journal editions and the efforts that have gone into that. He wondered whether there would be space in the journal for

reviews of both Les Huckfield's 2021 publication and Rita Rhodes recent re-issues of her work, as well as possible articles. Jan responded that she will check with Nick Matthews (Book Review Editor) and that we welcome contributions of book reviews and article submissions from members, practitioners and academics.

Ian Hewitt asked whether there is an opportunity for the ICA set of ongoing debates on co-operative identity to get into the journal. Jan and Rory responded that the journal recently published several articles and short papers on co-op values and principles. Ian Adderley added that we tried to bring the ICA to this meeting, but the email got "lost in translation".

- 4.2 Ian Adderley reported on the Annual Lecture held during Co-op Fortnight.** In 2021 Tara Malqueen gave a lecture on co-ops legal recognition in the UK. The lecture is available on the UKSCS Youtube channel (as it this year's lecture).
- 4.3 Rory reported on the 2021 Conference.** We were still operating under Covid. The event was not as well attended as in previous years and there were not as many submissions received, but we still had a good number of participants and speakers, and the event ran smoothly. Sessions were recorded and are available online. Bruno Roelants and Peter Hunt gave interesting keynote lectures. Income from the event was low as we kept the fees low and expenditure was primarily a Zoom licence.
- 4.4 Rory reported on the New Co-operativism Seminar Series.** This was a very engaging seminar series which ended up being quite a big undertaking. Lots of participants took part in the seminars, many with an international and practitioner profile. In addition to our own special issue, there are further special issues in Austria and Germany as a result of the seminar series. The videos are still being worked on and once the special issue is out their processing will be completed.
- 4.5 Mike Wistow reported on the Co-operative Conversations.** Mike calls the initial events in this series "limited conversations" as they ran as a sort of test with the Board. Post 31 March 2022, i.e. beyond the reporting period being considered, Paul Gerrard and Russell Gill were involved in two conversations. Feedback from participants is that they enjoy them, so there is scope to continue them. The next Co-operative Conversation is scheduled for 12 September with Ruth Cohen.
- 4.6 In relation to Section 6 of the report** ('Supporting other events across the co-operative movement') Francesca Gagliardi spoke about the funded research project she is co-leading (with David Gindis also from the University of Hertfordshire) on the contribution of co-operative values and principles to sustainable development. Two other UKSCS board members are on the steering group (Elisavet Mantzari and Prof Rory Ridley-Duff) which involves also Dr Chris Colvin (Queen's University Belfast) and Professor Tine de Moor (Erasmus University). During this reporting period the project was initiated. In the next reporting period, a 2-day workshop involving academics and practitioners will be held in December 2022 at the University of Hertfordshire.

5. Election of trustees

Three candidates sent their election statements (Mike Wistow, Janette Hurst, John Maddocks). There are three trustee vacancies. Hence this is not a contested election.

The results of member's voting is as follows:

Mike Wistow: 12 voted in favour. No votes against.
Janette Hurst: 13 voted in favour. No votes against.
John Maddocks: 16 voted in favour. No votes against.

Mike, Janette and John were all elected unopposed.

Rory informed the meeting that he will be standing down as Chair at the next board meeting. His time as Chair has been interesting and also quite challenging, as we were in the middle of Covid when he took on the role. At the beginning of his mandate UKSCS was quite internally focused to consolidate finances, sort out governance aspects etc. During his tenure, we started more outward facing work, organising seminar series, reaching out to external stakeholders etc. Overall, this has been for Rory an interesting and enjoyable ride.

6. Journal editor report

This item was taken under item 2. Trustee Annual Report

7. Any other business

Grant asked the following questions via the chat function (as he had no microphone):

- 1) Can we see the evidence for the Public Benefit statement?
- 2) Has SCS been affected by the "New Force" project and its aftermath (especially as CG gives a grant)
- 3) Is Google Analytics used?.

In relation to 3) Jan said that we use some basic Google Analytics.

In relation to 2) Ian Adderley said there has been no impact from "New Force".

In relation to 1) Rory said that the annual report is the evidence for the Public Benefit statement. UKSCS aims are set out at beginning of the report. Those aims have clear public benefit aspects.

Ian Adderley pointed out that the Charity Commission clarifies who is defined as the public, so we are satisfied that we are reaching the public.

The continued development of the UKSCS website has meant we have been able to develop additional content on co-operative studies and a more accessible format for issues of the Journal. We were able to do some basic tracking of site usage and user behaviour which we hope to develop further. Over the year, there were over 3,000 new users visiting the website. While 36% are UK-based, visitors were recorded from a range of countries. Of the almost 18,000 views (and over 50,000 interactions), nearly 5,000 of the pages visited were related to the Journal.

In relation to the issue of public benefit, John Maddocks pointed out that the Charity Commission struggle themselves on how to define public benefit and report on it. There can be different views of what public benefit is but the evidence that UKSCS provides in the annual report is far more robust than that offered by comparable organisations.

Grant also asked for evidence of UKSCS's research programme. Jan and Rory said that the journal demonstrates that activity. Rory also pointed out that UKSCS endorsed research carried out by Francesca, Ian, Elisavet. Nick is also trying to advance two new lines of research with co-operative retail societies.

Ian Hewitt pointed out to two topics that may be of interest. The first one relates to links with slavery of Robert Owen and his father-in-law (a topic discussed at a conference in Manchester). The second is on cognitive capitalism: the impact on the co-operative movement of the age in which we live where it is not possible to think of co-operative values, principles etc. Rory said one of the articles in the new-cooperativism special issue relates to this second topic by outlining a "post-capitalist imaginary", based on studies of worker co-operatives in Argentina. A special issue on Robert Owen is planned for publication in late 2023.

The meeting thanked Rory for his two years as Chair.

At 17:13 the meeting was declared closed.