

Date: 24 August 2021

Time: 4pm start.

Location: Zoom

## 1. Apologies

Francesca Gagliardi

Present:

Richard Bickle, Ian Adderley, Ruth Hall, Ian Hewitt, Alex Hay, Rory Ridley-Duff, Carl Pitchford, Mike Wistow, John Maddocks, Jan Myers, Gillian Lonergan, Paul Jones, Catalina Quiroz, Martin Metyard, Sylvia Howarth, John Boyle, Grant Wolstencroft, Elisavet Mantzari, David Smith.

## 2. Minutes of 2020 AGM

No corrections to the minutes.

71% voted in favour. 29% abstained. No votes against. Minutes approved.

Matter arising

- IH noted that the powers between previous and old constitution have been extended to working with private enterprise and social enterprise, and that these were not in the previous constitution. Noted.
- IA noted that the powers were drafted in this way as it would be otherwise difficult to work with any private organisation, such as Zoom, for instance. RRD noted that this also enabled us to work with organisations like Charity Digital.
- IH asked about 7.3 (session debating withdrawal of funding from co-operative organisations by Co-op Group at the 2020 conference). RRD confirmed it happened, and IH confirmed he chaired it.

## 3. Presentation and adoption of accounts

JMa:

- noted that expenses were lower due to no expenditure on conference. Also, no income on conference as we did not charge.
- membership income increased – but subscription levels have not raised. Therefore, it reflects that people are choosing to opt for print copies, or people are updating their subscriptions.
- main external funding from Co-operative Group, paid directly from them. Funding is unrestricted.
- volunteer expenses low as no physical meetings, therefore no travel expenses claimed.
- new website – easier for us to manage as an end-to-end solution for membership. Cost of website only increases if number of users increases.

- Journal expenses lower as due to Covid there was no printing despatch. This will go up substantially in this current financial year as the backlog of printing will be cleared. But this is forecast and accounted for.
- £30,828 cash in hand, which is the most we have had for some time.
- Noted Wheels for Co-operation funding still remains – awaiting claim for final payment. Need to consider whether to return to the funds if the money is not claimed.
- Liabilities are for printed journals that are ordered and waiting printing/despatch.

Martin Metyard – Wheels for Co-operation have finished work and Martin can advise them to invoice for £1972 so it can be cleared off the account.

Vote taken on the accounts:

Favour: 100%

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

#### 4. Trustee annual report and Q&A

RRD introduced the report and noted that he had read the Public Benefit statement on the Charity Commission website and is assured we have complied.

RRD highlighted

- Two lectures, with over 100 at the first and 75 attending the second.
- Changed conference chair – Francesca Gagliardi and Elisavet Mantzari are chairing the conference.
- Main activity has been clearing the backlog and the special issued of the Journal. Jan to report.
- Website – had redeveloped and switched to White Fuse, and has seen a significant increase in individual membership since switching to the website and advertising the conference.
- Started the Pub Conversation series – informal events which basically look at history of members’ involvement in co-operative movement. Format that can evolve and develop.
- Noted the work of Nigel Todd and Johnston Birchall given their sad passing recently.
- Records in the report about the committee and the work undertaken by volunteers. Thanks recorded in particular for those who have put in place the systems for membership and increase in social media usage.
- Likely to see a significant jump in individual members next year following the new website.
- Will be looking at ways to spend some of the accumulated reserves moving forward.

Jan – noted that we lost a lot of international members on the old website where individuals couldn’t log on and pay. New website is helping with that.

IH asked whether we should note the change in the helm of Co-ops UK and the College. Noted College change was after the end of March. Rose Marley had been invited by us to speak at the conference, and interviewed by UKSCS for a session to be run later.

IH expressed the view that Co-ops UK set an agenda at their AGM that was different to previous agendas and wondered whether there had been any discussion on how that would shape the current year. RRD noted that would be an excellent topic for the conference if someone wanted to bring that forward.

Richard Bickle – follow on to IH point – asks the Executive to consider during the course of the year key partnerships and relationships in the co-operative movement, academic world, and elsewhere, and report back in the next report. Noted this is a small society and that it was great to see it in relatively good health after previous difficulty. Part of the role of UKSCS is a networking role. From time to time reviewing at a strategic level which partners you work with and seek to work with is useful.

RRD – Mike and Ruth facilitated a stakeholder mapping exercise which has been very useful in rebuilding an international profile, in addition to the work Jan has done on the Journal. Noted there was a call for papers organised with EURICSE and EMES, building links with international academia, including those at ACE (US) and CASC (Canada).

John Boyle – recruitment – turnaround in recruitment. Sounds like people who left because didn't like website and couldn't pay. RRD noted default method now Direct Debit and the process is much easier. John Boyle noted it is an opportunity to boost recruitment and asked whether the Board will take steps to boost recruitment, not just of those lost but of new potential members too. RRD noted that this is the intention and work has begun on that.

Martin Metyard – noted website was simple and straight forward but wondered how many people had dropped off without realising they hadn't renewed. Asked whether we'll be taking action to follow up on those people. RRD committed that we would do so.

JMa confirmed reminders had been sent to every member on multiple occasions, but that the main issue has been with the administrative constraints particularly around payments not facilitating renewals.

RRD noted we had reached out to previous conference attendees to reconnect with the Society too.

RH noted that prior to the new website we had 56 members. Since the new website, it has gone up to 68. Between June to today, it's gone up to 76.

RB asked about conference costs. Confirmed that it is free for members, and £30 for non-members, with a reduced option for unemployed.

Catalina Q – first attendance at the AGM. In terms of the report, asked whether we could report on our carbon footprint, particularly in the context of reintroducing conferences. Also

asked how we can shout out loud the importance of vigilance in co-operatives and credit unions to highlight the main issues or problems co-operatives are facing, and how we can promote ethics in a more active way.

Action – take away point on sustainability reporting.

RRD noted there will be a session in the conference from the Centre for Excellence in Reporting in Co-ops (CEARC), reporting on the idea of a co-operative SORP. Wondered whether we can bring into practice some of the principles that emerge from that (noting that we have to comply with the Charity SORP). Elisavet M noted that there are a number of sessions at the conference that would bring in a number of this topics.

Paul Jones noted Catalina mentioned a financial co-operative. Agreed to share details of Centre for Community Finance Europe <https://cfcfe.eu>. JMy confirmed we would share this on the website too.

Election of trustees

Noted 3 places available.

Two trustees to stand down – Ruth Hall and Rory Ridley-Duff. Both are restanding for election. RRD noted that we had put out advertisement for recruitment of trustees but had not had other nominations. Therefore, a vacancy is carried forward.

Ruth Hall  
For – 100%  
Against 0  
Abstain 0

IH intervened to note that RRD's statement says he's a member of Co-operatives Yorkshire and Humber, but that he believed it no longer existed. RRD confirmed he was a member and previously a board member, but that it had since wound down.

Rory Ridley-Duff  
For – 100%  
Against - 0  
Abstain – 0

## 5. Journal Editor's Report

Jan Myers gave the Journal Report. Noted that there had been an impact on Journal production both due to Covid and REF (Research Excellence Framework) affecting academic journal reviewing and submissions.

The 1967 Journal has been reprinted and shared as a special edition.

JMy also noted that we have been scanning and digitising earlier editions, but that this was an extensive piece of work to make the documents text-readable.

Previously despatched journals through Co-op College. But now distributing with the help and support of Co-operatives UK. Recorded our thanks.

Still sending out hard copies of Journal, but institutional orders are increasingly PDF copies. With the new website we are able to put tracking information on journal articles to make them easier to find through Google and easy to track readership.

Also adding all journal articles to a database and are developing a searchable website tool so people can search and find content from the journals.

Some special issues coming through. Had the Irish (Society for Co-operative Studies, Ireland) special issue in the Summer. CASC – Canadian special issue in the Autumn. Open issue in December. And depending on what happens to conference 2020, that may be a supplementary issue. Also working with Co-op News to celebrate their anniversary. We will have the seminar series issue in Winter 2022.

Trying to get the balance between academic and practitioner articles. The edition on co-operation and journalism has a larger number of practitioner articles.

We're also working on capturing more content from conferences.

Website is really helping to develop member and public access to the journal.

Also noted that we will be looking at the Editorial and Advisory Board to look at who we bring in. Also looking at not just academic advisory board members, but co-operative practitioners too.

Interview with Rose Marley to appear in the Winter edition.

Gillian Lonergan gave an update on production. We moved over a few years ago to digital printing, noting that we buy enough to distribute and have a few spares. We do not print more than we need. Noted thanks for the helpfulness of the printers with their work, and for Co-operatives UK with the mailing.

Richard Bickle asked about the UK REF exercise – and that this and its predecessors had been an issue for 20+ years. Asked whether there's any ever chance of academics getting points for publishing with us. JMy responded that they can get points because we're an international journal. Noted system is changing slightly so it's not necessarily the case of needing to be a starred journal. Obtaining ABS List Start requires consistent publication in terms of getting the journal out regularly on time. Also need to look at the range of papers for this, with some more UK papers and slightly broader base of papers. JMy noted that it would be good to get practitioner led research agendas with academics supporting that, rather than other way around.

[David Smith joined the meeting]

Richard Bickle noted that we're multi-disciplinary, and longstanding, and noted that other journals had come and gone, whereas we are longstanding. JMy noted that because we're keeping up with 3 issues a year and providing extra editions, we're keeping up with where we need to be. JMy also noted that we do a lot of work with those earlier in their careers to help get people published. Potentially more than other journals do. It is worthwhile but time consuming.

IH congratulated the society on getting the journal up to speed and making a professional output. IH noted articles on 'academia' and questioned whether we need to be as involved in academia. Questioned whether we should be bold enough to ignore academic straight jacket and asked whether there was a ready market or role in the UK movement, for something different. Noted too that there's growing debate on Facebook with 3000 members in one co-operative group.

JMy noted that we take that on board, but that we have maintained the practitioner contributions, which makes us more difficult to fit into some aspects of academia. Noted that there are other platforms that we use – like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn where we have a lot of people connected. There is a question as to how we have engaged them, but not necessarily for the Journal Editor given the breadth of the role.

Paul Jones noted that it has always been the intention for everything in the Journal to be accessible – including academic papers for practitioners.

GL noted that getting papers from practitioners is difficult because practitioners are busy. We all could do more to encourage people to turn their good work into articles.

RRD noted the development of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), which prioritises links between practitioners and academics.

Meeting recognised the huge amount of work that has gone into the Journal – and recorded our thanks.

MW updated on work being conducted at the board to amplify the excellent journal contributions, conference, and other content to broader audiences.

JMy noted the benefit of open access increases reference and re-use of articles by others.

## 6. Any other business

Mike Wistow – Co-op Conversations – 7pm . Zoom meeting. 7.15 – interviews someone for 20 minutes or so – relaxed session to stay and chat afterwards. Trying to replicate the nature of the pub chat.

RRD – New cooperativism seminar series. 5 seminars, had the first two. Videos for the first seminar are now up. Those for the second will be uploaded after regaining access to

university system (post-retirement). Next seminars are split across 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September (3.30pm each day to accommodate a South American host).

Richard Bickle – during the course of the year, continued to nominally convene the UKSCS History Network. Largely operates as a Facebook page. Held a joint event with Birmingham Co-op History Group during Fairtrade Fortnight. Debbie Robinson, now CEO of Central England, gave an interesting talk on the co-operative movement's support for Fairtrade.

Martin Metyard – conference at New Lanark 12-14 October this year.  
<https://www.newlanark.org/conference-2021> Agreed to share details on website. JMy noted conversations with organisers about sharing of journal articles.

RRD shared details of Worker Co-op Union Conference at Wortley Hall., 1-2 October.

Meeting concluded at 17.30 with RRD thanking everyone for a very engaged and co-operative AGM.