

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
BRITISH & FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY HELD AT
METHODIST CHURCH HOUSE, 25 MARYLEBONE ROAD,
LONDON AT 2.00PM ON WEDNESDAY 19 MAY 2010**

Present: The Rev Baroness Richardson of Calow
OBE (President)
Mr R B Howarth (Chairman)
Mr G T Kingsley (Vice-Chairman)
Rev D Tennant (Vice-Chairman)
Mr D A Swain (Treasurer)
Mr J Bell
Ms L Broadbent
Mr S Campbell
Ms D Chipanga
Mr R E Dimsdale
Mr P Fishpool
Miss J Harrison
Mrs A Hillyard
Prof S R Hodgkinson
Mr J Kidd
Rev Dr S J Oxley
Mrs S Phoenix
Ms A Sampson
Miss R E Stephens
Mr A Stevens
Dr I Turner
Dr E I Waitt
Miss G Wood
Mr B York

In Attendance: Mrs I Wilde (Secretary)
Mrs B R Lawrance
Mrs P Bowers
Mr Robert Rouse (Auditor)

Convening Notice: The Secretary read the Convening Notice at the request of the President.

Welcome: The President welcomed all those present and particularly Robert Rouse, the Society's Auditor, Belinda Lawrance and Pat Bowers on the staff of the BFSS, and the guest speakers, Mr S Campbell (Computer Aid International) and Mrs J Harrison, consultant for Devon Development Education.

Prayer: The Reverend David Tennant, Vice-Chairman, led the meeting in prayer.

AGM10/01

Apologies for Absence were received from The Most Reverend and Rt Hon John Sentamu, The Archbishop of York, The Most Reverend Archbishop Vincent Nichols, The Archbishop of Westminster, Reverend David Gamble, President of the Methodist Conference, Reverend John Marsh, The Moderator of the General Assembly, United Reformed Church, Dr Hazel Bagworth-Mann, Mr Humphrey Barclay, Mr Roger Barrett, Mr Charles Crawford, Mr Vic Craggs, Mrs Fiona Dodwell, Miss Elizabeth Hunter, Dr Diana Jones, Rev Stephen Orchard, Mrs Constance Purkiss, Mr M Ridge, Mr M Rogers, Mr Frank Stephenson and Mr Cliff Winlow.

AGM10/02**Minutes of the AGM held on 20 May 2009.**

The Minutes were approved and the record signed.

AGM10/03**Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

AGM10/04**Annual Report 2009**

The Director introduced the Annual Report for 2009. She apologised that an inaccuracy that had been spotted by Dr Waitt in the Annual Report for 2008 had been perpetuated in the 2009 Annual Report. This was the date for the establishment of the Darlington College Building Fund (page 19) which should read 1955 rather than 1986. The date would be corrected in the electronic version of the Annual Report that appeared on the Society's website and in any copies circulated henceforth.

The Director reported that 2009 had been a very busy year, with a great deal of activity on the review of the future of the Society, on property matters and on grant giving. She thanked Belinda Lawrance and Pat Bowers by whom she had been very ably supported throughout the year. She expressed thanks too to members of Council, the demands on whose time had grown as a result of various activities and changes over the last year.

She started her report with a brief overview of the Society's financial position. 2009 had been a volatile year but, as the Annual Report indicated, ultimately a positive one, which saw the value of the portfolio grow – in rounded figures - from £9.5m at the end of December 2008 to £11.4m at the end of 2009. At the end of March 2010 it had grown further to just under £12m. Since then nearly £5m had been passed to the Society's Investment Managers, Rensburg Sheppards, representing the net sale proceeds of the Society's remaining

property, Butler Hall at Saffron Walden. The portfolio stood at £16.6m on 14th May.

The first strand of major activity was the review of the future of the Society. In early 2009 the Council took a decision to launch a review into the future of the Society having regard to a range of internal and external factors including: the internal change of leadership of the Society; changes in the external environment; and the passage of time since the last review. A discussion paper was drawn up which formed the basis for a consultative meeting in June 2009 attended by Council members and a number of major/longstanding grant recipients. In the light of that discussion, a consultation paper was produced setting out proposals for the future direction of the Society and its future procedures. The consultation paper was sent to 163 individuals including all members of the Society, recipients of large/continuing grants and a number of others who have had a relationship with the Society.

The responses to consultation identified many areas on which there was general agreement and pointed to other areas where more work clearly needed to be done. As a result a number of review groups were set up to do further work on: the Vision, Values and Mission of the Society; Grant Giving Criteria; Membership and Governance Structure; Innovation; and the Archive. The Archive Review Group was continuing its work, taking account of a number of points which have been put to it to consider. The other Groups had now finished their work and had reported to Council. The main outcome of the review would be a clarification of the objects of the Society through a statement of vision, values and mission; a streamlining of procedures; expanded and clearer grant criteria; reaffirmation of the membership base of the Society with a clearer definition of what membership means and what the Society in turn will offer its members – including a regular newsletter; and, subject to legal advice and approval by the Privy Council, some changes to the governance arrangements, in particular removal of the requirement for Council members to retire at the AGM after their 75th birthday. The BFSS website would be relaunched to reflect the relevant changes and would carry more information about individual projects supported by the Society.

The second strand of major activity over the last year was the work leading up to the sale of two properties. The first was the Old British School at Bratton. This was a 2-storey fairly derelict building in Bratton, near Westbury, Wiltshire, which had been used by the Bratton Ex-Servicemen's Club until the end of March 2009 when the BFSS assumed responsibility for the property. It was sold at auction in October 2009 for £162,000. Work was now in hand to agree with the Charity

Commission a scheme to replace the existing trusts and provide an outlet for the income from the proceeds of sale. In addition 2009 saw an intensification of activity on the sale of the remaining property at Saffron Walden – the Butler Hall residential block of the former College and the adjacent playing fields. In August 2009 the Society accepted a revised offer from David Wilson Homes Ltd. Planning approval was granted to David Wilson Homes in November 2009 which made it possible to move to exchange of contracts in February 2010 and completion of sale in April 2010 for a sale price after adjustments of around £5m. Over the last year security proved a continuing problem with regular break-ins notwithstanding that the building was completely boarded up. Thanks were due to Mrs Diana Hoy, a member of the Committee for the British School Charity, for inspecting the site regularly each week, reporting damage and even, on one occasion, confronting the trespassers herself.

The third major stream of activity was grant giving. The total available for grant giving in 2009 was down on 2008, reflecting the fall in income from the Fund as a result of the reduction in the value of the portfolio in the face of adverse economic conditions in 2008 and hence the reduction in the amount available for distribution in 2009. Grants to the total value of £383,000 were made, just within the amount voted by the Council of £390,000. Grant giving decisions reflected the criteria beginning to emerge from the review, in particular the decision to make far fewer grants for individuals and to channel any such grants via the educational institution attended. The list of institutional and organisational grants reflected a very good global spread: the UK, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Russia, Bangladesh, India, Nicaragua, Laos, Sierra Leone, Kenya and a number of other African countries. There was a reasonable balance too between longer term funding for projects – notably in Laos and Russia – shorter term projects and one off grants. Grant giving had been streamlined, with applicants being required to fill out application forms, submit their accounts and/or financial details and indicate in advance that they would be prepared to accept certain terms and conditions.

Lastly, the Director reported that the International Awards Scheme, had been reviewed and renamed the BFSS International Link Scholarship Scheme (BILS Scheme). This reflected the fact that the young people supported for up to a year to undertake educational activities in developing countries had to be sponsored by a link organisation - organisations such as the Daneford Trust, Project Trust, Outreach International and Huddersfield College. As a result of a determined effort over the last year, the young people put forward to the

Committee and awarded grants for the coming year came from a much wider, less privileged background than in recent years.

In conclusion, therefore, the Director said that the Society was now very soundly based in terms of vision, finances and procedures to move forward and increase still further the impact of its grant giving.

Having invited questions, the President told the meeting that the Report had been accepted by the Council and was recommended for adoption. The meeting so agreed.

AGM10/05

Archive Report

The Chairman invited Mr Brian York, Secretary of the Archive Committee, to give a short report. Mr York reminded Members that this was the most important archive on elementary education and teacher training in the country. The Archive was still at Runnymede on the old Brunel Campus but the lease would expire in September 2010 and it was still not clear whether it would have to move into temporary accommodation pending its longer term move to the Uxbridge campus of Brunel University. He paid tribute to the valuable service given by Dr Gillian Collins, who had stepped down as Chairman of the Archive Committee but was continuing as a member. The new Chairman was Dr Hazel Bagworth-Mann. He noted that Dr Emily Tomlinson was chairing the Archive Review Group which was continuing its work.

The Chairman thanked Mr York for his report.

AGM10/06

2009 Audited Accounts

The Treasurer made a brief report on the Accounts and endorsed the view that the Society was in a sound financial state. He thanked the Director and the staff as well as the auditors for their work. He pointed out that, in the Statement of Financial Activities, the reduction in the amount of distributions from the Fund reflected the reduction in income consequent on the reduction in the value of the portfolio as a result of adverse economic conditions in 2008. The figure for bank interest showed a substantial reduction but this simply reflected the transfer of funds to the Investment Managers. He said that overhead costs continued to be well controlled. The overall result was a deficit of £91,000, which had been budgeted for. The total return on the investment portfolio managed by Rensburg Sheppards had been 21.7%, with the increase in the value of properties reflecting the sale price. With net investments valued at £16.5m, the Society was in a

very healthy position and able to continue a significant grant giving programme.

There being no questions, the President told the meeting that the Accounts had been approved by the Council and were recommended for adoption. The meeting approved their adoption unanimously.

AGM10/07

Appointments

President

Baroness Richardson had indicated her willingness to continue as President until the September 2010 Council meeting. She was re-elected until then with acclamation.

Vice-Presidents

The Director read the list of Vice-Presidents who were re-elected unanimously with the exception of the President of the Baptist Union who had notified the Director that it would be inappropriate to appoint a Vice-President from the Baptist Union as there would not be a President next year.

Chairman

Mr Roger Howarth had indicated his willingness to serve as Chairman for a further 3 year term in the interests of continuity in taking forward the outcome of the review. He was re-elected as Chairman for a new 3 year term.

Treasurer

Mr David Swain was confirmed as Treasurer for the second year of his third term of office.

Auditors

The Treasurer proposed and the Chairman seconded the re-appointment of Messrs James Worley and Sons as the Society's Auditors. This was agreed unanimously.

Members of Council

The Director read the names of those members of Council who were due for re-election and who had confirmed that they were willing to stand. They were:-

- Mr Vic Craggs OBE
- Mr Robert Dimsdale
- Professor Steve Hodgkinson

- Mr Roger Howarth
- Rev David Tennant

All were re-elected.

The Chairman paid tribute to the retiring Council Members, Dr Hazel Bagworth-Mann, Miss Rachel Stephens and Miss Gillian Wood. All were thanked for their commitment to the Society. He noted that Miss Gillian Wood had been elected to the Council in 1995 and had made an enormous contribution to the work of the Society based on a lifetime's experience in RE. Miss Rachel Stephens had been elected to the Council in 2003 and was retiring only because of the maximum age stipulation in the current Statutes. Her experience of international activities and programmes had been invaluable to the Council and the Executive Committee. Dr Hazel Bagworth-Mann had brought professional Archive experience which had been very much appreciated and she was retiring from the Council because her commitments at North London Collegiate School ruled out attendance at Council meetings during term time.

AGM10/08

Presentations

The President introduced Mr Stephen Campbell who gave a presentation on the work of Computer Aid International. Mr Campbell thanked the Society for its continued support over a number of years, starting with the first grant in 2000. Since then Computer Aid International's activities in developing countries had grown significantly, to the point where it now shipped out 160,000 computers per year and had diversified its offering to include help with the introduction of distance learning, the provision of free software for blind and visually impaired people and also power and connectivity solutions. He went on to talk about the background to the Society's recent grant of £10,000 for PCs and other hardware for the LinkNet Information Technology Academy in the community of Macha in Zambia. Here, the LinkNet Cooperative, formed by the community, had established the largest rural wireless network in Sub-Saharan Africa, taking advantage of a satellite link established by the local hospital. The Academy would be available to pupils of 11 secondary schools in the vicinity as well as primary schools and adults. Following questions, the Chairman thanked Mr Campbell for his very interesting presentation.

The President then introduced Miss Jean Harrison, Consultant for Devon Development Education. Miss Harrison thanked the Society for its support for teacher training in *Food for Thought* schools in three Districts of Uganda. *Food for Thought* had begun as a school linking programme between primary schools in Devon and two Districts of Uganda. The work was co-

ordinated by Devon Development Education and by its partner organisation in Uganda. The focus was on food and organic/sustainable food growing in both countries. In 2007 a formal agreement was reached between Devon LEA and three Directors of Education from three Districts of Uganda, which created an opportunity to have an impact on teacher effectiveness in Uganda. Miss Harrison said that in 2007 she had offered her services to the *Food for Thought* programme. She had visited the schools in Uganda and come up with recommendations for a teachers' residential refresher course, which took place in 2008 thanks to financial support from the BFSS. Follow up visits bore witness to the success of the refresher course and the very positive impact which the training had had on classroom practice. As a result, Devon Development Education had applied to BFSS for further funding for a 12 month programme to develop the capacity of the *Food for Thought* primary schools to provide in-school professional development for their teachers, supported by local trainers. With further grant from BFSS, suitable teachers had been identified to be trained as Lead Teachers and training carried out by Ugandan trainers. Monitoring visits had demonstrated that the Lead Teachers were actively trying to implement their learning and were already having an impact in their schools. Following questions the President thanked Miss Harrison very warmly for her presentation.

AGM10/09

Date of Next Meeting

The President announced that the next Annual General meeting would be held on Thursday 19 May 2011 at 2.00pm.

She then declared the meeting closed at 3.30 pm.

Minuted by:

Secretary

Authenticated by:

Chairman

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