

**Durham University Retired Staff Association
Annual General Meeting
7 June 2017**

Present: The Chairman of DURSA, Dr AJ Heesom, in the chair, Professor JH Anstee, Dr HD Barry, Mr TC Doloughan, Dr IM Evans, Dr IS Evans, Mrs K Fall, Dr ED Hunt , Miss JM Kenworthy, Miss MS McCollum, Dr MJ Morant, Dr KJ Orford, Mr FW Pritchard, Professor PJ Rhodes, Dr EJF Ross, Dr IM Stewart, Dr WR Telford, Dr RB Thomas and Dr JM Tudor

In addition to the members of DURSA there were present as observers Mrs Angela Anstee, Mr Michael Fall, Dr Ruth Morant, Mrs Pamela Stewart and Dr Andrena Telford,

Minutes

29 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Professor PJ Atkins, Dr RW Banks, Professor DT Clark, Mrs B Harrison, Professor PDA Harvey and Mr T Rillands.

30 Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21 June 2016 were approved.

31 Annual Report

a) Received: the following Annual Report:

1. Acknowledgement

The Committee again wishes to record its gratitude for all the help received from the staff of DARO and in particular from Charlotte Kerr for handling the Association's records and bookings and for distributing news and circulars to members.

2. The Committee

Dr Heesom succeeded Dr Orford as Chairman but the composition of the Committee was otherwise unchanged until Mrs Brooks relocated to the USA. The Committee then co-opted Dr RB Thomas for the remainder of the session. The Committee has continued to meet regularly and believes that a successful pattern of activities has been established. Recent Committee meetings have preceded the drop-ins referred to below. The Committee has agreed revised procedures to reduce the Secretary's duties. In future each event will become the responsibility of an individual member of the Committee.

3. Membership

The current number of members is 435.

Invitations to join as Associate members have rarely been accepted.

4. Accounts

The accounts show a satisfactory picture.

5. Good Causes

The Committee regrets that little progress has been made on including support of a good cause in the Association's activities. The latest position is reported elsewhere in the minutes.

6. Events During the Year

A number of events have been held during the year which those attending have found interesting and informative. All the hosts have been very welcoming and have gone to a great deal of trouble on DURSA's behalf. We are most grateful to them. Details of attendance are as follows:

Visit to Thorn Electric at Spennymoor on 19 October 2016 - 28

Visit to the Department of Biosciences on 2 November 2016 - 21

Pre-Christmas Reception and Get-Together on 12 December 2016 - 25. During the proceedings an illustrated reading of *Tam O'Shanter* by Bill and Andrena Telford was much appreciated.

Visit to the Earth Sciences Department on 18 January 2017 - 25. This included a very successful series of ten-minute mini-lectures which were both fascinating and kept to time.

Tour of the Castle followed by Afternoon Tea on 1 March 2017 - 21

Annual Dinner at *Le Nouveau* restaurant at New College on 22 March 2017 at which we were pleased to welcome the new COO, Jane Robinson - 40

Visit to Croxdale Hall preceded by lunch at the Honest Lawyer on 3 May 2017 - 41

Evening visit to the Botanic Garden on 17 May 2017 - 22

The AGM and Visit to the Palace Green Library on 7 June completed the programme - 24

On an initial trial basis a series of drop-ins was arranged during the Michaelmas Term 2016 to encourage members to meet up over coffee in the Palatine Centre Café on the first Tuesday of the month. Prior booking was not required and the arrangement was sufficiently successful to be continued into 2017. The venue has now been changed to the Botanic Garden Café.

DURSA events are now regularly mentioned in *Dialogue*.

7. Future Events

Events already arranged for 2017-18 include visits to:

Estates and Buildings on Palace Green, the telescope in the Physics Department, the usual Pre-Christmas Reception and get-together, the National Biologics Centre, Darlington, the Department of Anthropology and *Locomotion* in Shildon. Unfortunately Nissan is still not accepting visits and DURSA has been advised to enquire again in July 2017.

b) In presenting the Report the Chairman emphasised the Association's gratitude to DARO staff and paid tribute to Dr Orford's contribution as DURSA's founder and first chairman. He drew attention to the small but significant balance in the accounts and the great welcome DURSA members had received on all their visits. An interesting programme was in hand for 2017-18 to which it was hoped there would be a contribution from an Arts department. Approaches at a Faculty level had been disappointing. If Nissan restarted visits one would be added to the programme if necessary at very short notice. It was noted that members with mobility problems would not be able to access the Physics telescope itself but would be able to watch what was seen through the telescope from an accessible point.

The Chairman noted that it appeared that not all retiring staff were receiving details of DURSA and urged members to inform the Committee if they came across examples of retirees who had missed out.

c) Possible Future Events

During a brief discussion the following possible visits were suggested:

The appropriate service for information on the employment of Durham graduates

The Languages Centre

Bishop Auckland Castle and the Zurbarans

Bishop Auckland Town Hall

32 Accounts

a) Received: the Association's accounts for 2016-17 as at 31 May 2017.

b) Noted: that the eleven-month accounts necessarily presented an incomplete picture but one which it was expected would produce a small and satisfactory balance to carry forward at the year end.

33 Constitutional Amendments

a) Reported: that the Committee had considered amendments to Paragraph 4 of the Constitution which currently read as follows:

- 1) "There shall be a Committee consisting of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer/Social Secretary and three other members to be elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. Members shall serve for three years but the initial members shall serve for periods of one, two or three years to establish a system of rotation whereby one third of the members normally retire each year. The Committee may co-opt not more than two additional members on an annual basis."

and had Recommended: That in the first sentence, **"/ Social Secretary"** be deleted and also that the word **"three"** be deleted and that **"five" be inserted in its place** as all but one of the current Committee members had been elected for three years

(instead of having two members co-opted for a year at a time) thereby ensuring that three members come up for election every three years. The proposed deletion of “/ Social Secretary” reflected the new procedure whereby individual members took responsibility for particular events.

b) Resolved: that the proposed amendments be approved and forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer of the University.

34 Good Causes

a) Reported: That Members were aware of the ambition for DURSA to be more than just a social organisation. Accordingly the Committee had given the matter much consideration over the last three years. Their first thought had been to support the University’s Orientation and Transition Workshop for new first year students with autism spectrum conditions. Although the target sum to be raised (£6,447 excluding extra staff costs) was relatively modest it was nevertheless beyond the reach of DURSA members unless contacts could be used to raise funds from external donors. However, it had been made clear to the Committee that external donors would regard the cost of the course as being well within the capacity of the University and, indeed, as a proper call on University funds. Since then the Committee had been in contact with the County Durham Community Foundation (CDCF) which supported good causes within County Durham, e.g. community groups and individuals or families in need. 13% of grants had been classed as education and training, 14% as employment and labour and 12% as health and wellbeing. Overall 16% of beneficiaries had been 13-18 year olds and 11% young adults of 19 to 25 years old. CDCF was a charity and able to claim gift aid for the sums it received. A further attraction of CDCF was the ability to attract matched funding. The ideal arrangement would be a named fund under the CDCF umbrella. However that would mean raising a minimum of £1,000 p.a., a sum the Committee considered might well be beyond the Association’s reach at this stage in its development. It must remain an objective. Nevertheless in the Committee’s view it would be good to put a toe in the water and to begin fund-raising now. For instance it would be possible to start contributing to CDCF’s Endowment Fund whose aim was to build up an endowment whilst allocating part of each year’s income for grants. The Committee had **therefore recommended** adopting this course of action to be funded by an agreed percentage added to the cost of those DURSA activities for which payment was made and, of course, members would be free to make personal donations as well.

b) During discussion of the Committee’s recommendation it became clear that there was general support for fund-raising in the manner suggested; a levy of as much as 5% was suggested by one member and a fixed addition of £1a head to the cost of events by another. It became clear, however, that there was a reluctance on the part of some members to raise funds for a cause outside the University.

c) Resolved:

- i) That, in preparation for charitable activity a surcharge of an appropriate size, as judged by the Committee and made clear to members, be levied on DURSA events.
- ii) That further consideration be given to its allocation when, after allowing for a small reserve fund, a sufficient balance had been accumulated.

35 Membership of the Committee

a) Reported: that the retiring members of the Committee, all eligible to stand again, were Mr TC Doloughan, Mr FW Pritchard (Treasurer) and Dr IM Stewart (Secretary) and that in addition to the foregoing three-year vacancies there was a one-year vacancy following the resignation of Mrs Brooks.

(Dr Stewart had indicated that he did not wish to stand again as Secretary and would prefer to retire from the Committee to make way for a new member. Mr Pritchard proposed to retire as Treasurer but was willing to stand again as a member of the Committee to advise in particular on IT matters)

b) Resolved: that, in the absence of other nominations, the following who had been duly proposed and seconded, be declared elected to serve for three years from 1 July 2017:

Mr TC Doloughan
Mr FW Pritchard
Dr RB Thomas (Secretary)

c) Resolved: that, in the absence of other nominations, Mrs M Allison, who had been duly proposed and seconded, be declared elected to serve for one year from 1 July 2017.

NOTE: The composition of the Committee for 2017-18 is therefore as follows:

Elected until 30 June 2018

*Mrs M Allison
Mrs K Fall (Treasurer)
Dr AJ Heesom (Chairman)*

Elected until 30 June 2019

*Professor JH Anstee
Dr KJ Orford*

Miss MS McCollum

Elected until 30 June 2020

*Mr TC Doloughan
Mr FW Pritchard
Dr RB Thomas (Secretary)*

The Committee will elect one of their number as Vice-Chairman

d) The Chairman thanked all members of the Committee for their contributions over the past year and paid tribute to the services of the retiring Secretary over the period since DURSA's initial meetings. He welcomed the new Secretary and expressed every confidence in him.

36 Appointment of Treasurer

- a) **Approved:** the appointment of Mrs K Fall as Treasurer of DURSA as recommended by the Committee.
- b) **Noted:** the Chairman's tribute to Mrs Fall's for all her hard work in tracing payments and receipts when preparing the accounts.

37 Applications for a Durham University email address

Reported: in answer to an enquiry, that members deemed 'research active' and seeking full electronic access to the latest journals, required the relevant head of department's signature on their CIS Personal email address registration forms. All other members should forward their CIS registration forms for signature in DARO.

8.6.17.