

**Durham University Retired Staff Association
Annual General Meeting
16 June 2015**

Present: The Chairman of DURSA, Dr KJ Orford, in the chair, Professor JH Anstee, Professor DT Clark, Professor PDA Harvey, Dr AJ Heesom, Professor PS Johnson, Miss JM Kenworthy, Dr WTW Morgan, Professor J Ann Moss, Mrs N Parker, Professor MC Prestwich, Mr FW Pritchard, Professor PJ Rhodes, Dr IM Stewart, Dr WR Telford, Dr RB Thomas, Professor AR Townsend, Dr JG Townsend, and Dr Josephine M Tudor.

In addition to the members of DURSA there were present as observers Mrs Angela Anstee, Mrs Jill Heesom, Mrs Charlotte Kerr, Mrs Jean Orford, Mrs Pamela Stewart, Dr Andrena Telford and Mr Bruno Van Dyk.

The above were later joined for dinner by the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ray Hudson and Mrs Geraldine Hudson, the Chief Operating Officer, Miss Paulina Lubacz, Professor BH Bransden Miss Jane Lovett and Dr David Stoker.

Minutes

15 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Profesor PJ Atkins, Dr MP Collins, Dr PDB Collins, Dr IM Evans, Dr IS Evans, Mrs K Fall, Professor BS Gower, Mrs B Harrison, Mr Kieran Hosty, Miss MS McCollum, Dr MJ Morant, Professor KL Pratt and Mr WB Woodward.

16 Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 24 June 2014 were approved.

17 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a) - Minute 5 - Membership of the Committee

Reported: That, at the meeting on 24 June 2014, the following had been declared elected for one, two or three year periods of service to be determined by the drawing of lots:

(Note: The periods of service shown in brackets are those subsequently determined and were until the end of the month of the AGM in the year shown)

Chairman - Dr KJ Orford (Until 2016)

Vice-Chairman - Professor J Ann Moss (Until 2015)

Secretary - Dr IM Stewart (Until 2017)

Treasurer - Mr FJ Pritchard (Until 2017)

Committee members:

Mrs Dorothy Anson (Until 2015)

Professor JH Anstee (Until 2016)

Mr Clive Doloughan (Until 2017)

Dr AJ Heesom (Until 2015)

Miss Margaret McCollum (Until 2016)

18 Annual Report

Reported: That in introducing the annual report the Chairman noted that 2014-15 had been the Association's first year of full operation. He thanked the staff of DARO for all their assistance and the Committee, Treasurer and Secretary of DURSA for their help. The Committee then reported as follows:

Acknowledgements

The Committee was very grateful for the continuing help of DARO staff in handling records and bookings and in distributing news and circulars to members.

The Committee

The Committee itself had met regularly during the year and had welcomed the evolving implementation of the registration arrangements and the privileges for members as well as improvements to the website. Further simplification of processes was still a target as members continued to experience difficulties. The domain name dursa.uk had been acquired and directed to the DURSA home page on the web to simplify access for members. Consideration had been given to the best ways for DURSA to support the University in its work resulting so far in the proposal referred to in Minute 21 below. Attention had successfully been drawn to the problem faced by the widow of a member of staff initially denied access to work in progress held in her late husband's email account.

Membership

Drawing the attention of Durham's USS pensioners to DURSA as reported last year, had resulted in a continuing increase in membership which now numbered 312. It was a matter of much regret that a parallel circulation to retired members of the University's own pension scheme had been delayed by problems affecting the University payroll.

Unfortunately despite all efforts, it was still not fully appreciated that eligibility for membership was dependent only on drawing a University of Durham or USS pension irrespective of whether continuing to work part-time or not. There was now one associate member although a number of offers of associate membership had been made. Special arrangements have been made for the few members without email access.

Events during the Year

A number of successful events have been held and there had been a welcome increase in the numbers attending as could be seen from the following:

(Actual attendance figures so far are shown in brackets)

Visit to the Queen's Campus, Stockton on 29 October 2014 (11)
Pre-Christmas Reception and Get-Together on 16 December 2014 (24)
Visit to New Police Headquarters on 4 February 2015 (31)
Visit to the Department of Archaeology on 18 February 2015 (28)
Visit to Harrison and Harrison, Organ Builders, on 15 April 2015 (39)
Visit to the Bowes Museum and its Library on 29 April 2015 (26)
Visit to Netpark on 15 May 2015 (25)
(The AGM and Annual Dinner in Collingwood College on 16 June 2015)
(Events had been costed to leave a small margin with a view to building up a small balance to act as a cushion and as the nucleus of a good causes fund)
On every visit DURSA members had been made very welcome and the Association recorded its gratitude to all the hosts.

Future Events

Events being arranged for 2015-16 included visits to the Engineering and Geography departments and to the Oriental Museum, the usual December Reception and Get-Together, an antiques event and the AGM and Annual Dinner. It was hoped to arrange further visits and activities.

19 Accounts

Received: the Association's accounts for 2014-15 which had been laid on the table at the meeting and which showed a balance of £57.71 to be carried forward. (Copy is filed with the minutes)

Noted: that, probably as a result of coding problems, considerable difficulty had been experienced in tracing some transactions. Some concerns remained but a firm basis had been established for the 2015-16 accounts. Mrs Kerr was thanked for all the trouble she had taken in helping to produce the accounts.

20 Membership of the Committee

Reported:

a) That the retiring members of the committee, eligible to stand again were Mrs Anson, Dr Heesom and Professor Moss. All were warmly thanked for their services.

b) That, in the absence of further nominations, the following, who had been duly proposed and seconded, were declared elected for three years:

Mrs S Brooks
Mrs K Fall
Dr AJ Heesom.

21 Development of DURSA's Activities

a) Reported:

That as mentioned in the Annual Report both this year and last, where payment was involved, events had been costed to leave a small margin to act as a cushion against potential loss and to form the nucleus of a good causes fund.

That increased participation of members in the Association's events had led the Committee to consider whether the time was now ripe to extend the Association's activities beyond the mainly social to support a 'good cause'.

That one such cause could include helping to support students with special needs and specifically those on the autistic spectrum who, despite being very bright, might fail at the University without the right form of continuing support being put in place, something which could be facilitated by an orientation course tailored to their needs.

That such a course had been run successfully on a trial basis but there were no continuing funds to support it. (Copies of the description of the course or workshop were circulated and a copy is attached to the minutes)

That the cost of the course for an estimated 30 students appeared to be within DURSA's reach and that it represented an area in which DURSA could make an identifiable difference.

That the Disability Support Department had been consulted and had pointed out that there were well-established mechanisms for helping students with physical and specific learning disabilities, which, once put in place enabled the student to continue with their University life with little further intervention. This was in contrast to those on the autism spectrum with their need for continuing support.

b) Noted: during discussion:

That a number of members had experience of teaching such students and that the cause and the workshop were considered well worthwhile.

That there was general support for the proposal to fund raise for the course to be run next year.

That DARO would be kept fully informed of all fund-raising activity.

That the proposal for a voluntary subscription by DURSA members as a fund-raising mechanism might discourage some potential members whom it was desired to include.

c) Agreed: to set in motion fund-raising for the course entitled Orientation and Transition Workshop

22 AGM Arrangements

Noted: that the members present preferred the current arrangement of a dinner associated with the AGM to combining the AGM with a lunch.

IMS 18.6.15.