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## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 17 October 2015 at IHR, 11a.m.**

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Present: Dr Andrew Dilley Co-Convenor (Aberdeen); Dr Kate Bradley Co-Convenor elect (Kent), Dr Marcus Collins Co-Convenor (Loughborough), Dr Richard Hawkins Treasurer (Wolverhampton), Dr Daniel Grey, Secretary (Plymouth), Dr Meg Arnot (Roehampton); Dr Robert McNamara (Ulster); Dr Andrew Roach (Glasgow); Dr Karin Dannehl (EHS), Dr Daniel Gordon (Edge Hill), Dr Charles Insley (Manchester), Dr Rachel Bright (Keele); Dr Rachel Lock-Lewis (South Wales); Dr Paul Corthorn (Queen's University); Dr Bill Aird (Edinburgh); Dr Ariel Hessayon (Goldsmiths); Dr Heather Shore (Leeds Beckett); Professor Maureen Meikle (Leeds Trinity); Dr Lowri Ann Rees (Bangor); Dr Rosalind Crone (Open); Dr Mark Clapson (Westminster).

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Dr Jamie Wood (Lincoln)

### **1. Minutes of the Last Steering Committee Meeting**

*Confirmed but add a couple of apologies from draft*

### **2. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

BA: do we need a verbatim record?

### **3. Convenors' Reports:**

#### **i. Succession**

AD steps down as convenor, KB from Kent stepped in as convenor from this meeting forwards.

KB is very excited to be involved in HUK. My background is that I was one of founders of HL And HL+, been involved with the SHS for a long time as postgrad

rep and committee organiser. Also on AHRC peer review college. Keen to bring things in from that where possible and be involved.

## **ii. History Subject Association**

AD attended this which brings together an assortment of learned societies relating to history in the UK. Discussion of TEF, but insufficient information for concrete action to emerge. One thing that did come out which is worth noting is that inasmuch as it is appropriate for individual subjects to emerge from the framework, HUK would be a good body to issue a response. Call at TNA circulated to HUKSC.

## **iii. Plenary**

MC notes we have an excellent line up for this, and REF 2020 is already on most people's horizons, but we need to still drum up interest and support. If you cannot make it, then please do get the word out to people both in your department and more broadly. In particular, if you could share this with heads of research and so on? Hopefully we can get higher numbers than we currently have – a little under 30 are registered at the moment. I think we can easily double that. Within and beyond institutions would be ideal, especially because we have more departments in HUK than there are SC spaces. Very important for our profile that we run well-attended events. We now have a programme for the day, which Sue can send out, and this would be a good way to generate greater interest.

Daniel Gordon reports he has been doing exactly this, including a stall at French History, which raised awareness of the group.

AD: If anyone is planning on going in the SC and has not yet registered, please do – this is important for not only profile but also funding for us, and on a practical note we need numbers for catering and so on.

BA: Difficult for people travelling from further away to attend – department will sub me for this, but not necessarily the rest of the colleagues who are interested.

MC: Reminder this is now 4 weeks away

## **4. Treasurer's Report**

Circulated written report. RH took over from Rainier Schulze who resigned mid-year. We will probably end up with a surplus of about £3000. Administration is outsourced to the IHR but there is absolutely no written record here. We're trialling Eventbrite as a payment option, and would be very interested in any feedback that

colleagues may have. Might consider corporate sponsorship from relevant organisations to help support this – other groups which do this can dramatically reduce or abolish attendance fees. Companies such as Gale might think of this as a chance to garner interest.

AD: 72 subscriptions raised is important because although there is considerable scope for growth, that means we have not lost any subscribing institutions either following the need to raise fees last year. Does anyone have any comments or objections to Richard taking this forward?

Daniel Gordon: Does this create the impression we are in thrall to corporate sponsors?

Ariel Hessayon: One of the ways to keep costs down is to do this?

Meg Arnot: Since it is so hard to keep up with new databases this might well be of real benefit to colleagues?

Bill Aird: Can we be sure there is no editorial interference?

Robert McNamara: Maybe the next plenary session could be on historical databases, which would lend itself easily to sponsorship?

*SC agrees (subject to concerns) that people are happy for the convenors and treasurer to take this forward*

MC: How much can we actually expect to be a surplus based on last year's figures once we have included the catering costs?

RH: On figures from last year, we would roughly assume there is a £2000.

## **5. Secretary's Report**

Minute thanks to long serving members who are stepping down as active members

## **6. Media Officers Report**

Delivered by MC in JW's absence: Social media – given relative paucity of tweets, it is good to have approximately 1200 followers. We need more visibility as an organisation, so please do publicise our address and encourage people to follow us. Colleagues who are social media savvy are ideal. Need to change the website further – we have a wordpress one in development, which is a holding site at the moment.

But we have made arrangements for transferring the domain name over once this is up and running. Would the SC commit to spending £200 to paying a postgrad to populate the new site. MC is very much in favour of this.

RH asked to make the point if we don't migrate the website before November we will need to pay the IHR for another annual fee for hosting this.

Rachel Bright: Good idea, we have the money and need to push forward

Daniel Gordon: Current website a big improvement on the older version. My only question is how many hours work is that and what is the rate?

Bill: Maintenance of the site is this factored in to the costs?

MC: JW will be doing this as media officer

RH: Sustainability is an issue here. Will Lincoln keep it?

AD: This is not tied to Lincoln, although it is hosted- and part of the reason for raising fees is to give some costs to sustainability. I think the key thing now is to get it finished and not incur a new set of fees from the IHR.

RM: Do we need to close this down before we migrate it?

MC: The problem is that this is very tied.

Meg: Can we agree that MC and JW can sort out the exact fees to pay someone?

## **7. Teaching History in HE Conference**

AD: Peter D'Sena circulated report on this. This conference used to be sponsored by the HEA, and has been revived sponsored by a number of organisations including us such as the RHS, though our support more moral than financial at the moment.

MC: Held 8-9 September hosted by the IHR, with international speakers. Successful takeover from HEA, and we think it will be repeated next year. What made this interesting was it got a slightly different constituency, from outside the usual suspects. HUK presence was quite strong. I think we need to think about what involvement we would have for the 2016 version.

RH: Could we give a small sum of money that would mean we got our logo on it?

Paul Cothorn: Could we sponsor one specific bit – a session, or round table?

MC: This was our initial plan, but it didn't quite work out in practice.

AD: What the RHS did last year was underwrote the conference- so they didn't need to do this in practice because the conference broke even, but they were acting as guarantors.

MC: We could approach Peter to underwrite a portion of it?

AD – The idea of a session as Paul suggests is a good idea, perhaps MC and KB should think about taking it forward?

Rachel – TEF is not going to go away, it is going to evolve- maybe we should go with that?

AD: We need to play to our strengths – this is a good idea.

Paul Cothorn: what about something on teaching postgrads?

## **8. Teaching Excellent Framework**

AD – reports will be circulated by Peter shortly.

MC: Since the last SC meeting we have had the fallout from the election. The only thing in Conservative manifesto was the TEF. JJ has made it abundantly clear that this is his no. 1 item. Very little in way of initial details, and there was a thought that this might be a programme by programme matter, or on departmental bases. Also thought at the very beginning that there would be major financial consequences for the TEF scores. Since then there have been a lot of meetings, some of which HUK has been able to represent us at. JJ is jolly annoyed with experiences of some people within elite institutions. The interesting thing here is that the original implication of the TEF tied to lifting the cap on fees is not happening – and instead RG unis were as much in the firing line as anyone else. Financial implications have been scaled down. So they are suggesting that people who pass TEF will be able to increase fees in line with inflation. Also talking about nonfinancial incentives to do well. We won't know until the Green Paper (likely December) is out how they will measure this. At the moment, you can pick your rumour about it. Likely to be introduced next year, or at the latest 2017. It is likely to be something given to each institution – do note this is my prediction not a fact – and based on existing metrics like NSS scores. The government has shown its hand there will be some element of widening participation, and likely 'value added'. Trials currently conducted of non subject specific standardised tests. Involvement of disciplines likely going to be minimal if,

as they seem likely to, they are going to go at a solely institutional level. QAA is fighting for its existence at the moment, and understandably arguing they need to maintain some element of peer review. Unclear whether or not the government agrees.

KB: I was at HEFCE consultation on 8 September. Sense that on the one hand there were various parties being invited to give opinions, yet also a clear sense that certain things were foreshadowed. Lots of discussion about subject vs institution. Also a question about teaching excellence and British universities reputation worldwide. Much more discussion needs to be had about their terminology and the potential implications of this. One thing mentioned was strengthening the role of externals – perhaps having a college of external examiners. An organisation like this might allow people to join who are currently overlooked. That could be something positive to come out of this – but, to what extent does this then lend itself to the idea of a national curriculum. This is something that keeps coming up in the background and we need to keep very alert to.

RH: my impression from my uni is that teaching qualifications may be under discussion as a new initiative.

Daniel Gordon: This is already happening in my institution. We should make a response to the TEF – JJ did single out by name two former lecturers of his in history. We might want to make a point about this?

Mark Clapson – interesting about the emails given some companies in the City turn off their servers over the weekend. We're also all being pushed to do a PGCert – at my university which may upset the balance of moving towards the TEF

Meg: We too have a 3 line whip on the training. The NSS is a very blunt tool and I wonder if we need to think more on this. Students should have to take responsibility for what they say, affecting the reps of depts. and unis. Has this been taken up by anyone?

MC: On the whole, the good news in History programmes is that they generally do well in the NSS. But the government is not going to tamper with this I think.

Heather – I am entirely cynical about this, and it really worries me that our organisations. I think there are massive ideological things pushing this. I think they will keep changing goalposts.

Karin Dannehl: I think we should tackle the NSS- the law of unintended consequences. The whole system has flaws.

MC: There seems to be a meeting mood that we need an organisational response to the Green Paper.

AD: We have precedent for responding to these matters as we did on OA, and on the REF.

Maureen: Fast track programme took a few days but was relatively painless for me

Rachel: It is difficult to say too much about TEF, but one of things that depresses me about JJ's speech but could be an opportunity for us, is the promotion of the idea of the casualisation of teaching.

Daniel G: A lot will depend on which metrics they use. The extent to which there is game playing about NSS will only increase about this.

AD: We would want to give serious consideration to a response to the Green Paper. We have a comprehensive spending review at the moment which means that REF is under consideration about whether it will even happen again. It really is a case of watch this space.

## 9. Early Career Historians

Discussion of *History Today* article, and Brodie Waddell's response to it.

Heather Shore – This is a knock on effect of the REF, buying people out of teaching and not investing in that. We're trying to bring staff forward

BA: One of the big problems with institutions like mine is the rise of teaching fellowships

Kate H: Brodie Waddell pointed out [on Twitter and Wordpress] we need to say to people doing PhDs is to be clear they won't get a job.

KB: Going back to the point on teaching fellowships, getting a post which lasts 12 months rather than 9 can be incredibly difficult. Is it in our gift or is it not?

MC: There seems to be a real lack of understanding among some ECRs about who has the power here, and who gets to decide about drawing up contracts

BA: Teaching fellows often doing research anyway

?: ECRs and mentoring is really important

Rachel: There is a whole realm of career development that TFs are not paid to do, like going to conferences.

Karin: Did anyone respond to Brodie's tweet?

Paul Cothorn: Following on from Marcus' point, there is a danger of one group of academics being set against another.

Robert McNamara: The REF has ironically created some new opportunities for teaching posts – sadly this is a cycle.

Rachel Lock-Lewis: This is a practical idea, but what about trying to set up an ECR fund for something like conference support? Maybe increasing subs by £5 per year?

MC – Problem of institutional affiliation ending means access to a whole host of things – such as publications online – ends. We could try and work with the RHS to give a holding strategy that would enable people to have a stable email address and so on for a couple of years.

Ariel: What about something like an HUK fellowship, with email addresses and so on?

MC: At the moment we don't have the facilities for this. I think this is something for future activities.

Meg: We could encourage all History departments to offer an honorary fellowship to all PhD graduates.

Robert : This is a great idea

## **10. Future Activities**

MC – SC had a couple of priorities: publicity, social media, sponsorship of events, guest speakers. Already mentioned the precondition for publicity is a working website that we can draw people's attention to. Social media is something we are already doing, it doesn't cost money though it does cost time. Sponsorship of events - next teaching history in HE conference? We might consider sponsoring a roundtable at the SHS for their upcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference. We could put something together for teaching history in UK HE over the last 40 years? KB and I have had a chat about guest speakers. We thought it would be good to get people from research councils and other funding bodies to come and speak at SC meetings, one per meeting. AD has suggested bringing someone who knew about Euro

funding would be interesting. But we'd need to be sure for any of these that people would want it and find it of use.

AD: What do people feel about an HUK conference panel?

*Meeting agrees*

MC: I'd be looking for volunteers, this is not something we would necessarily need to pay for- just to organise.

Daniel Gordon: Conference representation is really useful as it highlights our place in networking, and it is a captive audience. My advice would be to make sure your stall if you have one is near the tea and coffee.

KB: We could distribute literature at SHS though there might be a small charge (less than £50).

Meg Arnot: Something really history focused on Euro funding would be incredibly helpful, and advertised more widely.

Kate Bradley – We could think about a podcast?

Rachel: We'd just need to make sure we had the storage.

AD: Sounds more like we are having a mini-plenary halfway through the year?

Andrew Roach: I think this sounds like a spot on idea, I don't think this is a justification for people specially coming to the SC.

## **11. Reports from:**

### **i. Northern Irish Representatives**

Paul notes there is an institutional element to cuts, which goes hand in hand with current restructuring

### **ii. Scottish Representatives**

AD: Waiting on an election – but very controversial bill on university governance going through the Scottish Parliament at the moment. Andrew Roach notes that this about to what extent academic staff and students should be represented in management of HE. Scotland is not affected by TEF, but they are watching very closely.

### **iii. Welsh Representatives**

Lowri Ann Rees notes that story of foreseeable cuts, financial concerns, no posts advertised, and suggestions of cuts to major databases. Rachel Lock-Lewis observes a growing obsession with employability in Welsh post-92s, to the point this actually could cease to be a university environment.

## **12. Reports from:**

### **i. Historical Association**

Need to get a new rep for this. MC notes there was a suggestion of a matchmaking event between teachers and academics – this is now happening, and will be held in Harrogate in May.

### **ii. Royal Historical Society**

Paul mentions there has not been another meeting since last report.

### **iii. Institute of Historical Research**

Peter D'Sena reports success of his new to teaching event – cost approx £1200

### **iv. History Lab/History Lab Plus**

### **v. Postgraduate Representative**

Tom O'Donnell report sent in –Daniel Grey to circulate

## **13. Any other business.**

Suggest 6 or 20 Feb as different days for meeting in Feb. 6 seems to be the winner

MC reminds us of the AHRC ongoing consultation. The questions they want answers to seem to be things not directly associated with disciplinary concerns.

Andrew Roach notes the draconian language of the 4 year plan and the idea of reducing the number of institutions of partner organisations. This has quite serious implications for diversity.

Heather Shore – We have had some discussion about this as well, and there is real concern at the prospect of removing to 5 consortia – that would take us out of doctoral training completely.

AD: Could SC members forward their comments to Andrew Roach?

**14. Dates of future meetings**

14 November 2015 – Plenary

6 February 2016

14 May 2016