

Minutes of a Meeting of the Steering Committee of History UK, 19th May 2018, Wolfson II, Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, London

Present: Lucie Matthews-Jones, Heather Shore, Rachel Bright, Charlotte Alston, Hannah Burrows, Efram Sera-Shriar, Stewart McCain, Kate Bradley, Adam Morton, Sarah Bastow, Simon Peplow, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Charles Insley, Ariel Hessayon, Ian Talbot, David Stack, Richard Hawkins, Peter D'Sena, Euryyn Roberts, Martin Johnes, Alex Titov, Daniel Grey, Jamie Wood, Neil Fleming

Apologies for absence: Sarah Holland, Alison Hems, Rachel Lock-Lewis

1. Minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting

Members of the SC confirmed the accuracy of the minutes. Ariel Hessayon's apologies had not been noted: Charlotte agreed to amend this.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

3. Co-Convenors' Report

Heather and Lucie reported on recent and forthcoming events. These include the Transitioning to Higher Education event held at Leeds Beckett in May; the British Library Digital Labs event held at Lincoln on 15th May; the Academic Job Boot Camp (being held today); and an event to be held on 4th September, organised by Neil, focusing on mid-career researchers. Representatives from the British Academy and the AHRC are coming to speak at this event. We are currently looking for someone who has had success with mid-career research funding schemes to kick start the day (see Research Officer's Report, point 7 below).

i. 2018 AGM / Plenary

The AGM in November will focus on the future of the Humanities. Stefan Collini and Karen Salt are both confirmed as speakers. Peter Mandler, who we had also approached, will unfortunately be out of the country. Lucie suggested that the third slot could be dedicated to a roundtable involving more junior scholars. Members of the SC thought this a good idea. **Please send suggestions for speakers who could make a good contribution on challenges to/the future of the humanities to Lucie.**

We also agreed to send a reminder to departments about the new set up in terms of financing the AGM: i.e., the annual membership fee (already paid) entitles each department to one free place.

ii. TNA Collaboration

Heather and Jamie reported on the progress of HUK's collaboration with the National Archives on the update to the guidance on collaboration between archives and HEIs, both in terms of teaching and research. Following on from the survey that was sent out to all HUK members, a workshop had taken place in March involving HUK members and archivists, at which initial results were presented. A representative from the Royal Historical Society also attended this workshop. A launch event for the new

guidance is planned shortly. We hope this will be a continuing relationship: it was clear through the process that the archivists were keen to work more closely with us.

Heather announced her intention to step down early as co-Convenor, as a result of overwhelming workload at the moment which was only likely to increase (as unit lead for the REF, and with new funded projects starting) which was only likely to increase. She would give her six weeks notice from 1st June, and we should look for someone else to be in place by mid-July. HUK is currently in a good stable position, and whoever steps up as co-convenor would be in place in time for the Plenary. **Please contact Lucie if you are interested in taking on the co-convenor role.**

SC members all expressed their thanks to Heather for the excellent work she has done for HUK during her time as co-convenor.

4. Treasurer's Report

Richard reported that subscriptions were coming in more slowly than in previous years, partly as a result of the fact that, owing to the change in funding arrangements for the AGM (inclusion of the cost of registering in the membership fee), we did not get invoices out as early as usual. The strike may also have had an impact; as might the usual issues with budgets and with passing invoices to the right person for processing. Sue has sent reminders out and membership fees are steadily coming in, perhaps partly because we didn't get them out so early as usual. Sue has done reminder and moneys are coming in. We have a healthy closing balance.

The cost of room hire at the IHR is still an issue that we need to keep an eye on going forward. SC members broadly agreed that we should still be hosting some central events in London, and the IHR is the obvious location. We do probably also want to keep thinking about broadening our focus to Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

5. Secretary's Report

Charlotte mentioned the new data protection regulations that come into force at the end of May (GDPR) and the need to make sure HUK is compliant with them. Several SC members have undertaken institutional GDPR training, and the committee discussed the implications for HUK as we understood them. As our members are departments/institutions rather than individuals, we do not hold much personal information that would be regarded as sensitive. We do need to consider how we hold, process and dispose of material relating to attendees at our events, particularly the bootcamp. We agreed to also talk to Sue about long term/institutional memory and material we might be holding that goes further back than current membership of the SC.

6. Education Officer's Report

Transitions Event, May 2018: Peter reported on the HUK Transitioning in History from School to University event, held at Leeds Beckett on 11th May. 25 paying delegates and an additional 8 presenters/others attended. Delegates appreciated the theory into practice model used at the event. Unfortunately the speakers from Newman cancelled as they had to turn around on the M1 due to closure of the road; but it was still a full and busy day. The SC discussed some ideas for events for next year. Would we run the transitions event again? There seemed to be some appetite for this amongst attendees at this years event. One attendee had asked about the

possibility of an event on undergraduates and reading. Other ideas included an event on students and mental health, although it was agreed that we needed to be careful not to accept the idea that dealing with mental health issues was part of our job, given that we are not trained to do that, and should not be looking to train ourselves to do it. There are questions though about how we deal with these issues in the classroom through inclusive education. **Peter asked for suggestions about what we should do for an education event next year by Christmas so we can get speakers organised for something in around April /May 2019.**

Teaching History in HE Conference: Peter had also been in discussion with Ken Fincham, chair of the RHS's Education Policy Committee, about the prospect of a Teaching history in HE conference, perhaps for around September 2019. There's some possibility that the British Academy would be interested in hosting an event which gives a focus to skills development. Teaching History in HE.

New to Teaching Event 2018: This year's New to Teaching Event will be on 11th September 2018. We are staffing it, and the RHS have confirmed financial support. Presenters include Max Jones on the history lecture, Jamie Wood on the history seminar, James Baker on digital history, Peter D'Sena on curriculum design, and Helen Rogers on using social media in the classroom. The SC agreed that we should offer bursaries for attendees coming from further away.

7. Research Officers Report

Neil reported that a date had been agreed for the workshop on funding and mid-career researchers: it would take place on Tuesday 4th September from 10 til 4. Representatives from the AHRC and the British Academy will attend. We are looking for a mid-career scholar who has been particularly successful with funding to speak. **[As a result of suggestions at the meeting we have now secured Emma Griffin].**

8. Media Officer's Report

Jamie reported that both the website and twitter feed were doing fine. He also reported on the BL Digital Labs event that had taken place this year at Lincoln, following on from the first iteration at LJMU the previous year. 45 people had attended. It was a really good event. The BL do lots of these, but this is the only event that focuses specifically on history. For anyone who wants to organise a future version, you just need to organise room hire and food. HUK can cover speaker costs. The date has to be negotiated with the BL as they only offer set dates.

9. Reports from

i. Northern Irish Representatives

Alex Titov reported that QUB has both a new VC, and a new appointment in History. They are launching a new MA in Public History, in partnership with local archives. There are the usual questions about student recruitment, and concerns about what will happen as a result of changes to the funding model for HE in GB. There are also the problems with demographic dip that are common across the sector.

ii. Scottish Representatives

There was nothing particular to report.

iii. Welsh Representatives

There is a process of compulsory reduncancies ongoing at Aberystwyth. A similar process took place at the University of South Wales last year. The Welsh

government's new funding model means that, on a means-tested basis, students can have both fees and a maintenance grant covered, wherever they choose to go to study. In practice this means 60% of the Welsh HE budget is going to English universities. It's a good scheme for students but less for HE institutions and staff in Wales.

The SC also discussed common problems across the sector: Keele and Plymouth for example are both looking at voluntary severance or voluntary redundancy schemes. Manchester went through this last year (though not in history). Leeds Trinity are in a similar situation. SC members discussed how interventions might be made in terms of a) influencing course choice, and A level choice, in terms of students choosing a humanities route; b) how we sell the value of the humanities; c) how we challenge the monetising rhetoric (i.e. that the value of a degree in history is not *just* about job prospects).

10. Reports from:

i. Historical Association

No report

ii. Royal Historical Society

The SC notes that the RHS survey on race, ethnicity and equality is still open.

iii. Institute of Historical Research

No report

iv. History Lab/History Lab Plus

No report

v. Postgraduate Representative

No report

vi. ECR Representative

Simon Peplow thanked everyone who had circulated the links to his blog posts on ECR issues. Hopefully there would be more material going up on the website in the near future, e.g. on finishing the PhD, dealing with the job market, post-doc experiences, life outside academia. There is currently a lot of dialogue about precarity, and some positive developments, for example the move from some institutions (Durham and Kent) to offer 12 month contracts as standard (rather than 9 or 10 months as has become common for temporary posts).

11. Any other business

12. Dates of future meetings

The AGM/Plenary will take place on **3rd November 2018**