

British Philosophical Association

Minutes of first Annual General Meeting, Westminster, 24 October 2003

Around 50 individual members or representatives of departmental or learned society members were present, with the Interim Chair of the BPA, Professor Roger Trigg, in the chair.

1. Apologies had been received from six members, including the Interim Treasurer, Professor Ruth Chadwick, and three members of the Transitional Committee.

2. Constitutional arrangements for Annual General Meetings

The meeting's attention was drawn to the provisions in the BPA Constitution which bear on general meetings, and annual general meetings in particular.

3. Election of the Association's first Executive Committee

(i) Declaration of results

The Returning Officer, Professor Cameron, reported that out of the 184 full individual members of the Association who were eligible to vote, 108 had done so by post or e-mail or by handing in ballot forms at the start of the Conference earlier in the afternoon. Of the eighteen candidates standing for the twelve places on the Executive Committee listed below, the twelve indicated by asterisks had received the highest number of votes, and were accordingly elected to serve on the Committee:

Professor Robin Attfield	* Professor Brad Hooker	Dr Duncan Pritchard
* Dr Helen Beebee	* Professor Dan Hutto	Mr George MacDonald Ross
* Professor Stephen Clark	Dr Sarah Hutton	* Professor Tom Sorell
* Professor David Evans	* Mr Dudley Knowles	* Professor Roger Trigg
* Dr Katherine Hawley	Dr Christopher Megone	* Professor Tim Williamson
Professor Matti Häyry	* Baroness Onora O'Neill	* Professor Jo Wolff

The terms (3 years, 2 years or 1 year) to be served by the successful candidates would be determined by the numbers of votes they received, but subject where applicable to any preference expressed by any candidates to serve less than a full 3-year term.

(ii) Returning Officer's report on the running of the election

The Returning Officer (Professor Cameron), emphasised the experimental nature of the use of e-mail in the election, and reported that it had become clear to him that confirming the identity of e-mail voters was not as straightforward as had been assumed (though he was confident that no personation had in fact taken place); the use of e-mail voting involved a placing a heavy trust on the Returning Officer's integrity. He proposed to invite individual members to comment on the working of the system, and the new Executive Committee might wish to review the system for future occasions. He suggested it would be highly desirable for the Returning Officer's duties not to be combined with those of the Secretary in future elections.

4. Chair's business

(i) Report on the work of the Association's Transitional Committee, 2002-03

In presenting this Report, which had been made available on the website, the Chair emphasised the continuing and increasing need for an effective voice speaking for Philosophy today. No questions were raised about the Report.

(ii) Other business: the Chair had no other business to bring forward.

5. Treasurer's report

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Secretary presented an initial financial statement, indicating that initial subscriptions had yielded £1949, of which only £192 had so far been spent, most of the early expenses of the launch of the Association and recruiting having been met out of NCP funds. An estimate of the likely annual income available to the Association based on current membership suggested that, at around £5,500 a year, it would fully match the figure used in initial discussion about setting up the Association. The Transitional Committee had concluded that a higher income would in fact be needed for the Association to function fully effectively; however, the continuing trend of rising membership gave

hope that that level of income might be achieved. It was noted that the appreciable deficit on the Conference would be met from a generous one-off offer of support from the Mind Association Committee towards costs of getting the Association launched and recruiting members to it.

6. Secretary's business

The Secretary reported that specific arrangements with publishers for members to obtain discounts on journals and/or books were still to be clarified in many cases, but he hoped to pursue the matter shortly. He also enquired of those at the meeting about whether they were concerned about their e-mail addresses becoming known to the rest of the membership through the way in which e-mail circulations were sent out; he proposed to enquire of the membership generally about this.

7. Membership report

It was reported that there were, at 18.x.03, 184 full individual members, 14 associate individual members, 59 departmental members, and 11 learned society members.

In considering applications for membership, the Transitional Committee, while conscious of its caretaker role, had adopted a cautiously liberal attitude in interpreting the eligibility conditions for membership of the Association. In regard to **full individual membership**, it accepted PhDs in Philosophy of Religion and Philosophy of Education as suitable qualifications for teaching and pursuing research in Philosophy. In one case it accepted for full individual membership a PhD student who was exceptionally qualified in other respects, while making clear that it did not wish this to serve as a precedent binding the Executive Committee subsequently. In regard to **departmental membership**, it had very recently deferred, for the Executive Committee to consider, an application from a very well-known adult education college.

In July the Transitional Committee had decided to add to the categories of individuals eligible for **associate individual membership** the category of current Philosophy PhD students in UK HE institutions; most of the current associate members to date had come from this category.

8. Future activities of the BPA

An opportunity was provided for the meeting to propose particular forms of activity which the Association might take up, for the Executive Committee to consider. No particular suggestions were forthcoming.

9. Timing of next AGM

It was agreed that this should be left for the Executive Committee to think and consult about. However, the possibility of the Association linking up in some way with the annual Joint Session in July was canvassed; and this suggestion met with some favour, subject to a proviso that whatever kind of meeting was arranged should be one that was likely to attract equally philosophers with interests in any area of philosophy.

10. Any other competent business

No other matter was raised.