

**British Philosophical Association
Executive Committee Meeting: Friday October 6th 2006
Seminar Room: 19 Gordon Square, London WC1E 6BT**

Present: Helen Beebee, John Dupré, Gordon Finlayson, Brad Hooker, Dan Hutto, Dudley Knowles, Adrian Moore, Duncan Pritchard, Tom Sorell, Alessandra Tanesini, Jo Wolff. Sacha Stephens.

1. Apologies: David Archard, Stephen Clark

2. Welcome to new member.

Alessandra Tanesini was welcomed to the committee.

3. Minutes of the last meeting March 31st 2006.

As the minutes of the last meeting were not circulated prior to today's meeting it was agreed that following today's meeting, Jo would email the minutes of the March 31st meeting to all members for approval.

4. Matters Arising:

1. Having come to the end of his three year term, Robin Attfield was thanked for his work on the committee as a co-opted member

2. Constitutional amendments made at the AGM were noted. These were i) allowing schools to become institutional members and ii) changing the title of Secretary of the BPA to Director

3. The possibility of the BPA's involvement in future organisation of the Joint Session was discussed. It was agreed that this matter should be put off until after the next Joint Session when Jo has stepped down from his current position in the BPA.

4. European Reference Project for Humanites
It was agreed that as the AHRC have now distanced themselves from this project, there is no longer any need to discuss it.

5. Communications Received:

i) We have been sent a press release from the British Academy publicising their opposition to current copyright law. It was agreed that with a few exceptions, copyright issues are not a particular hindrance to philosophical research and that in light of this the BPA would take no further action in this matter.

ii) The AHRC's proposed changes in postgraduate funding
 This October the AHRC published its proposals for new funding arrangements. The changes propose that institutions will put in bids for 'block grants' - a portfolio of postgraduate awards for a period of up to five years. Under the new system 75% of AHRC money allocated for studentships will come from block grants with the remaining 25% coming from an annual competition for individual postgraduate studentships. Such block grants will be allocated to Humanities departments and it will be up to the department to allocate the studentships. The AHRC propose to have the new system in place by the 2008 competitions.

In discussion, there was a general feeling that this system would not bear close scrutiny and that the proposals were being rushed through without proper consultation. Concerns were that the new system would breed battles within institutions over how to configure their bids, that the system would take up a lot of time and that smaller philosophy departments would be left very vulnerable.

It was agreed that the BPA were in favour of putting off the proposed changes until further consultation is undertaken. BH agreed to take on the job of consulting the membership and writing a response to the AHRC. It was agreed that an email be sent out to all members as soon as possible given that the deadline for responses to the proposals is 3rd November 2006.

6. Treasurers Report

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND MEMBERSHIP 1st October 06 From August 05 to October 06

INCOME FROM MEMBERSHIPS	<u>2006</u>
Full individual members	£4582
Associate members	£ 56
SUB-TOTAL	£4638
Departmental membership	£1840
Learned Society memberships	£ 539
<u>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP INCOME</u>	<u>£7017</u>
GRANTS	<u>2006</u>
Analysis Trust	£500
<u>TOTAL INCOME FROM ALL SOURCES</u>	<u>£7517</u>
MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS	<u>2006</u>
Full members	280

Assoc. members	10
Lifetime Members	4
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS	<u>294</u>

Departments 50
 Although we gained we gained 3 new departmental memberships in 2006, departments have not yet renewed. Southampton and Edinburgh.
 Learned Societies 13
 We gained 1 new society member in 2006 but 3 societies have not yet renewed. The UK Kant Society, The British Logic Colloquium and the Bradley Society.

EXPENDITURE	<u>2006</u>
Main items	
Office expenses	£526.12
Recruitment flyers	£367.00
Executive Secretary	£2386.93
Exec. Comm. Members	£ 558.23
05 AGM Room Hire	£ 341.10
Fisp Membership (05 and 06)	£ 218.02
Misc.	£ 68.00
Newsletter 04 and 05(printing)	£ 300 (estimated)
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>£4764.47</u>

BANK STATEMENT BALANCE (8th Sep 06) **£14570.84**

REPORT – INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

In the last 15 months there was a £2752.53 surplus of income over expenditure.

Income has decreased compared to the previous year due to falling membership numbers. There are no major increases in expenditure expected for the year to come. Sacha is to increase her role to executive secretary and to paid an increase of £23 per month in line with inflation and with the previous secretary's salary. This will result in a further £276 per year expenses.

If all things remain the same, in 2007 there will be a surplus of £2476.

REPORT – MEMBERSHIP

Individual membership numbers require some attention. There was an overall decrease in membership numbers in 2006. Although over 80% of individual members have renewed, there have been far fewer new

memberships this year. In 2005 there were 81 new individual members. In 2006 there were only 39 new individual members.

Current recruitment activities by the executive secretary to continue. We have discussed the possibility of a paper mailshot which, though relatively expensive, is likely to produce a better response than email canvassing. We also invite the committee to suggest new ways to increase membership numbers.

Despite the healthy financial state of the BPA, it was agreed that committee members need to make efforts to recruit new members. DH agreed to draft an email alerting potential members to the reasons they should support the BPA, rather than offering discounts and special offers although JW suggested that we offer to fix the cost of membership for three years for those who opt to pay by standing order.

Sacha to continue her activities in contacting potential members personally by email.

7. Administrative Assistant

Sacha has agreed to take a larger role, beyond assisting the Treasurer including recruitment and minute taking. The decision regarding appropriate compensation was delegated to DH.

8. Benchmarking

The new draft benchmarking document has been produced, and the QAA has entered consultation. This has been communicated to members. It was agreed that no further action was needed by the BPA in this matter.

9. RAE and Metrics

The membership has been consulted, and a draft response on behalf of the BPA was circulated to members. The matter was discussed by the committee.

In his absence, DA's report on the meeting called by the AHRC expert group was given by JW. At this meeting the general feeling was that there may be some room for metrics but that in the humanities peer review should remain the basis for benchmarking. The outcome of that meeting was that the current system should remain with room for a few minor changes or additions with regard to metrics.

The membership was consulted and a draft response on behalf of the BPA has been circulated. Reporting on the response from members, JW told the committee that the general feeling was that members were not in favour of metrics although some felt that there was some room for such a system. Following a suggestion made by Paul Hubbard, JW suggested that the BPA's position on this ought to be that if there are to be metrics then there ought to be a very great many of them. This will make it difficult for institutions to remain aware of their performance with regard to a particular metric. Ensuring that institutions do not get caught up in fulfilling a certain metric will rather encourage 'business as usual'. It was agreed that this should be the BPA's official response. JW agreed to include this development in the newsletter and on the website.

JW was thanked for his exceptionally hard work on this matter.

10. Schoolteacher Issues

TS reported activity on two fronts:

- i) A schoolteachers' conference is to be held on the 20th November at the William Hulme Grammar School in Manchester. The conference is already well-organised and considerable advertising has been taken out to ensure reasonable numbers. Simon Blackburn and Brad Hooker are to speak at the conference.
- ii) Our dealing with the AQA, one of the examining bodies for examining Philosophy at A and GCSE level.

At a meeting in May of people connected with GCSE and AS level specification possible revisions to the specification were considered in a very constructive discussion. Progress is slow in this area but it is hoped that the eventual outcome is likely to be that the revised specification will be thinned down to make it easier to teach and more philosophically satisfying without being intimidating.

TS reported that there is to be another meeting regarding this in December.

It was noted that the change in constitution to allow schools to become institutional members must be included on the website. TS reported that a recruitment pitch would be made to schools at the conference in Manchester.

11. Website and Logo

A new website design has been commissioned, and a sub-group of JW, HB and GF have been discussing design options. Three different basic

designs were tabled and one was agreed upon. JW will be involved at each step of the design process.

HB is still pursuing acquisition of the domain name www.bpa.ac.uk. It is likely that this will be available but if not, it has agreed that the domain name is changed to include 'bpa' even if this means taking a .org domain.

Logo change. HB has been pursuing logo design but it has proved to be extremely expensive. It was agreed to ask the current website designer if she could attempt this. GF also tabled a basic design he had done himself and he agreed to show a more finished version at a later date.

12. Newsletter

The newsletter was not ready for circulation before or at the meeting.

13. Lifechanges

The new union UCU has invited us to become associated with their 'life-changers' campaign. JW agreed to ask the UCU for more details and the committee decided to discuss this at a later date.

14. PRS Subject Centre

i) They would like a second rep from the BPA. David Archard has been nominated but has not yet had a chance to respond.

ii) HB has suggested that the BPA might send a fairly strongly-worded letter to the HEA concerning the need for a transparent and appropriate assessment procedure for HEFCE teaching-related project grants. The committee agreed that the letter should come from Brad as chair.

15. AOB

There was no other business.