

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
National Association of Language Advisers,
Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon, Wednesday 8th July 2009

Item 1 Apologies.

Apologies were received from Michael Wardle.

Item 2 Minutes of the 2008 AGM

Re. Chair's report: NP reported that exec had considered her 'mindmap' of activities for the website. Exec had discussed the needs of members working in primary and/or secondary phases and it was hoped to provide a guide to finding key information.

Re. Treasurer's report: NP said that exec was trying to make application easier by providing a one-page document requiring only essential information.

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting

Item 3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising. The minutes were approved.

Item 4 Officers' reports

President JL tabled a written report which was to be posted on the website. He thanked executive members and regional convenors on behalf of the membership for their hard work. He had much appreciated his visits to regional groups. JL expressed his thanks particularly to David Mee and the help given by Peter Hall for their maintenance of the website. He offered thanks also to Geoff Swinn and Adrian Finbow for work on membership and subscriptions and finally to Nikki Perry and Jim McElwee for planning and running meetings of exec.

Chair Nikki Perry told the AGM that she and the exec would do their best to keep up to date with current issues so that they could keep the membership informed and also to reflect members' views in national forums. This was particularly important now that the profile of the membership had changed: it was no longer the case that most members were working largely with secondary schools. NP urged members to use the website so that the association would reflect the interests and views of its members. NP invited members to visit join a meeting of exec to see how it worked and possibly to consider joining. NP thanked exec members for their commitment and hard work.

Secretary Jim McElwee had recorded the minutes of all the executive committee meetings. He had written the annual report to ASPECT. He had represented NALA on the Early Language Learning Forum (ELLAF) and had supported the chair at meetings with the National Director for Languages.

Treasurer Adrian Finbow reported that the accounts were in a healthy state. This was due in large measure to the change to electronic communications: printing expenses had dwindled from £2000 to almost nothing. AF felt that the membership fee of £50 per annum was very good value. He had received the sum of £180 from ASPECT in respect of the subsidy for members who belong to both NALA and ASPECT. The accounts had been audited and the audit approved by Bury Borough Council auditors. The 2008 conference had shown a small excess of income over expenditure. A reserve of approximately £15,000 which had been retained for contingencies had been reduced in order to maintain value for money and a small subscription fee. The new membership system was working efficiently and it was much easier to check membership and subscriptions. AF would send an email to members confirming payment of subscription. AF urged members who had not done so already to switch to payment by standing order. He also reminded members to ask the agency paying a subscription to indicate the name of the member and the BACS transfer so that the member could be identified: payments had been made without any indication of the member concerned.

Membership Services Officer Geoff Swinn reported an up-to-date membership list. He felt that if members were recruiting new members, it would be helpful to mention the simplified application form. GS reported an increase in the membership representing the diverse interests nationally. He was particularly pleased that many new members were younger, so the association was renewing itself. GS and NP also welcomed colleagues from CILT Cymru.

Communications Officer David Mee presented a written report. The decision to remove Update had improved the flow of information to the members. Since last year more than 70 items had been posted on the website by members and national agencies. DM paid tribute to Peter Hall for his commitment and support.

DM reported that the review of the website initiated in 2008 had led to a number of decisions. Exec did not feel it was appropriate to post photographs on the website. It was decided that there would not be complete revision of the website at this time, rather a number of small improvements. DM encouraged members who had not yet done so to update their details on the database.

It was suggested that regional co-ordinators post details of meetings and minutes on the website.

DM had been in touch with the five awarding bodies in respect of GCSE specifications and asked them to have a permanent link to the website.

DM and PH had worked on the new home page which would display two buttons: one for members and one for non-members who might wish to join.

NP thanked exec on behalf of the membership for their hard work and commitment.

Item 5 Election of Officers

The posts of Chair, Membership services officer, Communications Officer and member without portfolio were open for election.

Jim McElwee proposed Nikki Perry for a second term of office as chair and Jenny Carpenter seconded the proposal.

Nikki Perry proposed Geoff Swinn for the post of Membership Services Officer and Rhona Heald seconded the proposal.

Alison Edwards proposed that David Mee should continue to serve as Communications Officer; Brendan Meehan seconded the proposal.

Dick Boatman was proposed as member without portfolio by Ann Farren and seconded by Geoff Swinn.

Item 6 Audit of Accounts

AF proposed that the accounts should continue to be audited by an officer of Bury Council. The proposal was seconded by Jeff Lee.

Item 7 AOB

Jenny Carpenter reported that she had tried to send details of NALA SE by email but these details had not been updated. All of the meetings of NALA SE would take place at CILT. JP proposed thanks to CILT and the British Council for hosting meetings of exec.

JL praised regional groups for the quality of their meetings. They reflected the intellect of the members across the country.

Chris Wakely expressed disquiet about regional support for languages and asked the association to work closely with Links into Languages particularly as none of the partners in Links had extensive experience in working with Local Authorities. NP asked members to consider CW's comments and to send feedback to exec so that conversations could take place between NALA and Links into Languages. There was a lively discussion on the topic.

The meeting finished at 5.53 p.m.

J. McElwee (secretary)