

**Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Language Advisers
Imperial College, London
6 July 2011**

Item 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Chris Maynard

Item 2 Minutes of the 2010 AGM

The minutes of the 2010 AGM were read and approved as a true record.

Item 3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Item 4 Officers' reports

Written reports (below) were submitted by the President, Chair, Secretary, Treasurer; Membership Secretary and Communications Officer. The Professional Development Officer was unable to report because of her recent accident. Nikki Perry proposed best wishes to Alison Gilvey for a speedy recovery.

President (Alan Dobson)

I have attended all the meetings of the Executive in 2010-2011 and also carried out a number of specific tasks on its behalf including inviting Adrian Finbow, Peter Hall and Jeff Lee to become Honorary Members of NALA and assisting in the preparation of the collection of tributes to Peter Hall.

I should like express, on behalf of the wider membership, my appreciation of the great commitment to the work of NALA shown by the Executive in these difficult times when many have themselves had to cope with multiple pressures.

Chair (Nikki Perry)

The year since the last AGM has held serious challenges for many of us in the Association and although the future for languages is looking brighter than it has done since this time last year, there are still challenges to be faced. Many of us have had to take on different roles or find different ways of working. Appropriately, this year's conference title is 'Speaking to the Future'.

Over the last year we have lobbied relentlessly for languages to become a statutory part of the primary curriculum, having the chance in January to construct a well thought-out response to the National Curriculum Review. More recently we were able to give our views to Graham Stuart MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee, and respond to his request for information on the E-Bacc. We seek out any opportunity to send information to policy makers to keep languages on the agenda.

We continue to maintain a presence at national key partner meetings. We have contributed to the discussion or represented the Association at:

- Links into Languages Board meetings
- Speak to the Future Campaign
- Meetings with the National Director for Languages
- All Party Parliamentary Group on Languages
- OCR subject development group
- Development of the Leaders in Primary Languages Award, with CILT
- Key Stage 4 consultation, with Lid King
- EULL award judging panel and visits
- ALL Executive Council

Members will see from the minutes of meetings that we are responding to the current climate of austerity by trying to keep the running costs of the association down and will be inviting discussion at the conference as to how we can best serve our members in the new 'world'. We have already started this by developing the website. Regional Convenors continue to play a huge role in keeping members up to date and in providing a forum on which to share their own expertise and discuss issues relevant to the region. These regional networks are becoming even more important as many members have been forced to work independently and some of the other national forums are no longer operating. We invite members each year to contribute in whichever way they would like and do so again this year. The Association exists for you so please let us know what we need to do to meet your needs.

Personally, I have enjoyed representing the Association over the last year and owe a debt of gratitude to the members of the exec who have been extremely supportive of me and generous with their time to make sure the machinery of the association works. Thank you!

Lastly, I would like to remember Peter Hall. I feel privileged to have known him and learned from him.

Secretary (Christopher Maynard)

I have produced the agendas and written the minutes for executive committee meetings and preceding briefing meetings with the British Council and ALL. I have managed the final editing of the NALA Primary Paper, drafted NALA's response to the National Curriculum review and written an annual report to Aspect. I have also provided some assistance to the conference team, attended two meetings on behalf of NALA and helped to find venues for national executive meetings. May I thank my colleagues on the executive for their reports and prompt responses!

Treasurer (Jenny Carpenter)

JC explained that in the new situation it had been necessary to engage the services of a professional accountant to check and certify the accounts, but not to audit them, which would have been an unnecessarily expensive process. There is no discernible difference in the way in which this year's accounts are presented compared with previous years. This is, however, a matter that needs the approval of the membership as the constitution states that the accounts should be audited.

JC also said that debate was needed about regional groups and their expenses.

JC included the following notes on the accounts (appended to these minutes) in her report:

- The current account refers mainly to memberships
- The conference account has relatively little in it as there is little or no movement in this account except around the time of an annual conference.
- The deposit account has remained at or about this level for some time.
- In the previous year's accounts, income from memberships was £7 900 compared to £4 700 at a similar point this year.
- Aspect subscriptions continue to make a useful contribution to the coffers.
- We had received one donation by 31 December 2010 – and two more have followed.
- The amount noted as Surplus on the conference account is in reference to a modest and unforeseen profit from last year's conference. In light of the relatively low attendance at this year's conference, I propose to use this amount to make up any shortfall which there will inevitably be.
- Travel expenses have included attendance at Executive meetings as well as other national meetings where NALA has been represented.

- The hotel and subsistence amounts refer mainly to the Exec residential held in January of each year to plan this conference.
- The Development Plan work referred, for example, to the preparation of the Primary Paper
- The regional meeting expenses are extremely varied from £0 to £400+. All invoices have been paid without question. We may agree that regional meetings are an important function of the Association but might want to consider whether we want to (re)establish some ground rules about who is eligible to attend, ways of cutting costs whilst maintaining the quality of our regional meetings and so on.
- You will note that despite the positive figures, there has been a loss of £3297.59 in regards to the day-to-day running of the Association in 2010. This is principally due to the drop in membership.
- The debtors refer to two conference fees from last year which were extremely slow to come in and had still not arrived at the close of play on 31 December 2010.

NP thanked JC for her work as treasurer over the year and also for her help in planning the conference.

Membership Secretary (Geoff Swinn)

2010-2011 has been a particularly busy year for the association. It has seen a significant number of new members join, but also the loss to NALA of some highly regarded and long standing members, many of whom have decided to leave upon often enforced retirement or redundancy. Others sadly have passed away and we are the poorer without them.

I have liaised closely with other executive members to keep an up to date and accurate membership record on our website. I have kept in close contact with regional convenors so that new members are welcomed into the local meetings. I am able to report that while the national situation has led to a net fall in membership, there has been a recent upsurge of interest in joining NALA. The most commonly cited reason is the opportunity to access high quality, independent information and support at both local and national levels.

The membership fee has remained unchanged over many years, but following a financial review your exec has identified the need for an increase and has proposed that it should be raised to £59 per academic year, starting in September 2011, in order to maintain a robust and sound organisation.

Communications Officer (David Mee)

We are all well aware of the global economic difficulties that have affected all of us over the past twelve months. For *Nala* colleagues and similar organisations, it has meant, and is continuing to mean, considerable changes in professional situations, organisation, structure and location. Members have lost their jobs, services offered have been decreased or curtailed, funding redirected, reduced and/or discontinued. These are to say the least challenging and worrying times for an organisation like *Nala*.

For precisely the same reasons, however, there has probably never been a more important time for *Nala* members to stand together in the face of such challenges and to continue to champion the cause for the fundamental underlying passion we all share for the teaching and learning of languages. On a personal level, it is pleasing for me to be able to say in my final report as Communications Officer that despite these growing problems, the basic aim in website usage and activity has during these last twelve months remained that of enabling members to get hold of the most current news and documents more quickly than ever before, and of providing much more "immediate" access to such information. E-mail messages to "alert" members to items posted in Stop Press and elsewhere have continued to be the most effective means of providing this access. There have been approximately 40 additions to Stop Press during the year, including information about the latest developments, programmes and events from the QCDA,

The British Council, CILT, and LINKS, and once again from the various language associations, in particular the Goethe Institut, the French Institute, UK-German Connection, and the Consejería. Via its website, *Nala* has encouraged and participated in consultations on a new OFSTED framework, the National Curriculum Review, and the E-Bac. There have been regular updates on *Nala* conference planning and news about programmes and funding for Foreign Language Assistants and Primary Languages

Stop Press is not the only source of useful information on the website, however. There are in addition archived documents such as conference reports, AGM and National Executive Committee minutes, "*Nala* papers", activity plans, annual reports to other organisations and reports of liaison meetings between *Nala* and QCDA, The British Council and ALL, and finally a variety of notes provided by members of *Nala*'s National Executive Committee who have attended a wide range of Key Stakeholders' meetings.

The website has also been the conduit for members to express their feelings about Eric Hawkins and Peter Hall, both of whom died during this period of time. The *Nala* tributes to each have been posted on our website in recent weeks. My previous reports have said much about Peter's immense help to me, his invaluable past work on the website and his contribution to *Nala* in general. It was good also to see many of our members at Peter's funeral on March 4th.

A significant change to the website in the past few months was the necessary move to a new server and the use of a new content management system to edit the site. This appears to have worked well despite one or two teething problems and members' reactions to what exists and to whatever changes are implemented remain very positive. I am confident that the website continues to be a vibrant, effective and up-to-the-minute source of vital information to its members, a jumping-off place to other related webs, and (last but by no means least) a place where members can communicate with each other. As I said earlier, in the present climate, this is vitally important and we remain immensely grateful to so many people for the varied, useful and often exciting contributions that are made.

Virtual communication is of course extremely important to organisations like *Nala* in this day and age, but we should not forget the immense contribution made by so many members on a more physical face-to-face basis, and amongst them the especially important role played by *Nala*'s regional convenors. The regional network remains strong in the face of the latest cuts and that is due almost exclusively to the dedication of the convenors in getting groups together locally.

I would finally like to thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee for all of their help and support during my time in this post, and also Chris Gill who has very kindly "held the fort" when holidays and other commitments have limited the time I had available for communication duties. I wish my successor the very best with what has always been a hugely rewarding pleasure for me.

I took on this role five years ago as I felt strongly that I wanted to be able to give a little something back to an organisation that had been immensely important to me in my professional career since I first joined. I am well aware (as are others, I am sure!) of things that I could have done better had it not been for family illnesses, other commitments and sheer lack of time. Nevertheless, I do hope that what I have been able to do has been of some small benefit to an organisation that has always been dear to my heart and that has given me so much enjoyment and help over the years. It has been an immense pleasure to do this job, and I for one shall continue to pay my fees, take advantage of the networking possibilities that have been such an important part of *Nala* for me, and be there to help in the background with website issues when needed. Long may *Nala* and its (albeit ever-changing) membership continue to thrive!

Item 5 Appointment of Auditors

JC proposed an amendment to the constitution, viz. that the audits should be changed in consultation with the national executive. Lid King proposed accepting the certified accountant pending the national executive committee's amendment of the constitution (subject to the approval of the membership) in order to accept certified accounts in the future. Jo Peach seconded the proposal, which was agreed unanimously.

Item 6 Annual membership fee

It was proposed to raise the fee to £59. Geoff Roberts proposed raising it to £60. Martine Pillette seconded this proposal which was approved *nem con*. JC will send a letter to members explaining the increase.

Item 7 Restructuring the National Executive Committee

NP felt that the executive is currently too large. There are 6 regional convenors and their presence was very important, but there should be discussion about possible combinations of the duties of officers in order to reduce the size of the executive and therefore expenditure.

Item 8 Elections to National Executive Committee

Chair: Jo Peach proposed Nikki Perry as Chair and Carmel O'Hagan seconded the proposal. NP was duly elected for a further term.

Membership Secretary: Kathy Wicksteed proposed Geoff Swinn as Membership Secretary and Sarah Brooks seconded the proposal. GS was re-elected.

Communications Officer: Jenny Carpenter proposed Jo Peach as Communications Officer and Yvonne Dixon seconded the proposal. JP was elected.

Yvonne Dixon thanked the outgoing Communications Officer, David Mee, for his very interesting and worthwhile emails and alerts. NP also thanked DM, who responded by remarking that NALA was the most important organisation ever in his career as teacher and adviser. He had taken the role of Communications Officer as a way of giving back to the association and offered his hope for a thriving future. NP also thanked Dick Boatman and Phil Dahl, who had stood down as convenor for the Midlands regional group.

JC said she had had a number of moving emails from people not renewing their membership. All mentioned what an important and influential organisation NALA is. Independent advisers also felt it was more important than ever to be in such an association.

Item 9 Any Other Business

There was none.

National Association of Language Advisors Statement of Income & Expenditure for the Year Ended 31 December 2010

Bank Accounts 1 January 2010

Current Account 9168.51
Conference Account 649.41
Business Reserve Account 8164.87

17982.89

Income

Subscriptions 4700.00
Aspect Subscriptions 155.00
Donation 50.00
Surplus on Conference 1060.60
Interest Received 3.27

5968.87

Less Expenditure

Travel Expenses 3466.10
Hotel & Subsistence 2300.67
Development Plan 990.95
Website Hosting 293.75
Regional Meeting Expenses 2214.99

9266.46

Deficit for the Year (3297.59)

Bank Account at 31 December 2010

Current Account 4307.05
Conference Account 1370.01
Business Reserve Account 8168.24
Debtors 840.00

£14685.30

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Geoff Mitchell Chartered Accountants
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