

The Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR 2014

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at 12:30 pm on Saturday 14 November 2015 at the Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, London, W1S 4BS. There were eighteen members present.

1. Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Robert Anderson, conducted the meeting. He welcomed those present and gave a brief introduction highlighting the Society's publications, recent activities and ongoing projects. These activities included the summer 2015 Oxford Seminars for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry and the October 2015 Postgraduate Workshop, both held at the Maison Française, Oxford. Dr Anderson thanked the Maison Française, and its Director, Anne Simonin, for their assistance in providing a venue, catering and administrative support free of charge. He encouraged members to attend the forthcoming SHAC meeting at the new Science Museum Research Centre on 11 February 2016, where Tony Travis will be presented with the 2015 Morris Award. The next Partington Prize competition will be in 2017, with submissions invited in 2016, whilst the Rumford Scholarship and ADHOC Seminars in Cambridge and UCL are currently on hold. The Chairman also reported that SHAC's Hon. Secretary, Simon Werrett, is currently on sabbatical and thanked the Membership Secretary, Anna Simmons and Hon. Treasurer, Michael Jewess, for their assistance in covering this role in his absence. The Chairman concluded by stating that he felt SHAC was an active and efficient society and that he was very grateful to all the Officers and Council members for their assistance.

The Hon. Treasurer noted that SHAC celebrated its eightieth birthday in 2015.

2. Apologies for Absence

The following apologized for absence at the AGM: William Brock, John Christie, Ernst Homburg, Jennifer Rampling and Carlos Sorrentino

3. Presentation of Trustees Annual Report (TAR) and Receipts and Payments Accounts for 2014.

The Receipts and Payments Accounts from the Treasurer for 2014 (already approved by Council¹ and passed by the Independent Examiner), as circulated on 23.09.15, was noted. There were no questions on this or the Trustees Annual Report for 2014 (also noted), with both documents already submitted to the Charity Commission. It was pointed out that the TAR set out how the activities of the Society were to the public benefit.

4. Secretary's Report

The Secretary's report for 2014 was included in the TAR, upon which there were no questions.

5. Membership Secretary's Report

The Membership Secretary reported that SHAC's current membership stands at 276, with 173 full members, 49 retired members, 47 student members and 7 corporate members. Out of this total, 96 members are based in the UK with 180 outside of the UK. Twenty-five new members have been recruited in 2015, but a similar number have resigned or failed to renew. She also reported the death in 2015 of three long-standing members, Mel Usselman, Robin Spring and Alan Pritchard.

Any member whose subscription is due in 2016 will receive an email reminder in January 2016. The membership secretary asked if members could pay promptly and encourage their colleagues to do the same. The membership rate for 2016 remains £40 for full membership, £30 for retired membership with 10 years' standing and £25 for student membership. In 2016, members will see a few changes to the format of *Ambix* and the portal for online access to back issues as *Ambix*'s publishers, Maney, have been taken over by

¹ "Council" is identical with the Board of Trustees.

Taylor and Francis. She confirmed that the November 2015 issue of *Ambix* would be the last to appear under the Maney imprint and that an introductory meeting between representatives of Taylor and Francis and SHAC had taken place on 9 November.

6. Treasurer's Report

The treasurer highlighted that his report for 2014 is located in the Receipts and Payments Accounts circulated on 23.09.15, and referred them on matters of detail to the annotations for members. He was asked about the future of the Awards Scheme, under which applicants (making submissions between 1 March and 31 May of each year) compete for shares of a budgeted sum covering both New Scholars Awards and Subject Development Awards. The budget for the foreseeable future was likely to be maintained at or above the 2015 budget of £3650. (However, the scope for funding projects *non-competitively outside the Award Scheme* would continue to be limited compared with the years 2010-2013 inclusive when a planned substantial reduction of reserves had been executed – see the bar chart in the annotations for members to the Receipts and Payments Accounts.) Some changes had been made to the terms of the Awards Scheme in 2015 which seemed to be delivering improved value for money.

7. Transfer to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

MOTION: That the trustees of the present unincorporated association are hereby authorised to proceed with the steps set out in paragraph 17 of the paper entitled 'PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER THE SOCIETY'S ACTIVITIES FROM THE PRESENT UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATION TO A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CIO)' in the time scale they think prudent and convenient.

The Treasurer highlighted the various benefits of converting to a CIO on the basis of the draft in the paper (which in turn was based on a Charity Commission model). These included the following: the establishment of legal personality for the Society,² the reduction of personal liability of Trustees, the recital of key legal obligations in the constitution for easy reference, increased flexibility in assigning officer roles and fixing the date of the AGM, and an improved re-election cycle for Trustees. He also highlighted that under the new constitution those who had not paid their subscription by 1 July each year would cease to be a member and receive *Ambix*.

The motion regarding transfer to a CIO was proposed and passed unanimously by those present. The Hon. Treasurer noted that he had budgeted around £1,000 plus VAT for potential legal fees and that he hoped to complete the transfer to a CIO at the end of 2016, although it could be earlier. The Chairman thanked the Hon. Treasurer for his considerable efforts in preparing for the transition to a CIO.

8. Composition of Council and Officers

Dr Anderson announced that Judith Mawer was stepping down as UK Student Representative to concentrate on her new role as editor of SHAC's newsletter, *Chemical Intelligence*. He thanked her for all her work as student representative, especially organising the recent postgraduate workshop in Oxford. The list of Council members and observers, as circulated to members in September, has been updated accordingly, with Harriet Lloyd, in her capacity as Administrative Coordinator, also added as an observer. Printed copies of the updated list were made available for members to take away.

9. Any Other Business

There being no other comments from members and no other business, the meeting concluded.

Anna Simmons
Acting Honorary Secretary
24.11.2015

² Larger charities had long achieved this by incorporating themselves as companies limited by guarantee, but only with recent legislation had a vehicle (the CIO) been created which was attractive for small charities such as SHAC.