THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR ASIAN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE ARMY & NAVY CLUB,
36 PALL MALL, LONDON SW1Y 5JN, ON 9 JUNE 2015

The President of the Society, Lord Davies, opened proceedings at 6 pm by welcoming members to the Annual General Meeting. Approximately one hundred members attended. Among apologies received were those from Mrs Juliet Campbell, Mr James Hoare, Mr James McNeish, Mr Owen Moelwyn-Hughes and others.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN AND HONORARY SECRETARIES
The Chairman, Sir David John, gave his report and that of the Honorary Secretaries. He detailed members who had resigned and retiring members of Council, particularly Mr Richard Lewington, Mr Zed Cama and Mr Antony Wynn. He dealt with Monetization of Assets, Membership Issues, the Activities and Events of the Society, the Library and Archives, Asian Affairs and the Editorial Board, (where he thanked Sir Michael Pike, who had resigned as Chairman of the Board and Mr Barney Smith, who had resigned as Editor of the Journal), Medals and Awards, Tours Group and Members who had passed away during the year. He proposed and it was agreed that questions on his and the Honorary Treasurer's reports should be held over until the Honorary Treasurer's reports had been delivered. *(Since the report is to be published in the November issue of the Journal, it is not recorded here.)*

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT
Mr Neville Green, Honorary Treasurer, presented his report. *(Similarly, his report is to be published in November and is therefore not recorded here.)*

Mr David Tomlinson raised the following points on the previous reports:

- He said that he preferred the use of the word 'sell' instead of 'monetize' assets. He felt that use of the word monetize was misleading, which he took to mean 'put a value on assets;
- He noted that the Chairman had raised the issue of changing the format of the Society to a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, thus releasing Trustees from anything other than £1 of financial commitment. He suggested that perhaps the more appropriate form of Company would be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which he commended to the Society as a means of re-organisation;
- He said that the Society was clearly categorised as a small charity and, as a consequence, had very limited reporting requirements to the Charity Commission. He was not aware of the requirement for the Society's total charity funds to cover annual support costs. He had never come across that and queried the requirement as he didn't think it existed. He felt that there should be a statement from the Council as to what cover is required. He also asked whether, as a Small Charity, was it necessary to appoint and pay an independent auditor;
- Whilst subscriptions and Gift Aid did not cover costs, if one were to include investment income with this figure, all three together would cover costs.

The Chairman responded that he would look into the question of which form of company would be appropriate and investigate a CIO. He also said that he was opposed to including investment income with subscriptions and Gift Aid.

The Honorary Treasurer indicated that he would respond to Mr Tomlinson separately on the necessity to cover annual support costs. He also added that Anova had taken responsibility as an 'Independent Examiner' not 'Independent Auditor' and, as a result, their fees were minimal.

Mr Norman Cameron noted what he considered was a change of policy with the sale of some of the archives, which was unprecedented and, he felt, to be regretted. He was not able to offer a financial solution to the problems of the Society and thanked the Chairman for his remarks, but he felt that the sale had rendered invalid parts of Chapter 10 of the Society's history. He requested that the items sold be listed in a publication and the history revised. He continued that 'monetization' was an obscure term; he wanted the Council to be transparent on the method of choice of items it might decide to sell, with criteria considered other than money; He viewed these developments with unease and concern.; It was an aspect of National Heritage and he felt that we should be keeping these items in the public domain. If there were to be future sales, the criteria for choosing which items should be made clear.

The Chairman thanked him for his remarks and stated that no further sales from the Library and Archives were envisaged, apart from the unsold items, but he took the point reference criteria for the future. The items listed in the sale had already been circulated to the objectors on 27 April 2015, but we could easily put it in the next newsletter if necessary.

Mr Adrian Steger commented that, if the Society had not acted and 'if we were to have hung on to the family silver', there would be no Society, no Schools Day, nothing.

There being no further questions, the meeting formally approved both the Chairman's and the Honorary Treasurer's reports.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS
It was proposed and in the absence of objection the re-appointment was agreed of Anova, Chartered Accountants, of Anova House, Wickhurst Lane, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 3LZ, as Independent Examiners for the 2015 accounts of the Society.

RE-ELECTION AND ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL
The Chairman proposed that the meeting re-elect Mrs Zeenat Rous for a second term of three years on the Council from 2015/2018. In the absence of objection the Chairman's proposal was agreed unanimously.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS The Chairman asked the meeting if any member had any other business to raise.
Mr Green pointed out that neither he nor the Honorary Secretaries had been formally re-elected at the previous AGM.
The Chairman proposed that the meeting re-elect Mr Green as Honorary Treasurer and re-elect the current Honorary Secretaries for a further period of two years. The meeting agreed the proposal unanimously.

THE LORD DENMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE. Sir Tony Brenton KCMG, former UK Ambassador to Russia, delivered the lecture entitled:

**"Russia looks East: Or does it?*".*