

Royal Society for Asian Affairs: Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held online on 8 September 2021 at 14.00 UK time

The Chairman, Mr Frank Slevin, opened the meeting. Sixty-seven members were present.

Chairman's report

The Chairman presented the Society's Financial Statements and Trustees Report for 2020. The text of the Chairman's remarks is available from the Society's office.

The Chairman paid tribute to the Society's volunteer Librarian, Marilyn Arnott, and to the Society's Archivist, Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, who had recently retired from their positions and were awarded Honorary Life Membership in recognition of their contribution to the work of the RSAA.

Honorary Treasurer's report

The Honorary Treasurer, Mr Andrew Cartwright, presented his report, the text of which is available from the RSAA office.

Questions

One member commented that the articles in *Asian Affairs* seemed increasingly to be from academics rather than the "practitioners" who the RSAA had traditionally published. Dr Omrani said that there had been no change of policy. The scholar-soldier/businessmen/diplomats and explorers that had characterised an earlier period in the Society were less abundant than they had been and submitted few proposals, although these were welcomed. Their place had in practice been filled by academics who were more likely now to have the expertise and the funding needed. Book reviews remained an important element in the journal and were widely read. The journal's revenue was now derived mostly from institutional subscriptions and digital downloads. These audiences had been growing steadily, suggesting that the journal's output was valued.

One member asked whether Society tours were likely to resume. The CEO recalled that the board had decided in 2019 to cease offering "own-branded" tours. Destinations that, when the tours started in the early 1970s, were difficult and expensive to travel to, now formed part of many commercial tour operators' itineraries at prices that the Society could not compete with.

One member asked if meetings of the Society at London venues would resume. Although the online events were good, the social character of the Society had suffered. The Chairman and CEO confirmed that face-to-face meetings would be reinstated when possible. A first such event was scheduled for later in the month.

One member asked if a new Royal patron was being sought. The Chairman noted that portfolios were being redistributed among the senior Royals and the situation was unclear. The CEO added that the Society's "Royal" name did not entitle it to a Royal patron. George V had granted the Society the use of the "Royal" title, but it was more than fifty years later that the Prince of Wales became the Society's first Royal Patron.

Adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts

It was proposed that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020 be adopted. The proposal was agreed with fifty-seven votes in favour and none against.

Appointment of Independent Examiners

It was proposed that Prentis & Co of 115 Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1XE be reappointed as Independent Examiners for 2021. The proposal was agreed with fifty-eight votes in favour and none against.

Election of members of the board

The appointments of Sophie Ibbotson and Martin Skipper to the board in 2021 were confirmed unopposed.

Mr Robin Lamb, Dr Bijan Omrani and Dr David Taylor were elected to second terms unopposed.

There being no other business, the meeting was concluded at 14.40.