



# The Scottish Society for Psychical Research

## *Annual General Meeting*

16/01/20

From 19.30 hrs to 20.30 hrs.

Theosophy House, 17 Queens Crescent, Glasgow, G4 9BL

## **MINUTES**

Chair: Innes Smith

Secretary: Marysia Lessnau

**Members Present:** Mishka Lessnau, Clare El Ghamrawi, Maria Dunlop, Alice Montgomery, Penny Sharp, Michael McCann, Innes Smith, Stephen Bostock, Irene Loudon, Derek Doran, Lorraine Cruikshank, Lorna Brown, Paul Kelbie, Ian Shanes, Chirsty Hamilton, Dennis Davidson, Wilma Davidson, Mary Laverty, Bill Darroch

**Apologies:** Jean McDougall; Peter Broughan; Janice McAllister; Mary Donnelly; Janine Neil; Sinclair Smith

### 1. Introductory Remarks by Chair, Welcome and Apologies.

Chair Welcomed all for attending. Despite attendance amongst the membership being *slightly down*, there were 6 visitors in attendance, so overall attendance *had increased*. All were thanked for attending, but non-members were reminded not to vote.

Members were supplied with a copy of the most recent signed off accounts (Year Ending NOV 2018), the Constitution of the Society and also the Minutes of the previous AGM (Jan 2019).

### 2. Approval of Previous Minute AGM 2019

Members were given the opportunity to read, reflect upon and suggest any amendments to the Minutes. Apart from one typographical error, no amendments were suggested and a vote was taken to approve the Minute.

Proposed by Marysia Lessnau. Seconded by Stephen Bostock. For 15. Against. 0 Abstentions. 0

(Of those members in attendance, three were NOT MEMBERS at the time of 2019's AGM & one member was NOT PRESENT during the official business of last year's AGM, therefore, they would not be entitled to vote on the Minutes).

### 3. Re-election and election of Council Members.

Chair explained that the Constitution required a third of all current trustees to stand down – and if willing – be available for re-election. There were also two new trustees up for nomination and election.



Paul Kelbie stood down and was not available for re-election

Chair, on behalf of Council and the Society as a whole, thanked PK for his service.

Jean McDougall stood down and was available for re-election

Proposed by Innes Smith, Seconded by Marysia Lessnau.

19 Votes in Favour. 0 Against. 0 Abstentions. Unanimous.

Vote to Elect Irene Loudon

Proposed by Mishka Lessnau, Seconded by Penny Sharp.

19 Votes in Favour. 0 Against. 0 Abstentions. Unanimous.

Vote to Elect Michael McCann

Proposed by Innes Smith, Seconded by Paul Kelbie.

19 Votes in Favour. 0 Against. 0 Abstentions. Unanimous.

4. Proposal

One proposal was put before the membership to vote on, which due to being an amendment to the legal status of the charity, needed to be passed by a two-thirds majority.

Chair made some introductory comments regarding the need for change – namely to protect the liabilities of the trustees in an increasingly litigious world. At present, the charity was an unincorporated organisation and Council sought approval from the membership to change this. Chair emphasised that Council felt strongly about this and had recently voted unanimously to put this proposal before the membership.

The Treasurer, Penny Sharp, explained the two potential options open to the society – either to become a 'SCIO' or a Charitable Company. The various benefits and costs of each option were weighed up, including what would be required in setting up both new legal entities – and any on-going obligations.

Chair and the Treasurer emphasised that the operation, activity and aims of the new legal entity would be exactly the same as the old unincorporated charity, although the status would change. Council would work with the Charity Regulator (OSCR) and take legal advice to ensure we made the best decision. The Proposal was as follows ~

We propose:

**That the Scottish Society for Psychological Research changes from being an unincorporated body to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation or a charitable company.**

The trustees will take the necessary steps and legal advice, both from lawyers and from the charity regulator (OSCR), to ensure that the new incorporated body *best protects*:



- a. *the vision of the founders of the charity*
- b. *the aspirations of the members*
- c. *and the well-being of the trustees.*

Members understand that the legal status of the charity being changed means that the charity founded in 1987 *will end* and a *new legal incorporation* will begin.

The new incorporation will be called 'The Scottish Society for Psychical Research' and - under legal guidance - we will migrate the current constitution across to the new articles of association.

*Date 05/12/19*

Proposed by Penny Sharp, Seconded by Marysia Lessnau.  
19 Votes in Favour. 0 Against. 0 Abstentions. Unanimous.

#### 5. Secretary's Report for the last Year

Mishka Lessnau presented an account of the past year's activities, thanking all those who took part (members, visitors and speakers) and thanked the Glasgow Theosophical Society and Trust Your Breath for allowing us to meet in their rooms.

As of this AGM, ML noted that the Membership numbers stood at 46 and our Mailing List was 113.

The Membership were given an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the accounts: no comments or matters raised.

Chair invited the Membership to join him thanking ML for all her hard work over the past year.

#### 6. Treasurer's Report

PS provided an overview of the last scrutinised accounts (YE Nov 30 2018), noted that despite the unexpected legal fees, the charity still made a profit. PS invited questions from the membership but none were forthcoming.

##### Proposal to Approve the Accounts YE 2018

Proposed by Innes Smith. Seconded by Derek Doran.  
19 Votes in Favour. 0 Against. 0 Abstentions. Unanimous.

The Treasurer also read out the up-to-date bank balance of the society.

The Balance stood at: £7346.26 (*Excluding the £50 Cash Float*)

Chair invited the Membership to join him thanking PS for all her hard work over the past year.



## 7. Presidential Address

IS reflected on the Society being in its thirty-third year and again expressed the society's gratitude to the Glasgow Theosophical Society and Trust Your Breath for being so accommodating. Without them, he stated, the SSPR would not be viable.

IS also thanked Council Members for all their hard work for the past year – none of the activities of the Society would function without their efforts – and also thanked the Members. IS also thanked the visitors for their interest and support.

IS commented on the positive benefit of the internet and social networking sites and how well advertising on Facebook had worked for the society: greatly increasing visitor numbers to our lectures.

IS also remarked that *despite* the ability of the internet to connect people, many people in society felt isolated and alone – and this social health crisis evidently had an impact on psychical research. IS stated, *"I mention this because of the cases we have taken on this year – all our clients, young and old, lived alone. Correlation is not causation. But a lack of support – in all cases – seems to be the real problem – not the paranormal.*

*We cannot take the human out of human experience. We strive to have a duty of care to our clients. But a line must be drawn as to what we can – and cannot do as investigators.*

*But as educators – we can join the debate – as how to best take the fear out of whatever troubles people – whether it's paranormal or not. And in that – maybe our most constructive contribution lies".*

## 8. Cases

Since the last AGM, the SSPR has had 7 contacts. 6 via our website / email. 1 via Facebook. 3 of which did not reply to an appeal for further info.

In total: 4 Cases – up from last year. 3 of which required visits/face-to-face interviews.

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The AGM was brought to a close – all members and trustees were thanked again for their attendance and support – and the informal part of the meeting began: a far more in-depth explanation of the Cases the society had taken on (led by ML, DD and IS), followed by a wide-ranging discussion on contributing causes, factors and possible interpretations of the phenomena/experiences reported by clients.

Minute proposed by Marysia Lessnau

Seconded by Mary Laverty

For 13.

Against 0.

Abstentions 12 (*those not present at meeting*).