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## **BAJS Annual General Meeting – 15 July 2014**

Trinity College Dublin

**Present:** Maria Diemling (Treasurer), Larry Ray, Zuleika Rodgers (President), Andrea Schatz, Helen Spurling (Secretary) and members.

**Apologies:** Nathan Abrams, Lutz Doering, Mark Gilfillan (Bulletin Editor), Francois Guesnet, Hannah Holtschneider (Web Officer), Daniel Langton, James Renton, Alison Salvesen

### **1. Welcome, Apologies and Matters Arising**

Helen Spurling opened the meeting and thanked Zuleika Rodgers for an excellent conference this year.

### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the previous AGM at Kent.

### **3. New BAJIS members**

Helen Spurling reported that 22 new applications had been received since the AGM at Kent. The list of applicants recommended by the committee for membership was circulated, all of whom were duly approved.

### **4. Committee and Officers**

The approval of the AGM was requested for the election of Andrea Schatz to the committee for a period of five years, which was granted. Charlotte Hempel was approved for the position of President Elect 2016. Helen Spurling thanked both Alison Salvesen and Lutz Doering, who were leaving the BAJIS committee, for their dedicated service over several years.

### **5. BAJIS Essay Prizes**

Helen Spurling reported that there were 14 entries for the essay prize this year, which consisted of 8 UG entries and 6 PG entries from a range of institutions in the UK. One UG winner was announced and no PG award was granted this year. The winner was Louise Pedersen (University of Nottingham) on the subject of 'The Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum: An Assessment of the 'Orphan Experience' 1841-1914'.

### **6. President's report**

Zuleika Rodgers reported that the conference had gone very well indeed, with some excellent panel sessions. ZR also noted that we were very lucky with the two keynote speakers (Paul Franks and Moshe Halbertal), who both delivered stimulating lectures. Special thanks were given to Maria Diemling for coordinating payment for the conference, and ZR also thanked the students who had proven to be so helpful in the smooth running of the conference and who had volunteered their time for free. On behalf of the membership, Sacha Stern thanked ZR for a highly successful conference.

### **7. Treasurer's report**

Maria Diemling presented a financial report for the year, which showed that BAJIS is in a healthy position financially. Income for the conference had been supplemented by funding from publishers. MD reported on the recent campaign to encourage members to pay their subscription. This had brought in some money, and tidied up our membership database as a result. However, MD noted that subscriptions are too frequently unpaid by members, and she requested that anyone with outstanding subscription dues should get in touch with her. Suggestions from members on how to improve the system were welcomed.

## **8. Secretary's report**

Helen Spurling reported on the establishment of a BAJIS archive at the Anglo-Jewish archives in Southampton. The archive would include details of previous conferences and financial reports on the state of the association. The archive would be a deposit for 25 years in the first instance. HS then noted that the committee had also been approached about REF nominations and had been able to contribute to ensuring the representation of Jewish Studies on particular panels. She also requested that members pass on updates to their contact details. HS hoped that recent mail and email communications had been received and encouraged more members to communicate by email.

HS then moved on to the proposed revisions to membership procedures. The committee proposed that: 1) applicants can apply to join the association without the need for references; and 2) applicants can be granted membership by two members of the BAJIS committee (normally the Secretary and the Treasurer) without waiting for approval at the AGM. The text of the Constitution would be amended as follows:

“Application for membership shall be made to both the Secretary and Treasurer. Applications shall be considered by at least two Committee members, and, if approved, membership shall commence upon payment of the subscription.”

Sacha Stern presented a concern that the proposals could affect the academic integrity of the association, and noted that it was important to both maintain and protect the membership. There was some discussion over the merits and disadvantages of the proposals amongst the membership and Zuleika Rodgers emphasised that applications would continue to be monitored. The new proposals were passed by a majority vote.

## **9. Web officer's report**

Everything is going well with the website, and there is a healthy amount of usage. Members are encouraged to pass on announcements to Hannah Holtschneider for posting on the website. Members are also reminded to sign up for automatic notifications at <http://britishjewishstudies.org/>.

## **10. Bulletin editor's report**

Helen Spurling reported on behalf of Mark Gilfillan. HS noted that the Bulletin was out and the committee hoped that members enjoyed reading our news and successes over the last year. HS also thanked MG for all his hard work in producing the Bulletin this year. HS reminded the membership that the Jewish Studies Survey would be published online from now on (so easily searchable) and it is hoped the results would be published in the Autumn. For members not at the conference, the Bulletin would be sent out with the next mail circular and the new policy would be continued of sending copies only to members who have paid their subscription.

## **11. Conference 2015**

Helen Spurling reported on behalf of Daniel Langton. HS noted that the theme for next year's conference is 'Atheism, Scepticism and Challenges to Monotheism' and will be held on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at the University of Manchester. HS drew attention to the Call for Papers, which was published in the Bulletin and emphasised that papers from other areas would also be accepted.

## **12. Strategic aims and direction of BAJIS**

Helen Spurling announced that the committee has been moving forward in exploring ways in which it can expand membership of the Association and grow its income in order to undertake more projects to advance Jewish Studies in the UK and Ireland. Input from the membership was welcome in these discussions. The committee proposed to establish a BAJIS studentship for a postgraduate researcher to support the activities of BAJIS. The studentship would run for one year in the first instance from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 and will be for £1500. The awardee must be a registered PhD student working in the field of Jewish Studies but can be based at any university in the UK and Ireland. The aim of the studentship is for the holder to contribute to the administrative organisation and activities of BAJIS, with specific projects determined by the Committee, and in this way provide valuable academic administrative experience, career development and networking opportunities. It is intended that the studentship will be a significant professional development opportunity for a postgraduate considering an academic career in Jewish Studies. In order to fund the studentship, and so enlarge the activities of the association, the committee requested that the AGM approve raising the subscription rates to cover the cost of financing this initiative. The proposed rates were: Ordinary Members – £40.00; Associate Members – £25.00; Student/Retired Members – £15.00. Following questions from the membership about the studentship, the proposed rise in subscription rates was passed by a majority vote.

## **13. Date of next meeting**

The next AGM will take place during the 2015 conference in Manchester.

provisional minutes, 17/08/14