

Minutes of ARMA Annual General Meeting, held at the Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh

Thursday 25 May 2006 at 17.30

Chair: Peter Townsend

Minutes: Nigel Billsbrough

Present:

Patrice Ajai-Ajagbe, Janet Ball, Sheena Bateman, Kellie Brain, Peter Brooks, Jonathan Cant, Ian Carter, Deborah Cash, Phil Clare, Carol Clugston, Lee-Ann Coleman, Rachel Day, Linsey Dickson, Ross Dowsett, Tim Edwards, Deborah Froud, Claire Gauld, Alice Gee, Yasmin Glover, Anna Grey, Rosemary Hatch, Steff Hazlehurst, Simon Kerridge, Stephanie Laidlaw, David Langley, Nick Lewin, Sarah Manning-Press, Pauline Muya, Kate Nimmo, Clive Randall, Kerry Revel, Jen Shearer, Maggy Taylor, Antony Weir, Melaku Wolde-Michael.

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting of the Association. No apologies for absence had been received.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous AGM held at the Thistle Hotel, Brighton, on 19 May 2005 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the proceedings and were signed as such by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising not covered elsewhere

There were no matters arising.

4. Annual Report 2005-2006 including Financial Report

All members [present] had received a copy of the Annual Report. In brief it had been another highly successful year for ARMA. Membership was now approaching 1000, an increase of almost 250 in the year. Turnover had risen to over £220k and over 700 delegates had attended ARMA events including almost 200 at last year's Annual Conference held in Brighton which, for the first time, had attracted much appreciated sponsorship.

Because of the firm financial footing the Association now enjoyed we had been able to appoint a part-time Executive Administrator, Rosemary Hatch, and set up a physical office, to undertake the support work of the Association. Rosemary's tremendous commitment is much appreciated by members and Executive Committee members alike.

We have launched our new Mentoring Scheme and so far four pairings have been established with more in the pipeline.

We continue to promote our Bursary Scheme to assist members' attendance at professional development events which they might not otherwise be able to access. Two awards have been granted in the past year.

A full programme of training events has been provided throughout the year. Some were repeats of previous events, others were introduced for the first time. These included our first ever study tour to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and to Brussels, which was in conjunction with the UK Research Office (UKRO). Both were very much appreciated by attendees. In January we ran our first ever residential workshop at Warwick for experienced managers. Potential delegates had been invited to submit expressions of interest to ensure an appropriate mix of attendees.

Our international collaborations are increasingly important with members in attendance at several international conferences. We continue to play an active part in the development of the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) and were particularly pleased to welcome members from our sister organisations to this year's Annual Conference.

Finally, during the year, the Executive Committee, after detailed consultation with our solicitors and accountants, had decided to seek the status of a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) for the Association. This was to limit the personal liability of Executive Committee members and members, to assist the Association in its increasingly large financial transactions and would offer more transparency to members on the handling of the Association's assets. A Special General Meeting held earlier in the day had unanimously agreed the proposal to take this forward.

There were no comments from the floor on the Annual Report.

The Treasurer commented on the Financial Report. Turnover in the year had increased by some 57% and the Association had generated a surplus during the year on its activities in excess of £42k. This had helped restore our reserves to a more reasonable level after last year's significant expenditure on the rebranding exercise. Individual membership fees had remained steady but group membership fees had almost doubled. Income from events had also increased dramatically.

With dedicated, paid support in place, most of the financial transactions were now undertaken by the Executive Administrator and improved back office functionality on the web site also greatly assisted the Executive Treasurer in the execution of their duties.

However, with the move to CLG status we would have to adopt a system of accrual accounting. New banking arrangements would need to be put in place and the existing bank accounts wound down and eventually closed.

There being no questions from the members the accounts were unanimously adopted by the meeting.

5. Executive Committee Election Results

These were tabled at the meeting. Seven valid nominations had been received for five vacancies on the Executive Committee. However, one candidate had withdrawn from the election prior to the count. Nigel Bilsbrough, David Langley, Jonathan Cant and Anthony Weir were duly elected to serve for three years until 31 May 2009 and Sheena Bateman was elected to serve for two years until 31 May 2008. The Chair offered a warm welcome to those members newly elected to the Executive Committee and wished to record the Association's appreciation to those members who had left the Executive Committee during the year, John O'Dowd and Helen Stochaj.

In addition it was noted that Ian Carter would take over as Chair of the Association until 31 May 2007 following the resignation of Peter Townsend, Pauline Muya would take over the role of Deputy Chair (External Relations) until 31 May 2008 and Simon Kerridge would take over the role of Executive Secretary until 31 May 2009.

6. Future Plans

The Chair outlined the main future plans that the Association intended to pursue:

- The next issue in the Association's Occasional Paper Series, *Issues in Research Management and Administration* (IRMA) is scheduled for publication in July. Members were encouraged to suggest topics for future issues and anyone wishing to take a more active role in producing an issue would be warmly welcomed.
- Following the success of the workshop for experienced research managers in January a new two day residential event aimed at experienced administrators is being held in Durham in July. Potential delegates will be asked to submit expressions of interest.

- In an attempt to meet the ever increasing demand for our Induction training we are trialling the licensing of training materials to enable members' institutions to deliver locally. In addition a condensed, one day variant of the Induction Workshop, the Fundamentals course, had been run on the day preceding this year's Annual Conference and had been very well received by the 42 delegates attending.
- This year's Annual Induction Workshop's programme is being reviewed in light of the Fundamentals Course and changes introduced last year to offer parallel sessions of greater interest to colleagues not necessarily within the HE sector.
- It is hoped to develop and expand the idea of Executive Forums as an appropriate vehicle to deliver training to our members. These are small scale events to facilitate frank discussion on a couple of chosen topics run under Chatham House rules. The first one had taken place on the day preceding this year's Annual Conference and had been deemed a great success by attendees.
- Finally, following the membership's unanimous support for the motion proposed at an earlier Special General Meeting to dissolve the existing Unincorporated Association and to transfer its assets to a newly created Company Limited by Guarantee, this would be the focus of the Executive Committee's attention in the immediate future. It would mean running parallel systems in the coming year but it was intended that all necessary formalities would be completed before the end of the year.

There were no further comments from the meeting on the future plans.

7. Any Other Business

Ian Carter, incoming Chair of the Association, wished to record a vote of thanks to the following:

Rossana Dowsett, who was stepping down as Treasurer after three years. During Ross's careful stewardship the Association had grown tremendously. She had also played a significant role in bringing about the transfer of status to that of a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Nigel Bilsbrough was, due to constitutional constraints, stepping down as Secretary. Nigel has provided many years of detailed and dedicated service as the Association's Secretary which was greatly appreciated. He was, however, continuing to serve the Executive Committee as an ordinary member.

Peter Townsend, who was stepping down as Chair of the Association. Peter had held the Chair for two years, perhaps the most significant period in the Association's history. Membership numbers and events provided had both seen tremendous increases; we had appointed an Executive Administrator which had greatly enhanced the service we were now able to offer to members; we had successfully managed a major strategic change in the rebranding exercise; and we had started the transition to new company status. Peter's leadership and dedication to the Association had played a major part in our success.

There being no other business the Chair thanked Ian for his kind remarks, members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 17.50.

Nigel Bilsbrough,
ARMA Secretary
31 May 2006