



AGM MINUTES

Saturday 31st January 2009, starting at 11am

The Education Centre at the Royal Geographical Society

1. Apologies

The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting.

Apologies were received from the following Members of the Council of the Society.

Liz Brookes, Nick Haddock, Lt Col John Kedar, Alastair Macdonald, Piers Marlow-Thomas, Derek Marshall, Matt Tinsley, Richard Wood

Apologies were received from the following Members of the Society

Rod Hartley, Lt Col Jon Fleming OBE, Derek Fordham, George Band, Ade Harris, Chris Horobin, Helen Turton, Sarah Dunne

2. Minutes of the AGM 26th January 2008

2.1 The minutes of the previous AGM were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed by Tony Whiting, Seconded by Michael Reeve.

2.2 Matters arising from those minutes

Item 5d. Marketing and in particular focus on marketing to Schools has received a great deal of attention in the past year.

Item 10. Amendments to the Memoranda and Articles have now been formally logged with and accepted by the Charities Commission.

3. The Chairman's report for the period February 2008 to January 2009

The Chairman (Teddy Watson) gave his report.

At the AGM in January 2008 he had outlined three aims for the Society. To expand the intake, to open our doors widely to all of Society, and to run in a more business-like manner.

The Council of BSES has been most active in this process. Additional members have been co-opted to the Council bringing much high level expertise. A great deal of work has been done on financial analysis, modelling and planning. We have undertaken a review of our Marketing, and have put a great deal more effort into our marketing in recognition of the Global financial situation. Science remains at the core of our activities, and will be a key focus going forward.

We have restructured the Committees of the Society. These are now Finance and Marketing, Expeditions, Fundraising and the Chairman's Strategic Committee. There is renewed focus on Corporate Governance. A business plan has been developed for the next five years. This evolving document will allow the Society to plan and to be better prepared for the future.

This will allow the Society to progress with better financial analysis and planning and significant development of marketing activities, and particularly development of our outreach programmes into less affluent areas of our society. The Society's committees have been restructured with renewed focus on Corporate Governance. We are especially aware that we must show the clear public benefit that is derived from our activities.

The Chairman offered his thanks and those of the Society to the Staff team, The Members of Council and the many others who have freely given their time and effort.



4. The Treasurer's report for the period February 2008 to January 2009

The Treasurer (Jeremy Moss) reported from his report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

A difficult year had been forecast and had turned out to be the case. There have been many operational and expedition based challenges.

The Finance and Marketing Committee has met monthly in the past year. The main focus has been on better forecasting, deployment of greater marketing effort and resources, and a better understanding of the financial drivers and risks faced by the Society.

We have amended the financial year to bring expense into the same financial year as the Expeditions to which they relate, as well as to the key marketing periods. We have reviewed risk management and insurances, and also our investment strategy.

Marketing focus has changed to include Regional Marketing co-ordinators, increased use of the internet (Facebook etc). At this time sales forecasts are promising, but this picture will continue to evolve until April. We will have a clearer picture at the end of February.

Financial modelling has been significantly developed, and this has given us a far better understanding of what expeditions work best for the Society from this perspective.

The financial result for the 16 months to October 2008 is a loss of £126K. This is derived from fewer YEs than forecast, and investment losses of £90K. Fundraising has exceeded targets. The deficit for the summer expeditions has been offset by an insurance claim of £41K relating to the South Georgia Expedition. The movement on reserves is therefore from £442K to £316K, which is adequate for ongoing viability in the coming financial year.

The 16 month period, in which 11 expeditions took place, makes financial comparisons with previous 12 month periods difficult, however trends are higher depreciation in 2008, higher capital expenditure in 2007, and higher income and expenditure overall relating to more deployed expeditions.

The accounts were unanimously accepted by the meeting. Their acceptance was proposed by Dr Ian Ashwell and seconded by Ben Stephens.

The meeting agreed to leave authorisation of the Auditors remuneration to the Council of BSES. The appointment of Spofforths LLP was approved by the meeting, having been proposed by Jeremy Moss and seconded by Tony Whiting. The Auditors will be invited to a future Finance and Marketing Committee meeting of the Society.

Chris Blessington asked that the thanks of the Society to the Finance and marketing Committee be recorded.

5.1 Expeditions Committee Report

The Chairman of the Expeditions Committee, Nigel Harling, and the Executive Director, Will Taunton-Burnet (WTB) reported.

Nigel Harling summarised the aims of the Expeditions Committee. The Committee has been streamlined with specific responsibilities defined and delegated, in particular for Expedition Science. The Committee works to a two to three year planning cycle. Expedition destinations are being considered in line with the five year plan for the Society. Destination choices, in particular the possibilities for back to back expeditions are in mind. Embedded long term complementary science projects remain the priority in the early stages of expedition planning.

It is proposed to investigate shorter and younger expeditions. The Assistant Leader and Leadership development programme will be reviewed and refined. We aim to strengthen the expedition specific marketing.



5.2 Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director, Will Taunton-Burnet reported on the operational activities of the Society.

The report covered the 2008 expeditions and the planned destinations for 2009 and 2010, as well as the Chief Leaders selected for these. Marketing initiatives are broadly under three headings; web based, from the BSES network and from direct exposure to Schools. Approximately twice as many school talks will be delivered in 2008 and early 2009 in support of recruitment for the 2009 expeditions. Greater emphasis is now put on the enquiry follow up and application closure processes.

Our strategy for the next three years involves three stages. Stabilisation of finances and recruitment in the year to October 2009. In 2010 the intention is to create demand for the expedition places we will offer. By 2011 we plan to have developed a strong platform for growth of the Society.

Operationally we have conducted a review and rationalisation of our organisational structure, finance, marketing and Expeditions planning functions. Over the coming 3 years we plan to offer three main products; GAP, YE summer and younger YE expeditions. We will retain our focus on Expedition Science, Youth development, Outreach programmes and wilderness challenge and adventure. Ongoing development projects include these areas and in particular, marketing development harnessing the power of the internet and the web.

Development and operational concerns for the coming year (especially in respect of the prevailing financial climate) are our marketing reach, financial awareness and control, challenges to fundraising, participant cost, Leader availability, Leader workload, our reliance on volunteers and the shrinking of the wildernesses.

Finally WTB thanked the BSES staff, The Chairman and Council, Committee Members, the Expedition Chief Leaders and the Leader Teams and the great many volunteers, sponsors and supporters who have contributed so much in the past year.

6. The election and re-election of Council Members

Members co-opted to Council during the year are Nigel Harling, Piers Marlow-Thomas and Doug Oppenheim. The co- option was noted and all were unanimously accepted as full members of Council by the meeting.

The following have resigned during the year; Jon Fleming, Richard Williams.

The following are standing down at this AGM; Alastair Macdonald, Nick Thompson and Michael Reeve.

The Chairman thanked all members for their contribution and efforts for the society.

No proposals or applications for new members of Council were received.

7. To receive the names of new members of the Society from the 2008 expeditions.

A list of the new members of the Society from the 2008 Expeditions was received by the meeting. All were accepted unanimously.



8. To receive the names of the Chief Leaders of the 2009 and 2010 Expeditions.

The Society gave thanks to the Chief Leaders of the 2008 Expeditions.

The names of the 2009 Chief Leaders were received by the meeting and unanimously accepted.

Svalbard Spring (GAP) – Ade Harris

Amazon – Ewan Laurie

Ladakh – Chris Horobin

Greenland – Pete Allison

Kayak (Norway) – Mike Devlin

Leadership Programme (Norway) – Helen Turton

Advance notification of the Chief leaders for the 2010 expeditions was also given.

9. Proposals and resolutions submitted by October 31st 2008.

No proposals or resolutions were tabled.

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 11.51.

Date of next meeting Saturday 30th January 2010 at 11am. The Royal Geographical Society



10. Open forum discussion

The Chairman introduced the open forum part of the meeting and invited comments or questions from the assembled members of the Society.

Clare Jackson - what are our competitors doing? How do we compare?

WTB. Competitor and Customer research is an area that requires more work. We are aware that our product is different but that we market to the same people. We understand our sales efforts to be to three groups. The Schools and their staff (as gatekeepers to young people), the young people themselves, and to their parents. One major aim of the Regional Marketing co-ordinators are intended to develop longer term relationships with Schools and their key personnel.

Ben Stephens (BS) - Fundraising activities and the outreach programme. (Next Generation)

What are our plans? How are they communicated to the wider audience?

WTB. The Next Generation programme has evolved from a pilot to a meaningful programme in the last three years. The Chairman asked for the significant contributions of Michael Baggs and Neil Laughton to be noted and recognised by the meeting. The need to promote this project more, tied to fundraising is understood, but is developing well within our limited means. We aim for 10% of our total intake to come from the Next Generation programme.

Teddy Watson (PEFW). There is no doubt that this programme is of massive benefit to the Society. The programme has followed a natural growth pattern over three years and steady progress remains our intention.

Mike Ridd (MR). What happens to the young people after participation?

Michael Baggs (MB). This is the third year. Participants from year 1 have now returned and are mentoring participants this year. This trickle down effect of their story is developing and inspiring peers and others in their neighbourhoods. Newsletter handouts were made available to the meeting.

Chris Blessington (CB) Vouched for the massive changes and development of the young people, and the importance of the programme to BSES. He counselled for organic rather than exponential growth.

David Williams (DW) Leaders need to have awareness and some degree of training to handle these young people. BSES leaders are not trained social workers.

PEFW. This is an important issue. We must accept that there will be hiccups and if there are not, must ask the question if we are pushing ourselves / the programme hard enough.

Dr Ian Ashwell (IA) This programme fills a big gap in BSES provision, and is therefore a very promising venture.

Andy Toal (AT). A bank of information about this programme must be made available for the benefit of local Government and Councils.

Tori James (TJ) London Olympics 2012 - Education Programme. Tori suggested alignment with this initiative, and will proceed with introductions to explore feasibility and benefit.

Chris Furse (CF). Keen to find ways to develop relationships and spread the word in Kent.

Peter Steer (PS) BSES has in the past taken blind and deaf young people. These positive examples could be re-engaged to our benefit to sell and promote our activities. Places have been underwritten by local authorities in the past.



Tony Whiting (TW). The Government initiative Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) has funding available, which we should be tapping into. Therefore we need to show what Youth development we have achieved.

WTB Our Youth development model has evolved with the needs of the end user (the workplace) in mind. There is a requirement for far greater data and capture of evidence and this is anticipated in the coming year.

PEFW It is clear that this is an area for further development. A number of discussions are in progress.

Clare Jackson (CJ) There is a requirement for greater communication with Council Members.

WTB / PEFW We are aware of this. A Council area of the website is available, but regular updates to Council can be easily produced. Newsletters published on a more regular basis will help us to keep the wider Society adequately informed and therefore better able to help us.

Jean Sinclair (JS) Greater awareness and use of Facebook etc would be appreciated. The need for a communications manager is developing with the increased use of and development of internet / web based / online social networking sites and marketing channels.

WTB. This is work in progress

There being no further business the open forum meeting closed at 12:35 pm.