

Retired Prison Governors Association

A section of The Prison Governors Association

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Friday 29th March 2024 at 11.00 hours via Zoom

Present:

Graham Smith - Chair
Jan Thompson - Minutes
Graham Mumby-Croft
Harry Brett
Paul Laxton
Roger Outram
Kevin Bilson

1. Apologies.

None

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th October 2023 were accepted as a true record. Proposed by: Harry Brett, Seconded by: Kevin Billson and agreed by all committee members.

3. Matters Arising.

Reference	Action	Responsibility	Progress
6.10.22	To continue to contact previous newsletter contributors inviting/encouraging them to submit more articles for publication.	Roger Outram	Ongoing
12.10.22	To look at the membership list for a further name/s to be approached for joining the committee.	All	Ongoing

Reference	Action	Responsibility	Progress
6(i).5.23	To include a sentence in the membership letter to potential new members reference that we are looking to co-opt new members onto the committee	Harry Brett	Ongoing
4.10.23	To include an article in the Newsletter asking members to check if they are paying the correct subscription rate.	Graham Mumby-Croft/Paul Laxton	Completed. Included as part of the Treasurers' Report and published on the website.
9.10.23	Include an item on the 2024 AGM Agenda: Members to put forward any resolutions for the AGM	Jan Thompson	Ongoing. AP* Paul Laxton to include this in the Spring Newsletter. Waiting on confirmation of time/ date of AGM
3.1.24.(i)	To undertake a costing exercise in regard to the savings to be made in printing and postal costs incorporating those members opting for an email version of the newsletter.	Graham Mumby-Croft	Completed
3.1.24.(ii)	After liaison with G M-C, to send a draft copy of the spring newsletter to all committee members.	Paul Laxton	Completed

4. Treasurers Report - GMC

The Treasurer sent out his report in advance of the meeting. In it he wrote that at the beginning of the 2023 financial year (Jan 23 to Dec 23) the current account stood at a balance of £15,541.93 and at the end of the period it stood at £14,981.57 - **a deficit of £559.96 for the year**. The total income for the year was £5121.00 and the total expenditure for the year was £5680.96. This deficit could partly be due to the membership consolidation exercise recently undertaken by Graham, Harry, Roger and Kevin which culminated in approximately 20 'members' payments not being received in the financial year. He went to say that if our income and outgoings stayed much the same

we would be looking at an annual loss of between £500 and £1000 per year without any action being taken.

Our outgoings remain fairly stable although the cost of postage is due to rise in April and the cost of printing has gone up this year, so the cost of producing the newsletter has risen (and will continue to rise). This shows the value of the recent exercise undertaken asking members if they would be willing to receive future newsletters via email. If the 80 members who agreed to this went ahead with the proposal, it would reduce the deficit to an absolute minimum which would enable us to continue without having to increase the subscription rate. The aim is to try to hold back any increase in subscription rates for as long as possible. A discussion took place reference the size of the newsletter and the cost per copy. Roger asked if there was an optimum run, i.e. if the number of copies got so small that it became more expensive to produce. Graham replied that the printers had approximated that if we had 400 copies it would cost around £2.50 per copy but if that number dropped to 250 copies the cost would rise to about £3.00 per copy. So, in effect, reduced numbers are more expensive to produce but this is outweighed by the loss in additional postage costs. If the 80 members were to receive email copies of the newsletter the overall saving per edition of the newsletter would be approximately £150 - £170.

The treasurer formally proposed that: From the autumn newsletter 2024 onwards, we go to email distribution of the newsletter to those members indicating they are happy to receive it as such. This was seconded by Roger Outram and agreed by all committee members.

AP* Paul Laxton: To include the above statement in the spring newsletter.

AP* Harry Brett: To contact and inform those members who agreed to receive the newsletter via email that this will start with the Autumn edition if they still agree.

A brief discussion took place reference a differential subscription rate for those receiving an email version of the newsletter. The treasurer formally proposed that: We will not change to differential subscription rates. This was seconded by Jan Thompson and agreed by all committee members.

Graham continued that the accounts for 2023 had now been audited and signed off. The document will be forwarded to the PGA who publish our figures along with their balance to Conference.

5. Membership Report - HB

Harry gave an update of the membership numbers and stated that the current membership stands at 361, which comprises of 308 members and 53 non-paying associate members. Ten members were removed from the list as they had not made any payment in 2023. All had been either emailed or written to and, as a result, some resigned although the others did not respond at all.

There have been 8 member deaths since the AGM:

John Dovell

Peter Quinn

William Thompson
Douglas Moon
Stuart Millikin
Roy Smith
REV James Anderson
Ken Alderson.

Harry also mentioned the death of 5 non-members who were probably well known to some members:

Norman Halliday
Keith Lawson
Gary Pavey
Aidrian Turner
Ernie Foster

There were 3 returned newsletters but, on a positive note, we have had 8 new paying members.

Graham Mumby-Croft mentioned that there was possibly a new Verse Package on the horizon, as mentioned in the latest PGA Bulletin. The question was asked if these people would join the RPGA as some may still be quite young. A brief discussion took place on how (or even if) we would find out the names and whether we could contact them. Harry said that if they were PGA members then James Bryant would let him know their names and their establishment and Harry would send them an application form via the establishment. He also mentioned that there is an article about the RPGA in the PGA diary which includes his contact details. Roger also mentioned that there is an application form on the website too.

6. Website Update - RO

Roger said that the website is going from strength to strength. Harry keeps him posted regarding the membership so he manages to keep that list up to date. He continued by saying that over the last twelve months we've had 405 visits to the website, which works out at an average of 33 per month.

Interestingly, there were 18 new visitors to the site in November following the publication of the Autumn Newsletter, which appears to be bringing people to the site. The website provides a good archive if people want to look back at anything.

In regard to the newsletter, Roger said that apart from Bob Duncan people are not writing to us, in spite of asking them to, and we may need to review the letters section and fill that space with something else as we won't be able to rely on Bob's contributions for ever!

7. Newsletter - PL

Paul mentioned that he does get a few pieces from Brendon but they are nothing like the length we have had before. He also said that articles from Peter Atkinson have been very good. In regard to Harry's membership report and the number of members now being 361, Paul thought that we should probably reduce the print size from 400 to 375 for the spring newsletter. When Harry gives Paul the final tally of those members opting to receive the newsletter via email, the print size will probably be reduced again for the autumn issue.

A discussion took place about an article received from John Ramwell reference the (Nurse) Lucy Letby case. Graham Mumby-Croft asked whether we should publish this article due to there being an ongoing appeal by Lucy Letby against her conviction, which is due to be heard in April, and the fact that there are still several enquiries going on about the case. Following an in-depth discussion, the decision was made to publish the article with a disclaimer that it did not necessarily reflect the views of the RPGA.

AP* Paul Laxton: To publish a general disclaimer in the newsletter which will cover all articles.

8. Update on Newsletter Survey of Membership - GMC/HB

It was decided that this had more or less been covered in the earlier Treasurers' report, Membership report and Newsletter report and no-one had anything more to add.

9. RPGA and CSPA - PL/HB

Harry said that he had just been to the National Pensioners Convention biannual conference at Stone (near Stoke) which proved to be very interesting. The motions that were put forward were centred around better transport and tax thresholds. The pre-tax threshold has not changed since 2021 and is not destined to go up until 2028. It is feared that another rise in state pension would see pensioners paying tax on their state pension - maybe a case of giving pensioners an increase in the form of the triple lock on one hand but taking it back in tax on the other hand!!

He continued to say that CSPA membership is a problem. It was thought that they had 52,000 members at one time but the auditors refused to sign off the accounts as the money coming in didn't equate to that number of subscriptions. That led to a reconciliation of the membership numbers and it was found that there were only about 32,000 members! There are now four or five permanent office staff, most working part time, which is quite an expense for the CSPA. The total income is only just now slightly higher than expenditure.

Paul mentioned that he had just been re-elected as the Leeds branch chairperson but had nothing relevant to add to the conversation that involved the RPGA.

10. AOB - GS

Graham Smith asked how the job shadowing was going. Graham Mumby-Croft said that in respect of the banking there had been a few problems. In being able to get Jan and Kevin authorised as counter signatories, the bank then challenged his own signature and authorisation! Graham continued that the current situation was the need to get Jan and Kevin access to the online banking and this is what he is trying to do with the bank at present, although there is some debate as to whether Jan and Kevin have to initiate this or whether it has to come from himself. He went on to say that he now has a debit card for the account which probably negates the need to issue cheques any more as he can use this for any death benefit donations, so this actually makes the battle to get the two new signatories fairly worthless!

11. Subsequent Committee Meeting Date - All

The next committee meeting will take place on Monday 7th October 2024 at 10.00 hours (prior to the AGM which will be held in the afternoon) at Delta Hotels Nottingham Belfry NG8 6PY, subject to confirmation from the PGA.

Summary of Actions.

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6(i).5.23	To include a sentence in the membership letter to potential new members reference that we are looking to co-opt new members onto the committee	Harry Brett
9.10.23	Include an item on the 2024 AGM Agenda: Members to put forward any resolutions for the AGM - PL to also include this in the spring newsletter	Jan Thompson/Paul Laxton
4(i).3.24	To include a statement in the spring newsletter stating that email distribution of the newsletter to those members indicating they are happy to receive it as such will take effect from the autumn edition onwards,	Paul Laxton

4(ii).3.24	To contact and inform those members who agreed to receive the newsletter via email that, if they still agree, this will start with the Autumn edition	Harry Brett
7.3.24	To publish a general disclaimer in the newsletter which will cover all articles.	Paul Laxton