



The Scottish Society for Psychical Research

Annual General Meeting

19/01/23

From 19.30 hrs to 21.00 hrs.

Online Meeting held on Software Platform Zoom

MINUTES

Chair: Innes Smith

Secretary: Marysia Lessnau

Minutes: Innes Smith

Members Present: *Innes Smith* (Trustee), *Mishka Lessnau* (Trustee), *Penny Sharp* (Trustee), *Dennis Davidson*, *Wilma Davidson*, *Dorothy Hamilton*, *Jean McDougall* (Trustee), *Alice Montgomery*, *Chirsty Hamilton*, *Derek Doran* (Trustee), *Doug Brown*, *Irene Loudon* (Trustee), *Lorraine Cruickshank*, *Mary Laverty*, *Bill Darroch*, *Michael McCann* (Trustee), *Nick Kyle* (Hon Member), *Peter Broughan*, *David Burns*, *Janice McAllister*, *John Loughlin*, *Zoe MacLeod*, *Catherine (Kaye) Ashton*, *Laura McHard*, *Anne Milligan*, *Andrew Phillips*, *Becky Munroe*

Apologies: None Received

1. Introductory Remarks by Chair, Welcome and Apologies.

Chair Welcomed all for attending and asked members for their patience during this online meeting. Chair asked that if anyone had any questions, to please wait until after each item on the agenda, as opportunities for Q&A would be provided. Chair also reminded that as the SSPR was a charity regulated by OSCR that this was a public meeting and any member of the public had a right to attend. Also, if any members wished to raise an issue, we would have AOB at the end.

Members were previously emailed copies of the most recent signed off accounts (Year Ending NOV 2021), the Constitution of the Society and also the Minutes of the previous AGM (Jan 2022). This information is also archived and available on the society website – and members were sent links.

2. Approval of Previous Minute AGM 2022

Members were given the opportunity to read, reflect upon and suggest any amendments to the Minutes. No amendments were suggested and a vote was taken to approve the Minute.

Proposed by Nick Kyle. Seconded by Irene Loudon. *Nem con.*

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.



Mishka Lessnau stood down and was available for re-election

Proposed by Irene Loudon, Seconded by Doug Brown.

Members voted unanimously in Favour. Nem con.

Innes Smith stood down and was available for re-election

Proposed by Marysia Lessnau, Seconded by Peter Broughan.

Members voted unanimously in Favour. Nem con.

Chirsty Hamilton was nominated for election

Proposed by Irene Loudon, Seconded by Anne Milligan.

Members voted unanimously in Favour. Nem con.

John Loughlin was nominated for election

Proposed by Innes Smith, Seconded by Mishka Lessnau.

Members voted unanimously in Favour. Nem con.

Stephen Bostock stood down from Council.

Chair thanked SB for all his many years of service to the SSPR.

4. Proposals

No proposals were forwarded by the Council nor the Membership. None were forthcoming at the meeting.

5. Secretary's Report for the last Year

At the time of the AGM, The Society had *59 Members*, including 3 who are honorary members.

Our Visitors Mailing list stands at *161*, which includes past visitors and past members who wish still be informed. This makes our total emailing list of *220*.

Marysia Lessnau also extended the Society's sympathies to the family of Helen Watson, who passed away in the past year, the prior Librarian of the SSPR who very kindly volunteered to be our Librarian for many years. Tricia Robertson attended the funeral on behalf of the charity, and ML also extended her gratitude to TR for doing this.

Chair, on behalf of the SSPR, extended our gratitude to ML for all her hard work despite it being a difficult year.

6. Treasurer's Report

Chair, on behalf of The Treasurer, Penny Sharp, provided an overview of the last scrutinised accounts (YE Nov 30 2021) and talked through the receipts and payments. The Treasurer stated that we had found an accounts scrutineer: from a charity in Galloway, The Machars Action Trust. We paid a fee of £100 for this service. Again, the charity had made a surplus of £527.25 bringing our bank balance on the 30th of Nov 2021 to £8762.20. Chair also noted that despite not meeting in the Glasgow Theosophical building in Queens Crescent,



Glasgow, we were still paying them as they very kindly allow the society to store our Library there.

Nick Kyle asked why there was such a delay in presenting accounts to the membership? Chair said that OSCR allowed 8 months after the end of accounting year to file – and it was this time lapse that was to be factored in. Penny Sharp added that it was difficult to find an Accounts Scrutineer that could check our accounts over December and January, two busy months over the festive period, to be ready for our AGM. NK accepted this.

Chair read out the up-to-date bank balance of the society of: £8241.82

This was down from the previous year because of Council's investment in the Society's Library. This would be covered in the next AGM more fully, but Council essentially paid just for postage to receive a collection of books from Lichtenstein that were of an excellent quality. John Loughlin asked how to borrow books from the library? Chair said that as soon as we started to meet in person in the Theosophical Society, we could sort through our collection, catalogue them and make them available to the membership.

Proposal to Approve the Accounts YE 2021

Proposed by Nick Kyle. Seconded by Mary Laverty.

The Accounts were passed unanimously. Nem con.

Chair invited the Membership to join him thanking the Treasurer Penny Sharp for all her hard work (*which has been an especially busy year*) over the past year. PS received a unanimous VOT.

7. Presidential Address

Chair began by stating that it was a formality for the President/Chair to present an address in a very formal manner. However, this year, the address would be very much in *an informal manner* and apologised for this lack of preparation.

Chair reflected upon the fact that the SSPR often responded to approaches from clients with questions, and this was a tension between the expectation that the SSPR would supply *answers*. This may provide an explanation as to why clients stop communicating with us: mystery being a threat to an authority or an authoritative voice, which is what people *want* or *expect*. The SSPR being institutionally neutral on the existence of the paranormal and scientifically cautious is usually reticent to make any definite or definitive statements on client's experience – and this is not what people want. Chair reflected upon the perilous position of 'traditional psychical research' and its attitude of open-minded scepticism, whether it was tenable in today's culture of either hardline pseudo-scepticism and uncritical belief. This might be illustrated by the situation of the American SPR which had gone into a suspended state since 2004 and now, almost two decades later, the SPR in London was trying to discover what happened to the Society: its building in New York is now empty – and its collection of books has disappeared! Chair finished by reflecting upon how paranormal phenomena was often 'attention seeking' in its nature and the SSPR itself would need to raise its public profile.



Chair ended by again thanking his partner, Treasurer Penny Sharp for all her hard work, and the rest of the Council. Also, welcoming on board the new members, Chirsty and John. Chair also thanked the membership, stating, '*we would not exist and your support during this difficult time is not taken for granted*'. Then commented upon Council's intention to begin meeting again, in person

8. Cases

Since the last update at our SSPR AGM in Jan 2022 (9 Cases) the Society had received 12 new contacts (12 via our website). Of the 12 new contacts, 5 were *about investigation*. Of the remaining contacts, which were *requiring an investigation*, 3 did not respond to further requests for information. This meant the remaining contacts, involving correspondence, telephone calls or Zoom interviews, numbered 4. 4 Cases – down from last year.

9. A.O.B

No questions were raised.

However, Michael McCann reminded the membership that the Society now had an Instagram account, to publicise our events, and we would hope that this would bring in more members.