



ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

President: Claire Harman

Chair: Marty Ross

Email: martyross73@gmail.com

Secretary: Mark Green

Email: markr_green@msn.com

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

The Annual General Meeting of the Alliance of Literary Societies will be held 21 May at 2 p.m. at Hull History Centre

Please notify the Chair of any matters your society wishes to raise including queries about the accounts, so that they can be added to the proposed Agenda.

Nominations for the Committee of the Alliance must be made to the Secretary not less than 14 days before the meeting, with the consent of the nominees.

The proposed Agenda, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2021, the Annual Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet, and a list of the current Committee are posted on the ALS website.

Please notify the Secretary of apologies.



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES HELD 22 MAY 2021 (ON-LINE)

Chairman's welcome: Linda Curry welcomed everyone to the first ALS AGM held via Zoom. After outlining some rules for the meeting and checking that everyone was agreeable to having it recorded, she gave the traditional roll call of societies represented:

Margery Allingham Society, Jane Austen Society, Arnold Bennett Society, Betjeman Society, Brontë Society, Browning Society, Lewis Carroll Society, John Clare Society, George Eliot Fellowship, Elmet Trust, Galloway Raiders, Gaskell Society, James Hilton Society, Johnson Society (Lichfield), Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, Charles Lamb Society, Philip Larkin Society, Wyndham Lewis Society, Nancy Blackett Trust, Norman Nicholson Society, Wilfred Owen Association, Barbara Pym Society, Arthur Ransome Society, Terence Rattigan Society, Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship, Sherlock Holmes Society, Angela Thirkell Society, Edward Thomas Fellowship, Trollope Society, Walmsley Society, Sylvia Townsend Warner Society, Mary Webb Society, P.G. Wodehouse Society, Mary Wollstonecraft Fellowship, Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship, Zola Readers.

President's address: Claire Harman began by stating what a peculiar and distressing year it has been. It seems ages since we gathered at Nuneaton, and everyone felt so sorry for the cancellation of last year's AGM in Robin Hood's Bay, after so much work had been done by the Walmsley Society. We now have Highgate to look forward to in October. We are all perhaps a little zoomed out at this point, but Zoom has been a help and has proved to be so versatile and useful. Societies have coped and changed in different ways.

She mentioned last year's report on the LitHouses conference and urged us all to work more closely with writers' museums and other related organisations. We need to build on what we have learned in the last year about using alternate technologies, which have encouraged international audiences for many societies and have fostered a feeling of community.

Apologies: C.S. Forester Society, Don Lee (ALS committee), Helen Newman (ALS committee), Jodie Roberts (ALS committee), Sheila Webber (John Clare).

Acceptance of minutes of AGM 2020: The minutes were approved and were signed by the chair.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

Chairman's report: Linda Curry began her report by commenting on the difficulties of the past year, and for the ALS, this was especially marked by the sudden and sad death of Julie Shorland, who had been treasurer for 20 years. She was a friend as well as a colleague, meticulous and dedicated. Linda had taken over as acting treasurer until the AGM could take place, when Jeremy Mitchell had volunteered to take on the role. Additionally, she was standing down as chair, the intention being for Marty Ross to take over and Mark Green to become secretary.

Linda said that it has been hard for societies to cope with the pandemic, though personally, she has attended more talks and 'walks' than she would have done normally, and even attended the annual Sherlock Holmes dinner (virtually)! She agrees with Claire that societies should continue to use technologies like Zoom. The result is societies becoming less parochial. However, not everyone likes or can access online events. The ALS has been busy providing advice where possible, and there are various guides available on the website.

She reiterated our sadness for the Walmsley Society. At last year's online AGM, Colin Greateorex (Johnson Society (Lichfield)) suggested that we might make a gift to them in thanks for all their work, and £100 was voted by the ALS committee and sent.

We are all hoping that Highgate can go forward in October. As we emerge from the pandemic, we need to keep re-thinking how we do things and to try to grow our memberships.

Secretary's report: Marty Ross began by paying tribute to Linda Curry, who became chair of the ALS in 2006, and has led it through thick and thin ever since, including, most recently, the challenges posed by the covid pandemic and the sad and sudden death of Julie Shorland, when she immediately and cheerfully volunteered to take over as acting treasurer until this meeting. Marty said that she joined the committee in 2008 and had thoroughly enjoyed meetings and the friendship of colleagues, which in itself is a tribute to Linda's leadership and shows why it is a pleasure to serve the ALS. Marty expressed thanks to Linda on behalf of the entire Committee.

Last year the ALS we were all heartbroken for the Walmsley Society, who had put so much enthusiasm and hard work into planning the weekend in Robin Hood's Bay for us. Although our online AGM lacked all the fun of our usual gatherings, we really appreciated the trouble that members took to participate, and to provide some really valuable feedback and suggestions.

For this year's Highgate weekend the Betjeman and Hopkins societies have kindly allocated the ALS our usual hour just after lunch. Since we will have dispensed with the AGM, this will be an opportunity for societies and individuals to raise concerns and issues for general discussion, so please bring your thoughts. Of course, we will conclude with our traditional raffle!

One of the great pleasures of being secretary has been getting to know so many of you. Please do keep in touch. Issues are raised which are later explored through the newsletter; most notably, the recent challenges that covid has posed to the functioning of literary societies, but also the Betjeman Society's innovative teaching plans, which Andrew McCallum wrote about in the spring newsletter.

Julie Shorland had served as treasurer of the ALS for 20 years; Linda has been chairman for 15. Marty has been secretary for a mere five. With these three offices changing this year, it will be a period of transition. Please do support us as we move forward. We have an extraordinary depth and breadth of expertise and knowledge in this organisation, as well as boundless enthusiasm for our writers. We will need to learn to use all of that as we move forward into the post-covid future.

Treasurer's report: Linda, as acting treasurer, showed a copy of the accounts. Our expenses have been lower than normal, owing to the pandemic. Grants were made to the Dylan Thomas Society and the Literacy Trust in memory of Julie. A gift was given to Janet Allan of the Gaskell Society, who stood down from the committee after long service.

New societies are: the Djuna Barnes Society of UK & Ireland, Howdenshire Literary Society and the Milton Society of Georgia.

Editors' reports:

Newsletter

Mark Green, our new newsletter editor, commented that it had been fun learning to use Mailchimp! His first newsletter went out this spring and only two addresses bounced back, one of which has been resolved. Please do let us know if you are not receiving the newsletter or other mailings.

Journal – ALS

Robin Healey, the new journal editor, reported that he had received 20 submissions for the 'Writers in Lockdown' parody edition which should appear soon. Next year's edition will have the theme of 'The Day Job': how writers' employment before or during their writing career impacted on what they wrote. Details will appear in the autumn newsletter.

Linda appealed for those present to take the idea back to their societies and encourage submissions.

Social media officer's report: Jodie Roberts had to send apologies at the last minute. She said there isn't a great deal of interaction, but plenty of 'likes'. She is always happy to hear suggestions for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Election of officers and committee: Linda said that because the meeting was taking place on-line, it had been decided not to have proposers and seconders. Instead, she proposed the three main officers, who were elected:

Chair – Marty Ross (Johnson Society (Lichfield))

Secretary – Mark Green (Trollope Society)

Treasurer – Jeremy Mitchell (Edward Thomas Fellowship)

The rest of the committee were elected en bloc.

Julie Shorland Memorial Grant: Linda stated that the ALS has traditionally offered small grants to societies on an ad hoc basis. Following Julie's death, it was decided

to formalise this as a memorial to her and £100 will be awarded every year by the committee. Details will appear in the autumn newsletter and applications, for any type of project or towards a larger project, will be accepted. Applications need to be sent to the secretary and a decision will be made by the ALS committee at its February meeting. Societies represented on the committee are also eligible, but the committee member will not participate in the vote.

Constitution: alteration to dissolution clause: An issue raised at a recent committee meeting was the vagueness of the existing dissolution clause in our constitution. It stated: 'After the settlement of any debts, the ALS Executive Committee shall agree on the allocation of remaining funds in accordance with its literary objectives.' It was agreed to adopt the altered clause: 'In the event that the Alliance would have to be dissolved, the remaining funds in the account, after all debts have been settled, would be divided equally between all member societies whose subscriptions are paid at the date of dissolution.' This was approved.

Campaigns: Antoinette Fawcett of the Norman Nicholson Society announced important developments in their campaign to purchase Nicholson's house in Millom and to raise the three-figure sum necessary to turn it into a worthy tribute to the poet, as well as a community facility. One donation of £5,000 was received as a tribute to a former Barrow English teacher, Wilf Kimber, for instilling a love of Nicholson and literature generally. The society has also launched an app for self-guided tours around Norman Nicholson's Millom.

Elaine Peake of the George Eliot Fellowship reported that, after nine years, they have very good reason to believe that the George Eliot Visitor Centre will become a reality this year. If all goes to plan, demolition/construction work is scheduled to begin in July, and we hope to be able to officially open the Visitor Centre on 22 November, George Eliot's 202nd birthday.

Jeremy Mitchell of the Edward Thomas Fellowship said that the new Edward Thomas Study Centre will be opening on 9 June at Petersfield Museum, with a collection of 2,500 books by and about Edward Thomas.

Marty suggested that reports on these campaigns should be included in the next newsletter.

October weekend in Highgate: Andrew McCallum of the Betjeman Society said how much the Betjeman and Hopkins societies are looking forward to welcoming us to Highgate for the weekend of 1-3 October. The theme is 'High-flyers of Highgate'. The weekend's programme features lectures, guided walks and our traditional dinner with readings of ALS writers. Due to the covid situation, a final decision on the programme will be delayed as long as possible, with registration forms being sent out in mid-July.

Future AGMs: Philip Pullen of the Larkin Society invited us all to next year's AGM in Hull, over the weekend of 20-22 May. It will be the centenary of Larkin's birth, with many events planned. The society has established a separate co-ordinating committee called 'Larkin 100'. It is hoped especially to emphasise links between Coventry, where Larkin grew up (and currently the City of Culture) and Hull, where Larkin spent most of his adult life (and a former City of Culture). A Larkin festival in August will feature the poet Simon Armitage, and a project called 'Larkin the

Teenager' will hope to draw a younger audience. For us, they hope to provide an exciting and innovative weekend, and that we will have a chance to discover Hull – or 'Hull's sudden elegances', as Larkin wrote – in addition to learning more about Larkin and his poetry.

Other future AGMs include:

- 2023 will be hosted by the Charlotte M. Yonge Society in Winchester.
- 2024 Arthur Ransome Society in a venue yet to be decided, but possibly the Lake District or East Anglia.
- 2025 Kipling Society
- 2027 Norman Nicholson Society

2026 is still vacant, so if your society might be interested in hosting an AGM, please let the ALS know.

Any other business: Claire Harman asked if we could once again offer our condolences to the Walmsley Society at our October meeting.

David Leigh-Hunt of Keats-Shelley wished to say thank you to the committee for holding the fort during this difficult time.

Date and venue of next AGM: The ALS will hold an informal Q&A session on Saturday, 2 October 2021 in Highgate. Next year's AGM will be held on 21 May 2022 in Hull.



ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

Annual General Meeting

21 May 2022 at 2pm at Hull History Centre

President: Claire Harman

Chair: Marty Ross

Email: martyross73@gmail.com

Secretary: Mark Green

Email: markr_green@msn.com

AGENDA

1. Chairman's welcome
2. Apologies
3. Acceptance of minutes of AGM 2021
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. Chairman's report
6. Secretary's report
7. Treasurer's report
8. Editors' reports
9. Social media officer's report
10. Election of officers and committee
11. Future AGMs
12. Any other business
13. Date and venue of next AGM

Treasurer & Membership Report for the Alliance of Literary Societies (ALS) Annual General Meeting – 21 May 2022 - DRAFT

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT, year ending 31 March 2022					
At start of year	£				Total
Community a/c balance	8243.75		current balance		9586.35
		TOTAL		TOTAL	
	£	£		£	£
INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
Membership subscriptions		1571.25	Admin expenses		65.04
AGM 2021		205.98	Travel for meetings	55.00	
Journal Sales		9.00	Print, post, stationery	10.04	
			Committee room hire	0.00	
			Publicity		125.00
			Bookmarks	125.00	
			Leaflets	0.00	
			Website		253.59
			Grants		0.00
Contras		95.00	Contras		95.00
TOTAL		1881.23	TOTAL		538.63
Excess of income over expenditure		1342.60			

To a degree the financial performance of the ALS during the last financial year is self-evident due to the lack of activity, owing to the various Covid-related lockdowns which led to the cancellation of the 2021 AGM and also the move online of the rearranged October meeting.

As a result, the Alliance's finances look healthier than they might otherwise have done and should allow us to maintain subscription levels at the current rates for the near future at least.

The income of £205.98 relating to the 2021 AGM was a refund of the hotel booking fees paid in advance for the ALS President's accommodation.

The 'Contras' in the accounts relate to income received in error when the ALS bank details were given in error for a payment due to a member society. The funds were received by the ALS on 16 July 2021 and paid to the correct beneficiary on 4 August 2021 after the error was identified.

Turning to Memberships – subscriptions received of £1,571.25 compare with £1,434 and reflect a welcome increase in Societies joining the Alliance.

At the end of the financial year (31 March 2022) there were 105 paid up members and 16 whose memberships were unpaid at the year-end. Of those 16 unpaid memberships, 6 are unpaid for two years and in line with ALS Membership rules their memberships will lapse if still unpaid at the time of this year's AGM.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Marty Ross	Chair
Jeremy Mitchell	Treasurer
Mark Green	Secretary and Social Media (acting)
Cally Phillips	Website
Robin Healey	Editor <i>ALSo</i>
Amanda Ardagh-Walter	
Frieda Barker	
Linda Curry	
Mark Davies	
Maggie Parsons	
Jodie Roberts	