

Minutes of the Genetic Society Annual General Meeting 2007

Minutes of the Genetics Society Annual General Meeting
Held in the Carnegie Room at Heriot-Watt University
on Friday

The meeting was attended by 17 members, including 10 members of the Committee. In addition, 48 members had voted in advance on items 4(c), 4(d) and 4(e) by the email voting mechanism introduced for the first time this year, in accordance with clause 17(ii) of the revised Constitution, and the meeting was therefore quorate.

President Brian Charlesworth chaired the meeting, and the minutes were recorded by Honorary Secretary John Armour.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting (Thursday 30th March 2006), and matters arising

The minutes of the 2006 AGM had been posted on the Society's web site for consultation by members. The meeting approved them as a true record and they were duly signed by the President. No matters arising were raised.

2. President's Report

President Brian Charlesworth reported that in the last six months the Society's administration had operated without the services of the Executive Officer, who had recently left the Society's employment, and thanked Hazel Hutchison for her efforts in keeping the Society's administration going; he also thanked Helen Sang, Justin Goodrich, John Armour and Andrew Ward for their work for the Society over this time. He reported that plans had been initiated at the previous day's Committee meeting to recruit extra staff to restore the Society's office to a full level of operation, which he hoped would take shape in the near future.

3. Honorary Treasurer's Report

Justin Goodrich, at his last AGM in the role of Honorary Treasurer, said that he had enjoyed his stint as Treasurer and wished Josephine Pemberton every success in her tenure of the post. Increased expenditure this year meant that the Society would approximately break even, or perhaps incur a small loss. Nevertheless, the substantial income from the Society's journals has meant that both income and spending on charitable purposes have continued to increase. It remains uncertain whether the journal income will continue at its present levels, but the Committee will monitor developments. Among the many grants and other support available from the Society, he particularly highlighted the Heredity Fieldwork grants, which now included provision for exchange visits between laboratories. Brian Charlesworth thanked Justin Goodrich for his long and distinguished service to the Society.

4. Honorary Secretary's Report and business for transaction

(a) Honorary Secretary John Armour confirmed that Daven Presgraves had been elected to be the 2008 Balfour Lecturer.

(b) Similarly, he confirmed that Nick Hastie was the winner of the 2008 Genetics Society Medal.

(c) For the items 4(c), 4(d) and 4(e), requiring votes from members, the Honorary Secretary reminded members

of the changes to the procedure for voting at this year's AGM consequent on the amendments to the constitution approved at last year's meeting. A total of 48 members had voted in advance by email and were deemed to contribute to the quorum even if not attending in person; some who had voted by email were present, and John Armour reminded them not to vote a second time.

The Honorary Secretary drew the meeting's attention to a list of 149 applicants for membership that had been posted on the Society's web site and which was circulated at the meeting. No objections were raised to any of them becoming members. The proposal to admit them all to membership of the Society was put to a vote, and combining email votes in advance with those made at the meeting, was carried unanimously by a total of 58 votes.

(d) Honorary Secretary John Armour expressed the gratitude of the Society to the retiring committee members Wendy Bickmore, Peter Keightley and Patty Kuwabara for giving their time and effort to help the successful work of the Society; he gave particular thanks to the outgoing Vice-President for Public Understanding of Science, Mark Macnair, and the Honorary Treasurer Justin Goodrich for their hard work for the Society. These thanks were echoed by President Brian Charlesworth.

There were seven nominations for election as Committee members: Steve Jones (Vice-President for Public Understanding); Josephine Pemberton (Honorary Treasurer); Steve Russell (Newsletter Editor); Anne Ferguson-Smith (area "A" – gene structure, function and regulation); Graham Moore (area "B" – genomics); Liam Dolan (area "C" – cell and developmental genetics); and DJ deKoning (area "D" – applied and quantitative genetics). Additionally, Helen Sang was nominated to serve an extension of twelve months as Vice President for Corporate Affairs, and John Armour for an extension of twelve months as Honorary Secretary.

At a vote, combining email votes with the show of hands at the AGM, their election to office was supported unanimously; because of variations in patterns of abstentions in email voting, the election was supported by slightly different numbers of votes (between 57 and 59 votes) for different Committee members, but with no votes against.

(e) John Armour described the change to the Society's constitution made necessary by new charity law in Scotland, and by the necessity for the Society – as a charity operating in Scotland – to be scrutinised by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) as well as the Charity Commission (for England and Wales). OSCR had requested a change to the dissolution clause of the constitution to avoid technical incompatibility and ambiguity in relation to Scottish charity law. He explained that because the relevant clause (clause 22) was one of those that required the prior approval of the Charity Commission for any change, that permission had already been sought and granted by the Charity Commission. The proposed change was to insert the following paragraph into the dissolution clause (clause 22):

"Throughout this Constitution a 'charitable purpose' is a purpose that is regarded as charitable both in the law of England and Wales and in the law of Scotland, and the term 'charitable' is to be interpreted in accordance with the law of England and Wales and the law of Scotland."

Combining email votes in advance with those indicated at the meeting, the proposal to make this change to the constitution was carried unanimously, by a total of 59 votes.

5. AOB

No further issues were raised by the meeting. The President therefore thanked those present, and closed the meeting.