



Registered Charity  
No. 313336

# Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Business Archives Council held on 12 November 2020 at 11 am virtually via Zoom

Present: Mike Anson (Chair); Anne Archer; Melanie Aspey; John Chambers; Hannah Cleal; Carmen Hoffman; Judy Faraday; Allison Foster; Moira Lovegrove; Phyllis Macfarlane; Emma Markiewicz; Gabriella Massaglia; Rachael Muir; Aisling O'Malley; Brian O'Sullivan; David Owen; Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan; Natasha Richards; Karen Sampson; Tina Staples; Jeannette Strickland; Kevin Tennent; Claire Tunstall; Alison Turton; Meg Venter; Matti Watton; Benjamin White; Lorna Williams; Richard Wiltshire

## 1. Apologies for absence

Edwin Green; Sara Kinsey

## 2. Approval of minutes

Mike Anson proposed that the minutes of the AGM of 20 November 2019 be agreed and signed. This was seconded by Jeannette Strickland and approved unanimously.

## 3. Chair's report

First of all, thank you to everyone for attending this AGM, the first to be held online (and I sincerely hope that it proves to be the last to be held online).

It goes without saying that 2020 has been a difficult year for everyone, not least for the archive sector in general, and closer to us all here today, for businesses and business archives.

If we cast our minds back a year, the BAC had just held an excellent conference at the RIBA, followed by a most enjoyable Wadsworth Prize reception at the National Theatre Studio. Richard Wiltshire and others were busy behind the scenes to bring about what is arguably the most high-profile rescue of a business archive, at the risk of hyperbole, I'm going to say ever undertaken. Of course, I'm referring to the transfer of the Thomas Cook archive to the Record Office of Leicestershire and Rutland. Early in 2020 we held a hugely successful training day on business records for archive students at the Baring Archive. Then the global pandemic changed everything.

Since March we have been working to support BAC members and the wider business archives sector. We have organised Zoom workshops for our members covering various aspects of how Covid-19 is impacting business archives. The Crisis Management Team, with the help of additional volunteers from the BAC membership, has been monitoring business records at risk. We have also, at long last, been able to establish a dialogue with insolvency practitioners about implementing guidelines on what to do with the archives of failed businesses. In many ways we have come full circle – after all, the BAC was founded in 1934 to save business records at risk because of the interwar economic downturn. So, that part of our mission 'the preservation of business records' remains as important as ever.

Our 'business as usual' work has also carried-on. We are running our conference and awarding the BAC Wadsworth Prize next week – both events online of course. As in previous years, we have also awarded two cataloguing grants. I will make a couple of comments here. First, we are not yet sure how Covid-19 will affect our membership subscription income, and we won't be generating any surplus funds from the conference, as it's free of charge. This means that we have looked closely at our finances and decided that for 2021 at least, we cannot offer two cataloguing grants. I should also like to say that the BAC fully supports the ARA Pay Review Group recommendations on pay rates for freelancers and therefore we must ensure that the cash value of the grant/s reflects these rates.

Many of you will remember the launch of the National Strategy for Business Archives back in the summer of 2009 – yes it really was 11 years ago! For some time now we have felt that the Strategy had run its course. If nothing else, the landscape of archive sector bodies has changed dramatically since then, and digital preservation scarcely warranted a mention back then. Working together with The National Archives, we have commissioned a review of the Strategy, and I'm delighted that Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan is able to join us today to present a summary of the findings. We will of course be looking at how to develop future initiatives from this.

Finally, you will deduce from the AGM papers that there will be some personnel changes on the Council. First, Judy Faraday will be stepping down as Deputy Chair, having served 10 years, but I'm delighted to say that despite her name not appearing on the nomination papers, Judy will be remaining as a trustee. We also say goodbye to Judith Wright – since 2010 she has

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undertaken many roles including Conference Organiser, Membership Secretary, and looking after our Risk Register. Last, Moira Lovegrove, who since November 2012 has been our Treasurer – Moira has been a calm and stable influence on spendthrift trustees and at times has made critical interventions to ensure the continued operation of the Council. I would like to record my formal thanks to Judy, Judith and Moira for their huge contribution over the last decade.

To end, on behalf of the Council I would like to thank all of our members for your continuing support in these difficult times. Let's hope for some improvement in 2021 and I look forward to being able to see you in person rather than on a screen. Thank you.

#### **4. Review of 2009 National Strategy for Business Archives**

Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan presented a report on her strategy review, including methodology, successes, unfulfilled aims, foundational issues, and suggestions for the future. Mike Anson thanked Elizabeth for her work.

#### **5. Hon. Treasurer's report**

The Hon Treasurer reported that the BAC had made a loss of c.£3,000 in 2019/20, but that it was not a concern as the BAC had made a surplus in some years. About half of the loss related to the conference - having to pay for a venue for the first time, and unusually most of the speakers claiming expenses. Both of these can be factored into the costs of tickets for the next physical conference. There was also additional costs to awarding the value of the BAC Wadsworth Prize to two winners.

The Hon. Treasurer highlighted the Going Concern paragraphs in the report. The auditors requested the BAC to review its operations to make sure it was a going concern in the light of Covid-19. Having additional funds beyond its reserve has put the BAC in a good position, but a loss is anticipated this year given that it was decided not to charge for the conference.

Moira Lovegrove proposed that the accounts be accepted, Mike Anson seconded and it was passed unanimously.

#### **6. Election of Honorary Officers**

Mike Anson stepped down as Chair. His re-election was proposed by Judy Faraday, seconded by Karen Sampson. The Chair proposed the election of Sara Kinsey as deputy Chair, seconded by Judy Faraday. Moira Lovegrove proposed Brian O'Sullivan as honorary Treasurer, seconded by Mike Anson. Mike Anson proposed Lorna Williams as honorary Secretary, seconded by Anne Archer; and Natasha Richards as Membership Secretary, seconded by Meg Venter.

All were approved unanimously.

#### **7. Election of members of the Executive Committee**

The Chair proposed the re-election of Anne Archer, Chris Campbell, Judy Faraday, Dr Emma Markiewicz, Dr Kate Murphy, Richard Wiltshire, and the election of Dr Alix Green, Meg Venter and Benjamin White. This was seconded by Melanie Aspey and approved unanimously.

#### **8. Election of President and Vice Presidents**

The Chair proposed the re-election of Terry Gourvish as President, and Edwin Green, Alison Turton and Sam Twining as Vice Presidents. This was seconded by Judy Faraday and approved unanimously.

#### **9. Election of auditors**

Brian O'Sullivan proposed that RSM UK be re-elected as auditors for the Council. This was seconded by Mike Anson and approved unanimously.

#### **10. Any other business**

David Owen highlighted the concern that the Archives West Midlands had about archives being lost. He made the point that existing business archives could help new business archives and that universities could be teaching a positive policy on business archives, which the BAC could lead on. Mike Anson responded that the strategy work that the BAC will take forward will include this, with a focus on those other than archivists, which Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan highlighted as a weakness in her report.

The meeting closed at 11.48am.