

Minutes of the AIACE-UK AGM held on 18th May by Zoom

The meeting was quorate throughout, with 98 people present at its height. Apologies had been received from National Committee members Belinda Pyke and Tony Robinson.

1. Outgoing National Committee Report

The Chairman, Tom Kennedy, referred members to the Committee's report highlighting the following points.

- Zoom had allowed the continuation of national and some regional meetings even through the difficult pandemic period. This was likely to continue in future at least at national level. Regional groups might have more scope for face-to-face gatherings.
- The Committee had deliberately maintained a high profile in AIACE International, both to lend our expertise and to maintain visibility of the UK Branch's unique situation.

John Wiggins reported that the accounts had been certified by T O'Hanlon, for whose work the Committee was grateful. There was a healthy surplus even with our comparatively low subscription level.

Melanie Leivers reported on the membership situation, noting that the pandemic restrictions had led us and the Commission to streamline our processes and communication effectively.

Michael Hocken reported the success in reinstating the JSIS equality coefficients. He outlined the current situation on medical screening, noting the possibility now for reimbursement for BUPA off-the-shelf packages, even though they were not wholly in line with JSIS requirements. There was also the possibility of the Candover clinic in Basingstoke offering the full package.

Martin Clegg explained that the Institutions continued to apply the correction coefficient to salaries of UK-based pensioners and that as a result our salaries would be paid on the basis of an annual exchange rate calculation. A review of the 'Method' was due in the next two years and a report was due on the Staff Regulations, but as yet there were no indications of major change.

The meeting unanimously approved the Report and the Accounts.

2. Election of new National Committee

There were 12 candidates for the 12 places, who were approved unanimously. See Annex One. Outgoing Committee members (Karen Griffith, Nick Heenan, John Nolan and Tony Robinson) were warmly thanked for their contribution over the years.

3. Independent Examiner of Accounts

On the proposal of Tom Kennedy, the meeting unanimously approved the appointment of Colin Maynard to this role.

4. Other Business

David Harley reported that AIACE International wished to make a submission to the Conference on the Future of Europe which would gather views of organisations and citizens on the future of the EU. Members were encouraged to submit their views and suggestions, either on a personal basis directly to the process or to AIACE-UK which would make its own submission. See Annex Two.

Tom Kennedy urged members who were not UK nationals to ensure that they applied for Settled Status by the deadline.

5. Guest Speaker – João Vale de Almeida, EU Ambassador to the UK

The meeting enjoyed a stimulating hour with the Ambassador who outlined the work he and his team were undertaking with the UK Government on issues arising following Brexit. While there were points of concern, he stressed the positive relations with UK officials and was hopeful that the forthcoming Joint Partnership Council would help boost ongoing relations and the resolution of difficulties.

In the discussion, João Vale de Almeida offered the help of his team on any settled status issues and requested members to look out for people who may need to make an application.

In a lively debate on the role of AIACE and its members in the 2016 referendum, Julian Currall offered helpful clarification that pensioners were free to express their personal opinions and take part in the debate, whatever the position they took. However, they should not denigrate the Institutions nor bring them into disrepute by their actions.

João Vale de Almeida invited members to visit Europe House when the occasion presented, underlining that we were always welcome. He would be visiting the devolved nations and other regions and would be happy to meet colleagues where feasible.

The meeting concluded with thanks to the Ambassador for his engaging and informative contribution.

AH, 20 May 2021

Annex

National Committee elected by the Meeting

- Claxton, John
- Clegg, Martin
- Cornelius, Jane
- Harley, David
- Hocken, Michael
- Hull, Bob
- Huyton, Alan
- Kennedy, Tom
- Leivers, Melanie
- Porro, Brian
- Pyke, Belinda
- Wiggins, John

Independent Examiner of Accounts appointed by the Meeting

- Colin Maynard

Annex Two- Note on the Conference on the future of Europe

“The future is in your hands”

The aim of the Conference, which was formally launched on May 9th in Strasbourg, is to enable European citizens to have their say on what kind of Europe they would like to live in, for themselves and future generations.

The recently elected president of AIACE-International, Dominique Deshayes, has asked the national sections to encourage contributions from individual members who wish to get involved, preferably on one (or more) of the following nine themes:

Climate change and environment – Health – A stronger economy, social justice and employment – The EU’s role in the world – Values and rights, the rule of law, security – Digital transformation – European democracy – Migration – Education, culture, youth and sport –Other ideas (which could include the functioning of the EU institutions and European public service).

Dominique Deshayes considers that, as former EU officials, we have a particular responsibility in this exercise, given our personal experience and overview of how the EU has evolved hitherto and how it might develop in the future. She encourages the expression of individual views, including opinions that may be critical or even hostile to the EU in its current form. Several national sections have already started organising debates and events related to the Conference.

Contributions should be sent to the chairman or secretary of the committee, if possible by 1st September. The committee will then put them together and forward to AIACE-International for submission to the Conference.

More information on the Conference can be found at <https://futureu.europa.eu>.

David HARLEY