

**AIACE-UK**  
**Minutes of the meeting of the National Committee,**  
**held by Zoom video-conference, 30 January 2023**

**Present**

Tom Kennedy (Chairman, TK), Pernille Andersen (PA), John Claxton (JCI), Jane Cornelius (JCI), Michael Hocken (MH), Bob Hull (BH), Alan Huyton (AH), Gail Kent (GK), Brian Porro (BPo), Belinda Pyke (BPy), Emanuela Savoia (ES), John Wiggins (JW)  
Apologies had been received from Martin Clegg (MC).

On invitation from the Chairman, Dame Philippa Russell (PR) was also present for the point on social care.

**1. Agenda**

The draft agenda was agreed.

**2. Social Care**

The Committee welcomed Philippa Russell, a member of AIACE, whose deep knowledge of the subject was informed by her personal experience and roles as Vice-Chairperson of Carers UK and in the Department of Health and NHS England. A wide-ranging and informative discussion could be summarised as follows.

**Ageing** - increased life expectancy was not underpinned by an adequate care system to cope with the consequences, for some, of old and very-old age. Our own community did not always factor this in to their choices of lifestyle and could therefore be vulnerable.

**A difficult and deteriorating context** - despite political commitments, the prospects of effective reform to the social care system seemed to be far-off. The current system was plagued by low wages and, partly as a consequence, severe shortages of staff. Brexit had been a major factor in this regard. This contributed to a shortage of nursing homes and places. Getting financial support was means-tested and inconsistent, often depending on the local authority's policies and even on how skilfully application forms were completed.

**Needs of AIACE members** - we concluded that we could consider how to provide the following support:

- Where and how to get reliable care,
- How to manage dementia, or at least get useful support,
- Understanding of how to get UK funding for care,
- Understanding of the JSIS funding,
- Providing 'soft' support such as regular contact, etc,
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**Input to the wider debate** - Individual AIACE members could be encouraged on the one hand to lobby political representatives or pressure groups and on the other hand to engage in consultations, voluntary or political organisations and in particular to bring to the table the more positive experiences from the European Union. At the level of JSIS, the dependency scheme was coming up for review in the context of the GIP revision.

**Organisational measures** - in the short-term, we would implement the following measures:

- Find and appoint a Social Care ambassador, who would be part of or co-opted to the National Committee,
- A regular page in Connect for discussion and exchange of tips and experiences,
- A survey of the membership (TK/AH/BPy) - PR kindly promised to provide examples of surveys that we could draw from,
- Advice to DG HR and other Institutions on how the subject could be effectively addressed at pre-retirement courses,
- Promoting the subject as part of the role of the regional coordinators,
- Consider the proposal from TK to create a new category of membership for carers.

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2022 were agreed. There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

### **4. New membership database**

AH/JCo/ES had worked to modernise and improve our membership records system by transferring it from a standalone Excel file transmitted by email to a cloud-based (Google Drive) platform using Sheets software. The new system aimed to reduce the burden of work on the Membership team. This had the advantage of ensuring continuity and improving security/data protection. There remained questions of whether Google was the best host: JCI recommended research into EU alternatives and BH asked whether and how to continue to use Europe House as a basis.

### **5. PMO Matters**

#### **5.1 JSIS**

MH reported that in the context of the GIP revision, the dependency regime was coming up for review and that he would be following this carefully.

#### **5.2 Pensions**

PA reported with dismay that the online pensions calculator was still inaccurate. She would take this up with the PMO on the occasion of a future visit to their offices.

### **5.3 Status of pensioners in the UK**

MH emphasised the need to ask DG HR (C Roques) to clarify the outstanding anomalies in treatment of UK pensioners which were in contradiction to the Commission's policy of treating UK pensioners as if they were resident in a Member State. TK would write to C.Roques.

## **6. AIACE International Matters**

### **6.1 Malaga 2 seminar, 7th and 8th March (Séminaire bénévoles sociaux et séminaire ambassadeurs)**

It was agreed that JCI and PA would attend. It was further agreed that AH could attend on the expenses of our Branch provided that AIACE International were willing and that he was available.

### **6.2 Data protection**

AH reported that he was part of the AIACE working group, which was looking at how different sections implemented DP. For the UK, there were one or two areas to tighten up to ensure we met our responsibilities towards members and AH would report.

### **6.3 Vade Mecum Famille - AIACE International Working Group**

AH was part of the group and had contributed our Survivors Guide.

### **6.4 AIACE International meetings**

The March CA would take place on 27 March. The AGM (on Zoom) was scheduled for the 27th April.

## **7. UK Branch Matters**

### **7.1 Membership team**

JCo/ES reported excellent progress with the 2023 subscriptions and would send out a reminder to the non-payers in the next few weeks. They reported ongoing difficulties with access to the Europe House IT systems and were liaising with the IT team to resolve this. There were some issues with writing to new members or relatives of deceased members as a consequence.

### **7.2 AGM 2023**

*Date* - in the last half of May or in June, depending on speaker availability.

*Speaker* - options discussed were Dame Philippa Russell On social care, Environment and climate change and an address by the new EEAS Ambassador to the UK. It was agreed to invite the President and Secretary of AIACE International.

*Venue* - London at a venue that could organise a hybrid meeting.

### **7.3 Treasurer's Report**

The Committee adopted with thanks the 2022 accounts prepared by JW, which would now be signed by TK and sent to our auditor.

#### **7.4 Connect**

BP reported that the next issue would appear at the end of February and that she had several articles prepared or in the process of writing.

#### **7.5 Vox**

BP reported that regrettably BH's excellent review of C.Tugenhardt's new book had not been credited to him in the last issue, but that a correction would be published in the next. The latter would contain two articles from UK members.

#### **7.6 Regions**

The Committee noted recent or upcoming meetings in Oxford, East Anglia and South. It also commented with regret on the fact that several coordinators had or were in the process of resigning. There was a grave shortage of replacements though the Committee thanked BPy for agreeing to take over the Oxford Region.

It was agreed that it might be useful to write a short guide to the role, though this might equally discourage volunteers, who were very thin on the ground. John Farnell's upcoming article in Connect would be useful in this regard.

#### **7.7 Future Committee Meetings**

*Future meetings planned* : 4 April - hybrid, 20 June - Zoom, 26 September - hybrid, 21 November - Zoom

*Expenses*: TK/JW would work on revising the terms and rates, drawing on the new AIACE International Financial Regulations and on adapting to UK conditions and prices. AH urged clarity well before the next Committee meeting. MH underlined the importance of proper funding for attendees at meetings, who should feel free to participate independently of their own financial situation.

*Timing* - some members queried the evening start of the meeting, but the Committee noted that the hybrid meetings would be held in the daytime. The evening start suited others and the arrangement tried to balance out different preferences.

AH, 1 February 2023