MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

# HELD ONLINE

**ON TUESDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2023**

*This AGM was recorded and the recording can be accessed on the website www.oups.org.uk*

**1. Welcome**

The Chair addressed the meeting and thanked those attending.

**1.1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Dave Clarke and Hayley Hart

**1.2. Members present**

36 members were present at the meeting. 9 trustees were present at the meeting.

**2. Chairperson’s Report**.

The Chair explained that the committee made a decision to put the AGM online this year so that we could include as many members as possible and this has been very successful as the event attracted a lot of interest and we have a record number of attendees.

The Chair thanked the committee for being so supportive, with everyone fulfilling their role and playing their part to ensure the effective running of OUPS. She informed the meeting that that we have recruited 3 new committee members this year and that this will ensure succession and spread the load a bit. Regular meetings were held to ensure the effective running of the committee.

Historically OUPS built up very healthy financial reserves. OUPS is a charity and all committee members are Trustees and are therefore responsible for the running of the whole society, including the regions. The committee takes all aspects very seriously and discusses finances at all committee meetings. We work very hard to keep prices down but we have to cover our costs and we have re-introduced free places at our weekends and we hope to run more free events.

The Chair emphasised that she has always supported the weekends and wants to see these continue and flourish, believing that they are at the heart and soul of OUPS. The weekends always have fabulous feedback. Our numbers at weekends are growing which is very exciting but increasing membership is an area which we really want to work hard on next year….so please spread the word! It is always dispiriting when attendees say that they wish they had found us sooner.

The Chair reported that we have continued a very good relationship with the staff at Warwick University who are helping us organise our 50th birthday weekend. She expressed the hope that many students will attend the conference and celebrations in May. The celebration will be looking backwards and forwards and the Annual conference this year is on ‘Pleasure’.

OUPS have also continued their online events which were set up very effectively by the previous committee. These continue to be organised by volunteers on the committee. These take time and commitment, and the Chair especially thanked those committee members who have given up their weekends for these. She apologised that IT has occasionally let us down but explained that we are working hard at rectifying this.

The Chair explained that the website has previously been owned personally by website officers of OUPS and this was not a good idea because every time the officer left we have had to start again. So, for the first time we have set up a new website which is now owned by OUPS. This proved challenging at times and the Chair thanked those who helped to set up the new website. OUPS now has a new website officer and a new secretary who have good expertise in the IT area and we are planning to develop and improve the website in the future.

Another area which the committee is hoping to develop is the regions. We currently have 2 active regions and we would like to expand the areas we cover and number of regions we have. The Chair put out a request for members to get in touch if anyone would like to run events in their region.

Finally, the Chair said she wanted to thank the committee, to welcome our new committee members and to thank The President and Vice Presidents for all the help and support they have given us.

**3. Treasurer’s Report**

*A full copy of the accounts can be found on the OUPS website.*

The Treasurer reported that overall OUPS had had a fairly good year and presented the accounts for 2022. He pointed out that these are subject to audit.

At December 31st 2022 the Society held unrestricted funds of £96,493 (2021: £100,421). The Society made a loss of c£5500. This reduced to c£4000 when adjusted for deferred income. However, the Treasurer pointed out that OUPS is a charity and not a business and were currently holding too many funds and so it was planned to redistribute some of these funds back to members in the future, for instance by giving free places on some events.

He explained that the committee had been left with a legacy from the previous committee, which fixed very low weekend prices. This was problematical in two respects. It seemed unfair as it equally helped those who could afford the weekends as well as those who could not and, therefore, we have now started to utilise funds to reintroduce free places. In addition, as it meant we were making a loss on every person who attended a weekend it discouraged us from expanding weekends which went against our objectives.

Both income and expenditure were much higher in 2022 compared to 2021 due to three weekends being run rather than one. Total income in 2022 was c£56,000 with expenditure of c£60,000. Each weekend made a loss of c £3000-4000, but a reasonable profit was made on online events. Expenses included £1500 which was put into setting up the new website and also an estimate of c£1000 for accountancy fees, which was a reduction of c£2000 on 2021 as a new accountant had been found and also the Treasurer had carried out a lot of the work himself. [N.B Subsequent to the meeting the confirmed final cost for accountancy fees was only £150].

The Treasurer informed the meeting that in past years regional finances have not been reported as part of the accounts. He explained that this was not right as the regions are part of OUPS and the OUPS trustees are accountable for them. In future OUPS accounts will include an overview of regional finances. OUPS currently has two active regions, COUPS and LOUPS. COUPS currently have funds of £3638. They hold a small number of events each year on which they break even. LOUPS have funds of £35,526. 2021 was a very productive year for them financially, but in 2022 they cut back appropriately in terms of not building up too many assets. They mainly hold online events with some face-to-face events.

The Charity Commission suggests that charities should hold assets at approximately one half of expenditure. OUPS currently have assets worth approximately 1.5 times its expenditure and so needs to continue to cut back on its funds. In terms of the regions, COUPS holds assets worth 5.3 times its expenditure. However, since it is operating at a low level, it may be acceptable, given that it may wish to run a big event in the future. LOUPS holds high levels of assets, almost one third of those of OUPS with much lower expenditure and at 9.6 times its annual expenditure. The Treasurer explained that this could cause some issues with the Charity Commission, and it may be that OUPS as to think about how some of these funds can be redistributed to start up other regions.

The Treasurer said he was optimistic about the future. The current picture for 2023 showed that funds had been reduced by c£10,000 which was in keeping with the plan to reduce assets but not too speedily.

**3.1. Adoption of Accounts:** **Accounts were approved** **unanimously.**

**4. Election of Officers and Executive Committee**

According to the Constitution Officers and Committee members hold their positions for 2 years. Consequently only some positions were elected this year.

Officers and Executive Committee Members were elected as follows:

The following officers were proposed and elected:

**Vice Chair:** Abigail Robbins

Proposed: Frederick Toates Seconded: Sarah Harwood

**Secretary:** Sarah Harwood

Proposed: Abigail Robbins Seconded: Evelyn Slavid

The following 2 people were proposed and elected as ordinary Committee Members on the Executive Committee:

Denise Ward: Proposed: Alan Pechey; Seconded: Vanessa Jones

Gemma Gow: Proposed: Sarah Harwood; Seconded: Evelyn Slavid

**5. Submitted Motions**

No submitted motions were put forward

**6. AOB**

The following matters were raised from the floor.

* **Weekends:** There were several comments, including one from a tutor, on how useful the F2F events were, particularly now that the OU now only holds online tutorials
* **Regions**: Several attendees expressed an interest in being involved in regional events. The Committee will follow up with these offers and will be looking at how best to support them.
* **Members discounts**: The Chair confirmed that we were continuing to offer substantial discounts for members on weekend events and that these were available on the website
* **Online events:** There was a request for online alternatives to be offered on as many events as possible. The Chair confirmed that this is the intention where possible.
* **Free membership:** There was a query as to whether D120 students would be offered free membership, as DE100 students had been. It was confirmed that this was now available on the website. It was explained that a decision had been made to only offer this to D120 students and not D110 students, as D120 was the first compulsory psychology module and the only first level module that all psychology students would be studying.
* **Relationship with OUSA:** It was confirmed that we have a good relationship with OUSA and that we meet up with them on a regular basis. They support us as far as they can and they provide some funding towards free places and carers costs.
* **Free places:** It was suggested by a tutor that we provide them with details on free places so that they can pass this on to students. It was agreed to do this.

Close of meeting