

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
HELD AT WARWICK UNIVERSITY
ON SATURDAY 11TH MAY 2019**

1. Welcome

The Chair addressed the meeting and thanked those attending. Voting bulletins were handed to all present members who did not vote online and wished to do so at the meeting. Voting results to be presented later in the meeting.

1.1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Lorna Rouse (trustee).

1.2. Members present

23 members were present at the meeting, of which 9 were trustees of the society.

2. Minutes of 2018 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were approved with one amendment.

Current published version: *“One member also added that she did not find the information online confusing, it was all very clear and she had sufficient time to arrange payments with her bank (one month notice).”*

To be amended to: *“One member also added that she did not find the information online confusing, it was all very clear and she had sufficient time to arrange payments with her bank (one month notice). **One other member also stated they found the payment scheme very helpful.**”*

3. Chairperson’s Report.

The Chair reported that OUPS’ main concern in the past year was to increase revenue and decrease cost. He was happy to report that income is stabilising, first time after a few years of steady decrease, and this was achieved after a series of decisions taken by the executive committee in the past year, such as:

- increase the prices for all weekend events;
- reduce costs by running two of the weekend study events with minimum number of volunteers;
- make the Business Administrator job redundant. This decision was taken based on the significant reduction in attendance numbers at the weekend events which consequently led to reduced admin support needed by the committee. All admin jobs have been delegated to various committee members. The Chair took the opportunity to thank Mrs Irene Baumgartl, present at the meeting, for her many years of service and for the fantastic support she offered

to all our members and customers. Mrs Baumgartl was a Business Administrator for the society for 17 years. All those present thanked her too and were pleased to hear that Mrs Irene Baumgartl offered to volunteer as Student Support Officer and she was co-opted in this role upon termination of her employment contract.

- cancel the landline phone contract;
- cancel the PO Box service;
- switch to paperless events and consequently a managed copyright environment (tutors/speakers give consent on material distribution).
- worked towards an agreement with the School of Psychology to cover the expenses for all their speakers invited to our events and to provide or contribute towards the cost of venues for some regional events.

The Chair informed the meeting that the committee succeeded to achieve a fairly consistent programme of events which we intend to continue offering. For instance, the offer for DE200 students consists of local days (quantitative methods school days, held in various locations, ahead of TMA2, organised with the help of the module Chair, Dr. Gini Harrison) and weekend study events in January and May at Warwick University. The Chair added that past years' trend of low attendance continued through this year and that while general psychology events were well attended, both at national and local level, module focused events had a low attendance, especially at local level. Some events had to be cancelled due to lack of interest.

The Regional structure was reviewed in the last year and the executive committee decided to trial an option to the current regional setup for events in regions without a committee: we ran the admin centrally, while using local volunteers for the day. We offered a few events like this, some of them poorly attended so we need to continue the work and find more suitable locations. Question from the floor: do the committee intend to change the existing regional structure? The Chair answered that the two models will be run in parallel so no changes to the current regional structure are planned. Another question from the floor was asked: do the committee intend to resurrect South OUPS? The Chair informed the meeting that due to lack of volunteers to form committees in the South and South-East regions, these have been combined with London OUPS as agreed in the previous ECM with all events being coordinated by the LOUPS committee.

The Chair ended his report by adding that the committee will continue their work on governance by constantly reviewing and maintaining policies such as GDPR, safeguarding, compliance, copyright etc.

4. OU Liaison Officer's Report

The OU Liaison Officer (Miss Abi Robbins) was happy to report that society continues to receive support from the School of Psychology in terms of raising awareness amongst the students by publishing the link to our website in their News items and by co-organising two events: the OU/OUPS Student Fair in October 2018 which sold out and the LOUPS/OU Postgraduate Options Day in April 2019. Both parties would like to continue the trend and offer more similar co-events and hopefully this will be achieved in the near future.

The society was honoured to welcome a number of OU speakers to our events, with the support of the School of Psychology, such as guest speakers at the national events who

presented their research within the School. There is also an initiative to offer a Methods Lab type of event aimed at students preparing for Level 2, an event led by the School and supported by OUPS.

The OU Liaison Officer continued her report by informing the meeting that the society will engage in a crowdfunding project aimed at raising funds to subsidise carers' costs at our events. Unfortunately, the society is no longer able to sustain free places for carers and the project initiative was welcomed as a good way of attempting to increase accessibility to our events. The project will get help with media exposure from OUSA and the OU.

The OU Liaison Officer ended her report by thanking the team for their continued support.

5. Treasurer's Report

An extract of the Balance sheet from the finalised accounts is attached to these minutes. The full set of accounts will be available on the OUPS website and the Charity Commission website.

The Treasurer (Dr Alex Sandham) reported the society experienced the same trend of income and membership decrease again this year. However, she highlighted the actions taken by the committee in the past year in an effort to reduce costs, such as: deciding to have paperless-only events which saved on cost and of course have the added benefit of being more environmentally friendly; deciding that the Newsletter will be offered as an online version only; no tutoring fees for the tutors who are also elected members of the committee; running January and September events with a reduced team of volunteers (minimum required number); deciding to make the Business Administrator role redundant.

The society incurred a loss of £18,406, however this included the redundancy cost. The Treasurer was confident that starting with 2019 the society will redress its financial situation by continuing to apply the cost reduction measures already in place, alongside an increase in prices for the national events.

5.1. Adoption of Accounts: It was proposed that the meeting should approve the 2018 Accounts.

Proposed: Alex Sandham Seconded: David Byrne

Accounts were approved unanimously

5. Election of Officers and Executive Committee

The following candidates have been elected to the respective posts as Executive Officers and Ordinary Committee as they were the only candidates nominated so no further voting was required:

Role	Applicant
Vice Chair (Executive Officer)	Prof Graham Edgar
Treasurer (Executive Officer)	Dr Alexandra Sandham
Regional Representative Officer (Ordinary committee)	Faye Griggs
Books Officer (Ordinary committee)	David Clarke
Newsletter Officer (Ordinary committee)	Steve Nealon

The Chair wanted to thank Lorna Rouse who volunteered as a Newsletter Officer for six years. Lorna was praised for her professionalism and high standards in delivering great editions throughout the years. The Chair wished the new committee member Steve Nealon good luck and thanked him for his offer to volunteer.

6. Constitution changes

Motion 1: Regional Representative

That the role of Regional Representative as defined in the OUPS Constitution only exists if the Executive Committee require it to, or if there are more than five regions active and a majority of them want to have a Regional Rep. Otherwise any regional issues are simply discussed directly between the Executive Committee and the Regional Committees.

Motion was proposed by David Byrne, seconded by Alex Sandham.

Rationale:

The Regional Representative role as defined made perfect sense when most of the activity in OUPS took place locally in the 13 regions, but is not relevant when most of the activity is at national level - for example in recent years there have been fewer than three active regional committees in the whole of the UK (only two in 2018) so most of the country has had no regional OUPS events.

In 2018 we ran a number of successful pilot events around the country (2 x Glasgow, Plymouth, Cheltenham, 2 x Brighton) that were run by local volunteers and supported centrally by Committee members. These all ran without any operational issues, and also met our "break approximately even overall" financial guideline so this approach is clearly viable as a way to support students in areas without a regional committee. We propose to extend this further, using our sub-committee model with a new Committee role of Regional Coordinator, responsible for building and maintaining a network of volunteers, and coordinating these to present the programme of events in regions without a sitting regional committee.

Change proposed:

Change #1

From:

6.3.1 The Regional Representative shall be selected in accordance with clause 9.9

To:

*6.3.1 A Regional Representative **may** be selected in accordance with clause 9.9*

Change #2

From:

9.6 Once formed, the Regional Committee and its Regional Representative shall be subject to annual re-election by OUPS members living in, or associated with the Region in question, at a Regional Annual General Meeting organised by the outgoing Regional Committee.

To:

*9.6 Once formed, the Regional Committee **members** shall be subject to annual re-election by OUPS members living in, or associated with the Region in question, at a Regional Annual General Meeting organised by the outgoing Regional Committee.*

Change #3

9.9 The Regional Committees are to be represented at the Executive Committee by a single representative elected by the Regional Committees. If the elected Regional Representative is unable to attend an Executive Committee meeting a substitute may be nominated. This substitute may act and vote on behalf of the Regional Committees.

To:

*9.9 **A single Regional Representative may be elected by the Regional Committees to represent them at the Executive Committee if this role is required by the Executive Committee, or if there are more than five regional committees of whom a majority vote in favour of having this role.** If the elected Regional Representative is unable to attend an Executive Committee meeting a substitute may be nominated. This substitute may act and vote on behalf of the Regional Committees.*

The motion was carried forward:
23 votes for
5 against
1 abstain

6. AOB

One member who is founder of Addictions UK proposed a collaboration between the two organisations: online published research website funded by Addictions UK and promoted and academically supported by OUPS and possibly shared events. A detailed email explaining the actual proposal will be sent to the Chair and the committee invited Mr Simon Stephens to briefly join the Executive Committee meeting scheduled for the following day in order to discuss further. The Chair added that we have already explored the partnership route and managed to offer a regional co-event with BPS London which was free to attend and we have been co-advertising events with the BPS, the Weekend University and the Royal Institution.

Another question from the floor was raised with regards to planning a celebratory weekend event when OUPS will be 50 years old. This was prompted by the OU celebrating 50 years of activity and one other member asked why OUPS did not mark the moment yet. The OU Liaison Officer explained that we have offered to, however we did not receive any feedback. There is a possibility that OUSA might do something, in which case OUPS would definitely be part of it.

The Regional Chair of Cambridge OUPS, Dr Alan Pechey, observed that this year there was no Regions Report on the agenda and asked to present his regional report to those present at the meeting. COUPS organised the following events in the past year:

- E219 Overview day
- DE200 Preview Day
- DE200 Methods Day

The Chair added that minutes from the regional AGMs, detailing their full list of events and their financial reports, are available on the website.

Mr Barry Morgan asked to make a complaint with regards to being banned from OUPS Facebook groups. The Chair explained that OUPS membership does not guarantee membership of Facebook pages, that the decision to block him was as a result of persistent and ongoing complaints about his posts on our pages by other members and that that decision was entirely left to the groups administrators. In order to reduce the effort of managing the situation they decided to block Mr Morgan's access and the committee respects their decision. Mr Morgan left the meeting.

No other matters were raised.

The Chair thanked all those present and closed the meeting.

Close of meeting