



Approved Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 6th January 2022

Time: 2pm

Venue: via videoconference

In attendance: Brycchan Carey, Emma Salgard Cunha, Helen Williams, James Harriman-Smith, Declan Kavanagh, Rees Arnott-Davies, Sean Creighton, Christoph Heyl, Conrad Brunstrom, Ulrike Kohler, Arthur Burns, Matthew Grenby, Valeria Viola, Caroline Warman, Madeleine Pelling, Patricia Rodrigues, Adam Budd, Katie Aske, Mathew McCormack, Penny Pritchard, Penelope Corfield, Jordan Blake, Paul Saunders, Gemma Tidman, Helen Leighton-Rose, Karen Lipsedge, Anjali Rampersad, Phil Connell, Mary Clare Martin, Brianna Robertson-Kirkland.

1. **Members present and apologies**

No apologies received. The meeting was quorate.

2. **Minutes of last AGM**

The minutes were circulated and approved. The President proposed and Christoph Heyl seconded the approval of the minutes.

3. **Matters arising**

No matters arising.

4. **Report on the election of officers and committee members (BC)**

BC thanked Emma Salgard Cunha for service on the committee as Executive Secretary. Tina Jansen is leaving her role as PG and ECR Representative. He thanked Danielle Thom who is leaving us formally after a period of maternity leave and wish her well.

BC congratulated newly appointed committee members Katie Aske joining as Ordinary Member and Helen Williams who is taking over as Executive Secretary after a lengthy term on the Executive Committee.

BC announced the co-option of new committee members Paul Stephens as Assistant Treasurer, who brings considerable professional experience to the role, and Meg Kobza who joins as Communications Officer.

Other committee members who have agreed to renew their roles: Ryan Hanley, Brianna Robertson-Kirkland, Maddy Pelling.

We are currently accepting nominations for a new PG or ECR representative.

5. Officers' reports

a. President (Brycchan Carey)

BC reported on a good year for BSECS. The handover from Past President Caroline Warman happened under challenging circumstances with last year's lockdown. Despite this the Society has weathered the move to digital events and committee business well.

BSECS has for several years had a focus on supporting early career scholars. In recent years we have been introducing initiatives to support precariously employed and independent scholars and are pleased to announce a collaboration with Gale Cengage to enable free ECCO subscription to our members who do not have an active academic affiliation. This is part of the long-term direction of initiatives towards supporting our early-career members and especially those in precarity.

Valeria Viola asked if the ECCO access would be open to non-UK residents. BC confirmed that unfortunately this was only available to UK residents due to Gale Cengage's licensing arrangements.

BC referred to the constitutional changes having taken place a few years ago to make Equality, Diversity and Inclusion a central part of BSECS's practice. This conference will include an EDI listening panel hosted by the Committee to take feedback from members about how we can strengthen this work.

b. Treasurer (James Harriman Smith)

JHS presented the accounts. Declan Kavanagh and Christoph Heyl proposed and seconded that the Treasurer's report be accepted.

JHS described the financial health of the Society. At present we are holding a greater than usual surplus and so will be augmenting our bursary provision in the coming year.

JHS called our attention to an item of deferred expenditure which is a deposit for our conference venue St Hughs College which will be used when in-person conferences return in 2023.

The ICE Legacy fund has almost entirely been spent, and this has been in line with our aims to disperse the money for use by academics across the field. ICE Legacy funds have enabled masters studentships, PhD studentships, and

ECR and career development projects (the latter using both BSECS core funds and ICE Legacy funds), and finally a series of residential fellowships in the north of England.

Our general expenditure has been minimal this year due to the online conference. Our ISECS subscription fees and our membership incomes have been lower than usual due to these being calculated based on a membership snapshot taken on one day of the year; however in fact membership has now increased and so we will expect to see both of these increase next year.

The final significant change is an increase in our expenditure on bursaries. Conrad Brunstrom remarked that the present approach of spending surplus funds on bursaries in years when BSECS is in good health is the best course of action.

Mary Clare Martin asked about support specifically for part-time students. JHS assured the meeting that part-time students may apply for several of our bursaries and scholarships but suggested that the committee might consider reviewing the way that we are advertising these opportunities and making sure that we are clearly communicating these criteria.

Mary Clare Martin asked about the need for BSECS membership in order to register for the conference. JHS clarified that it was necessary for attendees of the conference to be members at the moment of the conference. If anyone is unsure about issues connected to their membership they should feel welcome to speak to the Treasurer about their individual case.

c. Executive Secretary (Emma Salgard Cunha)

ESC reminded the membership that there are frequent opportunities to join the Executive Committee and that if anyone is interested (or knows of someone interested) in standing for a role now or in the future they can informally approach committee members. Posts will continue to be advertised online via all of our usual channels. It is important for the health of the Society and for our EDI aims that posts be contested and we encourage and welcome anyone to become more involved in the Society through joining the committee.

d. Journal Editor (Kate Tunstall)

KT reported that since this time last year, we have published four issues, three of which are *Varia* and the final one a Special Issue on Women and Property in the Long Eighteenth C, edited by Karen Lipsedge and Rita Dashwood.

KT reported with apologies that the third issue was late coming out due to delays and pressures on both the authors and the editorial team caused by the pandemic.

KT expressed her gratitude to all our authors, peer reviewers and guest editors for their incredible work and achievement in releasing four issues this year.

KT reported that the pipeline of new articles is healthy and the standards high, and there is a pleasing increase in the number of articles published in French. The next issues are based on papers that were given at the ISECS Identities conference in 2019, guest-edited by BSECS Presidents, past and present, Caroline Warman and Brycchan Carey.

KT reported that we are experiencing some issues with our publisher Wiley who have moved their copy-editing in-house, despite our protests. KT is in constant contact with the team at Wiley, and will meet them more formally to find an acceptable solution. The Committee apologise to disruption caused to our authors and editors by these changes.

KT announced that we will shortly publish a Call for Guest Editors for the Special Issue of December 2023.

- e. Conference organisers (Brianna Robertson-Kirkland and Rees Arnott Davies)

BRK reported that we received more submissions than usual this year, 88 in total which included 17 panels and 4 roundtables. We were able to accept around 60 of the proposals. We have also included additional events in the form of keynote lectures, a PG/ECR networking event, a listening event, the 18th Century in the 21st Century roundtable and a live concert. We have just under 300 attendees which is slightly lower than a normal year. Next year we intend to return to an in person conference at St Hugh's College with the theme of 'Homecoming'.

RAD thanked Marie Giraud who has joined the Conference team. RAD asked members to share feedback with the organisers and hoped that we would also be able to implement some of the members feedback from our last in-person conference when we return to an in-person format next January. Over the coming few years the committee intend to review the choice of venue and will also be canvassing members about potential alternatives.

5. ISECS (Matthew Grenby)

MOG reported that the Rome congress is still scheduled for 2023 and the ISECS committee are considering applications for a 2027 congress. ISECS priorities are to support new national societies, support early-career scholars, and to report publications on subjects relating to the long 18th century.

6. Proposal to amend the Society's Equality and Diversity statement, see appended proposal below (Declan Kavanagh)

DK on behalf of the BSECS EDI working group presented a proposal to the Society's Equality and Diversity Policy. There are two proposed changes: first to revise the

name of the Policy document and secondly to endorse a statement in support of gender-inclusive language and to include this in the statement.

DK reported that we have discussed the change at committee and that it is brought to AGM for approval.

Elizabeth Schlapps, Conrad Brunstrom, Ulrike Kohler and Madeleine Pelling expressed their approval for the amendment.

Declan proposed the amendment and Stephen Gregg seconded the proposal. **The motion was carried by majority and passed.**

7. BSECS relationship with Wiley (Brycchan Carey)

BC reported that the Society has had a longstanding relationship with Wiley and although there are no immediate changes envisioned, we wanted to speak to the membership about their experiences and thoughts about Wiley. One area which has been flagged is Wiley's processes around the Journal copy editing which have caused difficulties for the JECs Editor. BC will welcome feedback from Society members which can inform the committee's review over the coming year.

8. Members feedback and comments

Sean Creighton asked whether the regular email newsletter was continuing, as it provides a helpful alternative to social media communications. Madeleine Pelling replied that the newsletter was indeed continuing, and indeed is being expanded and developed and we are glad to accept further suggestions for revisions or new items to include.

James Harriman Smith mentioned that the ISECS Early Career Seminar is currently accepting applications. The ICE Rome Congress CFP will appear this year.

Sean Creighton let the committee know that he has been in conversation with ISECS to explore the possibility to foster more work on Anglo-Danish relationships in the 18th Century. There is also the possibility of an intra-island Caribbean society for eighteenth-century studies. BC mentioned that the Early Caribbean Society may also be of interest to those supporting new work in this area.

Mary Clare Martin highlighted the work of the Children's History Society UK, which will be launching a new website in January. BSECS members would be welcomed by the Society. Adam Budd, the Centres and Affiliate Society Officer, will be glad to be put in contact with any other Societies to see if a more formal partnership or affiliation with BSECS is appropriate.

9. Any other business of an annual nature

No other business.

Proposal on amendment to the Society's Equality and Diversity policy

- 1) To clarify the aims of the policy, we propose to retitle our Society's policy on Equality and Diversity (v. 7 December 2017) to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion <https://www.bsecs.org.uk/the-society/equality-and-diversity/>
- 2) We propose to agree the following principle and action: BSECS recognises the importance of gender-inclusive language, and thus will revise its internal and public-facing documents to adopt gender-neutral language (e.g., rather than "he or she," we will use "they").
- 3) We propose to add the following sentence to the Society's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy:

"BSECS understands the importance of gender-inclusive language, and so we encourage members to adopt gender-neutral language in all Society-associated documentation, and at Society-sponsored meetings, workshops, and conferences."