

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Friends of Imperial College held on Thursday 29 November 2012 at 6.00pm in the Skempton Building, Imperial College, London SW7 2AZ.

Committee present: Roderick RhysJones (Chairman), John Little (Deputy Chairman), Bill Blackburn (Hon Treasurer), Riitta Soininen (Hon Secretary), Katri Yates (Membership Secretary), Paresh Parmar.

Members present included: Selwyn Castleden, Michael Gore, Kostas Giannoutakis, Karen Little, Bob Lloyd, Meg Lloyd, Anna Rowe, Sandi Rhys Jones, Travis Spurling, Keith Woodward,

1. Apologies for absence
 - 1.1. Apologies had been received from Rita Leek, Paul Garwood, John Sanderson.
2. Minutes of the last meeting
 - 2.1. The minutes of the last AGM held on Tuesday 8 November 2010 were read and approved.
3. Chairman's report
 - 3.1. The Chairman reported that the association had maintained the high level of activity achieved last year. Twelve events were organised including one off campus. Total audience numbers for the year were up for the public lectures from 1199 to 1421, an increase of 19%. Average attendance rose from 173 to 205. In addition overall numbers and had been boosted to about 2000 by an estimated audience of 500 at an event Friends sponsored at the newly inaugurated Imperial Festival.
 - 3.2. Membership has increased by 4 per cent from 284 to 295.
 - 3.3. Finances have improved and Friends' donation to the Rector's Scholarship Fund (previously the Student Opportunities Fund) was raised to £3000 from £2500 last year.
 - 3.4. A broad spectrum of people were attracted to our events including alumni, students, school pupils, parents and members of the public who have no connection with the college.
 - 3.5. We carried out two surveys of audience satisfaction during the year. Dr Zita Martins lecture Where does life come from? and the Oddities of physics show.
 - 3.6. Both showed very high levels of satisfaction. 98% and 99% found each event very enjoyable or reasonably enjoyable. 96% and 97% found them very informative or reasonably informative. 96% said Dr Martin's lecture was very challenging or reasonably challenging. As one would expect far fewer 60% found Oddities of Physics as challenging.
 - 3.7. Through our programme of events we are fulfilling our aim of helping the College with one of its five strategic intents "to communicate widely the significance of science in general, and the purpose and ultimate benefits of its activities in particular".
 - 3.8. Winton Capital Management Ltd has continued to support the association with a generous donation for the sixth year running. This donation allows us to maintain low subscriptions and low ticket prices whilst promoting Friends' events in local magazines and other media.
 - 3.9. We continue to receive a great deal of support from the College through the provision of lecture theatres, technical support and promotion of our events. We are very appreciative of this funding and support of our activities.
 - 3.10. We were invited to nominate a member to the re-established Imperial College Court which represents a wide range of stakeholders. It was agreed that the Chairman should represent the Association and he attended the first meeting in May 2012.
 - 3.11. We believe that now is the time to apply for charitable status in order to enhance our image, provide further funds for the College and also circumvent difficulties we sometimes encounter in dealing with other organisations. We believe that we meet the criterion of providing a public benefit. The idea has been mooted with the College which generally supports the move.

- 3.12. Friends' administrator Jill Cook retired in July having provided the association with outstanding service for seven years.
- 3.13. Katherine Orr has been appointed in August. She has extensive experience organising events whilst working for Intercontinental Hotels and the Imperial War Museum. She read Environmental Archaeology at Edinburgh University.
- 3.14. The Chairman thanked members of the Committee for their support and help during the past year.
4. Hon Treasurer's Report
 - 4.1. The Hon Treasurer reported that income increased by £1,218.00 compared with the previous year with a higher proportion through membership. Expenses were higher by £3,591.99. This is in part due to a cheque for the previous summer party catering being accounted for during this financial year. Increased administrative efforts to supporting the growing membership and number of events plus additional promotional activities accounted for the remainder of the increase.
 - 4.2. Costs were incurred for catering at the members-only Behind the Scenes events.
 - 4.3. The considerable work undertaken to revamp the Friends' website is now delivering benefits improving operational efficiencies and providing members with a convenient mechanism to manage bookings and obtain event information. We continue to need members and guests to make best use of the online booking system and ensure that payments are made in a timely manner to avoid administrative effort chasing outstanding payments.
 - 4.4. Looking ahead through 2012/13, we anticipate some rise in administrative costs as a result of the transition of activities for the Friends' Organiser and Administrator role.
 - 4.5. Financial status maintains a sound position due to the continued generous support of Winton Capital Management and the College, which provides venues and technical support for our events. This assists achievement of Friends' goals of promoting public understanding of science while supporting the College achieve its strategic aim to help create awareness in society of the benefits of world class research and education in science, engineering, medicine and business.
 - 5.1. Following a review of level of subscriptions and membership benefits the Committee had decided that member's could invite guests at the reduced rate of £8 instead of the normal guest rate of £10. They would be termed members' invitees. The members agreed.
6. Proposal to register Friends of Imperial College as a charity
 - 6.1. The committee recommended that Friends should apply for charitable status in order to improve its status both within the College and outside, to provide the fiscal structure to make it easier to deal with other organisations, and to increase the moneys available to College through Gift Aid where appropriate.
 - 6.2. It was felt that Friends would meet the public benefit criteria of a Charity as it was open to the public and offered them educational services,. It also made annual donations to the College, itself a charity.
7. Any other business
 - 7.1. There was no other business.
8. Meeting closed at 6.50pm