
Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 15 October 2016 at IHR, 11a.m.

In attendance:

Marcus Collins (Loughborough), Kate Bradley (Kent), Rachel Lock-Lewis (University of South Wales), Judy Stephenson in place of Karin Dannehl (Oxford and Economic History Society), Lowri Ann Rees (Bangor University), Andrew Roach (Glasgow University), Robert McNamara (University of Ulster), Paul Corthorn (Queen's University Belfast), Rachel Bright (Keele University), Jamie Wood (University of Lincoln), Joan Allen (Newcastle University), Dina Gusejnova, in place of Sarah-Miller-Davenport (University of Sheffield), Sabine Clarke (University of York), Mark Hutchinson (Durham University), Lucinda Matthews-Jones (Liverpool John Moores University), Richard Hawkins (University of Wolverhampton) Heather Shore (Leeds Beckett University), Maureen Meikle (Leeds Trinity University), Neil Fleming (University of Worcester), Daniel Grey (University of Plymouth)

1. Apologies for absence

Alison Hems (Bath Spa); Ian Talbot (Southampton); William Whyte (Oxford); Peter D'Sena (Hertfordshire); Bill Aird (Edinburgh); Karin Dannehl (EHS); Martin Johnes (Swansea); Charles Insley (Manchester); Sara Wolfson (Canterbury Christchurch); Pippa Virdee (De Montfort); Tom O'Donnell (UCL- Postgrad Rep)

2. Minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting

These were accepted, pending the following corrections: to add Heather Shore to the list of attendees, and to correct the Glasgow/Glasgow Calendonian error (NB – A word search of the document doesn't show up what this was referring to, so Daniel would be very grateful for clarification!)

3. Matters arising

Speakers at Steering Committee meetings

MC had explored this with both the AHRC and the British Academy, both of whom were unable to make staff available to attend meetings on Saturdays. Therefore, this plan was to be put on hold for the time being.

Archives

RH and JW would be attending the IHR History Day on behalf of History UK, partly to raise awareness of HUK and partly to build up relationships with archivists and their institutions, with a view to potentially inviting them to steering committee meetings. This would be returned to later HUK steering committee meetings.

Items 13.i. and 14.ii were taken at this point.

14.ii. PC reported that the Royal Historical Society Education Policy Committee were looking into pressures on departments to increase their PGT offerings. A working conditions survey was being planned, with the aim of looking at the impact of audit culture and micro-managerial approaches on the workforce. The Teaching History conference was also discussed.

13.i. The History Department at Queens was merged with other departments. The coverage of the QUB V-C's comments on medieval history in the *Belfast Telegraph* had resulted in a personal and public apology.

4. Convenors' Reports

This is the first time that the convenors have circulated written reports to accompany the agenda. The committee noted the highly positive feedback that the **Academic Job Bootcamp** had received from participants, their supervisors and colleagues. MC noted that, for a repeat version of the bootcamp, he recommended running the presentations concurrently with the HUK meeting, rather than trying to do these simultaneously with the interviews, and that there could be a lunch put on to provide a networking point (and a break) for participants and volunteers. Possibilities for making the event more geographically accessible were discussed. One option would be to locate the event outside of London, though this was not necessarily a cheaper or more practical option, and MC found that participants liked the idea of going to London, as it added to the sense of occasion. MC drew attention to the need for sufficient volunteers from the steering committee for an event like this, and the need for money for travel bursaries and refreshments (see also discussion on co-sponsorship under point X). AR asked for thanks to MC and colleagues running this very successful event to be minuted.

On the question of funding, it was noted that there are funding opportunities for networking and training for PhD students through the AHRC. The minute-taker has since confirmed that this avenue of funding has been cut by the AHRC – see <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/phdstudents/fundingandtraining/collaborativeskillsdevelopment/>

5. Treasurer's Report

RH noted that income currently exceeds expenditure at the moment, but there are some expenses due to come in.

6. Media Officer's Report

JW spoke to his report, highlighting how the new website arrangements were live and had considerable benefits for HUK in terms of cost and being able to update it quickly and easily. RB asked for thanks to be recorded to JW for all the work he had put into the website, and the importance of ensuring that HUK's access to the website be maintained – particularly when people changed responsibilities within HUK or their terms came to an end.

7. New Co-convenor

MC thanked KB for her work on as co-convenor, and HS for volunteering to take on the role of co-convenor in KB's place. The steering committee were in favour of HS taking on the role of co-convenor (elect). MC stated that he was also standing down, as of the plenary, because he felt that he had not been able to affect as much reform of HUK as he had wished on joining. This raised a constitutional issue in terms of HUK's ability to change officers within the course of a year, when it is currently only permissible on an annual basis, at the plenary/AGM.

8. 2016 Plenary

Posters for the 2016 Plenary on From REF to TEF were circulated. There are three ways of paying – by Eventbrite, by cheque to Sue in advance or on the day, or Sue could invoice institutions. Steering committee members were asked to encourage as many people as possible to attend the day.

9. Administrative arrangements

An update was presented verbally

Scotland. AR reported that Scottish universities would be joining the TEF, as there were reputational and recruitment risks to not having stars for teaching if English universities were getting these.

Wales – RLL to summarise! The Diamond Report had consequences for those English institutions who take in Welsh-domiciled students, as much as it would also put more money into Welsh universities.

Secretary's Report

William Whyte's (University of Oxford) term on the steering committee had come to an end, and someone from Aberdeen had been nominated to replace him. There would be five vacancies next year as there were a number of second terms due to end. There was also some discussion about making use of the constitutional provisions to ensure that steering committee members attended regularly and sent stand-ins when they could not attend.

10. The Future of History UK

In response to the document circulated, RM floated the possibility of streamlining steering committee meetings, perhaps having two plenaries a year, and having a three-month interval between meetings. LMJ asked about the possibility of moving the autumn meeting to summer, with RB suggesting early September.

RB spoke to the need for HUK to continue to work on responding to government policy initiatives. MH spoke about the value of plenaries in keeping the momentum of HUK going, and LMJ felt they had an important role in raising HUK's profile. Surveys of departments and the profession were felt to be an important part of finding out about the emerging needs of the departments and those working in them, and also for engaging with our constituency.

An action point Media Officer and another SC member was to provide the logo and publicity materials via the website for committee members and co-sponsors/grant winners to use.

On content for the blog, HS suggested starting with four blogs posts a year, with Daniel's contact being one person invited to repost/adapt their blog on the bootcamp for our website. LMJ suggested that the minutes could be more blog-like and suggested the use of Tweetdeck and scheduling tweets as a means of avoiding Twitter silences.

It was agreed by the steering committee that the media officer become a member of the executive.

There was considerable discussion about the roles needed on the committee. The futures document referred to an education and a research officer to join the executive, which the steering committee felt to be helpful but potentially very broad and subject to overlap. SC suggested looking at the things that the convenors and executive needed to do, and therefore to focus on the jobs/tasks, e.g. events, outreach, surveys etc. It was generally agreed by the steering committee that there would need to be clear job descriptions for the new roles, and that the postholders would need to be proactive in executing them. It was also important to be flexible with the posts, at the same time that a proliferation of jobs was unlikely to be helpful. Making use of sub-committees on the steering committee could also be useful.

Action point: the executive would need to go away and work on the roles, reporting back to the steering committee by the plenary. In constitutional terms, it would be important to introduce a degree of flexibility in being able to extend or contract the executive, rather than specifying too many of the roles.

On co-sponsorship, this was felt to be a good thing, as it was a productive way of working, particularly with History Lab and History Lab Plus. There was some discussion of working with other groups/generations of scholars.

On the postgraduate/early career representative question, it was felt that there were benefits to making History Lab and History Lab Plus the main representatives, but there was a benefit to having representatives from HL and HL+ and having an open competition for ECRs to stand for the committee. It was agreed to provide for both routes in the constitution.

Any other business

Charles Insley had asked if HUK would release a statement of support for those scholars whose positions had been destabilised by the Brexit vote. It was decided to leave this for a future meeting.

Date of the next meeting

The AGM was to be held on 5 November 2016; the next steering committee should avoid Valentine's Day.

JA asked for thanks to be recorded to the two co-convenors who were stepping down.

KB 16.10.2016