

Council for College and University English
Minutes of the AGM Business Meeting

HELD 28 APRIL, 2006
AT ST ANNE'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

The Chair, Elisabeth Jay (Oxford Brookes), welcomed delegates to the business meeting.

1 Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from Ado Haberer, Heidi Macpherson, Brian Maidment, and Chris Ringrose.

2. Minutes of the 2005 OGM, 10 December 2005
The minutes were accepted as a correct record and approved by the meeting.

3. Matters Arising
EJ reported that there were no points for action noted in the minutes and no matters arising to report other than those covered under other headings below.

4. Chair's Annual Report
EJ noted that it was customary on these occasions to report at some length the activities undertaken on CCUE's behalf by the Executive Committee and its officers during the preceding year. However, this year those activities had been so many and various, and the paper output so prolific, that she would produce only a brief resumé. The full documentation can now be consulted on the CCUE website, where the latest copy of *CCUE News* and an archive of earlier issues are also available thanks to the efforts of Chris Ringrose who has overseen the transition of the journal from paper to electronic form. EJ also thanked Paul Vetch, coincidentally a former member of St. Anne's, who had designed and is maintaining the website.

E-mail consultation has been an increasingly marked feature of the Executive Committee's work. The committee met in person in August and December, but several times each month members are asked for their comments and contributions to statements and reports that CCUE has been invited to make by one public body or another. Working in this way has been good for CCUE's bank balance since it saves on travel, but makes increasing demands on members' time. EJ took the opportunity to record the collective thanks of the Exec for the efficiency and good humour of GW in his role as Secretary, to SO for organising the Exec meetings, and to LiP as Treasurer.

EJ presented a list of the various written reports and responses produced over the past year, along with an indication of who had produced them on our behalf.

- a) Response to the Draft Criteria for RAE 2008 (compiled by GW).
- b) Response to the AHRC report on Doctoral Research in the Arts and Humanities (MC, VJ, and LA compiled a draft response for Exec comment)
- c) Nominations for the AHRC Panel and Peer Review College (The AHRC's 3-week deadline prevented consultation of the entire membership, but the Exec offered a list of nominees and, where necessary, reduced these to two

suggestions for each of the vacant sections of the Panel [Medieval, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, Creative Writing, and Postcolonial Writing]).

- d) Subject Benchmarking (A small working party, chaired by BK, and involving EJ, GW, and SZ, met twice to recommend and accomplish minor revisions which reflected changes in the subject over recent years. In particular it made more explicit reference to the growing field of Creative Writing. The document, approved by the Executive, will shortly be displayed on a website hosted by the QAA who will invite comments from the entire subject community).
- e) ERIH Journal Ranking Exercise (EJ, accompanied by LyP, attended a meeting hosted by the AHRC on 31 March. The community was subsequently consulted and a letter reflecting the responses of the community was drafted and sent to the AHRC on 27 April, indicating our dissatisfaction with the process, its intended outcomes, and possible future uses and implications. A copy of the letter was distributed to each delegate.

EJ also recorded her appreciation of the other contacts and collaborations that CCUE has undertaken during the past year, especially with the ESC and its Advisory Board, and the Council of the HEA. She also drew attention to the extremely helpful liaison between CCUE and the English Association, facilitated by Peter Kitson, Chair of its Board of Trustees. GW also recorded his personal thanks to Professor Kitson for the close and fruitful dialogue that had been possible during the drafting of the CCUE and EA responses to the ERIH exercise.

The range and extent of the consultations undertaken this year has led to unprecedented demands on the time of Exec members in general and the Chair and Secretary in particular, who have at times been devoting around a day a week to CCUE duties this year. Given that many of these unpaid consultations were conducted on behalf of the AHRC, who have placed considerable emphasis on the introduction of Full Economic Costing for research grants, it might become necessary to make the AHRC aware of the true economic costing of the various exercises they launch.

In conclusion EJ observed that, having served sequentially as Secretary and Chair of CCUE, she now felt that it was a good moment for her to step down as Chair, and to allow the Executive to appoint a successor at its meeting at the end of the AGM. She thanked the delegates for entrusting the job to her, stating that it had been a privilege to represent them.

5. Report from ESSE

EJ noted that, given that Lachlan Mackenzie would be addressing the meeting on Saturday morning, she would keep her comments brief. She reminded colleagues of the forthcoming ESSE conference to be held in London from 29th August to 2nd September 2006, co-sponsored by the IES and CCUE, and encouraged everyone to attend. Her service on the ESSE Academic Planning Group for this conference has made EJ aware of the rapid changes occurring across the subject in mainland Europe, where government pressure is forcing colleagues to sacrifice literary and cultural courses in favour of instrumentally-driven language ones. CCUE would be well advised to monitor these changes in the coming years. ESSE is also in the process of electing a new President to

replace Professor Ado Haberer, who is standing down after many years of service to ESSE. CCUE will in due course be asked to play a role in the process to nominate and select his successor.

6. Treasurer's Annual Report

LiP reported that the financial situation was extremely stable. Subscriptions were still trickling in, some of which seem to have taken a considerable time to be processed by institutional finance departments. The most recent OGM had also made a small profit, which was an unprecedented achievement. The current balance was £8,172.67, which would allow the continued subsidisation of events such as the OGM and AGM (where necessary), and the activities of members of the Executive in attending Executive meetings and representing the subject community at other events. Subscriptions to ESSE had fallen significantly, however, and colleagues were urged to press their departments to continue to subscribe in reasonable numbers.

7. The English Subject Centre

- (i) **Professor Judy Simons** (Chair of the ESC Advisory Board and Chair of the Council of the Higher Education Academy) gave a brief address to the meeting on the history and future of the relationship between the ESC and its various stakeholders, including CCUE. She introduced a draft Memorandum of Agreement between CCUE and the ESC which was discussed in some detail. A number of minor changes were suggested and it was agreed that BK would bring a revised version of the text to the next Executive meeting for discussion. (**Action: BK**)
- (ii) **Professor Ben Knights** (Royal Holloway/Director of the ESC). Owing to lack of time before the evening lecture, BK offered a very abbreviated report this year. He drew attention to a number of forthcoming events (including a symposium on the Pedagogy of the Text, to be hosted at the University of Gloucester by Simon Dentith) and other activities conducted by the ESC, offered a brief survey of the ESC website, and reminded colleagues that a reception to launch the first volumes in the *Teaching New English* series, published by Palgrave, would follow the lecture at this meeting.

8. Arrangement for a Ballot to Elect Members of the Executive

GW announced that, as the number of nominations this year was equal to the number of executive places currently available, there would be no need for an election. The following were thus deemed to have been elected to the Executive for a term of two years: Linda Anderson, David Duff, Elspeth Graham, Clare Hanson, Andrew Thacker and Greg Walker.

9. AOB

The assembled delegates warmly thanked EJ for her service to the Executive, and especially for her extremely productive and successful term as Chair of CCUE. They wished her well for the future.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.00.

Greg Walker, Secretary, 30/04/2006