

American Politics Group

Annual General Meeting

05.01.15

Manchester Metropolitan University

APG officers in attendance: S Hurst (outgoing chair), C Harrington (incoming chair), David Morgan (incoming vice-chair) E Ashbee (web coordinator), Mara Oliva (Treasurer)

Apologies: Gareth Williams

A majority of conference attendees were also present.

(AGM notes taken by the vice chair)

1. Executive roles

New and existing roles were confirmed at the meeting. Membership officer Gareth Williams will continue in his existing role. In his absence, the executive acknowledged all the work to date that GW had put into updating and expanding the membership database.

Mara Oliva will continue in her role as Treasurer as the handover from Donna Jackson was completed in autumn 2014. Attendees thanked Donna for her years of commitment and service to the group, and Mara particularly observed the support that Donna had provided during the handover period.

Eddie Ashbee will maintain his post of Web coordinator. Attendees were very grateful to EA for bring the website to life and being extremely proactive in terms of adding information to the site on a regular basis.

Clodagh Harrington finished her three-year term as APG vice-chair and was successfully nominated by Donna Jackson for the role of chair.

Steve Hurst completed his term as chair of the group and was thanked wholeheartedly by attendees for his three years of effort and input.

David Morgan was successfully nominated by Andy Wroe for the position of vice-chair. The executive welcomed David on board.

2. Treasurer's Report

Mara Oliva produced a report on the group's finances and informed attendees that the current APG account balance is a healthy £10,193.95.

2014 membership income was listed as £350, and although this figure is not necessarily reflective of the real amount as many members pay their dues every three years, there is clearly room for substantial improvement on this front. A discussion ensued regarding how best to manage this situation going forward, and it was decided that for now at least, membership subscriptions will stand, and efforts at widening participation will be made.

GW is in the process of updating the membership database and chasing lapsed payments. It was agreed that encouraging members to move to the more appropriate payment method of standing order would be very useful as a next step. MO outlined the merits of opening another APG bank account. It was agreed that the Lloyds account would remain active but a second account would be opened at a bank which offers interest payment. MO will 'shop around' and report to the executive on the best deal available.

3. Web coordinator's Report

EA provided an update on the new (since 2014) APG website and reminded attendees that in order to keep the site fresh and interesting, he needs to receive regular copy and images. Blogs, publications, events etc can all be posted and/or promoted on the site. Suggestions for content included an undergraduate essay section and a quarterly message to members from the vice-chair (also in the form of an email)

There will be a £50 website renewal subscription for 2015.

4. Future conference venues

Mara Oliva confirmed that Reading University will host the 2016 conference from Thursday 7 – Saturday 9 January.

Alex Waddan has provisionally offered the University of Leicester as a venue for 2017 (tbc)

Nigel Bowles has provisionally offered Oxford University as the venue for 2018 (tbc)
All of the above suggestions were warmly received by the executive.

5. Colloquium venue – post 2015

The next colloquium is booked for Friday 13 November 2015 at the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London. There is a question-mark over the future colloquium venue from 2016 onwards as this is the year that the US Embassy begins its phased move to Battersea. At a recent meeting with Philip Davies and Clodagh Harrington, Cultural Affairs Officer Anneliese Reinemeyer was clear that the new venue does not have an auditorium and may therefore not be suitable to facilitate the colloquium. It was agreed that APG representatives would be invited to view the new venue when it is up and running and a decision could be made from there. In the meantime,

Philip Davies kindly offered the Eccles Centre as a possible venue for the 2016 colloquium which will take place on Friday 2 December.

6. Honorary membership

The suggestion of offering honorary membership to former colloquium speakers and former conference keynote speakers was raised but dismissed on the grounds of membership dues already being unacceptably low.

7. APG Journal

Andy Wroe raised the possibility of setting up a peer-reviewed APG journal with a view to promoting intellectual pluralism. It was decided that although the time and financial costs would be high, this was an idea worth pursuing. Andy kindly agreed to research options, and assisted by Eddie Ashbee, will report back to the group in due course.

8. Neustadt Book Prize

Donna Jackson asked on behalf of the book committee if it was possible to roll the prize over from one year to the next if there was a particularly small amount of entrants. Members decided against such a practice, as it would complicate the book prize funding process.

9. Travel Awards

Attendees were reminded that in order to maintain the two £750 travel awards, further fundraising would need to be undertaken. Philip Davies very kindly sponsors the annual Ros Davies Memorial Travel Award, and the Alan Grant Memorial Award is funded by member donations and matching funds from P Davies. This extra act of generosity from PD is specific encouragement for members to donate, and by the end of the conference, MO had collected £195 in cash. PD suggested that the website should reflect more specifically the names and details of the Travel Award providers and recipients, with an archive of previous winners and more substantial reports than the current offerings. All of this should be easily done as the vice-chair already coordinates and manages the Travel Award process.

A final suggestion on this topic was to strongly encourage Travel Award recipients to attend and give a paper at the APG conference.

10. AOB

None