

The Arthur Ransome Society

Minutes of the 88th meeting of the Board of Trustees, held on Zoom on 5 March 2022

Present: Peter Wright (in the chair)
Jules Blue
Krysia Clack
Barbara Flower
Mike Glover
Susan Gouldbourne
Marc Grimston
Linda Hendry
Brian Key
Iain Khan-Gilchrist
John Pearson
Kirstie Taylor
Elizabeth Williams
Peter Willis
Diana Wright

Action: names in red

1. Apologies for absence

There were none; the entire Board was present at the meeting.

2. Chairman's opening remarks

Peter welcomed to the meeting Barbara Flower, who had succeeded Barry Gouldbourne as the South Western region's Representative Trustee. He noted that Brian would, under the six year rule, be standing down from the Board at the next IAGM. He thanked Brian for his sterling services to TARS. Eastern Region should nominate a successor to Brian in due course.

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Peter said that John and he hoped soon to meet face-to-face with the company responsible for TARS' public liability insurance, with a view to exploring such questions as the extent of coverage of TARS' own members.

Peter and John

AusTARS Cup: Peter informed the Board of the nomination recently received from AusTARS for the winner of the cup in 2022. The Board ratified the nomination.

The Board agreed with Peter's proposal that the £1,000 donation from Jim and Judy Andrews should be applied first of all to the current children's writing/mapping competition, with any remainder being applied to other specific projects or activities.

David Middleton had recently given notice of his intention to withdraw in 2023/4 from his responsibilities in respect of TARS membership and major events.

3. Minutes of Board meeting of 9 October 2021

Subject to the deletion of item 16, the Board approved the draft minutes as a true record of that meeting.

There were no matters arising from these minutes and not covered elsewhere on the day's agenda.

4. TARS Presidency

TARS President Libby Purves, whose term of office would end in the summer, had not yet replied to Peter's invitation to attend the forthcoming Literary Weekend. If she could attend, the possibility of an extension of her period of office should be discussed with her on that occasion. If she could not be present, the question would need to be raised with her immediately afterwards, with the Board kept informed.

5. Literary and Resources Committee

Krysia commented on her report, circulated to the Board, of the committee's meeting on Zoom of 1 February.

The Board agreed that it would be helpful to discuss with Christine Rae at the Literary Weekend certain problems that she was experiencing as Stall Manager, of some of which account could be taken in the Stall section of the next 'Signals'.

The Book Club faced certain difficulties to do with relatively low membership, general aims, choice of books for discussion and recommendation, etc. In the case of children's books it should be possible to arrange coverage in 'The Outlaw'; Elizabeth, Peter Wright and Amanda Ardagh-Walter would discuss this with Jules.

The 2024 AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies, to be organised by TARS, was approaching. The Lakes was confirmed as the best location for it; the likeliest date was the month of May.

The committee had approved a note by Ann Farr advising on how best to handle offers of books, etc. received from time to time as a result of the death of a TARS member. The note would be forwarded to the Board and the regional secretaries. John

6. Publications and Publicity Committee

Marc reported on the committee's recent meeting on Zoom. Catherine Lamont had stated at the meeting that she was standing down with immediate effect from the editorship of 'Mixed Moss'. It appeared that Julian Lovelock would be willing to ensure safe production of the 2022 edition. A new editor needed to be appointed for 2023 onwards; Marc, Peter Wright and Peter Willis would prepare an announcement for 'Signals'.

The committee would pursue consideration of the publicity ideas mentioned at the Board's previous meeting. Pub Cttee

7. Literary Weekend 2022

The meeting would be well attended and St. Edmund Hall was proving a helpful partner. However, the Bodleian Library had been obliged to cancel the tour it had offered to participants.

8. TARS IAGMs

Brian reported on the continuing preparations for the 2022 IAGM. He would sign the formal contract insisted upon by the Royal Hospital School. There had been some cost increases, but the weekend would still be good value for money. As regards the intention that the IAGM itself should be made available to TARS members on Zoom, it was not yet clear whether Carla Johnson would be available to organise this. It was suggested that if she could not, Andrew Silk might be able to take this task on. Brian would in any case confirm that the School had the right equipment for the zooming facility. Brian
Kirstie and Linda informed the Board about preparations for the 2023 IAGM in Dundee.

Two possible venues had been investigated, of which one seemed clearly the better. The likeliest dates for the event were 5 – 8 or 12 – 15 May. The organisers had to cope, however, with a shortage of human resources: help would be needed. In discussion it became clear that various kinds of assistance could be made available by other TARS regions, both before and during the event. Mike reminded the meeting that there already existed a group of members ready to organise such help. The Board, acknowledging TARS Scotland's problems, agreed that the necessary support could and would be provided.

9. Financial matters

The Board thanked Susan for the numerous useful accounting tables which she had circulated in advance. It noted that a surplus of £2045 had resulted in 2021, mainly because of the reduced number of physical meetings.

The Board adopted the proposed budget for 2022. It was agreed that in future it would be desirable to institute a two stage budgetary procedure, under which a provisional budget would be adopted in the autumn of year -1, to be revised if necessary in March of year 1. Susan said that David Middleton was interested in the possibility of being able to use a TARS debit or credit card; this would be pursued. Susan

10. Membership matters, TARS website

The Board thanked Diana for the report which she had circulated. It agreed with her proposal of a fee of £150 for the web designer. The membership committee was active. An effort was in hand to encourage members with standing orders to replace these by a direct debit arrangement; a note this should be included in 'Signals'.

As regards the website, it was agreed that the regions' programmes should be featured in the public as well as the members' section. Diana

11. Relations with Lakeland Arts

The Board, to which the recent exchange of emails with Lakeland Arts had been copied, was pleased to note the positive positions adopted by them. It agreed that the current arrangements for the care and display of Cochy should be rolled forward on their expiry in December 2022. Further information about AR's medical chest had been requested by Lakeland Arts and duly supplied. Lakeland Arts were cautiously positive in respect of TARS' suggestions for joining forces for an event in 2024 celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1974 S & A film; a Zoom meeting on this was likely in the spring. Peter Wright, Sophie Neville, Marc and John would work to progress this proposal and report back to the Board.

Lakeland Arts had thanked TARS for its offer to help with the restoration of the vessel Esperance, but stated that another boat was currently their number one priority for restoration. Finally, Lakeland Arts had said they might be able to find some space in which TARS could assemble, sort and organise parts of its archives. A note should be prepared for them giving a fuller idea of the space required and proposed dates for using it. Chris Birt Marc suggested, as an alternative, a building in his garden: he would communicate details of its dimensions and availability. Marc

12. Reports

The Board thanked Krysia for circulating her own Overseas Report – February 2022 and the 2021 annual report from David Stamp of AusTARS. The premature death of Cheryl

Paget was a great loss to TARS – in New Zealand and beyond. It was noted that the Australia/New Zealand committees were considering the establishment of an annual memorial award in their regions in Cheryl's name for contributions to TARSNZ or AusTARS.

The UK's regional representatives each gave the Board a brief oral report. Veronica Priest was standing down from Northern region's committee but would remain active. Southern region now had a secretary, Rosemary Beale. Midland region was exploring possible venues for the TARS IAGM of 2024; this event - probably over just two days - might be held in August rather than May, subject to seeing how well such a shift turned out in 2022.

13. Other business

The Board agreed with Susan's proposal that certain literary festivals could be suitable venues for publicity about TARS.

The future of the boat Amazon used in the 1974 film: her owners had approached TARS members about the possibility of the society's helping with its future care. This proposal was as yet by no means clear enough, although it could perhaps hold out the enticing prospect of uniting Swallow and Amazon in the same location. The Board asked **Diana and Mike** to contact the owners for more information, to permit an informed decision.

14. Dates and venues of future Board meetings

Sunday 28 August 2022, after the IAGM and members' forum

Saturday 8 October 2022, physical meeting in or near Peterborough

John Pearson
Secretary
10 March 2022