

ASE Annual General Meeting 2024

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association for Science Education held on Saturday 16th March 2024 via Zoom video link. The meeting commenced at 09.00 hours. 32 members were present and signed the register. In attendance were Lynn Ladbrook (CEO), Laura Rafferty (Director of Finance and Operations)

Alex Sinclair, the ASE Chair, welcomed all those present.

1. **Apologies** were received from Prof Michael J.Reiss, Martin Reece and Lady Sue Dale Tunnicliffe
2. **Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting**
The Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting held Saturday 7th January were accepted at the meeting of the Trustee Body following the AGM. These Minutes were approved.
Proposed: Susie Burr
Seconded: Dennis Sutton
Carried
3. **Presentation by the Chief Executive**
Lynn Ladbrook, ASE Chief Executive, gave a presentation outlining Association activities during the year, the key theme being the Association's highlights of 2022/23 (i.e. 01 August 2022 to 31st July 2023).

Highlights included:

- Topline numbers for the year included: 5115 individual subscribers in membership, over 9000 contacts on our email database, 12,500 subscriptions to our journals, 117+ CPD events and webinars and over 300,000 website visitors.
- We were pleased to return to a face to face conference at Sheffield, which attracted over 1700 delegates, ran, 250+ sessions and evaluated well, with over 80% of delegates agreeing or strongly agreeing that the event was important to their professional development.
- Inclusion in Schools programme supported 99 schools, with over 300 teaching hours. 15% of schools have seen an increase in A'level physics take up and 29% reported that inclusive careers provision had improved.
- 5 ASE members recognise by the Science Council CPD awards.
- ASE ran numerous local and regional events including in Wales, the Magic in Science Event and conventions in the Southwest and West of England.
- We contributed to a variety of policy consultations across England, Scotland and Wales including the future of post 16 qualifications (England), reform of Education Scotland (Scotland) and responses to proposals by Qualification Wales to introduce the new single science award alongside the double award (Wales).
- A big focus for the year was organisational sustainability and tackling falling membership numbers. The decision was taken to reduce subscription fees to make it less expensive for all. It was noted this was a financial risk, but Trustees considered this to be important to ensure we remained a viable membership organisation. The new model would be introduced in September 23.
- We have also streamlined journal production and undertaken a consultation on a staffing restructure to align with our charitable objectives and make financial savings.

- The CEO responded to a question about what additional support would there be for the regions in the absence of Field Officers. She noted that financially it was unlikely that the regional budget would increase, but that the Regional Events Officer was now in post and was building a relationship with the Regional Committees and looking to support where we can - both in terms of supporting regional ideas for events and activities and also helping to bring national events to the regions. It was also noted that the ASE was both a charitable organisation as well as membership organisation and as such we needed to get the balance right on what we charged for and what should be free for all.

The CEO offered her personal thanks to the President, Professor Reiss, the Trustee Body, the Chair Trio, especially Helen Harden who was chair during this financial year, former Chair of Trustees Ali Redmore and current Chair Manoj Chitnavis for his support. She also thanked the committees and the staff team for their support and hard work over the year.

The Chair of Trustees thanked the CEO for all her hard work along with her team.

4. **Annual Report of the Trustee Body**

The Chair referred to the previously circulated Annual Report

The AGM duly received the report.

5. **Annual Statement of Accounts 2022/2023**

Susie Burr, the Honorary Treasurer, thanked Laura Rafferty, Director of Finance and Operations, for her support and guidance throughout the year. She noted the ASE had new auditors (Goldwins), who were more cost effective than our previous auditors and that the audit for the last financial year (22/23) was completed efficiently. Laura Rafferty and Susie Burr presented the financial information. Highlights were as follows:

- The overall deficit for the financial year was £8k with unrestricted losses of £25k.
- ASE would have made a small surplus if not for unexpected conference charge.
- Income was down £256k on prior year which was project related and largely due to a reduction in the project funding for Inclusion in Schools
- Unrestricted reserves as at 31.7.23 were £191k – our aim is to build these up over the coming years.
- Costs had been reduced by £132,000, this includes a reduction in Journal Costs where we have saved £52,000 in print and production.
- Staffing review and restructure took place in the summer 2023 to better align it to our charitable objectives and create a more sustainable cost base for the future.
- A new membership structure and pricing was introduced with aim of increasing membership numbers. The financial impact was carefully risk assessed.
- Review of other areas of costs – most notably journal and book production, regional support and premises costs

Looking to the future, it was recognised that it was a challenging outlook for the Association, although we were working hard on fundraising bids and securing further project funding. It was noted that members could all support the association by promoting membership, which was now cheaper to join, and all the information was now on the website.

6. **To confirm the appointment of the Auditors**

As agreed at the last AGM, it is confirmed that Goldwins Ltd will be the Auditors for financial year 23/24.

Proposed: Susan Burr

Seconded: Alex Sinclair

Carried:

7. **Report of the Quality and Audit (Q&A) Committee**

Nicky Souter spoke on behalf of the Chair of Q&A. He highlighted the following:

- The Q&A committee has 5 members, including a representative of the Trustee body. There were no new members joined this year.
- The committee has held four online meetings since the last AGM and has reviewed various activities including the strategic plan, proposals for membership, reviewing the process for conflicts of interest, the annual report and accounts and set up a working group to review the policies and procedures for the ASE Archive.
- Nicky Souter thanked the Q&A committee for the inputs through the year. He noted that there were no new members for 2025.

8. **Changes to the Rules of the Association**

There were no changes to the rules of the Association.

10. **To elect Honorary Members**

It was confirmed that the following members had been awarded Honorary Membership of the Association: Frances Evans and Gaynor Sharp.

11. **Votes of Thanks**

The Honorary Secretary (Annual Conference) thanked Committee Conference Reps, Chair Trio, ASE Staff, and ASE members who helped during the conference days.

12. **Any other business**

There was no other business to report.

The Meeting closed at 10.09 hours.