

Minutes of the 3rd Annual General Meeting of the United Nations Association - UK (company number 7824306) held on 16 May 2015 at Resource for London, 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA

Present: Sir Jeremy Greenstock (Chairman) and 67 members, including by proxy.

WELCOME

Sir Jeremy Greenstock opened the 2015 Annual General Meeting and welcomed all those present.

This was the 3rd meeting of the company.

a) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AGM 29 MARCH 2014

One member requested that a reference be added to the passing of Malcolm Harper and his memorial service. Following the meeting, the UNA-UK executive found that this reference had been included in the minutes of the 2013 AGM, so the 2014 minutes did not need to be amended.

The meeting voted to approve and accept the minutes of the AGM 2014.

b) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE AGM 29 MARCH 2014

The Chairman noted that at the AGM 29 March 2014 there had been a call from members for more detailed financial information to be provided in the AGM papers. He pointed out that this was now provided in the 2015 AGM papers.

There was no further business arising from the minutes of the meeting of the AGM 29 March 2014.

3. ORDINARY RESOLUTION 1

'That the accounts for the year ending 30 June 2014, together with the Directors' report, be received and adopted.'

Stephen Harrow, UNA-UK Honorary Treasurer and Chair of the Management and Finance Committee, gave a summary explanation of the accounts for year ending 2014. The 2013-14 results show income of £523,300 and costs of £563,600, resulting in a loss of £40,300.

He highlighted the importance of long-term grants, which provide 75% (£392k) of UNA-UK's income, and of events like UN Forum (£15k) which are self-sustaining. He said Trustees have made the replacement of multi-year grants their priority for the current year.

Stephen Harrow (SH) then took questions.

Members asked if the annual income for legacies is variable. SH said that projections for this income area would always be speculative. He explained that legacies tend to vary from one year to the next. In 2013-14, legacy income was £15k (3% of income).

Members asked if membership subscriptions were declining. SH replied that income from membership subscriptions was declining steadily at a rate of approximately 12% annually.

Members asked how much of the £392K in grants came from the government. SH explained that in 2013-14, £75,800 had been given by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in support of particular projects: UN Forum 2014, a teaching pack, and a careers fair and website.

SH referred members wanting a more detailed breakdown of expenditure to the full audited accounts published on the UNA-UK website.

The meeting unanimously approved the resolution and adopted the accounts.

4. ORDINARY RESOLUTION 2

'That Kingston Smith LLP, having indicated their willingness to serve, be appointed Auditors to the Company for the ensuing year and that they be paid for their services a sum agreed by the Board of Directors of the Company.'

The meeting approved the resolution with 66 for and 1 against.

5. OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

5.1 Presentation by the Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock

The Chairman said that during 2014 UNA-UK had engaged in very successful lobbying activity, getting wide circulation for its "Foreign Policy Manifesto" and securing statements from five parties on their stance towards the UN ahead of the general election. He noted the lack of foreign policy debate and that the political parties had turned down an offer to take part in a UNA-UK organised foreign policy hustings event.

He informed the AGM that UNA-UK had received unsolicited compliments from various UN representatives this year as one of the best UNAs in the world.

The Chairman offered his view on the global context in which UNA-UK was operating. He emphasised that the UK was in danger of fading in image and impact unless the UK government engaged more with the UN, EU and its bilateral partners on key issues. He said that UNA-UK's main job was to remind the UK government of the indispensability of the UN as:

- a) a forum for discussing differences between member states
- b) a place to engage in debate and discussion of shared global problems
- c) a repository of norms and principles and a voice of moral authority on these same norms and principles

He said that UNA-UK further had the challenge to suggest ways in which the UN can be more effective in its role as an implementer, in particular as an implementer of peace agreements or resolutions.

He warned that the major challenges facing the world, such as climate change and development, required global cooperation. A fall out between big powers could have widespread impacts and not enough was being done to stop competition.

The Chairman closed by thanking all UNA-UK's members for their continued passion and interest.

5.2 Presentation by the Executive Director

Natalie Samarasinghe, Executive Director, reported to the AGM on the activities of UNA-UK during the 2013-14 financial year. She started by offering special thanks to UNA-UK's Chairman, Trustees, sub-committee members, staff and volunteer interns for their hard work.

She highlighted UNA-UK's peacekeeping programme and the [1 for 7 Billion campaign](#) – which UNA-UK founded with partners and which seeks a fair, open and inclusive process to select the next UN Secretary-General – as examples of when UNA-UK had been able to have real impact.

She spoke of the need for UNA-UK to return to its original mission: serving as a bridge between the UN and the UK. Commenting on the inward-looking general election campaign, she said that UNA-UK's mission was more important than ever, and the organisation needed to ensure it was equipped to deliver it. This meant addressing historical and longstanding challenges, including past governance decisions but also UNA-UK's policy focus, which had widened

considerably over the past seven decades, and its structure, which needed to be fit for purpose in the 21st century.

She closed by urging members present to support a refreshed vision, tighter policy focus and modern structure for UNA-UK going forward, noting that the Board had just started work on a new strategic plan for 2016 to 2018. She also informed members of UNA-UK's plans to celebrate the UN's 70th anniversary. (The full speech is available [here](#))

Members asked if UNA-UK could be making better use of its involvement with the UN All-Party Parliamentary Group (UN APPG) and World Federation of UNAs (WFUNA). On the UN APPG, NS replied that it had increased its activity considerably over the past years but that UNA-UK was actively working on more systematic engagement with Parliamentarians, particularly MPs. On WFUNA, she said that the capacity and programmes of UNAs across the world varied greatly. UNA-UK was working with WFUNA and UNAs on the 1 for 7 Billion campaign and UN70 activities.

Members asked for more detail on the situation with the lease, which NS had mentioned in her speech.

NS said that extensive legal advice had been required to rectify a potential breach of the terms of the sub-lease at 3 Whitehall Court in relation to the licence arrangements in operation with other organisations on the premises. She explained that new license agreements had been put in place, as well as an LLP arrangement between UNA-UK and a third party, with both holding a 50% stake in the sub-lease.

As a result:

- a) UNA-UK had received confirmation that the superior landlord was no longer investigating the alleged breach
- b) UNA-UK had received market value for the 50% share of the lease – this income had covered the cost of the legal fees, with the balance to be invested
- c) UNA-UK holds 50% share of the 70 year lease and the right of occupancy at 3 Whitehall Court
- d) As part of the LLP agreement UNA-UK will share all premises costs with the LLP partner, and be entitled to receive all income from licensing arrangements

The Chairman said that this matter had been very serious and that the Executive, with guidance from the Board, had handled it well.

In further questions, members agreed UNA-UK needed to change and update its approach to members, but asked what a new model might look like. NS asked members to wait for Richard Nelmes' presentation which would address this issue.

3.4 Members topics for discussion

The Chairman said that one topic had been submitted for discussion.

Graeme Panting presented the topic proposed by him and supported by five members from the Southern Counties Regional Executive.

The submission called for prime emphasis to be placed on membership growth and included four ways to achieve this aim, including improving the organisation's image, holding more events outside of London, identifying a system for following up on university students, and obtaining additional details from supporters.

In response, Richard Nelmes delivered a presentation exploring: the wider context of membership organisations; the Association's own circumstances; and the effectiveness of membership as a tool for fulfilling UNA-UK's mission.

Looking at other UK membership organisation he noted a wide trend in declining membership numbers. UNA-UK, he said, was no exception, with only 2,704 members now, from a peak of 85,000 in 1949.

He noted that over the past 70 years, UNA-UK had expended great efforts in combatting membership shrinkage with a wide range of activities including: gift membership; lapsed membership campaigns; competitions; gifts, low priced and free introductory membership; affinity benefits; member-get-member campaigns; reciprocal mailings with like-minded organisations; rewards to local UNAs for recruitment; New World membership leaflets and adverts; focus groups and committees; leavers' questionnaires; school children membership; fresher's fair recruitment; new payment systems; simpler organisational structure (the UNA Trust was often cited as a barrier); reduced subscription prices; dedicated regional development officers; member discounts for events; acquired mailing lists; young professionals group and school membership; companies and diplomatic mission membership and celebrity endorsement. He said that membership retention work had included an expanded reminder system to include two postal reminders with freepost envelopes; questionnaires to explore new members and leavers' views and payment by Direct Debit. Yet despite this effort there had still been a slow and steady decline in numbers.

Against this decrease in actual membership numbers UNA-UK's supporter programme had seen phenomenal success with 12,000 new individuals from a base of zero in July 2012. Supporters are people who have expressed an interest in our work but do not pay a subscription and this group is more active than our membership. 76% of UN Forum 2014 attendees were supporters rather than members; 64% of participants in our December human rights action were supporters and over half of our income from individuals last year came from voluntary contributions that were not membership subscriptions.

Richard emphasised that this was good news because our grassroots movement is growing; new people are joining us, our voice is getting louder and our influence is getting stronger. People really do want to give their time, energy and money to engage with global issues, just like they did in 1945. But 'membership', holds little meaning to the majority of people, not because of apathy, disinterest or a poor job by us, but because it's simply not a way of interacting that they recognise.

He concluded by asking the meeting to consider whether UNA-UK should keep pushing unpopular 'membership' at the expense of making real change or whether the Executive team should focus on increasing the Association's reach and effectiveness thorough growing the supporters programme. Members commented that other organisations have seen their virtual or online memberships increase and gave the example of Guardian online supporters who pay a small fee to access reports online.

The Chairman said that the UNA-UK Board would discuss the cost of membership and membership strategy. He emphasised the importance of numbers in impressing government and funders and adding weight to the arguments demanding action on behalf of the grassroots. He assured members that branches would be given support to engage.

5.4 Presentation of the Distinguished Service Awards

Sir Jeremy Greenstock presented three Distinguished Service Awards on behalf of the Board to the recipients present. He announced that two recipients were unable to collect their award in person. One had nominated someone else to collect the award on their behalf. The other would receive their award by post.

The first recipient was Keith Hindell, nominated by London & South East Region. The Chairman noted that Keith was a longstanding member of UNA-UK – over 40 years – who had contributed much at the branch, regional and national levels. He served as Chair of London & Southeast Region, as well as on the UNA-UK Board. Keith was a former BBC UN correspondent (1980-84). He had contributed to numerous UNA activities, speaking at most branches in the Region and running a study tour to the UN in Geneva. The Region, the Chairman said, described his contribution simply as: outstanding.

The second recipient was Frances Mildmay, nominated by Scotland. A UNA member for nearly 50 years, Frances had served Glasgow Branch and UNA Scotland in many capacities, including as Convener. She was also UNA's Scottish Development Officer for many years, a role she continued in a voluntary capacity after funding for the post ceased. Throughout her time at UNA, she offered unfailing support to members in Glasgow, Scotland and beyond – organising Model UN conferences and annual flag raising ceremonies, raising funds for clearing landmines and the UN Refugee Agency and running the Peace Garden at the Glasgow Garden Festival in 1988. She had also mentored asylum seekers and their families. The Chairman said Scotland's nomination described her work as "legendary".

The third recipient was Margaret Matthews, nominated by Southern Counties Region. In her time at UNA, the Chairman said, Margaret had risen from being an enthusiastic Southampton branch member to being the driving force behind the Region as a whole. The Region had said that without her dedication and relentless efforts, it could well have ceased to operate, and that it owed her a debt of gratitude for her work. The Chairman said that both the Region and UNA-UK hope that she will continue this work for a long time to come.

The fourth recipient was Canon Michael Swindlehurst, nominated by Eastern Region. The Chairman said the recipient was the retiring chair of Saffron Walden branch, former Chair of the Region and current Treasurer of the Region. He had been involved with Saffron Walden branch since 1998, and had been an inspirational leader, taking on a pivotal role not just as Chair but also as Secretary – finding speakers, booking venues and producing and disseminating literature. At the regional level, he steered Eastern Region through difficult issues and the region had benefitted from his wise counsel. He had also been extremely active nationally, at events such as policy conferences, and through regular engagement with the staff team. The Chairman said his Eastern Region describe Canon Swindlehurst's contribution as "excellent". His certificate was accepted by Trevor Evans.

The fifth recipient was Chris Dickenson, nominated by Central Region. The Chairman said that Chris Dickenson had been a tireless advocate for UNA for some 20 years. He set up the East Gloucestershire branch in 2003, undertaking activities such as visits to UNA Switzerland, the World Federation of UNAs in Geneva and a series of events with MPs and in schools. The branch grew and became the "Gloucestershire Rural Branch", which hosted Russian and US diplomats amongst its distinguished speakers. In 2011, he spearheaded the merger of three branches into "Gloucestershire County Branch" and secured Sir Crispin Tickell, former UK Ambassador to the UN, as its President. He served on the Central Regional Council, as well as the UNA-UK Board. One of his achievements was helping to inaugurate the biennial lecture in memory of Elnora Ferguson, former regional president and a key funder of UNA-UK. The Chairman noted that in his citation, the region praised his commitment and inspiring example. Unfortunately Chris Dickenson could not be present at the AGM. His certificate will be posted to him.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman announced that earlier in the day Gian Clare, Chair of UNA Warwick & District branch, had been presented with the Mayor's Award 2015 by Mayor Councillor John Knight of Leamington Spa in recognition of his significant contribution to life in the town.

Gian Clare was presented the award in recognition of his role with the Local Branch of the United Nations Association (founded in 1968) and help in establishing the Leamington Peace Festival (in 1978) and the One World Link with Bo in Sierra Leone (in 1980).

Members noted the importance of peace plays in promoting interest in the UN.

As there was no other business, Sir Jeremy Greenstock concluded the meeting by thanking members for attending.