



THE RUSKIN FELLOWSHIP
MINUTES OF AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
SUNDAY 23 JANUARY 2011

1. **Present:** D.Hollingsworth (President), A Shepherd (Secretary), A Potts, F Simkins, J Kimberely, B. Anderton, R Maher, R. Sealey, E Jeffers
2. **Apologies:** J Hurlston, A. Wright, C. Orgell-Rosen, R Dyas-Elliott, B Smith, A Sieve, A Mullender, S Courtney, P Hamilton
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on November 13 2010:** The minutes were approved subject to an amendment to minute 3 where “College Governing Council” should be amended to read “College Council”.

4. **Matters arising:**

- i) Treasurer’s Report – Gift Aid (min 5 refers): It was confirmed that a Gift Aid form for the Fellowship had been produced and that completion of the form was now part of the arrangements for joining the Fellowship. **NOTED**

It was **AGREED** that Bob Anderton would check the application of Gift Aid to activities like raffles.

- ii) The Ruskin Student Fund Sub Committee (Min 9ii) refers): It was reported that the Secretary had met with the Treasurer on January 11 to check income for the previous year. Income over expenditure for 2009 was £914.60, which was below the figure required to trigger expenditure under the Fund. It was **AGREED** to:
 - Review the rules with a view to lowering the £1000 income limit.
 - Check the nature of donations to ensure that those donations made specifically to the Student Fund were not affected by the rules that limit expenditure.

- iii) The Reunion/AGM Sub Committee (Min 9ii refers): It was reported that a sub committee meeting had been held immediately before the Executive meeting. The main points arising from the subcommittee meeting were:
 - That the Reunion/AGM would be held on 17/18 September.
 - That the Booking Form would be amended to ensure that we could make provision for a range of disabilities including wheelchair use, hearing and visual incapacity.
 - That information on the Reunion/AGM would be sent to those members who had and email address at the earliest opportunity.
 - That a Fellowship Facebook site be considered.
 - That a pamphlet format would be used to provide information on the weekend and that the pamphlet would include a calling notice, a summary report from the Executive, a short history of the Fellowship and the programme for the weekend. The pamphlet may be A3 size rather than the smaller A5 size that was used last year.

AGREED

- iv) Equal Opportunities (Min 9iv refers): The President reported that dates for the Reunion/AGM had been checked against a faith calendar to ensure that the situation of the previous year would not arise again. She also reported the intention to include feminist history in the writing of the Fellowship’s history pamphlet and in particular to write up the work of the ‘Ruskin Wives’ Group’ that was established in the 1970s. **NOTED**

- v) Fellowship Recruitment Activities (min 9x refers): The President reported that she had emailed the RSU President on two occasions but had received no reply. It was **AGREED** that further enquires should be made.
- vi) Oxford Local Group (min xiii refers): See item 2 in the Secretary's Report below
- vii) 2012 Calendar (Min 9xiv refers): The Secretary reported that he had spoken to Stan Young about the difficulties of producing a programme. In the light of the fact that the Executive now knows that 2012 *is* the centenary of the Fellowship a brief discussion ensued on the need to mark the event with some kind of publication. It was **AGREED** to look into the costs of producing a one-page calendar. It was **AGREED** to seek sponsorship for the calendar, possibly from the Co-op Bank. It was **AGREED** to make this a one-off event, but to review this decision in the light of our experience in producing the calendar.
- viii) Fellowship Fees (min xv refers): See the Secretary's report below, item 6.
- ix) Fellowship Archive (min xvi refers): The Secretary reported that some work had been done on the Fellowship archives. There appears to be a lot of information available including some photographic evidence. It was reported that the investigation had enabled the identification of the date of the establishment of the Ruskin Fellowship, which was Whitsuntide 1912. This information is in the College Report for the academic year 1911/1912 page 8. It was **AGREED** that we seek some funding for someone to work on the Fellowship archives and history. It was proposed that requests should be made, in conjunction with the College, to trades union General Secretaries, particularly those that might favour such a project (e.g. CWU) and/or the Cooperative Bank and/or the National Lottery.
- x) Ruskin Students Union (min xvii refers): See Secretary's report below.
- xi) Tracking Fellowship Members (min xviii refers): See Secretary's report below
- xii) Lena Wanford (min xx refers): It was reported that the College would have a new wheelchair in place in the near future. The Executive requested clarification on the arrangement for using the wheelchair, particularly in the event of the building having to be evacuated. **AGREED.**

This led to a wider discussion on health and safety matters. Elcena expressed the wish to participate in any training organised on health and safety. It was suggested that it might be better to ask the College if a representative of the Fellowship could participate in any training organised by the College. **AGREED.**

The President said that we had to acknowledge that we hadn't been asking the appropriate questions on the Reunion Booking form. This would change next year and, once the needs of the participants had been identified, the responsibility of the Fellowship was to ask the College to cater for any needs identified. **NOTED**

- xiii) Establishing Local Fellowship Groups (min xxi refers): See Secretary's Report below
- xiv) Bob Matthews (min 14 ii refers): It was reported that an email had been received from the Principal, in response to our request, that suggested that, when the memorial sculpture of a tree is erected in the refurbished College, a leaf would be added in Bob's name. This offer was gladly accepted by the Executive. **NOTED**

5. **The Proposed New Constitution:** Bob Anderton led on this and confirmed that the current constitution was established in 2006. He said that we needed to move on from the proposals of the last three years and simply ask: 'Do we need to change the constitution?' 'If so why and to what?'

A draft was tabled that generated some discussion on the principles on which the constitution should be based, e.g. to describe the main Fellowship roles and their responsibilities; to ensure the election process could only be changed by the AGM. A question was asked regarding Life Vice Presidents and Life Members. It was confirmed that the role of the Life VP was to 'serve and assist' and that Life Membership simply signified a type of membership that was open to all eligible people.

It was **AGREED** to hold a full debate at the next Executive meeting and that all questions can be raised during that debate. It was **AGREED** that Bob Anderton and the Secretary would work on the proposal and present a re-draft to Executive members prior to the next meeting. It was **AGREED** that the current constitution would also be circulated to members to enable them to compare and contrast.

6. **Officers' Reports:**

- i) The Secretary's Report: The President asked the Executive to consider this report as a joint report from the President and Secretary. It was stated that this agenda item would be a joint one in future.

1. **Meeting with the Principal – 11 January 2010 - Issues discussed:**

- Organising local groups (see more information below)
- The Fellowship to have representation on the College's *Outreach and Recruitment Committee*. Meetings on Weds 2 February, Weds 9 March, Weds 4 May, Weds 15 June all at 2pm. IT was **AGREED** that the President and Richard Maher be nominated for this Committee.
- The involvement of the College, the RSU and the Fellowship in 'Events'. See list at 10 below.
- To confirm the RSU President is Tamara Charakhova
- RSU: Students Fund. Advised that there are plenty of hardship funds for students and that the Fellowship Fund should allocate to collective activities/needs or for a more special cause.
- We discussed the information found in the College Library about the Fellowship's history and about whether a history / Photo session might be a popular session at the Reunion weekend.
- We discussed ways in which to ensure the needs of people attending the Reunion were met. Possibility of identifying wheelchair access / wheelchair provision on the booking form.
- Fund raising for Headington and the 'Buy a Chair' initiative. £50 per chair.
- At the meeting on Sunday 23 January, Fellowship Executive members are invited to take new prospectuses for circulation in their 'home' areas.
- Date for the diary: Graduation Day will be 22 October 2011

NOTED

2. **Regional Groups:** A letter has been circulated to ex-students in the following areas (Regional contact shown in parenthesis): West Midlands (Fellowship Secretary), London and Home Counties (no nominated contact), Derby (Rhys), Northants (Gary McDonagh), Oxford (Stan Young). Meetings organised for: Derby 27 November 2010, Northants 29 January 2011, London 9 February, West Midlands 19 February.

NOTED

3. **Articles for the College Newsletter:** Three items have been submitted for the Newsletter

Article 1: The Fellowship Re-union and AGM – 17/18/19 September 2010

Article 2: The Ruskin Fellowship – what work will we be doing in 2010 / 2011?

Article 3:

Ruskin Local Groups: Can you help?

The College and the Fellowship are planning to develop several local groups. At the moment we are developing groups in Oxford, the

East Midlands, the West Midlands and London. If you are an ex-Ruskin student in one of these areas and would like to participate we would like to hear from you.

If you live in any other area and would like to help us establish a Ruskin Local Group where you live would you please contact:

??? Who should be the contact???

NOTED

4. **Recruitment since September:** The Membership Secretary has informed me that, since the AGM in September, three new members have joined the Fellowship. The three members are:
- Mr Adrian Lawrence-Shepley, Oxford. Period at the College 2008-2010. Lifetime member.
 - Ms Adrienne Roche, London. Period at the College 2008-2010. Lifetime member
 - Mr Noel White, Oxford. Period at the College 2008-2010. Honorary Member

The position of 'Honorary Member' was clarified to the effect that such a member is engaged in fulltime education. The Executive asked if a check could be carried out in respect of the number of Honorary members the Fellowship has and if any of those listed know need to become full members. **AGREED**

Enquiries have been received from Ms Joan Brodie and Mr Roger Robinson.

Since the last Executive meeting a procedure which covers the banking of any money for the Fellowship has been developed. The procedure is as follows:

1. **Bank details:** Co-op Bank
Account number: 50115356
Sort Code: 08-90-38
2. **Procedure:** When any money has been banked, please contact Sally Courtney by email (scourtney@ruskin.ac.uk) and provide the following:
 - The name(s) and address(es) of the person(s) paying in the money
 - The amount that each person has paid
 - The *purpose* of the payment (eg 'subscription for life membership'; 'subscription for one year's membership'; 'donation').
 - Date that the money was banked
 - The Branch of the bank where the money was paid.
 - Where new members are recruited **paper copies of the application form and the Gift Aid form** should be sent to Sally.

3. A Gift Aid form for the Fellowship has been developed. **NOTED**

5. **The Fellowship Web Site:** Officer's reports from the AGM are available. The draft minutes need to be included. **NOTED**

6. **Meeting with the Treasurer 11 January 2011:** Sally and I met and discussed several things related to finance. We agreed that the Executive needs to consider the rules in the Student Fund, particularly in terms of the £1000 earnings before any expenditure on students can be entered into. Would the Executive also take note of discussions with the Principal, which took place later the same day and are outlined in bullet point 5 above, when considering this point. We also discussed the issue of the level of membership subscriptions. The point I would make here is that it would be better to increase the *number of new members* we recruit each year rather than increasing the level of subscriptions. To do this we really need to know the average number of new members we have recruited in the last period, eg three or five years and then develop a strategy to increase the recruitment of new members. It is, however, difficult to say exactly the number of new members we have had because the information on what money has been banked for what purposes is not clear, hence the development of the procedure shown at point 5 above. Therefore my **recommendation** on the possibility of increasing subscriptions would be to gather more information before we make a decision. **AGREED**

7. **Equal Opportunities:** We are in the process of identifying members to whom we should send out questionnaires regarding how we can make the Fellowship more accessible. The proposed content is shown below:

"As part of the Fellowships Equal Opportunity strategy we are trying to identify if there are any things that are preventing members getting involved in meetings or in participating in the work of the Fellowship in other ways. We would be very grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire and return it to us in the enclosed SAE.

- Do you think that you get enough information about the annual Reunion / AGM? Yes / No /Comments
- Do any of the things listed prevent you from attending: travelling distance; travelling costs; accommodation costs; date of the Reunion/AGM (nb this is usually held in September); work commitments; family commitments; other (please identify)
- Is the way in which the Reunion /AGM organised appropriate in terms of what you would want? ie the organisation usually consists of speakers on the Saturday daytime, a social (usually with live music, food, drink and a quiz or two) on Saturday evening and the AGM on Sunday morning.
- Do you receive the College / Fellowship joint Newsletter? Does it provide you with information that is of interest to you? Have you any proposals for items of information that you would like to see in the Newsletter?
- Do you access the College Web site? Yes /No. Do you read the Fellowship page? Yes / No
- Would you like to see/ would you support Ruskin meetings organised in your region? “

The Executive asked that an additional question be added that simply said “Any other comments”.

AGREED

10. **List of Events** (see point 1, bullet point 3 above).

Date	Event
Sat 5 th March	Million Women Rise – London
8 th March	Oxford International Women’s Festival main event
26 th March	TUC Demo March
April	Breaking the Waves in Cardiff
May	Levellers Day
June	Headington Festival – Oxford
June	Oxford Pride – Oxford
June	Barton Bash – Oxford
June	Jericho Street Fair – Oxford
July	Marxism Festival
July	Robert Tressell Festival
July 2-3	Cowley Rd Carnival –Oxford
July 9	Durham Miners Gala – Durham
July 15-17	Tolpuddle
August	Elder Stubbs
October	Feminism London
November	Reclaim the Night – London

NOTED

- ii) The Treasurer’s Report: Reports were tabled that presented the current monthly income and expenditure position and the Fellowship’s bank balances. It was **NOTED** that a small deficit of £8.04 was currently forecast for the end of the financial year. The Executive discussed the position regarding generating income from the subscriptions of new members. It was **AGREED** to investigate the possibility of changing the arrangements for joining the Fellowship to the effect that *all* appropriate ex-students became members automatically, with an opt-out arrangement for those who chose so to do. The Executive recorded its thanks to Sally for providing the reports.
- iii) The Membership Secretary’s Report: See the President and Secretary’s Report above, item 4.
- iv) The Newsletter Co-ordinator’s Report: See the President and Secretary’s Report above, items 3 and 5.

7. **Report from the College Council Representatives for the meeting held on 3 December 2010.** The key points reported to the Executive were:

- Capital Project: Phase 1 had been completed under budget and on time. Phase 2 tenders had been received and it was envisaged that contractors would be on-site in January. The College had bid successfully for £225k from the Skills Funding Agency for the Walled Garden Project.

NOTED

- **Cuts in Funding:** The Executive noted some very serious concerns here including cuts on the *Higher Education* side of the College's operation if the recommendations by Lord Browne were accepted. The issues here related to 1) the raising of the cap on fees; 2) the removal of public subsidies for the subjects offered at Ruskin, and; 3) the introduction of eligibility criteria in conjunction with higher level student grant being made available. The third point gives great cause for concern because it is highly likely that the students at Ruskin would not meet such criteria.

On the *Further Education* side the issues are 1) that there would be a 25 per cent reduction in funding over the next four years; 2) the possible introduction of a minimum contract value (MCV) that could mean the College would be deemed too small to operate independently; 3) trade union course were under threat because of the changes to curriculum funding, which meant that students would only be funded for whole courses with no duplication of level.

It was reported that the Principal was lobbying the Skills Funding Agency on this matter and that the College had been included in the unit funding trials, which may mean that some short courses could be offered. **NOTED**

The Executive expressed serious concerns for the future of the College, the Fellowship and its normal constituency. Whilst it was noted that further reports would be given at the next College Council meeting in June, the Executive stated that it would like to be kept informed in the interim period. **AGREED**

8. **Correspondence received:** It was reported that a complaint had been received from Brian Smith regarding the minuting of the AGM and the decision to move the Executive Committee meeting to a Sunday. **NOTED**

It was reported that a further email had been received from Brian regarding the arrangement that he would deputise for the President in the event of John Hurlston not being available. Brian had asked if this duty could be shown on the list of Fellowship Executive Members for 2010/2011, which had been previously circulated. The Executive asked that it be clearly stated in the minutes that Brian would deputise for John, where John was unable to deputise for the President. **NOTED**

9. **List of Fellowship Executive Members:** It was reported that this list had been circulated since the last Executive Committee meeting. It was further reported that the list should be amended as follows:

- i) That the Principal's work telephone number is: 01865 517801
- ii) That the Principal's mobile number is: 07787 428584
- iii) That an 'e' be added to Carole in the entry for Carole Orgell-Rosen

NOTED

10. **Date of next meeting:** The Executive briefly discussed the running of meetings on a Sunday and **AGREED** to continue with the Sunday date previously agreed, which is **Sunday 17 April 2011 between 1-4pm.**

It was further stated that the Sub Committee for the Reunion/AGM would meet on the same day between 12-1. (Please note: Members of that sub committee are the President, Roger Sealey, Richard Maher, Angela Potts and Sally Courtney).

11. There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.25pm.