

British Association for Irish Studies

Minutes of the meeting of the new Interim Executive Committee, held on Saturday 13th March 1993, in room E202, Birbeck College, Malet Street, London.

Agenda discussed.

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Minutes of last meeting
- 3 Co-option of members
- 4 Chair's business: BAIS bid for funding from 'Soldiers and Sailors Fund'
Funding from European Commission
- 5 AGM arrangements
- 6 BAIS conference-Oxford
- 7 BAIS Newsletter
- 8 Proposed one day conference on Irish Studies and possible establishment of new
Education sub-committee
- 9 Working party on constitution
- 10 Working party on electoral procedures
- 11 AOB

Present: J. McAuley, N.Sammells, V. Smith, T. Dooley, B.Bell, J. Woodhurst, E. Burgess, G. Davis, S. Hutton, P.Stewart, K. Thompson, M.Hickman

It was agreed that item 3 on the agenda be taken first and that the losing candidates in the recent election be formally co-opted as per the terms of the Irish Embassy agreement.

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

G. Boyce, E. Hughes, J. Sheeran, J.Moore, J.O'Hara, N.Danaher, G. Watson

Jim McAuley suggested that in future apologies be sent to one of the secretaries in advance of the meeting if possible. This was agreed.

Several members requested a copy of the Irish Embassy agreement. Jim McAuley agreed to send this to all executive members

* ACTION * Jim McAuley

Matters arising:

Sean Hutton suggested that Bob Purdie be asked to write a 'low key' report concerning the election for circulation to the general membership. **This was agreed.**

* ACTION * Graham Davis

BAIS Conference:

In the absence of the conference secretaries there was some confusion as to the exact state of play. **it was agreed to pick up this issue later in the meeting.**

Secretary's Report:

Jim McAuley raised two items. First was the reapplication for charitable status of the BAIS. Second the registration of the BAIS under the Data Protection Act. The fee for this was £75. It was agreed to register.

*** ACTION * Jim McAuley**

Chair's Report:

Graham outlined the discussion at the Irish Embassy meeting, the conclusion of which was that the Embassy would continue to back the BAIS, provided we 'quickly put our house in order' and were seen to be working efficiently.

Graham drew attention to the claim which had been submitted to the 'Soldiers and Sailors' Sean made the point that this claim should be seen as a short term strategy, which should not preclude a more detailed consideration of fundraising. Several executive members raised the issue of the 'balance' of the claim which they felt should have been more heavily tilted toward central co-ordination for the organisation. There was some discussion of the claim, the chair reminding the meeting that he and Sean had prepared it quickly as a 'holding operation'.

Graham reported that we had obtained a small grant from the European commission of ECU5,000. A detailed report would have to be submitted to the Commission concerning its use.

AGM:

Graham raised the question of when we were to hold our AGM. Technically our constitution was suspended. Sean suggested that it should be suspended until reports became available concerning the future structure and organisation of the BAIS. Following discussion, Eleanor Burgess suggested that the AGM be held during the conference in September. This was agreed.

Conference:

There was general agreement that given the recent history of the BAIS, that every effort should be made to make the 1993 conference a 'success'. There was further discussion concerning the structure of the conference and the chair was asked to contact Tony Downey to make sure arrangements were proceeding. It was agreed to remit the item to the officers.

*** ACTION * Tony Downey / Officers**

Newsletter:

Another issue of the newsletter was due out at the end of April. There was a discussion concerning the editorship, content, status and format of the newsletter. It was agreed to remit the item to the working party on the constitution for further discussion and recommendations.

*** ACTION.* Working Party on the Constitution**

Proposed one day conference on Irish studies**Establishment of new Education sub-committee:**

Graham Davis opened the discussion proposing the holding of a one day conference on Irish Studies and the possible subsequent formation of a new 'education' sub-committee, covering all levels and replacing the existing arrangements. This gave rise to a long

discussion. several different points were raised: the purpose of the conference; whether the interests of those involved in education were close enough to be covered by one conference; overlap with Soar Valley; the desirability of a series of regional conferences rather than a national one; the effects of the break up of binary divide; the different needs of teachers to those in further and higher education. **It was agreed** that a meeting be called for all those involved in 'education' on the executive, and others interested to formulate a series of recommendations concerning the above.

Working party on constitution and electoral procedures:

It was clear from recent events that the current constitution and electoral procedures needed to be reviewed. Sean Hutton suggested that the starting point for such a review should be the recent report on the election by Bob Purdie and the previous report by an external facilitator, Anne Schofield. Both reports identified areas of potential conflict within the BAIS. **It was agreed** that both these reports form the basis for a review. Sean identified what he saw as other important areas requiring clarification, particularly the role of patrons and the situation regarding fundraising. Following some discussion it was agreed that the same group of people be asked to form a working group to review the constitution and election procedures. Those invited to form this group were:

B. Purdie
V. Smith
T. Dooley
E. Burgess
S. Hutton

*** ACTION.* Working Party on the Constitution and Election Procedures**

AOB:

Following several points made during the day, **it was agreed** that there should be a sub-committee to formulate a longer term strategic plan for the BAIS. This was remitted to the officers

*** ACTION * Officers**

Minutes taken by J. McAuley

Agreed as a true record:

Proposed:

Seconded:

Chairperson's signature:

British Association For Irish Studies

Constitution

1. Name
 - 1.1 The name of this Association shall be "The British Association For Irish Studies".
 2. Objectives

The British Association For Irish Studies ("the Association") exists:

 - 2.1 To encourage teaching, research and writing in Irish Studies, to the public benefit, by establishing a means of communication between those interested in Irish Studies in all disciplines and by producing and distributing generally materials which will assist in the development of Irish Studies.
In furtherance of the foregoing objects, but not further or otherwise the Association shall have the following powers:-
 - 2.2 To develop and improve resources available, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Irish Studies;
 - 2.3 To encourage links with and exchanges between educational institutions in Great Britain and Ireland.
 - 2.4 The Association is a non-political and non-sectarian body. In order to maintain the essential objectives of the Association, Members involved in political or social action are not permitted to use the name of the British Association For Irish Studies in support of their activities. Non-observance of this clause will be held to invalidate Membership.
 3. Membership
 - 3.1 Membership of the Association shall be open to anyone with a bona fide interest in Irish Studies.
 - 3.2 Members must pay the annual dues at the rate recommended by the Executive Committee and ratified by the Membership.
 - 3.3 Members failing to pay dues for one year automatically forfeit the rights and benefits of Membership of the Association.
 4. Officers
 - 4.1 The Association shall have an Executive Committee.
 - 4.2 The Officers of the Association shall be:
A Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, a Conference Secretary and a Treasurer.
 - 4.3 The Executive Committee shall include the Officers specified in 4.2 above, together with the Editor of the Newsletter of the Association, eight other elected Members of the Association and two representatives from each of the advisory sub-committees referred to in 4.7 below chosen by the Members of those Advisory Sub-Committees.
 - 4.4 The quorum for Executive Committee Meetings shall be seven elected and/or co-opted Members of that Committee.
 - 4.5 The Executive Committee may co-opt up to four additional Members with full voting rights and appoint additional Officers as may be deemed necessary.
 - 4.6 The Executive Committee is responsible for formulating the policy of the Association. Members are encouraged to suggest policies and programmes to the Executive Committee. Policies shall not be accepted or adopted which would conflict with the objectives of the Association as defined in 2. above or have the effect of the Association ceasing to be a charity in law.
 - 4.7 The Executive Committee is responsible for arranging the dates and locations for the Annual Meetings of the Association.
 - 4.8 The Executive Committee shall have the power to constitute advisory sub-committees and shall initially constitute advisory sub-committees to advise on Irish Studies in higher education, further and continuing education and compulsory education. Advisory sub-committees shall be convened initially by a person identified by the Executive Committee. Convenors shall keep minutes of all meetings and shall submit approved minutes to the Executive Committee. The majority of Members of sub-committees should be involved in the relevant level of education.
 - 4.9 The Executive Committee has the power to appoint the Editorial Board of any Journal, Proceedings, Newsletter and any other publications of the Association.
 - 4.10 The Executive Committee is responsible for supervising Association elections.
5. Trustees
 - 5.1 The Association at its first Annual General Meeting shall appoint three Trustees. The Trustees shall have the power to appoint from time to time and as necessary further or replacement Trustees. Except in exceptional circumstances there shall be not less than two Trustees in post at any time.
 6. Elections
 - 6.1 Elections for Officers and Members of the Executive Committee shall be held every two years, not more than four months before the relevant Annual General Meeting and not less than six weeks preceding it by a postal ballot of all paid-up Members. The Executive Committee shall, by means of a circular letter to all Members, request nominations for the posts detailed in 4.2 and 4.3 above not less than six weeks before the date on which it is proposed to distribute ballot papers. Members wishing to stand for office must be nominated and seconded by current Members of the Association and at the time of nomination and seconding, shall signify willingness to take office if elected and supply a brief curriculum vitae

in writing to the Secretary or other designated Returning Officer for circulation with ballot papers. A panel of three Scrutineers shall be appointed by the Executive Committee to observe the opening of ballot returns and the counting of ballots. No election shall be valid without the presence of at least two duly appointed Scrutineers at the opening and counting of ballots.

- 6.2 The quorum for the Annual General Meeting shall be thirty or 10% of the paid-up Members of the Association whichever is the greater.

7. Classes of Membership

Membership of the Association shall normally be for individuals.

- 7.1 The Association shall have three classes of Member:

Waged, Unwaged and Corporate.

- 7.2 Members of the Association who are students shall pay dues at the same rate as Unwaged Members.

- 7.3 Waged and Unwaged Members shall enjoy equal status and shall be entitled to nominate and second nominations, and to stand for election to, the posts detailed in 4.2 and 4.3 above.

- 7.4 Corporate Membership shall carry entitlement to one vote in Association elections and the right to nominate and second nominations for the posts detailed in 4.2 and 4.3 above.

- 7.5 No person under the age of 18 years shall be entitled to serve as an Officer of the Executive Committee or vote, but shall be entitled to attend meetings in an advisory capacity.

- 7.6 The vote of a Corporate Member shall be exercised on behalf of that Corporate Member by a person who shall be from time to time identified by the Corporate Member to the Chairperson and Secretary of the Association.

- 7.7 No Corporate Member or the person identified by that Corporate Member as its representative shall be eligible for Office within the Association save only if the identified representative is a Member in his/her own right.

8. Meetings

The Association will hold an Annual General Meeting and may hold other Meetings as and when deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee.

9. Adoption and Amendment of Constitution

- 9.1 Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed at Annual General Meetings of the Association provided that notice is given in writing to the Secretary not less than four weeks before the Annual General Meeting.

- 9.2 Amendments, properly notified and put to an Annual General Meeting, shall be debated and if approved by a simple majority of those present shall be submitted to all Members of the Association for their approval in a

postal ballot. Written statements in support of the amendment(s) shall be supplied to the Secretary or designated Returning Officer for circulation to all Members with the ballot papers and opposing statements shall also be accepted and circulated. No amendment may be accepted which would have the effect of the Association ceasing to be a charity in law or shall conflict with the Objectives of the Association as stated in 2. above.

Definitions

1. Member means a Member or Corporate Member of the British Association For Irish Studies within the terms defined in 7. above;
2. Corporate Member shall include both incorporated and unincorporated associations;
3. Members in 6. above and in 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 above shall mean all currently paid-up Members as certified by the Treasurer and notified to the Executive Committee.

* * * * *

BAIS SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS

- 1 The counting of the ballots goes ahead immediately, with both sides accepting the electorate and the results. A meeting of the current Executive Committee to take place, possibly on 13 February 1993, to agree this document. The counting of the ballots to take place immediately after the Executive Committee meeting.
 - 2 In the event of one slate winning all the officer posts, the winning slate undertakes to co-opt the officer candidates from the losing slate onto the Interim Executive Committee (IEC). It is proposed that the less successful slate should be given the editorship of the BAIS newsletter and the chairmanship of the sub-committee to examine the constitution (see 4c below).
 - 3 Additional members, up to a maximum of four, should co-opted to the IEC to reflect a fair balance in the composition of the Committee.
 - 3(b) A second post of Vice-Chairman will be established as part of the IEC and will go to the unsuccessful candidate for the Chair of the BAIS.
 - 4 The IEC will agree to hold new elections in the current year. The timetable would be:
 - [a] The IEC would meet as soon as possible to agree the proposed arrangements and make plans for an Annual General Meeting of the membership to approve the holding of a further election, in the current year (the constitution only provides for one to be held every second year).
 - [b] The AGM takes places within a few weeks.
 - [c] The electorate for the new election will be all members of the BAIS who have taken out/renewed a subscription for the current year before 1 July 1993, the normal renewal date.
 - [d] The election would take place in the period between 1 September 1993 and 31 October 1993, with the new Executive Committee taking office not later than December 1993.
 - 5 The main tasks of the incoming IEC over the next few months would be to:
 - [a] Prepare an application to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Land Trust Fund (SSLTF).
 - [b] In order to do this, the IEC would need to prepare a medium term balanced development plan (say, 3 to 5 years) to underpin the application to the Fund. This might be done by a sub-committee of the Executive.
-
- 2 -
- [c] Address the constitutional loopholes which were pinpointed in Bob Purdie's report by setting up a sub-committee of the Executive, chaired by one of those co-opted from the less successful slate.
 - 6 If agreement on the way forward is reached within the BAIS, the Embassy would be in a position to forward to Dublin an application for funds from the SSLTF. In the event of a positive response to the application, the money could only be paid over when the Executive Committee emanating from the proposed elections in September/October 1993 and is in place and functioning.