

University of Edinburgh Graduates' Association – AGM 2024 Minutes

Minutes of the UEGA Annual General Meeting held at 11.00 am on Thursday, 8 February 2024 in the Raeburn Room, Old College, EH8 9YL.

Present: Mr David Gilmour, President in the Chair; Ann Henderson, Vice President; Mr David Lamb, Hon. Secretary; Mr T. Finlay Marshall, Hon. Treasurer; Prof. Stephen Hillier, Interim Editor; Mr Peter B. Freshwater, Editor Emeritus; Mr John R. Sutherland, Production Editor; Mrs Oonagh Gray; Mr Hamish McKenzie; Ms Elizabeth Owens; Mr Ritchie Walker; and Mr Peter Dunlop.

- 1. Welcome and Sederunt:** DG welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies:** These had been received from Sharan Atwall, EUSA President; Katie Hardwick, EUSA VP Activities & Services; Peter Sawkins, EUSU President; Lady Lucinda L. Mackay; Dr S. Michael Langdon; and Mr Malcolm Wylie.
- 3. Minutes of the AGM 2023 and Matters Arising:** These were approved and signed by DG. RW asked if any further decisions had been taken regarding an event to celebrate the work of PF. PF confirmed that a formal event was unnecessary, but that a café d'honneur would be welcome.
- 4. President's Report:** DG presented the attached Annual Report with a verbal summary. He called for volunteers from the membership to help with the organisation of future events. DG also suggested that the life of James Stagg, Edinburgh graduate and the meteorologist that decided the date of the D-Day landings, could be celebrated at an event or in the form of a contribution to the *Journal*.

PF further suggested that, in celebrating UEGA and the *Journal's* centenaries, we combine this with other significant anniversaries at the University. RW asked if any definite plans for a centenary celebration had been decided. DG reported that none were in place. SH suggested that, as part of discussions with D&A over the future of UEGA and the *Journal*, we hoped to work with the University to hold a suitably auspicious event in 2024 or 2025. AH agreed that a celebration should be held and seconded PF's suggestion. She asked the officers of the Executive Committee to consider possible events that they can arrange and help with because the staff capacity does not currently exist at UEGA for events planning. She also reported that she was investigating holding an event in the Scottish Parliament and would report back to the Executive Committee on any progress.

RW asked if UEGA's Patron, HRH Princess Anne, should be involved in the centenary celebrations. DG advised caution in the light of King Charles III's recent cancer diagnosis. This would need to be planned carefully, but it was hoped that the Patron could be involved.

- 5. Treasurer's Report:** FM presented the attached report and Accounts with a verbal summary. He confirmed that the Accounts had been signed off by the Hon. Accounts Examiner, Mr Eric Brown. FM reiterated the same warning from last year – UEGA is experiencing significant financial difficulties. The meeting mentioned in FM's report had been postponed, but would happen later in February 2024. FM also expressed his thanks to JS, without whom, he said, UEGA would not currently exist. FM also extended his formal thanks to EB for his work.

HM asked what the current overall balance of UEGA's accounts was to date; FM replied ~£4,100. RW asked if legacies left to UEGA were recorded as donations; FM confirmed yes. RW also asked what level of funding would be necessary to ensure redundancy payments. FM expressed the hope that UEGA's product – the *Journal* – is well thought of and will continue to be published. He suggested that redundancy would, therefore, not be a serious threat.

AH thanked FM for his report, and asked that the Executive Committee meet more regularly to confront the harsh realities of our current financial situation without the explicit support of D&A. She also asked that subscription rates be reconsidered carefully, not least to review how international postage is factored into payments by overseas members. AH, JS, and DL had recently completed a complete mailing of the UEGA membership; it was hoped that this would trigger a response from dormant members in particular, and it was agreed that regular communication with members should be a priority. AH also suggested that the general guidance for charities and non-profit organisations is to have at least three months of running costs in reserve for difficult periods.

DL raised the issue of Life and Ten-Year memberships. He suggested that these were problematic in that they constitute the majority of the membership, and yield little interaction. However, he also noted that UEGA would have folded long ago were it not for Life Membership funds. FM responded that Life Membership must be changed and that removing the option would help to ensure that future difficulties are avoided with more regular membership income. RW commented that he is a Life member and has made several donations; he asked if this is done regularly, and could it be suggested to Life members?

DG and AH confirmed that this suggestion would be taken to the next meeting of the Executive Committee. PF further suggested that *The Almanac* could, in future, include some kind of donation form. DG thanked FM and EB for their work.

- 6. Interim Editor's Report:** SH presented the attached report with a verbal summary. He commented that, at the end of his first year in the editorship, he was grateful to JS and PF for their help in producing the *Journal*. SH commented that the survival of UEGA is increasingly dependent on the *Journal*, and the Editorial Team has therefore worked very hard to improve the appearance and content of recent issues. He believed that the new appearance of the *Journal* would help to increase its visibility and profile at the University. Added to this are significant contributions from University figures, such as the Deputy Secretary Students, Lucy Evans, which can only benefit the *Journal*. In short, SH reported that the *Journal* is making progress.

SH reported that a call to action had been included with the most recent issue of the *Journal* – Vol 51, Issue 2 – to help with supporting UEGA. He also expressed his joy at working with the archive, and hopes that the wealth of content there will help to inspire future contributors to the *Journal*. SH commented that he is very worried about the future; there is enough material for the next issue of the *Journal*, but that the benefits of publishing in the *Journal* must be made clear in order to secure future material.

Regarding finances, SH suggested that the future of UEGA should be cast around the income of the Association to support the development of the *Journal*. He said that D&A think the *Journal* is unique and valuable, and that it is very encouraging how supportive they are of our activities. If we work in a way that benefits D&A, then there is a future for the *Journal*. He moved on to discuss the Business Case, which contains hard numbers on the production of the *Journal* and continuation of UEGA. The next step is a meeting with D&A; SH suggested that change will not be easy or quick.

PF congratulated SH on the work he had done thus far with the *Journal*. He confirmed that the *Journal* is moving forward and developing, and that specimen copies should be made available at the General Council Half Yearly meeting, including an appropriate insert. RW confirmed that this had been done in the past and could be very successful. He suggested giving away *Journals* with a donation box available for voluntary contributions at £5. It was agreed that RW, JS, OH, PF, and AH would work on organising a presence at the GC meeting. RW suggested that similar events should be held on a larger scale; DG suggested that such expansion should be a point of discussion with D&A before implementation.

AH asked how best to bring the *Journal's* archive to a wider audience. She suggested that it cannot be done with the current staff capacity, but that it was a vital component of the *Journal's* future, and should be considered carefully.

SH asked the meeting to confirm that he and AH still held a mandate, on behalf of UEGA and the *Journal*, to enter into discussions with D&A. This was agreed by the meeting. DG thanked SH, JS, and PF for their work.

- 7. Relations with Development & Alumni:** DG suggested that much of this had been discussed in previous agenda points.

- 8. Election of Honorary Office Bearers:** DG referred the meeting to the list included with the attached Annual Report. He asked the meeting for approval of this list; PF offered approval on behalf of the meeting, and this was agreed. DL suggested that office bearer positions would be reviewed at the AGM 2025, and DG further commented that it was important to bring in some new members to serve on the Executive Committee.

- 9. Election of Executive Committee Members:** DG confirmed that HM had been elected in 2023. No one is due to retire in the next year. No other nominations had been received.

RW and AH commented how important building a lasting relationship with EUSA will be to the survival of UEGA. It was agreed that efforts would be made to connect with permanent staff members, such as Sarah Purves, in order to avoid breaking contact through the replacement of sabbatical officers. RW further suggested co-opting members of D&A onto the committee; SH confirmed that this would be part of the support package sought from D&A. AH pointed out that, according to the constitution, only full members of UEGA can serve on the Executive Committee as full members, but that co-opting was an option.

- 10. AOCB:** PD commented that possible strategies for increasing the visibility of the *Journal* could be to include paraphernalia with the graduation package and to advertise in *The Student*. AH agreed that these were valuable ideas, and that a possible report could be written for submission to *The Student*. PD further asked why UEGA doesn't receive more graduates as members automatically, and HM extended this by asking why we don't contact graduates directly. DG explained the restrictions placed on UEGA by GDPR and that a closer relationship with D&A was the best way to communicate with graduates. RW suggested that secretaries of alumni groups could help with the dissemination of *Journals*, it was agreed that this would be investigated.

- 11. Date of AGM 2025:** It was agreed that a preliminary date for the AGM 2025 is 6 February 2025 at 11.00 am in the Raeburn Room. DG thanked everyone for attending the AGM, and DL offered a vote of thanks to the Chair.

University of Edinburgh Graduates' Association AGM 2024

Annual Report

After the industrial action last year caused the AGM 2023 to be postponed until April, it is good to see things back to normal.

Executive & Editorial Committees and Staffing:

All of our UEGA Officers are willing to stand for another year. Our Office Bearers are:

President: David Gilmour

Vice President: Ann Henderson

Hon. Secretary: David Lamb

Hon Treasurer: Finlay Marshall

Interim Editor: Steve Hillier

Other members of the Executive Committee include:

Hamish McKenzie

Sharan Atwal, EUSA President

Katie Hardwick, EUSA Vice President, Activities & Services

Peter Sawkins, EUSU President

Members of the Editorial Committee also include:

Shenxiao Tong

Ritchie Walker

Staff Members include:

Production Editor: John R Sutherland

Assistant Editor: Position Vacant

Events over the past year:

Since the AGM 2023, we have held two events: the Annual Reception & Dinner was held on 24 April 2023. We were due to have Dr Joe Morrow, the Lord Lyon King of Arms, as our guest speaker but unfortunately he was unable to come on the day and, at the last minute, Marie MacPherson stepped in to talk about John Knox. On 23 May 2023, there was a guided tour of the Song School murals at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, led by the President. This was arranged as a follow up to the talk given by Elizabeth Cumming on Phoebe Anna Traquair.

On Remembrance Sunday, the President was invited to lay a wreath at the memorial in the Old Quad.

Possible events for the forthcoming year are being discussed; details will follow in due course. One possible event, held in conjunction with the Eric Liddell Community, is related to the centenary of Liddell's success at the Paris Olympics in 1924.

Future of UEGA and the *Journal*:

Discussions with D&A with regard to the future of UEGA and the *Journal* are ongoing. This will be explored further in point 7 of the Agenda.

Current Membership:

The current total membership of UEGA stands at **779** members. Of these, 239 are Annual members, 20 are Ten Year members, 9 are Honorary members, and 511 are Life members.

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Financial Report

Last year's AGM minutes included the comment that UEGA remains heavily dependent on donations and on our Annual University Grant of £4,500 and that, due to 3 years of COVID-19, there has been a noticeable change in membership habits; events are not supported as well as they used to be. Fairly naturally, this has had a negative effect on the amount of donations received. As stated in the Accounts, the Independent Examiner, Eric Brown, and I are concerned about the future financial position because without substantial further incoming cash, whether from members, existing or new, or from increased support from the University, there is a material uncertainty that UEGA will be able to continue its operations

At present our only paid member of staff is John R. Sutherland (JS) to whom UEGA quite literally owes its continued existence. The current Office Bearers have been volunteering their time assisting JS in taking up the slack left by the death of Mrs Joan Meikle, but it is recognised that while this has so far been workable, it will not be sufficient in anything other than the very short-term: for example it offers no basis to provide the administrative capacity necessary to expand the membership at the rate required.

Negotiations have been ongoing with Development and Alumni (D&A) and a report on progress is scheduled for later in the Agenda. As a critical meeting with D&A is scheduled to take place the day before the AGM, it is not possible for me at present to comment further; all recognise that the outcome of these negotiations will most likely be vital in delivering UEGA's development plans.

T F Marshall
Hon. Treasurer

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION
REVENUE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
<u>Revenue:</u>		
Annual subscriptions	8,927	10,615
Ten year membership subscription fund	538	561
Journal Subscriptions	735	900
Life membership subscription fund	378	393
Interest income	56	4
Donations	1,324	3,882
Annual functions	3,650	2,565
Edinburgh University grant	4,500	4,500
Sale of Journals & Sundry income	0	85
Total revenue	20,108	23,505
<u>Expenses:</u>		
Wages and salaries	(9,946)	(16,543)
Annual function expenses	(3,030)	(1,569)
Calendar printing Expenses	0	0
Journal printing	(7,186)	(5,060)
Postage	(438)	(109)
Office expenses	(1,088)	(1,088)
Depreciation	0	0
Total expenses	(21,688)	(24,369)
Transfer to Reserve		
Net surplus / (deficit)	(1,580)	(864)

The notes on pages 4 and 5 form part of these financial statements.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets	2	0	0
<u>Current assets:</u>			
Debtors	3	0	4,500
Cash at bank and in hand		3,891	2,594
Total assets		3,891	7,094
Creditors due in under one year		(669)	(1,376)
Net assets		3,222	5,718
<u>Financed by:</u>			
General Fund	4	(14,588)	(13,008)
Centenary Reserve Fund		3,705	3,705
General Reserve Fund		3,500	3,500
Ten Year Subscription Fund	4	1,548	2,086
Life Membership Subscription Fund	4	9,057	9,435
		3,222	5,718

The notes on pages 4 and 5 form part of these financial statements.

Prepared by:

TF Marshall
Honorary Treasurer

Date: 15 January 2024

I have examined these accounts and confirm they accord with the Association's books and records.

Both the Treasurer and I are concerned about the future financial position because without substantial further incoming cash, whether from members, existing or new, or from increased support from the University, there is a material uncertainty that the Association will be able to continue its operations

I am assured that the Treasurer will up-date members at the AGM of the efforts being made to secure support from the University.

Eric Brown
Honorary Accounts Examiner

Date: 15 January 2024

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

1. Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention on the accruals basis together with the following accounting policies:

(a) Depreciation

Computer and office equipment is depreciated straight line over a four year period.

(b) Subscriptions

Ten year subscriptions are released to the Revenue Account at an equal annual rate over the ten year period concerned.

The Life Membership Subscription Fund is released to the Revenue Account at an annual rate of 4% per annum.

(c) Office premises

By courtesy of Edinburgh University, the Association has free use of the premises at 18 Buccleuch Place, which it shares with certain other organisations.

2. Fixed Assets £

Cost

Balance at 1 October 2022 0

Depreciation

Balance at 1 October 2022 and 30 September 2023 0

Net book value

As at 30 September 2023 0

3. Debtors 2023 2022

£ **£**

Accrued income 4,500

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

4. Funds	General Fund	Ten Year Membership Subscription Fund	Life Membership Subscription Fund
Balance at 1 October 2022	(13,008)	2,086	9,435
Revenue	19,192	0	0
Expenses	(21,688)	0	0
Transfer to Revenue Account	916	(538)	(378)
Transfer to Reserve			
Balance at 30 September 2023	<u>(14,588)</u>	<u>1,548</u>	<u>9,057</u>

University of Edinburgh Graduates' Association – AGM 2024

Interim Editor's Report

1. Journal Production

The next issue of the *Journal*—Vol 51, Issue 2—is with the printer and nearing the end of production. We expect dispatch of the *Journal* to take place in early February. A number of advanced copies have been brought to this meeting for members to review. We have ordered 1,000 copies with this print run to ensure that we will have enough of these new issues, focussing on the centenary of Eric Liddell's success in 1924, for promotional purposes and sale in the Visitor Centre. A number of issues will also be dispatched to significant members of the University community, and possibly to the Eric Liddell Community in Morningside.

2. Communications

With Vol 51, Issue 2 of the *Journal*, we have included a short statement from the Vice President, Ann Henderson, which informs our readership of some of the difficulties UEGA has experienced in the last year. Included here is advanced notice that a letter will be forthcoming to all members as an update on their membership, and information about delayed subscription payments. The note also calls for volunteers to help with the organisation of future events, and to serve on the Executive Committee.

3. Forthcoming Issues of the *Journal*

The Editorial Team is actively sourcing articles for the next issue of the *Journal*—Vol 51, Issue 3—which is due to appear in Summer 2024. We have a number of articles promised and in production for that issue, including several legacy pieces and some original writing. These include a modern commentary from Estates and Buildings on 'University Development' by E Appleton, 'On Scots and Swiss' by Bruce Taylor, and contributions from Katie Hardwick, EUSA VP, and others.

4. Centennial Business Scenario

The Editorial Team has been working closely with the Hon. Treasurer to produce a broad business case for the future of the *Journal*, using currently available figures and projecting over five years. The Interim Editor has met unofficially with Vice Principal Chris Cox, who has indicated that this kind of document would be most welcome. The current draft will benefit from feedback at the next meeting with D&A. However, the last meeting of the Executive Committee in January 2024 reviewed and approved the draft for use moving forward. Further, a covering letter was drafted by the President and Vice President to accompany the plan, mandating the Interim Editor to act as general negotiator on the *Journal's* side. A meeting has now been called of the *Journal* Implementation Group to finalise the plan according to feedback from the D&A Team. Once both sides agree that the plan is realistic and represents the best interests of all stakeholders, it will be submitted via D&A to the University as a formal application for funding and support.

This meeting was due to take place on 7 February 2024 but has been delayed due to illness. A rescheduled meeting will be held as soon as possible, and an update will be brought to a future meeting of the Executive Committee for discussion.

Stephen G. Hillier – Interim Editor

Peter B. Freshwater – Emeritus Editor

John R. Sutherland – Production Editor

7 February 2024