



The National Federation of Atheist, Humanist and Secular
Student Societies

AHS 18th July

2015

AGM Minutes

Order of Business

- Apologies
- Vote to ratify minutes from AGM 2014
- Vote to ratify Standing Orders
- Presentation of the President's report
- Presentation of Officers' reports
- Presentation of the Financial report
- Election of a returning officer to oversee votes
- Motions and constitutional amendments
- Executive elections
- Any other business

Apologies

AHS Board: Andrew Copson

AHS Exec: Chris Malburn

Caucus in attendance

Society	Representative 1	Representative 2
Atheist, Humanistic and Secularist Society of Northampton	Arte Artemiou <i>President</i>	Tim Khil <i>AHS Rep</i>
Atheist Humanist and Secularist Society at the University of Central Lancashire	<i>Glen Carrigan</i> <i>President</i>	Sean Flemming <i>AHS Rep</i>
University of Southampton Atheist Society	David Stanley <i>President</i>	Caroline Haigh <i>AHS Rep</i>
Leicester Students' Union Atheist, Humanist and Secular Society	Ryan Smith <i>President</i>	Gino Ragnoli <i>AHS Rep</i>
University of Liverpool Humanists Society	Helena Siggins <i>President</i>	
University of Birmingham Atheist, Secular and Humanist Society	Maria Matloob <i>AHS Rep</i>	Stamatis Wright <i>AHS Rep</i>
University of Nottingham Agnostics Secularists and Humanists Society	Alexa Robertson <i>AHS Rep</i>	Dale Claridge <i>AHS Rep</i>
University of Sheffield Humanist Society	Sylvia Broeckx <i>President</i>	
Warwick Atheists, Secularists and Humanists	Benjamin David <i>President</i>	Fraser Scarlett <i>AHS Rep</i>

University of Bristol Atheist, Agnostic and Secular Society	Caitlin Greenwood <i>AHS Rep</i>	
Durham University Humanist and Secularist Society	Helen Chamberlain <i>President</i>	Adam Carnall <i>AHS Rep</i>
Exeter University Atheist, Humanist and Secular Society	Azka Anees <i>AHS Rep</i>	
UCL Atheist, Secularist and Humanist Society	Luke Dabin <i>AHS Rep</i>	Cloe Ansari <i>AHS Rep</i>
Hull	Becky Lavelle <i>President</i>	

AHS Board

- Michael Paynter
- Ruth Haydock
- Jennifer Bartle

AHS Executive

- Martin Smith – Secretary (chairing the session, therefore only had a casting vote)

Total 27 voting members, the chair holding an additional casting vote.

Vote to ratify the minutes from AGM 2014

Sylvia Broeckx noted her name had been spelled incorrectly in “AOB” in the AGM 2014 minutes and so the following correction should be made:

“Syliva Broeckx pointed out that the SSA have a variety of guides online.”

To be corrected to

“Sylvia Broeckx pointed out that the SSA have a variety of guides online.”

Minutes from AGM 2014 were ratified unanimously by a raising of hands

Vote to ratify standing orders

Standing Orders suggested and agreed at the AHS Convention 2012 EGM were ratified unanimously by The Caucus for governing the running of this AGM by a raising of hands.

These may be found in Appendix A.

Presentation of President's report

The AHS Annual Report 2015 was presented to The Caucus by the Secretary, Martin Smith.

Officer reports

The Campaigns Officer, Caitlin Greenwood, delivered the Campaigns report

The Membership Officer, Adam Carnall, delivered the Membership report

The Education Officer, Helena Siggins, delivered the Education report

The Press Officer, Luke Dabin, delivered a report on the Newsletter

Presentation of Financial Report

The AHS Financial Report 2015 was presented to The Caucus by the Secretary, Martin Smith.

Break

Election of a returning officer to oversee votes

Terrence Waites was nominated and then unanimously elected as the Returning Officer

Motions and Constitutional Amendments

Caitlin Greenwood delivered the first motion:

"The AHS wishes to move the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to the second day of the Annual Convention. This allows for a new Executive to be elected in March/April. This means the National Federation elects its new Executive at the same time as the majority of its societies. This also means there will be a higher turnout from the Caucus. The new Executive would be fully integrated into the role in order to officially take over from July 1st. This allows for the new Executive to be absolutely sure that the added responsibilities and pressure is bearable.

The AHS AGM would be replaced with the Societies Training Weekend, which will be held in June or July. This allows new committee members to be fully trained prior to taking on their duties. This will take place over three days – Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Societies would submit applications to host the Societies Training Weekend.

The Annual Convention would see an election of a new Executive in London each year, as that is the venue of the Annual Convention and it is unreasonable to depart from London."

The Board noted that this would require a constitutional change to paragraphs 13.11.1 and 13.11.6 of the constitution. The motion was therefore amended to see if The Caucus wished to vote on constitutional amendments later the same day. This vote was a simple majority vote by secret raise of hands.

- 20 For;
- 4 Against;
- 2 abstentions;
- 1 Caucus member not present

The amended motion was successfully passed and a further vote was mandated for later in the day.

Richard Acton delivered the second motion:

Changing the name of the AHS (The National Federation of Atheist, Humanist and Secular Student Societies) to 'Humanist Students' is I think necessary if we are to grow in public awareness. As a scientist it goes against my instincts to sacrifice precision of expression but as a rationalist one has to be aware of the impact of labels on cognition and Humanist Students is snappier and more memorable than The National Federation of Atheist, Humanist and Secular Student Societies (I copied and pasted that rather than typing it out again that's how bad it is). It's a name you can say without an acronym and one you can typeset in a way that is aesthetically pleasing something almost impossible with the current name.

The blurb can read 'Humanist students' is an organisation that includes and represent the interests of Atheists, Secularists, Humanists, Skeptics, Free-thinkers, Agnostics, Rationalists, hell even Dan Dennet's Defunct 'Brights' so long as we don't have to put all the labels people want to use in the name. I have complained of the anthropocentrism of the label Humanist in the past and we all have our preferred label but let's get over it for the sake of effective group action.

Caitlin Greenwood delivered an amendment calling for a period of consultation with the final name only being voted on at the next AHS Convention. This amendment to the motion was voted on using a simple majority and a secret raising of hands.

- 22 For;
- 3 Against;
- 1 abstentions;
- 1 Caucus member not present

The motion was successfully amended.

Michael Paynter spoke against the amended motion

Jennifer Bartle and Richard Acton spoke for the amended motion

The final, amended motion was voted for on using a simple majority and a secret raising of hands.

- 20 For;
- 3 Against;
- 3 abstentions;
- 1 Caucus member not present

The *amended* motion was successfully passed.

Break

Further Constitutional Amendment Vote

Jennifer Bartle presented the constitutional amendments required to move the AGM to the same date as the AHS Convention. The modified paragraphs and new text are:

13.11.1 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held once every year between the 1 February and 31 March.

[...]

13.11.6 Members of the executive shall take office from the 1 July and handover for members of the Executive shall occur intensively before they take office with support continuing for as long as reasonably necessary.

A vote was carried out using a secret raising of hands and a two-thirds majority, as required for constitutional amendments.

- 25 For;
- 0 Against;
- 2 abstentions;

The motion to modify the constitution was successfully passed.

Executive Elections

Voting for president was carried out using secret ballots where The Caucus ranked the candidates in order of preference. Victory was to be decided by the Alternative Vote method. As it turned out, no more than the first preference votes needed to be taken into account. Elections for Secretary and Treasurer were carried out by the secret raising of hands observed and counted only by the Returning Officer.

Election of the AHS President

Candidates

Hari Parekh – *Manifesto distributed to the caucus a week before the AGM*
Benjamin David – *Manifesto distributed to the caucus a week before the AGM*
Richard Acton – *Manifesto distributed to the caucus a week before the AGM*

Results

- Richard Acton - 14
- Hari Parekh – 7
- Benjamin David – 6
- Re-open nominations – 0
- Abstentions - 0

Richard Acton was duly elected President of the AHS 2015-16

Election of the AHS Secretary

Candidates

Caitlin Greenwood – *Manifesto distributed to the caucus a week before the AGM*

Results

- Caitlin Greenwood – 27
- Re-open nominations – 0
- Abstentions - 0

Caitlin Greenwood was duly elected Secretary of the AHS 2015-16

Election of the AHS Treasurer

Candidates

Luke Dabin – *ran for election on the day of the AGM*

Results

- Luke Dabin – 26
- Re-open nomination – 1
- Abstentions – 0

Luke Dabin was duly elected Treasurer of the AHS 2015-16

AOB

None

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Standing Orders

1. General

1.1. Where conflict arises between these Standing Orders and the Constitution of the AHS then the Constitution takes precedence.

2. Submission of Motions

2.1. All motions submitted in writing and in full one month prior to the General Meeting shall be included as business except as follows:

2.1.1. Motions to amend the constitution should be submitted with a minimum of eight weeks' notice.

2.1.2. Motions to be discussed at a General Meeting that do not aim to amend the constitution may be submitted with two weeks' notice at the discretion of the Chair.

2.1.3. Procedural Motions concerning the running or direction of the General Meeting may be submitted at any time at the discretion of the Chair.

2.2. Motions shall be submitted in the format as advised by the Executive.

2.3. Motions included for business at a General Meeting shall be distributed to the Caucus a minimum of two weeks prior to the meeting.

3. Speaking and Debating

3.1. Speakers shall be invited at the discretion of the Chair with:

3.1.1. Eligible attendees indicating their desire to speak by show of hand.

3.1.2. Due consideration being shown to all points of view.

3.2. All speakers shall be limited to a maximum of 5 minutes.

3.3. Debates on any motion shall be limited to 30 minutes.

4. Candidates and Manifestos

4.1. Manifestos from electoral candidates shall be allowed and shall be distributed to the Caucus no later than one week ahead of the General Meeting.

5. Elections and Voting

5.1. All votes, including elections, shall be determined by simple majority using the Alternative Vote system except where explicitly stated.

5.2. All votes shall be conducted in public except as follows:

5.2.1. Elections for personnel shall be conducted in secret.

5.2.2. Votes on motions where an appropriate procedural motion has been passed shall be carried out in secret.

5.3. A show of hands with closed eyes may be considered "secret" at the direction of the Caucus at the discretion of the Chair or Returning Officer.

5.4. The Returning Officer should be a non-voting attendee of the General Meeting and shall have the following responsibilities:

5.4.1. To regulate and process the election of candidates to the Executive.

5.4.2. To determine the method of collecting votes.

5.4.3. To inform the Chair of the results of the elections.

5.5. The President need not cede the Chair to the Returning Officer unless they are running