

ACADEMY of SOCIAL SCIENCES

Minutes 24th Annual General Meeting of the Academy of Social Sciences, Monday 5 June 2023, 4.00pm-5.15pm, at the Building Centre, 26 Store Street, London WC1E 7BT

Attendees

Toyin Agbetu (ASA)	Will Hutton FAcSS (President)
Suma Athreye FAcSS	David James FAcSS
Adrian Bailey FAcSS	Richard Laughlin FAcSS
Ravinder Barn FAcSS	Denise Lievesley FAcSS
Paul Barnard FAcSS	Clare Loughlin-Chow (SRHE)
Madeleine Barrows (BAM)	Ziyad Marar FAcSS
Richard Blyth FAcSS	Jil Matheson FAcSS
Harriet Bradley FAcSS	Alisoun Milne FAcSS
Glynis Breakwell FAcSS	John Pullinger FAcSS
Jane Broadbent FAcSS	Mo Ray FAcSS
John Elliott FAcSS	Ceridwen Roberts FAcSS
Xiaolan Fu FAcSS	Andy Ross FAcSS
Rita Gardner FAcSS	Tirthankar Roy FAcSS
Kristian Gleditsch FAcSS	Sylvia Walby FAcSS
Joe Grice FAcSS	Stephen Wood FAcSS

In attendance

Ed Bridges, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, AcSS

Sarah Jones, Head of Administration, AcSS

Amy Williams, Communications Manager, AcSS

1. Welcome by the President, Will Hutton FAcSS

WH warmly welcomed everyone noting apologies as received. WH said how delighted the Academy was to be able to hold its first in person AGM since 2019.

2. Formal business of the AGM

Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2022

By a show of hands, the minutes were accepted as being an accurate record of the AGM held on 16 June 2022.

Report from the President, Will Hutton FAcSS

WH opened the first item of formal business by giving his perceptions as President, now two years into the position. He has seen the Academy go from strength to strength which is a reflection of the commitment and effort of the staff team and trustees. The aim is to bring Britain's social science community together and make the world better through the promotion of social science. With firm foundations laid WH commented that it has been a privilege to watch the Academy take flight.

WH then went on to highlight three new initiatives that commenced in 2022:

The We Society podcast series was an idea suggested by RG. WH said it is a great pleasure to be so intimately involved. Working with committed and professional production company (Whistledown) and many Fellows has resulted in three successful series.

Designed to educate the thinking public through discussion with experts holding evidence at their fingertips, it also acts to promote the social sciences – in all their breadth - and raise awareness of what social science is among public audiences.

The series was launched in May 2022, after a tender process to select our preferred production company. Over the past 12 months the Academy completed the first three series of, in total, 21 podcasts. WH has hosted conversations across a very wide range of issues from the NHS, to international migration, sport and wellbeing, the future of cities, and many more. At the end of the first year there had been more

than 100,000 downloads in total and during the broadcast period the series held the first rank in the Apple podcast charts for both social science and science.

WH acknowledged and thanked his guests on the series, including many leading Fellows and the three well-known public figures – one per series - Hilary Clinton, Ai WeiWei, and Ian McKewan.

The **ESRC co-funded EDI project** which is working in partnership with the Academy and its learned society members got underway. It is a significant part of the ESRC contribution to the wider UKRI initiatives on EDI and is underpinned by the ESRC/AcSS strategic partnership in EDI.

The purpose is to facilitate sharing good practice and development of new EDI initiatives by Social Science (learned) societies, in their work that supports their disciplines and communities in higher education. This also includes the provision and analysis of HESA benchmark data on EDI variables, and £150k of small grant funding to be awarded to help pump prime new initiatives.

The project recognises both the convening role of the Academy and the great importance of the societies as independent and well networked gateways to their communities. After 18 months of discussion and planning, the project agreement was signed in late 2022 and work started in earnest in 2023. WH thanked Dr Sarah Jones for her leadership in this project, and the advisory group comprising learned society staff members responsible for EDI. Dr Elizabeth Norman-Sargent joined the team early in 2023 as project manager.

A major project in association with the **British Academy to analyse the REF 21 Impact Case Studies** in panels C and D – across the breadth of the SHAPE disciplines. With more than 3000 case studies, it is both a huge task and represents an important data set, although not one without its challenges. This major project is ground breaking in that it is the first time the BA and AcSS have worked together on a project. The AcSS has committed funds to it from the surplus generated in 2021. The outputs from the project will be freely available to the community and the public via the project reports and a project dashboard; and both the AcSS and BA will be

using the findings to support their respective advocacy for the social sciences (AcSS) and for SHAPE as a whole and the humanities (BA).

The analytical work is being led by Prof Melinda Mills (a Fellow of both organisations) and her team in Oxford University, appointed after open tender. WH thanked Dr Rita Gardner our CEO for her leadership in establishing the collaboration and nurturing it. Rita and the newly appointed Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Dr Ed Bridges are working together with Dr Molly Morgan Jones and Connor McKenzie, the BA staff leads, in helping to guide the work, together with oversight from the project steering group.

WH ended by warmly thanking everyone involved for their support of the Academy in so many ways. The Academy could not function without the support of its members, partner organisations, those who serve on our Council and committees, those who donate to and sponsor our work, and our hard-working small staff team. WH offered his heartfelt thanks to everyone. For an organization with a budget of some £0.6m we are punching well above our weight.

Report from the Chief Executive, Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS

RG was delighted to be able to report favourably on the second full year of working to deliver our current three-year action plan, which is the implementation route map for the strategy launched in Autumn 2020. Over the past two years the Academy has:

- Strengthened our administration, finances and support tools – essential which underpin these e.g CRM
- Renewed its visual identity and developed a single integrated website
- Engaged Fellows and Learned society members more fully, increased diversity and implemented the searchable Directory of expertise – building on the work of previous team – Directory of Fellows expertise.
- Refocused the Campaign onto showcasing social science, with greater input from Fellows and more support – linking across to policy work

- Grown its credibility – more established externally; an invited partner; capable of attracting more and wider sources of external funding
- Commenced new, successful ventures to reach target audiences
- Enlarged and refreshed our staff team – skilled, motivated, energetic, thoughtful. About 40% greater.
- Commenced fundraising in 2020 for projects and built CfSS support. There have been successes in each year since, with c. £1m new funds raised.
- In 2023 the team are working on improving our messaging and communications and impact. One key to this will be more integrated work between campaign, communications and policy – all in support of advocacy for social sciences – which is being led by our new Head of Policy and Public Affairs – Dr Ed Bridges. The Academy also recently welcomed Amy Williams, as Communications Manager in May 2023.

RG also noted some of the other highlights of 2022 specifically, including:

Social Sciences in a Time of Change

The successful completion of ‘Social Sciences in a Time of Change’ project in summer 2022 – the Academy’s first major grant-funded project. Supported with grant-funding from ESRC, and jointly led by the University of Lancaster and the Academy, the 18-month project set out to monitor in real time the impacts of the pandemic and Brexit on the health of the social sciences in HE. The project stemmed from the very grave concerns and a great deal of uncertainty that existed back in 2020.

While the social sciences were not immune to the generic impacts on higher education of both Covid and Brexit, our findings highlighted particular characteristics of the social sciences that led to differentiated or augmented impacts for the sector. The report was an important benchmark for the SS at this point in time, provided useful advocacy material, and illustrated both robust strengths of SS and areas of concern for the future, most notably in terms of cuts to GCRF and issues over access to EU research funding, and career development for PGR, ECR and some other selected cohorts.

There are still ongoing concerns on the government's focus on STEM and the AcSS will continue to lead on improving visibility of the SS.

The project findings were well received. RG thanked the project team and especially Prof Tony McEnery as Co-PI; and the ESRC for the support. Among several actions arising, is the formation of the Academy's forum for leaders of social science in HEIs – a space for discussion and sharing for those responsible for the SS, chaired by Professor Richard Black.

Journal

Secondly, there was a change in editorship of the Academy's journal Contemporary Social Science mid-way through 2022 and the Academy was delighted to welcome Prof David Bailey as the new Editor, bringing his wealth of expertise in journal editorship, in applied social science research, and in social media. Building on the sterling work of former editors John Conolly and Jacqueline Barnes, he has got off to a cracking start in commissioning new themed issues.

Over the past 5 years full article downloads have more than doubled to 152,000 and we have continued to see the journal impact factor rise. RG also extended warm thanks to Taylor and Francis, the journal publishers.

Fundraising

In addition to raising significant funds for the EDI project, the Campaign successfully grew its supporters throughout 2022, while also retaining existing ones. Eight new supporters joined from universities across the UK and a further three have joined in 2023, resulting in a most welcome increase in Campaign income inc. support from almost all of the Russell Group of universities.

The headline fundraising figure is that between 2020 and 2022 we raised over £1m in project grants, major donations and Campaign sponsorship, over and above our income from Fellows' and Learned Society subscriptions.

Fellows and the Fellows Directory

A major achievement in 2022 was completion of a public-facing Directory of Fellows expertise that is a fantastic resource for those seeking expertise and for the Academy too. Thank you to our admin team for managing the addition of geospatial, discipline and areas of research expertise for every Fellow, and to those Fellows who kindly supplied the information we required. Finally, there is now a database that the public and policy makers can use and the administration team can now interrogate what Fellows do, empowering the Academy to be able to engage more fully with the Fellowship.

The Academy's Fellowship continued to flourish sustainably in 2022, with 87 new Fellows being elected. This translates into a small net growth in overall numbers of salaried Fellows. Retention rates were 96% but this masks a significant number moving to retired Fellow status. 23% of conferments in 2022 were of Fellows from ethnic minority and ethnic groups; 55% were women. Seven Fellows received honours in the New Year or Birthday Honours lists.

Staff changes

The Academy experienced unexpected staff changes in late 2022, all for very understandable reasons of retirement, career shift, and getting PhD funding. As a result, the area that suffered most in 2022 was the annual SAGE policy report on Social Science and STEM. The team are now making up for that lost time and we thank SAGE for their patience and support.

It has been a demanding time since September in re-appointing to new roles, but the plus is being able to re-shape the external facing team and to bring in additional expertise and new skills in policy, public affairs, communications and membership.

RG warmly thanked Sharon Witherspoon and Alison Blow who left at the end of 2022 and Chizom Ekeh who left in March 2023 for their work to advance the Academy.

The Academy welcomed new staff Dr Ed Bridges, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Annie Hogan, Membership and Database Manager, Dr Elizabeth Norman-Sargent, EDI Programme Manager and Amy Williams, Communications Manager.

Finally, all of what is presented here today is the result of team work. 2022 dug deeply into that team spirit and did not find it wanting. Sincere thanks to all, and in particular to Sarah Jones, Steve Grundy, and Sophia Cole for being team players par excellence in 2022.

Report from the Chair of the Campaign for Social Science, by Dr Ed Bridges on behalf of Professor Bobby Duffy FAcSS

EB was very pleased to be reporting on the CfSS on behalf of Bobby Duffy, who was unwell and unable to attend.

Themed approach and hubs

The Campaign's work in promoting the social sciences is themed, in line with some of the key issues and policy agendas of the time. These are issues for which the social sciences provide essential evidence, insight and contributions to both shaping policy and informing practice. The thematic approach was introduced from 2020 as part of the Academy/Campaign new strategy.

2022 saw the launch of a new Campaign hub, for the third consecutive year. The theme being 'Climate Change and Sustainability'.

Throughout the year, the addition of new content also continued to expand the 'Covid Hub' that was first launched in May 2020 and the 'Living Standards and Levelling-up Hub' launched in 2021.

The Climate Change and Sustainability hub grew substantially over the year. By December 2022, it featured 11 comment pieces from 9 universities focusing on the social dimensions of the climate crisis, from many perspectives. It also hosts over 70 links to centres and bodies of work on this topic in universities and other organisations. It is an important resource of which we are proud.

By the end of 2022, taken together, the three Campaign hubs featured 51 individual comment pieces and more than 130 links to other resources/institutions.

The main purpose of the hubs is to showcase the contributions of social science to some of the grand challenges facing the UK, and its devolved nations, nationally and internationally. They showcase evidence, interpretation and policy relevance, from across the breadth of social science disciplines. They draw widely on the social

science community both in academia and in practice, including many Academy Fellows.

The Campaign will shortly launch its fourth hub on the theme of 'Election 2024', featuring objective, evidence-led commentary on selected policy areas in the run up to the general election, plus a supporting events programme across the nations and in partnership with Campaign supporters. This represents a major new area of activity. It will also demonstrate the benefits of social science research.

Events

The hubs were complemented by a busy Autumn 2022 programme of events.

The well-attended Campaign Annual Lecture was given by Torsten Bell, director of The Resolution Foundation, entitled 'The cost of living crisis: the short and the long view'. An excellent response was given by Shreya Nanda (Chief Economist, Social Market Foundation) and Arun Advani (Associate Professor of Economics, University of Warwick). Some 700 people registered for this event, with around 207 attending on the day. A subsequent VIP dinner discussion reflecting on the themes of the lecture offered an opportunity for deeper conversations and networking.

The Campaign partnered with SAGE Publications to present A Hot Topic: Exploring the social dimensions of the climate crisis, an online event focused on climate change to tie in with the new hub on this topic. The event included presentations from leading researchers, Lord Deben (Chairman of the Climate Change Committee) and Lord Adair Turner (Chair of the Energy Transitions Commission).

SAGE, The Conversation and the Campaign started a new programme of quarterly networking events, called Social Science Perspectives. The first two events of the series took place in 2022 and featured:

- Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman (Emeritus Professor of War Studies, King's College London) on the war in Ukraine.
- Carl Miller (Research Director, Centre for the Analysis of Social Media) on state influenced disinformation on social media.

Supporters

Support for the Campaign from universities and commercial sponsorship remained very strong with all university sponsors and the lead commercial sponsor renewing plus eight additional institutions joined, as noted earlier.

We are hugely grateful to the existing and new supporters whose sponsorship quite simply enables us to run the Campaign and its associated policy work. The fundraising for the Campaign enables us to appoint a Policy and Campaigns Officer in 2023 to support our work.

Look ahead to 2023

There are plans to publish two Campaign reports during the year, in partnership with SAGE publishing. The first uses a data-driven approach to explore Social Science and STEM collaboration.

The events programme will be expanding further, including a larger number of partnered events with Campaign supporters.

The Academy will be drawing together its policy, campaign and communications work to extend and enhance the impact of its work, taking advantage of the new and enlarged staff team across these areas.

Lastly, EB warmly thanked:

- Our increasing number of supporters for their sponsorship of the Campaign, and in particular SAGE Publishing, our lead commercial sponsor, for their support with all the Campaign events.
- The Campaign Board, for their expertise and advice, and not least the new members who have joined the Campaign Board in 2022 from the universities of Glasgow, Swansea, York and East Anglia.
- The very many people who have contributed time, expertise and energy to create content for the Campaign hubs and to speak at events.
- The small staff team, and especially Steve Grundy, Senior Campaign Manager, for his hard work and commitment in implementing the development of the Campaign's work and Bobby Duffy, Chair of the Campaign.

Report from the Honorary Treasurer, by Jil Matheson on behalf of Professor Nic Beech FAcSS

JM was pleased to present the financial overview for 2022, standing in for Prof Nic Beech, Honorary Treasurer, who was unable to join the meeting.

Starting with the finance report, the headline was that the Academy, once again, ended the year in sound financial shape. We should also record that we navigated well, in financial terms, the pandemic and its many impacts over the three years from March 2020. In 2022 the steadily rising costs of inflation presented the main financial risk.

Overall, expenditure in the year of £757k exceeded income in the year (£605k) by £152k. These summary figures are explained as follows: The excess of expenditure over income fell solely under restricted 'project-based' activities, and related largely to the separation of SPRE (Scottish Policy Research Exchange) from under the Academy's umbrella to become an independent Scottish SCIO. This was at the SPRE Director's request and with the blessing of the SPRE advisory group and the Academy's Council. On separation, the Academy paid over the reserves accumulated by SPRE since its inception.

The remaining expenditure excess (over income received in the year) relates to repayment of £47k of unspent EU funds on completion and final reporting of the Pro-Res project; and £20k expenditure against the strategic development fund raised in 2020 and 2021.

Unrestricted income, which funds core Academy activities, rose by 5% from 2021 to 2022 to £316k. Restricted Campaign income rose by 15% over the same period to £174k.

Unrestricted expenditure on Academy activities rose by £45k compared with 2021, owing to a planned increase in staff FTE, annual salary inflation adjustments, and an increase in promotion costs.

Both the Academy (unrestricted) and its Campaign (restricted) cost centres recorded a modest surplus on their operating finances in 2022; the Academy of £38k, and the Campaign of £14k.

Half of the Academy (unrestricted) operating surplus was a one-off HMRC payment to AcSS for back-dated employer NI discounts that can be claimed by small organisations. The remaining surpluses arose largely from income exceeding budget and the cost allowance budgeted (but not expended) for a possible return to office space in central London.

Total expenditure on raising funds in 2022 was a modest £25k as our fundraising activities are highly targeted and successful.

At the 2022 year end the balance sheet stood at £590k (2021: £742k), of which £332k existed as restricted funds (2021 £522k). These largely support two programmes – the Campaign for Social Science (£180k) and strategic development (£138k). The difference between 2021 and 2022 largely reflects the removal of SPRE reserves.

The unrestricted general fund reserves stood at £258k of which £25k has been committed to the REF Impact Case Studies project (2020: £220k). This is the totality of the unrestricted money the Academy can fall back on should an unforeseen emergency arise.

In summary, with prudent management and a strong and growing supporter base the Academy's finances in 2022 were resilient. They continued to withstand the challenges of Covid-19 and inflation and remain in positive balance, supported by reserves that meet our reserves policy of 50% of annual expenditure. That is a healthy and prudent position to end the year on, especially given the financial challenges facing universities and individuals and the escalating costs of inflation.

Report from the Honorary Secretary, Dame Jil Matheson FAcSS

JM reported on the main matters of governance for 2022.

A Remuneration Committee was formed in 2022 which comprises the President, Honorary Treasurer and one trustee to advise Council on remuneration for senior staff at the Academy.

In 2022, two Council members completed their terms - Chris Caswill and Professor Gill Valentine. The Academy warmly thanked them for their contributions.

The Academy welcomed three new trustees, Prof Lisa Anderson (Professor of Management Development and Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Liverpool University), Professor Sally Power (co-director of the WISERD Education University of Cardiff) and Professor Ian Rivers (Associate Principal and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor of Education for Social Change, University of Strathclyde). Two were voted into elected positions and one filled a vacant Council-appointed position.

The Academy is cognisant of the many different domains of diversity we seek in our Council membership and was very pleased in 2022 to have increased representation from the devolved nations.

JM announced the results of current elections to Council. This year one elected position fell vacant under the Fellows constitution. We received 2 declarations of candidacy from Fellows. She announced that Fellows voted to elect Professor Imogen Tyler, Professor of Sociology, Lancaster University to the Council.

Professor John Scott CBE was also to be appointed to the Council. John, a Fellow of AcSS and of the British Academy, will be taking on the role of chair of the Nominations Committee for the fixed term of 3 years. This position is an appointed position and comes with a seat on Council.

Finally, Prof Ian Rivers, a current trustee, has been appointed to the role of Chair of the Academic Fellows Search Committee.

3. Q&A (these have been paraphrased)

Q1 – What is the Academy’s relationships with sister academies in other countries?

A1 – The Academy has a number of informal relations, cognisant that the BA holds the remit for formal national relationships. Recently, for example, RG has met with New Zealand counterparts and is due to meet with the CEO of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences soon. In terms of the devolved nations, relations with LSW and RSE are longstanding and fluctuate from time to time in terms of active engagement.

Q2 – In addition to the regular meetings of the member learned society CEOs, are there regular meetings with leaders of other academic organisations?

A2 – The Academy's Forum for Leaders of Social Science (FLSS) was set up in 2022 to aid knowledge exchange and sharing within that community and with the Academy. The learned societies CEOs group is open to their officers and Chairs and often representatives from HEIs attend in their role as Presidents. There has recently been a welcome suggestion to organise an event for Presidents of the Learned Societies.

Q3 - What can AcSS do to help situation of young social scientists?

A3 - The Academy is conscious of the need to sustain the pipeline and future of the social sciences. SSTC engaged with ECR/PGRs and following the report, which identified ECRs and PGRs as one of the most badly impacted groups during the pandemic, made recommendations to ESRC/UKRI to set up more short term Fellowships, to which they have positively responded. AcSS will continue to monitor the situation of ECRs (through the health of social sciences work and EDI project) in social sciences and is committed to further action in areas of policy, as required.

Q4 – The 'We' autocratic/democratic answer will come from academe. Young careers are in trouble and many applied professions see direct action as being better than long term evidence-based practice. How will the Academy engage with the new generation?

A4 – The Academy plans to build on the attractiveness of social science to the public and young social scientists. The reality is that universities are on the defensive and worried. The student loan scheme in real term is worth £6k. VCs are concerned. Whether a change of government will bring some relief is to be seen. We are at an inflection point and a new liberal order is cracking. The G7 and liberal left EU are looking at the Biden administration (on threshold of 1930s). Universities are great economic earners, and they all need a strong social science department. AcSS needs to keep making the case.

Q5 - How outward looking should AcSS be to the wider society? The problem is we are not speaking enough to outside people to help explain how social science helps explain the world.

A5 – The We Society podcasts are aiming to do just this in reaching an educated public; and our policy work focuses on reaching the decision-making community beyond academia with social science. More public faces of social science are needed for media. We would also like to encourage Fellows to help support us in

simple ways to raise public awareness of social sciences. What you can do is on <https://acss.org.uk/support-us/>

Q6 – How is the Academy planning to fundraise over the coming years, has it considered crowd sourcing?

A6 – The plan is for more project-based fundraising, targeted largely to trusts and foundations.

Q7 – With focus on diversifying – what is the future for AcSS?

A7 – The Academy has sought and seen improvements in its Fellowship nominations, with 23% of nominees in 2022 self-identifying as being from ethnic minorities and minority groups. Every call out for nominations includes a clear statement about increasing diversity and while progress has been made but there is still work to be done.

Q8 – In relation to the EDI work, how easy has it been to engage economists?

A8 - Each discipline has different aspects of EDI that are their focus. We were delighted when RES agreed to be part of the Academy's EDI working group. They have been actively sharing their expertise with the other learned societies and we have been grateful for their input and support.

Q9 – Why was a remuneration committee formed?

A9 – The President recommended this as good practice having worked in several charitable organisations previously.

4. Adoption of Directors' Report and Accounts 2022

By a show of hands, the Directors' Report and Accounts for 2022 were approved.

5. Welcome new Fellows by President, Will Hutton FAcSS

WH welcomed all 87 new Fellows to the Academy and particularly those in attendance:

- Mr Paul Barnard MBE FAcSS - Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Plymouth City Council
- Ann Pettifor FAcSS - Director of Policy Research in Macroeconomics (PRIME)
- Prof Mo Ray FAcSS - Professor of Health and Social Care, University of Lincoln
- Prof Thirankar Roy FAcSS - Professor in Economic History, London School of Economics & Political Science

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

The AGM was followed by the Annual Lecture this year given by Prof Lucie Cluver, University of Oxford and then drinks and canapés reception.