

**Minutes of the 98th Annual General Meeting of English PEN
3 December 2019, 5-6pm
Free Word Centre, London**

Presiding: Maureen Freely (MF) Chair, Daniel Gorman (DG) Director

Reports:

Sanjay Jawa (SJ) Honorary Treasurer

Daniel Gorman (DG), Director

Cat Lucas (CL), Writers at Risk Programme Manager

Hannah Trevarthen (HT), Events and Development Manager

Will Forrester (WF), Translation and International Manager

Rachel Crome (RC), Head of Communications

1. Apologies

MF thanked all for attending and opened the meeting. She informed the meeting that there were apologies from 42 members for non-attendance and 24 proxy votes.

2. In Memoriam

MF requested a minute's silence for members who had died during the year, thank them for their work for English PEN over the years, and offered condolences to their families:

Gordon Bowker, Moris Farhi, Elaine Feinstein, and Andrea Levy

And also for Lyra McKee who, although not a member of English PEN, was actively involved in our libel reform campaign in Northern Ireland.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of the 97th Annual General Meeting of English PEN held on 6 December 2018

MF asked the meeting to confirm the accuracy of the minutes and for any matters arising. None brought forward.

One member abstained.

4. To receive and consider the Annual Report and Audited Accounts 2018-19

The Annual Report and Audited Accounts for 2018-19 were considered and received by the members.

i) Chair's Report

MF addressed the AGM, recapping on points made in the annual report.

ii) Treasurer's Annual Report/Audited Accounts

MF invited SJ to deliver the Treasurer's report on English PEN's finances 2018-19 for the year ended 31 March 2019. She noted that SJ would be stepping down as a trustee in the spring and thanked him for his contribution over three years.

SJ reported that he was pleased to be leaving English PEN in much better financial shape than when he arrived and thanked Antonia Byatt and MF for their role in achieving this.

SJ reminded the meeting that in 2017/18 the charity had been restructured with the support of Arts Council England and noted that the benefits of that were now being felt. He drew attention to the financial review on page 12 of the annual report, highlighting the overall surplus of £71k made up of a surplus of £73k on unrestricted funds and small deficit of £2k on restricted funds. He noted that the ambition to build unrestricted reserves to a level of six months of operating expenditure had been achieved, and meant it was possible to plan in advance. He also reported that the cash balance at the end of the financial year was £268k and unrestricted reserves £192k.

SJ then noted that the charity maintains a risk register which the trustees and Director monitor on a regular basis.

He concluded by saying that the auditors had prepared the financial statement on a going concern basis which means that the charity has resource to continue operating for at least another 12 months.

SJ opened the floor for questions. None raised.

iii) Introduction to the new Director/Update on PEN Congress

MF informed the meeting that Antonia Byatt had stepped down in June 2019 to take up the role of Chief Executive at First Story. She thanked AB for her all work and commitment and re-building of English PEN.

MF then introduced the new Director, Daniel Gorman, and invited him to give a report on PEN Congress.

DG introduced himself and reported that Congress had been held in Manila and attended by over 60 PEN centres. A full report of Congress is available on the PEN International website.

iv) Programme Reports

A. Campaigns & Writers at Risk

ML invited CL to report on English PEN's international campaigns and writers at risk programme. CL outlined relevant activities summarised in the annual report.

CL opened the floor for questions. None raised.

B. Public Programmes

MF invited HT to report on English PEN's Public Programmes and Development. HT outlined relevant activities summarised in the annual report.

HT opened the floor for questions. None raised.

C. Writers in Translation

MF invited WF to report on English PEN's Writers in Translation programme. WF outlined relevant activities summarised in the annual report.

WF opened the floor to questions. None raised.

D. Communications

MF invited RC to report on media and communications. RC outlined relevant activities summarised in the annual report.

RC opened the floor to questions. None raised.

E. Centenary

MF invited HT back to outline plans for English PEN's centenary in 2021.

5. Re-appoint the auditors, Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP

Action: Passed by a show of hands and 24 proxy votes

6. To delegate authority to the trustees to fix the remuneration of the auditors on an ongoing basis until this authority is revoked by further members' ordinary resolution.

Action: Passed by a show of hands and 24 proxy votes

7. Retirement and election of trustees to the board of English PEN.

MF announced four new trustees who the board is recommending for ratification by members: Ruth Borthwick, Cathy Galvin, Georgina Godwin and Francis Coles.

Action: Passed by a show of hands and 24 proxy votes.

MF noted that two trustees are retiring from the board: Rosie Meredith and Anthony Julius. She thanked them for their work.

11. Any Other Business

None

MF closed the AGM

END