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Minutes of Annual General Meeting 109 held on 7 September 2023 (online)

**Present:**

**Trustees:** Emmanuel Asamoah EA, Paul Bodley PB, Michael Clarke (Co-Chair) MC, Mel Harakis MH, Olly Parsons OP, Marlowe Russell MR- (Co-chair), Susan Simmonds SS, Cherry Simpkin CS, Roy Vickery RV, Maria Vorontsova MV

**In attendance:** SLBI: Sarah Davey SD, Nell Gatehouse NG, Elyssa Livergant EL, Cath Pearson CP, Sarah Webley SW, Sophie Mason SM.

Independent Examiners: Philip Landergan

**Others:**

Carmen Acedo, Deborah Ajia, Catriona Andrews, Darrell Barnes, Anthony Bourne, Petra Broddle, Sophie Clement-Jones, Susan Cole, Anna Colligan, Stewart Cowell, Angela Craft, Lucia Daniels, Elizabeth Dauncey, Sarah Davey, George Deacon, Mary Edelstein, Lisa Fusco, Michelle Garner, Lesley Gelbart, Anne Gibney, Auriel Glanville, Pamela Harling, Jenny Harper, John Hewitt, Leonora Hunt, Wendy Knowles, Judith Kusel, Ros Marshal, Judy Marshall, Paloma Moore, Ruth Morgan, Laura Morland, Moira O'Donnell, Caroline Pankhurst, Maralyn Pickup, Connie Pring, Robert Prys-Jones, Alona Sheridan, Fadha Shinewi, Jill Smith, Paul Sotiriou, Charlotte Stripling, Craig Swick, Ilse Towler, Greta Valvonyte, Catherine Walter, Adrian Wells, Valerie White, David Wilson, Jill Wilson.

**Apologies for Absence:** were received from Gaby Avendano, Letta Jones, Sarah Malins,

1.	<b>Welcome by Co-Chair</b>	Marlowe Russell welcomed everyone to the meeting and declared it quorate.
2.	<b>Matters arising from minutes 27 October 2022 not covered elsewhere in the Agenda</b>	No matters arising except to say that Sarah Webley remains at the SLBI as Education and Outreach Officer
3.	<b>Approval of Minutes of 27 October 2022</b>	AGM 108 Minutes from 27 October 2022 were accepted as being a true and accurate record, approved and signed by Emmanuel Asamoah, Marlowe Russell, and Philip Landergan
4.	<b>Annual Accounts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation by Emmanuel Asamoah, Treasurer and Independent Examiner,</li> <li>Approval of Financial Statement 2022-23</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emmanuel Asamoah, Treasurer, presented the accounts and thanked the Independent Examiners for all their work. He also thanked the Trustees, Finance sub-group,</li> </ul>

*Founded in 1910 by A O Hume*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of Independent Examiner – Philip Landergan</li> </ul>	<p>Elyssa Livergant and all SLBI staff for their support and dedication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EA gave his presentation of SLBI Accounts over the past financial year explaining SLBI financial position and expectations for future finances. The reduced income and increased costs over the past 3-4 years of the pandemic, staffing, cost of living, reduced building use and subsequent upheaval of leaving the building for repairs have all led to the current financial situation. Current and projected deficits were noted as was the ability of SLBI to cover them through sales of investments.</li> <li>• Financial Statement: MR proposed to accept the Financial Statement, seconded by Darrell Barnes and Craig Swick with no objections.</li> <li>• Appointment of Landergans to include Peter Willans) as Independent Examiners: MR proposed, seconded by EA - Approved.</li> </ul> <p>MR thanked EA for his informative and realistic presentation. She reiterated that although the deficits of 2022-2023, which will continue into at least 2023-2024, seem alarming, they should be seen in the context of the prolonged closure of the building which has reduced income, the effects of the pandemic and falls in investment values in Sept 2023. However, overall SLBI investments have more than doubled from 2007 to 2023. The next 2 years will be challenging, and SLBI has the financial resources and the staffing to meet the challenges. She thanked everyone involved for their work on this year's Annual Report and Annual Accounts</p>
5.	<p><b>Trustees' Report: Report of activities and plans for 2023-2024</b></p>	<p>MR gave a brief report on activities and plans. She reiterated that despite 2 years of covid, complete closure followed by 2 years of reduced building use and then complete removal from the premises, SLBI has managed to continue working and running many activities on and off-site.</p>

		<p>Thanks expressed to former trustee, Nicky Lacourse, for help with removal of our specialist collections, to all staff including the wardens and gardeners for continuing support and work during this time of upheaval, Nell Gatehouse for co-ordinating the building repairs and to insurers volunteers, donors and funders.</p> <p>A vote of thanks went to Caroline Pankhurst the outgoing Interim Director for 9 years of fantastic work.</p> <p>There was a brief summary of on-going initiatives, including the appointment of Elyssa Livergant as Director in May 2023.</p>
6.	<b>Questions from the floor</b>	None.
7.	<b>Elections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rotations of trustees</li> <li>• Newly nominated trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rotation: Paul Bodley – proposed by MR seconded by Darrell Barnes Michael Clarke – Proposed by MR, seconded by EA. Cherry Simpkin – Proposed by MR, seconded by John Hewitt. Roy Vickery - Proposed by MR, seconded by MH. All were elected to continue as trustees.</li> <li>• There were no newly nominated trustees.</li> </ul>
8.	<b>Short update on activities from April 2023 to present.</b>	<p>NG gave an update on the building works – underpinning completed and phase 2 and final phase 3 due to start and to finish Dec 2023/Jan 2024.</p> <p>EL reported on two ongoing educational projects, with thanks to Sarah Webley for all her work. She also thanked the outgoing Interim Director, Caroline Pankhurst.</p> <p>We continue with our ongoing field research days as well as staff and volunteer gatherings, whilst walks, talks and workshop programmes are also programmed to continue.</p>
9.	<b>AOB</b>	No other business
10.	<b>Chair's closing comments</b>	
The meeting was followed by a talk by Maria Vorontsova, SLBI President 'Does the modern world need herbarium collections?'		

**Reports:** Annual Report and Annual Accounts 2022-2023 for approval