



THE RUSKIN COLLEGE FELLOWSHIP

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 MARCH 2014 AT RUSKIN COLLEGE, RUSKIN HALL, OLD HEADINGTON, OXFORD

1. **PRESENT:** Richard Maher (President), Jill Watts, Pauline Hamilton, Bob Anderton, Frank Simkins, Alan Shepherd (Sec), Ian Manborde (for part of meeting)
2. **APOLOGIES:** Brian Smith, Art Wright, Angela Potts, Debbie Hollingsworth, Owen Murphy, Anne Sieve, Chris Wilkes, Paul de Felice, Chris Bussell
3. **John Hughes:** Before opening the business part of the meeting the President reminded members present that John Hughes, College Principal 1979-1989, Fellowship Executive member and a good and well respected friend of the Fellowship, died in November. The President said that several Fellowship members had attended John's funeral at St Andrew's Church in Headington and that a tribute had been given by John Prescott. It had been agreed by the Acting Principal, the President and the Secretary that the latter would write to Lord Prescott to ask for a copy of his tribute and request permission to put it on the College's website. The request was made because it was thought that Lord Prescott's tribute expressed in a thoughtful and humorous way the feelings of former Ruskin students towards John Hughes. Lord Prescott had given his approval and the letter and the tribute were circulated to members present. Members then stood for a minute's silence for John Hughes.
4. The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2014 were agreed a correct record.
5. **MATTERS ARISING:**
 - i. Skype/Conferencing (Min 7ii refers): A lengthy discussion was held on how to widen participation at EC meetings. This was stimulated by the difficulty Art Wright was experiencing attending meetings. It was **AGREED** to try to make participation easier by giving EC members the opportunity to comment on various issues, in writing, prior to future meetings. The Secretary would establish an arrangement for the next meeting so that this could be tried out.
 - ii. 'Working Together' (min 7i refers): It was reported that the EC had yet to consider College guidelines. It was **AGREED** to circulate copies for consideration prior to the next meeting.
 - iii. College Records – letter to Governors (min 7ii refers): It was reported that the letter expressing the Fellowship's concern at the shredding of student records in 2013 has been received by members of the Governing Executive. **NOTED**
 - iv. Area Meetings (min 7iv refers): It was reported that Debbie had agreed to organise a London meeting. The suggested venue was the House of Lords. Lists of London area members were being developed and labels for envelopes would be provided. A speaker would also be identified. It was likely that the meeting would be held in June.
 - v. Public telephone at the College (min 7viii refers): **AGREED** that the President contact the Acting Principal about this.
 - vi. Access to telephone numbers (min 7 viii refers): It was reported that the Fellowship Notice board needed to be reclaimed. **AGREED** that the President contact the Acting Principal regarding this.

- vii. Transferring Fellowship data to Web Alumnus (min 7xi refers): It was reported that the Secretary had received the most recent version of the Fellowship database and needed to compare this with Web Alumnus. This process would probably commence in late March. When both databases were ‘synchronised’ the Fellowship database would be ‘suspended’ and Web Alumnus used in future. **NOTED**
- viii. To develop a partnership with Ransackers (min 7x refers): Jill Watts reported that Ransackers provided opportunities for older people to participate in lifelong learning. She said that, when the Ransacker Association was established by Vi Hughes, funding from central government was assured. With the change of government, funding became much more difficult. Colleges wanted paying to run courses and the re-organised Ransacker Association now needed to find funding. At the moment the best arrangement was for the two organisations to be ‘friends’ until such time as more specific activities can be agreed. **NOTED**
- ix. Pamphlet on World War 1 (min 7xii refers): It was reported that a pamphlet on the College, the Fellowship and WW1 was part written. The full draft would be available for the next meeting. We discussed the development of something that considered the wider aspects of the war. **NOTED**
- x. Christmas Cards (min 10 refers): It was confirmed that circa 60 cards were sent out to members before Christmas. **NOTED**
- xi. Letter to Prof Audrey Mullender (min 10i refers): It was confirmed that a letter wishing the retiring Principal best wishes for the future had been sent and an email of thanks and best wishes from the future had been received from Audrey in reply. **NOTED**

Ian Manborde joined the meeting at 2.15pm.

6. **PROGRESS ON ORGANISING THE REUNION**

- i. The meeting discussed the structure of the Saturday Reunion. It was **AGREED** to retain the Ice Breaking session 12-13.30 and to request the Acting Principal to address the meeting.
- ii. The meeting discussed the nature of the proposed *Climate Change* part of Reunion Saturday. It was **AGREED** that this would be an hour long session to enable there to be a variety of Activities during the afternoon. It was further **AGREED** that Jill would contact Prof. Miles Allen to see if he would be prepared to lead the session. Jill would let the Secretary know his response within two weeks of the EC meeting.
- iii. In terms of the final session of the afternoon the meeting discussed two alternatives; a session on the 30th anniversary of the Miners’ Strike or a session on World War 1. Ian Manborde said that it might be possible to get one of the tutors to discuss the College’s role in the Strike, both in hosting the miners and through the Miners’ Wives Support Group. He also said that a display in the College would be available in any case.
- iv. Ian also informed the meeting of the book launch of Seamus Milne’s *The Enemy Within*, which had contemporary resonance in respect of police corruption at Orgreave and recent revelations in respect of Hillsborough and ‘Plebgate’. Ian also said that students were planning to fund a bus to the Durham Miners’ Gala and that an event with Frances O’Grady was planned. **NOTED**
- v. The EC **AGREED** to include “The Miners’ Strike” as the last session on the Saturday afternoon of the Reunion. The Secretary would confirm with Ian.

7. OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSED WITH IAN MANBORDE

- i. Ian offered to be a staff representative on the Fellowship and would confirm this with Chris Wilkes.
- ii. Ian said there was a need to consider a strategy for getting current students to join the Fellowship. This needs to be more than just a presentation at the Graduation Event. Consideration to be given to how we could talk to the students *before* they complete their Studies.
- iii. Ian raised the possibility of an EC member or officer attending the staff conference to speak for five or ten minutes about the Fellowship.
- iv. We also discussed the College's intention to approach ex-students for income generating purposes, ie for alumni to give a regular donation or a one off payment. It was thought that the Fellowship may be able to help in this.
- v. Ian informed the EC that the College was taking advice from the University and from Oxford Brookes regarding endowments.
- vi. He also informed the meeting about the validation event for the MA in Public History that would be available from October.
- vii. The meeting thanked Ian for his attendance and he left the meeting at 3.10pm.

NOTED

The meeting **AGREED** to continue with the business agenda and to re-arrange the activity on Fellowship Aims for the next meeting.

8. PROGRESS ON THE 2013/2014 ACTION PLAN

- i. Item 5, above, covers most of the items in the Action Plan. The items below were developed:
- ii. College Records (item 2 of the Plan): Jill Watts reported that she had been contacted by Denise Pakeman on behalf of the *newruskinarchives* database saying the archive was "up and running". The people involved in this are Denise, Hilda Keen and Annie Skinner. The point was made that this was not an archive but a database. Jill also said that she understood here were some difficulties between people at the Bishopsgate Institute, and organisation that had been involved in the dispute over College records. **NOTED**
- iii. The Secretary reported that he had contacted Annie Skinner in December asking for a meeting with the people running *newruskinarchives*. Whilst an immediate response had been received saying the offer would be considered, no further contact had been made with the Fellowship. It was **AGREED** to leave the offer 'on the table' and not to make contact with this organisation.
- iv. The Secretary also reported that the *newruskinarchives* web site had 58 names listed on its website. The information available against each name varied from nothing to information taken from various sources. The web site had been running for about 6 months. **NOTED**
- v. It was reported that Mathew Smith of the RCSU had asked senior managers at the College to establish a "History Commission" to consider how best to promote the history of the College and how to ensure that Ruskin College's history and its story is properly protected. **NOTED**

- vi. John and Vi Hughes's commemoration (item 13 of the Plan): It was **AGREED** to request a plaque to John and Vi be placed on the bench in the Headington garden. It was **NOTED** that further discussion on the possibility of presenting an annual prize should be discussed at the next meeting.

- iv. Outstanding Items: Items 1,7 and 8 of the Plan remain to be actioned. **NOTED**

9. **REPORTS FROM OFFICERS**

- i. President: The President reported that he had called off the last meeting because of the inclement weather. He had, however, attended the College on the day to ensure that no one had attended inadvertently

- ii. The Secretary made the following points:

The College in the current financial year (August 2013 to July 2014): The College now faces the task of paying back the loan for the new buildings at the same time as funding for students moves from being a grant to being a loan. Recruiting students and increasing income over the coming years are, therefore, even more important than they have been in the past. The College must ensure that it has sufficient cash reserves to cover its (current) liabilities to remain a 'going concern'. The Fellowship can help by spending more with and at the college and encouraging others to do the same. For example, we might want to consider running an additional activity at the College that we pay for (eg a workshop, a conference, a meeting). Individual members of the Fellowship might purchase meals and drinks at the College and/or buy some of the College's merchandise eg scarves, key rings, sweaters, ties. **Every little bit helps over the next few years.**

Membership: One new member has been recruited since the last meeting: William Ryan, Life member, at Ruskin 2007 to 2012. BA Hons ILTUS, West Midlands area.

Absent Friends: James Patrick McCourt, d. 7 January 2013. Ruskin student 1963-66.

10. **REPORT FROM COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING HELD 6 DECEMBER 2013**

- i. It was reported that, of the reps to Council, only the President was able to attend the Council meeting on behalf of the Fellowship.
- ii. The President said that there was a lot of business conducted at the Council. One of the most significant discussions was the appointment of the new Principal. He said that consideration was being given to a leadership group rather than a single leader. A process had been started that would culminate in the appointment being made before September 2014.
- iii. The President reported that the Council also discussed the important issue of finance, which covered payment for new buildings and the government changes made to funding colleges. This led into a discussion on the possibility of booking residential accommodation for Fellowship members and associated groups.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Saturday 12 April 2014, 1-4pm**

12. There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.10pm