



# The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

## COMMITTEE MEETING

12 March 2010. 1.30-4.30 pm Online meeting: <http://fm.ea-tel.eu/fm/4d4329-20317>

### Minutes

Present: James Fairhead, Simone Abram, Raminder Kaur, James Staples, Kate Degnen, Ian Fairweather, Ro Jackson, Garry Marvin

#### 1. Apologies

Nayanika (maternity leave, but reported submitted)

#### 2. Minutes of 20-11-09

Were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

#### 3. Matters arising

In response to action points on the minutes of 20.11.09:

- 1 – James has not circulated the AHRC document on impact.
- 2 – JS does not remember talking to Garry about reality TV ethics
- 3 – Ro started to prepare info about WCAA membership, but **will circulate info** once the website is finalised.
- 4 – JF doesn't have a great deal of info about the Sage handbook. **JS will contact RF directly.**
- 5 – Ro has archived last year's annals. There are still some missing depts this year. **Ro requested that committee members remind HoDs to submit if they haven't already.**
- 6 – Ro has made a note to **circulate networks with invitation to contribute to annals.**
- 7 – report on consultation over REF appended to chair's report to this meeting
- 8 – **IF still intending to circulate a-level curriculum.**
- 9 – SA has been in touch with Nafisa who is working on raising the profile of the A-level on the RAI website, and we have added a link to our ASA website.
- 10 – **JF still aims to have a paper on rejoining ACSS for the AGM.**
- 11 – Ro and SA did discuss automating ASAonline but have delayed for now. JF suggested asking HoDs to encourage people to submit to ASAonline.
- 12 – Proposal to bring together conference organisers to elaborate guidelines: Ro has been unable to get a response from Penny Dransart; Indian organiser won't be available. But the guidelines another look, so **it would be useful for Ro to revise the guidelines and circulate the committee** for comments to be suitable for the way we currently run confs. JF would like to see clarity over guidelines and welcomed the suggestion. Garry noted that Piers Locke has moved to New Zealand, and wondered whether there were implications for the conference. SA emailed Penny Dransart this morning. She will forward any reply that comes. JF has heard from Edinburgh that they are keen to develop an ASA conference proposal, but that's looking towards 2013.
- 13 – Ian was in touch with Ro about the early careers event.
- 14 – This item on enabling mass-mailing was not ready for action yet but will come up in the future – **Ro will notify James after all the DD's have come in.**

15 – Ro couldn't remember whether he had **invited bloggers via AM but will do it again** anyway.

16 – **Ro will add a note to the blog indicating views are not those of ASA asap.**

17 – NM has indicated that she is going to host an ethics event.

18 – According to JS's report it looks unlikely that a joint mailing of monographs in 2010 makes sense as they will be some time apart. It will also look better to get 09 out asap.

19 – no action required. NM is forwarding ethics issues as required.

20 – Ro has contacted Penny about ASA2011 but had no response. SA now chasing.

21 – don't know whether committee have emailed Easter vac dates to NM. **ALL: Please email easter dates to NM.**

22 – JF not sure whether NM sent a letter to send to JNU. **JF will contact NM** on this. RK having some delays in getting responses to requests to update abstract. Chris Pinney has not responded to blurb suggestions. But he did send a list of suggested speakers. **JS will circulate various proposals for discussion among committee.**

23 – JS suggested revisiting this issue in light of conference concerns under agenda item 7.

24 – moved to agenda item 7 too.

25. ditto

26 – JF did write to the sociology group about their India conference but has not had a response. RK reminded the committee that they were also organising a conference and we were hesitant about applying for funds in competition with them. Has also not had any update. **JF will try to catch up again on this.**

27, 28 – IF received the requested feedback except for the request for a speaker on external examining. Decided that a stand was unnecessary and it would be sufficient to put out publicity materials out at the conference.

29. JF and SA were both in touch with CA about taking over as secretary, which she was delighted to accept. They will brief her before the next meeting.

#### **4. subsidising student travel**

The question arose at the last meeting. In general we seem to agree that we should have a fund to help students or lower-income delegates to attend meetings. The questions are whether we put particular amounts aside for students or for commonwealth scholars, and whether we fund all expenses or just part fund, and how we keep the admin to a minimum. We could have a set of rules for international delegates and one for UK conferences. JS proposed two tracks: one for people to apply for the full amount (approx £1000 to fully fund two candidates per conference) and a second £1000 divided up as contributions part-funding (e.g. £100 each for speakers without other funding). We could develop details by email discussion. RK suggested putting this to AGM. CD thought that if we link the funding to the acceptance of abstracts, the timing might get very compressed. JF suggested the fund could go instead to the conference organisers to distribute. SA suggested offering this with a set of guidelines about what we think the purpose of the funds are. Committee agreed that this would be part of the conference guidelines/package. All applications should include one reference as a guarantor to the application. The first round of funding should be administered for the Lampeter conference 2011 as it is too late for 2010 now.

#### **5. replacement for Trevor on ASA film competition**

Trevor requested that the film competition be handed back to the committee. Garry would be interested in taking over. JF suggested Garry contacted Trevor directly. *[NB: reminder to JF to thank TM for his efforts at the AGM]*

**6. Reports (Written reports to be circulated in advance, please, minimal and urgent verbal reports only at the meeting)**

**a. Publications – online publications strategy?**

Was accepted.

**b. C-SAP**

IF wanted to know if ASA would sponsor teaching prize again this year, who would want to be on the committee, and whether a prize could be presented at ASA2011. JF thought the prize was a good thing that we should support. We will have to ask Lampeter to find a good space/time for presenting. **Kate volunteered to be on the prize committee and was thanked!** The prize will be £150 each from ASA and RAI. JF thanked CD and looked forward to meeting the networks in Belfast.

**c. Media – media strategy?**

GM noted lots of enquiries received and responded to. He has been working with the writer and producer for what looks likely to be a 6 part drama series featuring an anthropologist, which seems to be going quite well, first script almost ready. This could be significant for the profile of anthropology. It is a drama that involves crime, Morse-style anthropology, serious but light hearted, producers taking it extremely seriously. What is gratifying about the new drama is that it avoids the sensational but looks quite sensible and interesting.

He has also arranged to meet someone from the independent producers' association.

JF was very pleased to hear that tv producers were liaising with the ASA.

SA asked if there have been any queries from radio, and whether anyone heard the biography of Malinowski recently on radio3. GM has had requests from radio, of which he's weeded out very trivial ones.

**d. Networks**

CD apologised for not submitting a report. She thanked Ro for helping get AM up and running again. Amy Pollard, Gemma John and Rebecca Marsland are rejuvenating the committee.

Apply network is still active but unable to make Belfast. AoB also active, had a meeting in Sheffield recently and will be holding a meeting at ASA Belfast.

**e. Ethics**

NM submitted a report. JF was very happy with NM's participation in various ethics committees as per her report. SA asked whether anyone understood what the correspondence with Pnina had been about. Kate thought that Pnina's ethics committee might have been giving her a hard time on how to get consent for studying public meetings. Garry thought there were some issues on ethics but cannot see anything particular about filming public events. **JF suggested following this up on email where NM could help explain what the email exchange was about.** This is also not necessarily the same issue as the update of the guidelines. Go back to NM and ask for clarification and discuss it via email.

Blog: JF does think that Ian Harper will get involved in the blog, but is a little delayed.

**f. Treasurer**

RK reported: 1. chasing up approx 6.5k in DD subscriptions - incentive of monograph would help. Point 4 concerned whether we should close the Lloyds account. Ro noted that we have moved all of our money into the Coop. We currently have about £85,000 in the coop.

Although we might be concerned about the financial crisis, Ro thinks that the Coop is less of a risk because it does not have a city section, and it has an ethical policy. For ease of use we could have all our money in one place. Kate noted that up to 50k is guaranteed by the govt if

a bank fails and suggested that we should be risk averse and put the balance over £50k into another institution. Raminder suggested putting the Firth account into another bank. JF suggested keeping the Lloyds account for now until we are sure about the position.

#### **g. Chair**

Reported on the REF consultation. No news as yet.

ESRC board membership has been vexing as we did not have enough time to respond to a request for applications to the new board structure. We are not well represented so we must pay attention to this. Only Marcus Banks is representing Anthropology on the peer review panel – Jonathan Spencer raised a concern. ESRC have not responded to JF's query about this.

#### **h. Administrator**

RJ reported that the direct debit system is now working well, and we have recently received about 60% of this year's subscriptions in one swoop. Invoices will go out for remaining amounts next week. The online directory should be ready to be announced at the AGM. Committee should be able to see a version within the next couple of weeks.

### **7. ASA conferences - review and plans**

#### **a. Proposal for conference guidelines**

Discussed above.

#### **b. Firth Lecture 2010**

Crapanzano is booked in, will arrive Tuesday morning and no doubt spend time recovering from the journey. Wednesday is the Firth lecture. Wednesday evening we could take him out to dinner. James F, James S, Kate, possibly Garry. Ian would like to come too. **Ro will book a table.** (NB Kate is allergic to peanuts, so not Thai restaurant please).

#### **c. ASA 2010**

Everything is in place, panels, papers, an additional round table to include more people, about 60 registrations so far, but very few of the convenors or paper givers have registered yet. Ro expects about 100 people min. Budget would balance on 130 people, so we must push as hard as possible to get people to register.

In general, JF agrees that we should stick with the principle that ASA doesn't share losses. SA suggested ASA cover expenses of principal officers as a contribution rather than agree to cover any losses per se. Ro noted that their costs are already not in the budget. With 135 delegates, the profit would be £14. If there are only 100 delegates, there may be a 2.5k loss and Belfast will be pushing for us to share that loss.

In general, SA felt there may be legal issues about how far we can be liable for losses and that it would be better to deal with things on an issue by issue basis. Raminder suggested that we could set limits to the losses we can accept. JF thought it would be more appropriate and risk-averse to leave any financial negotiations to particular instances. Because we are a small organisation, we cannot afford to put ourselves in a position of liability.

In conclusion, we address issues with Belfast, and can be flexible in some form, to help them out this time. But we retain the position that we do not, in principle, become liable for losses from any conferences. The new guidelines should reflect this position and we must be clearer with future conference organisers.

#### **d. ASA 2011**

The situation in Lampeter has been somewhat unstable, as we are aware from having sent a letter of support recently. JF asked whether we have any **planB**. We do not appear to have one at present.

CD seconded Raminder's point that we should have a written agreements with conference organisers. SA suggested that we should retrieve the role of conference liaison, so that this does not remain with Ro, which is rather unfair on him, and is rather ambiguous in relation to his position as offering a commercial service. JF proposed having an additional committee member as conference liaison, proposing this to the AGM.

Suggestions of people to ask: Julie Scott, Jeanette Edwards, Matthew Engelke, Mukulika Banerjee, Pete Wade, Laura Bear, Lisette Josephides. Jeanette is becoming HoD. Jo Vergunst. Andrew Irving, Gillian Evans and Atreyee Sen are all on RCUK fellowships.

Committee agreed to **discuss these names via email and then approach them in order of pref to see who would consider standing. NB Before AGM!**

**e. ASA 2012**

JS has been asking whether there is anything needed for 2012. They are waiting for some feedback from Chris Pinney. He suggested the following speakers: Rosalind Morris, Taussig, Patsy Spyer, Erhard Schutplez. Ro has not really turned to 2012 yet, but thinks that Susan in Delhi doesn't understand how we run our conferences and the open proposal structure. Ro needs to clarify with her. She also needs to understand that all the info about Belfast is on the website, so that shows how we deliver information. It's probably too late for her to get to Belfast now. Perhaps she could come to Lampeter. Ro thinks it will have to wait until after Belfast now, from his perspective. JF suggested discussing it at the conference in April. The 2012 conference must be confirmed at this year's AGM. CD suggested that the proposal should come from Susan and JNU if they are the host organisers. JS will write to Susan and ask her to respond to the blurb for the AGM. She seems to give the impression that she thinks she's hosting our conference rather than organising it herself. CD reiterated that it is then particularly important to have clarification. **JS will email Susan on Monday and would appreciate comments on the blurb he circulated by email.** We can also try to confirm Wenner Gren funding.

2013 would have to be agreed at the next year's AGM (ie in Lampeter).

**8. AOB**

IF asked if anyone could recommend any senior staff who could contribute to the early career event in Belfast. Ro suggested looking at the programme for someone already attending the conference.

JF asked who will introduce the Firth lecture. SA indicated that JF should do this. SA also reminded him that the ASA chair usually gives a speech at dinner. JF will liaise with conference organisers about after dinner speech.

**9. Dates of meetings 2010.**

To be organised by email with the new secretary.

JF thanked SA for her sterling work as secretary over the past 5 years.

SAA 13.3.2010.