**AGM Minutes**

**8th August 2015**

**Present:** Cath Brown, Jamie Pettit, Anca Seaton, Robert Light, Gavin Lindsay, Jo Hewitt, Leah Moyse

**Apologies:** Kay Burrows, Claire Foulkes-Jones

1. **Introduction and opening of the meeting**

Those present at the meeting gave their name and Alchemy role (if applicable). The agenda and report were handed out to all present. The last AGM minutes were agreed.

1. **Membership numbers**

Anca confirmed that the current number of members was around 1800. However, she thought there may be some duplicates. The members present agreed that the issue of inactive members needs to be tackled but it was thought that this would be addressed when membership charges were introduced.

1. **Merchandise**

Anca provided an update on merchandise. OUSA (the Open University Student Association) have advised that they can’t sell Alchemy merchandise through the web shop due to VAT issues.

**Action: Cath to talk to Magda Zamojska at OUSA to try and resolve the issue.**

Cath advised that at present that there is no coherent stock control system but that this wasn’t currently causing any issues.

1. **Finance**

Gavin summarised Alchemy finances over the previous twelve months. Alchemy accounts for 2014 have been submitted to OUSA as required. There has been little financial activity in this period and all trips have been fully paid for by the attendees. Gavin clarified that Alchemy’s main source of funding is a small grant received from OUSA.

The accounts for 2015 are due to be submitted by September 2016 and are likely to show more activity than the previous year. The biggest outlay this year is going to be the revision weekend in September and Cath estimated the cost could exceed £10,000.

It was agreed by the members present that it is important to have financial reserves to cover unexpected expenditure. Gavin advised that at present we do have reserves and that the accounts are looking healthy.

1. **Alchemy presence**

The members present agreed that it was important for representatives from Alchemy to attend revision weekends for the following reasons:

* It raises the profile of both Alchemy and the chemical sciences
* It provides an opportunity for networking
* It provides an opportunity to raise revenue by enabling the sale of merchandise
1. **Trips over the last 12 months**

Jo spoke about the two Jodrell Bank visits she had organised. She mentioned how helpful the staff at Jodrell Bank had been and how interesting the talks had been.

**Action: Jo Hewitt to provide details of her contact at Jodrell Bank to the committee so further trips can be organised by other members.**

Leah apologised that she had not fully realised her role as Events (South) as she hadn’t organised any events over the past year. However, the members present agreed that there had been a good variety of events planned by others within Alchemy so this hadn’t been a problem. Leah brought up the possibility of setting up a Meet Up account for visits and social events.

**Action: Leah to look into setting up an Alchemy Meet Up account.**

1. **Alchemy links with OUSA**

Cath advised that Alchemy currently receive relatively little practical support from OUSA due to the high workloads of the staff team. However, this should improve in the future as OUSA is giving higher priorities to societies. Cath is now chairing the OUSA societies standing committee/

Anca spoke about attending the OUSA Central Executive Committee and meeting OUSA staff, such as Wendy Burrell. Wendy had assured the committee that student societies are taken seriously. Wendy had tried to get links to the science society pages from module pages but this had not been possible due to there being no Biology society.

The members present discussed the possibility of getting links to societies put in new students’ welcome emails but it was decided that there was already too much information in these emails and it would probably get missed.

1. **New Alchemy website**

Anca spoke about the new website which should be ready for launch by15th August 2015. Anca mentioned that she had received invaluable support from Davin Davies from the Open University Computer Club and wanted it noted that she was extremely thankful for his help. Davin had set up the website, answered all of Anca’s questions, had done a lot of the work and had removed some of the old content.

Anca advised that the contract for hosting the website had been signed on 18th April 2015 and will cost £3.59 per month for 12 months and would rise to £5.99 per month after that. These payments are made monthly and currently come out of Anca’s personal account.

**Action: Anca to switch the payments from her own account to Alchemy.**

Anca advised that the subscribe button would be changed soon. She advised that the first year’s payment would be made through Paypal and, after that members would be invoiced.

Anca confirmed that members’ accounts would be verified by email and that members who do tasks for Alchemy (e.g. writing articles for the magazine, organising trips etc.) would be exempt from the membership fee.

The members present thanked Anca for all her hard work on developing the new website.

1. **September revision weekend**

Cath confirmed that the dates of the upcoming revision weekend were Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th September and that the modules covered were S104, S345 and S377.

The members present agreed that the S347 revision weekend was a big success. It was oversubscribed and 23 students attended in the end. The tutor on this weekend was Catherine Halliwell and it was agreed that she had done an excellent job. There was very little initial financial outlay so it had been a low risk for Alchemy. There was also a surplus left over after this weekend which had allowed for any contingencies.

The members present agreed that the upcoming revision weekend allows members to build on their initial experience and they were able to get a good deal with Jurys Inn. Those who attended felt that Jurys Inn provided a good service. It was also mentioned that Booking.com had provided some special deals on room bookings so would be a good resource for future revision weekends.

Cath advised that all but one attendee have paid their monies in full for the upcoming revision weekend. The possibility of getting insurance for tutor drop out was discussed, and was agreed to be important, particularly if activities were expanded to include tutors we do not know so well.

Cath advised that there was going to be a lot of work at the revision weekend. Jo offered to come and help with registration and general administration over the weekend.

**Action: Jo to contact Cath to make arrangements to help at the September revision weekend.**

1. **Committee structure**

Cath advised that the use of named roles had not necessarily been effective, as it can stop people contributing in line with their strengths. Some specific named roles are required for OUSA affiliation - namely Chair, Treasurer, Secretary – and Webmaster was felt to be necessary also.

Those present agreed to a structure involving a mix of named and unnamed roles in future.

Anca asked for help with her role.

1. **Committee elections**

The election of the committee proceeded as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Nominated by** | **Seconded by** | **Voted in** |
| Chair | Cath Brown (re-election) | Jo Hewitt | Gavin Lindsay | Yes |
| Secretary/newsletter editor (in her absence ) | Kay Burrows (re-election) | Cath Brown | Robert Light | Yes |
| Treasurer | Gavin Lindsay | Anca Seaton | Robert Light | Yes |
| Webmaster | Anca Seaton (re-election) | Leah Moyse | Cath Brown | Yes |
| Committee member | Robert Light | Anca Seaton | Leah Moyse | Yes |
| Committee member | Claire Foulkes-Jones | Gavin Lindsay | Leah Moyse | Yes |
| Committee member | Leah Moyse | Cath Brown | Jo Hewitt | Yes |
| Committee member | Jo Hewitt | Gavin Lindsay | Anca Seaton | Yes |
| Committee member | Jamie Pettit | Gavin Lindsay | Cath Brown | Yes |
| Committee member | Jo Webb | Robert Light | Jo Hewitt | Yes |

**Action: Cath to ask Gaynor Bailey if she wishes to continue in her role**

1. **Plans for next year**

Cath mentioned that there were plans for some new regular features planned for the newsletter.

Cath also mentioned that, if Alchemy is going to be selling more merchandise, they would need to be transported by car. Jo and Leah both offered their services when they were available. The members present agreed that molecular and orbital modelling kits would be popular as the OU were no longer offering them to students.

**Action: Cath and Leah to investigate sources of modelling kits and links to relevant websites would then be posted on the Alchemy website.**

It was agreed that Alchemy would promote some external events that may be of interest to Alchemy members. There is now an events diary available on the Alchemy website. Leah agreed to coordinate this diary.

The group discussed visits that could be organised next year and ideas put forward included:

* The Diamond Light Synchrotron (Harwell)
* Manchester Science Festival
* Pint of Science
* Jodrell Bank
* EDF power stations

It was agreed that visits would depend on member’s interest and availability of members to organise the visits.

It was agreed that a decision would be made on whether future revision weekends would go ahead after the September weekend.

The OUSA conference was briefly discussed and it was felt that some chemistry demonstrations would help raise the profile of both Alchemy and the chemical sciences.

**Actions:**

1. **Leah and Cath to decide on which experiments to demonstrate**.
2. **Cath to contact OUSA with regards to putting on demonstrations at the conference**.