**AGS Committee Minutes**

**Annual Committee Meeting, by Skype, Tues 11 May 2016, 2-4pm**

**Present:** Sarah Colvin (President), Margaret Littler (Vice President), Steffan Davies (Treasurer), Ben Schofield (Publicity), Frauke Matthes (Conferences), Stephan Ehrig (Postgraduate and Early Career), Anna Saunders (Membership), Beate Müller (lead organiser, 79th conference meeting in Newcastle).

1. **Welcome**

Sarah Colvin welcomed Stephan Ehrig to the Committee in the newly-created role of Postgraduate and Early Career Representative.

1. **Newcastle Conference**

a. FM and BM reported that all is in hand with the programme and the logistics at Newcastle.

b. It was decided to offer accommodation (for one night) and meals to guests from the Embassy, Goethe Institute and DAAD, should they need it. They can choose which evening event they wish to attend, but may find the Thursday more convenient if they wish to attend the Business Meeting. **SC will now issue formal invitations to the Embassy (Susanne Frane), GI, and DAAD**.

c. As in 2015, publisher representatives can either pay £100 for a book table if they don’t wish to attend, or register as non-members, in which case they don’t have to pay for a table.

d. Conference rates for DAAD Lektor/innen were discussed: the committee agreed to allow those in this position to pay the PG conference rate for the Newcastle meeting.

e. Given that the cost of attending the conference in 2016 is unusually high, and this might be a trend, it was agreed to ask the membership attending the Business Meeting at Newcastle whether, at future conferences, they would prefer to arrange accommodation for themselves, or continue to have centrally organised accommodation.

f. It was agreed that a Committee Meeting will be held before the Newcastle conference, from 12-1pm on 31 August.

1. **Committee Roles**

a. Each committee member outlined their role, and it was agreed that the administrative tasks surrounding committee and business meetings would be added to the Membership Secretary’s role. **Each committee member is to send a brief role description to AS, who will circulate for discussion**.

b. It was suggested that the term ‘secretary’ could be dropped from role titles. Alternative suggestions: ‘Representative for …’ / ‘Committee member for …’. **Further suggestions to be circulated via e-mail**.

c. **BS agreed to create an ‘archive’ space on the website for committee documents (e.g. minutes, role descriptions etc.).** In the longer term it will be useful to be able to draw on an archive for a history of the organisation.

**3. Finance / Membership Fees**a. SD reported that the AGS is financially in a healthy state. We take in ca. £5000 in subscriptions annually, which covers the main activities, albeit with a shortfall some years (with which the current finances can accommodate). If we want to increase support for PGs/ECRs, and/or increasingly subsidise conferences, we will need more income in the longer term.

b. The committee discussed whether to suggest an increase in subs to the membership, or to dig into reserves for the coming few years: the point was made that many members are still paying the old rate of £25 and that if subs are raised, not everyone is likely to change their standing order. It was agreed to take the issue to the membership at Newcastle, and to ask whether members would support a raise in the membership fee in order to provide greater support for PGs/ECRs. There could also be scope for a middle tier of payment and/or a ‘supplementary’ payment or donation for those on higher salaries. **SD to work on a proposal to present at the Business Meeting.** It was agreed that the conference is the AGS’s main activity, and that enabling wider participation should be one of its aims.

c. It was noted that a number of Germanists are not members, and it was agreed that a membership drive (for PGs and established staff) around the time of the conference would be a good idea. It was suggested that schoolteacher membership could also be encouraged.

d. AMGS money: it was agreed to put this on the agenda for the Business Meeting once again, but to suggest that the money be used to support Network events and other school and schoolteacher networking activities across the UK and Ireland. Greater involvement of local schoolteachers (e.g. a panel on teaching German in schools?) and school pupils (e.g. invitation to film showings etc.) at the annual AGS conference would be a good way of promoting wider engagement.

**4. Future conference dates**a. The dates of the Warwick conference were confirmed as 6-8 September 2017.

b. Discussion took place concerning the dates of the 2018 conference, given that it falls after the 3-year ‘trial’ period for September, but will need to be booked before the next conference. It was decided to go ahead with late August/early September, which is the best time for all (exc. possibly RoI). AS to liaise with Christiane Schönfeld to find the best dates for RoI and Bangor.

c. It was agreed to take the issue of dates for future conferences to the Newcastle Business Meeting: do members wish to continue with September or go back to Easter?

**5. PG/EC issues**a. SE reported that he had talked to PGs at PG colloquia and summer schools, and sent out an e-mail to PGs via German-Studies. Given that he only had one response (from the WIGS PG rep!), he would work with WIGS on this. He aims to gather ideas at the Newcastle conference, and discuss ideas at the Business Meeting.   
  
b. It was agreed that it was a good idea to have a session for PGs and ECRs at future conferences. Given time restrictions at Newcastle, it was suggested that an evening meeting for PGs/ECRs could be held in a local pub after the meal on the second evening. **FM agreed to add this to the conference programme**.

**6. Significant birthdays**John Foot wrote to SC suggesting that it had formerly been normal practice for the President of the AGS to send messages of congratulations to retired members on ‘significant birthdays’. There was little time for discussion, but the general feeling was that given the threat of member redundancies in Birmingham and Nottingham there were more pressing issues to be dealt with at present. **Further views on this to be circulated via e-mail.**

**7. Terms of office**It was noted that BS and AS come to the end of their terms of office at the Newcastle conference, where new committee members would need to be elected.