

Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)
36th Annual General Meeting, 8 October 2022

MINUTES

1. Welcome from the Chairperson

Gill Lusk welcomed everyone to the 36th Annual General Meeting of the SSSUK and thanked everybody for attending in person, after a hiatus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and with the challenges of a rail strike.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Leila Aboulela, Sara Abdel Galil, Hashim Ahmed, James Dickens, Mark Duffield, Douglas Johnson, Nicki Kindersley, Cherry Leonardi, Amira Osman, David Wolton, Peter Woodward.

3. Minutes of the AGM of 23 October 2021, and matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes, which had been previously circulated, and they were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Chairperson's report

Gill Lusk sadly reported the deaths of three members of the Society since the last, online, AGM.

Professor Jack Davies (1931-2022): geographer; he was a former editor of *Sudan Studies*, the SSSUK journal and published widely on the Sudans, most recently *Contributions to an understanding of the geography of drylands* (2004).

Suleiman Musa Rahhal (1942-2022): Director of Nuba Survival Foundation; he was author of *The Right to be Nuba: the story of a Sudanese people's struggle for survival* (2001).

John Udal (1926-2022): Sudan Political Service, 1950-1955 (Khartoum and Kodok, Upper Nile province); he was a former member of the SSSUK Committee and published several books about Sudan, most recently *Munich on the Nile: the road to Sudanese independence* (2016).

The Society's activities have been disrupted by the pandemic, but two recent webinars have been well attended. Members were invited to contribute ideas for future seminars.

Gill Lusk ended with an appeal for more active participation in the Society by its members, which will be essential if the Society is to continue to develop and flourish. Two members of the Committee stepped down this year, and the Chairperson role will become vacant in 2023 and Gill Lusk hopes then to retire as Chairperson.

5. Treasurer's report

Adrian Thomas reported for the last time, as he now proposes to hand over his role to Simon Bush.

The 2021 accounts were circulated. The Society's financial position is healthy. On the income side of the accounts for 2021 subscription revenue grew by 10%; the overall fall in income in comparison to 2020 is due to some very generous donations recorded in that year. On the expenditure side, by far the largest item was the production and despatch of the journal. However, a significant reduction in costs was achieved this year by moving to a new printer; Jane Hogan and the Committee members who organised this transfer were particularly thanked.

Due to the pandemic there were no symposiums in 2020 or 2021, but AGMs took place online. Consequently total figures in the accounts have been quite modest, but that has had little effect on the Society's overall finances as the AGM/Symposium has usually been more or less revenue neutral. Total income in 2021 was £3,721 and expenditure £2,710, so the Society had a surplus of just over £1,000. The Society's bank balance therefore rose from £4,840 at the beginning of 2020 to £8,212 at the end of 2021. The Society should confidently be able to meet any contingencies that arise, but also it can consider investing for the future, particularly as a surplus in 2022 is also projected.

There are currently 212 members in the Society. The figure was 190 when Adrian Thomas took over the Treasurer's role in 2007. It is a relief that numbers have held up during the Covid period, but a greater increase overall would have been preferred. Adrian appealed again to members to recruit friends and colleagues so that the Society can become stronger and more influential.

Adrian concluded by saying how much he had enjoyed the Treasurer's role over the past fifteen years, noting "much Sudanese graciousness", and he also noted his appreciation for the support of colleagues on the Committee, particularly Chairperson Gill Lusk and Vice-Chairs Mawan Muortat and Fidaa Mahmoud, the Secretary Jane Hogan, and the Editor of "the Society's most important product", *Sudan Studies*, Charlotte Martin, and finally the examiner of the accounts, Heywood Hadfield.

6. Editor's report

Two issues have as usual been published this year. Special issues of the journal have proved difficult to organise due to insufficient articles in one topic being sent in at the same time. The Editor regretted the absence of meetings of the Society as these are valuable for exchanging ideas for articles and themes for special issues. Rather than a single special issue on the 50th anniversary of the Addis Ababa Agreement, articles on the Agreement will be spread over two issues, with one further article to be published in January 2024. Further contributions were invited.

The Editor proposed the appointment of one person or a small group to take over the management of book reviews in the journal. In response to a question from Aziz el Nur, it was agreed that reviews of important non-recent publications would also be accepted.

7. Elections to the SSSUK Committee

Gill Lusk (re-election) (Proposer Sara Abdel Galil, Seconded Abdel Azim El Hassan)
Adrian Thomas (re-election) (Proposer Peter Woodward, Seconded Aly Verjee)
Dr Rebecca Bradshaw (re-election) (Proposer Francis Gotto, Seconded Jane Hogan)
Rev. Andrew Wheeler (re-election) (Proposer Cherry Leonardi, Seconded Gill Lusk)
Simon Bush (Treasurer) (Proposer Adrian Thomas, Seconded Mawan Muortat)
All candidates were elected by a majority of the members attending the meeting.

8. Any other business

Farouk Abdel Rahman Eisa asked for an update on the organisation of an international conference in Khartoum in 2024. Gill Lusk noted that the disturbed political context would inhibit planning, but that the Committee would consider it again at the next meeting. Aziz el Nur asked if there might be more hybrid seminars offered in conjunction with SOAS. Gill Lusk agreed these are useful and valued events, but reiterated the constraints on the time volunteered by committee members. Professor Lutz Oette (SOAS) stated he would be happy to facilitate more such seminars at SOAS, with sufficient advance notice. Angelica Baschiera, our SOAS liaison person, was also thanked for all her support. Abdel Azim El Hassan offered the Society's thanks to out-going officers Jane Hogan and Adrian Thomas, which participants roundly applauded.