

**Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)**  
**38<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, 5 October 2024**

**MINUTES**

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

Gill Lusk welcomed members to the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the SSSUK. A minute's silence for all victims in Sudan and South Sudan was then led by Dr Husam Elmugamar and observed by those attending.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Leila Aboulela, John Benington, Simon Bush, Peter Tesch, Andy Wheeler.

**3. In memoriam**

The deaths of two members of the Society were marked with tributes. Chairperson Gill Lusk remembered Aliya Elagib Mahmoud, and John Ryle contributed a pre-recorded video tribute to Wendy James.

**4. Minutes of the AGM of 16 September 2023, 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.

**5. Chairperson's report**

Gill Lusk reported several changes in the team of officers of the Society. President Leila Aboulela has notified the Committee that she is stepping down. Gill thanked her both for her public activity in support of the Society's activities, including a very successful launch of her novel *River Spirit*, and for her constant quiet support in the background. Noting she will be much missed, Gill invited members to submit any suggestions for a new chairperson to the Committee. Peter Woodward has resigned from the Committee after many years of service. Gill thanked him for his long support of the Society, being one of its original founders. Mawan Muortat has also resigned from the Committee. For many years he has provided significant help with events, the website and social media, and has provided an essential South Sudanese presence and viewpoint in all the Committee's deliberations which will be much missed. Gill also reported to the members that, after 11 years in the chair this AGM would be her last act as the Chairperson of the Society. No-one from the Committee has yet stepped forward to take her place. Gill would remain on the Committee and provide whatever support she could. Members were again invited to make any suggestions to the Committee for a new chairperson, or as Gill suggested, two co-chairs.

**6. Treasurer's report**

In Treasurer Shiemaa Ahmed's unavoidable absence abroad past treasurer Adrian delivered her report. Income in 2023 exceeded expenditure by just over £1,000, a very similar result to the last few years. The Society's income in 2023 was just over £6,000,

some 10% higher than in 2022. This increase was mainly because more money was collected from subscriptions, although the income from the symposium was also somewhat higher. There was a significant increase in the cost of the AGM/Symposium but other expenditure remained steady, so there was a surplus for the year of nearly £1,000. In sum, the Society's total assets have increased to £11,000, enough to cover about two years' expenditure. So compared to the situation pre-Covid, the challenge for the Committee now is to find more projects and activities to use some of these funds. Membership remained stable in 2023. However, the Society would be stronger with a larger membership, so, as ever, Adrian repeated a plea for members to recruit friends and colleagues to the Society.

**7. Sudan Studies Editor's report**

Charlotte Martin reported such an abundance of content on the subject of transport that a special issue was a possibility. A special issue on Education, long in development, was now also an option, particularly as one panel in this AGM was dedicated to this subject. Heywood Hadfield was thanked for his great work on book reviews. Members were invited to send contributions or ideas to the editor and all would be acted upon.

**8. Website and social media**

Francis reported that a new website was to be developed and invited any members who wished to support this project or help out on any of our social media channels to get in touch.

**9. Elections to the Committee**

The term in office of current Committee member Azim el Hassan has come to an end, but Azim has generously offered to remain on the Committee. He was therefore proposed for re-election by Abdel Salam Sidahmed and seconded by Adrian Thomas. He was elected unanimously by the members attending the meeting.

**10. Any other business**

- a) On behalf of Society members Francis thanked Gill Lusk for her long and committed service as Chairperson of the Society since 2013 and presented a bouquet of flowers as a token of members' esteem and warm gratitude.
- b) Francis suggested members particularly interested in Sudanese cultural material in UK museums and archives form a sub-group to meet and decide on a programme of activities.
- c) Nicola Steen suggested the symposium was very good value and more income could be raised if in future on Eventbrite there was an option for attendees to make an additional voluntary contribution. Tickets might also be sold for online attendance. Nicola also suggested a good project for utilising the Society's extra funds might be to sponsor an event in Sudan or South Sudan with a meal.
- d) Aziz el Nur suggested the Society host an event (day, half-day or evening) targeted at younger people. He also proposed Azim el Hassan and Mawan Muortat as co-chairs.
- e) Hashim Mohamed Ahmed reported he was still committed to writing a joint paper with Ian Cliff on transport in Sudan, and an article on the Sudan Railway Museum. He thanked Aziz el Nur for reviewing his book on the same subject, and volunteered to help record a video.

- f) A member conveyed members' thanks to the Secretary for circulating news of events and updates, and the *Sudan Studies* editor for the high quality of the journal's content.
  - g) Hazel Oberst suggested if the Society was seeking ways to feed children in Sudan her charity <https://www.kidsforkids.org.uk/> was an option, and one of very few charities still now active in North Darfur (110 villages).
  - h) Professor Oette re-emphasised SOAS's support for hosting SSSUK events, particularly if they might also raise funds for the crisis. With sufficient notice, he and Dr Nada Ali would support space requests and liaise with SOAS support services.
  - i) Imogen Thurbon suggested the Society open an Instagram account, which would be an effective means of reaching younger audiences.
  - j) Zaki el Salahi suggested that in order to reach youth groups the Society would do better by going out to those groups. As a means to achieving this he suggested the Society use representatives in each nation to coordinate activities.
- All these suggestions would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting.