

Yorkshire branch AGM Minutes

Saturday, 11th November 2023, 13:00 – 14.15 AGM (only members may vote)

1:30 Opening time and 14:24 finish

Oastler Building (Rooms OA4/01 & OA4/02), University of Huddersfield, Queensgate Campus, Huddersfield, HD1 3DH

1. Introduction and welcome

Dr Fiona Real (FR), Dr Graham Bonwick (GB), Dr Val Randall (VR), Chris Collins (CC), Dr Ioana Lock (IL), Nganwuchu Chioma (NC), Sara Booth-Card (SBC), Dr Martin Walker (MW), Dr Lynda Partridge (LP), Dr Antony Scimone (AS)

2. Apologies for absence

Dr Sohan Jeeta, Dr Richard Reece-Jones, Paul Smith, Godwin Adejo

3. Resolutions

Resolution: The AGM resolves that the annual accounts and associated AGM documentation should be made readily available to the Yorkshire membership at least 7 days prior to each AGM. Approved.

4. Minutes from the previous meeting

Available on the RSB website and LP had hard copies available. No changes were made.

5. Review of committee roles

- Nomination of Dr Fiona Real to replace Dr Lynda Partridge as Branch Chair- Voted in.
- Hayden Ho and Andrew Holding have both resigned from the committee. We join Lynda in thanking them for their contributions.

6. Elect new committee members

- Nomination of Nganwuchu Chioma (Chinyere) by LP as Ordinary Member- Voted in
- Nomination of Dr Qaiser Sheikh as Ordinary Member by LP - Voted in
- Nomination of Dr Ioana Lock as Branch Social Media by GB - Voted in
- Nominated Dr Lynda Partridge as vice chair by FR - Voted in

7. Chair's report (see attached document)

We currently have circa 750 members in the Yorkshire branch and we have held 5 committee meetings since the last AGM. The notes for these are available from the RSB central team.

8. Treasurer's report (see attached document)

2022-2023 (1st Oct-31st September is the branches financial calendar year)

The purpose of the £1000 grant from RSB central team is primarily to deliver events.

Additional funding can be requested, and we followed this procedure to cover the Lady Mary Wortley blue plaque event.

Receipts for expenses need to be submitted within in 8 weeks of an event and we can ask for extra funding for up to £500 for events.

Total branch admin costs are £330 which mostly consists of travel for committee members to in person committee meetings.

Pricing of events needs to be appropriate, and we need to break even. We need to review this (GB). The upcoming Frontiers of Science Event may be virtual rather than in person, which could reduce costs. We need to monitor spending and income and ticket prices.

We will deliver a minimum of 4 public engagement events within the financial year, and this will be met.

VR suggested that the Yorkshire Branch should be getting more than the £1000 (£1.33 per member in Yorkshire). Does each branch get the same grant, or is it worked out per capita?

It was suggested by a branch member that 'we have already paid' by being a member of RSB.

GB responded that with free events fewer people turn up and we have put in a small amount of cost to run the event which would be wasted and risk the reputation of the RSB if people did not attend. SBC has also later commented that RSB is a charity, similar to the National Trust, where some activities are paid for on top of membership fees

9. Event reports

Last year's Autumn Symposium at the University of York (12th November 2022, Food Security) had more than 40 attendees and received good feedback. A report on the event has been submitted to view on the RSB website.

10th December 2022: Big Biology Day at Wilberforce College We had a good turn out by combining with an A-level open day and there was support from the RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts and Hull Butterfly City.

18th March 2023: Frontiers of Science. 60 people registered and this was our first hybrid event. Hybrid events need some form of specialist skill but the format makes it accessible. CC reported that the majority of the day went well, but the hybrid part could have been better and we now have some ideas on how to improve this.

19th April 2023: Joint RSB/RSC seminar at the University of York. Professor Tony Ryan OBE (Dept Chemistry, University of Sheffield) spoke on "The Desert Project" (using hydroponics to grow fruit and vegetables in Syrian refugee camps in the Jordanian desert). Turn-out was a little low (~20), but the seminar received very good feedback. The seminar was preceded by our only live committee meeting. Zoom is much easier for attendance. A report on the event has been submitted to view on the RSB website.

June 2023: Foxglove Covert 6 people attended and had an enjoyable and informative day, but had to rearrange the date at short notice.

15th July 2023: An event celebrating Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's blue plaque unveiling at Wentworth Castle Gardens, for her achievement of introducing smallpox inoculation to Britain in 1721. (This was originally intended as part of the celebration to mark 10 years since the founding of the RSB in 2020). The YRSB Branch had to organise the event, which was a considerable effort (designing and getting the plaque made, dealing with planning permission, making arrangements for catering, talks etc.), but good assistance was offered by the National Trust and Northern College who manage the site. The event was very successful with more than 50 attendees. Jenny Rudd (History Guide) spoke about the life of Lady Mary and Dr Sarah Haywood Small from Sheffield Hallam University gave a talk on recent progress in vaccinations. The plaque is on the Long Barn if people would like to visit. A report on the event has been submitted to view on the RSB website (and also in the December edition of The Biologist).

10. Future events

March 2024: The Frontiers of Science meeting: currently under discussions as to hold it as a live/ virtual event (SJ arranging)

24th April Joint RSB/RSC seminar Dr Helen Cooper (University of Birmingham) to speak about mass spectrometry. (Being organised by RSC this year).

1st/8th June Spring/ Summer Outing: Harlow Carr visit (CC arranging)

October 2024: Biology Week (AS and CN to discuss?)

November: Autumn Symposium. Ideas for this from our members were invited (also email us with any ideas). This will be discussed at the next Committee Meeting

Big Biology Day at Wilberforce College: MW, SBC are hoping to repeat, but this has to be outside of normal working hours so access to college is limited.

11. AOB

Update on RSB Council and Head Office Activities from Professor Nigel Brown (Chair of College of Individual Members and Council Member) (see attached report)

In discussing this it was noted by LP and MW that some regional branches are struggling to recruit committees and put on 4 events a year. There will be some restructuring following further consultation in future. MW noted that the Yorkshire Branch is lucky to have a diverse Committee and a good membership.

LP noted that a “save the date” programme may be useful in future so members have an idea what is coming up.

CC suggested a separate strategy for virtual events - easier to get speakers if we want more events (as during COVID). YRSB could liaise with Scotland and West Midlands. Noted that virtual symposia went well in COVID.

With respect to member benefits, is RSB approaching other organisations e.g. National Trust for discounts?