

## SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

**24<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**12.00pm GMT**

**Flexspace/Zoom**

Dr Anya Hunt (ALH) opened the meeting at 12.04pm and wished everyone good afternoon and welcome to the first virtual General Meeting of the Society. She thanked everyone for joining and confirmed that the meeting was over the quorum numbers.

Also online were Roger Robson (RR) President, Adam Long (ASL) (acting) Honorary Secretary and Nicola Schumacher taking the minutes.

As move forward will be conducting the meeting as a Zoom webinar. The aim will be to ask for people to propose and second the ratification of items on the agenda. Will ask you to raise your hand and we will record as normal. ALH also asked everyone to use the chat function for that just general chat and to ask any formal questions to go into the Q&A section, which ALH would manage.

This is a learning experience for everyone, and we have all spend far too long talking into our screens over last few months and hoping to come to an end but glad we have been able to facilitate this.

ALH passed to RR to formally Chair the meeting. Thanked everyone again for engaging.

RR wished all a good afternoon.

### **1 Apologies**

Formal apologies had been received from members and these were noted: Samantha Pickles, Gillian Tully, Kerri Allen, Jason Payne-James, Cheryl McGowan, Graham Jackson, Surender Singh, James Munday. RR added that if anyone wished to add the formal apologies of any colleagues to send those through on chat.

### **2 Minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> AGM**

The minutes of the previous AGM had been displayed on the Society website and it was proposed to accept them as an accurate record. These had been published on the website as usual practice. RR requested a proposer and seconder.

This was proposed by Brian Rankin and seconded by Barbara Daniel.

#### **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

### **3 Presentation of Annual Report and Financial Statements**

Under normal circumstances the Annual Report would have been finalised and published a couple of weeks before the November AGM. However due to the current ongoing situation hence the need to hold this Special General Meeting (SGM) earlier than normal. The reason being to ensure we were able to hold an SGM remotely, rather than in person, and in line with the emergency measures as per the Insolvency Act deadline which is the end of September. Therefore, the Annual report has only just been finalised and published on the website. If there are any questions on the report, please email [secretary@csofs.org](mailto:secretary@csofs.org) and we will respond. The report will, as normal, be submitted to the Charity Commission before the January deadline. RR proposed to accept the report as an accurate record and requested a proposer and seconder.

This was proposed by Pete Merrill and seconded by Ivan Birch.

#### **4 Election of Council Members**

There were 4 positions vacant this year, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Editor and 2 Ordinary members. These were advertised on the website and to the membership. Nominations were received before the closing date for Honorary Secretary, Honorary Editor and 1 Ordinary. A late nomination for the second Ordinary role had been received shortly after.

One nomination for Honorary Secretary had been received from Adam Long, who has been acting Honorary Secretary since November 2019, and has been doing an excellent job. There being only the one nomination Mr Long is elected. RR called for a proposer and seconder for ratification.

This was proposed by Richard Forster and seconded by Sheila Willis.

Two nominations for Ordinary Member were received from Dr Samantha Pickles and David Hancock. There being two nominations for two roles Dr Pickles and Mr Hancock are elected. RR called for a proposer and seconder for ratification.

This was proposed by David Goodwin and seconded John E Cooper.

Three nominations for Honorary Editor had been received and so a ballot was called. This was held electronically for the first time, which was approved at last year's AGM. Using Choice Voting it was an easy system to manage and a lot more cost effective than using postal ballots. We had the highest number of recorded ballots, we could still do more by the way as still only a small percentage of the overall membership.

The nominees were Dr Rachel Bolton-King, Dr Kevin Farrugia, Dr Geoffrey Stewart Morrison. The ballot has been collated and the nominee with the most votes was Dr Bolton-King who is duly elected. RR called for a proposer and seconder for ratification.

This was proposed by Sue Carney and seconded by Lisa Smith.

RR wished congratulations to the new Council members and thanks to all those who put themselves forward for nomination. It is great to see such support of the Society.

All changes to Council will come into effect on 6th November at which point RR will hand over to Sheila Willis as new President.

#### **5 Motions for Consideration**

There was one motion for consideration. This had been published on the website and a link circulated to the members prior to the meeting. This was as a direct result of the ongoing Covid situation we have all found ourselves in. At present the Society AGM requires a quorum of 30 voting members in a physical location. We are only able to carry out this SGM online now due to the government legislation essentially suspending usual AGM practice, however this legislation is only short term and in effect until end of September. To "future proof" any similar situation we propose to amend the Bye Laws to allow for the AGM to take place virtually.

While making this amend to the Bye Laws, we have also taken the opportunity to make some minor corrections. We have taken the advice of the Privy Council on this and they are happy with our amendments.

ALH was happy to take questions via the Q&A at this point.

Question: "In Bye Laws 1.9 and 1.10 there are specific references to "evidence of fact". Why is this? The Society is concerned with expert evidence. For nearly a century, fingerprint experts pretended that their conclusions were "evidence of fact" and that did not end well. We should avoid going down that path".

ALH responded that the Society wishes to be inclusion to all those that involved in the crime scene to court process and therefore there are people within that chain that are dealing with evidence of fact

not opinion and so that was a deliberate act.

The questioner responded thanked ALH for response and noted they were now better informed.

There were no further questions.

RR proposed to accept amendments and forward to Privy Council for final approval.

This was proposed by Sheila Willis and seconded by Joseph Giddings and the motion was carried.

A further comment came in: “a major benefit of conferences and AGMs is networking so I would prefer to attend AGMs, so can the virtual meeting be permitted only under extraordinary emergency measures”. ALH responded that she and RR had already discussed this, and she had also discussed with Sheila Willis as incoming President, about everything going forward being blended so potentially having both offerings available. ALG wholly agreed with the comment about the AGM and would hate to see all conferences and AGMS being done this way but noted this does give opportunities for greater engagement for those who struggle with abstraction.

There were several comments in agreement with using blended going forward, including ASL. Great to hear one comment from an overseas member grateful for blended. ALH added that this showed how this enabled the Society to be more international. ALH added that members have massively benefitted from the online webinars and the blended approach and greater reach and hoped this would be the case with this year’s conference. ALH assured it would not become the norm or the only option.

## 6 Any Other Business

RR asked if there were any further questions at this stage.

ASL comment re 6.10 that meeting is convened at a ‘set location’, set location could include virtual and/or set location as in a physical space. ALH agreed and had taken advise on this to mean either wholly online or blended, still essentially a venue irrespective of where that is held.

ALH concluded by thanking everyone as without you voting to enable the Society to hold a virtual SGM and without you coming online today this would have been very difficult. Wholly appreciated that you get behind these initiatives. To reiterate RR a little disappointed that having facilitated online voting whilst numbers more than before still low and lower than they should have been.

To pick up on the point about networking unfortunately this year have had to make the decision to not hold a physical conference in November but we are holding a one day virtual conference with four workstreams, posters, sponsors and chat room, so there will be some networking opportunities. Hoping to facilitate as much of a conference vibe as we can. Early bird ticket prices run until 9<sup>th</sup> October. Access will be live on the day and on demand afterwards. This will be a test for the Society as not done before but already showing a greater level of engagement, with overseas people involved in presenting and attending. Wholly agree will not become the model but a learning point to increase our offering.

ASL noted a comment in chat: “Does blended also mean that questions for AGM could be submitted in advance?” ALH responded that AGM questions can always be submitted advance. In a normal year, the Annual Report would be published ahead of AGM and the Society encourages early question submissions.

There was a final comment: “thanks for the excellent webinars and online voting, allowing me to keep in touch while recovering from surgery”.

The meeting closed at 12.24pm and RR, ALH and ASL thanked all for joining.