

## **AOSA : the future a way forward? 2015 (draft)**

**Background :** Following the discussion at this year's AGM we need to look seriously at the future of the OS and perhaps think 'outside the box'. If we rely on the annual magazine and Ayton weekend as the only way to survive then our future is limited by outlay, unless of course OS were to get the magazine by subscription only. I believe that with a membership of around 520 + we are giving the magazine and the current weekend format too great importance. We need to serve the full membership better and not just the 30/40 who attend the OS weekend. With this in mind I would like to suggest the following format and procedure always with the timings subject to discussion.

**Magazine :** Changing the magazine from print to email would reduce outlay by about £2000 a year. Those members who do not have computers could be sent a paper (A4) copy by post. The change from annual to 2/3/4 yearly would of course retain magazine current format and allow funds to grow before next edition is out. In between times members could be kept upto date with news sheets on a regular basis by email. However more change is needed than just to the magazine.

**OS weekend :** as this is only attended by a small number of the members then I suggest that the Ayton weekend be once every four years. That the District Secretaries organise annual local get togethers, in any format that they chose. I know that some OS are already meeting informally and not all of them attending the OS weekend. This would make it easier for those living at a distance to maintain contact with other OS in their area. It would of course cut the cost for members to meet like this. (Our weekend costs in the region of £300 and I know it would be more for those travelling even further). Every four years we could have a meeting for all members, perhaps taking it in turn to go around the country to other districts and those weekends to be organised by the host district. To maintain the Ayton link perhaps meet at Ayton every 10 years. This format would create closer bonds for members with others living in their district and encourage them to work together for their own annual meeting and the time they host the OS weekend.

**District :** Size or areas may need to be reviewed. District secretaries to be the main organiser and each district could elect a deputy secretary to head up their functions. The president of OS to attend as many district events as possible during term of office, to make this possible, perhaps a four year term elect when we all get together at Ayton. The national president to be elected from a different district each year.

**Communications** : It is vital that there are constant exchanges of news about births/ marriages/ deaths/ and events in each district. This can be best done by email. My understanding is that currently we do not have many e-addresses. Those that we have currently may well have the email addresses of other members and it may take time to get this information but regular communications will be the key for holding or even increasing membership in the future.

**Subscriptions** : The system of national plus /or district subs needs to be thought through. At the moment subs are unrealistically low and few if any organisations can be run on such a low income.

**Constitution** : It may well be that these changes fall outside the current constitution and would require changes to be made. I assume that this is not beyond the realms of possibility.

#### **Annotation**

17.7.15 CDB

**Background** : Following the opening of discussion at the AGM and with George Hetheringtons' draft and introduction to an Autumn committee meeting. Propose making changes, openness not closure.

**Magazine** : Make bi-annual, tri-annual or other periodical. As a periodical suggest making this a Journal, omitting AGM report and all other business items, let these be assembled in a folded A3 sheet into a A5 post, a PDF download or e-mail news report. Keep the Journal for articles, photos, main contacts, contributors on Quaker education, their schools, history, persons, contemporary influences and connections - promoting a wider interest including some research notes on the collection.

**OS weekend** : agree a periodic say tri-annual with a Journal publication and annual District Gatherings.

**District** : devolved annual gatherings, with news and pictures sent to the Editor for assimilation. Spread dates across May – July to allow mobile attendance. A tri-annual term for each President to match Journal and Great Ayton gathering OS weekend.

**Communication** : Agree to update, so all District Secretaries and main contacts have a published e-mail – though do not exclude committee people not on e-mail. Change the membership administration from a laborious tabulation to – first choice, an on-line form, self-entered, that updates on the Membership Secretarys' overall chart. This provides confidentiality, reduces update labour by the Secretary who can provide a new form to anyone by e-mail or resend someone their form. Otherwise using the same layout design, forms can be sent by post as applicable.

Consider : open membership to all free of charge, as it is an association of experience. District news on AOSA web pages, AGM annual reports likewise as PDF to download. Add selected articles from the Journal as PDF for download, Landmark news e.g. seasonal photographs of Cooks' Hill, Roseberry Topping, Great Ayton village. Photograph the collection to e.g. School cups, and feature an item with notes 6 monthly. Webmaster to open a facebook page as a receiving place for contacts, news, video, picture and such items, editing a selection to pass to the Journal Editor or Membership Secretary as applicable. Add a Paypal donations and subscription page. A list of available Journal back numbers.

**Fund-raising** : for a tri-annual Journal publication, and a Paypal subscription for the same with postal subscription accepted. Also fund-raise for a general fund recovery, even Life Members (like myself) can be approached for a donation to defined purposes. Likewise for each project on its own terms e.g. publication, Great Ayton Reunion, which is open to grants for education, history, from benefactors and international interest.

**International interest** : For international interest (and all others) assemble a set of items from the collection, for sale (proceeds to the general fund) e.g. a Portrait of Thomas Richardson, a year ensemble (of choice from those listed), a prospect view from the Meeting House, an edition of the Magazine/Journal (of choice from those listed). Provide a description and details on a web page.

**Subscription** : see above.

**Constitution** : agree changes where advantageous.