

Ulster Place-Name Society  
Minutes of the AGM of the Ulster Place-Name Society

The AGM of the Ulster Place-Name Society was held at 5pm on Thursday, 1 December in room 02/013 of the Peter Froggatt Centre, Queen's University.

1. Attendance

Present: Mícheál Ó Mainnín, Greg Toner, Pat McKay, Kay Muhr, Conchubhar Ó Crualaoich, Fionnuala Williams, Frances Kane.

Apologies: Dónall MacDónaill, Gordon McCoy, Anne Marie Faulkner and Brian Lambkin sent apologies.

2. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the last AGM (held in 2019) were adopted, proposed by FK and seconded by FW.

3. Matters arising from minutes of AGM 2019.

Charity commission

FK indicated that she had been in touch with the charity commission who have told us that Annual reporting for Ulster Place-Name Society, NIC 103003, for period: 01/09/2019 – 31/08/2020 were due by 30/06/2021. They also indicated that due to the pandemic, and until otherwise advised, no charity will be penalised for missing its annual reporting deadline. This means that no charity will be marked as in default on the register of charities if they fail to meet their annual reporting deadline. The annual report will be compiled and submitted once ongoing issues with accessing the bank account are resolved.

Payments of guest speakers.

MÓM indicated that the Institute of Irish Studies had previously indicated a willingness to provide some support for travel and accommodation costs for guest speakers. This has not been required in recent years with no in-person lectures from guest speakers. The availability of support needs to be investigated for forthcoming guest speakers.

4. Tribute to Deceased Members

MÓM paid tribute to deceased society members, including Ruairí Ó Bléine who passed away in July of this year.

5. Chair's business

MÓM indicated that he had exceeded his two terms as society chair (largely because of the pandemic). He wished to place on record at this point the question as to whether the name of the society might be limiting in terms of membership. He suggested that the society keep this under review as an option might be to rebrand as the 'Place-names of Ireland Society' or 'The Irish Place-Names Society' (on the Scottish model). The latter is an extremely vibrant

society and, in addition, has many young members, and MÓM wondered if a ‘national’ (or ‘all-island’ society) might bring similar benefits in our case (particularly as there is no other place-names society on the island). KM raised concern around perceptions of the use of the word ‘Irish’ in the NI context; while it might attract some new members, it might alienate others. CÓC thought that the issue for the society in terms of maintaining and increasing membership was one of ‘reach’ and the desirability of bringing the society’s work to the attention of people in the south by other means. This fed also into the discussion of the society’s journal, *Ainm* (see further below).

## 6. Secretary's Report

FK indicated that ongoing issues with getting access to Stripe and the Bank Account meant that it was difficult to track members and to facilitate new membership requests. All current members have paid by direct debit. FK also reported that an issue with accessing the website had been resolved. The committee discussed the possibility of moving to Paypal for accepting membership payments, which seems to work well for SNSBI memberships. FK to follow up with DMacD on actioning this once bank account issues are resolved.

## 7. Treasurer's Report.

DMacD was unable to attend meeting but forwarded a financial report in advance. He was unable to furnish complete accounts due to some missing bank statements. On inquiry, Ulster Bank customer services confirmed that not all statements had been sent, but they were unable to explain why. In the absence of access to online banking for society accounts (as opposed to personal accounts), obtaining copies of transaction records is inordinately slow, as records retained by branches go back less than a year. However, Customer Services also declined to send replacement statements, pending resolution of the underlying problem, about which they are unclear. The auditor has kindly agreed to review the full accounts once the issue of withheld statements has been resolved. The current balances are: Current Account: £555.20 Business reserve £10,856.22. A complete report and audited accounts will be provided as soon as the issue of banking records from the Ulster Bank have been resolved. FK and MÓM undertook to contact bank and investigate complaints procedure (but would consult DMacD also on this).

## 8. Appointment of auditor

The auditor is currently Dr Hugh Gibbons, for Vice-President of IFUT (Irish Federation of University Teachers). FK to enquire as to the terms of auditor appointment with the Charity Commission.

## 9. Update from editor of *Ainm*.

After a lengthy discussion, the committee decided that back issues of *Ainm* should be made available as pdf downloads on the society website, with their release accompanied by a fresh call for articles. It was agreed that the next issue of the journal would be published online in electronic form only.

## 10. Lecturers for the year 2023

The committee proposed that one of the two annual lectures be held online, following the success of online lectures during the pandemic. The second of the two lectures will continue as an in-person/hybrid event (with an option to join online). The online-only format will be piloted in 2023 for the spring lecture but could subsequently rotate between spring and autumn lectures, potentially. For 2023, Aindí Mac Giolla Chomhghaill and Anne Connon were proposed as speakers.

#### 11. Election of new chair, committee officials, and committee members.

FK thanked outgoing chair MÓM on behalf of the committee, and for remaining in position for 1 extra term during the disruption of the Covid pandemic. KM indicated that she would be happy to take the chair's position on an interim basis (maximum 12 months), and was proposed by MÓM and seconded by FK. FK was proposed by MÓM for another term as secretary, which was seconded by KM. DMacD was proposed for treasurer by FK and seconded by GT. MÓM was proposed as an ordinary committee member by GT and was seconded by FK.

#### 12. Co-option of PRO

PMcK was happy to stay in the role and nobody else expressed an interest. PMcK was nominated by MÓM and seconded by FK.

#### 13. MÓM circulated a news bulletin 'Progress in Irish Name Studies 2022-2023' which FK agreed to upload onto society website.