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29 October 2011

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Annual General Meeting of the National Secular Society will be held on Saturday 26 November 2011 in the Main Hall at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL at **1:30 p.m.** Registration will start at **1:00 p.m.** Please arrive promptly. Tea and coffee will be available before the meeting.

The meeting is open to **paid-up members and affiliated group representatives only**. Only one representative of each affiliated group will be admitted, with a letter authorising them to vote on behalf of their organisation. Your Council hope that as many members as possible will come to participate in the meeting and have the opportunity to meet the Council, staff and other members. We particularly welcome those who have not been to an AGM before.

The agenda is enclosed with this notice and copies will be available at the meeting.

The nearest Underground station is Holborn, which is on both the Central and Piccadilly lines. Euston, Kings Cross, St Pancras and Waterloo main line stations, and Farringdon (Thameslink) are within a mile or so. Please check tube lines before travelling on [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk). There are also several bus routes passing nearby, including the no. 38 from Victoria, the 17 from London Bridge and 59, 68, 168, 171 from Waterloo. The 7 from Paddington terminates at nearby Russell Square.

Keith Porteous Wood, FCCA  
Company Secretary

***Members are invited to join us in the Brockway Room after the meeting for drinks and sandwiches.***

### COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE

Much of Council business is conducted on a daily basis by email and phone. There were nine Council meetings between the last AGM and the end of September. The number of absences (all with apologies) for Council members not standing down are as follows: Terry Sanderson – President (0), Gerard Phillips – Chair - (0), Norman Bonney (1), Dan Bye (6), Ray Newton (3), Elizabeth O'Casey (0), Afonso Reis e Sousa (2), Robert Stovold (1) and Peter Vlachos (3).

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
26 November 2011

# Agenda

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1. **Adoption of Standing Orders.**
2. **Minutes of 2010 AGM (Copies available at the meeting).**
3. **Matters Arising.**
4. **Report of the Council of Management. (The Annual Report is enclosed with this notice.)**
5. **Adoption of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2011**

The full Financial Statements reviewed by the reviewing accountants will be available to members attending the meeting, and will be sent to members on request. The Honorary Treasurer will deliver his Report for the year ended 31 March 2011 which is enclosed, together with an abstract of the Financial Statements on the reverse.

**6. Election of Officers (who are *ex-officio* members of Council)**

The nominations for the four Officers' positions (elected annually) are:

- (a) President: **Terry Sanderson** (nominated by Dr Michael Irwin, seconded by Bill McIlroy)  
The presidential candidate will make an address.
- (b) Vice-Presidents: (The Articles provide for up to two vice-Presidents).
  - (i) **Elizabeth O'Casey** (nominated by Eimear O'Casey, seconded by Martin Perry)
  - (ii) **Gerard Phillips** (nominated by Ray Newton, seconded by Shaun Joynson)
- (c) Treasurer: **Clare Wadd** (nominated by Keith Porteous Wood, seconded by Terry Sanderson)

**7. Election of other members of the Council of Management**

Dennis Penaluna resigned during the year for personal reasons and Zoe Cox is standing down at the AGM. Dan Bye, Martin Perry and Peter Vlachos retire by rotation and are eligible for re-election. Of these, only Martin Perry is not standing for re-election.

- (i) **Dan Bye** is nominated by Nic Brookes, seconded by David McKeegan.
- (ii) **Peter Vlachos** is nominated by Robert Stovold, seconded by Denis Cobell.

Also standing for Council, for the first time, are:

- (iii) **Colin Emerson** (nominated by Sarah Cochran, seconded by Neil Barber)
- (iv) **Peter Revell** (nominated by Dorothy Smith, seconded by Shaun Joynson)
- (v) **Adrian Tippetts** (nominated by Marco Tranchino, seconded by Malcolm Barnes)
- (vi) **Anne Marie Waters** (nominated by Maryam Namazie, seconded by Asad Abbas)

The maximum number of Members of Council permitted is thirteen. There is one more candidate than available places.

**8. Election of reviewing accountants**

The Council propose that Hunt Blake and Co. be re-appointed as reviewing accountants of the Society.

**9. Appointment of Agenda Committee.**

**10. Council Motions.**

**11. Members' Motion.**

**12. Conclusion of AGM.**

# Motions for AGM

Explanations of the motions are in [square brackets].

## 10. COUNCIL MOTIONS

[Motion A proposes a Secular Charter revised by Council after consultation with the members, to be adopted as policy. On balance, Council felt that this was not the appropriate time to rewrite the historic principles, so has proposed the Secular Charter as policy.]

**MOTION 10 A. Adoption of Secular Charter as policy**, which is proposed as an **ordinary motion**, requiring a simple majority of members voting:

“That the following Secular Charter be adopted as policy:

“The National Secular Society campaigns for a secular state, where:

- a) There is no established state religion.
- b) There is one law for all and its application is not hindered or replaced by religious codes or processes.
- c) Individuals are neither disadvantaged nor discriminated against because of their religion or belief, or lack thereof.
- d) Freedom of expression is not restricted by religious considerations.
- e) Neither the state, nor any emanation of the state, expresses religious beliefs or preferences.
- f) Religion plays no role in state-funded education, whether through religious affiliation, organised worship, religious instruction, pupil selection or employment discrimination.
- g) The state does not engage in, fund or promote religious activities or practices.
- h) Public and publicly-funded service provision does not discriminate on grounds of religion or belief.
- i) There is no privileged position in society or advantage in law for any individual or group by virtue of their religion or belief, or lack thereof.
- j) The state does not intervene in the setting of religious doctrine or the running of religious organisations.”

**MOTION 10 B: The following proposed changes to the Articles require special resolutions which need the support of three quarters of members voting to pass:**

[There was widespread feeling that the words deleted below were outdated or inappropriate to the NSS's current agenda, so this motion proposes that they be deleted.]

**MOTION 10 B (i)** That in Article 3 the following struck-through words be deleted from the first principle:

*~~“The National Secular Society affirms that this life is the only one of which we have any knowledge and human effort should be directed wholly towards its improvement. It asserts that supernaturalism is based upon ignorance and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.”~~*

[Even though it has not been decided to abolish the loosely non-religious membership requirement, it was thought appropriate however to formally recognise the willingness of the Society to cooperate where appropriate with religious groups.]

**MOTION 10 B (ii)** That in Article 4, the following underlined words be added to Article 4 a)

[4. The objects of the Society are:]

- a) To uphold and propagate secularist principles as set out in Article 3 above, including through co-operation with religious and non-religious religious groups on matters of common purpose.

[Part of the non-religious membership requirement rests on the Article 5 and the word “open” seemed to be ambiguous, so Council proposes its replacement with “restricted”.]

**MOTION 10 B (iii)** That in Article 5 the word “open” be replaced with “restricted”:

Membership of the Society shall be ~~open~~ restricted to all who subscribe to the principles and objects detailed in Articles 3 and 4.

## 11. MEMBERS' MOTION

**Member motion 11: The following proposed changes to the Articles require special resolutions which need the support of three quarters of members voting to pass:**

[This is a proposal to clarify the procedures that apply in the event that there is a 'casual vacancy' in any of the officer positions on Council.]

"That Articles 30 and 31 of the Articles of Association adopted on 27 November 2010 be deleted in their entirety and replaced with the following new Articles (addition to existing Articles underlined).

30. Until otherwise determined by a General Meeting, the number of the members of the Council shall not be less than seven nor more than thirteen, including officers and ordinary members. There shall not be more than nine ordinary members of Council.

31. Should any of the four officer positions be vacant or in the event that there be fewer than nine ordinary members, the Council may from time to time and at any time appoint any member of the Society as a member of the Council, either to fill a casual vacancy arising or by way of addition to the Council, provided that the prescribed maximum be not thereby exceeded. Any member so appointed shall retain their office only until the next Annual General Meeting, but they shall then be eligible for re-election"

Proposed by: Stephen Dunkling

Seconded by: Norman Bonney