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1 November 2014

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of the National Secular Society will be held on Saturday 29 November 2014 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, coffee and soft drinks 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, and they will be able to cast a vote on its behalf if they bring an authorising letter from their organisation. Your Council hopes 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 and AGM papers are enclosed. Please bring them to 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. There are currently no planned closures on the tube lines on the day, however please check for updates on www.tfl.gov.uk. There are also several bus routes passing nearby, including the no. 38 from Victoria, the 17 from London Bridge and numbers 59, 68, 168 and 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 eight Council meetings between the last AGM and the end of September. The number of absences (all with apologies) were as follows: Terry Sanderson, President (1); Gerard Phillips, Vice President and Chair (2); Afonso Reis e Sousa, Vice President (2); Clare Wadd, Treasurer (2); Daniel Bye (4); Clare Coghill (0); Alistair McBay (0); Ray Newton (2); Peter Revell (1); Robert Stovold (1); Adrian Tippetts (1); and Peter Vlachos (1).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

29 November 2014

AGENDA

1. Adoption of Standing Orders.

2. Minutes of 2013 AGM (Copies available at the meeting).

3. Matters Arising (from minutes and not included elsewhere on agenda)

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 2014

The full Financial Statements examined 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 her Report for the year ended 31 March 2014 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 Officers' positions (elected annually) are:

(a) President: **Terry Sanderson** (nominated by Michael Irwin, seconded by Diane Murray)

The presidential candidate will make an address.

(b) Vice-President: **Gerard Phillips** (nominated by Dominic Wirdnam, seconded by Gavin Alexander). The Articles provide for up to two Vice-Presidents

(c) Treasurer: **Clare Wadd** (nominated by Claudine Baxter, seconded by Des Garrahan)

7. Election of other members of the Council of Management

The following candidates have retired by rotation and offer themselves for re-election:

(i) **Afonso Reis e Sousa** is nominated by Claire Morris, seconded by Geoffrey Weston

(ii) **Peter Revell** is nominated by Shaun Joynson, seconded by Morgan Williams

(iii) **Robert Stovold** is nominated by Tim McGregor, seconded by Christine (Fleur) Jacot

The following members of Council were co-opted during the year and are required to retire and are standing for re-election:

(iv) **Clare Coghill** is nominated by Derek Lennard, seconded by Malcom Barnes

(v) **Alistair McBay** is nominated by Gary McLelland, seconded by Elizabeth McIver

Also standing for Council:

(vi) **Sadikur Rahman** is nominated by Asad Abbas, seconded by Charlie (Shahe) Klendjian

8. Election of reviewing accountants.

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

9. Appointment of Agenda Committee

10. Council Motions

11. Members' Motions – there are no members' motions this year.

12. Conclusion of AGM

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

Year ended 31 March 2014

1. Introduction

I am pleased to present my report on the Society's financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2014.

My comments should be read with reference to the Summary of Income and Expenditure (extracted from the Statutory Accounts) on the reverse of this report. Figures in this report are rounded to the nearest £1,000.

I should like to thank Stewart Ware from the staff, who has worked hard on the finances throughout the year.

2. Recurring Income and Expenditure

Amounts described as "Recurring Income" comprise subscriptions and regular donations (up to £2,500) and, at £223,000, has remained almost unchanged for the past three years. However, this year saw a further increase in Recurring Expenses of £15,000 to £292,000, which results from the planned increase in headcount, in line with the expressed wish of the AGM. The overall position was a Recurring Deficit of £69,000 compared with £52,000 in 2013.

3. Non-recurring items

The Non-recurring Income comprises principally legacies and large donations (over £2,500). The largest legacy received this year was £40,000. At £56,000, these were slightly higher than the previous year's £48,000, which was particularly welcome, given the increase in the recurring deficit. This was not however sufficient to extinguish the overall Deficit. This year's deficit was £17,000, up £13,000 on the minimal deficit of the previous year.

5. Society's Investments

The value of the Society's investments exceeded the cost shown in the Balance Sheet at the year-end by nearly £500,000 (the unrealised gain).

6. Going Forward

Our financial position is underpinned by careful cost control, but the income growth that has supported our increase in campaigning for nearly a decade has been stalled by the economic situation. Nevertheless, we intend to build further on our recent successes and further expand our activities in areas such as education and gender equality, where additional resourcing have already been repaid with handsome dividends. Council and the staff remain as committed as ever to their duty to provide value in return for the generosity of members who have committed increased sums in their recurring payments, whether by standing order or direct debit.

Our staff team are hungry for the new challenges which appear with increasing frequency. While we are satisfied that we have the ability to fund future campaigns, the task before us is huge, and the more you are able to donate, the more we are able to achieve. The economic pressure on recurring income means that legacies are becoming more important than they have ever been, so I hope you will consider carefully the President's enclosed message on this topic – which is so vital to our achievements in the longer term.

Clare Wadd
Honorary Treasurer, 21 October 2014

National Secular Society
Company Number 1418145

		£	£
Balance Sheet as at 31 March		2014	2013
Fixed Assets:	Investments	1,663,241	1,663,241
	Tangible assets	7,190	6,125
		<u>1,670,431</u>	<u>1,669,366</u>
	<i>Investments Market value (memo only)</i>	<i>2,161,031</i>	<i>2,157,216</i>
Current Assets:	Debtors	5,861	5,921
	Cash at bank and in hand	146,163	164,900
		<u>152,024</u>	<u>170,821</u>
	Less: Creditors falling due within one year	(33,182)	(29,016)
Net current assets		<u>118,842</u>	<u>141,805</u>
	Less: Creditors falling due after one year	(10,000)	(15,000)
Net assets		<u><u>1,779,273</u></u>	<u><u>1,796,171</u></u>
Capital and Reserves			
	General reserve	1,377,523	1,321,427
	Income and expenditure account	401,750	474,744
Total funds		<u><u>1,779,273</u></u>	<u><u>1,796,171</u></u>
Summary of Income and Expenditure for year ended 31 March		£	£
		2014	2013
Income, net of cost of sales		278,414	273,478
Administration expenses		(296,336)	(277,515)
Surplus / (Deficit) on ordinary activities before interest		(17,922)	(4,037)
Interest receivable		1,024	278
Surplus (Deficit) including interest income		(16,898)	(3,759)
Profit / (Loss) on disposal of investments		-	-
Surplus / (Deficit) on ordinary activities before tax		(16,898)	(3,759)
Tax payable on ordinary activities		-	-
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		(16,898)	(3,759)
Less Legacies, major donations and life memberships included in income above and transferred to general reserve		(56,096)	(48,436)
Retained surplus brought forward		474,744	526,939
Retained surplus carried forward		<u>401,750</u>	<u>474,744</u>
(Signed) C Wadd ACA			
Recurring Income	Subscriptions, smaller donations and sundry income	198,325	199,155
	Investment income less investment management fees	21,272	20,398
	Interest receivable	1,024	278
	Gross Profit / (Loss) on trading (estimated)	2,696	5,489
Total recurring income		<u>223,317</u>	<u>225,320</u>
Recurring expenses	Employment costs (including contract workers)	203,372	180,448
	Red Lion Square – Rent and service charges	10,217	8,722
	Collection and dissemination of information	43,588	67,401
	Other office and administrative costs	28,454	15,419
	Professional and financial costs	6,827	5,525
Total recurring expenses		<u>292,458</u>	<u>277,515</u>
Deficit for the year, excluding non-recurring items		(69,141)	(52,195)
Non-recurring income	Life membership	1,800	3,300
	Legacies and larger donations	54,296	45,136
Total non-recurring income		<u>56,096</u>	<u>48,436</u>
Non-recurring expenses	Red Lion Square – office refurbishment	3,853	-
Total non-recurring expenses		<u>3,853</u>	<u>-</u>
Surplus / (Deficit) on ordinary activities before tax, as above		<u><u>(16,898)</u></u>	<u><u>(3,759)</u></u>

MOTIONS FOR AGM 2014

The following motions, proposed by Council – none were proposed by members – are ordinary motions and require a simple majority of members voting to pass:

Explanations for the motions are shown in italics.

MOTION A

Membership fees have not been increased since 2008.

With effect from 1 January 2015, the following annual and life membership fees will apply:

Ordinary member/groups: £34 single payment or £3 per month (*currently £29 p.a.*)

Unwaged/Concessionary: £23 single payment or £2 per month (*currently £17 p.a.*)

Joint: £57 single payment or £5 per month (*currently £45 p.a.*)

Student: £12 individual annual payment only (*currently £9 p.a.*)

Life: under 65: £700 one-off, or for over 65s: £400 one-off (*currently £600 and £300 respectively*)

MOTION B

The following is proposed as a policy statement:

“The National Secular Society upholds the universality of Human Rights, which should not be overridden on the grounds of religion, tradition or culture.”

1 November 2014



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A personal message about legacies from the President of the National Secular Society

Dear Friend,

Having set out our achievements for another year, I hope you do not mind me mentioning wills. We all want to live long and prosper. Sadly, though, all good things must come to an end, and when our time is up, we want to be sure that our savings and possessions will be dealt with according to our wishes. That means making a will.

The Society's Council and I hope you will consider making a gift to the National Secular Society in your will, or by adding a codicil – a short variation to a will already written. Either would be a tangible way of benefitting future generations, and expressing support for a cause I know is also dear to your heart. It would also be a powerful statement for fairness, freedom and Human Rights and a declaration of your belief in a world in which people of all religions or none can live together fairly and cohesively.

As an organisation dedicated solely to political campaigning, we do not qualify for charitable status. And, unlike those who work in opposition to us, the NSS does not benefit from public funding, major charitable foundations or secret benefactors. Our funds come entirely from members and supporters convinced about the value of what we do. Without them we could do nothing. And the more funds we have, the more we can do; there is always scope to do more. The fight for secularism is not getting any easier and yet the need for it is becoming ever more apparent, and pressing. The Society is focussed entirely on that challenge.

A will or codicil can be written by anyone, but one prepared by a solicitor need not be expensive and will avoid mistakes that could affect its validity. The Citizens' Advice Bureau may be able to assist. November is Will Aid month. During this month you can have a solicitor draw up your will in exchange for a charitable donation. You can find out more at www.willaid.org.uk.

If you have any further questions, please get in touch with the office who will arrange for our Company Secretary Keith Porteous Wood to contact you.

All legacies of whatever size will be gratefully received and acknowledged. Leaving a bequest to us will be appreciated by the Council, members and those who benefit from the work we do. Could I thank you warmly in advance.

With many thanks and my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terry Sanderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terry Sanderson
President

PS: Remember, the NSS survives entirely on the generosity of its members and supporters. Please consider leaving a bequest to the NSS.

A small handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terry".