



The professional association for  
social work and social workers

## **BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023**

**MINUTES** of the hybrid 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the British Association of Social Workers held on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 commencing at 10.30am.

<b>Panel:</b>	Julia Ross	Chair
	Neeta Baicher	Vice Chair
	Ann Moir	Treasurer
	Ruth Allen	Chief Executive

**Advisers:** Shiva Peters – Dains auditors

#### **1/16 Procedures for the AGM**

Ruth Allen, Chief Executive explained how to vote, ask questions or raise a point of order, both in the room and online.

#### **2/16 Welcome**

Julia Ross, Chair of BASW welcomed members to the meeting and introduced the panel & Equality Monitors.

#### **AGM Minutes 2022 & Order of Business for AGM 2023**

AGM minutes 2022 proposed by Julia Ross and seconded by Anne Moir, the Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were formally agreed.

AGM 2023 order of business proposed and seconded by Neeta Baicher were formally agreed.

Procedural motion notified by a member to be raised under the motion's agenda item

#### **3/16 Recognition and remembrance of members' work**

The Chair read out a list of members, who had passed away over the past year, were remembered: -

- Catherine Pryde
- Alison Miller

- Ann Haigh
- Peter Westland

Recognition noted for Bridget Robb, further acknowledgement of this will be made later in the agenda.

#### **4/16 Chief Executive report on the work and impact of BASW**

Ruth Allen reported back on work over the last year. She thanked the Chair for helping her to run the organisation efficiently and in line with our Code of Ethics and for the support of Council members.

- We are in a sound financial position, managing our resources well is a resource, focusing on what members want and expect.
- Annual report reporting on detailed information on measuring impact and reflects members priorities.
- 2022/2023 Annual members survey completed. Themes emerged around influencing national policy on social justice, improving working conditions and on the importance of advising protecting and representing members with employers. Strong concerns emerged around recruitment and retention.
- Significant membership growth in Independents, a review is currently being undertaken to reform our offer.
- Opportunities for students' contribution including the ambassador scheme.
- We have increased co-production with people with lived experience.
- We have achieved our main planned organisational objectives and have achieved our highest ever membership level.
- We have invested members' income into providing improved services.
- In 2022-23 the membership fee was frozen; this was not sustainable for 2023 - 24. All staff helped members to sustain their membership during the ongoing cost of living crisis and will continue to look to diversify income and to keep improving the offer to members.
- We pay close attention to the areas our members most value for example:
  - challenging inequalities and social injustice;
  - improving working conditions;
  - developing our Advice and Representation service in partnership; with the Social Workers Union.

#### **5/16 BASW's campaign priorities and follow up on motions 2021/22**

- Overview of BASW UK anti-poverty and working conditions campaigns.
  - Area of focus for BASW presented by Kerri Prince (Staff -Public & Political Lead) and Dominic Watters (Member).
- Update & response to 2022 Motions provided.
  - Commitment is to provide regular updates throughout the year to Council and to members.
  - Christian Kerr (member) speaks on this and supports the regular updates for motions.

**6/16 Introduction to member motions (proposals for the year ahead) process, timing and voting arrangements – Julia Ross, Chair**

- Reminder to retain confidentiality.
- Reminder of order of business.

**7/16 Motions session one:**

- **Motion 1** to recognise lifetime contribution of June Thoburn:

**This AGM notes:**

The outstanding contribution to social work made by Prof. June Thoburn. June qualified as a Social Worker in 1963 before joining the University of East Anglia in 1979, where she is now Emeritus Professor of Social Work. Her practice, academic and campaigning contributions are varied, manifold and have been sustained with remarkable commitment over her career. June's work is firmly grounded in a belief in the need to provide both better family support and better support to children and young people in care. She has always maintained a fierce commitment to the social work profession and a university based social work education. Into her 80s June continues to push steadfastly, with erudition, humanity and wisdom, for better systems of support for children and families.

**This AGM thereby calls on:**

BASW to celebrate this outstanding commitment and achievement by presenting June with a lifetime achievement award.

**Proposed by Robin Sen**

**Seconded by Christian Kerr**

**Motion carried**

- **BASW Lifetime Achievement Awards:**
  - Lifetime achievement awards present to June Thoburn, David Jones and Bridget Robb.
- **Motion 2** on Israeli Apartheid (*formally entitled Motion to State Solidarity with the Palestinian People*) **(Non-Amended)**

**This AGM notes:**

The recent reports of the Israeli human rights organisation, B'Tselem, the international organisations, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur, which all found that Israel is practising apartheid against the Palestinian people;

The leading role BASW played in the suspension of the South African social work association from the International Federation of Social Workers during the apartheid years.

**This AGM welcomes:**

BASW's commitment to anti-racist action.

**This AGM believes:**

BASW should therefore take appropriate action related to Israel's apartheid against the Palestinian people.

**Accordingly, this AGM agrees that BASW will:**

State its abhorrence of apartheid, whenever and wherever this is practised, and condemn the particular instance of Israel's apartheid against the Palestinians;

Ensure it does not hamper members in expressing views critical of the Israeli state;

State its solidarity with the Palestinian people;

Work within IFSW towards that body taking these positions.

**Proposed by Guy Shennan**

**Seconded by Abyd Quinn-Aziz**

**Motion from floor**

It was proposed that the meeting move to next business.

**Proposed by Joan Franklin**

**Seconded by Ian Johnston**

**Motion to move to next business not carried**

**Motion to accept amendment carried.**

- **Motion 2** on Israeli Apartheid (*formally entitled Motion to State Solidarity with the Palestinian People*) **(Amended)**

**This AGM notes:**

The recent reports of the Israeli human rights organisation, B'Tselem, the international organisations, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur, which all found that Israel is practising apartheid against the Palestinian people;

The leading role BASW played in the suspension of the South African social work association from the International Federation of Social Workers during the apartheid years.

**This AGM welcomes:**

BASW's commitment to anti-racist action.

**This AGM believes:**

BASW should therefore take appropriate action to understand and where appropriate take action on the claims of apartheid and human rights breaches in Israel and in any country.

**Accordingly, this AGM agrees that BASW will:**

State its abhorrence of apartheid, whenever and wherever this is practiced.  
Remit the claims by human rights organisations of apartheid by the Israeli state for review by the BASW International Committee and produce an explanatory position paper for members of the facts and ethical issues.

Ensure BASW does not hamper members in expressing views critical of the Israeli government;

State its solidarity with the Palestinian people;

Work within IFSW towards that body taking these positions.

**Proposed by Council**

**Amended motion carried.**

**9/16 Report on BASW's finances and budget**

Ann Moir, Honorary Treasurer presented the financial statements for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, available in the Annual Report.

- Planned for deficit budget in 2021/2022, ended the year with a small surplus, some losses in investments are now recovering.
- Membership has been sustained and have remained the higher end of 22,000.
- Increases in central costs have been balanced out with savings in year, including changes in working from offices.
- Continue to review ethical investment portfolio.
- We are making plans to sustain membership during the cost of living crisis.
- Mutual trading status update provided, article change agreed in December 2022 which HMRC have accepted and have confirmed mutual trading status from December 2022 onwards.

She thanked staff for their work in maintaining the healthy finances of the organisation.

**Members voted to receive the report of the Auditors and the Statement of Accounts for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.**

**Proposed by Elaine (??) and seconded by Ian Johnstone**

**The motion was carried.**

**9/22 Vote on Appointment of Auditors to review and verify our accounts from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**Proposed by Elaine (??) and seconded by Ian Johnstone**

**The motion was carried.**

**10/16 Updates on BASW's charitable work**

**Social Workers' Benevolent Trust (SWBT) report**

Su Roxburgh – SWBT Co Chair presented the SWBT annual report.

SWBT is the only charity dedicated to helping social workers in difficult times. She thanked all the Trustee for volunteering their time. Meetings had taken place with BASW staff to ensure the smooth running of the charity. The Trust were grateful for the help from BASW staff and to the BASW CEO for her ongoing support.

She wanted to acknowledge the contribution of Julian Levitt, their Vice Chair, who was retiring from the Trust after 20 years.

She thanked members for their donations to the Trust over the year. The Trust had received grant help from the Civil Service Insurance Society.

283 applications had been received during the year which is a 63% increase from the previous year. 243 grants have been awarded this year. The criteria are that you must be a qualified social worker and the Trust is not just for BASW members. A significant number of applicants were fleeing from domestic violence or people losing their home due to ill health.

68% of applicants are in employment and a large number are in considerable debt. The aim is to make a difference wherever possible. Maximum grants are between £45 & £400. Only 4% of applicants are retired. They were receiving more applications from the under 30s.

**Social Workers' Educational Trust (SWET) report**

Catherine Poulter presented the SWET annual report.

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year for SWET, a book has been produced to celebrate this, this is available at BASW books to purchase. An Anniversary Scholarship award went to Rebecca Buss. SWET had received 64 applications in the last financial year. The Elizabeth O'Dell scholarship to support good practice with older people but sadly no applications have been received for this. SWET finances are healthy, and the annual accounts are available on the SWET website and Charity commission website.

### **International Development Fund (IDF) report**

Janet Walker, Chair of the BASW International Committee presented this item.

The IDF was established in 2014. This year sponsored 20 social workers, including students to attend IFSW Europe conference in Prague.

### **The Foundation (BASW Trust)**

Fran Fuller presented on this.

The Foundation has just started work this year and so currently do not have an annual report. Board of Trustees includes practitioners, lay people and experts by experience. Focus on CPD this year, including a holistic programme for students.

**The BASW Chair thanked all the Trusts for their work over the year.**

### **11/16 Motions session two:**

- **Motion 3** to speak out against authoritarianism and anti-democratic

#### **This AGM notes:**

Social work ethics are rooted in European and global commitments to human rights, democracy and rule of law, embodied in the European Convention of Human Rights of the Council of Europe, the UN Declaration on Human Rights and other conventions of both bodies.

BASW helped produce the 2019 IFSW statement: *Social workers respond to the growing social crisis in Europe* highlighting growing authoritarianism, anti-democratic, anti-universal rights and discriminatory forces in governments across Europe and globally <https://www.ifsw.org/social-workers-respond-to-the-growing-social-crisis-in-europe/>

Such forces have spread since 2019. BASW has highlighted how these forces are driving global but also UK government policies on human rights law, migration, protest, voting and welfare.

**This AGM calls on BASW to:**

Work with IFSW to update and reissue the 2019 statement;

Speak out against authoritarianism and anti-democratic governments at home and abroad;

Champion the practical and advocacy role of social workers in fostering inclusivity, democracy, social and human rights in the UK and internationally;

**Proposed by: BASW Council**

**Motion carried**

- **Motion 4** to challenge Government's current policies for support to asylum seeking children in the UK

**This AGM notes:**

Since July 2021, 4,600 unaccompanied children have been housed in hotels, for an average of 16 days but some up to 3 months. It is currently illegal to accommodate unaccompanied children in unregulated facilities, including hotels. There are concerns about safeguarding as 1 in 10 have gone missing and 200 remain missing.

The Illegal Migration Bill significantly undermines the rights and protections of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children across the UK and increases the risk of their abuse and exploitation.

In addition, there are thousands more children accompanied by their parents, but nonetheless housed inappropriately and subject to physical and mental ill health as a result.

**This AGM thereby calls on BASW to:**

Challenge the UK Government to ensure all asylum-seeking children receive the same legal rights and protections whether they are accommodated by local authorities or by the Home Office;

Monitor the numbers of unaccompanied and accompanied asylum-seeking children affected by this Bill whether accommodated by local authorities or accommodated by the Home Office;

Collate data from social workers on the impact of government policy;



Lobby Government to ensure that all asylum-seeking children have access to education in accordance with their rights under the relevant legislation in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Lobby Government to ensure that all asylum-seeking children have access to the same legal protections and rights granted to all children in the UK who are accommodated by local authorities;

Call on Children's Commissioners across the UK to ensure that all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children have access to the same legal protections and rights granted to all children in the UK.

Campaign to change the Home Office National Age Assessment Board employment arrangements so that all social workers in this role are not employed by the home office (either directly or by stealth) and that instead social workers in this role are employed by a local authority, NHS trust or a trusted equivalent.

**Proposed by:** Coventry & Warwickshire Branch

**Seconded by:** Worcestershire Branch

**Motion carried**

- **Motion 5** to fully acknowledge Jewish identity as ethnoreligious

**This AGM notes:**

Currently, when completing the voluntary Equality and Diversity information for BASW membership, there are inadequate categories for Jewish people regarding self-identification. Jewish people can tick whether they are Jewish as a religion, and this disregards that there are many secular Jewish people. Jewish people could also tick 'any other ethnic background' or 'any other white background'. This disregards the complex intersectionality's, and that Jewish people can be divided into various other ethnic groups. For example, there are Jewish people who identify as Black (e.g. Jamaican Jewish), or South Asian (e.g. Goan Jewish), or African (e.g. Ethiopian Jewish). It also ignores that despite being typically considered as such by others, some Jewish people may not regard themselves as 'white' but instead 'white presenting'.

Inadequate and unsuitable categorisations and labelling of Jewish people, which are inconsistent with self-identification result in a lack of visibility, marginalisation, and inaccurate data. This can make it difficult to determine, for example, how many complaints are made disproportionately against Jewish people and how many complaints Jewish people make regarding antisemitism.

**This AGM thereby calls on BASW to:**

Agree that the Policy, Ethics and Human Rights Committee will commit to examining current categorisations of Jewish people with consultation with Jewish members, the UK Jewish Social Worker Special Interest Group, and an independent Jewish organisation well-versed in such matters.

Agree that the Policy, Ethics and Human Rights Committee will commit to examining all current categorisations of ethnoreligious identities.

**Proposed by:** The UK Jewish Social Worker Special Interest Group

**Motion carried**

- **Motion 6** to call on employers to adopt recruitment and induction standards for overseas social workers.

**This AGM notes:**

The Recruitment and Induction Standards highlight the need for adequate support to resettle (overseas social workers) which is particularly relevant during this time with high accommodation costs, utilities, and general expenses. We want the UK to be an attractive place for all social workers to practice safely and call on recruiters and employers to adopt these standards so that overseas social workers are afforded equal dignity, respect and fairness.

**This AGM thereby calls on BASW to:**

Recognise the valuable contributions of overseas recruited social workers in the UK and the importance of maintaining high standards for recruitment, induction, and support;

Call on regulators, recruiters and employers of overseas social workers across the UK to adopt our 'Recruitment and Induction Standards' which sets out standards for recruitment and induction practice, to support internationally recruited social workers to adapt and adjust into the workplace culture and values.

Campaign that sufficient time is provided for reflective practice with all social workers from overseas giving due consideration to the additional risks which disproportionately affect minoritised social workers.

**Proposed by:** The Diaspora Special Interest Group.

**Motion carried**

**12/16 Update on Council elections**

- Treasurer
- Elected Director

Anne Moir  
Annie Ho

- Elected Director
- Elected Director

Sumayya Hanson  
Merlin Joseph

### **Council membership from AGM 2022**

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| • Chair   | Julia Ross         |
| • Vice Chair                                      | Neeta Baicher      |
| • Treasurer                                       | Ann Moir           |
| • Chair, Policy Ethics & Human Rights Committee   | Martin Sexton      |
| • Chair, International Committee                  | Janet Walker       |
| • Appointed Director - England Committee          | Vava Tampa         |
| • Appointed Director - England Committee          | Katy Jackson       |
| • Appointed Director - Northern Ireland Committee | Orlaith McGibbon   |
| • Appointed Director - Northern Ireland Committee | John Sheridan      |
| • Appointed Director - Scotland Committee         | Jude Currie        |
| • Appointed Director - Scotland Committee         | Caroline MacDonald |
| • Appointed Director - Wales Committee            | Christian Beech    |
| • Appointed Director - Wales Committee            | Andrew Pennington  |
| • Elected Director                                | Annie Ho           |
| • Elected Director                                | Camelia Chowdhury  |
| • Elected Director                                | Lesley Best        |
| • Co-opted Director                               | Hari Sewell        |

### **13/16 Presentation & reflections from Experts by Experience UK Forum**

Co-Chairs Omar Mohamed and Reshma Patel provided an update on the UK Forum:

- UK Forum brings together experts by experience across the UK.
- Developing the voice and contribution to social work as a profession and challenge some of the experiences that experts by experience have faced.
- Contributing to the development of BASW.
- Future work will involve developing a more four nation approach, involvement in consultation groups across BASW, develop a webpage that will hold information for support, involving in policy making, campaigning and action, contribute to review of payments to experts by experience across the social work sector.

### **14/16 Signing of refreshed SWU BASW co-operation agreement**

- Presentation by Ruth Allen and John McGowan

### **15/16 Closing remarks from Julia Ross, Chair**

- Voting for motions announced following verification.
- Thanks all present, reiterates that an equality assessment for the AGM will be undertaken and members will be asked for feedback.

### **16/16 Close of meeting, Any Other Business**

None.

Questions from members

*Request that guidance for submitting motions is clear and that new guides and procedures involve consultation with members.*

*Tribute made to Bridget Robb and Su Roxburgh for being the backbone of SWBT.*

*Request to explain how far SWU have got with the endeavour to link with other trade unions.*

*Chair and executive team thanked, and the effort put into ensuring voting and speaking was fair.*