



# THE LEARNED SOCIETY OF WALES CYMDEITHAS DDYSGEDIG CYMRU

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY – CELEBRATING SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVING THE NATION  
YR ACADEMI GENEOLAETHOL – YN DATHLU YSGOLHEICTOD A GWASANAETHU'R GENEDEL

## MINUTES OF THE TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING ON WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2021

<p><b>Present:</b></p> <p>Professor Hywel Thomas Professor Michael Charlton Professor Helen Fulton Professor Keith Smith Professor Alan Shore</p> <p>Professor Ann Ager Professor Cara Aitchison Mr David Allen Professor Peter Atkinson Professor Roger Awan-Scully Professor Gwyn Bellamy Professor David Benton Professor Sir Michael Berry Professor Richard Bevins Professor Kirsti Bohata Dr Louise Bright Professor Tony Brown Professor Hazel V Carby Professor Simon Cox Professor Tom Crick Professor Ceri Davies Professor Michael Davies Dr Sally Davies Professor Alan Dix Professor Edwin Egede Professor Dianne Edwards Professor Paul Emery Professor Chris Evans Professor David Evans Professor Robert Evans Professor Tess Fitzpatrick Professor Tony Ford Ms Paula Gardiner Professor Neil Glasser Professor Claire Gorrara Professor William Griffiths Dr Robin Gwyndaf</p>	<p><i>(President)</i> <i>(Vice-President)</i> <i>(Vice President)</i> <i>(Treasurer)</i> <i>(General Secretary)</i></p> <p>Professor Peter Halligan Professor Simon Hands Professor Keith Harding Professor Paul Harper Professor Andrew Henley Professor Trevor Herbert Professor Ieuan Hughes Professor Ifan Hughes Professor John Hughes Mr Rob Humphreys Professor Wen G. Jiang Professor Angela John Professor Nigel John Professor Richard Jones Professor Sally Jones Professor Trevor Jones Sir Emyr Jones Parry Professor Rob Knipe Professor Peter Knowles Professor John Lazarus Professor Dorian Llywelyn Dr Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan Professor Biagio Lucini Professor Marian Ludgate Dr Steven Luke Professor Marco Marletta Professor Paul Meredith Dr Wyn Meredith Professor Faron Moller The Baron Kenneth Morgan Professor Russell Morris</p>	<p>Professor Iwan Morus Professor Max Munday Professor Helen Nicholson Professor Perumal Nithiarasu Professor Ruth Northway Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna Professor Katherine Leni Oglesby Dr Helen Ougham Maxine Penlington Professor Ronald Pethig Professor Ryszard Piotrowicz Professor Philip Prewett Professor Huw Pryce Professor Eleri Pryse Professor Mark Rees Professor Siân Reynolds Professor Geoff Richards Professor David Ritchie Dr Stephen Roberts Professor Karl Michael Schmidt Professor Qiang Shen Professor Zoë Skoulding Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard Mr Geraint Talfan Davies Professor Jean Thomas Professor Mark Thomas Professor David Toll Professor John Tucker Professor Carol Tully Professor Meena Upadhyaya Professor Marcela Votruba Professor Helen Wilcox Professor Diana Wallace Professor Catrin Williams Professor Colin Williams Professor David Williams Professor John Williams Ms Nia Williams Professor Sir Robin Williams Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar</p>
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**Attended by Proxy:**

Professor Russell Davies	Professor Sally Power	Sir Keith Thomas
Professor John McWhirter	Professor Dominic Reeve	Professor Martyn Tranter
Professor Peter Modmore	Professor Nigel Richard	Professor Chris Williams
Professor Ken Oglesby	Professor Colin Riordan	Dr Lynn Williams
Professor Ceri Phillips		

**In attendance:**

Mr Martin Pollard	<i>(Chief Executive)</i>
Dr Sarah Morse	<i>(Policy and Public Affairs Manager)</i>
Mrs Amanda Kirk	<i>(Clerk to Council)</i>
Mr Joe Boyle	<i>(Communications Officer)</i>
Mrs Fiona Gaskell	<i>(Fellowship Officer)</i>
Ms Janice Gillian	<i>(Finance Officer)</i>
Ms Nerys Hurford	<i>(Interpreter)</i>

***The Annual General Meeting opened at 2.30 p.m.***

**1. Welcome and Introduction by the Society's President**

The President, Professor Hywel Thomas:

- 1.1 welcomed Fellows present, in particular newly-elected Fellows, to the Society's eleventh Annual General Meeting and thanked them for attending;
- 1.2 advised Fellows that they were welcome to address the meeting in Welsh or English;
- 1.3 expressed his gratitude to the interpreter, Nerys Hurford.

The President paid tribute to past Fellows:

Sir John Meurig Thomas DSc ScD MAE FLSW FRS

Professor Sir Peter Harper CBE FRCP FMedSci FLSW

Professor John Ffowcs Williams DSc ScD FREng FIMA FRAeS FInstP FIOA FAIAA FRSA FLSW

Yr Athro Glyn O. Phillips DSc FRSC

Professor Catherine Belsey FEA FLSW

Mr Emyr Humphreys DLitt FRSL FLSW

Ms Jan Morris CBE FRSL FLSW

Yr Athro John Gwynfor Jones DLitt FSA FRHistS FLSW

Professor Hywel Francis FRHistS FLSW

Professor Peter Excell FIET FBCS FHEA FLSW

There was a moment's silence as a mark of respect.

## 2. Apologies for absence

The President noted that he had received apologies for absence from eight Fellows; these would be noted as an appendix to the minutes of the meeting. 13 Fellows had registered to attend and vote by proxy.

## 3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20 May 2020

Members **RECEIVED, NOTED** and **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the tenth Annual General Meeting of the Society, held on 20 May 2020. The minutes would be signed by the President at the earliest opportunity.

## 4. Governance Matters

### 4a. Annual Report and Accounts, 2019/20 and Appointment of Independent Examiners

Members **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** paper AGM/2021/01, the Governance Matters Annual Report and Accounts, 2019/20 and Appointment of Independent Examiners.

The Treasurer introduced the paper. Members had been notified that the Annual Report and Accounts were available to download from the Society's website.

It was **NOTED FURTHER** that:

The Society's income primarily came from universities in Wales who provided unrestricted funding. In addition, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David provided in-kind services valued at around £30,000. The Treasurer expressed his gratitude to the universities for their ongoing support.

The second highest source of income was from Fellows' subscriptions fees. The Treasurer thanked Fellows, especially those who had signed up to Gift Aid, which allowed the Society to claim an additional 25% of the subscription fee. The Treasurer encouraged Fellows who were eligible to sign up for Gift Aid to do so.

The Treasurer noted the Society's major categories of expenditure.

He reminded Fellows of the importance of diversifying income sources to ensure the long-term future of the Society. However, the Society was in a good financial position, and with the agreement of Council had established several investment accounts for reserve funds. It was hoped that over time these funds would increase in value and would be sufficient for the Society to be able to draw down a helpful regular income.

Fellows **NOTED** that the accounts had been independently examined by Azets, who had raised no concerns.

The Treasurer invited comments from Fellows on the report. None were received.

Members voted and **RESOLVED FORMALLY TO RECEIVE** the Annual Report and Accounts for 2019/20.

Members voted and **RESOLVED FORMALLY TO APPOINT BALDWINS AS INDEPENDENT EXAMINER** for 2020/21.

#### **4b. Officers, Council and Committees: Outgoing and new members**

The General Secretary thanked Professor Smith.

He noted that the Society's governing instruments – Royal Charter, Bye-laws and Regulations – could be found on the website:

[www.learnedsociety.wales/about-us/governance](http://www.learnedsociety.wales/about-us/governance)

The Society's Council and committees had continued to work hard during the last year. There had been a great deal of work to ensure the Society was one that promoted and embraced equality, diversity and inclusion. This had included a special meeting of Council to agree measures to improve the Society's current procedures and communications.

Professor Michael Charlton would continue as Vice-President for STEMM for a second term. The General Secretary thanked Professor Charlton for his valuable contributions to the Society.

Professor Keith Smith had completed one term as Treasurer and had decided not to stand for re-election. The General Secretary thanked Professor Smith for his service to the Society, noting his legacy of establishing an investment policy and reserve funds, which were helping the Society strengthen its financial security.

The General Secretary congratulated Professor Terry Threadgold on her appointment as Treasurer.

He also thanked and welcomed two new members of Council, who had been elected by Fellows to serve for a three-year period until the end of the 2024 AGM. The new members were:

- Professor Kirsti Bohata
- Professor Carol Tully

Professor Ieuan Hughes and Dr Lynn Williams were congratulated on their re-election to Council.

The General Secretary thanked the outgoing members of Council for their contributions to council and the Society. They were:

- Professor David Boucher
- Professor John Jones

The General Secretary thanked all Fellows for putting themselves forward to serve on the Society's Council and committees. Dr Sally Davies had been appointed to the Finance Committee and Professor Perumal Nithiarasu to the General Purposes Committee.

He then thanked Professor Ceri Davies and Professor Julia Thomas for their contributions to the General Purposes Committee.

The General Secretary noted that although not a formal part of the governance structure, the Society had appointed several University Representatives of the Learned Society (URLSs). They acted as a conduit between the Society and the Fellows at universities in Wales. They also arranged activities at their own institutions and worked to encourage nominations for Fellowship.

The Society would issue a call for new URLSs in June, and all Fellows were encouraged to consider applying.

The General Secretary noted his thanks to the URLSs, especially Professor Simon Hands who was leaving Swansea in the summer and would no longer be a Society Representative.

Members **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** paper AGM/2021/02, Governance Matters Officers, Council and Committees: Outgoing and New Members.

## 5. Highlights of the Year

Dr Sarah Morse introduced the highlights of the Society year.

Fellows noted the success of the Lockdown Learner Challenge in summer 2020. The Society's multilingualism symposium, *Trwy Brism Iaith*, had originally been scheduled for spring 2020. As the country went into lockdown in 2020, the decision was made to take the event online in the autumn. It was the Society's most successful event to date. Over three days, 40 speakers contributed to 11 different panels. 355 people registered to attend on Zoom, and the event attracted over 450 different audience members on the live stream and webinars.

New ways of working had facilitated greater engagement with other national academies. The Society had launched the Celtic Academies Alliance with the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Irish Academy. This would enable the three academies to pool the wide-ranging expertise and practitioner experience that exists within their memberships, to inform public policy developments at both the UK level and within the devolved nations.

The Society's Wales Studies network continued to grow and would be launching a small pilot grant scheme in May 2021.

Dr Morse highlighted the priorities for the coming months, including monitoring and contributing to the scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Tertiary Education and Research Bill, responding to the BEIS and UKRI research strategies on Place and People and Culture, continuing to monitor developments in the 'levelling up' agenda and the Shared Prosperity Fund at UK level, and work on innovation strategies.

Dr Morse was also developing a public affairs strategy that would ensure that the Society's work continued to be impactful, ethical and relevant.

The Chief Executive thanked Sarah for her efforts and noted her tireless work to coordinate the Society's public affairs.

He noted that the Society's work relating to Wales and the World had spanned two Society years and had included three in-person events and one event hosted online. The events had explored Wales' international assets and considered how the nation presents itself on the word stage.

Upon conclusion, the events produced a number of recommendations. These included how Wales can use its distinctive assets more clearly; the use of soft power to realise 'hard' economic benefits; the need for longer-term international planning; and a recommendation for Wales to make better use of UK and international institutions and to expect more from them.

The first large-scale online event hosted by the Society took place in October 2020. This was an 'in conversation' event on children's rights with Mary McAleese (8<sup>th</sup> President of Ireland and Honorary Fellow of the Society) and Sally Holland, the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Prior to lockdown, the Society had been planning two pilot events for a new network of early career researchers. This was in response to the long-established desire to set up a Young Academy or similar institution in Wales. Unfortunately, the pandemic made physical events impossible. Instead, the Society established an online network of over 700 early to mid-career researchers and had hosted 3 online events. The Chief Executive thanked all the Fellows who had donated to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary funding appeal, which had made it possible for the work to be carried out. He also thanked HEFCW for the grant they had given the Society to support this work.

Dr Robin Gwyndaf addressed the AGM and thanked the staff team for all their work over the past year. He noted that he had previously mentioned the importance of the Welsh language and had requested that the Society give priority to Welsh over English. He was happy to see that the Society had made real progress and it was plain to see the efforts that were being made.

The President thanked Dr Gwyndaf for his comments and noted his agreement. It had not been an easy year for anyone, but it had been a pleasure to work with the staff during this time.

## 6. Honours, Prizes and Awards

The President noted that tribute had not been paid to Professor Sir Vaughan Jones KNZM FRS FRSNZ FAA HonFLSW who had sadly died in 2020, and apologised for this omission.

Members **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** paper AGM/2021/03, covering Honours, Prizes and Awards.

The President noted that since the AGM papers had been distributed, Professor Bernard Schutz had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society.

He noted the wonderful achievements of the Society's Fellows throughout the year and congratulated all those who had been recognised.

The President announced the Society's medal winners:

The Frances Hoggan Medal for outstanding research by women in STEMM had been awarded to Professor Dianne Edwards CBE ScD FRSE FLS FLSW FRS MAE

The Menelaus Medal for excellence in engineering and technology had been awarded to Dr Drew Nelson OBE FREng DEng FLSW

The Hugh Owen Medal for outstanding educational research in Wales had been awarded to Professor EJ Renold, Professor of Childhood Studies, Cardiff University

The Dillwyn Medals for outstanding contributions by early career researchers had been awarded to:

Dillwyn Medal for STEMM: Dr Emrys Evans, Royal Society University Research Fellow, Swansea University

Dillwyn Medal for Humanities & Creative Arts: Dr Ben Guy, Teaching Associate, Dept of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, Cambridge University

Dillwyn Medal for Social Sciences, Education & Business: Dr Annie (Ana) Khaled Tubadji, Senior Lecturer in Economics, Swansea University

The President congratulated all the medal winners and noted that a medal presentation ceremony would take place in early July.

## 7. Introduction to Honorary Fellows

Professor Helen Fulton, Vice-President for HASS, introduced the Society's new Honorary Fellow.

**Professor Hazel V. Carby** was a pioneer in the fields of black feminism and a leading scholar in black diasporic literature and culture. Among other honours, she had been awarded the American Studies Association's Jay B. Hubbell Medal for lifetime achievement in American Literature, and the British Academy's Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Global Cultural Understanding. She was Professor Emeritus of African American Studies and American Studies at Yale University.

Professor Carby thanked Professor Fulton and addressed the AGM:

"My grandmother Beatrice was born on Eldon Street in Canton into an environment and soundscape dominated by the GWR and coal extraction and transportation. The street name commemorated Lord Eldon, a Tory Lord Chancellor who fiercely opposed the 1807 bill to end the slave trade. My mother, Iris, was born in Llantrisant in 1920.

"Each year of our childhood, my brother and I travelled from London to Cardiff to live with relatives for the length of the school summer holidays. Before the Mint, before the Royal Glamorgan Hospital and British Airways Avionics, before the housing development, shopping centres, retail parks, leisure center and Costa Coffee, I explored the area from my aunt's house in Pontyclun, across fields hugging two rivers to Talbot Green and the cottage of a great uncle who used to work for the GWR, and up to Llantrisant and the path to the Billy Wynt. From the top of the stone tower the view seemed boundless, in contrast to Pollards Hill in Mitcham from where all I could see were regimented acres of south London housing estates. My mother introduced me to Llantrisant, telling me about Paul Robeson and his film *The Proud Valley*, scenes of which were filmed there.

"My father, Carl, was born under colonial rule in the city of Kingston, Jamaica on a street overshadowed by the General Penitentiary. The British government and Tate & Lyle determined that Jamaica's black population had to survive on starvation wages. My father was always hungry until he arrived in Canada in 1943 for training as an RAF airman.

"Paul Robeson and *The Proud Valley* was beloved by my parents because of its vision of the possibility of racial solidarity and reconciliation, a counter to the daily racist assaults and brutal encounters which battered their interracial relationship and their half-caste children. Not one of their Welsh aunts or uncles approved of the marriage of Iris and Carl but they did tolerate the

presence of their children, took them to Chapel every Sunday and on the annual Methodist outing to Porthcawl.

“Adults referred to some of the children on the beach as picaninnies and I realised that name included me and my brother. We had to explain to our cousins that our darker skin wouldn’t wash off no matter how patiently they tried to rub us clean.

“My career as an educator did not begin in the hallowed halls of Yale University but in the classrooms and streets of the East End of London in 1972, where my black students were terrorised by violence and the threat of violence: bricks thrown through windows landed on their beds as they slept; faeces and flaming bottles were pushed through their letter boxes; subject to constant abuse going to and from school or the shops, they also ran the gauntlet of racist slogans daubed throughout our neighbourhoods. At any hour of any day, they could be subject to physical and/or mental abuse, in or out of school, from their peers, from shopkeepers, from the police and social service workers who had no understanding of the history of colonialism and denied that black people could be British.

“Members of the National Front ran freely through the streets of the London borough of Newham and were also in my classroom. The violence they perpetrated against black and brown bodies was supported and blatantly encouraged by our local police force. When marauding mobs of fascists rampaged across council estates to terrorise black residents, the Met was nowhere to be found. The police were in many ways, “an army of occupation”. In response, we marched and marched in protest while the police spat their contempt at us and our white allies. Eyes full of hatred, fingers twitching clutching batons, hands itching to wrap themselves around our throats.

“In my academic career I have researched and taught the history and culture of the black diaspora, the long history of racial capitalism, colonialism and imperialism, forging links to the institutional racism of contemporary Britain and North America. But the legacy of colonialism is also environmental degradation and climate catastrophe – it was not only people who were colonized but entire ecologies, land, plants and animals. I am now focused on the art, literature and politics of imagining a future from the ruins, on environmental racism and injustice and on black and indigenous opposition to the extraction and transportation of fossil fuels.

“Despite the target of Wales achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, which is actually not soon enough, more than half a billion pounds are still invested in fossil fuels by Wales’ local authority pension fund. It would be fitting, perhaps, if Wales, with its history of mining for coal, copper, gold, lead and metal ores could project its voice on the world stage in favour of the urgent task of eliminating all extraction and use of fossil fuels.

“Thank you for welcoming me into your fellowship.”

Professor Fulton noted that **Professor Sir Michael Berry** was one of the world’s leading theoretical physicists. He had made major contributions to mathematical physics in both the classical and quantum domains and at their interface. His many prizes included the 1990 Royal Medal of the Royal Society, the 1996 Dirac Medal of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, the 1998 Wolf Prize and the 2005 Polya Prize. He was Melville Wills Professor of Physics (Emeritus) at Bristol University.

Sir Michael thanked Professor Fulton and addressed the AGM:

“Dylwn i fod yn siarad Cymraeg ond rwy'n ymddiheuro nad wyf yn medru gwneud hynny

“(I should speak Welsh, and apologise for not being able to.)

“What an honour to be granted this association with Wales, a country that has contributed so much to the culture of our islands and beyond. My being here (alas in the virtual sense of ‘here’) is through theoretical physics. More than half a century of scribbling, tapping at the computer, trying to understand how mathematics describes or explains or underlies the physical aspects of the world, why it works: seeking to isolate the elementary particle of sudden understanding, what I call the clariton, the ‘Aha!’ moment – dreaming of the insight that would ring true as a single note from Louis Armstrong’s trumpet. If only. And now, here I am. Strange, isn’t it?

“Today reinforces my family connection with your country. My Welsh-speaking son-in-law Gwion is Ceredigion Youth Service’s Children and Young People’s Participation Officer. He’s from a Carmarthen sheep-farming family, and lives with my daughter and their son among woods and rolling hills, and they still keep a few sheep. So my little grandson, splendidly named Forest Idris Brynmor Bowen, is bilingual, and at school entirely Welsh-speaking. My daughter’s association with Welsh culture is through the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea, showcasing Welsh industry and innovation. She has worked there since it opened; before that, Cardiff, at the National Museum of Wales. Good connections.

“Complementary to Welsh culture is diversity. I’m careful with my words. It’s a narrow view that regards the culture of a country, and multicultural diversity, as somehow opposed to each other. For those of us steeped in quantum physics thinking, they go together naturally: I give you my three word lecture on quantum mechanics, and not or. It is so good that this is explicitly recognised in the mission statement of your Society – or as I can now say, our Society. This gives me an excuse to tell you about my extreme multicultural experience. I was in Aberystwyth lecturing to students. That fine town is rather far from Bristol; I’m a world traveller but like many Englishmen I hadn’t realised how big Wales is. Anyway, in Aberystwyth I enjoyed an Indian lunch, in a Welsh town, by an English pier, overlooking the Irish sea. You can’t get more multicultural than that.

“A related theme, about the inclusiveness of the Learned Society of Wales. In London, we have the Royal Society, for science, and just a few doors away but separate, the British Academy, for what is awkwardly called the humanities, as though science is somehow inhuman – I was disappointed to hear your Prince (Charles) refer to what we do as “cold science”. In this society, there is no such separation. Therefore I’m especially delighted that this session today is hosted by Helen Fulton, my Bristol colleague in the humanities.

“Especially important is making the discoveries and practices of science accessible to people who are not scientists. I am not primarily an educator, but I welcome every opportunity to talk about science to a range of wider publics. You’re very good at this in Wales. I’ve mentioned the Waterfront Museum, and of course you have Techniquet, counterpart of our Bristol Exploratory just across the water, with which I was associated from its birth in 1981: showing and doing rather than telling (it morphed into Explore at Bristol; now it’s We the Curious). I first met Welsh physics teachers when I was invited to speak in Cardiff by the inspiring Goronwy Jones – someone many of you will

remember. More recently, I enjoyed meeting the enthusiastic participants at the Welsh Physics Teachers' Conference in Brecon. And it's been a pleasure to address varied audiences in Swansea, Bangor, Aberystwyth (as I mentioned), and in the splendid isolation of Gregynog. I'm particularly proud of a 1989 picture in the Times Higher Education Supplement, showing me lecturing to students in Caerleon while holding my one-year old daughter, who I had to look after that day.

"Finally, a story – somewhat evocative of your Eisteddfod – about a mediaeval poetry competition in the mountains in Spain. Poets young and old travelled to what were called the Floral Games to declaim their verses – in Occitan, a collection of dialects that became Catalan – hoping to win an award. The third prize was a silver rose, the second prize was a gold rose, and the first prize was ... a real rose. Today's real rose is an honour I deeply appreciate.

"Diolch yn fawr! (Thank you very much!)"

## **8. Announcement of New Fellows**

Members **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** paper AGM/2021/04, which outlined the process for the formal introduction of new Fellows.

Professor Michael Charlton, Vice-President for STEMM, invited the President to formally welcome all new Fellows to the Society. The President addressed them by saying:

*"In the name and by the authority of The Learned Society of Wales, I admit you as Fellows thereof."*

The Vice-President introduced each of the elected new Fellows, and the President concluded the induction by stating:

*"As an elected Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales, they undertake to do all within their power to uphold the purposes and good name of the Society."*

## **9. Annual Address by the President, Professor Hywel Thomas**

Professor Thomas presented to Fellows his annual address, the text of which would be made available on the Publications page of the Society's website.

Professor Michael Charlton noted that due to a technical issue during his presentation, two slides had been omitted. He apologised and welcomed Professor David Benton and Professor Alan Dix to the Fellowship.

## **10. Date of the Next Meeting**

The President noted that the next AGM would be held on Wednesday 25 May 2022.

*The AGM concluded at 4.30 p.m.*

**Apologies for the AGM were received from:**

Professor Malcolm Evans, Lord Griffiths of Burry Port, Professor Ralph Griffiths, Professor Peter Halligan, Professor Glyn Hewinson, Professor Biagio Lucini, Professor Ceri Phillips, Professor Judith Phillips