

Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting of the IBMT Manchester Conference Centre, 15 October 2022

In attendance: Gerry Abrahams, Mike Arnott, Lewis Ashworth, Richard Baxell, Terry Bayes, Ian Binnie, George Brigg, David Chanter, Paul Coles, Patrick Crampsie, Lisa Croft, Roland Davies, Pat Devine, Megan Dobney, Tony Fox, Pauline Fraser, Mary Greening, Robert Hargreaves, John Haywood, Hilary Jones, Jim Jump, Denis Lenihan, Shen Liknaitzky, Alan Lloyd, Dolores Long, Gideon Long, Simon Martinez, Rob McDonald, David McKnight, Manuel Moreno, Brenda O'Riordan, Eddie Redmond, Kathryn Rodriguez, Manuel Rodriguez, Harry Owens, Beth Richards, Ian Trotter, Sandra Trotter, Ernest Walker, Lynda Walker, Stuart Walsh, Ajmal Waqif, Paul Ward, Linda Wild, Mike Wild

1 **Chair's opening remarks**

Chair Jim Jump welcomed everyone to the 2022 AGM in Manchester and reminded attendees that first AGM was held in Manchester. UNISON NW and NW International Brigade Memorial Group were thanked for hosting the event.

2 **Apologies for absence:** Margaret Bruton, Duncan Longstaffe, Marshall Mateer, Moira Mateer, Jim McGarrol, Margaret McKenna, Pearce McKenna, Luke O'Riordan, Marlene Sidaway, Richard Thorpe

3 **Fraternal greetings:** received from:

The Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales, Madrid: Dear friends and relatives of the anti-fascist volunteers in the International Brigades,

We send you our fraternal greetings from Spain, where so many British men and women chose to do their moral duty against the advance of international fascism. We honour and remember them, and we are delighted to announce that we will be marking the site of the original memorial in Jarama as soon as it becomes feasible. We are also hoping to share more information about the nationality being extended to the descendants of the International Brigaders in the next coming weeks, when the new Law of Historical Memory is published in full.

As winter approaches and the working class will see our disposable income greatly reduced due to the cost of living crisis, we stand united and in solidarity. In the current political climate, with the apparently unstoppable advance of fascism in Europe and beyond, there is even more cause to celebrate and commemorate the men and women in the International Brigades who made a decision in 1936 to fight an ideology of hate and exploitation.

Let's remember their bravery and determination in our hearts and minds and in a proper monument when the time comes.

From the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, New York: Warmest greetings from ALBA to all of the men and women in our sister organisation, the International Brigade Memorial Trust.

These times demand that now, more than ever, we recommit to the values and tell the history of the brave anti-fascists of the Fifteenth Brigade. They are role models whose stories, when uncovered and told, as you do in your work, serve to inspire new generations in the struggle for peace, democracy, human rights and social justice.

We wish you the greatest success in your annual general meeting in Manchester.

From IBMT President Marlene Sidaway: My greetings and best wishes to IBMT members at the Annual General Meeting.

I'm sorry I can't be with you on this important occasion. I hope the AGM goes well and that you all enjoy your time together at the various events that Dolores [Long], Hilary [Jones] and the North West team have arranged.

PS: If 'The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel' is coming to a theatre near you, please come and see it and say 'hello'.

Lord Mayor of Manchester: Chair welcomed Manchester Lord Mayor, Cllr Donna Ludford, to open the AGM. Mayor acknowledged the contribution made by NW Brigaders and the NW Aid to Spain movement in the fight for democracy in Spain. Reminder that the plaque in the Manchester Central Library was placed by Greater Manchester Council. Councillor Sean McHale Councillor for Clayton and Openshaw accompanied the Lord Mayor.

MP for Rochdale: Tony Lloyd welcomed people to Manchester and spoke of the importance of maintaining the memory of the International Brigades' memory and the IBMT's cause.

4 **Approval of minutes from AGM 9 October 2021:** Approved. There were no matters arising.

5 **Executive Committee annual report** Megan introduced the report, highlighting: new merchandise – an excellent set of 20 postcards from 1937, and a seasonal greetings card; the importance of the education project overseen by Jim in securing better understanding in schools of the 1936 to 1939 period; progress on the Picasso in Sheffield project to site a sculpture in the city centre; the generous offer from Pedal4Progress to organise a fundraising bike ride over the Pyrenees to Barcelona.

6 **Finance report for April 2021 to March 2022:** Paul spoke to the summary report and was thanked for his excellent work on finances.

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2020-2021	2021-2022
Total income	39,444	38,704		
Donation income	12,639	8,817		
Subscription income	12,091	15,460		
"Earned" income (merchandise)	14,569	14,418		
Total expenditure			46,875	48,109
Expenditure on charitable activities			14,101	16,947
Support costs			32,774	31,162

Deficit			7,431	9,405
Total funds at 31 March 2022	92,597	83,192		
Reserves made up of:				
• Tangible fixed assets	846	846		
• Stock (merchandise)	1,345	6,092		
• Cash in hand	87,004	77,254		

Membership Strategy Working Party Report: Presented by Ajmal Waqif of the Membership Strategy Working Party (Ajmal Waqif, Megan Dobney, Alan Lloyd, Jonathan Havard, David McKnight) formed to address financial situation and options for increasing membership and income following the initial report to the Trustees in May.

Issues to be addressed:

- IBMT running at a loss, projected budget for financial year 2022-2023 estimates shortfall of £12,637
- lower membership has led to low membership income
- strategies to increase membership required
- more efficient membership tracking,
- database that automates lapsed and renewal procedures
- members to be encouraged to use online direct debit for membership
- decisions needed on scaling back or changing form of the magazine

Discussion following Ajmal's report covered:

- recognition that the culture of 'joining' an organisation has changed
- IBMT resources can be accessed without the need to join the IBMT
- strong support for the magazine but recognition that it is costly
- two printed and one copy online a possibility
- cost of postage
- magazine could be delivered totally online
- union sponsorship
- increase membership fees
- members of IBMT need to encourage people to join

7 **Election of two scrutineers:** Robert Hargreaves and Beth Richards were elected.

8 **Election of five EC Members:** Members made a brief contribution before the ballot papers were collected.

9 **Date and place of 2023 AGM:** Date agreed at Saturday 7 October 2023. Stockton and Sheffield were discussed as possible venues. The EC will seek offers from groups of members.

10 **Any Other Business: Memorial for Brigaders at National Memorial Arboretum:** Dolores Long approached by Orwell Society and John Roberts (ex Sandhurst Colonel) on possibility of a memorial to the Brigaders at NMA. The guidelines of the NMA on groups that can place a memorial have changed. Andy Ansell (NMA Memorials Committee) is supportive of the proposal from the Orwell Society. NMA visited by Quentin Kopp and Dolores Long. Proposal has been discussed previously by the IBMT and there were objections from several leading Brigaders. To be discussed at next EC meeting.

11 **Scrutineers report of election results:** the results were as follows: Mike Arnott 44, Megan Dobney 44, Jim Jump 46, David McKnight 38, Luke O’Riordan 37, Harry Owens 11. 47 ballot papers were counted.

Therefore Mike, Megan, Jim and David are elected for three years, and Luke for two years.

12 Jim closed the meeting with further thanks to the NW Comrades, and to Unison NW.