



Minutes of the **National Conference 2005**

University of Manchester, 14-16 October 2005

Workers' Educational Association
Quick House, 65 Clifton Street, London EC2A 4JE

Registered Charity Number: 314001

Attendance

5	Elected National Officers
14	Other Trustees
37	Delegates from Branches / Local Associations
31	Delegates from Regions / WEA Scotland
4	Members of the Standing Orders Committee
53	Staff and Visitors

Introduction

The President, David Lanch, introduced the General Secretary, Richard Bolsin, who took up his post in February 2004.

The General Secretary welcomed everyone to this his first Conference and reported he is keen to meet everyone and invited those attending whom he had not already met to approach him during Conference in order to make their acquaintance.

He reminded everyone that consultation events on incorporation had taken place around the country and in Scotland earlier in the year and that the Trustees have adopted the motion for the Workers' Educational Association to approve the principle of incorporation of the charity as a company limited by guarantee.

Standing Orders Committee Report

Michael Crilly, Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, moved the Report of the Standing Orders Committee detailing the Timetable and Order of Business.

It was reported that one member of the Committee, Shirley Harris, is very ill and had not been able to serve on the Committee. In addition, because neither Frank Colls nor Jean Spendlove were able to be present at Conference, both Ann Maybrey and Ron Peck had been appointed to the Standing Orders Committee by the National Executive Committee.

An Emergency Motion had been proposed by the National Executive Committee to Motion A2 to include a further Clause No. 2.6. This had been ruled Out of Order by the Standing Orders Committee since it was considered not to be of an emergency nature, nor were any Amendments allowed to the NEC's motions relating to the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

It was noted the National Executive Committee's recommendation is that, following incorporation, there would be 12 Trustees made up by 4 Officers elected initially by this Conference, 4 from England and Scotland nominated by the Association Committee and 4 Independent Trustees.

Following a vote, Conference approved the Standing Orders Committee Report.

Minutes

The minutes of National Conference held at Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Westminster on 25th May 2003 were considered and accepted as a correct record.

A query regarding the format of the minutes was raised and the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee agreed to write to the Branch member following Conference.

Incorporation

The President introduced Motion A1 which was formally moved by the National Executive Committee as follows:

A] INCORPORATION

MEMORANDUM & ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

A1] This Conference approves the principle of incorporation of the charity as a company limited by guarantee under the name of the Workers' Educational Association, and authorises the National Executive Committee to take all steps necessary to achieve this as soon as may be practicable. To that end, this Conference approves the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company known as the Workers' Educational Association (the "Company") submitted to Conference, subject to any changes deemed by the NEC to be necessary or expedient on legal advice to conform to company or charity law or the advice or requirements of any charity or other regulator.

Following debate a vote was taken: 85 in favour, 2 Abstentions.

The President introduced Motion A2 which was formally moved by the National Executive Committee as follows:

AMENDMENT OF THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MEMORANDUM & ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

A2] This Conference resolves that the following amendments be made to the WEA Constitution as agreed at National Conference May 2001, and to the Standing Orders Governing National Conferences attached thereto, to take effect at the close of this Conference except for the elections of the two new Deputy Presidents to become Association Officers in sub-amendment 2.3 which shall take immediate effect during the Conference:-

2.1 That clause 2 of the 2001 Constitution be deleted in its entirety and replaced by the following:

"The object of the Association is to promote adult and general education for the benefit of the community regionally, nationally and internationally based on democratic principles in its organisation and practice, through the participation of its voluntary members. In pursuit of this object, the Association shall have the following aims: -

- a) stimulating and responding to the demand for liberal education, through the direct provision of courses and other activities;
- b) relieving poverty and providing for the needs of working class people and of those who are socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged and in particular (but without limitation) by providing education and teaching skills for employment, voluntary work and social inclusion (defined as promoting equality, diversity, multi-cultural awareness, human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international instruments, participation in civil society including volunteering, self-confidence and self-development among the disadvantaged, literacy, numeracy and vocational education and skills for the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment, all towards supporting the disadvantaged of all ages and enabling improvement in their education standards, levels of social, economic and cultural engagement and general health and well-being);
- c) providing educational programmes for appropriate organisations concerned with collective educational needs in the community and in the workplace;

- d) generally furthering the advancement of education to the end that all people in England, Scotland and other parts of the world may have full access to the education needed for their complete individual and social development;
 - e) promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of charities with similar purposes and the efficient and effective application of resources for such purposes, in particular by promoting and disseminating educational programmes and models of activity, projects or good practice developed or carried out by the Association nationally and internationally in any appropriate form or format, and by the delivery of support services generally to such charities."
- 2.2 That the word 'District' or 'Districts' in all contexts shall be deleted and the word "Region" or "Regions" respectively shall be substituted except that in clause 7.2 (ii) "District Secretaries" shall be changed to "Regional Secretaries";
- 2.3 That the elections of the two Vice-Presidents and Deputy President in the WEA Constitution be replaced by the election of two Deputy Presidents during the Conference and that valid nominations for the elections of the three former National Officers shall be deemed valid for the election of the two Deputy Presidents who will become Association Officers and the following be substituted for existing clause 6.2 of the Constitution:-
- "6.2 From the close of National Conference in 2005, the National Executive Committee shall comprise only:-
- i] four Association Officers (the President, two Deputy Presidents and Treasurer) to be elected at the National Conference in 2005 when the President and one Deputy President will be elected until the election of their successors at the Association Conference in 2007 and the other Deputy President and the Treasurer will be elected until the election of their successors at the Association Conference in 2009;
 - ii] until the close of the AGMs of the respective English Regions in 2005, but in any case not after 30 November 2005, one previously elected representative of each of the former English Districts subsumed in that Region, and thereafter one elected representative from each of the Association's Regions in England;
 - iii] two elected representatives of the Scottish Association;
 - iv] up to five further individuals co-opted by the NEC."
- 2.4 That in clause 6.12 of the Constitution in line 1, and in paragraph 12 of the Standing Orders Governing National Conferences, the words 'President, Deputy President , Treasurer and [two] Vice Presidents' shall be deleted and the words "President, two Deputy Presidents and Treasurer" shall be substituted.
- 2.5 That all other references to 'National Officers' or 'five National Officers' shall be deleted and the words "Association Officers" or "four Association Officers" respectively shall be substituted."

A vote was taken and A2 was passed unanimously by 83 votes.

CONFERENCE 2005 ADJOURNED

An Extraordinary National Conference was convened and the President introduced Motion B1 which was formally moved by the National Executive Committee as follows:

B] TRANSFER OF ASSETS AND DISSOLUTION

B1] This Conference resolves to authorise the NEC to transfer to the Company (as defined in Resolution A1) the entire assets and undertaking of the WEA (subject to its liabilities) on such terms as the NEC think fit subject to the requirement that any person who is a member of the WEA on the date of such transfer shall be entitled to Association Membership of the new charitable Company on the terms of the Company's Articles of Association; and in accordance with clause 12 of the WEA Constitution that after the transfer of the assets and liabilities of the WEA to the Company the WEA shall be dissolved, the date of actual dissolution to be determined by the NEC and any assets remaining after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall, so far as not already transferred to the Company, be transferred to the Company.

Following a vote being taken, the motion was carried unanimously by 88 votes.

CONFERENCE 2005 RECONVENED

President's Welcome

The President, David Lanch, welcomed delegates and visitors to the Conference.

Trustees' Reports and Financial Statements

The Honorary Treasurer, Peter Cooper, introduced the Trustees' Reports and Financial Statements on behalf of the National Executive Committee for the period ended 31st July 2004. These were received by Conference.

Officers of the Association

The following were declared to serve in the offices named:

President	David Lanch
Deputy President	Eddie Conway
Deputy President	Chris Morton
Treasurer	Peter Cooper

Standing Orders Committee

The following were declared to serve on the Standing Orders Committee:

Gill Aldridge
Frank Colls
Michael Crilly
Ann Maybrey
Betty Wolfenden

President's Address

The President outlined events which had taken place in the Association since its Centenary celebrations to today's momentous decision to incorporate. He asked conference to support him and other Trustees for the future of the Workers' Educational Association through the Twenty First Century and beyond.

General Secretary's Address

Richard Bolsin outlined his vision and values for the future of the Association. The ALI Re-Inspection will be completed by December 2005, resulting in greater opportunity to focus on planning to enable the WEA to return to its former pre-eminence across England and Scotland. It will be essential to encourage new students and to influence others through the quality of what we do. He reminded Conference it is within our grasp to recover our greatness which will be challenging for all. He listed the following priorities:

- Demonstrating Improved Quality
- Making Better Use of all our Resources
- Rebalancing and Renewing
- Leading and Communicating
- Strengthening Governance
- Having Pride in the WEA

Debates on Further Motions

Conference considered the motions contained in the Agenda. Decisions taken are detailed below. The numbers refer to those in the Agenda. The original proposers are detailed for information.

The following motions were carried and become resolutions of conference:

1. This conference calls on the new Trustee body when elected to produce a report which outlines the necessary relationships between the main structures of the WEA. This will include the key governance structures at all levels - national, regional, area, branch and other local organisation; it must also include the relationships with the management structures.

Yorkshire and Humber Region

3. This Conference notes that we are an Association which celebrates and depends on the partnership between voluntary members and paid staff and calls on the new Trustee body when elected to ensure that this partnership is confirmed and deepened and that a statement outlining this is produced.

Yorkshire and Humber Region

4. This conference recognises that the nature of LSC funding increasingly threatens the traditional branch programme. While recognising the importance of targeted provision and widening participation this conference calls on the new Trustee body when elected to draw up plans to safeguard the provision of high quality liberal adult education.

Yorkshire and Humber Region

5. This Conference applauds the General Secretary's efforts to raise the profile of the WEA and its perspective on adult learning in the national press and other contexts:

endorses the NIACE/WEA manifesto entitled *Let's Put The Life Back Into Adult Learning* published earlier this year, and especially the commitments to focus on learning that enables people to question and challenge in informed ways as well as connect learning with social and civic action leading to a transfer of power from the powerful to the powerless;

and in welcoming these reaffirmations of WEA values:

requests the National Executive Committee to establish a working group, composed equally of staff and members, with a remit to devise a campaign strategy for safeguarding funding for liberal adult education, and to report to the next National Conference on the progress of the campaign."

North East Region

6. This Conference believes that an inclusive, tolerant and economically successful society can be achieved only when all adults have the opportunity of study for its own sake throughout their lives. The WEA commits itself to campaigning on this principle and to welcoming adults returning to education. It calls on Government to ensure that classes offering high quality, serious, liberal adult education are accessible to all at an affordable price, within an appropriate regulatory framework.

National Executive Committee

7. This Conference notes that the WEA has a long and proud history of campaigning locally, nationally and internationally in partnership with other bodies for educational change to benefit working class people; it calls on the new Trustee body when elected to conform fully to our governing document and strengthen this aspect of our Association. Conference applauds all such work carried out over the last year and calls for the office of Portfolio Holder for Affiliations and Partnerships to be established with support necessary to continue and extend this work.

Yorkshire and Humber Region

The following motion was lost:

2. This Conference expresses its sadness that the long-held tradition of student democracy within the WEA is being seriously eroded.

Grantham Branch

Presentations

Presentations were made to Janet Racklyeft and to Colin Barnes who retired from their national roles following Conference.

Vote of Thanks

A vote of thanks to all those concerned with the organization of, and participation in, Conference was given by Ms Pat Kynaston of North West Region.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF CONFERENCE

WEa



LearningforLife

Workers' Educational Association
Quick House, 65 Clifton Street, London EC2A 4JE
Tel: 020 7426 3450
www.wea.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 314001

National Conference 2005
Venue: The University of Manchester, Sackville Street Site, Manchester M60 1QD