



The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

COMMITTEE MEETING

20th November 2009. 1-5pm G.033 (Ground Floor Arthur Lewis Building) University of Manchester.

Minutes

1. **Present:** James Fairhead (Chair), Simone Abram (Secretary), Ro Jackson, Raminder Kaur, Nayanika Mookherjee, Ian Fairweather, James Staples,

2. **Apologies**

Garry Marvin, Catherine Degnen

3. **Minutes of 5-06-09**

Were accepted.

4. **Matters arising**

6a. James met with AHRC and ESRC but has not called the benchmarking group together yet – this remains to be done. GM attended the AHRC media event on impacts of research; it was mostly PR.

The committee had a short discussion about the current over-emphasis on 'impact' in the Research Evaluation Framework. IF noted that C-SAP could support arguments about the role of teaching as an impact (including the C-SAP Teaching awards). This will feed into the HoDs meeting next week.

James will re-circulate the AHRC document *Deliberating the Nature of Impact*.

Cicada affair: JF met with a group of lobbyists concerned about children in 'reality TV' in Britain. They shared our take exactly – that programmes should work through ethics committees in the way that research does. Agreed that a framework for realityTV ethics should be established. JF wrote a piece for parliamentary deliberation. [James to forward name of organisation and MP]. No result was noted – broadcasting lobby is extremely powerful and does not seem eager to be constrained by ethical codes. NM noted that we had had a plan to organise an event on this theme in summer 2010 preceded by a blog (NB there is a blogspot available from april to June). **JS will contact Garry to ask if he still has interest in this proposal.**

Ro will alert people to WCAA discounts before the AAA – and will send more information when the WCAA website has been finalised.

d. nothing further to report on Jeremy McClancy's enquiry about an ethics game.

f. **James and James will exchange information about the Sage Handbook so that JS is better informed on what it is about before contacting the editors.**

5. **Annals/Directory**

a. Progress (including non-departmental anthropologists?)

Ro is now chasing annals reports from departments to replace the ones online. Ro asked whether old dept news and staff listings should stay online. The committee agreed that it would be useful to keep the archive in the public domain. **Ro will archive them year by year so the old reports will remain online.**

Non-anth dept members: the directory is of all current members, wherever (or whether or not) they work. Staff lists from departments are not searchable directories. Ro suggested that we allow an option for people not within depts to list additional depts or additional persons outside anthropology departments. JF noted that making visible the activities of anthropologists outside departments would be a useful exercise in its own right. Members will be invited to write a short paragraph describing their department or what their role as an anthropologist within the department. NM indicated that at Lancaster there are several anthropologists in the Sociology department, and in the Geography department. This could potentially also be an attraction to recruit members from outside anthropology departments. IF noted that it would be useful for C-SAP and others organising events to find where anthropologists might be contacted. JF indicated that AoB network have wanted to be better profiled too, so this might be an opportunity. **Ro/Cate: will circulate networks with an invitation to contribute information.**

The Directory is in progress and Ro hopes that it will be ready by the end of the year. The database redesign is now complete and has been tested. Once we are happy that it has been tested, Ro will launch it in January.

6. Reports

a. Chair

1) ESRC postgrad training. JF added to his report that if a request for nominations to research council business arises again, then he would circulate the committee for proposals. Unfortunately, these nominations were required in very short time. Jonathan Spencer is more involved in the research training question than our nominees, and will inform the HoDs meeting next week. He did not want to be nominated this time.

2) REF consultation. JF circulated a document yesterday that was sent to HoDs in advance of their meeting next week that outlines the anthropology position on the REF consultation document. He outlined the key issues: The over-riding concern is the lack of clarity or formality about the management of sub-sub-panels. JF has been in contact with Hastings Donnan (QUB), chair of last Anthropology RAE panel 2008, and acting as link person between QAA and Anthropology – he was not consulted on either the shotgun wedding with sociology or the format of panels. Sociology have indicated that they are not keen to go into a joint panel with anthropology (an unconsummated marriage!) (Ro notes, that in an arranged marriage, it is the parents who choose = QAA?). There are allies in other disciplines seeking to safeguard their own position, but within the REF bureaucracy there is a view that economies must be achieved by scaling up. Anthropology has only about 250 eligible academics, around a quarter of the number recommended for a panel. ASA will be in a difficult position of being asked who we would prefer to be associated with – which is a problem because different departments will gain from different associations. Our statement is likely to suggest that whichever partner is picked, the important thing will be to secure anthropology within any partnership.

James F will circulate the minutes or response to consultation that emerges from the HoDs meeting.

4. RAI have been successful in establishing an A level in Anthropology that is now available for the A-level curriculum. We have been supportive to this initiative and encourage depts to circulate the request for examiners to their alumni. IF pointed out that it is not yet possible to take a PGCE for Secondary Education in Anthropology to allow anthropology graduates to teach the a-level. As yet there is only a small number of qualified teachers, and our members will be encouraged to offer support to secondary school teachers wishing to, or actively implementing anthropology A-level.

IF will circulate the curriculum to the committee so that they can become acquainted with the direction of the a-level. IF will ask RAI if we can circulate the curriculum to our membership.

SA will communicate with Nafisa about raising the profile of the A-level on the RAI website.

5. ASA letter to Peruvian government on Amazon unrest. NM asked whether we only respond to members' requests or do we take an active stance on similar situations? JF noted that we are not a

lobbying organisation on behalf of indigenous people (or the like), but that we are in a position to respond to members' concerns, and we can also support the work of WCAA.

6. Anthropology at Lampeter was under threat and asked for our support, which we offered in full, helpfully able to demonstrate our commitment by having already agreed that Lampeter will host ASA11. It appears that its future is now relatively secure. All staff were reappointed to their jobs.

7. Academy of social sciences. We seem to have made the right move at the right time. Cary Cooper does seem to be taking the ACSS in a very dynamic direction. **We will put re-joining on the AGM agenda.**

b. Treasurer

Most important task is to chase up direct debit payments. They run January to January – it took some time to set up. Ro has reminded and chased, but there are still members who do not pay. Ro has asked Megan to pick people off individually. IF suggested highlighting that they are due in January.

c. Administrator

Ro will continue to chase 09 memberships in 2010. BlipTV is ready for films, so Ro will chase up the films for the website. The blog requires quite a lot of support – in particular the spam filter is very aggressive, hence commenting is turned off between live blogs, because of the spam problem. Anthropology Matters webdesign is now operated by Ro, with an open access journal system. **Ro and Simone will discuss the potential for using this system for ASAonline.** David Mills and Didi Spencer have set up a teaching anthropology journal which we are hosting (supported by C-SAP). It should be launched before the end of the year.

Conferences: ASA 08 and 09, have brought us an income. ASA10 budget currently promises a breakeven, so Ro asked if ASA will support Ro and Megan's scoping visit to QUB, that, if the conference produces a surplus, will be refunded from that source. Ro will be travelling to Maynooth on EASA expenses but additional expenses would be welcome, roughly £300. **Committee agreed to cover their expenses in relation to the ASA conference.**

Ro will pursue the proposal to hold a meeting of recent and current conference organisers towards producing conference guidelines/advice.

The subsidy that we offered to student travel for ASA08 was returned (because of the shared budget scheme at Auckland). We have around £3000 to distribute for travel grants for conferences.

IF raised the proposal for C-SAP to hold an early-careers event prior to the ASA10 conference. The BSA is subsidising 10 places at £80 each. RK noted that when Lisette handed over the accounts, she suggested that reserves of £1700 should be maintained. We now have reserves of £30,000 and we have £4000 owing in memberships, so our current account should be around £17k. **JF proposed that we contribute £1000 towards sponsoring 10 students (including travel) for this event.**

Committee agreed. It will encourage new members to join, and will strengthen our applications to Wenner Gren.

IF will send information to Ro before he goes to visit QUB next week.

SA asked if we have a general policy of subsidising student travel to all conferences or only to Commonwealth conferences. We will discuss this at the next meeting **considering the following points:**

- we could support scholars from low-income Commonwealth countries attending ASA conferences in general;
- we could cover visa and biometrics expenses for scholars from Commonwealth countries
- we could offer expenses to invited speakers in particular where there are no other funding sources available.
- do we prioritise certain countries?
- what kind of application procedures could we put in place?

Spam questions about sending out emails: The server requires receivers to *opt in* to emails from ASA. How could we get people to respond to an email? **JF proposed that he sends an email from him as chair indicating firstly that people need to click on a link to opt in to emails, and secondly, to encourage people to bring their subscription up to date.** Committee agreed that this would be a sensible way forward.

d. Ethics

NM reiterated the work that has gone into the blog and that it is an important resource that is well read. SA thanked her for circulating the article she and Ian Harper published in Anthropology News. There have been technical hitches with the blog. Plus people have been putting in long posts rather than blog-length. Simone suggested using Eeva Berglund's blog as an example.

<http://jeesjees.wordpress.com/>

NM will remind potential coordinators how to structure or contribute to the blog and to emphasise that the blog is for a public audience and must be readable and accessible to non-academics! Ian Harper will run the next blog on experience of ethical review boards. We will also remind Garry about a possible media ethics blog to run after Ian. At some point Raminder will run a blog on the nuclear issue (after her maternity leave). SA suggested raising the blog at the early career event and try to recruit a blog coordinator among early career anthropologists. Ro suggested announcing the blog on AM and offering the opportunity to coordinate the blog next autumn, overseen by a member of the committee. **Ro and Nayanika will circulate an announcement on AM jisc-list.**

The blog should have a waiver indicating that views expressed on the page are not those of the ASA. **Ro will add a comment to this effect.**

[Andrew Irving popped into the meeting to give Ro a cheque for his subscription. Presence makes a difference - should we hold our meetings peripatetically in different anthropology departments?]

Revising the Ethics code. JF suggested using the member-consultation system for getting views on revising the ethics code in the light of the recent problems with questions of militarization. SA noted two separate issues – one of anthropologists' involvement in counter-insurgency, and one of involvement in covert intelligence services.

NM will draw up an amendment and circulate it to the committee before putting it forward to the AGM in 2010. **NM will contact Lisette and ask if she is interested in holding an Ethics event on the Wednesday lunchtime (14.4.10) of the conference at QUB.**

NM will do the code of ethics revisions despite her maternity leave. She will forward any enquiries she cannot deal with to Ro to forward to other members of the committee.

e. Networks

JF will write to Cate to request further information on other networks for the next committee meetings.

f. Publications – online publications strategy?

Ro will find out whether there is any cost saving on a double-mailing before deciding whether to send nos. 46 and 47 out together.

James asked whether we have a position on giving copyright approval for reproducing chapters of monographs. Usually he agrees on condition that they acknowledge the ASA. RM suggesting that we notify ACLS of translations to ensure that authors retain their royalties. JF suggested that it is good in principle that ASA publications are translated. He also proposed, and committee agreed that **any such full-book requests should be considered by the committee to evaluate whether or not royalties should be requested.**

g. Media – media strategy?

7. ASA conferences - review and plans

Crèche facilities: The committee agreed that local organisers must be asked to make enquiries about local facilities.

NB committee members should try to find own expenses to cover conference/AGM expenses, but in cases of last resort ASA will fund cheapest possible transport and overnight expense.

a. Proposal for conference guidelines

Is on Ro's list of to-do's, see above.

b. ASA09 summary (feedback)

Covered in previous reports.

c. Firth Lecture 2010

Abu-Lughod was unable to accept our invitation. James will extend an invitation to Crapanzano.

d. ASA 2010

Call for panels closes mid December. Ro will remind members again. Ro will circulate information after his and Megan's visit to QUB next week. Poster is in production – although too late for the call for panels. Aiming for around 135 delegates. If the numbers are higher, an increased surplus will be produced. It should be marketed beyond Anthropology as the title 'inter-views' will be of interest well beyond the discipline.

e. ASA 2011

Ro has not heard from Penny Dransart since the discussions earlier in the year. Committee noted that it was useful that they had been allocated the conference before the lobbying campaign. **Ro to contact Penny** now that has subsided.

f. ASA 2012

There has been a busy set of email exchanges with JNU, now primarily with chair of CSSS Susan Visvanathan. Confirmation that Wenner Gren would support the conference in principle was very helpful. Theme is currently 'arts crafts, techne and globalisation'. The conference would be interdisciplinary. Dates to be confirmed- we have suggested last week of March 2012 (earlier can be very cold in Delhi where there is no central heating). Easter is late that year. It must be between end of March and mid-April, but not the actual Easter period. **Committee members please check their term times and send to Nayanika.** James S will pick up the correspondence in December (when NM goes on maternity leave). The proposal has been sent, but JNU would like us to send a formal letter to JNU – **NM will draft a letter for JF to send.** We will need to suggest plenary speakers from ASA. NM suggests Chris Pinney. We also need to find funds for Ro to run the conference. JF noted that this is an event that is important for ASA and we should put some finance into making it work. It is core to our 'mission' (commonwealth remit). The conference budget currently shows a deficit of about £1600 but depends on many issues that are under local control, and the scale of the conference. Ro approximates costs – current UK ASA costs are £2,700 plus £22 per delegate. For a 300 person conference, the fee is approx. £9,500. Expenses are higher for an overseas conference – flights, etc cost more. Plus the liaison with local organisers is much more demanding and requires a great deal more work (Ro is already receiving a high level of email exchange about JNU already). We will, of course, try to generate the extra costs from income, but NM requested an up front commitment to supporting the extra costs. JNU require an intellectual collaboration on the content of the conference, but do not wish to handle any of the financial organisation. JS thinks this will become a large conference that we should be able to make work profitably. RK pointed out that ASA would be taking the risk for this conference in a way that we do not generally do.

SA noted that ASA does not normally organise conferences itself, but the organisation and risk is taken by the hosting department. In the case of JNU, **the committee agreed that in this one occasion, we are making an exception and taking the risk ourselves.** This must be reported to the AGM, that we suspend the principle of not taking risk ourselves on this occasion. All efforts will be made to ensure that income streams are secured to cover all costs. NM proposed **putting aside £3000 of surplus from each conference until 2012 to hold as a buffer to cover the risk of the JNU conference.** Committee agreed to do this if surplus is available.

Wenner Gren covers the costs of supporting attendance of scholars who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend the conference. The committee will make proposals for plenary speakers from both the wider South Asia and globally, who would be relevant plenary speakers.

NM, JS and RJ to formalise a **joint-organising committee** to agree plenary speakers, and accept panels, etc. NM suggested Susan V., Arnand Kumar (head of globalisation project), and Prof Shiprakash (head of Arts and Aesthetics Centre in JNU), NM herself, JS, with Rohan as administrator. JF suggested not only to invite S

Asianists to ensure that it is seen as a global conference. (Chris Pinney? Emma Tarlow?) **Committee will send suggestions for plenary speakers to NM.** We need at least 6 speakers to recommend, and anticipate 6 from JNU side.

NM is concerned that Susan V is acting autonomously without consulting or listening to our suggestions. NM suggests focusing on the WG application. Consider the proposal SV has sent to us, make comments including those that RK has helpfully provided. JF recommended linking up with Chris Pinney to advise on the proposal. The proposal has to be sufficiently embracing to incorporate a wide range of panels. NM will hand over to JS from December when she starts maternity leave. Committee agreed that Aesthetics should also be in the title.

The conference should be announced before Belfast – if title and dates have been confirmed by then.

BASAS did not respond to JF's email about their conference in India – **JF will ask John Homewood/Clare Anderson... in person.**

NM will be in South Asia in 2010 and will talk to JNU about progress for the conference. If RK and JS are there at the same time it would be useful.

8. AOB

SA asked whether committee members who are on leave should nominate deputies, as had been agreed in the past. Committee members agreed that this should be organised ad hoc, depending on how available the committee member on leave would be.

C-SAP – a lot of pressure from HEA to do something about external examiners. IF has been asked to put on an event. **IF requested feedback on the questions in his report.** JF suggested writing to HoDs to enquire whether they will support the event as they are the relevant constituency. **JF will flag it up at the HoDs meeting next week.**

The next C-SAP conference will be in July 2010. IF asked if we wanted to have a C-SAP stand at Belfast, and do we want to have an ASA stand at the CSAP conference. Ro suggested asking Berg to bring ASA monographs to the CSAP conference. IF suggested asking for student volunteers to oversee a stand with materials from the ASA. **IF will circulate a suggestion about the purpose of such a stand.** Ro also suggested cooperating on presence at each others' conferences and noted that fees for adverts could be waived if CSAP is short of funding.

Membership of the committee. SA will step down at the next AGM. **JF will contact Catherine Alexander about taking over as Secretary.**

9. Dates of meetings 2009/10.

Fridays are preferred.

Electronic meeting before AGM. Please ensure you have a webcam available. JF will propose dates, and SA will circulate.

AGM

June and October.

Summary of actions:

- James will re-circulate the AHRC document Deliberating the Nature of Impact.
- JS will contact Garry to ask if he still has interest in this proposal [for realityTV ethics].
- Ro will alert people to WCAA discounts before the AAA – and will send more information when the WCAA website has been finalised.
- James and James will exchange information about the Sage Handbook so that JS is better informed on what it is about before contacting the editors.
- Ro will archive annals year by year so the old reports will remain online.
- Ro/Cate: will circulate networks with an invitation to contribute information to annals

- James F will circulate the minutes or response to consultation that emerges from the HoDs meeting.
- IF will circulate the curriculum to the committee so that they can become acquainted with the direction of the a-level. IF will ask RAI if we can circulate the curriculum to our membership.
- SA will communicate with Nafisa about raising the profile of the A-level on the RAI website.
- SA put re-joining Academy of Social Sciences on the AGM agenda
- Ro and Simone will discuss the potential for using open access journal system for ASAonline.
- Ro will pursue the proposal to hold a meeting of recent and current conference organisers towards producing conference guidelines/advice.
- IF will send information to Ro before he goes to visit QUB next week.
- JF will send an email from him as chair indicating firstly that people need to click on a link to opt in to emails, and secondly, to encourage people to bring their subscription up to date.
- Ro and Nayanika will circulate an announcement on AM jisc-list to invite blog coordinators.
- Ro will add a comment to the blog to indicate that views expressed are not those of the ASA
- NM will contact Lisette and ask if she is interested in holding an Ethics event on the Wednesday lunchtime (14.4.10) of the conference at QUB.
- Ro will find out whether there is any cost saving on a double-mailing before deciding whether to send nos. 46 and 47 out together.
- NM will do the code of ethics revisions despite her maternity leave. She will forward any enquiries she cannot deal with to Ro to forward to other members of the committee.
- Ro to contact Penny about asa 2011
- Committee members please check their term times for easter 2012 and send to Nayanika
- NM will draft a letter for JF to send to JNU about ASA 2012
- NM proposed putting aside £3000 of surplus from each conference until 2012 to hold as a buffer to cover the risk of the JNU conference. Committee agreed
- NM, JS and RJ to formalise a joint-organising committee to agree plenary speakers, and accept panels
- Committee will send suggestions for plenary speakers to NM
- JF will ask John Homewood/Clare Anderson about BASAS conference in India... in person.
- IF requested feedback on the questions in his report
- IF will circulate a suggestion about the purpose of having a stand at ASA/CSAP conferences
- JF will contact Catherine Alexander about taking over as Secretary.

Summary of decisions

- Committee agreed to cover Ro and Megan's expenses in relation to the ASA conference in Belfast up to £300.
- Committee agreed to contribute £1000 towards sponsoring 10 students (including travel) for C-SAP early careers event at ASA10.
- committee agreed that any full-book requests should be considered by the committee to evaluate whether or not royalties should be requested.
- ASA conference crèche facilities: local organisers must be asked to make enquiries about local facilities.

- the committee agreed that in this one occasion, we are making an exception for ASA2012 and taking the risk ourselves.