

The Japan Society Annual General Meeting 2017

The Society's 2017 AGM took place on 12 July 2017 at the Embassy of Japan. The membership was well represented and we are grateful to all who attended and who took the time to vote by proxy. Following the formal business of the AGM there was a drinks reception.

Minutes of the 120th Annual General Meeting of The Japan Society

*Held at the Embassy of Japan, 101-104 Piccadilly, London W1
at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 12 July 2017*

Chairman's Welcome

Sir David Warren, Chairman of the Japan Society, opened the meeting by welcoming members and to the AGM along with the Society's President, the Japanese Ambassador, Koji Tsuruoka. He thanked Ambassador Tsuruoka and his colleagues at the Embassy for its continued support of the Society.

The Chairman invited Ambassador Tsuruoka to say a few words.

Ambassador Tsuruoka

Ambassador Tsuruoka thanked Sir David for the introduction and reflected on his role as President of the Japan Society. He was conscious of the responsibility this role brought and his duty to ensure the Society's success. Commenting on the celebration in 2016 of the 125th anniversary of the Society, Ambassador expressed pride in the efforts of the members who had contributed to its activity over the years and who would continue to do so.

The Japan Society of London was not only the oldest Japan Society, it was the only Japan Society to have received an endowment from Emperor Meiji, demonstrating the history, uniqueness and prestige afforded to the Society. Ambassador Tsuruoka gave his continued commitment and that of the Japanese Embassy to supporting the Society in its activities.

The Ambassador briefed the meeting on a future development – that of Japan House. A media launch held in May was the prelude to an opening which it was hoped would take place in the first half of 2018. Japan House would be situated on Kensington High Street, a newly thriving street near not only to the Design Museum, but to the Royal Albert Hall and V&A. The site for Japan House had been chosen for its cultural context and its booming and high quality retail situation.

The concept of Japan House should not be confused with that of the Japan Society. The collaboration between the two would improve the performance of both, and as the President of the Japan Society, Ambassador would strive to facilitate this. Minister Iida was the minister responsible at the Embassy for Japan House and had been spending 98% of his time on Japan House, and 2% on the Japan Society! This was because the Japan Society had 126 years of tradition and the Embassy did not wish to intrude or intervene into its successful activities.

To conclude, Ambassador Tsuruoka mentioned that in 2016, coinciding with the 125th anniversary, Heidi Potter had been awarded a decoration by the Japanese Emperor. While this reflected her very long term of service made to the promotion of the Japan-UK broader relationship, the timing was deliberately chosen to happen in the 125th year of the Japan Society because it was a commemorative occasion. Ambassador Tsuruoka wished to reconfirm for the record of the past year this significant event that was held at the Embassy. He pointed out that a Japanese award was made also to ensure that the work will continue, even with double or triple efforts on the part of the individual who received it.

Sir David Warren

The Chairman thanked the Ambassador for his words and for the unstinting support he and the Embassy had given the Society. The Society was very grateful for this.

Ambassador had mentioned Japan House. David commented that its opening would be eagerly anticipated. Those who were involved in various advisory capacities had seen some preliminary sketches and plans for Japan House, which was set to have a great impact in the coming year.

The Proceedings of the Japan Society for 2016 had been distributed, and members would have read also the Trustees' and Chairman's report in the annual accounts. It had been the Society's 125th anniversary in 2016, during which we had had the usual ambitious and successful range of events in the cultural, business, political and educational spheres. We were delighted to welcome former prime minister, Sir John Major, as guest of honour at a marvellous anniversary dinner. What had made that occasion even more special for us was the great honour of receiving from Ambassador Tsuruoka the Japanese Foreign Minister's commendation for the Society's role in promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the United Kingdom.

The Chairman highlighted the publication in 2016 of *Japanese Studies in Britain: a survey and history* edited by Sir Hugh Cortazzi and Professor Peter Kornicki. This was the Japan Society's contribution towards registering with a wider audience the history of the development of this area of academic work and the importance of continuing to support the study of Japanese language and culture in the broadest sense in British education and higher education. At a time when the study of modern languages had been for some years under threat and where there was intense competition in higher education between institutions and between different disciplines it was very important to register the success story of Japanese studies.

Although she was not able to be present at the AGM, Sir David formally thanked Alison Scott who was, is standing down as editor of the Japan Society Proceedings and ex officio chairman of the publications committee after five years of very distinguished service. The Society was very grateful to Alison for everything she had done during this time to ensure that its Proceedings was a record not only of activities but of the Society's work as a learned society for the study of Japan in fields including language, culture, history and literature. Sir Hugh Cortazzi had also requested that his personal thanks to Alison were recorded. The Chairman endorsed this on behalf of members of the Society.

Sir David also thanked Motohiko Kato, former Deputy Head of Mission at the Japanese Embassy, who had left London earlier in the year. He had served on the board in an ex officio capacity and had been a very loyal and supportive trustee, who would be much missed.

Agenda Items

The Chairman gave a brief reminder of AGM vote and the board and trustee structure and tenure. Three board members were therefore standing down at the end of a full term in office, or overseas postings: Tom Burn, Lydia Gomersall and Aki Tsuchiya. He thanked them for their enthusiastic support of the Society's activities and contribution to the board.

Five candidates were standing for re-election/election: Sue Hudson, Mami Mizutori (re-election), Yuuichiro Nakajima, Richard Oppenheim and Jenny White (re-election). Biographies for each candidate had been circulated in official AGM papers.

The following resolutions were passed:

1. To receive and adopt the audited annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2016 and the Trustees' report.
2. To reappoint Richard Place Dobson as auditors and to authorize the Board to approve their remuneration as thought fit.
3. To elect Sue Hudson as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
4. To re-appoint Mami Mizutori as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
5. To elect Yuuichiro Nakajima as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
6. To elect Richard Oppenheim as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
7. To re-appoint Jenny White as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.

Documents

If you wish to receive a hard copy of the annual accounts and Council Members' report, please [contact us](#).