

The Japan Society Annual General Meeting 2015

The Society's 2015 AGM took place on 24 June 2015 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 118th 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, 24 June 2015*

Chairman's Welcome

Sir David Warren, Chairman of the Japan Society, opened the meeting by welcoming members to the AGM along with the Society's President, the Japanese Ambassador, Mr Keiichi Hayashi. He thanked the Ambassador and colleagues at the Embassy of Japan for their continued support for the Society's activity.

The Chairman invited Ambassador Hayashi to make a few comments.

Ambassador Hayashi

Ambassador Hayashi welcomed Sir David and members of the Japan Society to the Embassy for his fifth AGM as its President.

The Ambassador noted that since the Japan Society last met at the Embassy for its Christmas party, the robust bilateral relationship between Japan and the UK had continued to forge ahead.

He reported that Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Cameron, had a good relationship, which was evident when Mr Abe telephoned Mr Cameron to congratulate him soon after the general election. During this conversation both Prime Ministers confirmed they would continue to pursue the joint interests of our two countries; this sentiment was reaffirmed at their meeting during the G7 summit in Germany.

Ambassador Hayashi had attended the state opening of parliament following the general election and was delighted to hear the Queen's speech. He welcomed the Government's determination to continue to play a leading role in global affairs such as international security, economic and humanitarian challenges. He noted that these issues reflected the shared values which underpin the cooperative relationship between Britain and Japan.

January saw the first ever bilateral foreign and defence ministerial meeting, after which a joint statement was issued expressing the intention to intensify collaboration regarding defence equipment, technology, maritime security and cyber relations, and to conclude an Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) as soon as possible.

Events of note in Japan were the Duke of Cambridge's long awaited state visit to Japan in late February/early March and the granting of parliamentary approval for the Japan House project in April. Ambassador Hayashi highlighted the Duke's overnight visit to Fukushima, which helped to restore the confidence in local food products, which had been affected by unfounded fears of radioactivity. He hoped that Japan House would

become a showcase for Japan's various attractions presenting the British public with the best of Japan from the traditional arts and ultra modern technology to the performing arts and Japanese food. Japan House would also benefit the Japan Society by providing a venue for its various events; he expected there to be a strong synergy and close cooperation between the two.

The Ambassador concluded by looking forward to the Society's up coming 125th anniversary which would provide an excellent opportunity to remind people of the invaluable contribution of the Society to the enhancement of mutual understanding and cooperation between the UK and Japan. In conjunction with the expected opening of Japan House at the beginning of 2017, the anniversary should provide an opportunity to run a series of high profile events. The Ambassador reiterated the Embassy's willingness to work collaboratively with the Japan Society and its supporters to achieve this aim.

Ambassador Hayashi gave a final word of thanks to everyone for their efforts in maintaining and building upon people to people links and reassured the Japan Society members of the Embassy's continued support of their invaluable endeavours in the year and years ahead.

Sir David Warren

The Chairman thanked the Ambassador for his encouraging and comprehensive words and for the Embassy's continued support of the Society's activities.

He continued by saying a few words about the Society's activities over the past year, noting that a more comprehensive record of what has been achieved was in the trustees report and accounts for the year ended 31 December.

The Chairman reflected on a very busy 2014 commenting briefly on the three key areas of the Society's activities: the cultural, educational and business programmes.

The Ambassador had earlier indicated that Japan and Britain are living in a very volatile time and the Chairman echoed this thought citing in particular economic policy, regional relations and trade negotiations as areas of interest to members. He explained that the Society's business programme reflected these issues by inviting commentators and politicians to speak about these and other topics with more domestic focus. The Society intended to continue to provide a platform and debate on wide ranging and relevant issues.

Sir David continued by explaining the Society's aim to expand its activities in Japan with the support of Saki Kuroda (former Japan Society Events officer) whose work will focus on supporting and developing support for Japanese schools, specifically in their links with partners in the UK. This would enable the Society to increase its educational footprint in Japan and, it was hoped, to cement a closer relationship with the Society's sister organisation the Japan British Society in Tokyo.

The final tranche of grants under auspices of the Japan Society Tohoku Earthquake Relief Fund had been made during 2014. All remaining funds had been transferred to the Sanaburi Foundation to be dispersed to support seven recipient organisations. The board had therefore made the decision to close the Fund at the end of 2014. The Society would continue to report on the projects that we have already supported.

Sir David thanked the Ambassador for his regular updates on the Japan House Project and reported that he had been asked to be on the steering group of Japan House in his capacity as the Chairman of the Japan Society. He noted the Society's close and supportive interest in this important project to increase the Japanese presence in London.

Following his speech the Chairman gave a brief explanation of the AGM vote and the board and trustee structure and tenure. He informed members that Minister Motahiko Kato had joined Minister Asari as an ex officio trustee in April.

Agenda Items

There were nine ordinary resolutions to be considered. Votes would be given by ballot.

It was noted that Jason James, who was standing for election as a trustee, was Director General of the Japan Society's landlord, the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation.

The following resolutions were passed:

1. To receive and adopt the audited annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2014 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 re-appoint Sir David Warren as Chairman of the Japan Society.
4. To re-appoint Graham Holman as an ordinary member of the board of the Japan Society.
5. To elect Tom Burn as an ordinary member of the board of the Japan Society.
6. To elect Janet Hunter an ordinary member of the board of the Japan Society.
7. To elect Jason James as an ordinary member of the board of the Japan Society.
8. To elect Mami Mizutori as an ordinary member of the board of the Japan Society.
9. To elect Eiji Wakiwaka as an ordinary member of the board of the Japan Society.

Trustees who had served during the year, but who were standing down were thanked for their contributions to the Society. These included, Martin Day, Stephen McEnally and Michael Spencer who had each served a full term of six years, and David Cairns who had been appointed as British Ambassador in Sweden.

Documents

If you wish to receive a hard copy of the annual accounts and Council Members' report, please **contact us**.