

## **The Japan Society Annual General Meeting 2016**

The Society's 2016 AGM took place on 22 June 2016 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 will be a **special launch event and reception for *Biographical Portraits Volume X***.

### **Minutes of the 119<sup>th</sup> 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, 22 June 2016*

#### **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 new President, the Japanese Ambassador, Koji Tsuruoka. He welcomed Ambassador Tsuruoka to London and thanked the Embassy for its continued support of the Society.

The Chairman invited Ambassador Tsuruoka to say a few words.

#### **Ambassador Tsuruoka**

Ambassador Tsuruoka welcomed Sir David and members of the Japan Society to the Embassy for his first AGM as President of the Society.

The Ambassador reflected on his recent arrival in the UK and the recent visit by Sir David and Heidi to the Embassy. He had been particularly impressed by the Society's 125 year history and commented that this reflected a long standing and strong friendship between Japan and the UK and one of which he was happy to be a part.

He spoke briefly on the friendship between the two countries highlighting the support the UK had provided over the years on the modernization of Japan, its engineering, railway technology and ship building. In return Japanese culture was brought back to the UK by visitors to Japan, which helped to establish Japan as a popular country within the UK and Europe.

Ambassador Tsuruoka announced that the Society's CEO, Heidi Potter, had recently been awarded the Order of the Rising Sun Gold and Silver Rays by the Japanese government, in recognition of her distinguished contribution to Japan-UK relations in the field of culture and education. He noted that, in the Queen's birthday Honours list (2016), she had also been awarded an OBE for her services to UK-Japan relations.

The Ambassador continued by congratulating Sir Hugh Cortazzi on the launch of Britain & Japan: Biographical Portraits Volume X whose launch was also being celebrated. He was looking forward to meeting members of and working closely with the Japan Society to further enhance the friendship between the two countries.

Ambassador Tsuruoka closed by reflecting on the upcoming referendum in the UK and his role representing the Japanese business community in London, who wanted the UK to remain in the EU. He stated that many Japanese businesses had been very successful within the UK due to its membership of the EU and that the business community valued the stability and integrity within the market.

### **Sir David Warren**

The Chairman thanked the Ambassador for his words and encouragement: in the few weeks since his arrival, he had already demonstrated his and the Embassy's continued support for the work of the Society. The Society was very grateful for this.

Sir David Warren echoed the Ambassador in congratulating Heidi Potter on her recent awards.

He noted the Ambassador's thoughts on the referendum, which was a significant moment for Britain's place in the world. It was only right for Britain's friends and allies abroad, including the Japanese Government, to make their views known.

The Chairman stated that the referendum represented an uncertain backcloth against which many Japanese and British companies, whose activities encouraged closer trade and investment contact between the two countries, were taking forward their work. Sir David hoped that the relationship between the UK and Japan remained strong whatever the result.

He continued by giving a brief summary of the Society's activities over the past year, firstly by confirming that the Society's accounts and annual statement had already been circulated to members.

The Chairman reflected on a very active programme of events in 2015 commenting briefly on:

- Business, cultural and educational events
- School outreach
- Lecture series
- Book club
- Japanese conversation group

Sir David noted that this programme had been developed to meet the needs of individual, corporate and donor members of the Society and that he was keen for the Society to continue to play an active role creating a platform where the British and Japanese community could come together. The Chairman stated that the Society currently had approximately one thousand active individuals and companies, which formed the core of the Society's membership, and that this was a powerful position from which to play an active role in giving Japan an even wider profile in the UK and bringing Japanese culture and activities to a wider audience.

The Chairman continued by mentioning the 150th anniversary of the arrival in Britain of the students from Satsuma in 2015 and this year's 125th anniversary of the Japan Society.

To mark the anniversary, the Society had an e-library which currently included digital versions of its core publications and would be developed further to include historical archive materials. He hoped that this would bring the resources of the Society to a wider audience.

The Chairman announced the death, in June, of Jill Brookes who had worked at the Society for 17 years between 1987-2004. Her funeral was to be held on 30 June in Chatham. Jill was a long standing member and supporter of the Japan Society.

The Chairman commented on the Society's annual report and accounts stating that a small deficit had been made during the year ending 31 December 2015. This was the result of some reserves held by the Society being drawn down to fund active educational outreach in Japan and the UK. Saki Kuroda was starting an office in Tokyo with the responsibility of identifying schools with which British schools can be twinned.

### **Agenda Items**

The Chairman gave a brief reminder of AGM vote and the board and trustee structure and tenure. Three board members had moved overseas and were therefore standing down: Anna Dingley, Masahiro Imai and Shinichiro Masunaga. 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: Lydia Gomersall (re-election), Tetsuro Hama (re-election), Morihiko Okudaira, Sarah Parsons, Yoji Saito. 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 2015 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 Lydia Gomersall as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
4. To re-appoint Tetsuro Hama as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
5. To elect Morihiko Okudaira as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
6. To elect Sarah Parsons as an ordinary trustee of the Japan Society.
7. To elect Yoji Saito 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**.