

Trustees' Annual Report 2014/15

ESPERANTO-ASOCIO DE BRITIO

(also known as Esperanto Association of Britain, EAB, Esperanto UK)

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Registered Charity no: 272676

Trustees

The Management Committee of the Association are the trustees of the charity. Those who served from 1 November 2014 to 31 October 2015 were:

Paul Gubbins (President) (resigned 15 December 2015)

Edmund Grimley Evans (Vice-President)

Tim Owen (Hon. Secretary)

Clare Hunter (Hon. Treasurer)

Ed Robertson

Michael Seaton (until 19 April 2015)

Paul Dennett (appointed 19 April 2015, resigned 7 December 2015)

Ian Carter (appointed 19 April 2015)

Staff and volunteers

Staff and key volunteers who assisted the charity during the year were as follows:

Honorary President: John Wells | **Director of Operations and Events:** Viv O'Dunne | **Co-ordinator for**

Research and Development: Angela Tellier | **Honorary Librarian:** Geoffrey King | **Compiler of La Brita**

Esperantisto: Simon Davies | **Webmaster:** Bill Walker

Accountant and Independent Examiner

Dains LLP, St John's Court, Wiltell Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9DS.

Solicitors

Tinsdills, Hays House, 25 Albion Street, Hanley, Staffordshire, ST1 1QF.

Bankers

Santander, 62 Hagley Road, Birmingham, B16 8PE

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ.

Barclays, PO Box 738, London, W6 9HY.

Governing document

The charity was founded on 13 March 1976 and is an unincorporated organisation, governed by a constitution which was last amended on 20 April 2014. Members of the Management Committee (trustees) are elected individually by the Annual General Meeting, to serve until the end of the next Annual General Meeting. The trustees are incorporated as a body.

Induction of trustees

A handbook for trustees, detailing their responsibilities and the current policies of the charity, is available on the charity's website and is regularly reviewed and updated. New trustees are sent copies of recent minutes. The first full committee meeting after the election is a residential planning weekend where induction is completed.

Objects of the charity

The objects of the charity are to advance the education of the public in the international language Esperanto in the furtherance of international communication without discrimination, and of the natural right of all people and peoples, their languages and cultures, to be treated equally.

Public benefit

In setting objectives and planning activities, the trustees complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. The activities undertaken by the charity during the year to further its charitable purposes for the public benefit are detailed below.

Activities undertaken to achieve the objects

The main activities undertaken by the charity to achieve its objects are as follows:

- Holding subsidised courses for beginner and post-beginner learners of Esperanto at our headquarters, so that new students can take their first steps into Esperanto in a quiet and friendly environment where they will be surrounded by Esperanto's cultural heritage.
- Running affordable single-day courses in London and other parts of the country to provide people with opportunities to improve their spoken Esperanto.
- Running a several-day residential course to provide people with an immersive environment outside of the classroom while they study Esperanto and its literature.
- Providing free courses accessible via email and post with experienced Esperanto teachers, as well as the option to undergo assessment in the form of examinations.
- Investing in the Butler Library in order to preserve Esperanto's cultural heritage and provide a research facility for study.
- Providing a book service so that people have access to learning materials and Esperanto literature.
- Encouraging members to participate in local meet-ups.
- Keeping a website up-to-date with information for enquirers and details of events around the country, as well as larger international ones.
- Raising awareness of Esperanto through attendance at language shows.
- Arranging, hosting and subsidising an annual conference, the central gathering-point for Esperanto-speakers in this country.
- Supporting the Springboard to Languages course for primary school children by providing free materials and consultation when requested.
- Liaising with other Esperanto foundations (Buchanan at the University of Liverpool, the Norwich Jubilee Esperanto Foundation) to support each other's mutual aims.

Summary of the main achievements during the year 2014/15

Education

- Our postal courses and examinations continued to have a steady, if small, uptake.
- Attempts were made to organise a session of the Esperanto CEFR examinations during the British Esperanto Conference in Brighton in April 2015, but there ultimately proved to be insufficient interest, despite the charity offering the examinations to participants for free.
- We held residential educational courses for beginners and post-beginners at Esperanto House in March and August 2015. These proved extremely successful, with 19 attendees in total across the two dates.
- We additionally ran Drondo courses for intermediate and advanced speakers in Sheffield and London during October 2015.
- The five-day Somera Festivalo took place at Shallowford House during August. Jack Warren and Paul Gubbins each took a strand to ensure coverage for people at different levels of capability in Esperanto. Six people attended.
- Education trustee Ed Robertson was one of the chief contributors to the Esperanto course on Duolingo, which generated 100,000 learners in its first 100 days.
- The annual Buchanan lecture was given by Dr Angela Tellier in October 2015 on the theme “W E Collinson: German, Esperanto and Interlinguistics at the University of Liverpool”. This was followed by “An Introduction to Original Esperanto Literature” by Dr Paul Gubbins.

Research

- During the year Angela Tellier continued to work on ongoing research projects, as well as establishing further links with universities and university-level projects and trialling materials into classroom-based use of Esperanto.

Publicity

- EAB had a prominent presence at the International Language Festival which took place at the University of Sheffield in November. Tim Owen gave five taster classes in Esperanto during the weekend. EAB provided financial support to the International Student Committee to run the event.
- Work has continued on renovating EAB's web presence, with an intention of building a suite of different applications.
- EAB has funded the use of an Esperanto account on the site meetup.com, which has facilitated the organisation of regular get-togethers in the Birmingham and Skipton areas. EAB has encouraged others to follow this model in Update.
- Our Facebook page now has 1,084 (2014: 847) fans, while the Twitter feed has 1,025 (2014: 898) followers.
- We redesigned our magazine ‘La Brita Esperantisto’, printing in full colour with a modern template, to present a more contemporary impression of Esperanto to anyone who might see a copy.

British Esperanto Conference

- 56 Esperantists signed up for the conference in Brighton in April.
- The conference was organised by Tim Owen and Viv O'Dunne.

Butler Library

- Since his appointment as a trustee in April 2015, Paul Dennett has taken responsibility for optimising the space occupied by the Butler Library, including a reorganisation of archive and storage areas.

- The new library management system Koha has been installed on a VPS and is ready for use once a cataloguing strategy is developed.

Plans for 2015/16 and beyond

- Organise the British Esperanto Conference in Liverpool in 2016.
- Launch a community suite on the Internet.
- Continue to run educational courses, including some at Esperanto House and others elsewhere in the country.
- Investigate the potential to build an online educational course which will dynamically respond to the learners' errors and adjust the course content to support them.
- Continue to invest in Esperanto-related research, including a biography of the life and work of Professor W. E. Collinson (to be published 2016).
- Continue to document aspects of EAB's history through an oral history project.
- Trial the second part of the university-level course book in Esperanto language and literature at the Buchanan Masterclass 2016, currently in preparation, edited by Wim Jansen and Angela Tellier.
- Continue to establish links with universities and organise a three day Masterclass in Esperanto language, literature and culture.
- Formalise a plan for the future development of the library.
- Continue to obtain formal permission for the charity to sublicense the republishing of works by British Esperanto authors who are willing to give such permission to the charity, thus ensuring that it will be possible to republish those works in future.
- Continue to send out relevant information to the public regarding our activities.
- Remind the members that the charity cannot function without trustees and make general requests for others to think about becoming trustees.

Closure of Wedgwood Memorial College

Wedgwood Memorial College, on whose Estoril site the charity has its headquarters, has remained closed throughout the year. The charity has sole use of the Butler Library and three Esperanto bedrooms as well as the Esperanto office in accordance with the terms of its lease, and will continue to enjoy this for the duration of the lease irrespective of the future of the College.

Membership

Life members = 20 (2014: 21), full members = 293 (2014: 300), family members = 11 (2014: 11), supporters = 29 (2014: 35). Total = 353 (2014: 367).

A few members of venerable age died during the year. New recruits and people re-joining after some years' absence were welcomed. Members and supporters receive *EAB Update* newsletter quarterly. Full members also receive *La Brita Esperantisto* – an all-Esperanto journal – twice a year, and are automatically affiliated to *Universala Esperanto-Asocio*. Full members are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting. Membership services include assistance with international payments via the UEA credit system.

Financial review of the year

Income

Income is derived from investments, membership subscriptions, sales, bequests and donations, and spent on EAB's charitable objects. The unfavourable economic climate has continued to result in low investment income.

Reserves

The trustees have agreed a reserves policy which requires reserves to be maintained at a level that, when prudently invested, will generate sufficient income for the charity to continue operating. £20k is currently held on deposit with Scottish Widows and can be accessed with seven days' notice in the event of unforeseen expenditure arising. The total level of free reserves, being total reserves less the endowment from John Brownlee and designated capital fund was £917,020 at 31 October 2015.

Investments

The trustees continue to monitor the performance of the charity's investments on a regular basis.

The constitution states that the trustees have the power to make investments as they see fit. Their duty is to seek adequate income and capital growth. Capital is invested in deposit accounts and unit trusts specifically designed for the charity sector, which are for the greater part socially responsible. The split between asset classes is shown in the notes to the financial statements.

The charity's investments have performed well during the year, mostly outperforming their relevant benchmarks. The Charities Property Fund, for example, has produced a total return of 5.0% for the year compared to 4.6% for the IPD All Balanced Funds Property Index. The COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund has also performed well, with a gross dividend yield of 3.83% compared to an average yield of 3.61% from the MSCI UK All Cap index over the same period. The COIF Charities Global Equity Income Fund produced a gross dividend yield of 4.44% compared to an average yield of 2.46% from the MSCI World index over the same period.

Risk review

The Trustees have examined the major internal and external risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to minimise these risks.

Responsibilities of the trustees in relation to the financial statements

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements at the end of each financial year which give a true and fair view of its financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In doing so the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf on 6 February 2016 by:

Tim Owen
Hon. Secretary