

## **Annual General Meeting Minutes**

**23 June 2021 – virtually via Zoom**

**Chair – Jim Longhurst (JL)**

The presentation, papers and video can be found at [http://www.eauc.org.uk/eauc\\_governance](http://www.eauc.org.uk/eauc_governance).

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

JL welcomed Members to the AGM as Chair.

Apologies were received on the day from Steve Cayzer (University of Bath), Helena Tinker (Manchester Metropolitan University) and Daniel Reeves (LSE)

JL introduced the Board of Trustees.

### **2. Approval of Minutes of 2020 AGM**

An update on activities will follow. Any other business was to be raised prior to the meeting and none were raised. No other issues were raised and the minutes were approved.

### **3. Retirement of Board Members who will act as Company Director and Charity Trustee**

We had one trustee retirement in between AGMs and this was Michelle Brown, Scotland Branch Convenor, from University of Edinburgh resigned as of 26 January 2021.

We appointed two trustees in between AGMs – this was Carolyn Strong as the Wales Branch Convenor (21 September 2020) and John Wincott as Scotland Branch Convenor (26 January 2021). As Branch Convenors these are appointed by the Branch members and are automatically appointed as Trustees and Directors.

The following trustees will be retiring from the Board as of this AGM due to serving their maximum term: Simon Kemp (University of Southampton) and Peter Rands (Canterbury Christ Church University).

The Board would like to extend thanks to the time, commitment and passion from the trustees retiring in this period.

### **4. Resolution Paper AGM21-01 – Election of a Board Member who will act as Company Director and Charity Trustee – Academic**

Due to the 2 retirements from the Board we have 2 vacancies. Educational Member Key Contacts – or their nominated representative – have been voting online for our 2 resolutions. The voting is undertaken by Civica – so members can be confident of the process and the voting closed on 15 June.

In order to ensure we have representation from the academic arena the Board requested at least one of the Board Members elected is an academic. We received 2 applications. I am pleased to announce that Zoe Robinson, Professor of Sustainability in Higher Education at Keele University has been elected by our members. Congratulations to Zoe.

## **5. Resolution Paper AGM21-02 – Election of a Board Member who will act as Company Director and Charity Trustee**

Our second resolution focuses on the 2<sup>nd</sup> vacancy. The Board are looking for a Sustainability Professional / Practitioner.

We received 4 applications in total. I am pleased to announce that Louise Ellis, Director of Sustainability at the University of Leeds has been elected by our members. Congratulations to Louise and I would like to thank all those who applied for both positions.

JL will now hand over to CEO, Iain Patton to take us through the Annual Report.

## **6. Diversity of the Board**

The Board are very aware of the issues of diversity – both in our organisation as well as the sustainability and education sector. We are taking a long-term approach with lasting impacts. We are taking a two-pronged approach. Firstly, looking at ourselves we have looked at potential barriers in joining our Board and we have removed the requirement of previous Board experience to enable younger applicants who may not have that experience to encourage younger people to engage with us and get vital experience of working on Boards. We have looked at the term of being a Trustee which is 5 years which is a big commitment so we have created Associate roles on the Board which are guests of the Board and are for a one-year term with the option to extend to two years if wished. These were again hoping to attract a wider diversity of people applying to the Board who could not commit to the full term. As these roles are guests of the Board and are not formal Trustee or Director positions they are agreed by the Board. We also welcomed applications from outside of the sector.

We received 6 Associate applications and we are pleased to say that we welcome Neelum Choudhury, Director – Sustainability Advisory and Certification Lead at CBRE and Dr Romas Malevicius, Lecturer in Sustainability and Ethics at University of Salford. Welcome to both.

Diversity in the sector is not just an EAUC issue – this is an issue across the sustainability sector as well as the education sector. So, we need to explore what the reasons are for this. The Board and staff are spending time to talk to colleagues across the sector to explore what other organisations are doing and what work is already taking place, such as IES, Association of Colleges, Education Training Foundation, Groundwork, Advance HE and many more. We do not want to duplicate work and want to see where the gaps are and where we can make the most impact.

We need to look at how we can encourage a wider diversity of people to think about sustainability as a career and we are working with many partners on this – such as UKRI, COP26 Universities Network and have fed into the BEIS Green Jobs Taskforce and the Environmental Audit Committee on skills. This is ongoing work and is a passion of Neelum's so we look forward to working with her on this agenda.

We are also very aware of our role on the global stage – through our various international initiatives such as the SDG Accord, Race to Zero and the International Green Gown Awards, we have a great variety of universities and colleges from all over the world. We work hard to ensure we provide opportunities for those that are less heard and particularly from the global south. We do this through our own events such as our virtual conference coming up on 8<sup>th</sup> July but also at partner events when we are asked to provide panellists. Such as the recent CimateXpo event where we provided a panel of speakers which included myself and colleagues from the Philippines, Kenya and Colombia.

This is a long journey and we all need to work together to improve diversity in sustainability and in education. We encourage members to get involved and help us improve our sector.

JL handed over to CEO, Iain Patton to take us through the Annual Report.

## **7. Review of the Year – 2020 Annual Trustee Report and Accounts**

IP presented the highlights of activities throughout the year in our Annual Trustee Report:

Without a doubt 2020 was a challenging year for us all – professionally and personally. With much of the country in lockdown due to the pandemic, this certainly brought challenges but also new opportunities. As we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel we need to take stock and look at what we have learnt and how we can take some of the changes forced upon us into long term change. What the pandemic has shown is how interconnected we are across the world and more than ever we need to work together to make the world more sustainable, more just and more equal.

### **Our Members**

Our members are the reason why we exist. We are proud to represent and support 209 universities and colleges across the UK and Ireland. We believe in partnership and collaboration both here in the UK and Ireland and internationally to make our members voice a powerful one through our links with our 186 strategic partners and company members. Overall our retention rates remain high at 94% for educational membership and with unsettling times facing the sector we will have to continue to maintain an excellent value for money offer for our members.

### **Our Strategy**

In 2017 we launched our strategy to support the challenges our members are facing today. This strategy is taking us through the steps to ensure we will transition to and remain a future-focused organisation. We created 6 goals under the strategy and I will highlight the activities we have delivered through each goal.

#### **Goal 1: Strategic Alignment**

Due to the pandemic we had to postpone our flagship leadership programmes and take the time to convert them to virtual offers – so now we have the virtual Leadership Academy and the Emerging Leaders Programme is starting in September.

To further support our skills work we teamed up with Change Agents to provide a study on the Future Graduate Skills. This examines perspectives from university leaders, business leaders and recent graduates on what skills are needed in the workforce to address the challenges posed by the climate crisis.

Period poverty is a global issue that can affect anyone with a menstrual cycle. We developed a practical guide including case studies and resources to help students and staff to provide free sanitary products.

#### **Goal 2: Advocacy**

Our advocacy strategy, created alongside members, captures the key advocacy issues members face and provides the most efficient and effective solutions. We have developed 25 new blogs within the year, our press coverage has extensively grown both through our regional and our international work. On behalf of members, we responded to 7 consultations covering plastics, governance, heat networks and environment strategy in Northern Ireland. We ran a survey with members on the impact of the pandemic and used your responses to focus our action plan for 2021.

#### **Goal 3: Knowledge Exchange**

We harness the wealth of experience and knowledge of our members to ensure on-going creation and dissemination of knowledge. We held over 20 webinars and with over 200 attending. To support members both professionally and personally at the start of the pandemic we ran a series of drop-in webinars to just

provide a space for us to share our concerns, fears and tears, We turned our normal conference into an epic virtual 5 day offering bring voices from all over the world. We extended the application stage for the Green Gown Awards and celebrated 74 finalists and held our first ever virtual Green Gown Awards Ceremony.

#### **Goal 4: Maximised Resources**

We launched our second annual report with a 69% increase in institutions taking part and more useful case studies to encourage more institutions to adapt a coordinated whole institution approach.

We are working with Change Agents and SOS to offer a supported Kickstart scheme designed for colleges and universities – providing high quality work placements for young people deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment and with a particular focus on increasing diversity of those entering sustainability as a career. You can still apply with a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> December so head to our website for details.

We worked with experts and scientists from the COP26 Universities Network on a briefing on offsetting aimed at the UK Further & Higher Education and this was published in January. Further to the recommendations in the guidance we have set up an offsetting scheme for the education sector called Carbon Coalition. This is underpinned by an advisory group made up of academics and experts and we are currently running a pilot with the hope to open to the wider sector in the next academic year. Full details are on our website to find out more.

#### **Goal 5: Stronger Community**

We held 49 regional, branch and community of practice meetings throughout the year – with new groups created for scope 3.

This year again we have also recognised members that consistently contribute a great deal of their time and resources to our organisation and the wider membership. These are members that have a formal volunteering role such as regional, branch, topic support networks, community of practice and task and finish group members. This equates to 40 volunteers and equivalent to £84,000 of staff time on an annual basis. Thank you once again to all our members that contribute.

We also work closely with key sector bodies such as Aldersgate Group, HEPA, Wrap and Healthy Universities to ensure we make the most of resources and networks to benefit our members.

#### **Goal 6: Expanded Horizons**

We continue to provide annual reports of the SDG Accord and present this at the UN High Level Political Forum. This has gained huge amounts of support with 150 endorsing partners and 220 institutions and continues to grow. The 2021 annual report will be available in July with further case studies to support members on embedding the SDGs.

We are the secretariat for the Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges in partnership with UNEP and Second Nature and is the official route for the sector to be part of the wider Race to Zero campaign. We have over 700 signatories representing over eight and a half million students. We will be launching a new website soon with case studies from signatories to provide further support for members to reach their net-zero targets. We look forward to celebrating the strong voice of the education sector at COP26. If you have not yet signed then sign today.

The International Green Gown Awards continue to grow and we are looking forward to our Awards Ceremony on 7th July which follows the Higher Education Sustainability Initiatives event at the UN High Level Political Forum.

We continue to represent and engage with members in the build up to COP26, including representation on the COP26 Cabinet Office Team roundtables for education and skills and youth engagement and working closely with the COP26 Universities Network. We are working with the Cabinet Office on developing a college and university pack. We will keep members informed of this work as we progress.

### **Scotland Programme**

Our new Scottish Funding Council funded programme started in April 2020 for a 3-year programme. Highlights to date include the Travel Better Package, our first virtual Scotland conference and a guide for student leaders in sustainability. We launched new topic support networks for student leaders and a new wellbeing network. You can find out more about all of the activity we do in Scotland in the Annual Report and on our website.

### **Sustainability Report**

We are pleased to present our annual sustainability report for 2020. Our carbon footprint for 2020 was just over 5 tonnes which we offset. This has decreased by 68% which was predominately due to the reduction in travel due to the pandemic. With all our staff working from home since March 2020 we included estimates based on hours worked from home and we used our data from the previous year for heating, lighting, water and waste. You can view the full details on our website.

The Board have approved that we move to a permanent home-based organisation so we will no longer have our physical offices and we would like to thank Queen Margaret University and the University of Gloucestershire for their years of support. We are co-developing a homeworking policy with staff to ensure they remain fully supported and engaged. We will still receive IT support from the University of Gloucestershire. You can view the full details on our website - <https://www.eauc.org.uk/sustainability>.

IP handed over to David Duncan, our Treasurer to take us through our Annual Accounts.

### **Annual Accounts**

We made an overall loss of £41,375 which includes our project funding. We made an unrestricted loss of £7,929 for the year which excludes our project funding. We took part in the Government's Job Retention Scheme or furlough which we received £59,194 which meant our loss was severely lessened by this support and was able to protect the charity from the full impact of the pandemic. Only staff funded through our unrestricted funds were affected.

We had a decrease of 28% in our unrestricted income which was mainly due to being unable to run our physical events which generate us income through delegates fees and exhibition and sponsorships. The 13% decrease in expenditure was mostly due to travel restrictions and conversely expenditure on physical events. This illustrates how important these events are for creating a surplus.

In 2020 we had 11.46 full time equivalent staff of which 3.85 FTE were funded through our restricted externally funded projects. Our non-project related staff costs represent 75% of our total unrestricted expenditure which is up from 56% from last year.

A breakdown of our income sources shows that 39% of our income comes from membership fees – both educational and company Members. 12% of our income comes from the Annual Conference and 11% comes from products and services such as the Green Gown Awards and Sustainability Exchange. We continue to receive funding from the Scottish Funding Council and this makes up 23% of total income received. 39% of income came from the Government's Job Retention Scheme.



As we still feel the impact of the pandemic, we will continue with our virtual conference which brings together our international initiatives. We are hoping to bring a networking forum for members at Loughborough University in September. Of course, we will follow Government guidance at all times.

Our unrestricted expenditure will reduce by just over £4k per annum as we move to a home-based organisation.

We have adapted our leadership programmes to be virtual and we hope to return to a physical leadership lab in January 2022.

Our reserves stand at £143,703 – with the pandemic this shows how important it is for us to have reserves to protect the charity from unforeseen circumstances.

Our educational membership remains strong at 96% retention and we have already welcome 7 new members in 2021 as we provide new tools and resources for our FE members. We are reliant upon our members to continue to support our work and we remain dedicated in supporting our members in 2021 and beyond. We thank you – our members – for continuing to support us – without you we would not exist.

DD passed back to JL and Manveer Gill for an update on the Climate Commission.

## **8. Climate Commission**

In November 2019, we took on our biggest challenge to date. In an unprecedented partnership we brought together Universities UK, Guild HE and Association of Colleges to launch the UK Climate Commission for Further and Higher Education for Leaders and Students. This is a confirmation that we need a sector wide response to the climate crisis and we need to work together to ensure no-one is left behind.

Throughout 2020 we delivered an ambitious programme of evidence gathering events and brought key stakeholders within the sector to agree a common approach for the sector.

We directly engaged 63 institutions and Climate Commissioners spoke at 19 external events.

A key output for the Climate Commission is the Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges. This was co-created with 13 colleges from the Climate Commission Council and was supported by Nous and includes case studies from EAUC members.

The Roadmap takes you through your journey so you can map where your institution is and sets out a clear path for your next steps and provides estimates on time and resources so you can plan effectively. Since the launch of the Roadmap the Climate Commission has engaged around two thirds of colleges and we are now working on the last third.

We ensured that students were at the very heart of the Climate Commission right from the start - it is our future and our education in your hands. We have 4 student Climate Commissioners and we engage the wider student body through a variety of activities and ensuring when the Climate Commission speak at external events we ensure we have a Student Climate Commissioner speaking as well. To date we have engaged over 450 students and we continue to increase this.

A key activity in 2020 was coordinated a collated response to UNESCO's Future of Education. It is important for the youth voice to feed into key decisions and policy making. Our next activity will be

engaging students to feed into the Conference of Youth which then feeds into COP26. The student Climate Commissioners will be running workshops over the summer so do get your students to get involved as this is a real opportunity for the youth voice to get into COP26.

We also work closely with our student voice partners – this enables us to communicate with a much wider student network but also we can bring opportunities and news from our student voice partners to the students on the Council. We are presenting at the Enactus Leadership Summit later this month.

Another key output of the Climate Commission is the Climate Action Toolkit for the Higher Education sector which was launched at the Universities UK conference. This provides institutions signposting to help you on your net-zero journey. It is full of great examples of best practice across the sector. Following the success for the FE Climate Action Roadmap we will develop a Roadmap for HE too.

In the coming months the Climate Commission will be working to develop a sector wide agreed standard including consistent language and to be clear on scopes and reporting. We will be working with EAUC Fellows to develop a draft and then will be consulting with the wider membership and then we will go across the sector through our climate commission partners.

With COP26 coming up later this year this is the opportunity for the sector to show real leadership and action to their students. But we need this beyond COP so will continue to provide leadership and support for the sector.

I encourage you all to engage with the Climate Commission, use the Roadmaps and Toolkit and most importantly engage with your students. All details are on the website at [https://www.eauc.org.uk/climate\\_commission](https://www.eauc.org.uk/climate_commission)

## **9. Questions**

The floor was opened for questions and comments on the Annual Report and Accounts:

- Emma Kallblad (University of St Andrews) asked what were the plans for the new strategy. IP responded that plans will come at the end of the year and engagement will start with the Board and staff, then Fellows and then our wider membership. This has been postponed due to the pandemic and a new world forming. There will be a formal process for members to engage and will be announced. JL added that we need to be agile, horizon scanning and listening to members and there will be plenty of opportunity for members to get involved and challenge.

## **10. Any other business and close**

No other business was raised and therefore JL closed this AGM.

We need to hear from you – our members – on what support, training, services you need to deliver sustainability within your institution. So let us know – you can do that via the regional and communities of practice groups. Or you can just get in touch directly with us. JL thanked the trustees and all the staff for all the challenges this year has brought.