



Adults Learning Mathematics - a Research Forum

Adults Learning Maths — A Research Forum

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 6th July 1995 at the University of Exeter

Chair: Dr Diana Coben

Minutes: Dhamma Colwell

1. Everyone was welcomed by Diana
2. The minutes of the last AGM were agreed.
3. **Chair's report**

Diana Coben said that she was really pleased that ALM had reached this stage one year after being formally constituted: the number of people at the Conference, and the many more who had expressed an interest but not been able to come, formed a stimulating and worthwhile grouping which should raise the profile of research into adults learning maths, generate new research, disseminate research findings, and help to break down the barriers between practitioners and researchers.

Diana had edited and produced the first ALM Newsletter and many people had been in touch as a result. Joan O'Hagan thanked Diana for producing an extremely useful and informative Newsletter. Alison Tomlin offered to type for the Newsletter. Ian Beveridge suggested asking an expert to produce a template for the layout of the Newsletter, so that text could then simply be typed in.

The Proceedings of the Inaugural Conference (1994) had been published with an ISBN Number, which meant that it would appear on various lists, and Avanti (book-distributors) had agreed to add it to their Resource List. This would give ALM a more public profile, Diana thanked all the people who had contributed papers to the Proceedings, Roseanne Benn and Jeff Evans expressed appreciation of Diana's efforts in the very professional production of the Conference Proceedings. Richards Angiama said he felt it was important to make the Conference Proceedings as widely known as possible.

Progress was being made with the book mooted at the first conference in November 93, and being co-edited by Willem van Zor, Hans ter Heege, and Diana. Proposals for chapters had been submitted by ALM members, and the publishers had responded with some useful suggestions. A revised proposal and further proposals could be discussed with Diana this weekend, and would subsequently be sent to the publishers.

ALM had received a letter from Ed Jacobean a member in the USA, asking for contributions for another book, to be published by UNESCO, with a section on adults learning mathematics. People were asked to contact Ed directly.

It has been a real challenge for the Steering Group to function as representative of a truly international research forum. We were experimenting with the use of electronic meeting, but still need to work on the best way of doing this.

Diana reported that she had attended the April 95 conference of the Adult Numeracy Practitioners Network in the USA which she found had many similarities with ALM and provided very useful contacts.

Anne Dickens congratulated Diana on achieving international radio status, having made contributions to programmes on the BBC World Service and Radio 4. Diana said that this had been a somewhat uncomfortable learning experience, for example trying to formulate simple answers to questions like, 'Why do people have difficulty in learning mathematics?' She said that the BBC would like more items. Jeff Evans and Roseanne Benn suggested that we could put together a press statement on the conference, giving about 6 items that were addressed, and that this could go out through Exeter University's Publicity Unit.

4. Treasurer's Report

An audited Statement of Accounts at 12.6.95 had been distributed by Sue Elliott. She said that these accounts included both the Nov 94 and July 94 conferences.

Although we appeared to have a healthy balance of £1124.01, we had not yet paid Goldsmiths¹ College for the production of the 94 Conference Proceedings, or for insurance for the 95 conference. We are planning to publish the 95 Conference Proceedings, and we also need a balance to run the next conference.

It had been found that the cost of sending membership fees from one country to another was prohibitive. We were therefore proposing to appoint Kathy Safford as USA agent and Pam Harris and Barbara Miller as Australian agents. This was agreed.

Sue recommended that the membership fee did not need to be raised this year. Members suggested that the institutional membership fee of £15 was too low for ALM to be respected as a creditable organisation. It was agreed to leave it at this level for this year, but that the Treasurer be asked, to bring new proposals to the AGM next year.

Ian Beveridge proposed that the accounts be formally accepted. This was agreed unanimously.

5. Membership Secretary's Report

Kathy Safford reported that we have 70 paid-up members, of whom 13 are Institutional Members. She has set up a database of all contacts of ALM. She asked members to write their names and addresses in block capitals, on the membership form, to add EMAIL addresses, and to indicate interest in a potential list serve. She reminded people to renew their membership if they joined last July. Membership cards will be issued to members this year.

Kathy said that she had been publicising ALM in the US through the National Centres for Adult Literacy. She and Mary Jane Schmitt will continue to promote the forum.

6. Networking

Diana identified the need for members' addresses to be circulated so that they could contact each other directly. She had consulted with the member of staff responsible for administering the Data Protection Act at Goldsmiths' College, who had advised that it was legal to do this. She felt that some people might not want to have their home address distributed, so she proposed amending the membership form so that people could give home and work addresses, but choose which one they would like circulated. It was agreed that a list of members' names and addresses would be circulated.

It was also proposed to set up an electronic list to which people on EMAIL could subscribe. The membership form should have space for an EMAIL address. Concern was expressed that people working in Higher Education tended to have access to EMAIL, but those working in Further and Adult Education did not. Diana undertook to make sure that people without EMAIL would have access to as much information as possible, through the Newsletter.

Mary Jane Schmitt said that the Adult Numeracy Practitioners' Network, a group of teachers in the USA, had an electronic list, and would welcome ALM members to join it. She had also brought copies of their Newsletter, "The Math Practitioner", which people could have.

7. Amendments to the Constitution

7.1 Dhamma Colwell proposed the following amendment to the Constitution:

Paragraph 6:

To replace the following sentence:

"Signed nominations shall normally be received by the Secretary at least 10 days before the Annual General Meeting" with

"Signed nominations shall normally be received by the Secretary at least 1 hour before the Annual General Meeting".

Dhamma supported this proposal by explaining that it was very important to have 'fresh blood' on the Steering Group each year, as members are only allowed by the Constitution to hold any one office for 3 years, or to sit on the Steering Group for 5 years. This year we had not received nominations from outside the Steering Group, and she felt that members would find it easier to make and accept nominations through personal contact at the annual conference.

Diana Coben seconded the amendment and it was carried unanimously.

7.2 Dhamma Colwell proposed the following amendment to the constitution:

Paragraph 7:

To replace the following sentence:

"Matters for discussion at the AGM shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least 42 days before the AGM." with

"Matters for discussion at the AGM shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least 52 days before the AGM."

Dhamma supported this proposal by explaining that the Constitution requires that the Agenda should be sent out to members 28 days before the AGM. As things stand, the Steering Group only has 14 days between the final date for submitting items for discussion and for the Agenda to reach members.

This year the English Bank Holiday and half-term week was right in the middle of these 14 days, and it proved impossible to arrange a meeting. As it is quite possible that this will occur frequently, it seems sensible to give the Steering Group another 10 days' flexibility.

The amendment was seconded by Diana Coben and carried unanimously.

8. Election of officers and the Steering Group

Roseanne Benn took the chair for the election.

The Officers and Steering Group were thanked for their hard work during the past year. The following were elected unanimously:

		<i>proposed by</i>	<i>seconded by</i>
Chair:	Diana Coben,	Dhamma Colwell	Sue Elliott
Secretary:	Dhamma Colwell,	Diana Coben	Sue Elliott
Treasurer:	Sue Elliott,	Roseanne Benn	Dhamma Colwell
Membership Secretary:	Kathy Safford,	Sue Elliott	Roseanne Benn
Steering Group members:	Richards Angiama,	Diana Coben	Sue Elliott
	Roseanne Benn,	Dhamma Colwell	Diana Coben
	Ann Elsey,	Roseanne Benn	Dhamma Colwell

It was proposed by Ian Beveridge and seconded by Declan O'Neill that Sybil Cock and Wendy Fortescue-Hubbard be co-opted onto the Steering Group.

9. The Future of ALM

The venue and timing of next year's conference was discussed. It was agreed that it was necessary to have an active member living or working at or near the venue who would be able to liaise between the Steering Group and the venue administrators. It was also agreed that it would be appropriate for the conference to be in a country other than the UK in 1996 if possible. Sweden, Holland, Limerick, Hull, and Durham were all suggested as possibilities. The Steering Group will follow this up.

10. Any other business

Ian Beveridge encouraged people to come to the Mathematics Support in Further and Higher Education Conference at Luton University in September.