



The Surname Society

Minutes of Committee Meeting held online on Friday 7 November 2014 at 12 noon GMT

Present: Mandy Blake (Secretary, UK), Jennie Fairs (Social Networking Co-ordinator, Australia), Kirsty Gray (Chair, UK), Linda Hauley (Treasurer, Canada), Elizabeth Kipp (Newsletter Editor, Canada), Colin Spencer (Webmaster, Spain), Steve Williams (Vice Chair, UK).

Apologies: None

ACTION

1. KG welcomed everyone. A special welcome was extended to our newly-appointed Treasurer, Linda Hauley.
2. Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed.
3. Actions arising – references 2014/012-2014/016 inclusive have all been completed. 2014/017 re Gedcoms; this is ongoing (see item 8). 2014/018; the press release is done and ready to go out. CS will set up a new mailing list of members and will circulate the press release to everyone on it and JF will circulate it everywhere else. The rest of the Committee members will also put the press release out wherever possible. It will be stressed that there will be an embargo until 7am GMT Monday. A Treasurer has come forward from the initial Society members and she was unanimously voted in by online means.
CS, JF, and all committee members (2014/020)
4. Social Media Plan – JF has produced a very extensive and detailed plan, which was very well-received by everyone, and she was thanked. JF asked if a blog was a necessity; she has been investigating online and it doesn't seem as though a blog is essential. KG mentioned that a lot of our new members seem to have blogs, so a TSS blog could well prove popular. JF is happy to start a blog and has already got some ideas for posts. KG suggested that JF asks in the Facebook group for contributions to the blog. Some people don't use Facebook or Twitter but they do subscribe to blogs. CS suggested that the 'news' page of the website is updated regularly and fairly frequently. He also suggested that we don't set up a blog yet, but to wait until TSS has evolved and we better recognise favoured online mediums

– we don't want to commit ourselves to too much too soon. It may be best to think again about a blog in the New Year and this was agreed. JF asked if 'social media' includes Google+ hangouts. She suggested that, if so, every couple of months we could invite a guest speaker from outside the Society membership, for example, from The National Archives. This idea was well-received. JF is happy to contact people to arrange this. KG agreed that the Google+ hangouts do come under Social Media for our purposes. CS explained the setup of Google+ as it is new to some of us. JF gave us some stats: out of 62 invites to join the TSS Facebook group, 38 joined. Not many took up the Google+ invites, but this was more due to some people not already having Google+ accounts and therefore couldn't be invited. Some interesting follows on Twitter, including a German names entity. SW asked whether we should all chip in and respond to queries on social media outlets, or whether we should leave it to a named person/people. KG confirmed that if they are general questions which we are capable of answering, then any of us can just go ahead and answer them. The only exception would be where an official line is required in the reply and, in those cases, we should get a consensus opinion from a couple of Committee members before responding.

JF
(2014/021)

5. Webmaster's update: There have been over 800 unique views to the website in just over four days. He is working to fix the problem where we are getting membership numbers skipped, so there are gaps in the allocation. We will use the missed numbers up on postal applications. The Latvian person mentioned previously in connection with invites to the soft launch is following us, but not yet joined because of privacy concerns. She is in Canada so LH and EK will make contact. JF asked if we could have the facility to register blogs on our website; CS could do it if it's required/popular. Agreed to leave it for now. CS asked if we want to do a monthly mailout (via MailChimp) or if we're just going to do it on an ad hoc basis. MailChimp has been set up and it's free until we reach 2,500 members. All agreed that the more ways we contact our members, the better, so we will make this a feature of TSS.

LH and EK
(2014/022)

CS
(2014/023)

6. Secretary's update: MB reported that this week has gone extremely well from an admin point of view, with Monday being very hectic and many applications coming through. She is printing off each application form so that we have hard copies for good business practice. She is also keeping spreadsheets with both application and payment details. MB said that there have been a few emails via TSS's info@ address, and these have either been dealt with swiftly or passed onto the relevant committee member for action. People have been pointing out small glitches in systems

(which is very helpful), but no major issues. We have so far received three postal applications, and most people using Paypal have opted for the recurring annual payment system. MB will now hand over the Treasurer's duties that she has been covering to LH, and KG will add LH to the Society's bank account at the earliest opportunity.

KG
(2014/024)

7. Saturday's Google+ hangout (swopped with agenda item number 8). CS helped all of us to put our name, title and logo along the bottom of the screen. KG will act as Moderator. The hangout will be recorded and put on YouTube and the website, so we need to be diligent about muting our mics when we are not speaking, etc. KG will start off with an overview of the society, how we started out, what we are going to do in the future, and how we will differ from any other single surname entities. Perhaps outline our plans for the future, how we are going to grow and evolve, etc. We will each say three or four lines about our role in TSS and our own single-surname studies. CS will do the wrap-up of the session. CS suggested that we start half an hour early so that we can do a bit of a run-through (9.30am GMT).

All
(2014/025)

8. Projects and priorities: CS is hoping to get the Gedcom facility up and running by Christmas, but work on this has slowed up due to launch. There are quite a few new members who are not experienced with surname studies, so there is a need for educational material. All the Committee/Postholders will have access to upload their own relevant documents to the website (eg meeting minutes, etc). It was agreed that a Wiki is probably a good idea but, again, this will be something that will take some time to set up. KG has already identified some of our new members as being capable of providing knowledge on surname studies.

9. AOB: MB asked if we could have a small poppy at the top of the homepage until the 11th; CS has done this and everyone agreed that it looked good. One of the new members contacted CS to say that it doesn't seem sufficient to have the surname search box only at the bottom of the homepage so CS has moved it up to the top. Everyone agreed that this was a good position for the search box.

10. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 19 November at 12 noon GMT (next hangout is Saturday 22 November at 4pm GMT).

