

Minutes of the Women's Engineering Society Annual General Meeting

Date: Saturday, 26 October 2024

Time: 10:30am

Location: Zoom

Chair: Dr Kathy Critchley (President) (also joined in the presentation by Susan Robson, interim CEO)

Present online

Katherine Critchley (Chair)

Chisomnazu Umeh

Susan McDonald

Hillary Taylor

Caitlin McCall

Modupe Jimoh

Steff Smith

Pauline Smith

Penny Lancaster

Lionel Yafele

Chika Judith Abolle-Okoyeagu

Patricia Ajuonu

Jasmine Kinsman

Jan Peters

Jo Douglas-Harris

Sharon Jones

Laura Brown

Mamta Singhal

Paula McMahan

Vince Pizzoni

Laura Shrieves

Sarah Haslam

Louise Rush

In attendance

Susan Robson – Chief Executive Officer, WES

Candi Colbourn – Marketing and Events Manager, WES

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Chair welcomed members, stakeholders, and board attendees.
- Purpose of the AGM outlined: to review the past year's activities, financial health, and strategic direction.
- The decision to hold the AGM virtually was discussed, along with the importance of face-to-face meetings for networking and collaboration.
- A survey was announced to gather feedback on the virtual AGM format.
- The departure of Elizabeth Donnelly as CEO after six years was announced, and her contributions were highlighted.

- Susan Robson was introduced as the new interim CEO, and her previous role as a trustee was mentioned.

2. Sign off of the minutes

- The Chair explained that the first order of business was to approve the minutes of the previous AGM. A link to the minutes had been sent out with the AGM notice.
- Members were asked to use the Q&A facility to indicate if they did not approve the minutes; if there were no objections, the minutes would be considered approved.
- It was clarified that only those who attended the previous meeting should approve the minutes.
- **As no objections were raised, the Chair confirmed that the minutes were approved.**

3. Presentation of Annual Report and Accounts

- The annual report was discussed, emphasising the role of volunteers.
- Obstacles in closing the accounts due to reclassifications in the accounting system were mentioned, and it was assured that the accounts would be published soon.
- The financial summary was provided, noting a 34.7% increase in income and a 12.8% increase in expenditure.
- The society's healthy financial position with a surplus of £144,516 was highlighted.
- The importance of making the right investments in the 2024 budgeting process was emphasised.
- Key achievements, including the success of the INWED23 campaign was mentioned.

4. Volunteer Presentations

- The activities of the members committee, partners committee, and special interest groups were discussed, including the focus on volunteers, the partners hub for universities, and the work on equity, diversity, inclusion, and the climate emergency.

- The need for more members to get involved in these groups was emphasized.
- **Laura Brown** (commercial manager at Northern Power Grid) and **Dr. Beth Barnes** (assistant professor at Durham University and co-chair of the cluster). Laura introduced the cluster's activities, and Beth shared details about university engagement and events, including the Tyneside and Tees cluster's collaboration with local and national organizations was highlighted. The activities of the Durham University Women's Engineering Society group, including bi-weekly talks, a showcase event, and a panel discussion on intersectionality, were presented. The cluster's future plans to continue supporting the women engineering community were discussed.
- **Vince Pizzoni** shared an overview of the work of the directors committees within the Women's Engineering Society. He discussed the members committee's focus on volunteer strategy and the development of a volunteers hub, the partners committee's work with universities through a partners hub, and the activities of special interest groups on equity, diversity, inclusion, and the climate emergency. He highlighted successful initiatives, such as a letter to parliament on the energy transition, and encouraged members to get involved in committees and special interest groups to help advance the society's mission.

5. Board Elections

- The outgoing trustees were thanked, and the new trustees
 - Caitlin McCall
 - Judith Abole
 - Susan McDonald

6. Volunteer Awards Presentation

- The Isabel Hardwich Medal for sustained services to the society was awarded to **Paula McMahon**
- **Jasmine Kinsman** was acknowledged for redesigning the medal.
- The Gillian Skinner Award for behind-the-scenes work was awarded to **Sharon Jones** for leading the South Coast Cluster

7. Member Questions and Feedback

- **Pauline Smith's** questions about the CEO appointment and the recruitment process were addressed, with clarification that Susan Robson first acted as interim CEO from May to September in an unpaid capacity. Susan resigned from the board of trustees in September, and the board appointed her as interim CEO under a paid contract.
- Members were encouraged to hold the board accountable and provide feedback.
- The society's mission and vision, emphasising collaboration and inclusivity, were reflected upon.

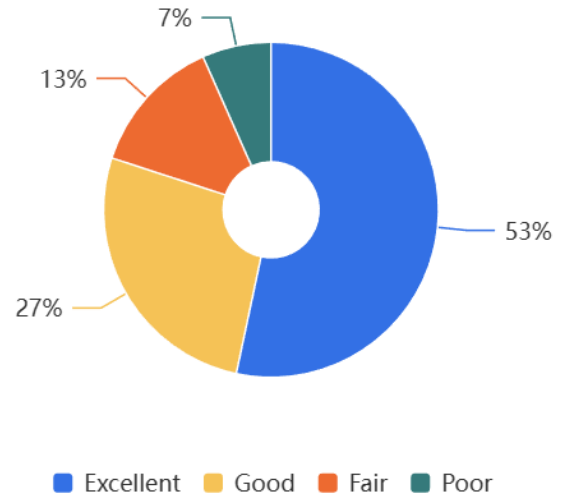
8. Closing Remarks

- The Chair thanked everyone for attending and encouraged continued involvement and support for the Women's Engineering Society.

Post meeting survey

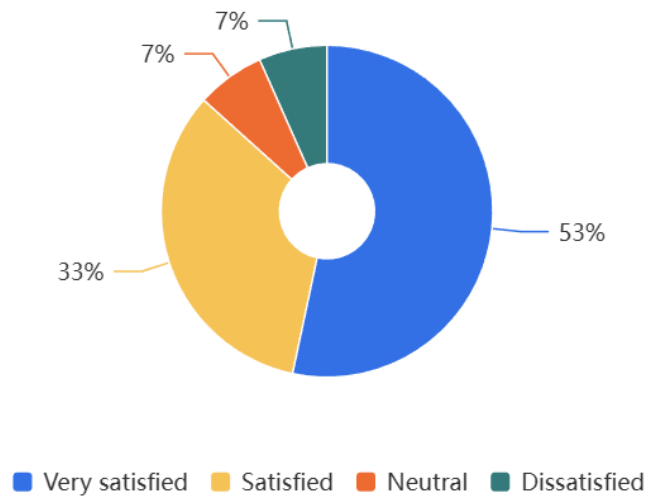
1. Overall Experience (Single choice)

(15/15) 100% answered



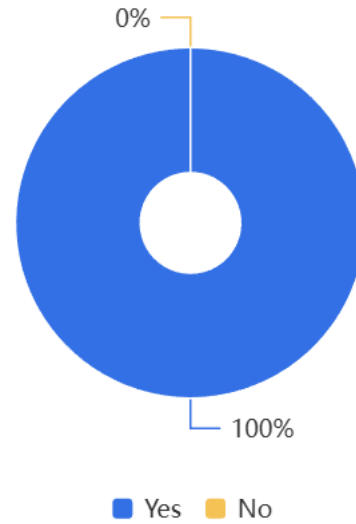
2. How satisfied were you with the content presented? (Single choice)

(15/15) 100% answered



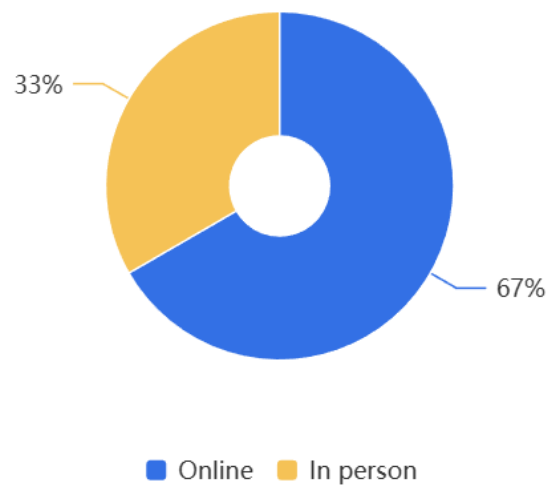
3. Were the logistics and pre-meeting logistics handled well? (Single choice)

(15/15) 100% answered



4. What is your preference for how the AGM should be held? (Single choice)

(15/15) 100% answered



5. Any other feedback? (Long answer)

(10/15) 67% answered

Anonymous

Thanks, Susan, for the insightful answer to the questions.

Anonymous

First AGM I've attended. Really interesting to hear about the wider activities going on, as I'm looking to get more involved as I work towards gaining CEng through IET. Thank you.

Anonymous

It could be made more interactive

Anonymous

being prepared, obvs an agm is a set format, but it felt like something else was going on?

Anonymous

A positive and constructive meeting. Noted a preference for in-person to support building new and stronger relationships with our members, but wanted to share that online was effective.

Anonymous

Whether in person or online there should be an opportunity for members to speak. There was no report or accounts so perhaps the AGM should have been postponed. Agenda item 9 was not covered.

Anonymous

Would be nice to see folk and connect, but practicalities and growth in networking events means it's not necessary. Feels WES has come of age and transitioned to a professional space.

Anonymous

In the past we've had a more interactive online meeting where you can see all other participants, and could stay and chat at the end - as we're all spread over the country its good to catch up

Anonymous

A slide for some of the finance figures would have been easier to follow

Anonymous

Appreciate the meeting being so well organised. Most post-Covid events have been held in London which is difficult for us up north. Key events like the AGM need some form of virtual access.