

## **Social and Cultural Geographies Research Group**

### **Annual General Meeting Minutes**

Weds 3rd Sept, 9am (UK BST)

Attended: Rebecca Collins (Chair), Sinéad O'Connor (Secretary), Jason Luger (OCM), Rishika Mukhopadhyay (Conference Officer), Adam Searle (OCM), Leila Dawney (OCM), Joyce Deng (International Officer), Liv Robinson (PGR), Danny McNally (Dissertation Officer), Sam Berlin, Basak Tanulku, Victoria Jones, Hanh-An Trinh.

#### Agenda

1. Apologies for absence: Vickie Zhang (Treasurer), Lucy Everitt (PGR), Chen Qu (Early Career Officer), Will Jamieson (Membership Officer)
2. Welcome to new committee members: Lucy Everitt (PGR) and Joyce Deng (International Officer)
3. Updates from Committee members

- a. Membership (SOC)

The group's membership has been stable over the last six months and currently stands at 350.

- b. Treasurer (SOC)

The main expenditure in the last year was the group's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in November 2024 (£2,560). We also spent £100 on the dissertation prize. As the anniversary was the primary activity that took place in the last year, we still have a sizeable budget for follow-up activities in 2025/26. The closing balance of our account stands at £2,338.

- c. Dissertation Prize (DM)

Thanks to committee members for reading this year's dissertations, particularly Adam, who participated in both rounds. There were 24 submissions. The Chair and Dissertation Officer will decide on a winner in the coming week. The excellent quality of the final two dissertations was noted. The committee discussed whether to continue in last year's vein and award two winners – one which reflects excellence in social geography, and one for cultural geography. The committee also discussed whether it is necessary to continue anonymising the dissertations, as this places additional labour on the dissertation officer, and the majority of submissions are still made by Russell Group institutions. We also discussed how to acknowledge the high quality of all submissions and a commendation list was suggested.

d. Conference officer (RM)

RGS conference sponsorship was highly sought after this year, with 19 applications submitted to the group, up from 10 last year. We sponsored 9 sessions at the AC. The sessions were a combination of in-person and live hybrid formats of paper presentation, workshop and live stitching, facilitating diverse voices to contribute remotely who were unable to travel to Birmingham. SCGRG nominated four presenters for AC2025 guest passes to encourage participation from the global south and from outside the geography academy (artists and authors). This includes nomination of a guest pass for the Social and Cultural Geography keynote lecture by Prof Hayden Lorimer. Overall, it was a successful conference which saw rising interest in different experimental, political and urgent domains of social and cultural geography.

4. Nominations and Elections

a. Conference Officer

We welcome Hanh-An Trinh to the role. Nominated by Rishika, seconded by Danny

b. Social Media & Website Officer

We welcome Basak Tanulku to the role. Nominated by Jason, seconded by Rishika

c. Dissertation Prize Officer

Adam Searle is ending his term as OCM and stepping into the dissertation officer role. Nominated by Danny, seconded by Sinéad

d. Treasurer

Danny McNally is ending his term as dissertation officer and stepping into the Treasurer role. Nominated by Sinéad, seconded by Adam.

**Action:** Existing members to arrange handover with new committee members taking up their former role.

Beck to contact new committee members for induction.

5. 2025-26 Planning

a. Budget

Members are encouraged to suggest ideas for events in the coming year given the health of our current budget.

Joyce suggested a series of 'common room' online seminars for international colleagues to share their work at times more appropriate for the Americas/Asia Pacific. There was strong support for this.

b. SCG in Policy and Practice (Beck & Danny)

Beck and Danny are currently organising a follow-up from the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a focus on the contributions social and cultural geographers make to policy and practice. This will involve academics who collaborate with policy-makers and former academics who now work outside of the academy.

c. Responsive Intervention Fund

Beck reminded the committee of the new RGS funds which are available to support urgent responses to particular events. Anyone with an application they would like the group to support is encouraged to contact Beck.

d. AC 2026

As next year's conference will be chaired by Prof Peter Hopkins, the committee is welcome to suggest activities or events that align with social geography/the conference theme when it is announced.

6. AOB

a. The committee would like to thank Leila Dawney for arranging the group social at the RGS AC in Birmingham, which was a great success.

b. Jason Luger suggested re-starting the 'Work in Progress' coffee sessions where group members can informally share ideas and current research. There was strong support for this. **Action:** Jason to organise suitable dates

c. RGS Sub-committee meeting, Sep 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025, 1-2pm (induction for new members)

**Action:** Secretary to send new committee members Zoom link

d. Departing committee members

The committee would like to extend our warmest thanks to those members whose terms are coming to an end. Particular thanks to Liv Robsinson, our departing PGR rep, who was instrumental in facilitating the PGR session at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Thanks to Ben Anderson, who acted as interim Chair in previous years, has contributed to the group's annual activities, and also supported and participated in the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Thanks to Martin Zebracki whose term as OCM is also ending. Deep gratitude too to Vickie Zhang, our departing Treasurer,

who has given so much of her energy and enthusiasm to the group, particularly in organising the 50<sup>th</sup> event in November 2024.