

Agora Annual Report and Accounts (2020)

Charity #: 1176974

Approved by board of Trustees on 30/3/2021

Trustee annual report

Adapting to a global pandemic made 2020 challenging for all organisations, so we are particularly proud of our achievements this year. We end it stronger than we began. There are also some true milestones which demonstrate our continued growth as a think tank.

The Executive Committee (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer) continue to provide leadership to the organisation, informed by a strategy co-decided by the Board of Trustees (BoT) and Council. This year is the first where the membership of the BoT and Council is separate (except for the Executive Committee, which *ex officio* sits on both). This allows Trustees to focus on longer-term plans for the Agora and for the Council to concentrate on the effective running of the think tank.

We launched our first regional group in Oxford. The group are already active, with a sub-team of volunteers who organise and hold regular events.

Agora also crossed a financial and professional Rubicon, winning and delivering our first project contract. This allowed us to take on our first ever employee for a fixed period of time. The project saw us work with a coalition of organisations to feed in to the Government's Integrated Review. Beyond this, modest sums were brought in through membership fees and donations. The think tank's balance sheet is starting to look healthier and begins to present us with greater opportunities.

All six of our research programmes continue to work well, producing content and providing a point of contact for our members and participants. We published 27 blogs and held 13 public events throughout 2020. Considering the disruption of COVID-19 and the need to be agile in moving our operations entirely online, we are pleased that our written output increased and our number of events only declined very slightly. Through the use of the Policy Kitchen platform developed with our Open Think Tank Network partners we developed and participated in our first cross-border policy exercise, seeking to define a feminist foreign policy and establish its possible aims for the 2020s.

We ended this reporting period with 10 paying members, likely a consequence of an inability to meet during the pandemic. We are working on implementing a digital membership and payment system, which we trust will help us grow our number of members again.

Our online community grew significantly during this reporting period. Our number of followers on Twitter increased 78%, on Facebook 38% (in part driven by a new page for our Oxford group), on Instagram 265%, and on LinkedIn 99%. Our total social media following at the close of the year was 3875. The think tank enjoyed a similar growth in website visitor numbers, with traffic growing 52% year-on-year in Q4. Last but not least, the launch of a new quarterly newsletter allowed us to connect with our audiences in a new way.

Accounts

Financial activities

Revenue (£)		Expenses (£)	
Item	Value	Item	Value
Project contracts	3648.29	Salaries	2325.36
Membership fees	200	Insurance	30.80
Donations	204	IT fees	33.58
		IT services	137.94
Total	4052.29	Total	2527.68
Net income (£)		1524.61	

Balance sheet

	(£)
Carried over from previous financial period	654.44
Revenue	4052.29
Expenses	2527.68
Total assets at financial period end	2179.05