

Present: Catrin Williams (President), Michelle Fletcher (Secretary – attending via Zoom), Julia Snyder (Treasurer), Dominika Kurek-Chomycz (Incoming Secretary), Siobhán Jolley (Information Officer), Andrew Byers (TRS-UK rep), Julia Lindenlaub (Committee member), Kelsie Rodenbiker (Committee member), 46 Society members, 4 guests

The President welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** the minutes of the 2025 meeting were approved as an accurate record.
2. **Matters arising** not elsewhere on the agenda
 - a) TRS-UK update

Andy Byers reported briefly on the recent activities of [TRS-UK](#). It is closely following closures, mergers and cuts in the sector. TRS-UK aims to grow the pool of students in the field, deepen collaboration with RE school teachers, and improve public understanding of religion.

In relation to the latter, the [Religion Media Centre](#) works with TRS-UK and keeps a pool of experts for journalists. Members interested should get in touch via the TRS-UK website or directly.

Andy highlighted two of TRS-UK's initiatives:

- Recruitment videos: TRS-UK has published videos of TRS graduates in varied careers, useful for recruitment and admissions teams.
- RE in the national curriculum: a move to bring RE into the national curriculum for England and Wales has been approved. This creates a need for trained RE teachers; TRS-UK is monitoring developments.

3. **Election of committee members for 2026–29**

Committee members: The President thanked Andy Byers for his contribution, particularly his work as TRS-UK rep. She also thanked (*in absentia*) Cor Bennema, who had recently stepped down from the Committee before completing his term.

Three nominations had been received for the two vacancies: Tim Carter (nominated by Nick Moore), Tim Murray (nominated by Steve Walton), and Nathanael Vette (nominated by Helen Bond).

Elections were held. The results were subsequently announced: Tim Carter and Tim Murray were elected to the committee.

Secretary: Michelle Fletcher is stepping down after two terms (six years). The President paid tribute to her skill, foresight and commitment in running the Society. Michelle thanked members and wished the incoming team well. Dominika Kurek-Chomycz, announced as Secretary-designate last year, was welcomed and approved as Secretary.

4. **Accounts and report on finances 2025–26**

The Treasurer reported on the accounts and other matters related to the Society's finances.

Last year's income was similar to the previous year. Conference profit was lower because of unforeseen technology fees at the University of Manchester; donations to the Unwaged Support Fund were higher. Expenditure was in line with the previous year. Bank balances fell slightly, and money was transferred from the General Fund to the Unwaged Support Fund. No questions were raised. Accounts will be circulated with these minutes; paper copies are available from the Treasurer.

Unwaged Support Fund: applications close tomorrow night. Donations can be made by bank transfer or in cash (GBP, EUR or USD) at the evening plenary.

Reserve fund proposal: a larger reserve would enable the Society to reassure host departments against a (highly unlikely) conference shortfall, making venues easier to secure. The money would not be spent. Target: an additional £50,000. Two routes were outlined:

- Annual membership fees: no decision today; an online form will seek members' views in the coming months.
- Donations and legacies: gifts (e.g. £250, £1,000, £5,000), possibly in memory or honour of someone; larger gifts could name a lecture or fund. More information will follow by email.

Reducing costs: holding all seminars on the middle day would avoid hiring breakout rooms on the last day, saving up to £1,500 at some venues (about £10 per ticket). This may be trialled and will be on the online form.

Discussion: a member suggested a wealthy guarantor could backstop the risk instead of donating; the Treasurer agreed this was possible. Ideas can be sent to treasurer@bnts.org.uk.

5. **Seminars**

The Secretary thanked the Seminar Chairs for their work.

She reported on Seminar Chairs who had served their 5-year period and informed the Society of their successors who will serve for 2026–31:

- Book of Acts: James Morgan is stepping down [the name of the successor was confirmed after the conference: Paul Wilson];
- Book of Revelation: Daisy Andoh to succeed Martina Vercesi;
- Later Epistles: Madison Pierce to succeed Kelsie Rodenbiker;
- Johannine Literature: Elizabeth Corsar is stepping down; [the name of the successor was confirmed after the conference: Amy White];
- Early Christianity: Tim Murray & Julia Snyder to succeed Jane McLarty and Kimberley Fowler;
- Ancient Judaism & Christianity: Logan Williams to succeed J. Thomas Hewitt;
- Synoptic Gospels and Historical Jesus: Nathanael Vette to succeed Tim Carter;
- The New Testament & Christian Theology: Sydney Tooth to replace Erin Heim; Jamie Davies is also stepping down [the name of the successor was confirmed after the conference: Ben Leighton].

The Secretary also announced that chairs would receive an email inviting them to a Zoom meeting in October. She then communicated a new set of deadlines:

- Chairs to submit Calls for Papers by 1 November;
- CfPs open from 1st December to 15th February;
- Decisions communicated in early March.

Julia Lindenlaub was introduced as the committee's Seminar Representative, working with the Secretary and the President. Committee members who are not officers are encouraged to take on specific portfolios.

Julia then reported:

The seminar survey showed interest in new formats, alongside a wish to keep the strengths of the current seminar model and a need for more committee support for chairs.

A survey of seminar chairs will run every three years, starting this year. It will collect data on submissions, attendance, demographics (including PhD students), formats and plans, and invite chairs to raise concerns. Details will follow by email.

Themed sessions: to replace simultaneous paper sessions. Anyone may propose a session, from working groups and grant projects to panels, workshops, interdisciplinary guests or host-institution expertise. Proposals open now and close on 1 November; outline ideas are welcome. Proposals should be sent to the Secretary (secretary@bnts.org.uk) and to Julia (lindenlaub.julia@gmail.com). The committee may also sponsor themes. Decisions will be made in February, with planning support for selected sessions.

6. **Promoting and Informing about the Society**

The Information Officer provided a report:

Social media following continues to grow. The Society has moved away from Twitter/X but keeps the account to point people elsewhere. The Facebook group is the most active channel; Instagram is used mainly during the conference.

Facebook: The British New Testament Society

Bluesky: @bntsoc.bsky.social

Instagram: @BNTsoc

X: @BNTsoc

The newsletter trialled this year will not continue; news will be shared through social channels and the website.

New membership questions and posting guidelines for the Facebook group have improved moderation and made it more welcoming.

Members are asked to email the Information Officer with news (research seminars, PhD supervision, events) and to add the email address (info.officer@bnts.org.uk) to departmental mailing lists.

Siobhan is stepping down at the end of December and invited anyone interested in the role to speak to her. The President thanked Siobhan for her significant contribution as Information Officer.

7. **Future meetings**

The 2027 conference will be held at the University of Edinburgh, 23–25 August 2027. Sessions and meals will be at the John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls, which

has a bar; accommodation (en-suite and standard) is within walking distance. The dates fall in the last week of the Edinburgh Festival (to 30 August), so members are advised to book early.

8. **Members who have passed away**

The Society remembered Professor Max Turner and Dr Thomas (Tom) Brodie in silence.

9. **PhDs awarded**

The President read out the names of those who had successfully completed their PhD since the last meeting, and the Society applauded their success:

- Amy White, *Trinity College Bristol*, “Shepherd My Sheep”: A Conceptual Blending Analysis of the Leader-as-Shepherd Metaphor in John’s Gospel
- Chris Norden, *Bristol Baptist College/University of Aberdeen*, ‘Weighing his Options: An Assessment of Paul’s Decision-Making in Acts’.
- Paul Bebout, *London School of Theology/Middlesex University*, ‘The founder identity of Jesus in Hebrews: an examination of Jesus as founder of the Christ-movement’
- Duane McCrory, *University of Birmingham*, ‘A Text-Critical Analysis of the Arabic Traditions of the Epistle to the Romans’
- George Oliver, *King’s College London*, ‘The Production of Space in the Acts of Thomas’
- Jonathan Berglund, *University of Aberdeen*, ‘Bound for the Gentiles: The Symbolic Logic of Paul’s Captivity in Ephesians 3’
- Axolile Ntsika Mandaba Qina, *Edinburgh University*, ‘The Dilemmas of Jesus’s Sacrificial Death on a Roman Cross: Towards a Xhosa Christian Hermeneutic for Xhosa Indigenous Customs of Animal Sacrifice’
- J. Tyler Brown, *University of Oxford*, ‘The Sign of Jonah in Matthew and Luke-Acts’

The meeting also marked the award of an aegrotat doctorate by the University of Birmingham to the late Zachary Skarka, a student of Hugh Houghton, who died aged 31. His wife, Joy Pedrow Skarka, collected the degree on his behalf. Zachary’s thesis title was ‘The Text and Transmission of Colossians.’

If you want to be included in next year’s announcement, email the Secretary (secretary@bnts.org.uk) with your name, university, and thesis title.

10. **Any other business**

There was no other business.