

CHAWREC MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE UNITY CENTRE, 17 CUPPIN ST, CHESTER.

Wednesday 30 September 2015 @ 6.30pm.

Present:

Individual Members

Mark Arratoon, TK Al-Jorani, Hammideh Brice, John Cummins, Ram Darigala, Shamla Naidu, Bhupinder Virdee-Lace, Alift Harewood, Abdul Jilani, Brett Watson, Murial Benyon, Chantal Davies, Brett Watson

Organisational Members

Carol Berry (CVA), Kate Bond (WCMCWG), Sue James (WCMCWG), Elizabeth Bott (Cheshire Asian and Minority Communities Council), Eric Bowers (Chester Bahai's), Abdun Noor (Cheshire Asian and Minority Communities Council), Neil Sledge (Cheshire DEC), Marina Smith (Warrington Russian Group)

Staff:

Shantele Janes, Elizabeth Lambrakis, Anita Dean, Valerie Donnelly (minutes)

Apologies:

Individual Members

Yumi Andrews, Shamen Naidu, Prue Wendt, Peter Frost, Vijay Singh, Ling Liow, Paras Gorasia, Halina Kelly

Organisational Members

Graham Gordon (Nipponkai), Sheuli Ahmed (SHAPLA)

21 members present, 15 needed for quorum.

1) Welcome and Apologies

Chair Eric Bowers welcomed all present and thanked them for attending. Shantele Janes gave some housekeeping information and apologised for the noise coming from the Capoeira class.

2) Approval of Minutes (AGM – 29.02.12)

Bhupinder Virdee-Lace proposed the minutes were accurate. Abdun Noor seconded.

3) Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4) Presentation of the Annual Review 2014/15

SJ began the presentation of the Annual Review and mentioned that there would be 2 sets of accounts to approve later on, from the past two years. She went on to describe the challenges CHAWREC and The Unity Centre have been dealing with over the past 2 years.

She asked members for questions. Abdul Jilani asked how many organisations now use The Unity Centre. SJ listed all the current community groups. She explained that there was no longer an active Bangladeshi Association using the centre and that Kolobok, the Russian group had also folded.

SJ said that we would very much like to have an Activities Coordinator for The Unity Centre – we have applied twice for funding, but have been rejected. However, this still remains an aspiration.

SJ described the role of the Service Users Group in response to Abdul Jilani's question re group and individual involvement.

Ram Darigala asked about problems with the lease for The Unity Centre building. SJ described the ongoing discussions with CWaC. She explained that we will potentially have use of the whole building once Young Peoples Services have left. She then went on to describe the financial risks, should this happen. She described how CWaC have been reducing our Grant Funding and trying to push us into being self-sustaining – this would be a distraction from our primary role as a charity – we do not want our main objective to become raising money from our room hire.

Eric Bowers commented that he and Shantele would be attending an important meeting tomorrow to discuss financial matters affecting our future here at The Unity Centre.

5) Presentation and approval of independently examined accounts 2014 and 2015

The accounts were presented for approval by Martin Meredith. He explained that the format of the accounts was not 'member friendly'.

Grant income has been falling, due to cuts, but we made a slight surplus in 2014.

He asked for questions regarding the 2014 accounts. Abdul Jilani asked whether the wages figures included any amounts paid to volunteers. MM replied no, they were purely wages paid to employed staff.

Abdun Noor proposed that the 2014 accounts were accepted by members. Bhupinder Virdee-Lace seconded.

MM continued presenting the accounts for 2015. He explained the decrease in income during this period.

SJ explained how we have had to reduce staff and also mentioned the recent natural wastage as a result of Mandy Roberts and Craig Heard leaving CHAWREC for other jobs.

MM said that a heavy reduction in expenditure has continued into the current year.

Eric Bowers explained that competition for finance has become intense and that further austerity measures are planned in November 2015. Carol Berry commented that we are not alone – other charities are having similar problems. The whole sector is facing a major challenge in the face of heavy cuts.

Martin Meredith said we are hoping to break even, eventually.

Bhupinder Virdee-Lace proposed that the 2015 accounts were accepted by members. Sue James seconded.

Martin Meredith proposed Hargreaves and Wood should continue to be our accountants as they offer us good value for money. This was agreed by all present.

6) Elections

Eight people were nominated –.

Eric Bowers, Hammideh Brice, John Cummins, Chantal Davies, Martin Meredith, Shamla Naidu, Abdun Noor, Bhupinder Virdee-Lace.

A full house voted for those nominated.

7) A.O.B

No issues were raised.

Business meeting closed @ 7.15pm.