

Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Annual General Meeting

@ the Unity Centre, 17 Cuppin Street, Chester, CH1 2BN

21 November 2017 @ 7pm

Present

Individual Members:

TK Al Jorani, Bhupinder Virdee Lace, Sophie Minshull, Martin Meredith, Heather Lannin, Kate Bond, Arfa Bayne, Ram Darigala, Karen Dixon, Laretta Righi

Organisational Members:

Elizabeth Bott (CAMCC), Eric Bowers, Adrian Lee (University of Chester), Sue James (WCMCWG), Shamla Naidu

Apologies:

Celal Acar, Jim Michie, Heather Swainston (CDEC), Alift Harewood, Peter Losa, R Davidson, Vijay Singh, Halina and Alan Kelly, Katherine Leighton (University of Chester), Graham Gordon (Nipponkai), Leck Moore, Murial Benyon, Mark Aratoon, Abdun Noor

Staff:

Shantele Janes, Elizabeth Lambrakis, Valerie Donnelly (Minutes)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Chair Eric Bowers welcomed all present. He commented that austerity is still an ongoing theme for CHAWREC. He thanked Bhupinder Virdee Lace for providing the food.

2. Approval of last year's Minutes

Bhupinder Virdee Lace proposed that last year's minutes were correct and TK Al Jorani seconded.

3. No Matters Arising

4. Presentation of Annual Review 2016/17

Shantele Janes commented on the 'home made' nature of this year's Annual Review due to lack of funds. She went on to provide an update of the past 12 months: She said our volunteer team was growing. We had a total of 43 volunteers this year, working within the

English classes and the casework team. She mentioned our role in the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme. She observed that 2 years of sole occupancy had changed the feel of the Unity Centre. We signed the lease in April which has given us more security. The Community Asset Transfer is still an option we are hoping to achieve.

Shantele mentioned the problem of dry rot in the building. This is still awaiting repair as CWaC have no funding and we therefore have no date yet for the work to be carried out. We will have to deal with major disruption when the time comes.

Shantele gave more details regarding the refugee families – we have provided Arabic interpreters (TK and Dina) and Nicola Oldfield and Ruth Lane provide English lessons, assisted by a strong team of volunteers. She said the needs of the families were very complex.

She summarised the activities we have undertaken this year, including family activities for our Syrian families, Eid, Diwali and the Unity Centre Family Fun Day.

Room hire is now generating a decent income, though there are issues balancing external hire vs community use.

We have been awarded a grant from Brightlife to build a community kitchen. The funding requires this to be targeted at the over-50s, but all groups will benefit.

We have had more requests for Diversity and Equality training which Shantele has dealt with.

Shantele said we are seeking help with our websites and would appreciate a volunteer with the expertise to merge the 3 sites.

Shantele went on to summarise the year in our Casework Department. We have had 192 enquiries in the past 10 months. A selection of case outcomes were summarised.

5. Presentation and Approval of Accounts

Martin Meredith presented the accounts for approval. He produced a 2 page summary and explained the contents, including the loss of the Big Lottery grant and ASTF funding. Overall we have lost 18K of former sources of income and the Casework Service is not paying for itself. Due to the difficult economic situation in the UK most charities are in the same position. He finished by thanking the auditor for doing a good job.

Eric Bowers thanks MM and asked for acceptance of the accounts. TK proposed acceptance and Pippa seconded.

Martin Meredith proposed Hargreaves and Wood, our Accountants, should be re-elected as they provide an excellent service. TK Al-Jorani agreed and Elizabeth Bott seconded.

6. Any Other Business: No issues were raised.

Shantele concluded the AGM with a presentation – an update on the work of CHAWREC.