

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Disability Rights UK 24/11/2021 13.30-15.30
Online**

Apologies received: **Atif Choudhury, Anna Morell
and Anna Denham**

1) Open from the Chair, Martin Stevens:

The Chair welcomed and opened the 9th AGM of Disability Rights UK. DR UK was unified and became a legal entity in its own right on 1st January 2012. We celebrate our 10 years next year, so look out for news on what we have planned.

2) The minutes of our last AGM are on the web and we have received no amendments. I will sign them as a true record of that meeting.

All voting was cast prior to the meeting

Minutes of last AGM (2020) were e-mailed out to all members. Attendees asked if any questions. None, therefore accepted by all as a true record.

3) Nick Spencer (DR UK Financial Controller) – Financial Summary of the last 12 months (please also refer to financial statements):

Nick Introduced the Report and Financial Statements which the members were asked to ratify, having already been approved by the Board.

The Audit went smoothly with no matters arising. The auditors have the same team with an experienced audit senior which enables an efficient audit.

What could have been an extremely challenging year with the outbreak of the covid pandemic at the start, turned out to be a good year.

We remained active throughout the whole period with only one member of staff furloughed for a few months.

The charity had a positive movement in funds of £125,623. This has improved the balance sheet which now shows net assets of £305,495, of which unrestricted reserves are £231,190.

One off grants were received from the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) and Esmee Fairbairn. We negotiated a three month rent free period and a rates rebate of £11,000 from the local council. We also received a number of legacies totalling £45,323.

The CVA continued to be paid off and as at 31 March 2021 there was £53,333 remaining. This was finally paid off on 4th November just gone.

The Chair, Martin said that the votes had been counted for approval of the Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements:

Votes

For 35

Against 0

Abstain 1

The Trustees Annual Report and Financial accounts are accepted.

4) Appointment of Auditors for the Year:

- The board recommended that we appoint Goldwins for a further year. They have provided excellent services at very competitive rates. We endeavour to retender them next year.

Votes:

For 35

Against 1

Abstain 0

Goldwins appointed as our Auditors.

5) Approval of the Board's recruitment of the new Chair and trustees re-election:

This year the board felt as it was recruiting a chair through an external public open process that we would not seek additional trustees this year. Instead we would extend the service by a year of our vice chair Frances Hasler and then our new chair along with the board can assess the needs of the board through a skills and diversity audit.

We have 2 trustees that have served their first terms of 3 years and are prepared to serve a second term. Our members were asked to vote for this.

I am pleased to say that Atif Choudhury and Madeline Close have both been re-elected to serve a second term.

During the year one of our trustees Jacqueline Winstanley stepped down as her work with an All Parliamentary group on entrepreneurship had grown significantly.

At the end of this year Rob Trent steps off the board after seven years. Rob has for past three years chaired our people and governance committee. He is also our go to expert on risk management.

On behalf of the board and our members I offer our warmest thanks to both Jacqueline and Rob for their service.

Last year the board asked the members to amend our articles so that we could use an open and publicly advertised process to recruit a new chair. Our members agreed. Earlier this year the board spent time considering the needs of the organisation and constructing a brief to recruit to. We engaged Prospect Us, an agency that only works in the third sector to assist us in conducting our search. We had an excellent response with many contacts and further information requests resulting in 14 formal applicants.

We then agreed a longlist with the agency of 7 people that they interviewed. This led to a diverse group of 5 people on the shortlist. All with lived experience as disabled people and great skill sets.

The 5 were then interviewed by a stakeholder panel chaired by our treasurer Lesley, with staff members and representation from our members via The Our Voices group. The candidates were then interviewed by a trustee panel of three chaired by our VC Frances. For my part I helped with the brief and the process itself but not the interviewing or decision making.

It was a tricky choice all the candidates were excellent and had much to offer. The end result was that Liz Leech Murphy was proposed by the board to be the next Chair at DR UK.

Our members have agreed to the board's proposed candidate and I can therefore welcome Liz leech Murphy as our chair elect who will formally take over from me on January 1st 2022.

6) Introduction of new Chair:

- Martin introduced Liz Leech Murphy to the meeting. This is a transcript of what Liz said:
- Being 'a right pain in neck' is a common saying in Yorkshire, for me this is not a metaphor but a real daily experience. This was something that became significantly more prominent in my teenage years as I was studying at Leeds College of Music, after some further examinations I was diagnosed with three cervical ribs, compacting on my core nervous system. I was offered a range of therapies that did not ease the pain I was experiencing. When I was offered an operation that could result in a 50% likelihood of being paralysed from the neck down – I took the decision to self-manage the pain and to adapt where I could. I took matters into my own hands which I believe has helped me to cope and achieve as much as I have. I won't be held back but as I get older the condition is progressing and I now live also with Thoracic Outlet Syndrome, which brings pain and numbness in my arms, wrists and hands. Every day starts with a high degree of pain.

As someone who dedicated all my working life to achieving equality and justice for those who have live with a disability or any condition that means that face barriers and prejudice within society. Within this time I have worked alongside and supported a large number of DPOs across the UK addressing what is needed for people to be able to self-determine their life experience, including self-directed support, personalisation, person centred practice and independent Support Brokerage.

I am now really pleased to be offered the opportunity to be the Chair of Disability Rights UK an organisation I have followed for a number of years and who I have often refer people to for help and assistance.

I believe Disability Rights UK have an important part in realising the rights of all people with a disability in the UK and is positioned as a strong vehicle for peoples voices to be heard and to campaign for change.

I am looking forward to getting involved in the organisation, building relationship within and outside the organisation and to be a support in the next stage of the organisations journey in the delivery of the Mission and Strategy.

8) Annual Report – CEO and Leadership Team DR UK panel – chaired by Vice Chair of the board Frances Hasler:

Frances asked as series of questions of the leadership team in relation activities as detailed in the Trustees Annual Report.

9) Closing remarks from the Chair:

I have been trustee of DR UK for seven years and have had the privilege to chair the organisation for the past four years.

While I feel sadness at leaving I feel more than happy at the position the organisation is now in. Back in 2017 DR UK was close to insolvency, no reserves, spiralling costs and a significant debt to the Pension Protection Fund. We had just hired Kamran as I took

over as Chair. What followed was a period of reorganisation, an office move and an overhaul of our business model, strategy and many of our internal processes. As you heard earlier in the finance section we now have positive net assets at year end of over £300K. Earlier this month we made the last monthly payment on our legacy pension debt, this was a significant moment for DR UK as it has felt like the Albatross round our neck, I raised a very enjoyable glass or two with the finance team last week in London.

Our solvency is currently solid. The momentum is contagious, our bids to major funders are returning success on a consistent basis. We were shortlisted in the diversity category in the third sector governance awards. We have been included in this years Shaw Trust Powerlist 100. It is the first time in the Powerlist's 6-year history that organisations could be nominated, and we were.

You have heard from our leadership team and can read in the trustee annual report the significant impact we are generating.

I say thank you on behalf of our members and all disabled people to everybody at DR UK, staff, volunteers and trustees who continue to deliver on our promise to listen to disabled people, amplify their voices, provide much needed information, support and advice during times of need and to constantly challenge and hold to account those in positions of power.

Thank you to our funders and generous donors, your contributions and support allow us to make the impact. Thank you to our ambassadors that greatly add to our influence, I would like to say a special mention to Stephen Brookes who voluntarily took on the role as our rail policy advisor and over many years has had and continues to have great influence in shaping accessibility on our transport network, this year he was recognised in his own right on the Shaw Trust Powerlist 100.

Thank you to you, our members for being part of the DR UK, for placing your support behind the team and trustees.

My final thank you, and it is a big one, is to our CEO. Having worked closely with Kamran over the past 4 years he has

developed into an excellent CEO leading the operations of Disability Rights UK, I wish him and DR UK continued success in creating a society where disabled people have equal power, rights and equality of opportunity.

Meeting Close.