**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**Disability Rights UK 23rd November at 13.00 pm – 16.00pm**

 **Online**

Apologies: **None received**

1. **Open from the Chair, Liz Leach Murphy:**

The Chair welcomed and opened the 10th AGM of Disability Rights UK. DR UK was unified and became a legal entity in its own right on 1st January 2012.

1. **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 (2021) were e-mailed out to all members. Attendees asked if any questions. There was one question about the use of the word society and the chair explained that when she used the word society she was including the plural ‘societies’. The minutes were accepted by all as a true record.

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

Lesley Baliga (Treasurer) shared some headline financial results:

For the year to 31st March 2022, Disability Rights UK had a small positive movement in funds of £8,720, which in the current situation is very positive. This surplus has maintained the balance sheet which now shows net assets of £314,215. Of that, the unrestricted reserves are £241,568. The board has set a reserves target level of around £300,000, which equates to around 3 months running costs. So, there is a small target for us to work towards, but DR UK is in a comfortable position.

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.

This was the second year of the Covid pandemic, and the charity planned for it to be more challenging than the first. In the previous year, we were fortunate to receive one off donations and grants in response to the pandemic, and were able to make cost savings. But as always the charity continued to look for new income streams, and keep costs down. So the small surplus was a pleasing outcome.

The company voluntary agreement, CVA, was finally paid off in November 21. Financial planning and building our reserves will be much more straightforward without the monthly CVA payments.

The balance sheet is now the strongest it has ever been. The website costs have been capitalised with further costs in the current year, and these will be written off over 3 years, which is standard practice.

Lastly the accounts have been audited by Goldwins and approved by the board, and these are then to be ratified by members.

Nick asked if members had any questions. There were no questions.

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

**Votes**:
For 30

Against 0

Abstain 0

**The Trustees Annual Report and Financial accounts are accepted.**

1. **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.

One member asked if the accounts could be provided in Easy Read and the Chair agreed to consider this suggestion.

**Votes**:

For 29

Against 1

Abstain 1

**Goldwins appointed as our Auditors.**

1. **Approval of the Board’s recruitment of the new Chair and trustees re-election:**

Trustee Laura Swainbank has made the decision earlier this year step town from her role as a trustee. Lesley Baliga who has just presented alongside will also be stepping down. Finally Frances Hasler has now served her maximum term as a board member and will be leaving us at the end of this year.

A huge thank you to Laura, Lesley and Frances for the support and input you have provided DR UK.

Members have had the chance before the AGM to read the profiles that new trustees shared as part of this process. The votes that members cast resulted in the following position.

Clenton Farquharson

**Votes:**

* For 26
* Against 3
* Abstain 1

Naomi Lawson Jacobs

**Votes:**

* For 31
* Against 0
* Abstain 1

Claire Nevin

**Votes:**

* For 29
* Against 1
* Abstain 0

**Outcome of votes:** Clenton Farquharson, Naomi Lawson Jacobs and Claire Nevin have all been elected to serve on the board.

1. **Short Break**
2. **New Website**

Our existing website, while functional in terms of the volume of information and data on and with high usage number, has become outdated. In particular website accessibility has moved on a great deal in the last 10 years and we decided, rather than fix accessibility and usability problems piecemeal that we would opt for a wholesale redevelopment of the site. This process has taken longer than we hoped but we felt it was essential to involve Disabled people in the design and testing of the site.

Kamran gave a short introduction to the new site explaining that accessibility was built in to the structure and that it was created with mobile devices in mind.

**Questions**

* Have you considered people with neurodiversity? White is a very difficult background for us.

Kamran: there are specific tools allowing users to change the background and text colours and sizes.

* Did the website come in on budget?

Kamran: yes, it came in on budget.

* What do we do if we have news items for the website?

Kamran: DR UK staff will get training on uploading content and when the site launches we will share how you can send us content.

1. **Annual Report – CEO and Leadership Team DR UK panel – chaired by outgoing 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. The conversation was based on the contents of the report.

1. **Closing remarks from the Chair:**

So first of all just everyone here at DR UK would like to thank members and partnership organisations for the work we do together. It is really clear that we achieve what we achieve through the partnership we have and working together through that involvement.

The Trustee board would like to thank the whole fantastic team at DR UK including the volunteers you show so much energy and dedication to your work and we really admire that and appreciate that. A huge amount of gratitude to all of you, you are a small team making a huge difference on such a big vision and mission. You work well.

I would like to thank trustees really for their support since I joined DR UK and welcoming me onto the trustee team at the start of this year I have enjoyed it so much so far. I am really looking forward to the years to come in working alongside you all. Finally, a huge thank you to Frances for your years of dedication and guidance and this year stepping down after seven years of dedication to DR UK. Previous to DR UK you were the chief executive of the national centre for integrated living and you were there for a number of years. You have really bought that grass roots movement and keeping us rooted in why we are here and why we do what we do. So thank you so much for everything that you have done. And we look forward to being able to to keep in contact with you and to continue to see the difference that you make through the passion and dedication you have got around Disability Rights, we are pretty sure that is going to continue. We would love to see and hear your recollections on the board and your highlights and hopes for the future. Maybe if you have one highlight that would be lovely to hear.

**FRANCES**: My reflections are two great things have happened since I have been trustee one is we are solvent and other is our new website is practically ready to go. My hope for the future is that we really do keep going on our commitment to full inclusion. We have started really, really well on some work on examining what we do and thinking about what all our members do on inclusion and that is really where we can be strong and I really hope that continues.

**LIZ**: Thank you Frances and everybody for today. I think we can formally close today.

**Meeting Close.**