



LifeLines

www.LifeLines-uk.org.uk

Registered charity number 1168273

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of LifeLines
Saturday 1 October 2016
Held at Amnesty International Human Rights Action Centre
25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA

Attending

1. The AGM was held during the 2016 autumn conference with members attending the conference present for the AGM proceedings. Those present registered for the conference and are identified in our records. Key committee members for the AGM were Karen Collett (Chair), Nichola Glasse (Membership Secretary) and Jan Darts (Treasurer).

Chair's Introduction

2. Our AGM this year is a more formal affair and slightly longer than in previous years because of our newly acquired charity status. The AGM is an important part of our governance and the ground work we do this year will ensure a smooth running of proceedings in the future. I hope that some of you will have seen the changes to the LifeLines website that now includes a section devoted to the AGM and Committee and this will be the prime method of communication with members on matters of governance such as the AGM. Those without internet access will be able to request information by post.

3. During the AGM, you as members of the charity will be asked to vote on a number of matters. Only members who have paid their subscription and are resident in the UK can vote. If you do not fall into this category, then please do not be tempted to vote, otherwise we will have to go to the expense and trouble of issuing voting cards.

AGM Quorate

4. I can advise you that from the register of members attending the conference that the AGM is quorate.

Minutes of last AGM

5. Normally, our first agenda item would be approval of the minutes of the last AGM and any arisings. However, in the past, whilst we published a report on the conference in the Wing, there were never minutes of the AGM. As a charity, this will change so that the minutes of this AGM will be published on the LifeLines website prior to the AGM in 2017.

Annual Return

6. All registered charities must make an Annual Return to the Charity Commission. The annual income of LifeLines is over £25,000, so our Return must include our Account (with an Independent Examiner's Report) and the Trustee's Annual Report. Our Annual Report will cover - among other topics - our activities, achievements and performance, including reporting on our public benefit. Our intention is that the Account and Annual Report will normally be

published on the website prior to the AGM. This year LifeLines is a newly registered charity and our first Annual return will cover the period up to end June 2017, consequently our first Annual Report will be available for the AGM in 2017.

7. Before we receive reports from the Membership Secretary and Treasurer I want to take this opportunity to thank all our members, the coordinators, the committee, and Jan Arriens for their continued dedication to the work of LifeLines.

8. In particular, I would like to thank Carole Butcher and Andrew Wilkes who stood down as Coordinators during the year and to welcome Lindesay Mace (Coordinator for Arizona), Stacey Hutchins (Coordinator for Georgia) and Christine DePlacido (Coordinator for Florida). As you know Robbie O'Callaghan and Iona Teague had to stand down as the Wing team because of work commitments and I thank them for their time with the team. Mention must also be made of Michele Baxter who works in the background making sure our website is maintained.

9. Lastly and sadly, I have to report the death of Andrea Martin the long term coordinator of California. Our thoughts are with her daughter Rachael. Carole Butcher and Linda Colbourn are assisting Rachael whilst she gets back on her feet. Sadly, we also lost Jean Peak who many will remember as Coordinator for Arizona.

Membership Secretary's Report

10. Much of the content of our Annual Report will relate to activities undertaken by the Membership Secretary, so in lieu of an Annual Report, Nichola was asked to give her report as usual.

11. First of all some figures relating to the membership of Lifelines since the last AGM, these figures relate to the LifeLines accounting year end June 2016.

- There have been 159 new members who have joined during the period.
- Together with members who have decided to write to an additional pen friend, it has meant that we were able to allocate 244 pen friends to those who have requested someone to write to.
- At the end of June there were 1357 paid up members.
- Linda Colbourn (Press Secretary) has placed adverts during the past year in a number of publications among others Amnesty International magazine, The Friend and The Tablet. We also have an advert on the Do-It volunteer website.

12. At the start of 2016 Jan Arriens was interviewed by various radio stations, a television station, and also an article appeared online which all generated a lot of interest in LifeLines during the start of 2016 and as a result a number of new members joined.

13. As of today there is a waiting list of requests for pen friends of 24 which is truly amazing; it does feel wonderful to be able to advise you of such a reduced waiting list and much shorter waiting time for those who have requested a pen friend.

14. As you will have gathered from the Wing of Friendship this will be the last report that I will be making as Membership Secretary, and it feels good to be doing it at a time when LifeLines has gained charity status. I have now served as Membership Secretary for 6 years and prior to that for a further 6 years on the Committee. However, sadly the demands of my work are such that I do not have the time which I used to have to devote to the work of LifeLines and, as a result, I am today stepping down from the committee. Thank you all so much for the support that you have given me over the past 6 years, and I hope that your friendships continue to flourish and you find being part of LifeLines worthwhile and rewarding.

15. There were no questions arising from the members present on the Membership Secretary's report.

16. On behalf of the membership and committee, Karen thanked Nichola for her long service to LifeLines and Nichola was presented with a small token of everyone's appreciation.

Treasurer's Report

17. Our first Annual Return to the Charity Commission next year will include our Account for 2016/17. However, as is usual, the account for the past year 2015/16 has been prepared and Jan was invited to provide his report.

18. The annual account covering the period to end June 2016 has been displayed at the entrance to the Conference room, and on the LifeLines website since early September. The account is presented in a format recommended by the charity commission, although the financial period is before we became a charity. As usual, I do not intend to talk you through the account line by line.

19. The financial position of LifeLines is stable, much as expected, and similar to last year, with sufficient reserves to cover any liabilities we may incur with Conferences, Money Orders, etc. Expenditure is routine showing the normal variation from one year to the next, with expenditure on advertising being tailored to ensure no significant deficit is incurred. Our registration as a charity has meant that this conference centre has once again become affordable.

20. As a registered charity we will be entitled to claim gift aid. However, the entitlement to claim gift aid on our subscriptions is complex and under discussion with HMRC. The financial benefit of gift aid must also be weighed against the administrative overhead.

21. Another overhead of becoming a charity is the requirement for our accounts to be subject to Independent Examination, although this applies only for our accounts ending June 2017 and thereafter. I am hoping that someone connected to the LifeLines community will come forward and offer their services as an Examiner. The Examiner does not need to be an accountant, but they cannot be a member of LifeLines. If you have a friend or partner who loves numbers, understands the meaning of financial propriety and regularity, and wants to provide a service to a charity, then contact me for further details.

22. My thanks go to Mary Comber for running the Money Order shop again this year. You will know that the cost to you of Money Orders was increased earlier in the year because of the drop in the value of the £ against the \$. Currently, the mid-market rate has stabilised at about \$1.3 to £1 and at this rate we should be able to maintain the current cost to you. Our aim is to provide the Money Order service with no overall gain to LifeLines, but the volatility of the currency market makes this hard work.

23. Finally, my thanks go to Richard Helyer who runs the US Stamp Service and who has also had to contend with the erratic exchange rate between the £ and \$.

24. A question from the members present asked how the membership would be told when Gift Aid was applicable. Jan advised that the membership would be informed through normal communication routes if Gift Aid was allowable.

25. Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by *Linda Colbourn* and seconded by *Sally Warren* and passed unanimously by the membership.

Resolutions

26. Members were invited through the Wing and website to submit resolutions to the AGM by 9 September 2016. None were received.

Election of Committee Members

27. Members were invited through the Wing and website to nominate members for election to the committee at the AGM by 9 September 2016. Carole Butcher, Mary Comber, Jan Darts and Nichola Glasse retire from the Committee on rotation as required by the constitution, but are eligible for re-election. Nichola Glasse has declined to be re-elected. Carole Butcher, Mary Comber, Jan Darts and Jessica Dalton were correctly nominated and seconded for election as committee members by 9 September 2016. The candidates were asked to make themselves known to those present at the conference. All the candidates were unanimously elected to serve on the committee.

28. Karen asked Jessica to make herself known to those present at the conference so that she could be welcomed as the new Membership Secretary.

AOB related to AGM business

29. There was no AOB and the AGM closed.

Minutes approved as a true record of the AGM

Karen Collett (Chair) _____

Dated _____