



LifeLines

www.LifeLines-uk.org.uk

Registered charity number 1168273

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of LifeLines

Saturday 3 October 2020

Held via Zoom

Attending

1. The AGM was held during the 2020 virtual autumn conference with members attending the conference present for the AGM proceedings. The AGM was held virtually in accordance with emergency Covid-19 regulations. Those present registered for the conference and are identified in our records. Key committee members for the AGM were Jan Hall (Vice Chair), Nichola Glasse (Membership Secretary) and James Mason (Treasurer).

Vice Chair's Introduction

2. Jan welcomed everyone to our fifth AGM as a charity. The AGM is an important part of our governance and a necessary activity as a charity. She reminded those present that our website includes a section devoted to the AGM and this will be the prime method of communication with members on AGM matters. Those without internet access are able to request information by post. These details were advised to members in the Autumn Wing.

3. Jan explained that 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. Jan advised that from the register of members attending the conference that the AGM is quorate, with 134 members present.

5. Apologies were received from Linda Colbourn.

Minutes of last AGM

6. Minutes of the 2019 AGM were published on our website on 21 Sep 2020. No comments on these minutes were received. Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Caz Dyer and seconded by Sue Drysdale. Jan signed the minutes as a true record.

7. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Annual Return

8. 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 the Trustee's Annual Report and our Accounts, with an Independent Examiner's Report. Our Annual Report was published on our website on 21 Sep 2020 and included a review of our activities during the year as well as the Accounts. Jan confirmed that the Independent Examiner's report has also been completed.

9. Before receiving reports from the Membership Secretary and Treasurer, Jan took the opportunity to thank all members, the coordinators, the committee, and Jan Arriens for their continued dedication to the work of LifeLines. Mention was also made of Michele Baxter who works in the background making sure our website is maintained, Richard Helyer who runs the US stamp shop, and Mary Comber who ran the Money Order shop until it closed in March.

10. In particular, Jan thanked Karen Collett, who stood down as Chair of LifeLines and as a Trustee in June after long and dedicated service. She was the second ever Chair of LifeLines and the first for us as a registered charity. She thanked Jan for all her hard work and was very pleased and grateful that Karen agreed to make a return to assist in hosting this year's conference. Jan proposed a vote of thanks which was endorsed by all present.

11. Jan thanked David Browne also stood down as a Trustee in the last year. We are grateful for his service as a member of the LifeLines Committee. David has continued in his role as State Coordinator for Pennsylvania, Utah and Illinois.

12. Caz Dyer stood down as a Trustee and member of the Committee at this AGM and was thanked by Jan. She has been a member of the LifeLines Committee for many years, a past Editor of the Wing and, with her sister Liz, an essential presence and support at all our Conferences.

13. Finally, Jan offered thanks to Mary Comber and Karen Collett for their long service to LifeLines as State Coordinators, they both stood down during the year. She also thanked Karen Shaya for her service as a State Coordinator during the past year. Jan welcomed Hazel Caltainn as Coordinator for Oklahoma, Lauren Stapleton as Coordinator for Alabama and Mary Hardiman as Coordinator for Arkansas and Louisiana.

Membership Secretary's Report

14. Much of the content of our published Annual Report relates to activities undertaken by the Membership Secretary, Nichola Glasse.

15. Nichola said that was encouraging to have so many members as part of the online conference today and thanked all present for being a part of LifeLines, and for the friendship and support they provide to their pen friends.

16. During the financial year July 2019 to June 2020 we had 135 new members join LifeLines; and many others who requested information about LifeLines. We also had 41 of our existing members volunteer to write to a new pen friend, in all we were able to provide 176 people on death row in America with a pen friend.

17. There were many ways in which prospective members discovered LifeLines: from the adverts placed in Good Housekeeping and the Psychologies magazines; on Amicus training days; as a result of research online after watching a film about death row; listening to a podcast; or reading a book. During September through to November 2019 there were a variety of interviews and articles which appeared on the BBC website about some of our members. Nichola thanked Mary Hardiman, Brid and Lorna Fitzpatrick and Ann Barnes for sharing the stories of their friendships.

18. Also, members have given talks about LifeLines during the past year and have written articles or been interviewed for a variety of publications such as Positive News and The Plain Truth. Nichola thanked everyone who has written an article, been prepared to be interviewed for print or on a radio programme; and everyone who has encouraged a friend to consider becoming a member.

19. At the end of the year we had 1216 members, and a short waiting list for pen friends from those on death row.

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

Treasurer's Report

21. The AGM proceeded to the finances contained within the Annual Report, which relates to activities undertaken by the Treasurer, James Mason.

22. James explained that the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 30 June 2020 are available on our website, and that if anyone would like a hard copy they were welcome to request it from him after the AGM.

23. For the year ending 30 June 2020, Lifelines recorded a surplus of £4,706. This compares to last year where we made a loss of £2,572. Two years ago when James took over as Treasurer, Lifelines had registered a loss of over £7,400 so our increasing financial strength year on year is good to see.

24. There are two key reasons for the surplus, and both relate to a reduction in expenses rather than an increase in income. First we only had one conference in 2020. Second due to COVID-19 we only printed and posted three Wings, not the usual four.

25. In terms of income, our subscriptions remained remarkably stable year on year.

26. Improving our financial situation further, we received income of around £1,700 just after the year end from HMRC for Gift Aid. Due to the timing of the payment this will form part of next year's annual accounts. This is double what we have received in the past for a single financial year from HMRC and is due to the tireless efforts of our Membership Secretary Nichola Glasse.

27. In the Treasurer's Report at the AGM last year, James said that we would seek to re-negotiate with our largest suppliers in an effort to cut costs, and that he would report on the outcome this year. He was happy to report that this was successful. In 2020 we changed the printer of The Wing and the postage method by which we send it. Both of these have cut large costs - perhaps up to 25% - without impacting quality, and the full positive impact of this should be evident in the Annual Report for 2021.

28. The renegotiation of contracts, the Gift Aid increase and the overall surplus means that for the twelfth consecutive year our Membership fees will not increase.

29. Despite these positives, James went on to warn that as the UK economy is in a recession, it is natural that discretionary spending is the first item of spending that individuals will cut - and we should therefore expect to see a decrease in membership in the coming year. We will be holding onto a higher than usual cash reserve in order to ensure we are well prepared for any financial shocks that may occur.

30. James offered that if anyone wished to discuss this, or any other part of the Annual Report, to contact him either now or via email after the AGM.

31. Acceptance of the Annual Report and Accounts was proposed by Patrick Ballin, seconded by Carole Butcher and passed unanimously by the membership.

Resolutions

32. Members were invited through the Wing and website to submit resolutions to the AGM by 11 September 2020.

33. The following resolution was proposed by Patrick Ballin and seconded by Margaret Shepherd with the support of the LifeLines Committee. The purpose is to allow future AGMs to take place virtually if required, bringing the LifeLines Constitution in line with what are at the moment only temporary Charity Commission rules.

This General Meeting resolves to amend the LifeLines Constitution to allow for General Meetings of Members to be conducted virtually in future, if required.

We will insert the following sub clause (9) at the end of clause 11 (General Meetings of Members) in the LifeLines Constitution. This is similar to the existing wording that allows virtual Committee meetings [clause 19 (Meetings and proceedings of charity trustees) sub clause (4)]:

(9) Participation in general meetings by electronic means

(a) A general meeting may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the charity trustees in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.

(b) Any member of the CIO participating at a general meeting by suitable electronic means agreed by the charity trustees in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants shall qualify as being present at the meeting.

(c) General meetings held by electronic means must comply with rules for general meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes, except that the notice in sub-clause (c)(ii) of this clause shall give the electronic means by which the general meeting is to take place

[for clarification: the term "Member of the CIO" used in the Constitution means "Member of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation", i.e. Member of LifeLines]

34. The resolution was accepted unanimously by the members present.

[Post AGM note: due to a subsequent delay with filing the Constitution amendment with the Charity Commission, this resolution will be presented again at the 2021 AGM]

Election of Committee Members

35. Patrick Ballin took the chair and explained that Jan Hall and Nichola Glasse retire from the Committee on rotation as required by the constitution but are eligible for re-election. Caz Dyer is not standing for re-election.

36. Members were invited through the Wing and website to nominate members for election to the committee at the AGM by 11 September 2020.

37. Sue Drysdale, Nikita Mistry, Melanie Mitchell and Davina Chima were correctly nominated and seconded for election as committee members by 11 September 2020. All the candidates were unanimously elected to serve on the Committee by the members present.

38. Jan resumed the chair and asked the new Committee Members to make themselves known to those present at the conference.

AOB related to AGM business

39. There was no AOB and the AGM closed.

Minutes approved as a true record of the AGM

Jan Hall (Vice Chair) _____

Dated _____