



LifeLines

www.LifeLines-uk.org.uk

Registered charity number 1168273

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of LifeLines

Saturday 9 October 2021

Held via Zoom

Attending

1. The AGM was held during the 2021 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 sixth 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 was quorate, with 92 members present.

5. No apologies had been received.

Minutes of last AGM

6. Minutes of the 2020 AGM were published on our website on 22 Sep 2021. No comments on these minutes were received. Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Patrick Ballin and seconded by Ian Stuart. 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 22 Sep 2021 and included a review of our activities during the year as well as the Accounts. Jan confirmed that the Independent Examiner's report was in progress.

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 has worked for many years in the background making sure our website is maintained. Michele handed over to Davina Chima this year, who Jan also thanked. Jan also thanked Richard Helyer who continued to run the US stamp shop during a period when postal services were often disrupted to the USA.

10. In particular, Jan thanked Margaret Shepherd, Linda Colbourn and Leigh Rose, who stood down as State Coordinators after long and dedicated service. Margaret was also standing down as a Trustee at this AGM. She thanked them all for their hard work and the AGM offered a vote of thanks. Margaret has handed Texas over to Denise Tolson, and Mississippi to Laura Vizor. Linda Colbourn has handed her responsibilities for Kansas to Patrick Ballin; for Ohio, to Alison Robinson; and for South Dakota, to Melanie Mitchell. Leigh Rose has handed over the role of State Coordinator for Kentucky to Danielle Callaghan, who has in turn handed on to Hannah Persaud. Leigh has handed Oregon over to Hazel Calltinn.

11. Jan reported that Lauren Stapleton stepped down as State Coordinator for Alabama, succeeded by Emma Delaney. Thea Torriset stepped down as State Coordinator for Idaho and Indiana, succeeded by Michele Baxter, who has in turn handed on to Carole Butcher. She offered appreciation to all the State Coordinators who have left or joined, and to everyone who served as a State Coordinator over the past year.

12. Jan explained that the State Coordinator role is vital to the work of LifeLines and if anyone present might be interested in doing this, they should contact Carole Butcher.

13. Jan went on to offer thanks to our Regional Group Coordinators. Most have continued to meet virtually over the year, and a few have recently started to meet in person again. London has temporarily become a virtual London and International group. Several other regional groups have also had writers join from abroad. She welcomed and thanked Ann Barnes, who started a new group in East Anglia this year, and Marie Faire, whose Wales & Borders regional group came into being shortly after the 2020 AGM.

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 reported that we are always seeking to attract new members to join LifeLines. Each year we have members who cease to correspond, or who lapse their membership; and co-ordinators constantly receive requests for pen friends. There are many on death row whose request for a second pen friend we have also been able to fulfil in the past year.

16. During the year 2020 / 2021 LifeLines attracted 169 new members, one of the highest figures she had reported for quite a few years. Together with existing members volunteering to correspond with a second person it meant a shorter waiting list, and less time to wait for a pen friend.

17. Nichola explained some of reasons we had so many people join this year. There were quite a few articles by the BBC about the death penalty in the US, at the end of which was often included a video of interviews with members. There had also been an advert in Psychologies magazine. Also this year members have written or been interviewed for articles in Positive news, Faith Alive and Saga, as one of the major ways that prospective members hear of LifeLines is from their friends.

18. She asked those present to please consider if they would be able to give a talk locally about LifeLines, write an article, or be willing to be interviewed about their pen friendship to raise awareness of LifeLines.

19. As of the start of October there were 1270 members of LifeLines.

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 thanked everyone for staying on to this part of the Conference. He stated that Financial Year 2021 was the strongest since LifeLines became a charity. We ended the 2021 financial year with a surplus of £10,628, compared to a surplus of £4,706 in Financial Year 2020.

23. While a surplus of just over £10,000 is very good, we should also recall how recent it was that our financial situation was not as strong. In 2017, the year James took over as Treasurer, LifeLines made a loss of just over £8,000. We should be proud of our new financial health, but we should not be complacent. He fully expects in the next two financial years that our surplus will reduce back to around the £2,000 mark or perhaps even just breaking even.

24. The reason for the surplus uptick in the current year, in truth, is mostly due to circumstances beyond the control of the committee. The previous year, due to the pandemic, we did not have an in-person Conference, and the number of Wings that were printed and posted were reduced as some issues were moved to "electronic only". This represented a significant cost saving for LifeLines, and therefore despite our *true* income remaining very similar year on year, the reduction in our costs triggered the increased surplus.

25. James went on to discuss Money Orders. After a long delay due to the pandemic, it now appeared as though travel between the US and UK would be normalised in November. This in theory would make it easier for us to receive Money Orders for distribution. We did not have any Money Orders at present, but we will keep membership updated when we do. However money orders are logistically difficult for us to procure, and financially extremely risky. They require James to send thousands of pounds worth of this charity's money twice across the Atlantic and hope that it all comes back in one piece. Therefore he wished to remind membership of LifeLines policy to Money Orders:

- If your penpal is in a state where you are able to make payments to them online, please continue using that function.
- Also ask your penpal if there is any other way of them receiving money from you, or whether instead of money you could make direct purchases of food or books etc.

26. He reminded members that there is absolutely no obligation on your part to make payments to your penpal, and you should never feel pressured to do this.

27. James ended with two requests for our Membership:

a. Please consider leaving a legacy to LifeLines in your will, no matter how large or small this is. For a charity of our size, these one-off payments make a gigantic difference. Those present can contact James or anyone else on the committee- via email or post if they would like to know more.

b. As mentioned by Nichola, a BBC article - and other smaller articles- are a huge boost to interest in our charity. If any of our membership have any links to media or journalists, please give some thought as to whether you could, with the help of the LifeLines Committee, suggest to them a piece about LifeLines. There are so many amazing stories from LifeLines members, and it would be fantastic if more of these could be shared widely. If you do have such links, please get in touch with any of the Committee members before confirming any pieces with journalists.

28. 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.

29. Acceptance of the Annual Report and Accounts was proposed by Jan Hall, seconded by Sue Drysdale and passed unanimously by the membership.

Resolutions

30. Members were invited through the Wing and website to submit resolutions to the AGM by 10 September 2021.

31. The following resolution was re-submitted by Patrick Ballin with the support of the LifeLines Committee. It was presented at last year's AGM but needed to be ratified so that an amended Constitution can be filed with the Charity Commission. The purpose is to allow future AGMs to take place virtually if required, bringing the LifeLines Constitution in line with Charity Commission guidance.

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 (3)(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]

32. The resolution was proposed by Patrick Ballin, seconded by Davina Chima and passed unanimously by those present, meeting the requirement for 75% of Members present to pass a change to the LifeLines Constitution.

Election of Committee Members

33. Jan Hall explained that Beryl Kingsbury and James Mason were due to retire from the Committee on rotation as required by the constitution but were eligible for re-election. Margaret Shepherd was not standing for re-election.

33. Members were invited through the Wing and website to nominate members for election to the committee at the AGM by 10 September 2021.

35. Beryl Kingsbury, James Mason and Edmund Conybeare had been correctly nominated and seconded for election as committee members by 11 September 2021. All the candidates were unanimously elected to serve on the Committee by the members present.

36. Jan asked the new Committee Members to make themselves known to those present at the conference.

AOB related to AGM business

37. There was no other business and the AGM closed.

Minutes approved as a true record of the AGM

Jan Hall (Vice Chair) _____

Dated _____