

Minutes from Leicester City of Sanctuary AGM

St Martins House, Saturday 9th May

56 volunteers, members and supporters present.

1. Pam Inder and Bushra Ali welcomed everyone to the 2015 AGM and thanked them for their attendance.

2. There were apologies from:

Hilary Comfort, Ruby Hamid, Eileen McKellican, John Sandford Smith, Maddalena Tacchetti and Gull Zada

3. Apart from a spelling error on Point 3 the previous minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

4. As a matter arising from Point 4 of the previous minutes, Pam explained that a new Governance structure had been put in place. However there had been complications that led to the resignation of several new trustees and that the acting Board only had three members. It was explained that this year LCoS hopes to give the new governance structure more of a chance by voting in a full board of trustees.

Pam also highlighted the title change of 'Chair' to 'Coordinator',

5. The Coordinators report was delivered. In brief the report detailed that;

- Overall LCoS is in a good shape
- The charity is operating well and is solvent
- A new 'Open Door' scheme has been introduced and the drop-ins were seeing between 2 - 10 new people each week.
- A new LGBT programme has been launched to run alongside the organisation's current activity; approximately 10% of Home Office cases involve people with LGBT status.

The full report is available online.

6. The treasurer's report was given by Sabena Aliyeva. The charity's primary income is from grants; totalling £20,540.00 in 14/15. The closing balance 31/03/2015 is £35,952.76

Members were asked to put an 'X' next to their name on the sign-in sheet if they wished to receive information on how to make donations.

Sabena shared that she had negotiated with HM Revenue Customs that LCoS could be reimbursed unclaimed Gift Aid from the past 5 years donations. She was thanked for her incredible efforts in this task, and her work as treasurer to date.

7. Pam announced her resignation as Coordinator. She thanked the volunteers and clients for their strong and continued support. On behalf of the trustees Bushra thanked Pam for her excellent work. Pam will continue to be involved with LCoS in other capacities.

8. Mick Walker was welcomed to the front of the room and officially took over from Pam as the LCoS Coordinator. Mick gave a heartfelt message of thanks to Pam for her many years of great service. Mick talked about the recent changes in Government and how the challenges facing refugees and asylum seekers is not likely to get any better; however he highlighted the changes in local government and indicated this may be a good time to re-open dialogues and demonstrate the essential service that LCoS provides to the community.

He also explained how he hopes to rework the delivery structure of the charity, ensuring it is run efficiently and effectively.

9. Trustee Piotr Kuhiwczak outlined LCoS's current legal framework as an Unincorporated Organisation, and the implications that this has; in particular how trustees are individually financially responsible for the organisation and fully liable for its actions, and that this is deterring potential trustees from joining the board. To ensure this is not the case going forward, and to grant the charity additional powers such as owning land and engaging employees, the trustees have undertaken research into a new legal identity for LCoS.

Piotr and the Board recommended LCoS seek to become an Incorporated organisation; adopting the new CIO status. This allows the charity to have various additional powers (cited above) without having to submit accounts and reports to additional regulatory bodies. This route requires LCoS to rework its constitution, however there is lots of guidance and templates to assist with this. Alison Birch from After18 commented that After18 had recently incorporated in the same way and found it to be a positive move.

It was highlighted that CIO is a new legal framework and relatively unused; meaning there may be unidentified risks, however the Board had fully researched and were happy to recommend this move to the AGM.

The need to make the decision on the day was challenged as this is seen as big step for the charity, and details of the proposal had not been shared in advance. Members felt they trusted the research of the Board and were happy to consider the motion at the current AGM.

The AGM was asked to vote on the motion; there was 1 member against, and 1 who abstained and 33 that voted to carry the motion.

10. All prospective trustees gave a 2 minute presentation introducing themselves and highlighting what they felt they could bring to the governance of LCoS.

11. Bushra Ali, chair of the board, gave a case study on a Home Office case she had supported through her professional role as an Immigration lawyer.

12. Votes for the 7 available trustee positions were cast and we counted during a brief coffee break.

13. The results of the vote were announced by Mick Walker, who officially declared the new board of LCoS trustees as:

Pamela Inder

Samuel Javid

John Ssenkindu

Rob Blow

Golden Ngwenya

Annie Merton

Pete Hobson (re-elected)

14. Other key posts confirmed for the forthcoming year:

Mick Walker – Co-ordinator

Shali Bullough – Deputy co-Co-ordinator

Jenny Westmoreland – Deputy co-Co-ordinator

Sabena Aliyeva – Treasurer