

Minute of Annual General Meeting – 22/11/2023

Present: David Brownlee (Chair/Member), Gladys Purves (Trustee/Member/Volunteer), Colin Robson (Staff), Rene O'Reilly (Staff), Bill Calder (Vice-Chair/Member + minute taker), Hollie Callaghan (Staff), Moya Loughrey (Staff/Bureau Manager), John Offord (Treasurer/Member), Laura Plumb (CAS), Brian Reid (Member/Volunteer), Patricia Buckley (Member/Volunteer), Kerry Gentleman (Member), Keith Buckley (Member), Joyce Cove (Member/Volunteer), John Paton Day (SBC Board Representative) , Lina Allkhatib (PASS), Ciaran Hamill Diamond (Company Secretary/Member), Alan Morton (Member/Volunteer).

Apologies: Kathryn Peden, Riley Sansom, Roberta McNeilage, Maureen Bak, Yvonne Cassidy, Mike Turner, Liz Copeland, Annette McGraith, Fiona Caldwell, John Goldie, Linda Farrell, Richard Smart, Gill Westwood, Madhuka Senanayake, Jennifer Duff, Amy Darrie, John Lamont, Christine Graham, Derek Purvis.

Minute of Annual General Meeting held on 4/10/22 : This was circulated and approved. Approval was proposed by Bill Calder, seconded by Pat Buckley .

Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

Annual report:

David Brownlee presented the report for 2022/23 and highlighted these key issues.

- Thanks to all of the staff and volunteers for all their hard work during a very challenging year
- Thanks were also extended to the Board volunteers. The main focus for the Board has been the preparation of a business plan which will be finalised in the near future
- He highlighted the healthy financial basis which will enable us to fund key elements in the business plan
- David thanked the Robertson Trust whose generous contribution enabled the Consortium to employ 2 trainers, Colin Robson and Rene O'Reilly who are already making a significant impact across the 3 Border Bureaux
- Thanks were also extended to CAS both for the support Laura Plumb has given the Board during the year and for the support offered by the data protection service provided by Thorntons Solicitors
- David and Moya Loughrey, our new Manager confirmed that the Bureau has already surpassed £1m in client financial gain in the current calendar year and, in this regard, they paid tribute to all of the staff involved

Kathryn Peden, our Manager in 2022/23

- noted the very high level of demand and continuing need for additional advisors
- On the positive side, she highlighted the more flexible service provided post-Covid and the fact there are currently 7 trainees at various stages of training
- She also acknowledged that Scottish Borders Council has extended the current contract to 2026, which offers a measure of financial stability
- She thanked the Friends for their continued support
- Finally, she thanked all staff and volunteers for their hard work throughout the year

Moya

- paid tribute to the way Kathryn managed and organised her induction as Manager and thanked her for her invaluable support since appointment. These sentiments were echoed by David
- She confirmed a new Triage worker, John Paxton has been appointed and will start shortly. John brings some very valuable experience of triage work in another Border Bureau setting
- She paid tribute to the work of Colin Robson and Rene O'Reilly in the recruitment and supporting trainees
- Finally, Moya thanked all of the staff for their hard work and David for his support as she has settled into her new role

Approval of the report was proposed by Gladys Purves, seconded by Alan Morton and passed by the meeting.

Independently Examined Accounts:

John Offord (Treasurer) presented the accounts and drew attention to the following points.

- The net income in the year 2022/23 was circa £145k, net expenditure was circa £129k and the net surplus was circa £16k, which is a very good outcome considering the financial pressures
- He added that the liquid reserves are circa £97k, of which £50k has been lodged in a fixed term account offering a greater return
- Finally he and David both thanked the Independent Examiner for her skilled help and support during a very testing year

David thanked John, who is stepping down, for all his hard work and wise advice

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Alan Morton, seconded by David Brownlee and passed by the meeting.

Election of Directors: The re-election of the 8 current Directors and election of John Goldie as a Director were approved by the meeting. David noted there are currently 3 vacancies and highlighted the need to recruit new members for the Board.

Independent Examiner: The reappointment of Pamela Redpath was proposed by John Offord, seconded by Gladys Purves and approved by the meeting.

AOCB: There were no matters arising.

Prior to closing the meeting, David presented completion of training certificates to Gladys Purves, Brian Reid, Alan Morton.

The meeting closed at 6.30 with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

