

Minutes of Director's Meeting held at
11.00am – Friday 1st February, 2013.
Holiday Inn Express, Braintree

Present

John Reid, Chairperson, **JR**
Christine Mitchell, Vice Chairperson, User Group, (North) **CM**
Roy Haycock, Treasurer, **RH**
Pat Fitzpatrick, Board Secretary, **PF**
Stuart Holt, User Group (South), **SH**
Dennis Small, **DS**

LA Office Staff

Dave White, Chief Executive Officer, **DW**

Apologies

Gareth Jones

Prior to the meeting starting **DS** asked to say a few words to the meeting. He said that in spite of a number of adverse comments, about the chairman, from an LA member he wanted it noted and made clear that he had every confidence in **JR's** chairmanship; this sentiment was agreed by everyone present. **JR** thanked **DS** for his kind words and the board for their support.

2. Approval of Minutes from Board Meeting 6th September 2012

The meeting were unable to approve the minutes of the last Board meeting held on 6th September 2012 as they were still in a hybrid version and were not in a fit state to be signed off. **CM** commented that the original minutes were unclear and difficult to read as well as some elements being factually incorrect. **CM** agreed to make notes on her copy of the minute and send them to **JR**. **JR** asked everyone to check the minutes and let him know of any changes required. Once all changes had been agreed an amended copy will be sent out by email for approval by the Trustees.

Action – All Trustees to check 6th September Minutes and let **JR** know of any amendments to be made. **JR** to produce an accurate copy of the minutes

DW asked if previous minutes should continue to be kept in the LA office; he confirmed that these were filed away under lock and key. Board agreed that the minutes should be kept securely in the office.

JR said that he would check all the minutes held in the office and sign any if it was appropriate e.g. those held on the LA website.

Action – **JR** to check minutes held in office and to sign them as appropriate.

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RH asked **DW** if the recent judgment on CRB checks will have an effect on the LA. **DW** said that the office staff was looking into the effect of the Court of Appeal ruling that blanket CRB checks are not compatible with a key part of the Human Rights Act.

Action – Office staff to check effect of CRB ruling

Sensitive – Office Matters

3. Matters Arising

Business Plan – **JR** said that he and **DW** had revisited the Business Plan and it was now nearly complete. Once it is ready they will send to the Trustees for approval before publishing it.

Action – **JR** and **DW** to complete the Business Plan and issue to the other Trustees for approval.

Sensitive – Legal Matters

Sensitive – Office Matters

LA Football League – This item was left for discussion along with **DH's** (Dean Heffer) report later in the meeting.

4. Review of AGM 19th November 2012

- a. Following the AGM **RH** was going to write a letter to arrange a meeting with other disability groups but he and his wife had both been ill over the last few months. **RH** will produce the letter as soon as he is able.

Action – **RH** to write to disability groups to arrange a meeting.

- b. The reference to the date of the next AGM was put on the Agenda due to a misunderstanding with the Scottish Charity Commission over the date of the AGM. This misunderstanding has now been sorted out.

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5. Chairperson's Report

JR reported a success that he had in helping a young man who had lost his job following a conviction for erroneously claiming DLA. **JR** had written a letter in support of the young man for his appeal which the young man won.

JR had manned the LA phone over the Christmas period; he said that he had received 4 calls which he had either dealt with or passed over to the office to be dealt with following the Christmas break.

JR along with other Trustees attended the International Day for People with Disabilities (IDPwD) event that was staged by Chelmsford City Council on 1st December 2012.

On 9th December 2012 **JR** and **PF** attended the LA Spurs match against able bodied Prosthetists, the LA Spurs won 2 games to 1.

JR mentioned that he had recently attended a PIP meeting held across from Euston Station. The parking for disabled drivers was totally inadequate and he had been forced to park on a parking meter. In addition he had to leave the meeting early because he was only able to park on the meter for 3 hours. Following agreement of the Trustees **JR** will write to the Equality Minister, Minister for the Disabled, Lord Freud, Ian Duncan Smith and David Cameron and will consider contacting the EU on behalf of the LA to complain.

Action – **JR** to write to the Equality Minister, Minister for the Disabled, Lord Freud, Ian Duncan Smith and David Cameron and will consider contacting the EU on behalf of the LA to complain.

6. Treasurer's Report

RH said that since the last meeting he had found out from **DW** that the interest on the CAF account would cover any losses on our invested capital if the interest rate went down. **DW** confirmed that the LA money is not currently tied down to a long term investment. It should be noted that CAF gives higher interest if you make a long term investment.

RH would like to cut down the number of LA bank accounts from 5 to 1; he believes that this would mean that **MN** (Martin Nsiah). Would be able to keep control of the investments more easily **CM** agreed with **RH** about the need to reduce the number of accounts. **JR** asked what would happen if the bank holding our money went bust as we would only get £85,000 on our account but he was reassured by **RH** that our investments were safe.

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Action – RH to arrange for the number of bank accounts to be cut down.

CM raised the point that the LA did not have a reserve account. **RH** said that we currently have £250,000 in hand i.e. 2 ½ years running cost. He stated that we have enough money for the current year and as the CAF account holds £250,000 this would cover any expenses if the organization was wound up.

RH confirmed that the Lloyds bank holds the money from the children's' charity and Kilimanjaro funds. This account should remain in place.

CM asked if we could use the money held in the Volunteer Visitors account for other LA projects. **DW** said the money was left in a legacy specifically for volunteer visitors and could not be used for anything else.

DS asked what the position of the Trustees would be if the LA had to close. The legal position would be that each Trustee would have to pay £1.

RH asked **DW** to provide costs of the Trustee meetings and to let him have it.

Action – DW to provide **RH** costs of Trustee meetings.

JR asked if it would be agreed by the other trustees for the agenda items to be taken out of order as **DS** had to leave earlier to get his plane home. All agreed.

9. Complaints

Sensitive – Office Matters

10. Taking the LA Forward

JR read a letter received from **PJ** (Paul Judkins). The letter covered several points:

- *Sensitive:*
- David Pert, the financial advisor, has made contact with an insurance broker who may be able to offer cover for loss/damage to artificial legs on holiday though he would need certain information as to likely numbers involved.
- **PJ** had also been trying to make contact with some insurers over work that could be undertaken for the LA.
- **PJ** wondered whether the LA would consider setting aside an amount annually to enable well deserving cases to get an initial expert consultants report to see whether an individual had a valid claim. This money would be recovered if the claim was successful along, hopefully, with a donation to the LA from the successful claimant. There would also be good publicity for the

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LA. However should the claimant lose their case the LA would have to cover the whole cost of the initial report.

- **PJ** said that David Pert would like to meet the Board with a view to offering his services to members. **PJ** wondered whether the LA have thought of running a financial panel like the legal panel.

DW made the point that the LA did not want to be ambulance chasers, i.e. we do not want to be seen as contacting people when they have had an amputation. We are not trained solicitors; we cannot be seen to ask people for their medical history.

PF has a couple of suggestions for raising the profile of the LA and raise a little money as well:

- Trying to get the LA on the BBC Radio 4 Appeal, this broadcasts appeals for individual charities.
- Set up an association with the 'Recycling Factory', this is an organisation which recycles toners; phones etc and give a donation to associated organisations.

DH (Dean Heffer) has put forward several interesting suggestions:

- To make a DVD for all new amputees showing that there is help for them and still life to live after losing 1 or more limbs. **RH** suggested the DVD could be sent out with the Stepforward magazine. This may not be practicable but an alternative would be to put the DVD on the website and send out copies out to User Groups. **CM** asked **DW** if he could work out costing. **RH** suggested that certain activities for upper limb users could also be put on the DVD e.g. tying shoelaces, fitting light bulbs. This was felt by all the Trustees to be a very good idea.
- Produce a photo poster storybook showing amputees doing exercise and sporting activities. The poster could be made up from stills on the DVD. This could then be sent out to user groups and new members. Send to all DSC's to put up in fitting rooms at no cost to the centre.
- Put a survey on the LA website asking if there are any other activities that our members would like the LA to undertake. In addition survey all User Groups for their thoughts.
- A social event where there is a singer, comedian and a football match.
- **DH** had suggested that the LA promote a LA football league. **CM** asked if we can get costing. **CM** mentioned that she had sent a funding application form as well of details of 2 organisations who provide grants for sporting endeavours i.e. 'Sport England Small Grants' and 'McDonald Kick Start Grant'. **SH** suggested to **DW** to get the relevant information from **DH**. **DW** suggested that if **DH** was able to organise football matches with other parts of the country the LA could hire a minibus to take the team to the matches. It was noted that the McDonald Kick Start Grant covers a coach and driver. However **RH** pointed out that we need to know all the costing before we can agree to support a LA Football League.

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Action: DW to find out the cost of producing a DVD.

Action: DH to find out costing for setting up a LA Football League

DW said that the office was contacting companies with a view to selling web links.

As during Trustee meetings we don't have the time to cover all of the outstanding matters or give the various reports produced by the office proper consideration **CM** suggested that sub-committees of 2 people could be set up. **DW** mentioned in the past that the office report and other reports produced by the office were not always produced in such detail. **CM** suggested that **DW** do a 1 sheet report showing what the office had done. It was agreed that **DW** would produce a cut-down version of the office report and give details of other reports of meetings attended by the office staff. Trustees could then request any reports that they were interested in. This suggestion was agreed to by all the Trustees.

Action: DW to produce a cut-down version of the office report prior to future trust meetings.

JR suggested that the LA negotiate member discounts with large retailers like Debenhams etc. **DW** said the office was already in contact with travel and cruise companies via the web link initiative.

There was then a general discussion about the venue for the next User Group Conference. **CM** mentioned that she had recently stayed in the Malmaison Hotel in Liverpool which she felt could be a suitable venue to hold the conference. It was suggested that the conference could be held over the 1st or 2nd weekend in

October 2013. **CM** said that she would find out the possible charges of holding the conference at the hotel.

Action: CM to find out possible charges for holding the conference at the Malmaison Hotel

11. Fund Raiser

Sensitive – Office Matters

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DW and **DS** left the meeting.

SH commented that although the venue was very nice, perhaps we should think of holding the Trustee meetings in the centre of the country somewhere like Leicester. This would mean that most trustees could travel from their homes and attend the meeting over one day.

PF suggested that some Trustee meetings could be held over the telephone. **CM** and **RH** pointed out the problems associated with holding meetings in that manner. The general feeling of the meeting was that telephone meetings were not viable.

The meeting ended at 16:00.