

Minutes of Director's Meeting held at
10.00am – Thursday 2nd May, 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**

LA Office Staff

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

Apologies

Gareth Jones, **GJ**
Tommy McSorley, **TS**
Dennis Small, **DS**

PF said that she had received a letter from **TS** in which he stated that he would not be able to travel to any more meetings due to ill-health, though he would be able to attend via telephone conference. As this was the case would the Board like him to resign. **CM** suggested that **TS** should stay on the board until the end of the year. This was agreed by all present.

2. Approval of Minutes from Board Meeting 1st February 2013

CM proposed acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting. Seconded by **RH**. Agreed by all present. The minutes were signed by **JR**.

3. Matters Arising

JR confirmed that he had now produced an accurate copy of the minutes for the 6th September 2012 meeting with the help of other Trustees who had informed him of any amendments that needed to be made. He also confirmed that any minutes that were awaiting the Chairman's signature have now been signed.

DW was not due to join the meeting till lunchtime, in the meantime the query about the CRB checks will be held over until then.

The Action point over the Business Point will be discussed under agenda item no11.

The queries over the job descriptions to be undertaken by Bibby are to be discussed under agenda item 14.

Unfortunately **RH** and his wife have both been ill over the last few months and he has been unable to write to other disability groups to arrange a meeting as agreed at Unit 16, Waterhouse Business Centre, 2 Cromer Way, Chelmsford. CN1 2QE.

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the last AGM and previous board meeting. **RH** said that he would write to other Disability Groups and it was suggested by **CM** that all groups dealing with amputees should be contacted and asked if they would like to send one representative from each organisation..

Action – **RH** to write to the following Disability Groups to suggest meeting together to discuss items of common interest. Letter to be sent to all trustees for approval prior to being sent

- **BLESMA**
- **Disability Rights Organisation**
- **Dysnet**
- **Edric**
- **Em-power**
- **Limbcare**
- **Limbpower**
- **Meningitis Trust**
- **Meningitis UK**
- **Porter**
- **Reach**
- **Thalidomide Trust**

RH confirmed that the LA's Bank Accounts have not been amalgamated into one; this does need to be done. **JR** brought the issue of the set total amount refundable should the bank go under. This total refundable is based on the combined total for all funds held in all banks and subsidiaries within that group and more understanding of this needs to be achieved before we move funds into one account.

Action – **RH** to investigate re arranging for the Bank accounts to be cut down to one.

Presentation by 'Clearer Solutions'

At 11:00 **David Pert** and **colleague** from the financial planning firm '**Clearer Solutions**' joined the meeting and gave a presentation of the services that they felt they could offer to both to the LA and members of the association. They stressed that they were not financial advisors but financial planners. Their aim is to help individuals work out what's most important to the individual in life- i.e. ones individual goals for the future. By working out what the costs will be to achieve these goals and when the money will be needed, they can help to plan an individual's finances and work out the best way to achieve the goals. David explained that the first thing they did for clients was to produce an in-depth report on the client's requirements. This report cost £975 but the implementation of the recommendations could be done either by the client themselves, through the 'Clearer Solutions' company, or by

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another financial company of the client's choice. They can help where clients have a sum of money but not if they are on benefits.

SH joined the meeting at 11:30 after experiencing traffic delays on his journey to the meeting.

RH explained the current financial arrangements for the LA.

One suggestion that came out of the presentation was that the LA could set up a 'Financial Panel' along the same lines as the 'Limb Loss Legal Panel'.

David Pert and Gordon were thanked for their input and they left the meeting.

DW joined the meeting at 12:25.

CM stated that she did not want to go with 'Clear Solutions' but she would have no problem with getting names of other firms from the Institute of Financial Planning with a view to setting up a 'Financial Panel'.

A discussion of the pros and cons of setting up such a panel then took place.

SH felt that too much work would have to be undertaken by the office to set such a panel up.

After further discussion **SH** suggested we refer this to our next meeting after we had received further details from 'Clear Solutions'.

Action – PF to put an item on the agenda of the next Board meeting.

DW confirmed that **RM** (Richard Morrison) was checking into the effect of the Court of Appeal ruling regarding blanket CRB checks. However he has found out that CRB certification can be transferred from one organisation to another. The CRB application form is currently being updated and details of some criminal activities may remain on the form.

Action - DW will update the board on the result of RM's investigations.

DW had requested training on the SAGE software from the LA Accountant, **DW** explained that he really needed to understand the SAGE system so that he could act as a back-up to **MN** but also that he could produce any accounts needed for the board when requested at short notice. **RH** volunteered to attend the office over a weekend when **MN** was available to gain an understanding

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of the system. In the first place it was agreed that **JR** would find out the cost of the SAGE training to see if it would be financially viable for **DW** to undertake it.

Action - JR to find out the cost of SAGE training.

DW was asked if he had been able to obtain quotes from a charity solicitor. He was told that by the first solicitor he contacted that they needed various information about the Association before making an agreement to act for the LA. Once **DW** is able to supply the information he will obtain 3 quotes from different solicitors.

DW to obtain 3 quotes from 3 different charity solicitors.

LA Football League

DH (Dean Heffer) is looking into the costs of producing a DVD and setting up an LA Football League.

4 Chairperson's Report

JR had produced his Chairman's report detailing the many visits he had made on behalf of the LA.

JR said that he really appreciated that **SH** and **PF** went to meetings on his behalf and hoped that they would continue to do so. They said that they were happy to continue.

5. Treasurer's Report

RH was unable to produce a report as he did not have the relevant information. He said that he needed income and expenditure details on a monthly basis. **DW** will provide the relevant details to enable **RH** to produce a report which he will send out to the Trustees.

DW to obtain the income and expenditure details for **RH**.

RH to produce a report once he has received the details.

6. User Groups Report

CM has been to Nottingham as a representative of the MAAF organisation, she mentioned the LA but the general feeling of the user group was that they were not impressed with the LA. **CM** has had details of a few other user groups and has had

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invitations to visit from a couple and she will take these up when time permits. **CM** confirmed that the Lincoln group closed down about 4 months ago.

RH is part of the Manchester User Group and he confirmed that they also did not think much of the LA. He said that the Manchester User group does not want anything to do with the LA because of a previous incident. **JR** commented that we do need to know what the problem is.

Action – RH to investigate

SH has spoken to the Portsmouth User group. He mentioned that Hastings has a support group but this not specifically a User group. **SH** said that his own User group were having a tour of the Amex Stadium, Brighton, and the home of Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club. **SH** is also having a meeting with Otto Bock the following week regarding user legs.

RM and **GJ** are going to Wrexham. The outreach program is part of **RM**'s official duties.

CM had been investigating hotel details for a User Group Conference where we could possibly also present the P&O awards.

The prices for the Hilton Garden Inn in Birmingham were as follows:

- Day delegate rate £32
- Single room £89 per day

The prices for the Malmaison in Liverpool were as follows:

- Day delegate between £38 and £48
- 24 hour rate £124

CM suggested that we should have a key speaker and one suggestion would be Otto Bock.

SH proposed that we should aim to have the User group Conference next April as it was too late to organise one for this year. This was unanimously agreed.

Board Secretary Report

PF had produced the Secretaries report prior to the meeting, included in her report were details of 2 meetings that she had attended on behalf of the LA.

1. Joint Committee on Mobility for Disabled People held on 7th March 2012.
2. Joint meeting of the APPGS focusing on the Children and Families Bill and its impact on disabled children and young people held on 20th March 2013.

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There were no comments made about the report.

7. Media Data

JR and **PF** had been shown a demonstration of the Media Data package 'Agility' and both they and **DW** explained the facilities available with it. The board agreed unanimously to purchase the database. **UPDATE - DW** has managed to negotiate a further price reduction.

8. Roles of the Trustees

PF said that she had put this on the Agenda so that she could check if she was doing all the activities that she should be undertaking.

DW said that there were a couple of activities that he dealt with on her behalf which he was happy to carry on doing; otherwise she seemed to be fulfilling her role:

- The end of year procedures
- Companies House & Charity Commission

9. Fund Raiser

JR confirmed that he, **DW** and **PF** would be interviewing candidates for the Fund Raiser position on Wednesday 8th May. Three people had been offered interviews but Dave was having problems getting hold of one of the candidates.

RH said that he thought that the fund raiser should have a project that they could raise money for.

CM said that there were 2 types of fund raising

- Event organisation
- Grants from organisations e.g. Lottery funding. In these cases the Association would need to follow the guidelines of the funding organisation.

JR said that we should not fall into the trap of tying ourselves into a person saying that they could only work in the office i.e. were not willing to travel.

11. Decision Making by the Board

Some decisions are being sent out to the Board by email from the office but not everyone responds. It would be helpful if Trustees could reply.

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12. StepForward

PF said that she had not seen all the articles that were put in the latest Stepforward. Also, despite being asked a couple of times, **RM** had not put any details in the last issue of the work that the office had been undertaking. **PF** felt it was vital that members understood what was being done on their behalf. This would be one way for the members to see that the office were not just administrators. The details for the Stepforward article could be extracted from the report to the Trustees and would hopefully not cause too much extra work. **PF** suggested that the numbers of telephone calls from the enquiries line and into the office should be added together as this reflected the true position of the overall number of calls coming into the office.

DW commented that the office had a complaint from an upper limb amputee over the name of the magazine. **DW** had explained that the title refers to moving forward after limb loss and not to lower limb amputees.

CM brought up the question of advertising equipment on the website that was no longer required by members e.g. wheelchairs. **DW** said that he was changing the Associations insurance details so that this could be done. **DW** will look into this.

Action – **DW** to investigate if a 'Classified Ad' section could be put on the website.

13. Job Descriptions

CM said that she would talk to BIBBY about any changes required to the office handbook as well as asking them about job descriptions and staff appraisals for the office staff.

14. Office Report

DW had sent out the office report prior to the meeting. There were no comments about the report.

15. AOB

CM asked what the item about Trustee Expenses was about. **PF** said that **CM** had asked for this to be put on the agenda. **CM** said she could not remember requesting this. This being so no future discussion on the matter was made.

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DW mentioned the importance of the LA having places for runners in the London Marathon 2014. Unfortunately due to previous decisions made by the LA we no longer had Gold package and therefore the cost of entering 4 runners was now £6,750. **DW** said that the runners easily made enough sponsorship money to cover the cost of entry and it was agreed by the board that we should go ahead and purchase 4 places.

DW also mentioned that along with the Marathon places we also had the opportunity to purchase places in the 2014 BUPA 10K London Run. Again the cost of buying these places would be covered by the sponsor money that the runners collected. It was agreed that places should be bought.

The meeting ended at 16:20.