

Minutes of the Refugee Support Devon (RSD) AGM held on 20th October 2020 at 6pm via Zoom

Present:

Jenny Longford (Chair), Chris Hill (Treasurer), David Mezzetti (Company Secretary), Company directors: Bob Mycock, Shurouk Al-Sabbagh, Bernadette Chelvanayagam, Grace Frain, Ben Hudson, Liz Oxburgh, Elizabeth Smith (Minutes Secretary), Staff: Annette Hughes (Manager), Souad Fadel (VPR Outreach Coordinator), Denise Parker (Education and Employment Coordinator), Trupti Desai (Administrator), Supporting volunteers: Liz Vizard, Claire Harding, Cathy Potter.

Apologies:

Neli Montes de Oca (Casework Coordinator), Tameem Shaaban, (VPR Resettlement Coordinator) Nick Floyd (Administrative Assistant).

- 1. Welcome:** Jenny Longford welcomed everyone to this zoom meeting and explained that voting would be restricted to RSD company members and not supporting members. This was different from usual and was for practical reasons only. Questions and opinions were welcome from all.

2 Minutes of the previous AGM held on 22 October 2019:

Matters arising: Three new directors are now in place (details in section 4):

- Shurouk Al-Sabbagh
- Grace Frain
- Ben Hudson

Another director is still needed for PR work. Elizabeth Smith had been appointed as Minutes Secretary.

Chris Hill proposed that the minutes be agreed. This was seconded by Bob Mycock. It was agreed by all those present.

3 Annual Report and Accounts for the year 2019 – 2020:

The accounts and review are for the year ending 31st March 2020 and therefore do not include the period of lockdown.

The accounts have been fully audited. Chris reported that 2019-2020 was a good year.

£212,000 income
£184,000 expenditure
£135,000 reserves carried forward (60,000 restricted and 76,000 unrestricted)

David thanked all the 400 Appeal subscribers; the 400 Appeal comes under unrestricted funds.

Michelle and Ruth were thanked for all their hard work preparing the figures.

The coming year, 2020-2021, is looking good, helped by the amount carried over. The cost of this year's activities are covered and it is expected that £160,000 will be carried over.

2021-2022 is more uncertain, with little confirmed income to cover salaries and other costs.

David Mezzetti proposed that the accounts be passed, and this was seconded by Liz Oxburgh. It was unanimously agreed by those present at the meeting.

4 Appointment of Directors:

Jenny thanked Lena for her work as director, providing a very important link to the university for three years and spearheading the sanctuary scholarships. She stepped down in January.

Jenny welcomed the three new Company Directors, who introduced themselves:

- Shurouk Al-Sabbagh who has an operational and planning background. She used to be a solicitor and also has a human resources background. She is half Syrian, which has given her an extra interest in refugee issues.
- Grace Frain who works on community fundraising. She was a student volunteer with RSD for five years, president of STAR (Student Action for Refugees) and the Exeter University Guild of Students. She is about to start work at the university.
- Ben Hudson from Exeter University. He lectures in law and has worked with displaced populations abroad and is involved with the Sanctuary Scholarship scheme locally and nationally.

Jenny explained that three Company Directors are required to stand down annually at the AGM: Liz Oxburgh, Bob Mycock and Bernadette Chelvanayagam stepped down and stood for re-election.

Grace Frain proposed the re-election of all 3 Directors, seconded by David Mezzetti. The meeting declared them all elected.

Liz took over as Chair temporarily while three officers relinquished their positions: Jenny Longford (Chair), Chris Hill (Treasurer), David Mezzetti (Company Secretary). They were thanked for all their hard work. They then stood for re-appointment. Shurouk Al-Sabbagh proposed the re-appointment of all three officers, seconded by Ben Hudson. The meeting declared them all elected.

Claire Harding congratulated everyone at RSD on holding the organisation and its valuable work together during the coronavirus crisis, and for the last five or six difficult years. Cathy commented that RSD has a big impact for such a small organisation. Jenny thanked all volunteers, donors, staff and funders very much for their help and hard work. Denise Parker reported that ESOL volunteers had been very creative in keeping their work going in very difficult circumstances. Souad Fadel was proud to be part of a great team and praised Annette for being constantly available to help sort out problems.

5 Any other business:

Liz suggested that events should be created as social support for volunteers and clients – for example a walk or something similar.