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**Disability Equality Scotland**  
**Annual General Meeting 2020**



**Disability  
Equality  
Scotland**

**Minute: 25 August 2020, 11:00 – 13:00**

Virtual AGM, Via Zoom.

Attendee list can be found in Appendix 1.

**1. Welcome**

MB, Chief Executive Officer, welcomed everyone and confirmed that there were 48 delegates in attendance (of which there were 8 Directors, 6 Staff and 3 interpreters and captioners) and more than 15 were voting members and as such, declared the meeting to be quorate.

MB introduced the Convenor, LB and Treasurer, CM and indicated the remainder of the Directors would join on screen for the Questions and Answers (Q&A) session later in the agenda.

MB ran through the ways that attendees could interact during the session via the chat and Q&A functions. Closed captioning and BSL interpretation were also available and explained.

LB, Convenor, introduced herself and reiterated using the Zoom Q&A function would allow the team to have a record of key questions that they will respond to after the event, if time does not permit. LB also thanked the members for being receptive to the different ways of engaging with Disability Equality Scotland during lockdown; specifically, the success of the weekly polls, which allowed us to relay concerns and suggestions to Scottish Ministers, policy makers and service providers helping to reduce inequalities.

**2. Morven Brooks, Approval of AGM Minutes:17 October 2019**

MB confirmed that all delegates should have received a copy of the draft minutes from the AGM held on 17 October 2019.

Proposer: Dorothy McKinney, Vice-Convenor

# DRAFT

Seconder: Scott Stewart, Director

MB checked whether there were any matters arising. There were none.

### **3. Morven Brooks, Presentation of the Annual Report 2019-2020**

MB welcomed everyone again to the AGM celebrating the achievements Disability Equality Scotland in 2019/2020. MB thanked the members, Access Panels, staff and Directors for their contributions, particularly during the last few months of lockdown.

MB stated that the clear vision and strong leadership and governance framework provided by the Management Team and Board of Directors has steered the organisation during this period, reinforced by our Strategic Plan (2020-2023).

MB clarified that Disability Equality Scotland will continue to build on these foundations and expand the areas of work to meet the changing needs of Access Panels and disabled people in Scotland.

MB talked through the organisation's main objectives for 2019-2020. These included:

1. Improve disabled people's access to participation and engagement in society through increased support, services, and awareness around disability equality.
2. Improve understanding and reporting of disability hate crime across Scotland.
3. Promote connectivity between Access Panels and improve access to support for volunteer members in delivering on equality and inclusion-based work.
4. Increase awareness and knowledge of Access, Inclusion and Equality to the Access Panel Network.
5. Establish a permanent Youth Access Panel in Alloa as a pilot, supporting the local Access Panel with membership, providing a

# DRAFT

legacy for the Year of Young People, and ensure that disabled young people have a say in their local community.

6. Ensure that planning and design professionals have access to a range of resources, best practice, advice, and solutions aimed at accessibility / inclusive design.
7. Ensure that disabled people have ongoing involvement and opportunities in providing their views on Accessible Transport in Scotland, contributing to the progress of the Accessible Travel Framework development and implementation.
8. Ensure disabled people, transport operators, staff and other stakeholders have access to accessible travel guidance, information, and signposting via an Accessible Travel Hub.
9. Enable a joined-up approach to tackling disability hate crime and negative behaviours towards disabled people on public transport across Scotland.

MB discussed the ways in which Disability Equality Scotland progressed these outcomes.

Membership increased by 9.6% on the previous year. Members had been given opportunities to contribute towards nine consultations as well as opportunity to attend four disability roadshow events across Scotland.

There has been an increase in resources for the Inclusive Communication Hub and we have made information more accessible by providing our Easy Read Service. Our easy read work has steadily increased providing the organisation a stable income.

Members have given their views on over 50 poll questions on a variety of topics which have greatly contributed to decision-making and policy by Scottish Government officials.

There has been steady progress with the Accessible Travel Hub as Disability Equality Scotland reach out to more providers. Three accessible travel events took place around Scotland.

# DRAFT

Learning from consultation events led to the development and pilot of a Hate Crime Charter with Stagecoach, FirstBus and ScotRail.

The Inclusive Design Hub has continued to evolve with additional resources highlighting best practice in inclusive design for planners, developers, architects and building professionals in Scotland.

Disability Equality Scotland also continues to support the current 36 active Access Panels across Scotland.

MB reminded members, Access Panels and supporters to continue to engage with Disability Equality Scotland, sharing opinions and views and promoting its achievements with other disabled people.

MB concluded by announcing the opening of recruitment for young Directors and the launch of our annual Member's Survey, details of which would be made available on the Disability Equality Scotland website after the AGM concludes.

## **4. Colin Millar, Treasurer's Report**

CM stated that the total income for the charity this year was £288,340, slightly down from the 2019 figure of £296,492. The main income continued to be Scottish Government grants totalling £175,132, the same as the previous year.

Disability Equality Scotland also received funding to administer grants for the Access Panels within Scotland of £45,000, slightly less than the 2019 figure of £46,249. Transport Scotland provided funding of £49,728, the same as the 2019 figure to continue with consultations and our work on accessible travel for Scotland.

CM reported that the total expenditure for the year was £287,040, down from the 2019 figure of £296,492 with the main spending being attributed to staff costs (£186,195, slightly increased from 2019 at £185,307). This year grants totalling £26,862 were administered to the Access Panels within Scotland, less than the 2019 figure of £27,370.

CM confirmed that there are a number of policies in place within Disability Equality Scotland to minimise risk, and in relation to safeguarding staff, volunteers and members. These policies are part of

# DRAFT

the day to day working of the charity and are subject to review on an ongoing basis.

CM reported that trustees considered that three months of annual expenditure was an appropriate level of reserves to hold to meet the day to day running costs of the charity. The total funds held at the end of the financial year was £50,075 (2019: £48,775) of which £18,202 (2019: £17,427) is unrestricted reserves. The trustees continue to seek funding to assist in increasing the reserves to the appropriate level.

CM confirmed that these accounts were approved and adopted by the board of directors on 24 August 2020.

## **5. Colin Millar, Review of Fees and Subscriptions payable by members**

CM confirmed the fees and subscriptions would remain unchanged for the following year.

Proposer: Kenny Milne, Director

Seconder: Dorothy McKinney, Vice-Convenor

## **6. Colin Millar, Appointing External Examiners**

CM reported that the appointed Community Accountancy Scotland would continue their services for 2020/2021.

Proposer: Mike Harrison, Midlothian Access Panel

Seconder: Scott Stewart, Director

## **7. Morven Brooks, Election of Board Directors**

MB explained the voting process. Each voting member had been provided with a link to an online voting form and received biographies for each Director standing for re-election.

MB confirmed that seven proxy votes had been received in advance.

# DRAFT

MB stated that resolutions are proposed as an ordinary resolution. For these resolutions to be passed, more than 50 percent of the votes cast must be in favour of the resolution.

MB explained that the Company's Articles of Association (Article 31b) contained detailed rules for the appointment and retirement of Directors. There is a formal procedure in place to select and appoint new Directors to the Board. These Directors are required to retire at this Annual General Meeting dated today. They can offer themselves for re-election by members. Under the Articles, all Directors are required to submit themselves for re-election at intervals not exceeding three years.

MB talked attendees through the voting process to re-elect both Ms Linda Bamford and Ms Dorothy McKinney as Directors.

## **8. Voting Results**

The meeting paused for a comfort break, to gather votes and accommodate the BSL interpreters and Captioner present.

Following the comfort break, MB confirmed that:

Ms Linda Bamford has been re-elected as Director receiving more than 50% of votes.

Ms Dorothy McKinney has been re-elected as Director receiving more than 50% of votes.

## **9. Members Questions and Suggestions**

Time was set aside for member's questions and suggestions. All Board Directors present now joined the Panel for the discussion and introduced themselves. This included:

- Linda Bamford who is the current Convener of Disability Equality Scotland. Linda confirmed that her biography had been sent to members to assist with voting and thanked the members for re-electing her.

# DRAFT

- Colin Millar is the CEO of The Scottish Personal Assistant Employers Network (SPAEN) and Treasurer of Disability Equality Scotland.
- Scott Stewart is the manager of Disability Information Scotland national helpline; and has a background in local authorities.
- Janis McDonald is the CEO of deafscotland and a close partner with Disability Equality Scotland in their work around Inclusive Communication.
- Dorothy McKinney thanked the members for re-electing her as a Director. Dorothy has a background in Human Resources, mediation and conflict resolution.
- Maureen Morrison is the Operations Manager at Spinal Injuries Scotland. She has a spinal injury herself.
- Kenny Milne works for NHS Ayrshire and Arran in a public involvement role. He has been a wheelchair user for 25 years.
- Susan Fulton has a background in inclusive design and the built environment.

Attendees were then able to submit their questions to the panel via the chat function on Zoom.

A member of Oban Access Panel asked Disability Equality Scotland to consider asking the Scottish Government to include Access Panels as statutory consultees as set out in legislation.

MB reported that Disability Equality Scotland had spoken to Panels and there had been concerns about capacity issues for some Panels to be listed as statutory consultees. MB said that Disability Equality Scotland could support individual Panels locally rather than taking a national approach.

An Access Panel member asked what issues Disability Equality Scotland were hearing from its members. MB confirmed that the weekly poll format of engaging with disabled people had given great insight into disabled peoples' views specifically relating to Covid-19 including

# DRAFT

physical distancing, face covering exemptions and the incidents of hate crime. MB reiterated that information about face covering exemptions is on the website.

An individual member asked about support with shielding and raising concerns with employers about face coverings. MB said that tools such as the exemption cards should help to educate employers around the differing needs of staff but also provides a tool to help disabled people with confidence in going out without fear of being intimidated or challenged. A further question asked if Disability Equality Scotland could produce cards for specific disabilities. MB stated that the team did not have capacity for this but would follow up with specific disability organisations.

An individual member asked to present his question via audio. It was in relation to building regulations. SF agreed to follow up after the meeting.

An individual member asked if the Scottish Government consulted with Disability Equality Scotland about social distancing. MB confirmed that the guidance on physical distancing was fast-moving and that briefing papers based on weekly poll data were submitted to Scottish Government officials and Government ministers.

There were some questions on the topic of Blue Badges for disabled drivers. MB agreed to run a weekly poll question on Blue Badges. LB also indicated that in her other role as Convenor of MACS, that MACS and other disability organisations were focusing their engagements and messages to advocate that Blue Badge spaces are protected during any infrastructure changes in relation to physical distancing.

Other comments relating to infrastructure changes and the Spaces for People initiative were discussed. MB confirmed that Disability Equality Scotland held a webinar on this subject and can follow up with specific Panels after today. There was a general agreement that Equality Impact Assessments were not being carried out and MB agreed to raise this with Transport Scotland for clarity on any temporary measures.

There followed members' questions on various aspects of transport such as Motability and electric car charging points. LB suggested sharing the details of Motability customer services for specific queries, and MB



# DRAFT

agreed to consider electric car charging points as a possible weekly poll question.

In response to a point about Disability Equality Scotland working with the Access Panels to look at a minimum wheelchair turning circle in building standards, MB agreed to consider a survey of the Access Panel Network to gather data in the first instance.

In response to a question about the number of Directors on the Board MB confirmed that there were currently nine Directors, and that Carolyn Griffiths had given her apologies for the meeting. There remained two spaces on the Board for young directors. Comments from members indicated their support for this exciting development for the organisation.

An individual member asked whether Covid-19 had impacted on the Hate Crime work on public transport, specifically ferries. MB confirmed that Disability Equality Scotland are funded to pilot a Hate Crime Charter and work has begun to take this forward with CalMac Ferries. The incidences of hate crime reported to us during lockdown has made this work more important than ever.

An individual member asked whether Disability Equality Scotland were doing any work around domestic abuse during lockdown. MB signposted to the Disability Safety Hub ([www.disabilitysafety.scot](http://www.disabilitysafety.scot)) for relevant information. DMK indicated that she had been doing work on the impact of domestic violence in workplaces and offered to discuss this with the individual member after the meeting.

An individual member asked what Disability Equality Scotland was doing to promote equality in digital inclusion. MB confirmed this is work we are taking forward with the Access Panel Network as there is an opportunity to support the Panels with IT equipment or training through the Access Panel Grant.

## **Thank You and Close**

MB thanked the members for attending the AGM and asked attendees to complete a short evaluation survey to give feedback on the meeting.

**DRAFT**

**Close**

List of Attendees attached in Appendix 1.

# DRAFT

## Appendix 1: Attendee List

Amanda Foster, Individual Member  
Anne Cameron, Individual Member  
Anne Farrow, Dundee Access Group, Individual Member  
Brian MacKenzie, Individual Member  
Calum Maclean, SPAEN, Corporate Member  
Cameron Smith, SCLD, Corporate Member  
Carole Craig, Dundee Access Group  
Caroline Gould, Skye and Lochalsh Access Panel  
Chris Colebrook, Individual Member  
David Aston, Individual Member  
David Taylor, Individual Member  
Derek Taylor, Individual Member  
Don Fraser, Killin & District Volunteer Car Scheme  
Fiona Culbert, Individual Member  
Gillian Edwards, Centre for Inclusive Living Perth & Kinross  
Hilary Stubbs, MACS  
Jenny Greener, Central Aberdeenshire Access Panel  
John Ballantine, Edinburgh Access Panel  
Joyce Davies, Individual Member  
Karen Armstrong, Transport Scotland  
Kathryn Hill, Individual Member  
Ken Johnston, Oban Access Panel  
Lucy Logan, Transport Scotland  
Lucy McArthur, Edinburgh City Council  
Lynne Buchan, Individual Member  
Mike Harrison, Midlothian Access Panel  
Pat Shields, Orkney Access Panel  
Patricia Ferguson, Individual Member  
Patricia Steed, Access Panel Member  
Sandra Aird, Individual Member  
Seumas Campbell, NorthLink Ferries, Corporate Member

Morven Brooks (MB), Chief Executive Officer, Staff  
Emma Scott (ES), Operations Manager, Staff  
Ian Buchanan (IB), Access, Training and Engagement Manager, Staff  
James Davidson, Communications and Research Coordinator, Staff

# DRAFT

Alistair Bruce, Events, Training and Membership Administrator, Staff

Claire Jagger, Easy Read Worker, Staff

Linda Bamford (LB), Disability Equality Scotland, Convenor

Dorothy McKinney (DMcK), Disability Equality Scotland, Vice Convenor

Colin Millar (CM), Disability Equality Scotland, Treasurer

Susan Fulton (SF), Disability Equality Scotland, Director

Kenny Milne (KM), Disability Equality Scotland, Director

Scott Stewart (SS), Disability Equality Scotland, Director

Maureen Morrison (MM), Disability Equality Scotland, Director

Janis McDonald (JMcD), Disability Equality Scotland, Director

Linda MacKenzie (LM) Sign Language Interactions, BSL Interpreter

David, Sign Language Interactions, BSL Interpreter

Louisa McDaid (LMcD), Closed Captioner