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Disability Equality Scotland

Annual General Meeting 2022



**Disability
Equality
Scotland**

Minute: Wednesday 31 August 2022, 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Hybrid AGM, Via Zoom and Motability Operations, Edinburgh.

Attendee list can be found in **Appendix 1**.

1. Welcome

MB, Chief Executive Officer, welcomed everyone and confirmed that there were 25 delegates in attendance (of which there were 9 Directors, 7 Staff and 4 interpreters and captioners) and more than 15 were voting members. MB declared the meeting to be quorate.

MB introduced the Convener, LB and Co-opted Director KMB and indicated that 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 through the chat and Question and Answers (Q&A) functions. Closed captioning and BSL interpretation were also available and explained.

MB explained that voting members should have a link to allow voting on all resolutions and those in person will have been provided a voting form. MB instructed voting members to open this link to be ready for voting on resolutions.

Introduction

Linda Bamford, Director

LB thanked everyone for coming along to join us today.

LB stated today gives us the opportunity to say thanks. LB confirmed she has stepped down as Convener in her final term as a Director to allow succession planning with the new Convenor.

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LB thanked all members for their unwavering support, to our Access Panels for their dedication and commitment and the many hours spent “fighting the good fight” to improve local neighbourhoods across Scotland.

LB also thanked our Staff Team and Board of Directors for all the hard work and selfless contributions to make sure our members voices are heard to drive change. Thanks also to members contribution to make sure Disability Equality Scotland is stable and sustainable for our staff and our members.

LB explained the Board have co-opted her successor (Kayla-Megan Burns) and hopes that when we come to the elections of co-opted Directors, members will support Kayla and Marie Harrower and give them their vote. Kayla and Marie complement the existing board skill set perfectly and both are a great asset to Disability Equality Scotland and our members.

LB further explained that members will see the knowledge and skills that they bring to the organisation from their biographies. Their value has certainly been evident in our Board meetings and through contributions since joining our team.

LB stated this coming year will see her work more closely with Kayla as part of our handover and succession planning and has absolutely no doubt that Kayla and Marie will bring innovation, energy and vision to our Board and looks forward to working with our refreshed Board and new staff members until her second term ends.

LB asked members to use their vote when it comes to resolution 5 and the election of co-opted Directors. LB introduced KMB before handing back to MB.

Introduction

Kayla-Megan Burns, Co-opted Director

KMB thanked LB for such a kind introduction. KMB acknowledged pending votes that they will be taking LB place. KMB stated that LB has been a credit to Disability Equality Scotland and members and could not be more grateful to be learning from her and spending time with her and able to learn and serve members as best as possible over the next few years.

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KMB provided information about themselves. They are a disabled person and been on two previous boards before at Strathclyde University and Strathclyde Students Union and held position of chair on the latter. KMB stated that they are an activist at heart, passionate about issues such as climate change and social justice...

KMB also shared that they are a science student and they run a podcast as well as a sound production business and have gained skills and experience that they hope to utilise as best as possible to serve members of Disability Equality Scotland. KMB stated it has been a real pleasure getting to know Disability Equality Scotland over the past few months and can't wait to see the future that we can forge together. KMB stated we are in quite a period of change and they see this as a fantastic opportunity for us to grow and develop and bring on great new things.

KMB added that the board is for members and all their input. Their hope is to become a very open and transparent Convenor of the organisation and is looking forward to hearing from you, learning with you and building a future together. KMB finished by thanking everyone for having them here today and welcomed all to the Disability Equality Scotland AGM for 2022.

KMB introduced MB for the next agenda item.

Morven Brooks, Approval of AGM Minutes: 25 August 2021

MB confirmed that all delegates should have received a copy of the draft minutes from the AGM held on 25 August 2021. Voting members were asked to vote to approve **Resolution 1** the minutes from 25 August 2021.

- Proposer: Dorothy McKinney
- Seconder: Scott Stewart

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

2. Morven Brooks, CEO: Presentation of the Annual Report 2021-2022

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MB welcomed everyone again to the AGM celebrating the achievements Disability Equality Scotland in 2021/2022. MB reported that it has been another successful year for Disability Equality Scotland. Constant changes and pressures to the third sector relating to COVID do have an impact, the organisation managed to deal with these pressures effectively.

MB talked through the organisation's main achievements for 2021-2022. These included:

- Increased the membership by 9% during this period, bringing our membership to over 1400 members.
- Over the past year, the monthly newsletter has been an important channel for distributing key public health information to members about the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. Members have told us they found the newsletter to be a useful resource, highlighting the relevant support that is in place to support disabled people.
- Continued to administer Scottish Government's Face Covering Exemptions Card. For the reporting year 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022, over 47,450 physical exemption cards and over 24,000 digital versions have been distributed. In September 2021 digital download version was introduced in line with demand. During this period 45,621 cards were downloaded.
- During this period the organisation continued to engage with Disabled People and Disability Organisations through webinars. Delivered 8 Disability Webinars across the following topics:
 - Journey Planning
 - Access to Public Appointments
 - Independent Living Fund
 - Return to Public Transport
 - Disability Hate Crime
 - COVID-19 Recovery Bill
 - Assistance Cards
 - Transport staff training

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- Continued to advocate for the adoption of the principles of Inclusive Communication via the Inclusive Communication Hub.
- In this reporting period there has been a steady growth in the Easy Read Service, having completed 93 Easy Read projects for key partners, including the COVID-19 Self-Isolation Bill Consultation and Transport Scotland's Annual Delivery Plan. We have also seen an increase in repeat clients coming back to us.
- We would like to thank Garfield Weston Foundation for the funding received to develop our Easy Read training course during this period. Since the launch of the course, it has been well received across organisations wishing to make their communications accessible to all. The overall aim of the Easy Read Training course is to help professionals produce best practice easy read information that works for their audience. The training course is now available at cost and proving to be very successful.
- We have continued to gather the views from members on 48 topical weekly poll questions during this reporting period. Weekly polls have received praise and recognition from key stakeholders and contributed to developing legislation, service improvement, consultations, Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) and influenced policy and guidance relating to COVID-19 recovery.

We have also taken the opportunity to raise the importance of our members views from weekly polls as evidence in Scottish Parliament Committees, Cross Party Groups and in Parliamentary Questions.

- To assist with promotion, and to raise awareness of Disability Hate Crime, we worked with Police Scotland to host a webinar during National Hate Crime week in October 2021. This was an opportunity to generate content for the Disability Safety Hub and to provide an update on the Hate Crime Charter.
- The Access Travel Hub has continued to receive positive levels of engagement, which has been achieved through on-going updates

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from transport providers on the measures they have introduced to make transport more accessible and safer for disabled people. Members of Transport Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework Steering group also provide content for the hub to promote shared learning.

- We continued to deliver transport events via online webinars. During this year we have hosted four webinar events, which resulted in engagement with 175 people, including disabled people, transport providers, local authorities, and equality groups about their experiences of accessible travel.
- We worked with our partners at Transport Scotland, Police Scotland, British Transport Police, Sustran and People First Scotland to launch the National Hate Crime Charter on 24 March 2021. The Hate Crime Charter pilot reached over 1,255,671 passengers in an eight-week period. Fifteen partners signed up to pledge their support to the Charter and will be offered training in disability awareness and hate crime.
- And most importantly we have continued to support the current active Access Panels which operate across Scotland. Access Panels have told us that they have continued to ensure that accessibility remains at the forefront of people's minds, even as we continue to work remotely. Despite the lockdowns and remote working, we have seen an increase in Access Panels, with 4 new Access Panels joining the network and increasing the representation for disabled people's voices to be heard.

MB stated the organisation is aware of the fact that public transport still isn't accessible for disabled people and will continue to work with the Access Panels to make sure that remote working isn't used as a substitute for a poorly accessible transport infrastructure.

- Our staff team have continued to work effectively and efficiently from home and in the office (in line with government guidelines) this last year. Our operational outcomes continue to align with our growing

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strategic aspirations, and our success is down to the commitment, talents and diversity of our staff. That is why we value and develop our employees to succeed in their careers, as well as contribute to our success.

MB concluded that we might live in an uncertain world now, however, there are some things that Disability Equality Scotland can rely on, notably our members and Access Panels who continue to champion access, inclusion and equality for all.

MB updated that unfortunately Colin Millar, Treasurer was unable to attend today and confirmed she would continue with the presentation of our accounts

Presentation of Accounts 2021-2022

Morven Brooks, CEO

Financial performance in the year to 31 March 2022 has exceeded trustee's forecasts and expectations; there is an increase of income over expenditure of £67,112 for the year, compared to £30,983 in the year to 31 March 2021. This is a tremendous achievement to the CEO and staff team in managing project budgets effectively and mainly due to the success of the Easy Read Service.

The year ended with a balance of £148,170 (compared to £80,058 for the same date last year).

Income

Income receipts for the year totalled £395,304 – an increase from the previous year due to successful funding received from Garfield Weston to develop our Easy Read Training course.

The organisations income is generally healthy and there has been a significant improvement with previous performance.

Expenditure

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Expenditure for the year totalled £328,192 well within budget of funding received

Financial Management and Reserves Policies

The General Fund is unrestricted and is used for the day-to-day operation of the organisation.

The Equality Unit, Section 10, Access Panel Grant and Transport restricted fund was closed on 31 March 2022 as we reported in our Annual Report and Accounts of that date.

The organisation operates with an unrestricted reserve at a level set by the trustees; for this reporting period it is at £88,053 which equates to approximately three months running costs. The reserve is held to allow the organisation to offset fluctuations in income receipts and to provide for contingencies.

We are currently on track in building our reserves to cover 6 months operating costs. We will continue to increase our fundraising activities and income opportunities.

We feel it is prudent in the current economic climate; maintaining a substantial reserve will better allow the organisation to meet the funding challenges which the wider economic situation may impose. We also note that securing external funding is becoming increasingly difficult as sponsors and grant making bodies are forced to address their own funding issues.

We are also mindful that the long-term future of the organisation is difficult to guarantee and that we must be prepared to seek alternative accommodation, possibly at short notice, should our current venue cease to be available or too expensive.

These accounts are approved and adopted by the board of directors on 29 July 2022.

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MB asked voting members to vote on **Resolution 2**: To receive the Report of the Trustees and audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Please select Agree, Disagree or Withheld.

Review of Fees and Subscriptions payable by Members **Morven Brooks, CEO**

The fees and subscriptions will remain unchanged for the following year.

MB asked voting members to vote on **Resolution 3**: To approve Fees and Subscriptions payable by members (no change).

Please select Agree, Disagree or Withheld.

Delegation to the Board the reappointment of Independent Examiners **Morven Brooks, CEO**

The board have approved a decision to change of independent examiners for the following year, to year ended 31st March 2023.

Community Accountancy Scotland will cease to trade this year. Anne Knox has been the independent examiner through our services with Community Accountancy Scotland for the last two years.

To ensure consistency, we are appointing Anne Knox.

MB asked voting members to vote on **Resolution 4**: To delegate to the board the re-appointment of Independent Examiners (Anne Knox).

Please select Agree, Disagree or Withheld.

Election of Board Directors
Morven Brooks
Chief Executive Officer

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MB explained the voting procedure once again to ensure those online and, in the room, were following okay.

MB stated once we have gone through all resolutions, we will have a 10-minute break to allow staff to count and verify the votes.

MB confirmed that **6** proxy votes in advance of today's meeting.

MB asked voting members to vote on **Resolution 5**: To elect as a director of the Company Kayla-Megan Burns (Co-opted: 29 March 2021)
Please select Agree, Disagree or Withheld.

MB asked voting members to now vote on **Resolution 6**: To elect as a director of the Company Ms. Marie Harrower (Co-opted: 29 March 2021)
Please select Agree, Disagree or Withheld.

MB asked those online to click on the submit button as this concludes all voting.

MB confirmed a 10-minute Comfort Break which will allow us to gather the votes in the room and online. MB will announce the results after the comfort break.

Voting Results

MB confirmed the results are now in and have been counted and verified and can confirm:

Kayla-Megan Burns has been elected as director receiving more than 50% of votes.

Marie Harrower has been elected as director receiving more than 50% of votes.

Members Questions

MB introduced the Board of Directors.

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Linda Bamford, Convenor: Linda was appointed as Director on 14 November 2016 and is now in her second term. Linda has a passion for equality and doing the right thing and strives through her work and volunteering to bring about transformational changes that will assist everyone to lead their lives as they choose.

Dorothy McKinney, Vice Convenor: Dorothy was appointed as Director on 20 March 2017 and is now in her second term. Dorothy has over 35 years' experience in Human Resources, is a trained and experienced Mediator, she has Fellowship of the CIPD and a passion for 'Doing the Right Thing'.

Colin Millar, Treasurer: Apologies received. Colin was appointed as Director on 4 May 2018, currently served one full term. With lived experience Colin seeks to support others to live full, active and inclusive lives and fulfil their potential and ability.

Maureen Morrison, Director: Maureen was appointed as Director on 4 December 2017, currently served one full term. Maureen is passionate about the mission of Disability Equality Scotland, driven by her 'lived experience' of issues effecting disabled people both visible and hidden.

Scott Stewart, Director: Scott was appointed as Director on 5 December 2017, currently served one full term. As manager for Disability Information Scotland, an organisation supporting disabled people, Scott is aware of the challenges experienced by disabled people, their families and carers and constantly strives to break down the barriers that hinder the opportunities of disabled people in our society.

Carolyn Wilson-Smith, Director: Carolyn was appointed as Director on 4 May 2018, currently served one full term. Carolyn's areas of expertise include human resource development, organisational development, project management, consultation and engagement.

Kenny Milne, Director: Kenny was appointed as Director on 17 May 2018, currently served one full term. Kenny empathises with others who are

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faced with the same difficulties of becoming disabled in later life. He also brings his managerial experience to the organisation.

Lauren Asher, Director: Lauren was appointed 25 August 2021. Lauren is a full-time Youth Worker based in Dumfries and Galloway. Diagnosed with Asperger's and mental health conditions, Lauren is a passionate advocate for equality and inclusion.

Rhianne Forrest, Director: Apologies received. Rhianne was appointed as Director on 25 August 2021. Rhianne is a Creative Writing, Journalism and English literature Graduate. She has worked on projects such as Thistle Assistance and more.

Kayla-Megan Burns, Director: Appointed today by members. Kayla is a climate and social justice activist who has worked locally, nationally and internationally on projects and campaigns covering areas such as the climate emergency, accessibility, the right to education for all, anti-hate, and gender equality.

Marie Harrower, Director. Appointed today by members. Marie has been blind since birth; she was brought up on the Isle of Mull and attended the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh. Marie trained as a physiotherapist at the RNIB school of physiotherapy in London.

MB asked all members present if they had any questions they would like answered. No questions were raised.

MB announced the launch of our Members Survey today and encouraged all to complete this and share with us in how you feel we should be progressing as a membership organisation.

MB thanked everyone for their support and dedication to Disability Equality Scotland. MB confirmed this is her last AGM as CEO with Disability Equality Scotland as she moves on to Voluntary Action Orkney in October. MB shared she is truly grateful to have had the opportunity to work with all members over the last 10 years. Disability Equality Scotland needs your

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voice and views to make change, so please keep doing what you do in making Scotland more accessible and inclusive for all.

MB reminded everyone to complete the feedback form provided for today's event.

MB closed the meeting and wished everyone well.

Close

List of Attendees attached in **Appendix 1**.

Full results of voting received on resolutions in **Appendix 2**.

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Appendix 1: Attendee List

Online: Zoom Meeting

Maureen Morrison	Director
Linda Bamford	Director
Carolyn Wilson-Smith	Director
Lauren Asher	Director
Dorothy McKinney	Director
Kenny Milne	Director
Marie Harrower	Director
Lynne Buchan	Individual Member
Lucy Logan	Staff
Kayla-Megan Burns	Director
Steven Dora	Transport Scotland
Theo Hynan-Ratcliffe	Staff
Vanessa	Individual Member
Sarah Carrick	Individual Member
Lucy McDonald	Individual Member
Sarah Carrick	Individual Member

Communication Support

Cameron Smith (SCLD) (he/him-Scotland) (Guest)

Leah - BSL Interpreter (Guest)

Captioner - Mel Coulter (Guest)

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Captioner - Andrena (Guest)

In Person

Morven Brooks	Staff
Ian Buchanan	Staff
Calum Byers	Staff
James Davidson	Staff
Scott Stewart	Director
Douglas Bryce	Staff
Tracey Clark	Individual Member
Jenny Greener	Central Aberdeen Access Panel
Scott Arthur	Councillor for the Colinton, Oxgangs & Fairmilehead Ward

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Appendix 2: Full Voting Results

29 votes in total, 6 proxy ballots and 23 votes on the day.

Resolution 1: To agree the Minutes from Annual General Meeting held on 31 August 2022:

Agree - 89% (27 respondents)
Disagree – 0% (0 respondents)
Withheld 11% (2 respondents)

Resolution 2: To receive the Report of the Trustees and audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022:

Agree - 94% (28 respondents)
Disagree – 0% (0 respondents)
Withheld 6% (1 respondent)

Resolution 3: To approve Fees and Subscriptions payable by members (no change):

Agree - 94% (28 respondents)
Disagree – 0% (0 respondents)
Withheld 6% (1 respondent)

Resolution 4: To delegate to the board the appointment of Independent Examiners (Anne Knox):

Agree - 94% (28 respondents)
Disagree – 0% (0 respondents)
Withheld 6% (1 respondent)

Resolution 5: To elect as a director of the Company Kayla-Megan Burns (Co-opted: 29 March 2021)

Agree - 83% (26 respondents)
Disagree – 0% (0 respondents)
Withheld 17% (3 respondents)

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Resolution 6: To elect as a director of the Company Marie Harrower (Co-opted: 29 March 2021)

Agree - 89% (26 respondents)
Disagree – 0% (0 respondents)
Withheld - 11% (2 respondents)