



**Suffolk User Forum
Unconfirmed
Minutes of an annual general meeting of members held on
19.11.20 at 10:00
Via Zoom**

Trustees present:

Guenever Pachent - Chair	Malcolm Blowers
Brian Parrott	Charley Maher
Robert Nesbitt – Company Sec.	Jeff Stern
Paul Gaffney	Beverley Griggs
Martin Wright – Treasurer	

In attendance:

Jayne Stevens – CEO	Ken Burr – Finance Volunteer
James Woolnough – MH Advocate	Alex Knight – Office administrator
Tina Pointon – Engagement Lead	Siobhan Hemmett – Engagement Lead
Wendy Shepherd – Engagement Lead	

25 people attended the meeting including trustees and staff.

The meeting began at 10:00.

ITEM

ACTION

1. Welcome, introductions and notifications of any other business

Guenever Pachent welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked people for attending.

After introductions, an overview was provided as to how the meeting would work online and what would be covered.

Guenever Pachent explained that time was allowed following each item for questions and in addition trustees and staff would be available online after the meeting for informal discussions.

Attendees were asked to note that Dan Pennock who had been a trustee for three years had decided to retire from the board since the original agenda was circulated and so there would be no need to vote on his reappointment later in the meeting. Guenever Pachent explained that Jeff Stern who had been SUF's chair for many years had also stood down in October 2020 but had kindly agreed to stay on as a trustee. The meeting recorded a note of thanks to Dan Pennock and Jeff Stern for their support to SUF.

There were no notifications of other business.

2. Apologies and quoracy

Robert Nesbitt confirmed that there were no apologies and that the meeting was quorate.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 05.11.19

Jeff Stern asked whether those present at the 2019 AGM were content that the minutes of that meeting were accurate.

The minutes were approved as accurate.

Under Matters Arising, Brian Parrott noted that SUF had taken steps to improve the diversity of its board profile and had achieved better gender balance but that work was ongoing to achieve better ethnic representation.

4. Annual report 2019 / 20 for approval

ATTACHMENT A

The annual report, also known as the Impact Report, had been circulated with the papers and Jayne Stevens gave a presentation of the main points.

All of SUF's work depended on partnership working with service users, carers, commissioners and providers. Membership had increased by 35% which strengthened SUF's independent voice.

'Making our voices count' is published quarterly and had included 1300 voices this year. SUF has continued to champion mutual respect, listening and valuing people.

This year had also seen a continued focus on suicide prevention including work with the farming community. The Staying Alive app had had 1400 downloads and SUF members had promoted the message, "change the language, save a life, suicide is not a choice."

SUF had provided 1100 hours of advocacy to inpatient services supporting 780 interventions and raising awareness of advocacy to almost 2000 people.

SUF had also continued to be a strong voice in mental health transformation, having facilitated 2600 conversations with 1300 hours of coproduction work with a strong focus on crisis care; campaigning for a compassionate approach to people in crisis.

Jayne Stevens noted that volunteer trustees have provided the equivalent of £70k support over the year and she thanked David Whitefield and Dan Pennock for their support over recent years and Jeff Stern for his time as Chair, as well as Ken Burr for his work as company secretary and volunteer finance lead.

COVID-19 had of course been a particular challenge in 2020 and Jayne Stevens paid tribute to the flexibility that SUF team members had shown in changing their ways of working to support members.

Jayne Stevens concluded her presentation by saying that Wendy Shepherd, Engagement Lead for West Suffolk, was due to retire in December 2020 and the meeting thanked Wendy for her dedicated work at SUF and wished her a happy retirement.

Guenever Pachent asked the audience if there were any questions on the impact report.

In response to questions about the potential to increase volunteer participation, Jayne Stevens said that the plan was to find funding to appoint a volunteer coordinator. It was important to ensure that there was good support for volunteers particularly since one of the areas where they would be working would be in providing telephone support. Applications for funding for a coordinator would be made in 2021.

A motion to approve the annual report (impact report) was put by Malcolm Blowers and seconded by Brian Parrott.

A vote was taken, and the annual report was approved with no objections or abstentions.

5. Annual accounts 2019 / 20

The annual accounts had been circulated with the AGM papers and Ken Burr gave a presentation of the main points.

The expenditure for the reporting period was £179,545 which was £2,411 more than income. However, most of this consisted of spending of income held over from previous years. The trustees had built up the reserves so that there was a minimum of six months operating costs in order to preserve service levels should income drop and also to ensure that redundancy and notice costs could be covered if that eventuality arose.

SUF deposited funds to earn interest but returns were noted to be very low at present.

Expenditure was noted to be higher than the previous year due to increased activity including recruitment costs.

Support costs were lower than the previous year which had included payment for the suicide prevention app. However, there had been increased expenditure on printing of publications and on professional communications support.

Guenever Pachent thanked Kenn Burr for his clear and comprehensive presentation and then asked the audience if there were any questions on the annual accounts.

There were no questions and a motion to approve the annual accounts was put by Paul Gaffney and seconded by Guenever Pachent.

A vote was taken and the annual accounts were approved with no objections or abstentions.

6. Appointment of Lovewell Blake as independent examiner for 2020/21

A motion to approve the appointment of Lovewell Blake as independent examiners was put by Guenever Pachent and seconded by Charley Maher.

A vote was taken and the appointment of Lovewell Blake was approved with no objections or abstentions.

7. Reappointment of trustees

The following trustees had served three years and required reappointment at the general meeting to serve a further three years.

- a. Malcolm Blowers
Proposed by Beverley Griggs, Seconded by Charley Maher

Approved with no objections or abstentions.

- b. Guenever Pachent
Proposed by Paul Gaffney, Seconded by Malcolm Blowers

Approved with no objections or abstentions.

- c. Brian Parrott
Proposed by Jeff Stern, Seconded by Martin Wright

Approved with no objections or abstentions.

8. AOB previously notified to the Chair

None.

9. Thanks, and closing comments

Closing the meeting, Guenever Pachent thanked everyone for coming. The meeting had heard about the positive position that SUF was in and Guenever Pachent noted the excellent value for money that SUF provided given its relatively small budget. SUF was honoured that service users and carers trusted the organisation with their stories and everyone could justifiably be proud of the 'Making our voice heard' quarterly reports which are listened to by commissioners, providers and the Care Quality Commission. The feedback in these reports drives greater respect for service users and encourages services to be consistently compassionate.

Thanks were extended to Suffolk County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Groups for their funding and for encouraging SUF to act as a critical friend to commissioners and providers.

Thanks were also extended to Jeff Stern for his work as Chair and to Ken Burr as volunteer finance lead for their excellent support to SUF.

ATTACHMENT A

Finally, particular thanks were given for the hard work of the staff team and to Jayne Stevens for her enormous, tireless commitment.

Guenever Pachent closed the meeting by wishing everyone well for the (hoped for) coming end of lockdown and for a happy Christmas and much improved 2021.

The formal meeting closed, and everyone was reminded that they were welcome to stay on line for an informal discussion.

The meeting ended at 11:03